

March 15, 2018

To: Members
Community & Protective Services Committee

Re: Reduction in Denied Paratransit Trips

RECOMMENDATION

1. That this report be forwarded to the March 26, 2018 City Council meeting for information.
2. That item CM17-2 be removed from the list of outstanding items for City Council.

CONCLUSION

Paratransit is an essential service for more than 2,400 registered passengers. The demand for paratransit service exceeds capacity due to limited alternative options and an aging population. Over the past two years, the recognition of the importance of paratransit service has resulted in additional operating and capital investments by City Council. This additional funding has significantly increased paratransit's ability to meet demand and has allowed paratransit to provide 99.76 per cent of all advance trips requested in 2017.

BACKGROUND

Paratransit is a lifeline for people restricted in using other types of transportation services. People require paratransit to remain independent in the community with trips being used for work, medical appointments, school, shopping and leisure. Although other types of accessible transportation exist including accessible taxis, the cost is prohibitive for some people. Conventional transit is now being used more often by paratransit passengers due to recent accessibility improvements such as low floor buses and audible stop announcements. However, snow removal on paths of travel to the bus stops, ability to wait at a bus stop, and the ability to navigate conventional transit or recognize landmarks remain as barriers for some. This creates a high demand for paratransit service as requests for trips exceeds capacity.

In 2013, the Saskatchewan Human Right Commission (SHRC) launched the report titled "Achieving Equivalent, Comparable and Accessible Transportation in the City of Regina: A Report to Stakeholders." This report identified paratransit's denied trip rate as an important area requiring improvement. Since the release of the report, reducing the number of denied paratransit trips has become a top priority.

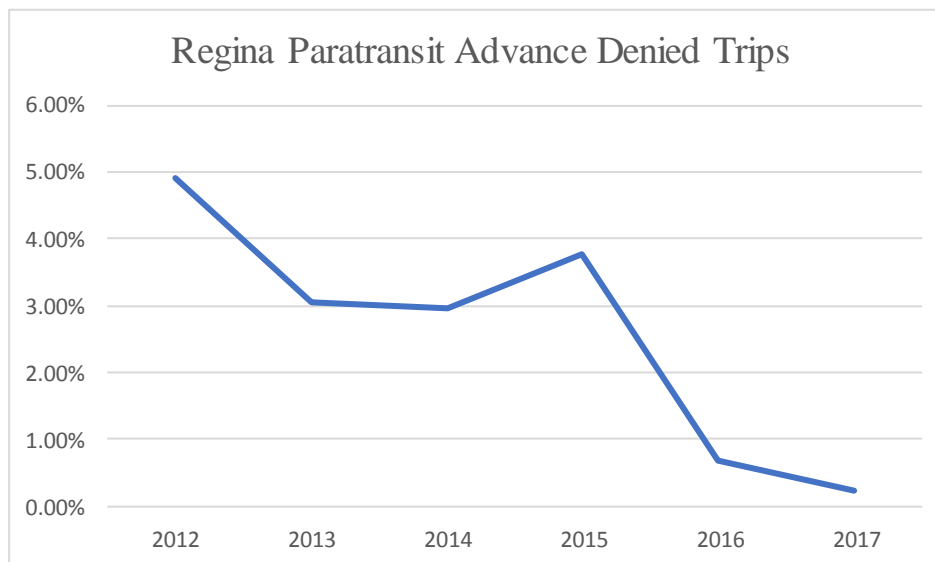
The SHRC has worked with both the cities of Regina and Saskatoon to establish a target of accommodating 99 per cent of all paratransit trips requested in advance. An "advance" trip is a trip that is requested before 12:00 p.m. the day prior to the day the trip is needed. Paratransit trips

can be booked seven days in advance. This report discusses the impact of additional funding on the denied paratransit trip rate.

A subsequent report is submitted to the Community and Protective Services Committee on March 15, 2018 addressing paratransit customer engagement.

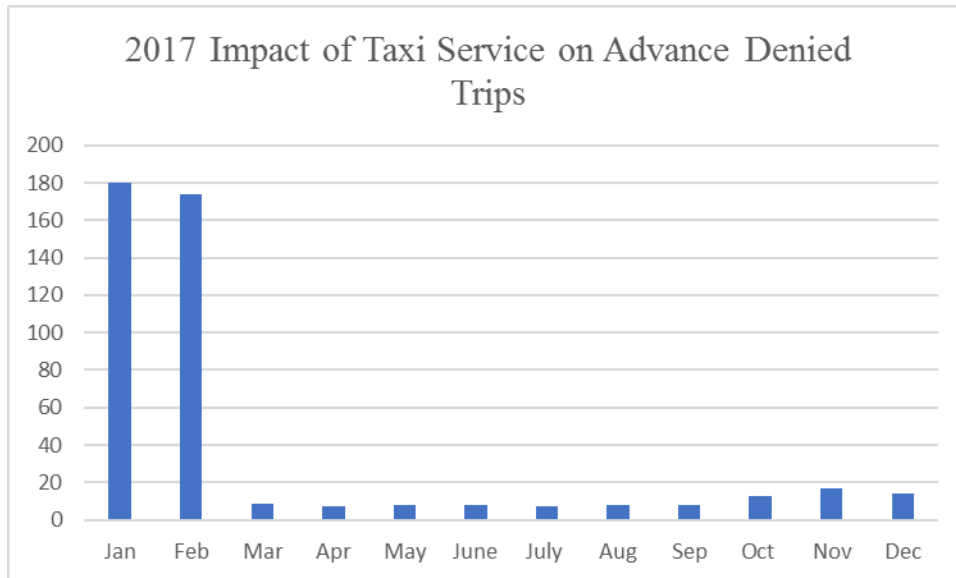
DISCUSSION

City Council provided additional resources to paratransit over the past two years, which has included additional buses, service hours, enhanced technology, and additional utilization of taxis. All enhancements are to reduce the number of denied trips.



In 2017, paratransit completed 186,513 trips. There were 453 advance trips requested that could not be accommodated. The use of taxis to provide some paratransit trips has been particularly important in reducing the number of denied

trips. The 2017 budget process provided an additional \$30,000 in funding for taxis to provide paratransit trips. This funding was implemented in March 2017 and resulted in a significant reduction in denied paratransit trips. Currently, less than 20 advance trip requests are being denied each month.



Paratransit is not able to accommodate every advance trip request because some passengers are not eligible to use taxis due to medical and safety requirements. Paratransit booking clerks make every attempt to create a space on the bus for a passenger who cannot use a taxi by moving a passenger who can onto a taxi. However, depending upon where the person is wanting to travel, this is not always possible. The main take away is there is less than one denied trip per day. This has allowed paratransit to meet its goal of less than one per cent denied trips as established by the SHRC in both 2016 and 2017.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

None with respect to this report.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Enhancing paratransit service helps achieve the transportation goals and policies in *Design Regina*, the City of Regina's Official Community Plan (OCP) and specifically, "Goal 2: Public Transit: Elevate the role of Public Transit" in Section D3.

Policy 5.13: Maximize the accessibility of the conventional transit system while ensuring the paratransit system meets the needs of those unable to use the conventional system.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

The reduction of denied paratransit trips enhances accessibility and quality of life for persons experiencing disabilities in Regina. More people will have the opportunity to travel in the community to participate in the activities that are important to them.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Paratransit Branch will work with Communications to raise public awareness of Paratransit's success in reducing denied paratransit trips and it will share the findings with customers in its spring 2018 newsletter.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendation contained in this report requires City Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Bells".

Brad Bells, Director
Transit Department

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Onrait".

Kim Onrait, Executive Director
City Services

Report prepared by:

Lynette Griffin, Manager of Paratransit & Accessibility