

Address Taxi Industry Proposals for Flex-Service and Sask Plates

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the Administration be directed to amend The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to incorporate Flex-Service based on the content and analysis in this report.

Topic and Purpose

This report is to provide additional information about Flex-Service (see Appendix A and B) and Sask Plates (see Appendix C and D) as proposed by the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association and United Steelworkers respectively. This report is also recommending the adoption of Flex-Service.

Report Highlights

1. The Administration has engaged with the taxi industry over the past year regarding the impact Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) would have on the industry, with the taxi industry emphasizing the need to establish a level playing field.
2. One aspect of supporting a level playing field between the current taxi industry and TNCs is providing the taxi industry with more flexibility to provide service to meet demand during peak periods.
3. The Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association (STCA) and the United Steelworkers (USW) put forth proposals (Flex Service and Sask Plates) that they feel would improve the ability of the taxi industry to meet demand during peak period.
4. The Flex-Service proposal is designed to put additional vehicles in service during high demand periods, and is best suited to meet the demand. The Sask Plates proposal would add additional cabs that could operate at any time.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the long-term strategy of optimizing the flow of people and goods in and around the city under the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Moving Around.

Background

At its December 18, 2017 meeting, City Council considered a report from the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (Committee) regarding taxi service proposals and resolved:

- "2. That the Administration be directed to report back concerning:
 - a. Amending The Taxi Bylaw to allow the implementation of part-time Flex Service licenses, issued to qualified drivers, to meet demand in peak periods;

- b. Amending the Taxi Bylaw to allow for the replacement of seasonal licenses with full-time plates, issued to qualified drivers, reflecting the Sask Plates proposal;”

Report

Engagement with the taxi industry regarding the potential impact of TNCs operating in Saskatoon occurred throughout 2017. The consensus within the taxi industry is that they are not concerned about competing with TNCs, provided a level playing field can be established through regulation. One aspect of supporting a level playing field between the current taxi industry and TNCs is in giving consideration to providing the taxi industry with the flexibility to provide service to meet demand during peak periods. Currently, the taxi industry is restricted in how many licences are issued; at times of high demand, they are not able to provide additional taxis due to these license restrictions. According to the taxi industry, issuance of seasonal plates, which provides for 24 additional cabs to be put in service during the winter months, does not adequately address this peak period demand.

The STCA and USW put forth proposals seeking to improve service availability (Flex-Service and Sask Plates), which were discussed at Committee on December 5, 2017, and at City Council on December 18, 2017. The Administration has had the opportunity to further engage with the STCA and USW regarding their Flex-Service proposal and Sask Plate proposal and clarify some of the details of the proposed programs. The organizations are not interested in putting forth a joint proposal.

Flex-Service Proposal

The Flex-Service proposal, as outlined by the STCA, would allow taxi brokerages to increase the number of vehicles operating under their brokerage during peak or high demand times. It would do so by allowing brokerages to put additional vehicles into service on an “as needed” basis during high demand periods. In addition, there would be no “surge pricing” as the current taxi fares would apply to Flex-Service.

Flex-Service vehicles would be in addition to the current taxi licences issued by the City, and in lieu of the current seasonal licence program.

In view of the foregoing, the Administration is proposing the follow regulations in order to implement Flex-Service:

1. **Brokerages and Drivers** – Brokerages and drivers wishing to offer Flex-Service or operate Flex-Service vehicles would be required to obtain a taxi brokerage or taxi driver’s licence, as per the licensing requirements set out in Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014 (The Taxi Bylaw).
2. **Flex-Service Licence** – Drivers wishing to operate a Flex-Service vehicle would require a Flex-Service licence. Flex-Service licences would be issued directly to individuals, as per the licensing requirements set out in The Taxi Bylaw.

3. **Vehicle Requirements** – Drivers operating vehicles under a Flex-Service license would not be required to comply with all the vehicle requirements outlined in the Taxi Bylaw. Instead they would operate similar to the proposed TNCs regulations (i.e. operate a private vehicle equipped with a dispatch application (app), tablet, and removable car decal/signage provided by the brokerage). All Flex-Service vehicles would need to be inspected annually and have a valid light vehicle inspection.
4. **Dispatching Flex-Service Vehicles** – Brokerages would engage Flex-Service when the average wait time for a taxi exceeds ten minutes and would disengage Flex-Service when the average wait time drops below ten minutes. The Brokerages would provide the City with monthly data to ensure compliance.
5. **Fares** –The current taxi fares would apply to Flex-Service; however, customers would be provided a trip price when they order a Flex-Service vehicle through the app.
6. **Vehicle Insurance** – Vehicles driven under the flex service program would be required to be appropriately licensed, the specifics of which are still being developed at a provincial level. Saskatchewan Government Insurance has stated it would work with the taxi industry to develop an insurance scheme for Flex Service; however, until this is achieved, Flex-Service would likely be unable to operate.

Sask Plates Proposal

The USW proposes issuing an additional 50 taxi licences directly to current taxi drivers through a lottery process, in lieu of the current seasonal plates program. These licensees would operate under the existing Taxi Bylaw except they would also be required to operate full time (minimum 40 hours a week), which could include high demand times. Additionally, the licences would not be transferable (i.e. could not be bought, sold, leased, or rented).

While the USW proposal will certainly create additional in-service taxi cabs, there are concerns regarding the proposal, which include:

1. The Sask Plates proposal is comparable to the Ambassador Plate that existed in the City of Toronto, which created a two-tier licensing structure and significant inequalities between individuals that held standard taxi licences and those that held Ambassador Plates. Toronto phased out the Ambassador Plate in 2016.
2. Additional taxi drivers would be competing for fares during non-peak hours on a year-round basis, and this proposal will not necessarily ensure that these taxis would be available during peak periods.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

The Administration held engagement sessions with the taxi industry in early 2017. In September and October 2017, engagement with a broader stakeholder group took place, which also included organizations with an interest in transportation services.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no options, policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations; a communication plan is not required at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

An additional report will be brought forward to amend the Taxi Bylaw.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Appendices

- A. The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet – October 2017
- B. The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet – February 2018
- C. Sask Plates - Improve Taxi Industry – October 2017
- D. USW Analysis of TNC Recommendations – January 2018

Report Approval

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Reviewed by: Jo-Anne Richter, Acting Director of Community Standards
Approved by: Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department

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The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet - October 2017



The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet
A "Made in Saskatoon" Transportation Solution

Prepared by the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association
October 2017

The STCA has shared this proposal with a number of government, industry and public stakeholders; it will continue to evolve as more information and points of view are received.

Policy Challenge

There is growing public concern over the shortage of taxi cabs providing service in Saskatoon during “surge” times or periods of peak demand. These surge times routinely occur in downtown Saskatoon on weekends when licensed establishments close, but can also occur during special events such as concerts and sporting activities as well as during weather events.

Today, this issue is not only a matter of considerable public inconvenience; it is a matter of public safety, as taxi patrons look for alternative ways to find a way home. It would be naive not to believe that some people who should not be, are in fact driving home simply because a taxi is not readily available.

The Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association (STCA) acknowledges there are time periods, special events and holidays when there are too few taxis to meet peak demand; at the same time the STCA hopes others acknowledge there are low demand periods when taxis sit idle for an hour or more without a trip.

As a result, the STCA seeks the assistance of both the local and provincial government to help resolve this issue in a safe, sustainable manner while supporting local employment and business investment.

This could be accomplished through the introduction of a “Flex-Service” of taxis which would allow the taxi industry to meet the peak demand for taxis. This could be accomplished without congesting the streets with excess Transportation Network Company (TNC) vehicles during periods of low demand, as is now the case in jurisdictions like Toronto, San Francisco, Seattle and New York. This would also ensure that all current driver and vehicle safety standards remain in place.

Overview of Current Policy

Taxi plates in Saskatoon have been bought and sold through City Hall since they were first issued. A person cannot buy or sell a taxi plate without registering the sale at City Hall. Currently Saskatoon has 210 taxis; however, this number has remained unchanged since 1989, even as Saskatoon’s population has grown by over 40 percent. And while 24 seasonal taxi plates have been added, these do not address the public need at peak times, are underutilized in the shoulder seasons, and often sit idle during periods of low-demand. In addition, 21 wheelchair accessible taxis have been added, but they too, can’t meet the demand during surge times.

Overview of Proposed New Flex Service

The establishment of the “Flex Service” would be overseen by a committee, comprised of community representatives and stakeholders within the taxi industry, who would establish the guidelines for its operation. The oversight committee would determine such questions as when the Flex-Service would be deployed and how many taxis would be required to meet public demand.

Flex-Service vehicles would meet all the same standards as taxis do under the City Taxi Bylaw including age of car, safety inspections, etc. Each eco-friendly or low-emission vehicle would utilize an installed dispatch tablet and carry a top sign when in service, plus car numbering and signage (magnetic door signs & windshield signs could be used). Unlike TNCs, there would be no surge pricing; regular taxi rates would apply.

Flex-Service drivers would be licensed and trained to the same standard as regular taxi drivers with full City bylaws, safety and World Host training. Flex-Service drivers would be licensed as regular taxi drivers (record checks included) and could use their own vehicle. A new driver who completed the training would register themselves with a brokerage as a fully trained and licensed driver. To provide the public with greater security, a Flex-Service driver would be required to display a Taxi Driver ID in the car at all times.

Broker / dispatch would engage 1.5 to 2 times as many Flex-Service taxis as they envision they would need for peak demand times. Vehicles and drivers could be put in service as needed. This could be done in advance by predicting service needs from looking at data, community events, prior year’s history or even specific holidays, and also by dispatch when unforeseen peak periods arise. The Flex-Service taxis would be dispatched through the computerized dispatch system just like regular taxis. The Flex-Service cars would receive an alert on their phones or tablets indicating the dates / times / zones they would be able to log in and work for. Nearly all Saskatoon taxis already have this infrastructure in place and would benefit from having an adequate number of cars to service the public when the demand is there, but not having an untold number of extra cars cruising around looking for business when not required. Traffic congestion and emissions would be controlled and minimized.

Customers would be encouraged to use the broker / dispatch apps to order a Flex-Service ride (with a text feature available by fall 2017). This would provide customers with a guaranteed trip price, as well as efficiently match cars to the nearest customers and circumvent the need to call or be placed on hold during peak times. This is identical to any TNC. They would enjoy the safety of having a fully trained and vetted driver, and a safety inspected car, fully regulated by the City of Saskatoon.

Regulatory Changes Required

The City Taxi Bylaw would be amended in order to allow an agreed to number of Flex-Service cars to be added based on supply and demand. These cars would have the exact same reporting requirements to the City as regular taxis do. All regulations are already in place, there would be no need to spend time and money to come up with a new set of regulations.

SGI would provide insurance for Flex-Service taxis based on the time they operate, as tracked and monitored by the broker/dispatch through the dispatch tablet. This insurance product is currently offered to the taxi industry in Edmonton. This would allow SGI to maintain all existing regulations and standards. Similar liability insurance would be provided to the flex-service fleet via the broker, just as they currently provide coverage to the permanent fleet.

In suggesting a solution to this serious and growing public transportation issue, the STCA has chosen to embrace a simple “supply and demand” philosophy. Most businesses and industries operate this way. The taxi industry is simply asking that it be offered the same opportunity to address its shortfalls as any other business would.

A Flex-Service can meet all current regulatory and safety standards regulations without risking hundreds of local jobs and millions in local business investment.

A Flex-Service would offer the ability to add and subtract vehicles based on controlled supply and demand utilizing data that can be shared and verified with all government agencies.

A Flex-Service can be achieved without flooding the market with excessive traffic and added emissions as now witnessed in other jurisdictions.

As local entrepreneurs in the transportation industry that have been serving the citizens of Saskatchewan for in excess of 45 years, all STCA members are asking is the opportunity to continue to provide that service while working with all levels of government to address issues of public concern.

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A Flex-Service Taxi Fleet – Logistics and Licenses

How will the operation of the Flex-Service fleet be regulated?

The City of Saskatoon would regulate the number of Flex-Service licenses. The STCA envisions these licenses being open to all; however, successful lottery winners would need to comply with all current regulations required of regular taxis. These include a Class 4 license, a clean driver's abstract, commercial insurance, \$1m in liability insurance, a criminal background check, a vehicle safety inspection and an in-car camera. The STCA is also advocating any new taxi-driver be required to take a certified training course. Each successful new applicant would be required to be affiliated with a taxi brokerage in order to receive rides via dispatch.

How will the number of Flex-Service licenses be determined?

The STCA has access to historic taxi dispatch data for the past several years. This means the STCA can accurately forecast which times, dates, holidays and events will require extra taxis. This information includes the supply of taxis in any given hour along with the public demand, including trips with a passenger on board, no shows, cancellations, vehicle usage levels and response times.

The STCA plans to share this information with a broad community advisory board assembled by the City in order to ensure wide consultation on the operation of the Flex-Service. The STCA has discovered a similar model is being utilized in Vancouver and it is likely that much can be learned from the Vancouver experience. The goal is, for the first time, to have both historic and real-time data help determine the number of taxis on the road at any given time. The STCA believes this method will prove to be more responsive to public demand and preferable to the current model, that utilizes the ratio of taxis to population method to determine the size of the taxi fleet – clearly the current method, unlike the Flex-Service proposed can't account for peak times such as a Garth Brooks concert or even the surge caused by the regular bar closures.

What would the Flex-Service licenses cost?

The STCA is recommending that all regulatory, license and insurance fees be prorated based on the full cost of a taxi license. This can be easily monitored through the tablet software.

Are the Flex-Service licenses transferable?

The STCA is recommending the Flex-Service license not be transferable

Who would own the vehicles used in this fleet?

The vehicles could be made available by the brokerage or the driver. It may be advantageous for the brokerage to provide them initially in order to get the fleet up and running quickly. It may also be easier for the brokerages to supply low-emission or electric vehicles as the STCA believe it is important to provide the public with a low-emission option.

How would these Flex-Service vehicles be identified?

Flex-Service vehicles would be identified with top signs during work hours only along with windshield & rear window illuminated signs, front and rear fender magnetic signs. We envision they would carry special plates and an easily recognizable rear window decal from the City (same as current taxis), as well as an SGI sticker for the plate (PV-T).

When would the Flex-Service Fleet be operational?

The flex service will be activated or de-activated by the dispatch software, based on historic and real-time volumes. Like Vancouver, STCA will examine this data and develop formulas that could be used to determine the time and duration of a Flex-Service call-out. In Vancouver, the service is operational during most Thursday/Friday and Saturday nights, but hours of operation will be unique to Saskatoon and agreed to by the consultation committee that will include representatives from the taxi industry and the stakeholders from the larger community.

How will the dispatch services connect with Flex-Service fleets?

The Flex-Service Fleet will be booked through app/text/web booking. Now that both the largest Saskatoon brokerages have recently moved to app and text-based dispatch, this will undoubtedly be a growing method to hail a taxi, particularly from younger patrons.

How long will the taxi driver training be?

The training program would be one week in duration.

How and when should the Flex-Service commence?

Ideally the Flex-Service should begin by Christmas 2017. Saskatoon could maintain the seasonal plates this year before moving exclusively to the flex service next year.

How does STCA envision insurance coverage working on its proposed Flex-Service taxi fleet?

All taxis currently book on and off an electronic dispatch system in order to receive bookings. This same method would be utilized for the Flex-Service fleet, which could easily and effectively track hours of operation over any period of time (day/month/year). STCA believes that insurance could be offered on a pro-rated basis at the same annual rate as a regular taxi. STCA envisions its members paying in advance for insurance, and employing a system of credits or debits at the end of the year to settle an account.

How can SGI be confident that the information received from the taxi brokerages regarding the operation of a Flex-Service taxi is accurate?

STCA is prepared to brief SGI officials on the electronic dispatch system and to allow SGI the opportunity to conduct any reasonable audit of the information gathered in order to ensure compliance.

The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet - February 2018



The Need for a Flex-Service Taxi Fleet A “Made in Saskatoon” Transportation Solution

**Prepared by the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association
February 2018**

For the past several months the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association (STCA) has been meeting with provincial and municipal government leaders, officials and industry stakeholders to advocate for the idea of a Flex-Service: a fleet of part time *Vehicles for Hire* which would augment Saskatoon’s current taxi fleet during periods of peak demand. This idea has gained considerable support, and in response, the STCA has now committed to provide more details to all interested parties as to how a Saskatoon Flex-Service could work to the benefit of our community.

Policy Challenges

Shortage of rides

There is growing public concern over the shortage of taxi cabs providing service in Saskatoon during “surge” times or periods of peak demand. These surge times routinely occur in downtown Saskatoon on weekends when licensed establishments close but can also occur during special events such as concerts and sporting activities, weather events and morning/afternoon workday rush hours.

Today, this issue is not only a matter of considerable public inconvenience; it is a matter of public safety, as taxi patrons look for alternative ways to find a way home. It would be naive not to believe that some people who should not be, are in fact driving home simply because a taxi is not readily available.

The STCA acknowledges there are time periods, special events and holidays when there are too few taxis to meet peak demand; at the same time the STCA hopes others acknowledge there are low demand periods when taxis sit idle for an hour or more without a trip.

As a result, the STCA seeks the assistance of both the provincial and municipal government to help resolve this issue in a safe, sustainable manner while supporting local employment and local business investment.

This could be accomplished through the introduction of a Flex-Service which would allow the taxi industry to meet peak demands for taxis. This could be accomplished without congesting the streets with excess Transportation Network Company (TNC) vehicles during periods of low demand, as is now the case in jurisdictions like Toronto, San Francisco, Seattle and New York. This would also ensure that all current driver and vehicle safety standards, developed over years of consultation, remain in place.

Defining a vehicle for hire

The STCA has found that many jurisdictions including Alberta have determined TNCs like Uber are no different than a taxi or limousine. A taxi meter is the same thing as a TNC app: both calculate fares based on a drop rate, time and distance. To believe a TNC offers “ride sharing” one would have to believe that every TNC driver just happened to be on their way downtown or to the airport when they received an app request to pick up a customer headed to the same destination. We propose that the city define or refer to a TNC as a “ride-hailing” company, a “vehicle for hire” or a “taxi.” There is no real difference between a taxi, limousine or TNC, in terms of the service it provides or the safety the public should expect. And there should be no real difference in the regulatory environment in which they operate.

Overview of Current Policy

Taxi licensees – or plates - in Saskatoon have been bought and sold privately since they were first issued. A person cannot buy or sell a taxi plate without registering the sale at City Hall.

Currently Saskatoon has 165 permanent taxi plates; however, this number has remained unchanged since 1989. 21 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licenses were added in 2014 (expiring December, 2018) and 24 temporary seasonal taxi licenses were added in 2015 (expiring June 30, 2018). The addition of the wheelchair accessible licenses and the seasonal taxis brought the total number of taxis to 210.

During this time, Saskatoon’s population has grown by over 40 percent. And while 24 seasonal taxi plates have been added, these do not address the public need at peak times, are underutilized in the shoulder seasons, and often sit idle during periods of low-demand. In addition, 21 wheelchair accessible taxis have been added, but they too, cannot meet the public demand during surge times.

Overview of Proposed New Flex-Service

The development of a Flex-Service would greatly benefit from the establishment of an advisory committee comprised of community representatives and taxi industry stakeholders, who could help establish guidelines for its operation. This advisory committee would review on a quarterly basis how Flex-Service is meeting public demand. This would be done through a review of data

from Flex-Service vehicles to ensure concerns or issues are being addressed. The sharing of relevant data is an important element to the success of this initiative. STCA members would be pleased to continue to provide this information to the City, as currently required under city by-laws, but would expect those bylaws to apply equally to all *Vehicles for Hire*, including TNCs.

Flex Service Establishment and Operation

To ensure fairness and equity, the STCA believes that the opportunity to become a **Flex-Service driver** should be open to all and that a Flex-Service driver must be licensed and trained to the same standard as regular taxi drivers.

The STCA envisions a streamlined application process to become a Flex-Service driver; one that is both affordable and accessible but meets common sense requirements commensurate with public trust and responsibility placed in a Vehicle for Hire driver:

A prospective Flex-Service driver would be required to visit:

Step 1. **City Hall** for driver requirements:

- Make application to become Flex Service Driver (suggested fee: \$50.00)
- Provide proof of a valid Class 4 driver's license
- Pass Criminal Record Check, conducted by the Saskatoon Police Service (including vulnerable sector check)

Step 2. **SGI** for vehicle requirements (concurrent with Step 1):

- To purchase part-time, prorated *Vehicle for Hire* insurance
- Receive stamp of approval on current vehicle inspection by an SGI accredited mechanical service provider
- Demonstrate other safety measures as required by provincial legislation (i.e. in-car camera)

Step 3. **City Hall** for driver requirements (following step 1 and 2):

- Provide proof of a provincial business registration, GST number, and an annual city business license attached to each Vehicle for Hire (some of these costs may be shared between drivers)
- Provide proof of any other vehicle requirements established by the city (i.e. age of vehicle, low emission vehicle)
- Provide proof of completion of World Host and sensitivity training
- Receive annual Vehicle for Hire Window decal (suggested fee: \$50.00)
- Receive Vehicle for Hire Photo identification

Once a driver and vehicle are approved they may, but would not be required, to apply for affiliation with any brokerage (as per current Saskatoon bylaw, if a taxi driver is using electronic means including mobile app, text message, internet web page, cell phone, or email communication to dispatch his/her taxi, he/she shall also require a taxi broker's license.) The brokerages would retain the right, as in any other business, to select drivers as per their own established criteria.

Step 4. At Brokerage for both driver and vehicle requirements (concurrent and conditional on Step 1-3):

- Apply for affiliation
- Proof of acceptable driving abstract
- May be required to receive further driver and customer relations training
- Receive dispatch app and tablet
- Receive brokerage car removable car decal and signage
- Receive personal "panic pendant" for driver's personal security in and out of vehicle

A **Brokerage** would engage enough Flex-Service vehicles as required to meet the supply needs during peak demand times. Vehicles and drivers would be put in service as needed based on an average wait time of ten minutes. The need for Flex Service vehicles could be anticipated in advance with consideration to community events, prior year's history or even specific holidays. But Flex-Service vehicles could also be quickly dispatched when unforeseen peak periods arise using real time dispatch data. Flex-Service drivers would receive an alert on their phones or tablets indicating the dates / times / zones they would be able to log in and work for. Friday / Saturday evenings and bar closing times would also be a regular focus.

Customers would be encouraged to use the broker / dispatch apps to order a ride (with a text feature now available). This would provide customers with a guaranteed trip price (no surge pricing), as well as efficiently match cars to the nearest customers and circumvent the need to call or be placed on hold during peak times. This is *identical* to any TNC. They would enjoy the safety of having a fully trained and vetted driver, and a safety inspected car, fully regulated by the City of Saskatoon.

The **City Taxi Bylaw** would require few changes as these Flex-Service vehicles would have the same reporting requirements to the City as regular taxis do. The STCA recommends the city not renew the expiring seasonal plate program as it believes the Flex-Service model will better meet the needs of customers.

SGI would provide insurance for Flex-Service taxis based on the days they operate, as tracked and monitored by the broker/dispatch through the dispatch tablet. This insurance product is currently offered to the taxi industry in Edmonton. This would allow SGI to maintain all existing regulations and standards. Similar liability insurance would be provided to the Flex-Service fleet

via the dispatch broker or a third-party insurance broker, just as they currently provide coverage to the permanent taxi fleets.

In suggesting a solution to this serious and growing public transportation issue, the STCA has chosen to embrace a simple “*supply and demand*” philosophy. Most businesses and industries operate this way. The taxi industry is simply asking that it be offered the same opportunity to address its shortfalls as any other business would.

A Flex-Service can meet all current regulatory and safety standards regulations without risking hundreds of local jobs and millions in local business investment.

A Flex-Service would allow a broker / dispatch to add and subtract vehicles based on *controlled* supply and demand utilizing data that can be shared and verified with all government agencies.

A Flex-Service can be achieved without flooding the market with excessive traffic and added emissions as now witnessed in other jurisdictions.

As local entrepreneurs in the transportation industry that have been serving the citizens of Saskatchewan for in excess of 45 years, all STCA members are asking is the opportunity to continue to provide that service while working with all levels of government to address issues of public concern.

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A Flex-Service Taxi Fleet – Logistics and Licenses

How will the operation of the Flex-Service fleet be regulated?

The STCA envisions these licenses be open to all; however, successful applicants would need to comply with all current regulations required of regular taxis. These include a Class 4 license, a commercial insurance, \$1m in liability insurance, a criminal background check and vulnerable sector check, a vehicle safety inspection and an in-car camera.

How will the number of Flex-Service licenses be determined?

The STCA has access to historic taxi dispatch data for the past several years. This means the STCA can accurately forecast which times, dates, holidays and events will require extra taxis. This information includes the supply of taxis in any given hour along with the public demand, including trips with a passenger on board, no shows, cancellations, vehicle usage levels and response times. The objective will be to have enough vehicles at any given time to respond within no more than an average ten-minute wait time.

The STCA plans to share this information with a broad community advisory board assembled by the City in order to ensure the operation of the Flex-Service is meeting its objective of delivering good service and providing rides to customers when and where needed. The STCA has discovered a similar model is being utilized in Vancouver and it is likely that much can be learned from the Vancouver experience. The goal is, for the first time, to have both historic and real-time data help determine the number of taxis on the road at any given time.

The STCA believes this method will prove to be more responsive to public demand and preferable to the current model that utilizes the ratio of taxis to population method to determine the size of the taxi fleet. The current method – the outdated city population to taxi number ratio - unlike the Flex-Service proposed cannot account for peak times such as a Garth Brooks concert or even the surge caused by regular bar closures or rush hour traffic patterns.

What would the Flex-Service licenses cost?

The STCA is recommending that all regulatory, license and insurance fees be prorated based on the full cost of a taxi license. This can be easily monitored through the tablet software.

Are the Flex-Service licenses transferable?

The STCA is recommending the Flex-Service license not be transferable.

Who would own the vehicles used in this fleet?

The vehicles could be made available by the brokerage or the driver. It may be advantageous for the brokerage to provide them initially in order to get the fleet up and running quickly. It

may also be easier for the brokerages to supply low-emission or electric vehicles as the STCA believes it is important to provide the public with a low-emission option. Ideally, the vehicles would be owned by operators much like taxis are currently.

How would these Flex-Service vehicles be identified?

Flex-Service vehicles would be identified with top signs during work hours only along with windshield & rear window signs, left and right-side vehicle branding clearly displayed. They would have easily recognizable rear window decals from the City (the same as current taxis), as well as an SGI *Vehicle for Hire* sticker.

When would the Flex-Service Fleet be operational?

The flex service would be activated or de-activated by the brokerages based on historic and real-time volumes. Like Vancouver, STCA will examine this data and develop formulas that could be used to determine the time and duration of a Flex-Service call-out. In Vancouver, the service is operational during most Thursday/Friday and Saturday nights, but hours of operation will be unique to Saskatoon and agreed to by the advisory committee that will include representatives from the taxi industry and the stakeholders from the larger community.

The STCA will share its data with the city, as it has always done, but only if other vehicles for hire are required to do the same. Data sharing is a responsible transportation practice and will serve to improve transit operations in our city.

How will the dispatch services connect with Flex-Service fleets?

The Flex-Service Fleet would have tablets with dispatch software installed and operational. They would receive messages alerting them to peak times, log in, ensure branding & top signs are displayed and begin accepting trips. Following the “closest car concept” already in the current bylaws this process will allow dispatch providers and drivers to meet supply and demand in a more efficient manner.

How long will the taxi driver training be?

The training program would be one week in duration. This includes two-day World Host by Tourism Saskatoon, as well as in car training, system software, basic operations and etiquette.

How does STCA envision insurance coverage working on its proposed Flex-Service taxi fleet?

All taxis currently book on and off an electronic dispatch system in order to receive bookings. This same method would be utilized for the Flex-Service fleet, which could easily and effectively track hours of operation over any period of time (day/month/year). STCA believes that insurance could be offered on a pro-rated basis at the same annual rate as a regular taxi. STCA

envisions its members paying in advance for insurance and employing a system of credits or debits at the end of the year to settle an account.

How can SGI be confident that the information received from the taxi brokerages regarding the operation of a Flex-Service taxi is accurate?

STCA is prepared to brief SGI officials on the electronic dispatch system and to allow SGI the opportunity to conduct any reasonable audit of the information gathered in order to ensure compliance.

Will a Flex-Service be accessible?

Accessible transit will be difficult to address through either Flex-Service or TNC plates as they are most likely to be casual/part time drivers utilizing their personal vehicles. One way to address the needs of accessible transit for all vehicles for hire would be to make all seasonal plates and the proposed Sask Plates all accessible.

There are currently 24 seasonal plates that will no longer be available as of June 30, 2018. Administration should analyze the current state of supply and demand as it pertains to accessible trips and forecast forward. Findings would likely see a need for all 24 of these to be re-issued as accessible permits. A discount on a business license could be offered as an incentive. SGI could also offer a discount on insurance to full-time drivers who want to provide accessible service.



Sask Plates

How we can work together to improve the taxi industry for workers and our community

Why does our city need this change?

There has been a public outcry of the lack of taxi services and because the industry is controlled by a few key players they are using their lobbying and business power to remain in control. We want the taxi licensing process to be more transparent and give the opportunity for drivers to enter the market without crushing debt or monthly fees from the current 160 Permanent Taxi plate owners

- Our city needs more taxis on the road to meet demand
- The current 160 Permanent Taxi plates issued are paralyzing the industry since any new permanent plates issued are immediately sold or rented for massive profits. This means the City is creating wealth for businesses that obtain these plates for free from the City.
- The current 24 Seasonal Plates only operate Sept 1 – June 30 each year
- The Current Wheel Chair Accessible plates must give first priority to customers with wheelchair needs
- The city needs to maintain involvement in the industry to be able to uphold the highest levels of public safety and demand.

Who is this going to impact?

Changes will impact each driver and dispatch company currently operating in the city. Changing to Sask Plates is a complete overhaul of the taxi industry in Saskatoon and hopefully the Province.

- All dispatch companies and current drivers will benefit
- More taxis will be available for the public
- Restaurant owners will benefit from having more taxis available for their patrons
- More taxis will help to address high rates of drinking and driving
- The City will be free to increase or reduce plates based on solid data without hearsay.



What is a Sask Plate?

Sask plates are a new type of taxi license that will be issued by the City of Saskatoon with the intention of replacing all current taxi licenses in the city. These plates will be issued directly to drivers and transfers will not be possible, meaning that no sale, leasing or renting of taxi licenses is possible.

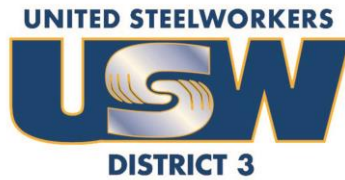
- Sask plates have no value to be bought and sold
- Taxi licensees will no longer be leased or rented to drivers causing inflated costs which impact meter rate increase decisions.
- Taxi drivers will be free to choose the dispatch service which best meets their needs
- City will have control over the number of plates released and/or recalled each year.
- The city will have the ability to look at demand for additional plates due to increased special events (e.g. sporting events, convention weeks, concerts).
- The city will eliminate the current situation where very few people control the taxi industry, leaving it up to the city to make changes in the best interest of safety



When should this change be implemented?

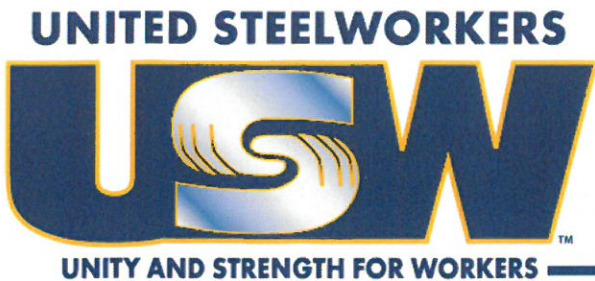
We believe that this change should be implemented on a gradual basis, in order to mitigate the losses of some of the current taxi plate owners. We should work with all stakeholders to develop a plan, and implementation timeline.

- Collaboration with stakeholders to create an implementation plan that will try to mitigate losses for current lease holders
- Make this process as transparent as possible



Discussion points and considerations:

- Lobby provincial government to change SGI to a province wide system for taxi services to help lower insurance rates by drawing in more taxis into one pool. This will set the standard for insurance requirements before TNC's (Uber) can get in at a lower rural rate or new fixed rate. This will level the playing field with fairness for current drivers against possible TNC's.
- Lobby Province to adopt "Sask Plate" model for whole province. Level playing field by insuring all fees and laws are same for Taxis and TNC's including city by-laws on costs (e.g.: meter rates, cameras, training, etc.).
- Use current peak time data from dispatch companies to help define how many new Sask Plates will be required. (Possibly 40-50 more taxi on the road at peak times)
- Sask Plates to be issued via a lottery to Drivers.
- If a current Seasonal Plate owner wins a lottery draw for a Sask Plate then they must return the Seasonal Plate before they are issued the Sask Plate.
- Current Seasonal Plate owners who do not win a Sask Plate will continue to operate the Seasonal Plate until the current term expires. Allows transition.
- Elimination of Seasonal plates going forward (10 months of 2 Drivers in 1 car each) to allow single Drivers in possibly twice as many or more current seasonal cars. This would mean more Taxis but not a flood of new drivers which would create increase service but not at the expense of bankrupting current Drivers.
- Driver applying for Sask Plates must commit to drive a 40 hours a week which include "Peak Time" hours. (Peak Time still needs to be defined, but will include examples such as pub/restaurant/bar closing times on weekends, convention, concerts and sporting events).
- Sask Plate owners can apply for leave of absence (with City) but only for vacation purposes and will not lose their plate. Duration and timeframes to be determined.
- Sask Plates are Owner/Operator only. Only the plate owner will be eligible to operate the vehicle (unless doing new driver training). Vehicle is available to operate 24/7/365 but only by the Sask Plate owner.
- Dispatch Companies cannot deny services to a new Sask Plate owner in effort to force a new lottery winner to be drawn.
- New Sask Plate owners will need to fill qualification requirements. (class 4, police check, driver training by dispatch company etc.)



USW Analysis of TNC recommendations

Draws backs of Flex-Fleet

1. Who will decide the peak time?

Drivers are concerned about the decision making process of peak times, and who will be responsible for enforcing peak time requirements. If dispatch companies are allowed to choose who will be allowed to drive at any given time there is an opportunity for unfair fare distribution.

2. Who will be responsible for the monitoring?

The city will be required to do so much monitoring, and as implementation start this process will need to be closely observed. There needs to be opportunities for all stakeholders to give feedback, and appeal decisions if they are not in the best interest of all stakeholders.

3. What about Insurance SGI?

There has yet to be a response about the how SGI will respond.

4. Who guarantee taxi will be available at peak time?

Although more taxi plates will be available, how will the city ensure that availability of taxis at peak times?

5. Full time drivers will be penalized.

Peak times are when full-time drivers currently make the most of their revenue. If the market is flooded with more drivers during these times, full-time drivers will not be guaranteed to get fares. There needs to be some consideration to dispatch fairness.

Sask Plates.

1. Economically beneficial to drivers and to the public

Drivers will be in control of their own taxi plate, meaning they will be relieved of crushing monthly lease fees, which in turn will allow them to generate more revenue. Allowing drivers to be free from these fees could possibly allow for savings to be passed on to the public. The drivers are willing to work with the city to identify opportunities to improve affordability for the public.

2. Guaranteed vehicle on road as well as cover peak time.

Sask plates guarantees that more vehicles will be on the road, and will allow drivers the autonomy to work more during peak time demand.

3. No Major changes in bylaw

Introduction of the Sask plate requires little changes to the bylaw.

4. We will lobbying for SGI rates but at same time driver will accept current SGI rate.

SGI can continue to offer the same insurance solutions to the taxi industry.

5. City already issues plates directly to drivers

The City has already issued winter plates directly to drivers, and this process has worked well for all stakeholders. The Sask plates would be distributed using the same process.

6. Easy to monitor for the City of Saskatoon.

The City will be able to monitor the success of the program through the data that they already collect. The City will also have the ability to make changes as needed based on the analysis of the data.

Fair Structure

Drivers are willing to work with all stakeholders. Drivers want to see lease rate reductions, dispatch fairness, and affordability for the public. Drivers also want to ensure that they support new technologies that will improve dispatch and customer service. The USW continues to be strongly committed to the safety of customer and drivers.