

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY &amp; PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 10, 2019</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>G. KOTSIFAS, P. ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT &amp; COMPLIANCE SERVICES &amp; CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PROPOSED ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE FOR HIRE INCENTIVE PROGRAM - UPDATE</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development & Compliance Services and Chief Building Official:

- (a) that this report **BE REQUESTED** for information purposes, and
- (b) that Civic Administration hold a Public Participation Meeting to amend the Vehicle for Hire By-law to make the necessary changes to implement an incentive program for accessible vehicles for hire.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on incentive options to mitigate the costs associated with operating accessible vehicles for hire and to improve service to citizens requesting on-demand accessible transportation services.

**BACKGROUND**

On September 19, 2018, Council directed Civic Administration to report back to the Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC) on matters related to potential incentives, including, but not limited to, potential incentives and/or grants for converting and/or operating accessible vehicles and fare incentives; it being noted that this report should address the feasibility of accommodating incentives retroactively.

The average cost to convert a van to provide for accessible transportation services range from approximately \$15,000-\$20,000. The average cost of an accessible van including all features is approximately \$40,000-\$60,000. The vehicle for hire industry has advised Civic Administration that the maintenance costs for these vehicles are high due to the additional weight of the vehicles. Given the significant costs of operating an accessible service and that accessible on-demand taxi service is a priority for the City of London, an incentive program would ensure a comparable service is available for the entire community.

Civic Administration has consulted with the vehicle for hire industry as well as the Accessibility Advisory Committee on several occasions. Further, a municipal scan was undertaken to examine best practices. This report presents a number of options, and possible programs to implement an incentive program with a goal of providing efficient and effective transportation services to those who live with mobility challenges.

**LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**

**Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

AODA (The Act) came into effect in 2005. The overall goal of the Act is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by 2025. All businesses and organizations that provide goods and services to people in Ontario are required to meet certain accessibility standards in five

important areas including transportation. The Act directs that every municipality shall consult with its municipal accessibility advisory committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community. The Act also directs that every municipality shall identify progress made toward meeting the need for on-demand accessible taxicabs, including any steps that will be taken to meet the need.

### **City of London Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACCAC)**

The role of ACCAC is to initiate and provide recommendations, advice and information to Council through the CPSC. ACCAC shall advise and assist in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free London for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility), including persons with disabilities. This is intended to be achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

### **Legislative Authority**

Section 106 of the Municipal Act outlines that a municipality shall not grant assistance by “giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money” thus prohibiting the funding or subsidizing private firms which would provide an unfair advantage to the recipients.

## **WHERE WE ARE TO DATE**

- Civic Administration is currently working on exploring various options on how to better support the vehicle for hire industry and its customers.
- In 2018, an additional 10 Accessible Taxi Licence plates (total 29) were made available to the industry. Of the ten, only one plate has been issued. Staff have been advised that some of the plates have not been obtained as drivers are awaiting an incentive program.
- Staff have consulted and met with the vehicle for hire industry, the City of London Accessibility Advisory Committee and the London Transit Commission.
- **Vehicle for Hire Industry:** Staff have consulted with the vehicle for hire industry to discuss and obtain feedback on matters related to accessible taxi services, an accessible taxi incentive program, methods to fund the program, accessible taxi centralized dispatch systems and approaches to other improvements to the accessible taxi industry. The vehicle for hire industry is eager for the City to develop an incentive program, in order to better serve the citizens of London, as maintenance and modifications of the accessible vehicles can be very expensive. They are supportive of any programs and incentives that would help the industry to continue to provide accessible services to the community.
- **Accessibility Advisory Committee:** Staff have presented proposed accessible taxi incentives and programs to ACCAC twice this year. ACCAC has expressed concern with availability of accessible taxi cabs and hours of operation as many accessible taxi customers have appointments at various times of the day and evening and require on demand service.
- **London Transit Commission (LTC):** LTC offers a paratransit service which is a shared ride, door to door service for passengers that require a lift-equipped vehicle for travel. Staff have met with the LTC on several occasions to discuss working together on improving accessible transportation services throughout the City of London.
- **Get Involved Survey:** Staff have been working with ACCAC to create an Accessible Transportation survey. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information on the demand for accessible transportation services in London. The Get Involved survey was released in August and will be posted for a period of up to 2 months.

### Municipal Scan – Accessible Taxi Incentive Programs

The table below identifies a variety of accessible taxi incentive programs.

City	Surcharges to fund Accessible Vehicles	Subsidies	Additional Incentives	Central Dispatch
Calgary	-\$0.30 per trip. -One-time funding request of \$350K in 2019 and \$350K in 2020 to support a two-year Centralized Dispatch pilot project	\$5000/year in grants and incentives (to a maximum of \$40,000) over 8 years.	Incentives provided for days on road, vehicle inspections, minimal complaints on vehicle, cordless debit machines.	Yes
Edmonton	\$50/year per accessible vehicle.	TBD	Accessible Licence fee reduction.	No
Hamilton	None	\$5.00 flat rate to all qualified accessible taxi drivers for each trip.	None.	No
Montreal	None	\$15,000 provincial vehicle conversion subsidy.	None.	No
Ottawa	\$0.07 per trip	Currently working on potential subsidies. Offers Taxi script booklets.	No annual accessible licence fee.	No
Toronto	None	Working on subsidies, including: creation of an accessibility fund and promoting side-entry accessible taxicabs.	Accessible licence fee reduced.	No
Chicago	-\$0.10 per trip. -\$22/month licence fees for non-WAV vehicles.	-Up to \$20,000 capital on new vehicle and up to \$5000 annual operating.	Airport fast lane voucher for accessible vehicles. Free medallion to annual "Excellence Award" winner.	Yes
New York	\$0.30 per trip	Up to \$30,000 capital and operating subsidy distributed over 4 years (\$14,000 up front) and \$10-\$30 per trip for trips booked through Accessible dispatch service.	\$0.50 for every trip taken in an accessible vehicle.	Yes

#### PROPOSED INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- Civic Administration has reviewed all of the programs listed in the table above and based on the regulations in the Municipal Act, municipalities in Ontario cannot provide direct incentives to the industry to subsidize accessible vehicles for hire.
- The City is exploring an option to subsidize each accessible ride by \$5.00 directly distributed to the vehicle for hire driver.
- In order to build a new accessible taxi reserve fund, staff are exploring options to add a \$0.05 fee to each taxi trip. This will require further financial and legal review.
- If initiated in Q1 2020 and based on 2018 ride statistics, the reserve fund would have accumulated approximately **\$235,000** by the end of Q4 2020.

- In order to initiate this program in early 2020, an initial amount of \$200k will be budgeted for 2020 as start-up funding (and repaid from the proposed reserve fund).
- Auditing, and enforcement requirements to implement the program will be managed through existing resources, and would be monitored over the two-year period to determine whether any additional adjustments are necessary.

<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
-------------------

As part of an ongoing initiative to support the accessible Vehicle for Hire service within the City of London, staff will continue to work with the Vehicle for Hire industry and ACCAC to bring forward a recommendation for service improvements. A subsidized incentive program would support the improvement of the accessible transportation needs of London’s community, as well as working towards compliance with the regulations outlined in the AODA.

Civic Administration will hold a Public Participating Meeting to present any changes required in the Vehicle for Hire By-law to implementation an incentive program.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
<b>OREST KATOLYK, MLEO (C)</b> <b>CHIEF MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER</b>	<b>GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P. ENG.</b> <b>MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT &amp; COMPLIANCE SERVICES &amp; CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL</b>

Cc: Alan Dunbar – Manager III, Financial Planning & Policy, Finance & Corporate Services  
 Melanie Stone – Specialist, Municipal Policy (AODA), Human Resources & Corporate Services