

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee
Comité des services communautaires et de protection
21 March 2019 / 21 mars 2019**

**and Council
et au Conseil
27 March 2019 / 27 mars 2019**

**Submitted on March 12, 2019
Soumis le 12 mars 2019**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2019-EPS-GEN-0002

SUBJECT: Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund – Allocation Plan

OBJET: Fonds pour l'accessibilité des véhicules de location – Plan d'allocation

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend that Council:

- 1. Approve the allocation of fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund to the initiatives described in this report;**
- 2. Delegate authority to the General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services to adjust the annual allocation of fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund as necessary and as described in this**

report and as recommended by the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Steering Committee;

3. Delegate authority to the Director, By-law and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the City Clerk and Solicitor, to negotiate, finalize and execute voluntary accessibility surcharges with Private Transportation Companies.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil :

1. d'approuver l'allocation des montants prélevés dans le cadre du Fonds pour l'accessibilité des véhicules de location aux initiatives décrites dans le présent rapport;
2. de déléguer au directeur général des Services de protection et d'urgence le pouvoir de modifier, au besoin, l'allocation des montants prélevés annuellement dans le cadre du Fonds pour l'accessibilité des véhicules de location, conformément aux indications du présent rapport et aux recommandations du comité directeur du Fonds;
3. de déléguer au directeur des Services des règlements municipaux, en consultation avec le greffier municipal et avocat général, le pouvoir de négocier, de conclure et d'instaurer des ententes relatives aux frais supplémentaires non obligatoires pour les exploitants de transport privé.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assumptions/Analysis

On April 13, 2016, City Council approved the report titled "Regulating Vehicles for Hire in the City of Ottawa – Taxis, Limousines and Private Transportation Companies"

(ACS2016-COS-EPS-0012). As part of its deliberations, Council delegated authority to the General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) to establish a voluntary per-trip surcharge for accessibility to be paid by licensed Private Transportation Companies (PTCs), with any funds received from the surcharge to be directed to a dedicated reserve fund.

Council further directed that the General Manager, EPS establish a Steering Committee comprised of internal and external stakeholders to develop a consultation strategy with respect to how fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund

could be used to offset costs for a number of programs supporting accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa.

Based on public consultations and the feasibility analysis conducted by staff, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommend that the funds be allocated as follows:

1. Provide funds to not-for-profit and community agencies, such as community resource centres, to expand accessible transportation services in rural areas;
2. Develop a Smartphone app for Para Transpo customers so they can track the arrival of their ride;
3. Reduce the cost of taxi coupons; and
4. Increase the maximum allowance of taxi coupons per customer.

Public Consultations/Input

Between January 24 and February 16, 2018, members of the public were invited to participate in one of five in-person sessions and/or complete an online survey. On January 30 and February 16, 2018, Emergency and Protective Services hosted five public meetings to obtain feedback with respect to how Council can use the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund to promote and foster accessible transportation services in Ottawa. Feedback was also received by telephone and e-mail. Feedback was obtained from 130 people using a combination of qualitative and quantitative consultation methods.

All feedback and ideas obtained through the consultation process were considered, however, participants were reminded that as per Council's direction, the VFH Accessibility Fund must be spent on programs and services that support accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa.

The consultations generated many innovative ideas for improving accessible transportation in the City of Ottawa. A total of 33 ideas were generated through the public consultation process. Of these, only four did not satisfy the requirements of the VFH Accessibility Fund, given they were outside of the scope with respect to supporting accessible transportation. Participants were asked to rank their ideas from one to five, with one being their most preferred idea. The complete list of ideas, in their original ranking, as well as key findings from the consultations are described in Document 1: Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Summary of Public Consultations.

Financial Implications

As of December 31, 2018, the total amount of funds available in the VFH Accessibility Fund is \$1,248,413. Based on historical trip data, an average of \$720,000 per year can be allocated to programs supporting accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa.

Funds collected for the Vehicle-For-Hire Accessibility Fund are credited to the By-law and Regulatory Services operating budget and any unspent funds are transferred to the Private Transportation Company Accessibility Reserve. Expenditures required to support accessibility programs will be funded by the accessibility funds collected.

BACKGROUND

On April 13, 2016, City Council approved the report titled “Regulating Vehicles for Hire in the City of Ottawa – Taxis, Limousines and Private Transportation Companies” (ACS2016-COS-EPS-0012). As part of its deliberations, Council delegated authority to the General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) to establish a voluntary per-trip surcharge for accessibility to be paid by licensed Private Transportation Companies (PTCs), with any funds received from the surcharge to be directed to a dedicated reserve fund.

Council further directed that the General Manager, EPS establish a Steering Committee comprised of internal and external stakeholders to develop a consultation strategy with respect to how fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund could be used to offset costs for a number of programs supporting accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa.

The City of Ottawa, under the *Municipal Act, 2001*, does not have the authority to impose an accessibility levy be applied to Private Transportation Companies that do not offer accessible vehicle-for-hire services to the City’s standards. At the meeting on April 13, 2016, Council approved a recommendation that the Ontario Government be petitioned to approve various legislative amendments relating to accessible transportation. In May 2016, the City Clerk sent two letters requesting that the province:

- Amend the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, 2005 (AODA) to mandate appropriate accessible transportation requirements for PTCs and to foster a more level playing field with taxicabs and accessible taxicab; and
- Amend the Municipal Act, 2001 or the City of Ottawa Act, 1999 to provide authority for City Council to impose and implement an accessibility levy to be

applied to for PTCs that do not offer accessible vehicle-for-hire services to the City's standards, where the fees collected from such a levy are to be used by City Council to promote and foster accessible transportation services in Ottawa.

To date, there has been no change in the legislation to allow municipalities to impose an accessibility levy.

Notwithstanding the above, in July 2017, the City entered into an agreement with Uber Canada Inc. (Uber) who agreed to pay a voluntary accessibility surcharge of \$0.07 per-trip to support accessible transportation in Ottawa. This voluntary payment was prorated to the effective date of when Uber was licensed by the City of Ottawa on October 4, 2016. In March 2018, a second PTC, Lyft Inc. (Lyft) was licensed to operate in the city of Ottawa. Like Uber, Lyft agreed to contribute \$0.07 per-trip to the VFH Accessibility Fund.

In October 2017, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee, chaired by the General Manager, EPS, was established. Membership included representation from the Accessibility Office, By-law and Regulatory Services, Transportation Services and three members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee including the Committee Chair and former City Councillor Shad Qadri. The Steering Committee was responsible for developing a consultation strategy to determine how the City could use the VFH Accessibility Fund to help offset costs for programs supporting accessible transportation. The Steering Committee determined that public consultations would be the most effective way to generate ideas on how the funds could be allocated.

Between January 24 and February 16, 2018, members of the public were invited to participate in one of five in-person sessions and/or complete an online survey. After completing an initial review of the feedback received through the consultation process, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee determined that many ideas fell under the mandate of multiple departments across the organization. Extensive internal consultation was required for determining the feasibility of implementing various ideas. Over the summer of 2018, EPS worked with other departments to complete a feasibility analysis of all ideas generated by the public.

On November 7, 2018, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee met to discuss the results of the cross-departmental feasibility analysis. After thoroughly reviewing the results, the Steering Committee developed recommendations on how the City of Ottawa can use the VFH Accessibility Fund to support accessible transportation.

DISCUSSION

Public Consultations

Between January 24 and February 16, 2018, members of the public were invited to participate in one of five in-person sessions and/or complete an online survey. On January 30 and February 16, 2018, Emergency and Protective Services hosted five public meetings to obtain feedback with respect to how Council can use the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund to promote and foster accessible transportation services in Ottawa. Feedback was also received by telephone and e-mail. Feedback was obtained from 130 people using a combination of qualitative and quantitative consultation methods.

All feedback and ideas obtained through the consultation process were considered, however, participants were reminded that as per Council's direction, the VFH Accessibility Fund must be spent on programs and services that support accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa. These programs and services include:

- Accessible transportation services provided directly by wheelchair accessible vehicles such as OC Transpo, Para Transpo and taxicabs; and/or
- City and community-based programs and services that support or enhance the ability of persons of all ages with physical disabilities who require the use of a mobility device to move around the city regardless of the mode(s) of transportation used.

Further, participants were advised that ideas on how to spend money in the VFH Accessibility Fund must align with the amount of money available in the VFH Accessibility Fund and at least one of the following Guiding Principles:

1. **Accessible:** Programs and services that support and/or provide transportation services, within the city of Ottawa, to persons of all ages who have physical disabilities that require the use of a power wheelchair or scooter to meet daily transportation needs.
2. **Safe:** Programs and services that further enhance the personal safety of individuals with mobility disabilities while using accessible public transportation services in the city of Ottawa.
3. **Available:** Programs and services that promote or enhance the availability of accessible transportation services for persons with mobility disabilities across all areas of the City, including rural zones and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of weather.

4. **Affordable:** Programs and services aimed at ensuring that public transportation costs for individuals for persons with mobility disabilities is equal to or less transportation costs for individuals who do not have disabilities.
5. **Timely:** Programs and services aimed at ensuring individuals with mobility disabilities are able to access public transportation services in a timely manner (on-demand) that is comparable to services available to all other customers.
6. **Sustainable:** Programs and services that the City is able to implement and maintain using available resources including funds, information, and staff resources.

The consultations generated many innovative ideas for improving accessible transportation in the City of Ottawa. A total of 33 ideas were generated through the public consultation process. Of these, only four did not satisfy the requirements of the VFH Accessibility Fund, given they were outside of the scope with respect to supporting accessible transportation. Participants were asked to rank their ideas from 1 to 5, with 1 being their most preferred idea. The complete list of ideas, in their original ranking, as well as key findings from the consultations are described in Document 1: Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Summary of Public Consultations.

Feasibility Analysis

After completing an initial review of the feedback received through the consultation process, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee determined that many of the ideas fell under the mandate of multiple departments across the organization. Extensive consultation with these departments was required for determining the feasibility of implementing the remaining 29 ideas.

Departments were asked to complete a feasibility analysis of each idea that fell under their respective mandates. When determining feasibility, departments were asked to answer the following questions for each idea:

- Are there any initiatives currently underway or planned related to this idea?
- What is required for you to implement this idea?
- How much will it cost to implement (one-time costs) and maintain (ongoing costs) this idea?
- Are there any technology, legislation or policy implications to implementing this idea?
- Can you implement and/or maintain this idea within your existing departmental budget?
- Do you have adequate staff resources to implement and sustain this idea?

- Do you require all or a portion of the VFH Accessibility Fund?
- If you cannot implement this idea, is there something else your department can do to address this idea/issue?

The feasibility analysis revealed that some of the ideas were already underway. Other ideas were deemed not feasible for implementation at this time for reasons, such as cost, resource requirements, and sustainability. Departments were encouraged to consider all ideas, including those not recommended for the VFH Accessibility Fund for inclusion in the 2020-2025 City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Approve the allocation of fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund to the initiatives described in this report, as recommended by the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund Steering Committee.

Uber and Lyft are voluntarily contributing \$0.07 per trip to the VFH Accessibility Fund. The amount of funds collected is based on the number of trips made and fluctuates each month. As of December 31, 2018, the total amount of funds available in the VFH Accessibility Fund is \$1,248,413. This money has been accruing since October 2016, when Uber was licensed to operate in Ottawa. Lyft began contributing the VFH Accessibility Fund in March 2018. Voluntary accessibility surcharges will be negotiated with any new Private Transportation Companies (PTCs) that emerge.

Based on historical trip data, an average of \$720,000 per year can be allocated to programs supporting accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa.

When reviewing the results of the cross-departmental feasibility analysis and determining its recommendations, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee applied the following considerations:

- The scope of the public consultations;
- The six guiding principles used to evaluate ideas generated by the public;
- The ranking of ideas by participants (1 through 33); and
- The impact on individuals with mobility disabilities in both rural and urban areas.

The VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee is recommending that Council approve the allocation of fees generated through the VFH Accessibility Fund to the following initiatives:

1. Provide fund to not-for-profit and community agencies, such as community resource centres, to expand accessible transportation in rural areas

On October 12, 2011 Council approved the report titled “Improved Transit Services for Seniors and People with Disabilities in Rural Areas” (ACS2011-ICS-TRA-0021). The report included a recommendation to redirect a portion of funding for rural Para Transpo service to the following community agencies:

- Rural Ottawa South Support Services
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre

These not-for-profit agencies provide rural transportation services for seniors and adults with disabilities through programs supported by limited provincial funding and community donations. Transportation Services currently allocates over \$600,000 to these agencies to maintain their service levels.

Participants of the VFH Accessibility Fund public consultations identified a need for more accessible transportation services in rural areas, including rural-to-rural trips, a service that is not provided by Para Transpo. Allocating all or a portion of the VFH Accessibility Fund to expand accessible transportation in rural areas was ranked at number three out of 33 ideas provided by participants of the VFH Accessibility Fund public consultations.

The VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommends that a portion of the VFH Accessibility Fund be used each year to increase current funding provided by Transportation Services to provide even more rural-to-rural accessible transportation services.

2. Develop a Smartphone application for Para Transpo customers so they can track the arrival of their ride

Participants of the VFH Accessibility Fund public consultations expressed concerns over long wait times for Para Transpo service. In the absence of on-demand service, participants recommended a GPS tracking system for Para Transpo so customers could track in real-time the location and expected arrival of their ride.

All Para Transpo vehicles, both City-owned minibuses and contracted taxis, already have GPS tracking systems. Para Transpo staff use this system to track vehicles and to make service adjustments as required to provide a reliable service to customers. Staff have committed to the Transit Commission that they will report back later in 2019 with a

project plan to provide online/app booking and account management for Para Transpo customers. The additional funding from the VFH Accessibility Fund will be used to enhance this online service further to allow customers to receive real-time information about the expected arrival time of their trips.

The VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommends that a portion of the VFH Accessibility Fund be used by Transportation Services to fund one-time costs associated with implementing this enhancement. Future maintenance costs are to be included in Transportation Services' operational budget.

3. Reduce the cost of taxi coupons and

4. Increase the maximum allowance for taxi coupons per customer

Transportation Services' Taxi Coupon Program allows registered Para Transpo customers to take discounted accessible taxicab service as an alternative to Para Transpo. Clients can book their trips, at their convenience, with participating Ottawa taxicab companies and save 40% off the regular taxi fare. The cost for one coupon book, worth \$40 in taxicab fares, is \$24. Currently, customers may purchase up to four coupon books each month.

Many participants of the VFH Accessibility Fund public consultations reported that even with a 40% discount, the cost of taking an accessible taxicab was still too high. Further, participants expressed a desire to increase the maximum allowance of taxi coupon books per customer, per month.

The VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommends that a portion of the VFH Accessibility Fund be used each year to increase the taxi coupon rebate from 40% to 55%. This would reduce the cost of one coupon book by 25% (or \$6). Additionally, the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommends that the maximum allowance of taxi coupon books be doubled from four to eight per customer, per month.

Recommendation 2: Delegate authority to the General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services to adjust the annual allocation of fees generated through the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund as necessary, as described in this report and as recommended by the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Steering Committee.

The amount of funds collected from Private Transportation Companies (PTCs) is based on the number of trips made and fluctuates each month. Each year, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) will review the amount of funds collected and make any adjustments necessary with regards to how the funds are allocated. Funds will only be

allocated to the initiatives described in this report. The Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund Steering Committee recommends that the General Manager, EPS be delegated the authority to adjust the annual allocation of fees generated through the VFH Accessibility Fund, as necessary.

Recommendation 3: Delegate authority to the Director, By-law and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the City Clerk and Solicitor, to negotiate, finalize and execute voluntary accessibility surcharges with Private Transportation Companies.

On April 13, 2016, City Council delegated to the General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS), in consultation with the City Clerk and Solicitor, the authority to negotiate, finalize and execute the establishment of a voluntary, per-trip surcharge for accessibility to be paid by licensed Private Transportation Companies (PTCs). Negotiations for a voluntary, per-trip surcharge occur alongside the licensing process. As per the Vehicle-for-Hire By-law, the licensing of PTCs is the responsibility of the Chief License Inspector, a position held by the Director, By-law and Regulatory Services. EPS is recommending that the authority to negotiate, finalize and execute voluntary accessibility surcharges with Private Transportation Companies be transferred from the General Manager, EPS to the Director, By-law and Regulatory Services.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

This is a City-wide report. Rural implications were considered when developing the public engagement strategy. Further, if approved, the recommendations described in this report would increase the availability of accessible transportation services for individuals with mobility disabilities in rural areas of the city.

CONSULTATION

On January 30 and February 16, 2018, Emergency and Protective Services (EPS) hosted five public meetings to obtain feedback with respect to how Council can use the Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) Accessibility Fund to promote and foster accessible transportation services in Ottawa.

Public engagement is an important part of the City's decision-making process. EPS referred to the City's Public Engagement Strategy when determining how best to engage the public. EPS consulted with the VFH Accessibility Fund Steering Committee throughout the Public Engagement Cycle and worked closely with the Accessibility Office and Public Information and Media Relations to develop consultation materials

and communications. The public was invited to participate in the consultation process through a variety of communication channels including:

- ottawa.ca
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Public Service Announcements
- Rack cards disseminated at a Para Transpo information session hosted by Transportation Services
- Targeted emails to:
 - Mayor and City Councillors
 - Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - 1600 subscribers of the City of Ottawa Accessibility Spotlight Newsletter
 - 131 community organizations and agencies

Additionally, the taxicab community and OC Transpo operations staff were also notified of the consultations and advised that all members of the public were welcome to participate.

Further details about the VFH Accessibility Fund public consultations including methodology, evaluation criteria and key findings is provided in Document 1: Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Summary of Public Consultations.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

There were two members of the 2014-2018 Term of Council Accessibility Advisory Committee, Brian Wade and Adele Furrrie, who participated as members of the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Steering Committee. Former Councillor Shad Qadri, former Accessibility Advisory Committee Council Liaison, also participated in the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was engaged and supported the development of the recommendations in this report. Furthermore, staff presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on September 18, 2018 to provide an update and receive any feedback.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to implementing the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funds collected for the Vehicle-For-Hire Accessibility Fund are credited to the By-law and Regulatory Services operating budget and any unspent funds are transferred to the Private Transportation Company Accessibility Reserve. Expenditures required to support accessibility programs will be funded by the accessibility funds collected.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Accessibility was a key consideration throughout the public engagement process and during the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Steering Committee meetings. Accommodations were made available for participants upon request including accessible formats, hearing supports and communication supports. Additionally, a male and female personal support worker were available at the in-person consultations to assist participants, as necessary.

As per Council's direction, the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund must be spent on programs and services that support accessible transportation in the city of Ottawa. These programs and services may include:

- Accessible transportation services provided directly by wheelchair accessible vehicles such as OC Transpo, Para Transpo and taxis; and/or
- City and community-based programs and services that support or enhance the ability of persons of all ages with physical disabilities who require the use of a mobility device to move around the city regardless of the mode(s) of transportation used.

All recommendations described in this report support programs and services aimed at improving accessible transportation for residents with disabilities and their families in the City of Ottawa.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations of this report support the following 2015-2018 Term of Council Priorities:

Healthy and Caring Communities: Help all residents and visitors enjoy a good quality of life and a sense of community well-being by providing healthy, safe, secure, accessible and inclusive places and services.

Service Excellence: Improve client satisfaction with the delivery of municipal services by measurably strengthening the culture of service excellence at the City, by improving the efficiency of City operations and by creating positive client experiences.

Transportation and Mobility: Meet the current and future transportation needs of residents and visitors through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Transportation Master Plan, including ensuring the City's transit services are reliable and financially sustainable. Continued focus on improving mobility during the LRT implementation, and support for alternative transportation methods including cycling and walking, as well as transit.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund Summary of Public Consultations

DISPOSITION

Emergency and Protective Services, in conjunction with any other relevant branches or departments, will implement Council directions emanating from this report, as appropriate.

Emergency and Protective Services, in conjunction any other relevant branches or departments, will provide updates to the Accessibility Advisory Committee, as appropriate, and will report back to Community and Protective Services Committee and Council every two years on the status of the Vehicle-for-Hire Accessibility Fund.