
Temporary Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Licences and Proposed Amendments to Bylaw No. 9070

Recommendation

That the City Solicitor be instructed to amend Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to:

- 1) extend 16 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences until January 17, 2019, and to include a new term from January 18, 2019, until September 2, 2020; and
- 2) clarify that the allocation of temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences be assigned proportionate to the number of permanent taxi licences in each brokerage's fleet as of December 31, 2018.

Topic and Purpose

This report outlines proposed amendments to Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to extend the term of 16 existing temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences set to expire on December 31, 2018. This report also partially addresses a resolution from City Council regarding information on the impact that Transportation Network Companies could have on the wheelchair accessible taxi industry.

Report Highlights

1. An extension of the term of 16 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences is required to ensure that service disruptions will not occur.
2. The incorporation of ridesharing is not anticipated to have a significant impact on accessible taxi services. The Administration will continue to monitor the impact and report further on provision of accessible services.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Moving Around by optimizing the flow of people and goods in and around the City.

Background

Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014 (Taxi Bylaw) permits 26 wheelchair accessible taxi licences to be issued by the City. Of these 26, 5 licences are permanent and owned by individuals or companies and 21 licences are temporary, owned by the City, and issued to taxi brokerages based on the size of their fleet. Of these 21 temporary licences, 5 were issued from September 3, 2015 until September 2, 2020; 16 were issued from January 1, 2014 until December 31, 2018.

At its December 18, 2017 meeting, City Council resolved, in part:

“That the Administration provide a further report on the current levels of service to people requiring accessible service, and the potential impacts of the incorporation of ridesharing on Accessibility services.”

This report partially addresses this resolution.

Report

Term Extensions of 16 Temporary Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Licences

To ensure that wheelchair accessible taxi service is not disrupted, the Administration recommends extending the term of 16 temporary licences scheduled to expire on December 31, 2018.

Temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences are issued by the City, at no charge, to taxi brokerages proportionate to the size of their taxi fleet. Permanent taxi licence owners may choose to associate with different brokerages over time, which will alter the fleet size of the various brokerages. In the event that the proportion of permanent taxi licences associated with brokerages changes, temporary wheelchair accessible licences, which have been issued to one brokerage, will need to be reissued to another. As the 16 licences are currently set to expire on December 31, 2018 (New Year’s Eve), logistical challenges could be created if a wheelchair accessible vehicle utilizing a temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licence is dispatched by one brokerage on December 31, 2018, and by another brokerage on January 1, 2019.

To mitigate this, the Administration recommends that the 16 existing temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licence terms be extended from December 31, 2018, to January 17, 2019, and that a new term be established to operate from January 18, 2019, to September 2, 2020. This would align with the term length of the other 5 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences, and would better accommodate future amendments to the Taxi Bylaw, if required.

Accessible Licences (Total – 26)	Current Expiry Date	Recommended Extension to:	Licence Reallocation to Brokerages (as of December 31, 2018) with Proposed New Term:
5 Permanent Licences	These licences do not expire		
16 Temporary Licences	December 31, 2018	January 17, 2019	January 18, 2019 to September 2, 2020
5 Temporary Licences	September 2, 2020		

As this is the first time that the terms of temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences will be extended, the Taxi Bylaw does not specify when the brokerages’ fleet size is to be determined. For greater clarity in the process of allocating temporary accessible licences to the brokerages, the Administration recommends that the Taxi Bylaw be

amended to state that the temporary wheelchair accessible licences be issued, based on the brokerages' proportion of permanent taxi licences as of December 31, 2018. The provision of accessible taxi services will be monitored by the Administration on an ongoing basis. It may be appropriate to review the terms and conditions under which wheelchair accessible licences are issued. Further consultation with the taxi industry and other stakeholders will be undertaken in the upcoming months.

Incorporation of Ridesharing

While there are examples of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) providing wheelchair accessible service in other municipalities, it is not typical for TNCs to do so, or to provide a significant amount of service when they do. If TNCs are permitted to operate in Saskatoon, the Administration does not anticipate that they will provide additional wheelchair accessible service.

The Administration has been in contact with several municipal vehicle-for-hire regulators across Canada to discuss the impacts on accessible service with the advent of TNCs in their municipality. At this time, they see continued interest from taxi drivers in driving accessible taxis, even in markets that permit TNCs. The City of Winnipeg recently held a lottery for 60 new wheelchair accessible taxis and received approximately 2,800 applicants. The City of Winnipeg does not currently provide incentives for the conversion or operation of a wheelchair accessible taxi.

Although not experienced in other Canadian cities, taxi drivers may choose to become a TNC driver rather than continue to operate a wheelchair accessible taxi. City Council has directed the City Solicitor to include provisions for a \$0.07 trip levy to support accessible service in the drafting of the TNC Company Bylaw.

In the coming year, the Administration will monitor the impact of TNCs and consult on how the funds raised through this levy can be applied to compensate and incentivize the accessible taxi industry. Further reporting will be provided on the current levels of service to people requiring accessible service, and on the proposed allocation of the accessible levy in the upcoming months.

Options to the Recommendation

City Council may choose to not extend the terms of the 16 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences set to expire on December 31, 2018. This option is not recommended as it will result in a 62% reduction in the number of wheelchair accessible taxi licences available to serve the public.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

On August 8, 2018, the Administration conducted further consultation with taxi industry representatives to discuss potential for a joint proposal that would provide additional flexibility for the industry to better address high-demand periods. The provision of additional accessible taxi licences was identified as a consideration in the industry's ability to better serve high-demand periods. At this time, the Administration has not received any indication that a joint proposal is pending.

Financial Implications

The taxi program is not subsidized by the mill rate. All expenditures are funded through the generation of fees. Fees in excess of expenses are held in a stabilization reserve.

Other Implications

There are no policy, 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

The Taxi Bylaw provisions for 16 temporary wheelchair accessible taxi licences are due to expire on December 31, 2018. To ensure no disruption in wheelchair accessible taxi service, an amendment to the current Taxi Bylaw will require City Council approval prior to December 31, 2018.

Public Notice

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

Report Approval

Written by: Mark Wilson, Acting Licensing and Permitting Manager, Community Standards
Reviewed by: Jo-Anne Richter, Acting Director of Community Standards
Approved by: Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department

S/Reports/2018/CS/Council – Temporary Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Licences/ks