

Advisory Committee of Council Staff Report



To Accessibility Advisory Committee
Date Tuesday, April 15, 2025
Subject **Vehicle for Hire Accessibility Fund – Request by Red Top Taxi for Vehicle Accessibility Modifications**

Recommendation

That the request from Red Top Taxi for \$39,500 to modify one vehicle for wheelchair accessibility, be approved.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to evaluate and address the recent request by Red Top Taxi to access collected funds for the modification of a taxi vehicle to make it accessible.

Key Findings

- **Request for Funds:** Red Top Taxi has requested access to collected funds to modify a taxi vehicle for accessibility.
- **Collected Funds:** Since 2018, over \$288,000 has been collected through fees from Vehicle for Hire Businesses that do not provide accessible vehicles.
- **Vehicle for Hire Licensing Category and Grant Program:** The funds are managed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and are used to support accessibility modifications for vehicles, including taxicabs.
- **Municipal Responsibilities Under the AODA:** Municipalities must consult with accessibility advisory committees and establish multi-year accessibility plans, both regarding accessible taxis.
- **City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:** The city's multi-year accessibility plan, to be renewed in 2026, includes provisions to increase accessible taxi licenses.
- **Bylaw Requirements for Vehicles for Hire:** Vehicle for Hire Businesses must pay a fee to a general fund if they cannot provide accessible vehicles, as per the 2018 bylaw.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report's key findings and recommendations align with the Strategic Plan priorities in the following ways:

1. **Lead with Accountability:** The report increases trust and transparency by detailing the collection and allocation of funds for accessibility modifications, ensuring that Council processes and the Accessibility Advisory Committee's effectiveness are maintained.
2. **Provide Excellent Service:** The recommendations aim to improve customer service by enhancing the accessibility of taxi services, thereby removing barriers and integrating Guelph's Equity Lens into transportation services.

Financial Implications

The request from Red Top Taxi for accessible vehicle modifications is \$39,500.

Report

Request for Funds

Recently, Red Top Taxi, an accessible taxi service provider, requested access to the collected funds to complete modifications on taxi vehicles. The modifications are intended to offset the cost of making their taxi accessible. This request aligns with the purpose of the grant program and approval through the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Collected Funds

Since 2018, approximately \$288,000 has been collected through fees imposed on Vehicle for Hire Businesses that cannot commit to providing accessible vehicles. These funds are collected monthly and provided to the Accessibility Advisory Committee to be used in a grant program for those needing accessibility modifications to their vehicles, including taxicabs.

As defined by the City's Business Licensing Bylaw, Vehicle for Hire Businesses means a Business which, through an Electronic Platform, arranges transportation of Passengers by Drivers in Vehicles for Hire, within the City for compensation, but does not include Taxicabs, bus transportation service or businesses, carpooling arrangement as defined in the Public Vehicles Act, or emergency vehicle service.

Development of Vehicle for Hire Licensing Category and Grant Program

During the development of the vehicle for hire licensing category, a key goal of the working group assigned to the project was to ensure that there were enough accessible vehicles within the city. This goal is potentially supported by the collected funds and the grant program.

Municipal Responsibilities Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Under the AODA, municipalities have two key responsibilities related to on-demand accessible taxis:

1. **Consultation:** Municipalities must consult with their accessibility advisory committees about the proportion of on-demand accessible taxis required in their community.
2. **Accessibility Plans:** Municipalities are required to establish, review, and update multi-year accessibility plans. These plans should include strategies for improving accessibility in taxi services.

City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The city's multi-year accessibility plan, which will be renewed toward the end of 2026, includes statements regarding the Taxi Bylaw and provisions to encourage an increase in accessible taxi licenses. This plan is crucial for ensuring ongoing improvements in accessibility within the city's transportation system.

Bylaw Requirement for Vehicles for Hire

Vehicle for Hire Businesses that cannot commit to providing accessible vehicles are required under the bylaw passed in 2018 to pay a fee to a general fund. The bylaw states:

Special Obligations of Issuer of Licenses (Schedule B of the Taxi Bylaw Number (2018)-20272)

The Issuer of Licenses shall ensure that all funds collected for accessibility under this Schedule are provided monthly to the Accessibility Advisory Committee to be used in a grant program for those needing accessibility modifications to their vehicles, including taxicabs.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the request for accessible vehicle modifications are significant. The Taxi Company has requested \$39,500 to modify one vehicle.

The ongoing sustainability of the grant program depends on careful management and periodic review of the fund's usage to support as many accessibility modifications as possible while maintaining financial viability.

Funds collected from the local Vehicle for Hire Businesses in lieu of accessible vehicles are for discussion by the AAC. The funds are from the general funds collected and held by Corporate and Community Safety.

Consultations

Operations - Corporate and Community Safety

City Clerks' Office

Departmental Approval

Alex Goss

Manager of Equity and Community Investment - SIIS

Report Author

Leanne Warren – Accessibility Services Supervisor

This report was approved by:

Jodie Sales

Strategic Initiatives and Intergovernmental Services (SIIS)

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Vehicle for Hire Accessibility Fund Request by Red Top Taxi for Vehicle Accessibility Modifications

Collected Funds: Since 2018, over \$288,000 has been collected through fees from Vehicle for Hire Businesses that do not provide accessible vehicles.

Municipal Responsibilities Under the AODA: Municipalities must consult with accessibility advisory committees and establish multi-year accessibility plans, both regarding accessible taxis.

Bylaw Requirements:

- **For Vehicles for Hire:** Vehicle for Hire Businesses must pay a fee to a general fund if they cannot provide accessible vehicles, as per the 2018 bylaw.
- **Vehicle for Hire Licensing Category and Grant Program:** The funds are managed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and are used to support accessibility modifications for vehicles, including taxicabs.

Recommended Motion

That the request from Red Top Taxi for \$39,500 to modify one vehicle for wheelchair accessibility, be approved.