

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 2014

Item 8, Report No. 1, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on January 28, 2014.

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CITY OF VAUGHAN LICENSING BY-LAW LICENSING OF ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

The Committee of the Whole recommends that this matter be referred to staff for a report with additional information on purpose built accessible vehicles including opportunities for a pilot project to issue licenses for these vehicles.

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor, in consultation with the City Clerk and the Manager of Special Projects, Licensing and Permits recommends:

1. That the Licensing section of the City Clerk's Office be directed to proceed with the issuance of ~~six~~ (6) accessibility plates over the next seven (7) years.

Contribution to Sustainability

The licensing of wheelchair accessible taxi cabs supports the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA), by providing Vaughan residents with access to specially designed vehicles that will accommodate wheel chairs.

Economic Impact

The fee, as presently set out in the City's Licensing By-Law for accessible taxi cab licenses is \$4,500. The issuance of ~~5~~ 6 licenses will generate approximately ~~\$22,500~~ \$27,000 over a 7 year period.

Communications Plan

The requirements to provide wheelchair accessible taxis will be communicated to the various taxi brokerages licensed by the City of Vaughan.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to report on the feasibility of a 7 year pilot project to make available five (5) new taxi licences to assist in compliance with AODA requirements and objectives.

Background - Analysis and Options

Council, at its meeting of October 8, 2013, adopted the following staff recommendation (CW Report No. 39, Item 20):

1. That the City Clerk report back before January 31, 2014, on the feasibility of a 7 year pilot project to make available five new taxi licenses for purpose-built, universally designed vehicles with warranty and local service to assist in compliance with AODA requirements.

On January 1, 2001, York Region Transit (YRT) took over the transportation needs of wheelchair bound residents residing in York Region, with the implementation of its "Mobility Plus" service. YRT issued a Request for Proposal and ultimately awarded a contract to Royal Taxi to provide this service. Royal Taxi continues to be YRT's contractor for accessible taxi cab services.

Prior to 2001 the City of Vaughan licensed a number wheelchair accessible taxis which were sponsored through the Woodbridge Lions Club and B'nai Brith. Sponsorship was necessary due

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to the high cost associated with purchasing and maintaining accessible vehicles. The implementation of Mobility Plus appears to have made it financially difficult for the Vaughan licensed accessibility taxi cabs to continue. As a result, all of the accessibility plates that had been issued by the City of Vaughan were not renewed by their owners.

In early 2013, City of Vaughan licensing staff collected data from Mobility Plus regarding its service level within the City of Vaughan. They indicated that they service 11,378 mobility registrants in York Region with 3,295 residing in the City of Vaughan. Approximately 30% of Vaughan's residents who require assistance (998), require wheelchair accessible vehicles. All rides are pre-booked 24 hours in advance.

In addition to the above, all taxi cab brokerages licensed to operate in the City of Vaughan refer requests for wheelchair accessible taxis to Royal Taxi who currently operates approximately 100 wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Royal Taxi receives and services over 175 calls per day in the GTA for passengers with special needs. On average, 50 calls are ambulatory and 75 require a specialty vehicle equipped with a ramp or lift. Their fleet is independently owned and consists of low floor vehicles manufactured by General Motors or Chrysler. These vehicles have been fully tested and meet the strictest accessibility transportation specifications. In addition to Royal Taxi, there are four (4) other wheelchair accessible taxi companies that service wheelchair bound residents in the City of Vaughan.

There appears to be renewed interest in the availability of accessible taxi cab licenses in the City of Vaughan. In the past few months, the City of Vaughan's licensing section has received requests regarding the availability of accessible taxi cab licenses and the requirements associated with the licensing of these types of vehicles.

At the time of writing this report, the City's licensing section has six (6) pending wheelchair accessible taxi applications from two companies. This interest presents an opportunity for the issuance of an additional license over and above the five (5) requested by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The City will ensure that the applicants operating these vehicles meet all licensing requirements and that the vehicles meet all required specifications. Staff believes that the issuance of these licenses is feasible as the taxi cab industry appears to see this service as more economically attractive. The issuance of additional licenses will assist in compliance with AODA requirements and objectives as outlined in the Accessibility Advisory Committee's recommendation dated October 8, 2013.

Considering the service level offered by York Region through Mobility Plus and the services being provided through the City of Vaughan's licensed taxi brokerages, staff believe that the needs of wheelchair bound residents in the City of Vaughan are being met. Staff is of the opinion that the pending six (6) licences will further enhance the present service level and enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible taxi cabs in Vaughan and will act as a contingency if the present Mobility Plus program becomes diminished in any way.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report appeals to:

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| Service Excellence: | Promotes Community Safety, Health and Wellness; Demonstrates Excellence in Service Delivery |
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Regional Implications

The issuance of six (6) accessible taxi cab licenses by the City of Vaughan is not expected to have a significant impact on the services being offered by YRT/Mobility Plus.

Conclusion

Vaughan citizens are presently serviced by on demand and scheduled wheelchair taxis through the utilization of independent service providers who are properly equipped and trained in the wheelchair accessible taxi business. These services are being provided through Mobility Plus and through Vaughan's licensed brokerages. The AODA wheelchair accessible requirement is being met. With the inclusion of additional licenses over a 7 year period service to Vaughan's accessible community will be further enhanced.

Attachments

1. Committee of the Whole Report No. 39, Item 20, October 8, 2013

Report prepared by:

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)