

## Paratransit Operations and Maintenance Contract

<b>Date</b>	June 8, 2020
<b>To</b>	Accessibility Advisory Committee
<b>From</b>	Citizen Services
<b>Service Area</b>	Transit & Fleet
<b>Item No.</b>	ACC20-3

### RECOMMENDATION

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It is recommended that Accessibility Advisory Committee:

Receive and file this report.

### ISSUE

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The paratransit operations and maintenance contract expires June 30, 2021. Administration will issue a request for proposals (RFP) in the third quarter of 2020 for a new five-year contract term, starting July 1, 2021 until June 30, 2026. The RFP needs to be issued a year in advance so a new contractor will have enough time to transition the service, and therefore has no disruption of service to customers.

Administration is seeking feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee to determine if any accessibility improvements should be considered as part of the new contract.

### IMPACTS

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#### Accessibility

Paratransit transportation service is a dedicated service for those restricted in using conventional transit service because of a disability. Paratransit is considered a lifeline for many people experiencing disabilities because it is their only affordable means of getting around. The manner in which paratransit services are provided have a significant effect on the people utilizing the services, as well as family members, caregivers and organizations that support people experiencing disabilities.

### Policy/Strategic Impact

The recommendation is tied to item D3-Goal 2-5.13 in the City of Regina's Official Community Plan which states "Maximize the accessibility of the conventional transit system while ensuring the paratransit system meets the needs of those unable to use the conventional system." The recommendation also addresses several Transportation Master Plan policies. Policy 3.23 states; "Continue engagement with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to identify and address accessibility issues" and policy 3.25 states, "Maintain the paratransit system to meet the needs of individuals unable to use the conventional transit system."

### Financial Impact

Enhancements to the paratransit operations and maintenance contract may have financial implications, which could increase the cost of providing paratransit services.

Potential contractors will evaluate the paratransit services that the City expects them to provide and will develop a price point based on an hourly rate. This rate will be disclosed in their proposal.

Pricing is only one of the factors that is considered when evaluating a proposal through the RFP process. Quality of service, capability, experience, maintenance and servicing are also evaluated.

### Environmental Impact

Vendors will be asked to discuss the environmental implications of their proposals as part of the RFP.

## **OTHER OPTIONS**

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### Option 1:

It is possible the Transit department could deliver paratransit services using a fully in-house model where the paratransit operations and maintenance staff become City of Regina employees. In-house service delivery is more costly

### Option 2:

Current paratransit in-house functions, such as scheduling and dispatching, could be contracted out, along with the operations and maintenance. Contracted service delivery is more cost effective but there is less influence related to service delivery.

These different options will be evaluated during the development of the Transit Master Plan (TMP), and the TMP will make a recommendation of how paratransit services should be delivered in the future. If the TMP makes a recommendation for a significant change (ie. bringing paratransit services fully in-house), which is then approved by City Council, it will

take several years to fund, secure, and renovate a building to house paratransit. There is currently no capacity within existing transit or City buildings to house and maintain paratransit vehicles. It will also take time to establish a transition plan, training plan and to move positions to the City of Regina.

Either option would be a significant change for paratransit. A detailed cost benefit analysis would need to be completed for both options before a change could be considered.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

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The paratransit operations and maintenance RFP will be communicated to potential contractors. Once a decision is made regarding the successful contractor, paratransit customers will be advised of the decision through the paratransit newsletter.

## **DISCUSSION**

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Across Canada, paratransit services are provided in different ways. Some services, including scheduling and call centre services, are fully contracted. Other communities have adopted a full in-house model where all services are provided by City staff. The service model that the Regina Paratransit Service uses, where the operations and maintenance are contracted to an external service provider, is not unique. Both York Region in Ontario and Winnipeg also provide their paratransit service this way. Regina has chosen this service delivery model because it offers flexibility, cost effectiveness and good customer service.

The City reviews the quality of paratransit service that is provided to customers and wants to ensure contract compliance. Currently, the contract is written with a number of provisions to make sure the contract is being followed. The Transit & Fleet department has a dedicated Quality Assurance Coordinator who monitors paratransit, with a focus on bus cleanliness and operator training requirements. The City's Transit Fleet Maintenance branch also inspects several buses a year to ensure they are being maintained properly. In 2017, the City's Paratransit branch conducted a customer survey to measure customer satisfaction with paratransit service. Approximately 90 per cent of respondents strongly agreed that the operators give them good customer service and the help they need getting on and off the bus.

Administration will make some changes to the contract when it issues the RFP. An example of a contract change is language will be included to relate to hazard and risk assessment so that it compliments City of Regina policies. The allowance for the addition of new vehicle types and services will also be included in the contract.

### Recommended option:

That Administration issues a five-year RFP for paratransit operations and maintenance services in the third quarter of 2020.

The Regina Paratransit Service uses a service delivery model where the management, administration, scheduling and dispatching are operated by the City of Regina and the operations and maintenance components of the service are provided by an external contractor. The City retains ownership of the buses. The contracted services include

providing operators for the buses and cleaning and repairing the buses. The contractor is also required to provide other services, such as supervision of the operators, fueling the buses, maintaining a lost and found and responding to complaints.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is encouraged to provide any suggestions of accessibility enhancements that it would like to see added to the service. Administration will consider these suggestions when it is developing the new contract and RFP.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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Paratransit services were fully contracted until 1991 when the City of Regina took over the administration, scheduling and dispatching of paratransit, but continued to contract the operations and maintenance portions of the service. Since this time, Administration has been issuing ongoing RFPs for paratransit operations and maintenance services. The last two RFPs have been for five-year durations to encourage more respondents and competitive bids.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brad Bells, Director, Transit & Fleet

5/22/2020

Respectfully Submitted,



Kim Onra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

6/2/2020

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