

**SUBJECT: On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Service Study and Minor Amendments to Vehicle-for-Hire By-law related to Taxicabs**

**File Number: ACS2023-EPS-BYL-0002**

**Report to Emergency Preparedness and Protective Services Committee on 15 June 2023**

**and Council 28 June 2023**

**Submitted on June 6, 2023 by Roger Chapman, Director, By-law and Regulatory Services**

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**Ward: CITY WIDE**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That Emergency Preparedness and Protective Services Committee recommend that Council:**

- 1. Receive the consultant's report entitled "Study of On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Services in the City of Ottawa", attached as Document 1 and referenced in this report.**
- 2. Direct staff to:**
  - a. develop, negotiate and implement a three-year pilot contract, with two optional one-year extension periods subject to mutual agreement of the City and the contractor, for a centralized dispatch service for on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles, in consultation with the Chief Procurement Officer and in accordance with the Procurement By-law; and,**
  - b. evaluate and report back to Committee and Council on the efficacy of the pilot.**
- 3. Approve an annual incentive grant, on a three-year pilot basis, of:**

- a. **\$5,000 per year for three years for each accessible taxicab plate holder licensee or vehicle owner for investment in a fully wheelchair accessible vehicle subject to eligibility criteria prescribed by the Chief License Inspector; and,**
- b. **up to \$2,000 per year for each accessible taxicab driver for fulfilling criteria prescribed by the Chief License Inspector including accepting all on-demand wheelchair accessible trip requests and maintaining the vehicle operational and available for dispatched requests 50 hours per-week, 48 weeks annually;**

**and, where plate holder licensees or vehicle owners who are also licensed and actively working drivers would be eligible to receive both incentives.**

4. **Approve the implementation of a \$15 per trip contribution payable to the accessible taxicab driver for each completed on-demand wheelchair accessible fare, subject to the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Chief License Inspector, on a three-year pilot basis.**
5. **Approve amendments to the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law to take effect upon approval by Council, to:**
  - a. **reduce the accessible plate holder license transfer fee to \$312 per plate transfer; and**
  - b. **repeal the requirement that standard and accessible taxicab vehicles must be less than five model years of age upon entry to the fleet; and**
  - c. **provide for an increase of the current ten-year vehicle age limit to twelve model years for taxicab vehicles that are fully wheelchair accessible, fully electric or hybrid.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Assumption and Analysis**

In 2019, Council directed staff to review the feasibility of a study of on-demand accessible taxicab service and subsequently approved the retention of a consultant to undertake the study. This report presents the consultant's findings and provides staff's recommendations based on those findings and associated stakeholder consultations. The recommendations include a centralized dispatch dedicated to on-demand

accessible taxicabs and several financial incentives to accessible taxicab plate holder licensee and drivers that recognize the higher costs of operating an accessible taxicab. A three-year pilot is proposed to provide an opportunity for evaluation of the efficacy of the proposed initiatives.

### **Financial Implications**

If the recommendations are approved by Council, funds to cover the associated expenditures would come from the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund derived from the voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge to Private Transportation Companies collected by the City. Based on the number of existing accessible plate holder licenses, licensed taxicab drivers operating those vehicles as well as an estimated number of on-demand accessible fares, the proposed incentive programs would represent in the range of \$1.5 million annually.

### **Public Consultation/Input**

The recommendations are based on both consultations with key stakeholders undertaken by the consultant retained to undertake the On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Services Study and discussions undertaken with those stakeholders by City staff. Comments received from stakeholders were considered and have been incorporated into the recommendations accordingly.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Evolution of Accessible Taxicab Service**

In 2001, Council commenced approving the release of accessible taxicab plate holder licenses in Ottawa. These licenses are referred to as “plates” and they are affixed to an accessible vehicle so that it may operate legally as such, after the vehicle and its driver, or drivers, meet the requirements of the by-law. In 2002, the process—specifically, a lottery and then an Accessible Priority List—was approved for the allocation of accessible plates, resulting in the release of additional accessible taxicab plates in subsequent years. The holders of these accessible taxicab plates were permitted to transfer the license after five years and to have additional drivers on the plate.

In subsequent years, further by-law amendments were enacted to facilitate accessible taxicab plate issuance and to ensure available and reliable on-demand accessible service to persons with physical disabilities affecting their mobility, including:

- a formula for the calculation of the required number of accessible plates based on population
- any new plates issued as a result of application of the formula are accessible
- a requirement for a minimum number of accessible vehicles based on fleet size to be available at all times
- a requirement for accessible drivers to be on the road ten hours a day, five days a week.

As part of the 2016 Council consideration of the [Taxi and Limousine Regulation and Service Review](#) report, the formula for the calculation of the number of accessible plates was updated resulting in the Chief License Inspector having the authority to issue four additional accessible plate holder licenses, bringing the total number to 191 plates available.

Since that time, on-demand accessible taxi service has declined. By-law and Regulatory Services recognizes that accessible taxi service for Ottawa residents, their families and visitors using mobility devices and with other disabilities, has become inadequate in recent years. It has also been recognized that holders of accessible taxicab plates bear significantly higher costs than holders of standard plates, as in higher vehicle and maintenance costs to name but two.

The taxi industry has indicated that they too would like to provide better service to users and are looking for solutions to the rising and additional costs associated with accessible vehicles, including vehicle and conversion costs (for example, up to \$100,000 for a new fully wheelchair accessible vehicle) and additional costs associated with repairs and maintenance of accessibility-related parts, such as ramps. Further, the 10-year age limit is limiting plate holders' and drivers' interest in returning to service as many of them purchased accessible vehicles in 2012, so there is uncertainty with respect to investing in a new accessible vehicle. In addition, the pandemic has changed the face of the industry. Specifically, it has contributed to drivers' ability to operate given fewer fares available and, as a result, those still driving do so generally with only one driver per plated vehicle, unlike the multiple drivers on one vehicle of previous years.

Currently, of the 191 fully wheelchair accessible plates/vehicles that could be operating, only about 80 are currently on the road, with about 20 or so of those working on Para Transpo, which are pre-scheduled fares only. Those numbers do fluctuate depending on Para user needs as not all require a fully wheelchair accessible vehicle and standard

sedan taxicabs also provide Para service. Enforcement efforts, either in response to complaints or as part of focused programs, have not been sufficient to improve the availability and quality of service, in part because vehicles have to be in service for enforcement to be effective.

The City commissioned this study with the goal of getting the current 191 allowable plates back on the road and ultimately improving service for the community of people with disabilities who are reliant on this service. Staff recommends making further investments by leveraging the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund to implement the recommendations of the study. The Fund will help augment the availability of accessible taxi services, as it was intended, and it will be done without reduction to the other supports under the Fund.

### **More Recent Undertakings**

Since 2016 and as a result of Council direction arising from the 2016 [Taxi and Limousine Regulation and Service Review](#) report, Private Transportation Companies licensed under the [Vehicle-for-Hire By-law](#) have been paying to the City a voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge, which form the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.

The per-trip surcharge started at seven cents and, following further negotiation with Private Transportation Companies, it was increased to ten cents effective July 2020 where it remains currently.

In 2019 Council approved the [Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Allocation Plan](#) which recommended provision of funds to not-for-profit and community agencies to:

1. expand accessible transportation services in rural areas;
2. reduction in the cost of taxi coupons; and
3. an increase in the maximum allowance of taxi coupons per customer.

The approved Allocation Plan was the culmination of a comprehensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders to generate ways in which the monies collected from the voluntary per-trip surcharge for accessibility paid by licensed Private Transportation Companies could specifically be allocated, in keeping with Council's 2016 direction that any funds received from the surcharge be directed to a dedicated reserve fund to support accessible transportation. By-law and Regulatory Services continues to collect, on behalf of the City, the voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge that provides financial support to transportation services in support of accessible transportation improvements.

This includes \$90 thousand for taxi coupons, \$56 thousand for discounted taxi coupons and \$200 thousand for rural transportation funding in 2022.

Later in 2019, Council considered a staff report relating to the [By-law Review Workplan](#) and approved several amendments to the taxi-related provisions of the Vehicle-For-Hire By-law to address certain concerns raised by the taxi industry and, since that time, other initiatives have been moved forward to streamline taxi operations and hence, improve service including: reduction in (only) the Commercial General Liability Insurance requirement; reduction in vehicle inspections under certain circumstances; amendments to the Tariff Card to reflect legitimate fees for taxis' cost recovery; providing for electronic submission of vehicle registrations and other documents required for taxicab license applications and renewals.

At that time, Council also directed staff to review the feasibility of a study of on-demand accessible taxicab service and subsequently approved the retention of a consultant to undertake the study. This study has since been conducted.

The purpose of this report is to present the consultant's findings and to provide staff's recommendations regarding on-demand accessible taxicab service. This is not intended to be a full review of the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law under which taxis are regulated, which would typically occur every ten years. Rather, this report focuses on the On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Services Study undertaken by the consultant hired by the City, on the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Allocation Plan, and on four specific regulatory issues identified to the consultant and to staff.

## **DISCUSSION**

As directed by Council, staff retained a consultant 6226051 Canada Inc. to study on-demand accessible taxicab services in Ottawa which included documentation review, meetings/interviews with key stakeholders, surveys, and benchmarking with other jurisdictions regulating accessible taxicabs. The consultant's findings and recommendations are detailed in Document 1 attached to this report. Notable is that other Ontario (Hamilton, Toronto) and Canadian (Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg) municipalities have implemented on-demand accessible taxicab programs similar to those recommended in this report.

### **Consultant recommendations and staff response**

Following a comprehensive review of options, environmental scan and stakeholder discussions, the consultant recommends that the City consider the following options:

**A. Developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purposes of awarding a centralized dispatch contract respecting on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles to a third-party vendor for a three-year period.**

- Centralized 24/7 dispatch via a dedicated third-party administered application, website and telephone number
- Centralized Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle dispatch would ensure that all requests for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles are routed through a dedicated application/website/telephone number and dispatched to the closest available vehicle to the benefit of both the client and the driver
- Contract would be administered by the City under specified criteria, including data retention and reporting requirements

**Staff response – Recommendation 2:**

Staff agrees with the consultant's proposal for a three-year centralized dispatch contract for on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles. There is however currently only one taxicab dispatch firm operating in Ottawa. Previous market scans undertaken in relation to Para Taxi Services have identified that that dispatch firm, a consortium of the three licensed taxi companies operating in Ottawa currently, is the only viable provider of accessible taxi dispatch services in Ottawa.

To confirm this assessment, an Advanced Contract Award Notice (ACAN) will be issued. An ACAN is a public notice indicating the City's intent to award a contract to a particular supplier where the City has determined there is only one available and qualified vendor to perform the work. If another supplier exists that believes it possesses the relevant qualifications to deliver the work, they may submit a statement of capabilities in response to the ACAN.

Subject to no viable alternative suppliers being identified through the ACAN process, staff recommends undertaking negotiations with the current taxicab dispatch firm operating in Ottawa to implement a three-year pilot contract, with two optional one-year extension periods subject to mutual agreement, for a centralized dispatch service for on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles.

An evaluation of the efficacy of the service based on criteria, including data retention and reporting requirements, will be undertaken by staff with a report back to Committee and Council.

**B. Implementing an annual monetary incentive plan that recognizes the higher cost of owning and operating a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) with the goal of increasing the availability of WAVs on the road.**

- Both accessible taxi plate holders and accessible taxicab drivers would be eligible
- Plate holders who are also drivers would be eligible to receive both incentives
- There would be an overall upset limit per incentive

**Staff response – Recommendation 3:**

Staff agree with the consultant's proposal to implement an annual incentive with criteria, on a three-year pilot basis, to recognize the costs borne by accessible taxicab plate holders/vehicle owners and drivers while setting out appropriate standards of service to ensure vehicles are on the road and available for dispatch.

This report proposes a grant of \$5,000 per year for three years for each accessible taxicab plate holder licensee/vehicle owner for investment in a fully wheelchair accessible vehicle, subject to eligibility criteria prescribed by the Chief License Inspector. The \$5,000 per year amount is intended to help offset vehicle conversion costs and considers the funds available in the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.

This report also proposes up to \$2,000 per year for each accessible taxicab driver for fulfilling criteria prescribed by the Chief License Inspector including accepting all on-demand wheelchair accessible trip requests and maintaining the vehicle operational and available for dispatched requests 50 hours per-week, 48 weeks annually. The criterion of 50 hours per-week is consistent with the minimum service requirement set out in the current Vehicle-for-Hire By-law and the 48 weeks annually accounts for vacation and other personal time for the drivers. The proposed incentive amount of up to \$2,000 for accessible taxicab drivers represents a reasonable incentive for drivers to provide efficient accessible service and is also based on the funds available in the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.

Licensed accessible taxi plate holders or vehicle owners who are also actively working drivers would be eligible to receive both incentives.

Staff is proposing a three-year pilot in consideration of the funds available in the Accessibility Fund and to provide for an evaluation of the efficacy of the proposals.



**C. Implementing a per trip levy of \$15 paid to the accessible taxicab driver for each completed WAV fare.**

- Recognizes the higher costs and time requirements associated with wheelchair accessible calls and incentivizes drivers to treat such calls as a priority.

**Staff response – Recommendation 4:**

Staff supports this recommendation and associated rationale outlined by the consultant, for on-demand wheelchair accessible taxicab drivers, who are not under contract with Para Transpo. Further, bearing in mind that the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law requires that all taxicab drivers may only activate the meter once the passenger is secure in the vehicle and ready to be transported. In the case of passengers with physical disabilities, this takes additional time for the driver over and above that associated with a passenger without a disability. For example, the driver would attend the passenger with a disability's location at the time of pick-up, such as their front door, assist them to and into the vehicle, ensure the wheelchair or scooter is appropriately secured, all for which the driver is currently not compensated. Staff is proposing that the three-year pilot approach also apply to this recommendation for consistency in terms of evaluation and the monies available in the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.

**Expenditures**

If the recommendations are approved by Council, funds to cover the associated expenditures would come from the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund derived from the voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge to Private Transportation Companies collected by the City. Based on the number of existing accessible plate holder licenses—191, in accordance with the formula prescribed in the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law—and licensed taxicab drivers operating those vehicles as well as an estimated number of on-demand accessible taxi fares, the proposed incentive program would represent in the range of \$1.5 million annually.

Those expenditures would be in addition to the three initiatives in Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Allocation Plan already approved by Council in 2019 in support of accessible transportation, as noted in this report.

There are sufficient funds currently in the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund to cover these new expenditures for a three-year period, during which additional surcharges would continue to be collected.

Further, following Council consideration of this report, staff will approach licensed Private Transportation Companies with a view to negotiating a potential increase to the voluntary per-trip accessibility surcharge currently at ten cents per completed trip.

### **Recommendation 5 – Regulatory Issues**

Although several taxi industry concerns raised with staff previously have been addressed either through by-law amendments or administratively (where lawful and feasible), there remain others that were identified both with staff and during the consultant's discussions with stakeholders that have been reviewed as part of this report.

The industry requests that were reviewed as part of this report are outlined below, along with staff's response.

#### **Issue: Accessible plate holder license transfer fee reduction**

Licensing fees are set to recover the costs of overall administration, enforcement and inspections associated with licensing regulations, in this instance, the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law. That includes functions such as the Property Standards and Licensing Appeals Committee, policy development, hiring of consultants and other necessary activities associated with supporting by-law administration and implementation. Fees are generally increased by the cost-of-living adjustment annually.

There are several fees associated with taxicab licensing, including those for the transfer of plate holder licenses from one plate holder to another, and in the case where a plate holder is deceased, to their spouse or child receiving the plate holder license. Currently, those fees are \$4,196 and \$312 respectively, both of which have not been increased in the last five years. There is a multi-step process to facilitate these types of transfers, with a variety of legal documents required, as well as their review and approval. The accessible plate holder to plate holder fee of \$4,196 covers the costs involved in the transfer, whereas the \$312 fee for a transfer of an accessible plate holder license upon the death of the licensee to a spouse or child does not cover the costs involved but is set at a nominal amount for compassionate reasons.

In recognition of the additional and higher costs associated with operating an accessible taxicab, staff are proposing that the accessible plate holder to plate holder transfer fee be reduced to \$312, to take effect upon Council approval to implement relief in relation to this fee and to incentivize transfers to allow new accessible plate holder licensees to enter the industry.

### **Issue: Accessible Vehicle Age increase to 12 years**

In 2016, the maximum vehicle age limit was increased from eight model years to ten years for standard and accessible taxicabs. The vehicle age requirements established a reasonable standard for a service vehicle and reflected the full-time usage of taxicabs, often with more than one driver working the vehicle, as part of the public transportation network. The Vehicle-for-Hire By-law has also traditionally required that replacement taxicab vehicles must be less than five model years old. However, the industry has changed significantly in recent years, and there are often vehicles with only one driver, with a lower mileage accumulation on the vehicles. As well, with the cost and availability of newer vehicles being a challenge, this report proposes to eliminate the requirement for the maximum five-model-year vehicle age upon entry into the fleet, applicable to both standard and accessible vehicles. Allowing older, pre-owned vehicles in good working condition to be used as taxicabs would provide increased flexibility for the taxi industry. The requirements for vehicle Safety Standard Certificates and annual inspections will remain in place.

Further, given the significant additional costs associated with obtaining and operating a fully wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicle and to encourage entry and re-entry into the business, staff is proposing an increase in the vehicle age limit for accessible vehicles from ten to twelve model years. Safety Standards Certificates and annual inspections would continue to be required. The proposed twelve-year vehicle age limit would also apply to fully electric and hybrid vehicles, including standard taxicabs, as an incentive in consideration of the City's climate change strategies.

### **Issue: Reduction or elimination of five-year non-transferability of accessible plate holder licenses to facilitate transfer between plate holders relinquishing plates and new ones coming on-line**

In accordance with the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law, standard taxicab plate holder licenses are fully transferrable, whereas accessible plate holder licenses must be maintained by the holder for a minimum of five years from the date of issuance to ensure that licensees who have made the investment to provide accessible service continue to do so and so that there is some stability in the operation and availability of accessible vehicles. The relinquishment to the Chief License Inspector of some accessible plate holder licenses, particularly during the pandemic, were reportedly due to the high costs of maintaining such a vehicle and the reduction in demand for service during COVID-19. With the pandemic largely under control and service demand on the increase, as well as

the incentives being recommended in this report, staff is proposing that the five-year non-transferability requirement of accessible plate holder licenses remain in place.

**Issue: Reconsideration of the minimum service requirement set out in the current Vehicle-for-Hire By-law that requires accessible drivers to be on the road ten hours a day, five days a week**

In 2007, Council approved amendments to the original Taxi By-law (No. 2005-481) to improve on-demand accessible taxicab service and to address certain administrative matters related to all taxicabs. Included in these amendments was the requirement for accessible drivers to be on the road ten hours a day, five days a week and that a minimum number of accessible cabs based on fleet size remained in service at all times. This requirement has remained in place since that time.

During the consultation process with the industry, staff learned that there has been a misinterpretation that the ten hours on the road must be consecutive. This is not the case and has been clarified with the industry. The current Vehicle-for-Hire By-law does not specify that accessible drivers must be on the road for ten hours consecutively, but rather, must be on the road for a total of ten hours a day. This means that accessible drivers may choose to distribute those hours at different times of day, such as during peak hours.

Therefore, staff propose maintaining the current minimum service requirement.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All financial implications are as reflected in this report. The expenditures associated with the incentive program in the three-year pilot will be funded by the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

For the reasons set out in this section, there are no legal impediments to implementing the recommendations of this report.

The recommendations seek to establish a pilot-project for establishing a centralized dispatch system for on-demand accessible taxicabs, along with incentives to wheelchair accessible taxicab plate holders/vehicle owners and to licensed accessible taxi drivers to make progress toward meeting the need for on-demand wheelchair accessible taxicabs. This is a requirement of the Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The regulations further

stipulate that persons with disabilities cannot be charged a higher fare or an additional fee for using a licensed taxicab than for persons without disabilities for the same trip, or from being charged a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices. The report demonstrates that there are currently higher costs associated with providing wheelchair accessible taxicab service than standard taxicab operations. These differential costs cannot be borne by the end user. The pilot project seeks to offset some of these costs through funds from the Accessibility Fund derived from per-trip accessibility surcharges contributed by licensed private transportation companies.

Consideration is given to Section 106 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* which prohibits a municipality from assisting directly or indirectly any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses for that purpose. Section 106 (the anti-bonusing provision) seeks to prevent a municipality from giving an unfair advantage to one manufacturing/industrial/commercial enterprise over its business competitors, or to entice such enterprises to the municipality over another municipality. The courts have recognized that municipal initiatives and contractual arrangements typically confer an advantage or benefit of some kind and should be permitted where the municipality receives a corresponding benefit. The courts are more likely to intervene where there is no corresponding benefit to the municipality and where the arrangement provides an unmerited windfall to an enterprise. Furthermore, when assessing compliance with this section, the courts will focus on the whole context of the initiative rather than any specific component.

The objective of the recommendations is to improve the availability of on-demand accessible wheelchair taxicabs for persons with disabilities. In accordance with the AODA, consultations with the Accessibility Advisory Committee have occurred to assist persons in need of on-demand accessible wheelchair taxicabs. In this context, the incentivization components seek to further a valid municipal purpose relating to improving accessible transportation along with progressing the purposes of the AODA. The pilot project is designed to increase on-demand wheelchair accessible service and will apply to all wheelchair accessible taxicabs and licensed accessible taxicab drivers, and to all wheelchair accessible fares, subject to eligibility criteria.

Both Toronto and Hamilton have implemented programs to increase on-demand wheelchair accessible taxicab services in their respective municipalities. Legal Services is not aware of any court challenges to these types of accessibility programs.

## **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)**

There are no specific Ward Councillor comments associated with this report as the recommendations apply city-wide.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS**

The consultant discussed his research and identified options with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee of the last Term of Council. The Committee was provided an overview of the consultant's findings, including information on the programs of other municipalities, and were asked to respond to a questionnaire. The details of the consultant's process and the Committee's response are outlined in Document 1.

Staff subsequently discussed the consultant's recommendations with the new Committee which agrees that on-demand accessible taxicab service is a significant issue that must be addressed. The Committee supports the proposed incentives to recognize the higher costs of accessible vehicles and the efforts of accessible taxicab drivers and supports the centralized dispatch model.

The proposals put forward in this report have considered the Committee's input on the consultant's recommendations.

## **CONSULTATION**

In addition to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the consultant also discussed his research and identified options with the taxi union, taxi brokers and accessibility advocates, including accessible taxi plate holders and on-demand taxi users that had previously corresponded with City elected officials and staff. The details of the consultant's process are outlined in Document 1. These stakeholders were provided an overview of the consultant's findings, including information on the programs of other municipalities, and were asked to respond to a questionnaire. Comments received from the respondents are detailed in the consultant's report, along with his overall recommendations which reflect a balanced cross-section of those comments.

Staff subsequently discussed the consultant's recommendations to the identified stakeholders who were supportive. The proposals put forward in this report are based on the consultant's recommendations, with some minor modifications that reflect the Ottawa market, and have considered stakeholder input.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

By-law and Regulatory Services serves the needs of our diverse and growing community and follows the City's accessibility legislative framework. This includes adherence to the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, 191/11*, meeting the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Policy to the greatest extent possible.

By-law and Regulatory Services, and the City of Ottawa generally, continue to receive accessibility complaints, both through 3-1-1 and other direct channels, about significant challenges to accessibility including, but not limited to, a lack of available accessible on-demand taxis in the city. The issues and feedback are investigated, tracked, and responded to in a timely manner with consideration and mitigation taken using a disability and equity lens. It is however noted that accessible taxicab service levels have declined at a significant rate which has profoundly impacted the ability of residents and visitors with disabilities to move about their day.

Through this report, By-law and Regulatory Services is putting forward the results of the On-Demand Accessible Taxi Service Study and recommendations associated with that study to address concerns raised about the quality, availability, and costs of accessible taxicab service.

In particular, the recommendations are designed to create more viable and equitable service for persons with disabilities by incentivizing accessible taxicab plate holders to invest in accessible vehicles. The recommendation for a centralized dispatch will ensure accessible vehicles are responsive and accessible passengers are prioritized.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report is recommending the continuation of provision of funds to not-for-profit and community agencies to expand accessible transportation services in the rural areas.

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The recommendations of this report align with the 2019-2022 Term of Council Priorities of Integrated Transportation: residents have easy access to their preferred

transportation choice; and Thriving Communities: safety, culture, social and physical well-being for our residents.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1: Final consultant's report – Study of On-Demand Accessible Taxicab Services in the City of Ottawa

## **DISPOSITION**

The Emergency and Protective Services Department will implement any direction arising from consideration of this information report, in consultation with other departments, as appropriate, and will prepare amending by-laws for enactment by Council.