

Vehicles for Hire: Accessible Service Improvements

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

November 2020

Background

Since the Vehicles for Hire By-law came into effect to regulate these services within Winnipeg, an accessibility surcharge of \$0.07 per trip has been charged to both personal transportation provider dispatchers and to taxi dispatchers to encourage a minimum ratio of accessible vehicles within the fleets of service providers. Revenues collected by the City of Winnipeg (City) from this surcharge are intended to be used to make accessibility improvements to local vehicle for hire services.

Engagement

The City met with stakeholders in January 2020 to discuss engagement and held several meetings in September 2020 to gather insight and feedback on proposed accessibility improvements that are to be funded through the vehicle for hire accessibility surcharge. Details of the meetings are in Table 1 below.

Background information was provided in advance along with the presentation.

Stakeholder Groups

The following groups were represented in the process:

- Accessible vehicles for hire dispatchers
- Accessible vehicles for hire drivers

- Accessible vehicles for hire owners
- Accessible vehicles for hire Users
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Disabilities Issues Office, Province of Manitoba
- Independent Living Resource Centre
- Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba
- The University of Winnipeg
- Transportation Options Network for Seniors
- Vehicles for Hire training providers
- Vehicles for Hire Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Vision Impaired Resource Network

What We Heard

- Issues that need to be addressed with accessible service improvements were accurately captured.
- Goals are aligned to addressing issues.
- Solutions should consider and benefit both users and drivers.
- A centralized dispatch system should be fully accessible, properly resourced, and available at all times of day.
- Solutions should meet the intended results and should be measured to ensure they are successful.

Date	Activity	Details
January 28, 2020 at 1 p.m.	Meeting with Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee members	Two advisory committee members with an interest in accessible service met with project team member to discuss options for accessible service improvement and approaches towards engagement as part of early planning.
September 22, 2020 at 1 p.m.	Industry session	Industry contacts from taxi and personal transportation provider companies were invited directly. There were 17 participants. A presentation was followed by small group discussions.
September 29, 2020 at 1 p.m.	Community/user session	Groups with an interest in accessible transportation were invited to attend and circulate to their networks. There were 33 participants. A presentation was followed by small group discussions.
September 29, 2020 at 5 p.m.	Community/user session	Groups with an interest in accessible transportation were invited to attend and circulate to their networks. There were 9 participants. A presentation was followed by small group discussions.
October 7, 2020	Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee members were provided with background and provided feedback to advise on some of the potential challenges and opportunities with accessible service improvements.

Table 1 Meeting details

To learn more, visit:

winnipeg.ca/vehiclesforhire

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What We Heard	How It Was Considered*
There are limited accessible vehicles at night. What will happen to ensure accessible vehicles are available through a centralized dispatch system?	Incentives will be put in place to encourage night time drivers on the centralized dispatch system.
Fairness is important. Ensure the system is fair to all drivers.	A dispatch system would automatically allocate trips to the nearest accessible vehicle, without bias.
Create a plan for the accessibility service improvements that benefits everyone (community, drivers, and owners) at no extra cost to taxpayers (through per trip fees only).	The Public Service is required to present a plan for Council approval in order to use the funds collected through the accessibility surcharge. When the Vehicles for Hire By-law was adopted by Council in December 2017, the accessibility surcharge was approved to encourage the industry to make more accessible vehicles available.
Will those who do not have a physical disability be able to use the centralized dispatch system?	Those who do not require a wheelchair accessible van would not be excluded, however would only be able to obtain an accessible van through this service. Goal would be to make sure that users that do not identify as accessible users do not get priority service over accessible users.
The City should get more drivers interested in taking passengers who use wheelchairs.	The City is considering recommending incentives to encourage drivers to join the system.
Registration for a system should be simple.	We agree. The plan would be to recognize the needs of users and details such as this would form part of the RFP.
Putting all resources into a centralized dispatch system may not have the intended outcomes. This should be a comprehensive plan that also looks at the big issues with accessible transportation (education and enforcement).	While the program is being called a centralized dispatch system, that is only one part of the overall network improvements. The intention will be to work towards improvements in all facets of on-demand accessible service.
Ensure there is testing of all booking systems to ensure they are fully accessible (including those using screen readers).	Details such as these would form part of the requirements of the RFP.

*Vehicles for hire accessible service improvements that require the accessibility surcharge require Council approval before proceeding to implementation.

Next Steps

Recommendations for improving accessible vehicles for hire service along with financial impacts will be provided to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works (SPC-IRPW).

The SPC-IRPW will consider the recommendations and recommendations may go forward to Executive Policy Committee and Council for further consideration.

To learn more, visit:

winnipeg.ca/vehiclesforhire

Appendices

Appendix A – Meeting Background and Agenda

Appendix B – Presentation Content

Appendix C – Meeting Notes

Appendix D – Stakeholder Questions and Feedback