
Extension of Seasonal Taxi Licences

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:

1. That the City Solicitor be requested to amend Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to extend the term of Seasonal Taxi Licences, beginning March 1, 2019 until June 28, 2019; and
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to amend Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to amend the hourly taxi fare from \$1.77 to \$1.92 for each additional kilometre in excess of 16 kilometres.

Topic and Purpose

The report outlines proposed amendments to Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, to extend operation of Seasonal Taxi Licences by starting a new licensing term effective March 1, 2019 to June 28, 2019. This report also addresses an increase to the hourly taxi rate in order to remain proportionate to the general fare, which was increased in June 2016.

Report Highlights

1. A new seasonal taxi licensing term, beginning March 1, 2019 until June 28, 2019, or a replacement program start date, whichever comes first, is required in order for seasonal taxis to continue to operate while the Administration consults with the taxi industry on a replacement program.
2. In June 2016, the general taxi rate was increased from \$0.25 per 142 metres to \$0.25 per 130 metres. This increase was not applied to the hourly taxi rate. In order to maintain the proportions between these rates, the Administration is recommending increasing the hourly taxi rate from \$1.77 to \$1.92 per additional kilometre in excess of 16 kilometres.

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

On July 21, 2016, City Council resolved to amend Bylaw No. 9070, The Taxi Bylaw, 2014, (Taxi Bylaw) to implement a 6% increase in meter rates effective August 1, 2016.

At its July 23, 2018 meeting, City Council resolved:

“That the City Solicitor be instructed to prepare the necessary Bylaw amendment to provide for seasonal licenses from September 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019 to be granted to the current holders.”

Extension of Seasonal Taxi Licences

At its August 27, 2018 meeting, City Council adopted amendments to the Taxi Bylaw, extending the existing term of Seasonal Taxi Licences from September 1, 2018 until February 28, 2019.

Report

Seasonal Taxi Licences

There are currently 210 taxi licences, of which 160 are permanent, 5 are permanent wheelchair accessible, 21 are temporary wheelchair accessible, and 24 are seasonal.

Seasonal Taxi Licences are licensed to operate from September 1 to June 30. Unlike permanent taxi licences, Seasonal Taxi Licences are owned by the City. Through a lottery system, Seasonal Taxi Licences were issued directly to drivers on a three-year term from September 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018. This term was extended until February 28, 2019, to accommodate a taxi industry consultation to identify a joint proposal to replace Seasonal Taxi Licences. As of the writing of this report, a joint proposal from the Taxi industry has not been received by the Administration.

In the absence of a joint proposal, the Administration will be developing a recommendation for a program to replace Seasonal Taxi Licences. A further report outlining a recommended program, including logistical and operating details such as the term length and eligibility for a lottery draw, will be provided in the coming months. This will be undertaken in further consultation with the taxi industry.

Seasonal Taxi Licences are due to expire on February 28, 2019. To accommodate the development of a replacement program, the Administration recommends that the existing licensing term be extended to June 28, 2019, and that the licences remain with the current licence holders.

As with the previous extension, granting this as an extension of the existing licensing term rather than the start of a new licensing term will not trigger additional licensing fees for the Seasonal Taxi Licence holders. A taxi licence provides a driver with certainty that they can operate during the licensing period. The proposed extension, combined with the previously approved extension, will result in an extra ten months within the 2018 Seasonal Taxi Licensing term.

Taxi Bylaw Amendment to Hourly Rates

On June 21, 2016, City Council received a report and resolved to amend the Taxi Bylaw to increase the general taxi fare from \$0.25 for each additional 142 metres or portion thereof, to \$0.25 for each additional 130 metres or portion thereof. A base fee of \$3.75 covers the first 130 metres of travel.

This increase was requested by the taxi industry, who at that point had not had a rate increase since 2011. The 6% rate increase was aligned with the Taxi Cost Index, which indicated that over the previous 24 months, there had been an increase of 6.3% in the cost of operating a taxi. The taxi industry has advised the Administration that the request was intended to address an increase to both the general fare and the hourly fare.

Extension of Seasonal Taxi Licences

The June 21, 2016 report did not address the hourly taxi rate; as a result, the hourly taxi fare of \$1.77 for each additional kilometre in excess of 16 kilometres has not increased since 2011. The Administration recommends that the hourly taxi fare be increased from \$1.77 to \$1.92 in order to remain proportional to the general taxi fare.

Options to the Recommendation

City Council may choose to not extend the term of Seasonal Taxi Licences. This option will result in a reduction of 24 taxi licences or an 11% reduction in the total number of taxis until such time as the replacement program will be in place in later June.

City Council may choose to not increase the hourly taxi rate. This option results in the hourly taxi rate continuing to be misaligned with the Taxi Cost Index and disproportionate to the general taxi fare.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Representatives of the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association and the United Steel Workers were consulted and confirmed their support of these recommendations.

Financial Implications

As the Seasonal Taxi Licence is an extension of the 2018 licence, a 2019 licence will not be issued, nor will licensing fees be collected.

There are no financial implications to increasing the hourly taxi rate.

Other Implications

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

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Taxi Bylaw provisions for 24 Seasonal Taxi Licences are due to expire on February 28, 2019. To ensure no reduction in taxi service, an amendment to the current Taxi Bylaw will require City Council approval prior to February 28, 2019.

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

Reviewed by: Jo-Anne Richter, Acting Director of Community Standards

Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, Acting General Manager, Community Services Department

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