Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – February 19, 2019

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 5, 2019

Item No. 2 Vehicles for Hire Safety and Security Program

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to use funds from the Safety and Security surcharge levied on Personal Transportation Provider (PTP) trips towards developing and printing a "Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct", which will be required to be posted in all taxi cab vehicles and to further investigate ways to have this available to PTP drivers and passengers, utilizing up to $5,000.00 for this purpose.

2. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to use funds from the Safety and Security surcharge levied on Personal Transportation Provider trips to implement an enhanced training program, utilizing up to $20,000.00 for this purpose.

3. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to identify an alternate funding source within its budget to accelerate implementation of the training programs, as identified in Recommendation 2 and that, as funds from the Safety and Security surcharge are collected, the WPA be reimbursed on a yearly basis to credit back any amount that has been expended against this funding commitment.

4. That future recommendations for utilizing funds from the Safety and Security surcharge be included in the Vehicle for Hire Annual Reports.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – February 19, 2019

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 5, 2019

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Allard,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On February 5, 2019, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On January 31, 2019, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and adopted the following:

1. That an extension of time of up to 60 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 22, 2019, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and submitted the following to Council:

1. That an extension of time of up to 60 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 5, 2019

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 8, 2019, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works recommended to Council:

1. That an extension of time of up to 60 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 28, 2018, the Executive Policy Committee referred the following to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On April 26, 2018, Council concurred in the April 11, 2018, recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and granted an extension of time of up to 180 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 5, 2019

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On April 11, 2018, the Executive Policy Committee recommended to Council:

1. That an extension of time of up to 180 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry, to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry;

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 13, 2017, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, and adopted the report on the Transition of the Regulation of Vehicles for Hire from the Province of Manitoba to the City of Winnipeg, which included the following recommendation:

19. That the Public Service report back in 120 days with recommendations on a program to support safety and security in the vehicle for hire industry to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from this industry;

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Vehicle for Hire Safety and Security Program

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
G. Heather	R. Topolniski, COO	B. D'Avignon, Acting for M. Ruta	D. McNeil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 1, 2018 the City of Winnipeg was statutorily required to assume responsibility for the vehicle for hire industry as part the dissolution of the provincial Taxicab Board. As part of this new responsibility, a Vehicle for Hire By-law was enacted to regulate and provide licencing oversight of the industry which consists of taxis, limousine and luxury vehicles, and personal transportation providers (PTPs).

The Vehicles for Hire By-law streamlined and modernized the vehicle for hire industry in Winnipeg. The By-law allowed for over 400 additional vehicles to operate as vehicles for hire, providing improved service and safety for Winnipeggers.

Recommendations in this report are based on the feedback regarding further enhancements to the safety and security of drivers and passengers that has been received and discussed by the stakeholder advisory committee, public engagement survey and through consultation and continued engagement of the taxicab industry, personal transportation providers, accessibility advocates and citizens who utilize vehicles for hire services. This includes developing and printing of a Code of Conduct to clearly communicate expectations of drivers and passengers and to have them posted in taxis. As well, additions and enhancements to the existing driver training program, and a new refresher training module to update drivers and ensure they have access to improved customer service education.

In addition, a mandatory minimum pre-payment program, designed in collaboration with the industry on a trial basis, will be implemented with the anticipation that there will be a reduction in fare disputes, determined by the stakeholders to be one of the most common causes for conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to use funds from the Safety and Security surcharge levied on Personal Transportation Provider (PTP) trips towards developing and printing a “Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct”, which will be required to be posted in all taxi cab vehicles and to further investigate ways to have this available to PTP drivers and passengers, utilizing up to $5,000 for this purpose.

2. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to use funds from the Safety and Security surcharge levied on Personal Transportation Provider trips to implement an enhanced training program, utilizing up to $20,000 for this purpose.

3. That the Winnipeg Parking Authority be authorized to identify an alternate funding source within its budget to accelerate implementation of the training programs, as identified in Recommendation 2 and that, as funds from the Safety and Security surcharge are collected, the WPA be reimbursed on a yearly basis to credit back any amount that has been expended against this funding commitment.

4. That future recommendations for utilizing funds from the Safety and Security surcharge be included in the Vehicle for Hire Annual Reports.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On December 13, 2017, Council approved the Vehicle for Hire By-law 129/2017, directing the Winnipeg Public Service to “report back in 120 days with recommendation on the program to support safety and security in the VFH industry to be developed in consultation with stakeholders from the industry.”

To support this request, Council also approved a $0.03/trip safety surcharge levied on every trip provided by Personal Transportation Providers.

On April 11, 2018, the Public Service requested an additional 180 days in order to allow for consultation with stakeholders, including new stakeholders to the industry (such as personal transportation providers), and the development of safety and security program recommendations. This extension was granted.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If the recommendations in this report are approved, the Winnipeg Parking Authority will continue to work with its industry partners, including VFH service providers, the VFH Stakeholder Advisory committee, and taxi driver training providers in order to develop and implement a program to foster improved safety and security within the vehicle for hire industry in Winnipeg, including a driver and passenger code of conduct and public education campaign (up to $5,000.00) and improved training for drivers, both initially and through the development and implementation of a refresher training module (up to $20,000)

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

When Council was considering the Vehicle for Hire (VFH) By-law, stakeholder consultation and delegations stressed the importance of safety and security for both drivers and passengers within the industry and reinforced that this should be a top priority.

As a result, Council approved the Safety and Security surcharge. The Safety and Security surcharge is only levied on Personal Transportation Provider (PTP) trips, and from March 1, 2018 to the end of October 2018, $4,374 has been collected.

While this amount is insufficient to meet the total expenditure amounts for both recommendations in this, Council approval will allow Winnipeg Parking Authority (WPA) to continue to work on these initiatives. In order to expedite the second recommendation, the WPA will work to identify an alternate funding source within its budget to accelerate implementation of the training programs. Council is being asked to approve the use of the surcharge, as it is collected, to repay the WPAs budget on a yearly basis to credit back any amount that has been expended against this funding commitment.

Improving Safety

Improvements to safety within this industry relies on multiple approaches, including education, training, awareness and action. The WPA is proposing several steps to improve safety through consideration of stakeholder and public input and by reviewing steps taken in other jurisdictions.

Vehicle for Hire Advisory Committee

In June, Winnipeg Parking Authority (WPA) VFH opened applications for citizens to apply to be a member of the Vehicle for Hire Advisory Committee. The stakeholder advisory committee consists of 13 members representing a variety of groups associated with the industry and a representative of the Public Service.

A common discussion item for the Advisory Committee has been safety and security. The advisory committee has discussed the important role that better customer service play in improved safety for both drivers and passengers. The committee has discussed the need to improve training to recognize the need to reduce conflict between drivers and passengers. Those members with vehicles for hire training experience noted the lack of refresher training for taxi drivers and a potential lack of required training for private transportation providers. A presentation was given on training areas that can be improved or enhanced. Advisory committee members also noted the importance of reducing the financial burden on drivers by limiting the cost and time required for training as much as possible.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The WPA and the Office of Public Engagement created a survey in order to obtain the public's input on safety and security in vehicles for hire. Survey input was accepted from September 14 to October 7.

The City of Winnipeg consulted with VFH stakeholders and the public to gather input for consideration while developing future recommendations to Council on the regulation of Vehicles

for Hire and how the revenue from the accessibility and driver safety surcharges should be used.

Stakeholders on the Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee were engaged at different stages in the survey process. The Advisory Committee was consulted early on to gather initial feedback on safety and for their input on the draft survey. The committee was also consulted after the survey was closed to gather input on recommendations.

The general public provided input through an online survey.

Date(s)	Activity	Details
July 8, 2018 August 15, 2018 September 13, 2018 October 17, 2018	Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee meetings	Representation from 14 stakeholders. Discussions on safety, accessibility, draft survey, and draft recommendations.
September 14 to October 7, 2018	Online survey	460 responses. This survey results do not provide a scientific sample, but rather, provides a general sense of feedback.

Key Survey Findings:

- Most survey respondents were passengers: 72% (330 of 460)
- Most respondents (310 of 460) feel vehicles for hire in Winnipeg are safe.
- Most drivers who responded to the survey feel safe most of the time: 75% (30 of 40)
- “Reduce the number of conflicts between drivers and passengers” was the most popular objective of a safety and security program
- An education campaign to provide information on the rights of drivers and passengers and the consequences of violence was the most popular safety and security measure.

What we heard	What is being considered
The highest ranked objective for a safety program was reducing the number of conflicts between drivers and passengers. In previous and ongoing discussions with drivers, fare disputes were noted as the most common cause for conflict.	In order to reduce fare disputes, the City is planning to investigate the steps necessary to implement a mandatory minimum pre-payment in collaboration with the industry on a trial basis. If the trial is successful, the vehicles for hire regulations will be amended to reflect the change. A campaign to notify residents and the industry will be required for effective implementation.
The Advisory Committee noted that requiring pre-payment would assist in avoiding profiling of passengers and drivers.	The City is planning to investigate the steps necessary to implement a mandatory minimum pre-payment in collaboration with the industry on a trial basis. If the trial is successful, the vehicles for hire regulations will be amended to reflect the change. A campaign to notify

	residents and the industry will be required for effective implementation.
The top selected safety improvement measure was an education campaign to provide information on the rights of drivers and passengers and the consequences of violence.	An education campaign will be initiated, including a "Passenger and Driver Code of Conduct" posted in all vehicles for hire. Funds from the surcharge are intended to go towards funding a public education program, including the creation and printing of materials and the costs of an advertising campaign.
Improved driver training to reduce conflicts was a popular choice amongst survey respondents and was discussed by the Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee, with offers from committee members to assist in the creation of such training.	A review of vehicles for hire training will be undertaken. A taxi driver refresher course will be developed with advice and content from advisory committee members as well as experts in vehicles for hire training and safety. Further discussion with PTP stakeholders will take place to determine how best to adapt taxi refresher training materials for PTP drivers.

Next Steps

The content of the proposed training program, delivery options and timing of the program will be developed following Council approval, and will be approved by the designated employee to ensure it meets the needs of the industry and is in line with VFH stakeholder feedback The WPA will work towards identifying a funding source to advance this initiative, and then the funds collected from the safety surcharge on PTP provided trips will be credited back to the WPA on a yearly basis to repay the funding committed, along with assisting in delivering it to dispatch companies and their drivers.

The WPA will ensure that the training program meets the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and includes the information intended to improve driver awareness of issues such as cultural differences, acceptable language and conflict management and de-escalation. The approach towards training implementation will consider the needs of drivers to avoid time away from work.

The WPA also plans to develop a public campaign, using various approaches and tools to highlight the industry and to improve the overall awareness of drivers and passengers and to support safety within the vehicles for hire industry. This would be accomplished in consultation and with the assistance of Corporate Communications to ensure a far reaching campaign. WPA and the Advisory Committee have identified that a "Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct", initially to be posted in all taxis, but possibly expanded to include availability in PTPs as well, would be beneficial to assist in informing passengers, along with setting expectations. This document would also be included on the Vehicle for Hire website. WPA recommends that a portion of the safety and security surcharge could be used to offset the cost to print the code of conduct for the taxis, along with working with Corporate Communications in developing a broader strategy to communicate these expectations to the general public and the industry. The content that will make up the code of conduct for drivers and passengers will be approved by the designated employee. The WPA will also work with PTP dispatchers on ways to provide this information to their drivers and passengers.

Steps to Improve Safety

- Mandate that all taxi cameras record audio as well as video. This has been completed and is an enhancement over the existing capabilities.
- Finalize and approve the content of a "Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct" and require that it be posted in each taxi, posted on the VFH website and eventually be available to all PTP drivers and customers.
- Implement a mandatory minimum pre-payment program in collaboration with the industry on a trial basis as a pilot project. This would be used to study an anticipated reduction in fare disputes and set guidelines towards expectations of both drivers and passengers. A trial would include a public education campaign to spread awareness and support the industry in its trial and implementation.
- Implement a dispatcher complaints reporting regime, and recommend to Council the addition of a penalty fine as a consequence for a dispatcher not following its documented complaints policy and for them consistently not handling complaints in a satisfactory manner. This will be recommended in the annual Vehicle for Hire update report.

Recommended Steps Using the Safety Surcharge

- Develop and print a "Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct"
- Plan and implement a public education program for improved awareness around driver and passenger rights and vehicle for hire safety.
- Complaints process information clearly communicated on the "Driver and Passenger Code of Conduct".
- Develop an enhanced initial training program for taxi drivers.
- Develop a refresher training program for taxi drivers that can be expanded to include PTP drivers as well, through collaboration with dispatchers.

The WPA continues to partner with the Vehicle for Hire industry and stakeholders to explore challenges and concerns and find innovative and effective solutions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: November 26, 2018

Project Name:

Vehicle for Hire Safety and Security Program

First Year of Program **2021**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 25,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Deferred revenue available	25,000	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts		-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments: The above costs represent maximum allowed to spend on VFH safety and security program in the future years. It is estimated that by 2021 WPA will collect enough funds from Personal Transportation Providers in the form of safety and security surcharge per trip. If WPA is able to secure another funding source or find funds within existing VFH budgets to cover these costs, then the program will be implemented sooner and the funds will be recovered from monthly safety surcharges over time.

original signed by

Lioubov Gavrilova-Crozier, CPA, CA
Acting Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:
Legal Services (as to legal matters)
Office of Public Engagement

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

These changes are aligned with the key goals of the City of Winnipeg 2011 Transportation Master Plan (a part of the OurWinnipeg framework):

“A key underlying goal of the transportation plan is to expand the range of travel options that are available to residents, workers and visitors, and to ensure that people are not dependent on one single mode. Expanded travel choice creates countless community benefits.”

SUBMITTED BY

Department:	Winnipeg Parking Authority
Division:	Vehicle for Hire
Prepared by:	G. Heather
Date:	December 3, 2018
File No:	WPA-040-2018