

October 9, 2018

To: Members
Community & Protective Services Committee

Re: Update on Taxi Bylaw Changes

RECOMMENDATION

1. That item #2 from CR17-80 be removed from the list of outstanding items for the Community and Protective Services Committee.
2. That this report be received and filed.

CONCLUSION

In 2017, Council amended the taxi bylaw to allocate a portion of seasonal licenses through a lottery system. Research has demonstrated that this change in process did not negatively affect the service provided to residents and visitors to the City of Regina. Specifically, analysis of trip data and a public survey indicated that service remained the same as in previous years. In fact, the research has revealed slight positive changes over the past year. First, there was an increase in average trips per vehicle, and therefore an increase in driver wages. Secondly, there was a small increase in customer service provided by taxi drivers. The public reported that drivers have shown a better knowledge of the city and improved interactions and assistance provided to customers.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Community Services Department completed a review of the taxi bylaw and presented proposed amendments to Council. A focus of the change was related to allocation of seasonal licenses and resulted in the following changes to how licenses were allocated:

- Allocation of 60 per cent of Seasonal Taxicab Licences issued via lottery directly to individuals, renewable up to three seasons
- Any new taxicab owner's licence issued required the holder to hold a valid taxicab driver's licence, drive the vehicle licensed to them no fewer than 390 hours every three-month period, and ensure the vehicle is operated a minimum 260 hours for a period of eight consecutive weeks.

The remainder were issued directly to brokers. Council directed Administration to report back after one full year on the impact of the recommendations regarding the allocation of seasonal licences in Q3 of 2018. The purpose of this report is to report on the impacts of the change in process.

DISCUSSION

a) Review of Lottery Process

On September 18, 2017, the City held a draw for the allocation of 28 seasonal taxicab owner licences. The seasonal taxicab owner licences were for a term of three seasons (2017, 2018, 2019) running from October 1 to April 30, to be renewed annually. All successful applications were notified to ensure they had an approved licensed vehicle available for use by October 30, 2017. The applicants were also advised that if they were found to be in violation of any other section of *The Taxi Bylaw, 1994* at any time over the next three years, the seasonal licence would be revoked and reallocated.

Three applicants were not able to meet all of the requirements and the licences were immediately reallocated using the list of alternates drawn during the lottery. There were also some initial concerns for the ability of the successful applicants to associate with a broker, as required by the bylaw. One broker was not accepting any lottery applicants to associate with the brokerage. However, all 28 licence holders were able to associate with one of the other brokers and all seasonal licences were operating by October 30, 2017.

Throughout the season, there were a total of nine seasonal licences that were returned to the City. The primary reasons for the return of the licences were either because the licence holder was unable to complete the minimum number of driving hours or were not earning the amount of revenue they had expected. Upon review of the trip data at the end of the season, the City revoked an additional three licences due to the minimum number of driving hours not being met. These licences have been reallocated for the remaining winter seasons of the three-year term.

b) Review of Trip Data

A review of the trip data supplied by brokers to the City for the seasonal period revealed that the change in allocation had little impact on trip volume or wait times. Trip volumes were equal to the volumes reported for the prior 2016/2017 winter season. The wait times increased by one minute for an average wait time of six minutes. While this is an increase over the prior season, it is still a reduction over the average wait time reported for the 2015/2016 winter season of 6.6 minutes. It should also be noted that the increased wait time was influenced by the removal of six temporary taxicab licences that were not reissued in 2018.

This change also resulted in a five percent increase in the average trips per vehicle. It is difficult to determine how much of this increase is related to the commitment of the individual licence holders. However it can be implied that this did have a positive impact as the reduction in the total fleet size was only four per cent whereas the increase in the average trips per vehicle was five per cent.

c) Public Feedback

Administration also engaged the public through an online survey to determine their satisfaction with Regina taxi services and if they perceived a change in services. The survey was developed and conducted by Fast Consulting in May 2018 using a sample of panelists from online

community partners (Research Now and SSI). Complete survey results for Regina Taxi Services can be found in Appendix A. A total of 494 respondents completed this survey. The feedback is an approximate representation and is reflective of Regina's population with a 95 per cent confidence interval.

The survey results revealed in general, residents are satisfied with the current taxi industry in Regina, the exceptions being the fares charged (too high) and the ability to book a taxi during peak operating times. Overall 66 per cent of respondents rated customer service provided by taxis as good to very good. Most agreed that taxis were easy to access by phone, only nine per cent disagreed, and 62 per cent believed services were timely with short wait times.

When asked if they believed taxi service had improved, the majority of respondents felt it had remained the same. Approximately one out of ten believed there had been improvement in driver knowledge of city streets and venues, drivers taking the shortest routes, interactions with the drivers, cleanliness of the taxis and the assistance provided when needed.

Overall, the change to the allocation process of seasonal licences did not negatively impact the service provided to residents and visitors to the City of Regina. Trip data and a public survey indicated that service remained the same as in previous years. If any impact occurred it was seen through an increase in average trips per vehicle, and therefore an increase in driver wages, and a small increase in the customer service provided by taxi drivers.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

None with respect to this report.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

None with respect to this report.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

None with respect to this report.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendation contained in this report is within the delegated authority of the Community and Protective Services Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Laurie Shalley, Director
Community Services

Respectfully submitted,



Kim Onrait, Executive Director
City Services

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