Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – December 3, 2019

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – November 19, 2019

Item No. 2 Annual Update on the Vehicle for Hire Industry and Amendments to the Vehicle for Hire By-law

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 19, 2019, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, as amended, and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the update provided on the vehicle for hire industry be received as information.

2. That the Vehicle for Hire fee schedule be updated as set out in Appendix A, effective January 1, 2020.

3. That the Designated Employee recommend the implementation of a flat fare schedule for trips originating at the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport and terminating in or around Downtown, to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, including a verbal report to the Standing Committee on February 4, 2020, and that the fare schedule (set out in Appendix B) be amended accordingly.

4. That the proposed amendments to the Vehicle for Hire By-law (draft amending by-law set out in Appendix C) be enacted, as well as amendments to the associated Municipal By-law Enforcement Act enabling by-law.

5. That the ratio of taxicabs to population be confirmed at 1:1,203.

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

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – November 19, 2019

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 19, 2019, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Delete Recommendation 3 in its entirety and replace with the following:

    "3. That the Designated Employee recommend the implementation of a flat fare schedule for trips originating at the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport and terminating in or around Downtown, to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, including a verbal report to the Standing Committee on February 4, 2020, and that the fare schedule (set out in Appendix B) be amended accordingly."

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- Patrick Stewart, Independent Living Resource Centre, submitted a communication dated November 19, 2019.
- Ram Valluru, on behalf of Duffy's Taxi and Unicity Taxi, submitted a communication dated November 18, 2019.

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:

13. That the Public Service be required to report back every 12 months for the first 5 years with an update on the vehicle for hire industry under the new By-law and to request approval for any By-law revisions deemed necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Annual Update on the Vehicle for Hire Industry and Amendments to the Vehicle for Hire By-law

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	n/a	D. Wardrop, Acting Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 1, 2018 the *Local Vehicles for Hire Act* came into force, thereby dissolving the Manitoba Taxicab Board and requiring the City to assume responsibility for regulation of the vehicle for hire (VFH) industry in Winnipeg.

The By-law has continued to support a more streamlined and modernized vehicle for hire industry by reducing the regulatory burden on taxis, increasing the industry's capacity to meet demand by allowing more vehicles for hire on the road, adding to the accessible taxi fleet, and implementing improvements to both driver and passenger safety. Since assuming responsibility for the industry, the VFH office has worked to develop collaborative relationships with the industry and stakeholders. An increase in the availability of accessible vehicles has taken place, with an 85% increase in accessible taxis, leading to additional capacity. This segment is now nearly 22% of the overall taxi fleet. A review of the approved ratio of taxicabs to population took place this year, with no recommended changes. There are no proposed changes to the maximum fare schedule for 2020. As well, the VFH office has continued to focus on safety as a priority.

Recommendations in this report are intended to continue to move the industry forward, address feedback from various stakeholders (including the taxicab industry, personal transportation providers, accessibility advocates and passengers who use vehicle for hire services), and take a proactive approach in making improvements to the overall regulatory and licensing regime.

Highlights of recommendations proposed in this report are:

- adjusting the fee schedule to provide some clarity and better reflect the reality of the industry;
- streamlining the required criminal record checks, without jeopardizing public safety or increasing risks.
- allowing the VFH Appeal Board flexibility in considering factors such as the amount of time that has passed since a criminal offence when making a decision being appealed; and
- introducing a new fine for failing to comply with an order issued under the By-law.

The management, licensing, regulatory oversight, and other initiatives for the VFH industry are currently projected to be cost neutral and have no budgetary impact to the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the update provided on the vehicles for hire industry be received as information.

2. That the VFH fee schedule be updated as set out in Appendix A, effective January 1, 2020.

3. That authority be delegated to the Designated Employee to implement a flat fare schedule for trips originating at the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport and terminating in or around Downtown, and that the fare schedule (set out in Appendix B) be amended accordingly, effective March 1, 2020.

4. That the proposed amendments to the VFH By-law (draft amending by-law set out in Appendix C) be enacted, as well as amendments to the associated Municipal By-law Enforcement Act enabling by-law.

5. That the ratio of taxicabs to population be confirmed at 1:1,203.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

This report is the second of five annual reports required by Council, as per the December 13, 2017 report on VFH By-law approved by Council, which directed:

> "That the Public Service be required to report back every 12 months for the first 5 years with an update on the vehicle for hire industry under the new By-law and to request approval for any By-law revisions deemed necessary."

Only Council has the authority to approve recommendations brought forward in this report.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The report proposes a number of regulatory changes that are intended to improve the overall safety and customer experience of the VFH industry from both a passenger and industry perspective, as well as continue to move the industry forward through regulatory and administrative improvements.

Details of all recommendations are included in the history and discussion section of this report.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

On November 9, 2017, The Province of Manitoba passed the *Local Vehicles for Hire Act*, which dissolved the Manitoba Taxicab Board, repealed the *Taxicab Act* and associated regulations, and statutorily transitioned oversight and regulation of Winnipeg's VFH industry to the City, effective February 28, 2018.

The City of Winnipeg assumed responsibility for the VFH industry by enacting a new VFH By-law that streamlined and modernized VFH regulations, with an emphasis on passenger and driver safety, as well as an aim to increase accessible service and options for passengers. This report's recommendations, combined with recent achievements made since the City was assigned responsibility for VFH regulation, will continue to resolve these concerns and allow for further improvements in the industry.

The following recommendations in this report will make oversight and enforcement more efficient, address feedback from industry stakeholders, and offer improvements to the VFH industry.

Recommendation #2- VFH Fee Schedule (Appendix A)

A proposed updated fee schedule for the VFH industry will enable some of the other changes suggested in this report, and will provide additional clarification to other existing fees. There is also a re-alignment of dispatcher licence categories and the associated fees to better reflect the realities of the industry and future growth.

Recommendation #3- VFH Fare Schedule (Appendix B)

A proposed updated fare schedule for the VFH industry which will include allowing a flat rate fare for trips originating at the James A. Richardson Winnipeg International Airport and terminating in and around Downtown is included. This has been requested by the Winnipeg Airports Authority and an amendment to the By-law has been included, allowing this to be implemented once the flat rate fares are approved.

Recommendation #4- By-law Amendments as set out in Appendix C

A number of amendments, as set out in Appendix B, are being proposed to more effectively administer and enforce the VFH By-law and to address feedback from the taxi cab industry, personal transportation providers (PTP), accessibility advocates, and passengers using VFH services.

Proposed amendments to the By-law and their associated implications are summarized below:

i) Amending the language in the By-law regarding PTP drivers and their registration.
Presently, the designated employee must hold a hearing prior to requiring a PTP driver to be deregistered. There are times, however, that a driver does not qualify under the By-law and should not have been registered. In these cases, a hearing should not be required. The designated employee should have the ability to notify a PTP driver and require a PTP dispatcher to terminate a driver for a relevant criminal offence conviction,

major driving offence or registration on the child abuse registry, as is the case for taxi drivers. However, unless the offence fell under section 76 (Immediate Suspensions), a hearing for the offender would be required, except in the case of section 77(2)(a), which allows the designated employee to suspend or terminate the registration of a PTP driver. A hearing would be required for criminal charges, but not for convictions. Further to this section, as a housekeeping amendment, we have added language regarding a driver who may have become listed on the child abuse registry.

ii) Wheelchairs and mobility devices.

In the first VFH annual report and By-law amendment, section 61.1 was added regarding the proper securement of a wheelchair or mobility device in a taxicab. We propose that this be extended to PTP drivers as well, as they provide accessible service and those drivers are required to be fully trained in the proper securement of wheelchairs. This is important from a public safety standpoint to ensure that all drivers providing accessible service are ensuring that passengers in a wheelchair are properly secured in the vehicle.

iii) TDL also valid is PTP driver's licence.

As the requirements are the same for both a taxi driver and a PTP driver to register and be eligible to drive under the by-law, and in order to allow for full flexibility of drivers, we propose that if a taxi driver has a valid taxi drivers licence (TDL), that they be able to provide a copy of that document to a PTP dispatcher in order to register as a PTP driver. The TDL would be provided to the PTP dispatcher, along with the background checks that were provided to the VFH office in order to obtain the valid TDL, and the licensed taxi driver would not be required to get new background checks as presently required by the by-law.

As licenced taxi drivers, when providing PTP transportation services, they remain under a duty to report to the designated employee any criminal charges, major driving offences or registration on the child abuse registry. As well, prior to allowing the newly registered driver to become registered with the PTP company, the PTP dispatcher would be required to provide a copy of the TDL to the VFH office with a request to confirm that the TDL is valid. Failing to do so would result in a fine to the PTP dispatcher of $1000 for not confirming the driver's status and registering a driver without the proper checks in place. Each year when the TDL expires, the driver must be deregistered by the PTP dispatcher immediately, until and unless the driver can prove that the licence has been renewed. The driver would be required to provide information related to the vehicle that they would be driving for the PTP dispatcher, if applicable.

iv) Criminal background checks and vulnerable sector searches

Without weakening the stringent background checks that are completed on drivers, and while still ensuring that public safety is paramount, a change regarding driver requirements is proposed. At present, both taxi drivers and PTP drivers are required to provide a full criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector search (VSS) at the time of registration and then each and every year in order to maintain their licence or their registration with a PTP dispatcher. The obligation to provide a VSS is entirely extraneous because the only additional information that the VSS provides that a criminal record check does not is whether an individual has been pardoned for a sexual offence. The requirement that a criminal record check be provided annually is guaranteed to reveal a conviction for a sexual offence well before it would appear on the VSS as a pardon.

Moreover, besides being unnecessary, the VSS is costly. As a secondary search of the pardoned sex offenders list, and due to the sensitivity of this list, it can often only be confirmed via fingerprints. This means that drivers are required to provide a new set of fingerprints each year, increasing their cost to have this check performed, as well the length of time to complete the check.

The VFH office is proposing that the VSS remain a requirement of all new registrants, whether taxi drivers or PTP drivers, but that the requirement of a VSS for renewing drivers be removed. As the only information provided by the VSS in addition to that provided by the criminal record check is the pardoned sex offenders list, if a driver provides a criminal record check with a clean VSS initially, and continues to provide a criminal record check each year without any convictions, then they cannot become a pardoned sex offender without the conviction appearing first on a criminal record check. In order to be on this list, they would have had to have been convicted of a crime, served their time, and subsequently pardoned by the Parole Board of Canada. A driver would be required to maintain a consistent registration without allowing their licence to lapse or be late in order to have this provision apply. However, to guard against this possibility, should this occur, the driver would then be considered a new applicant and would be required to apply with a new criminal record check, including a VSS.

v) Addition of set fine to the Municipal By-law Enforcement Act Enabling By-law for failing to comply with an order

Setting a fine under the Municipal By-law Enforcement Act (MBEA) for failure to comply with an order issued by the Designated Employee or an enforcement officer will allow for more expeditious enforcement and changing behaviours. This would be in addition to remedies under section 76. The proposed fine here would be $250, with an early payment discount of $125.

vi) Appeal Board flexibility

Allowing the Appeal Board flexibility in considering other factors they deem relevant to a license cancellation or suspension is recommended. At present, subsection 68(3) of the VFH By-law provides that the Appeal Board must consider whether the “nature of the criminal offence, the major driving offence or the actions that resulted in the registration on the child abuse registry justify denying the license or the registration, as the case may be.” Limiting the appeal board to consider only the nature of the offence or action excludes them from considering other important factors, such as the time that has passed since the violation, consideration of whether another incident is likely to occur, and the conduct and behavior of the appellant since the offence or action occurred.

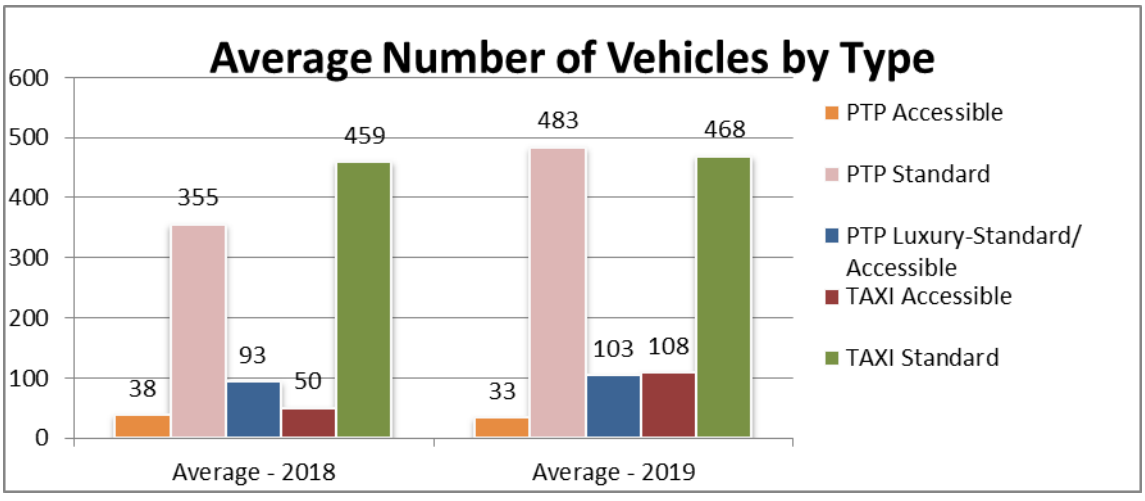
The proposed amendment would provide guidance to the Appeal Board member by providing factors they should consider, and direction to perform a risk assessment of the facts. It would allow the Appeal Board the ability to balance the safety of the public and other drivers, as well as the opportunity to the appellant to have their case heard and relevant facts considered. A guiding document could be provided to the Appeal Board that would include considering factors such as, but not limited to:

a. The nature of the particular criminal offence, particular major driving offence or the actions that resulted in the registration on the child abuse registry, including any extenuating or mitigating factors;
b. whether the particular criminal offence, particular major driving offence, or the actions that resulted in the registration on the child abuse registry took place in a vehicle for hire or while providing a transportation service;
c. the time that has elapsed since the incident and the appellant's record and conduct during that time;
d. the likelihood that the appellant will commit a similar offence or action in the future; and
e. the risk to passengers and the public of allowing the appeal.

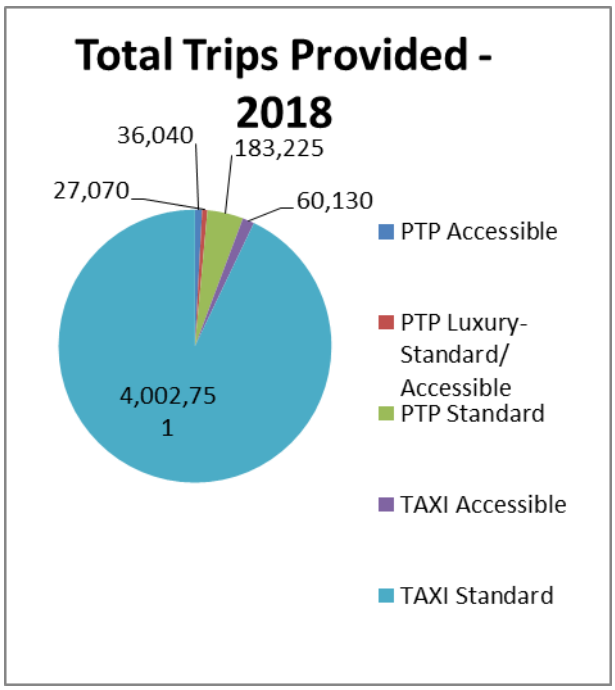
Key achievements and VFH industry update:

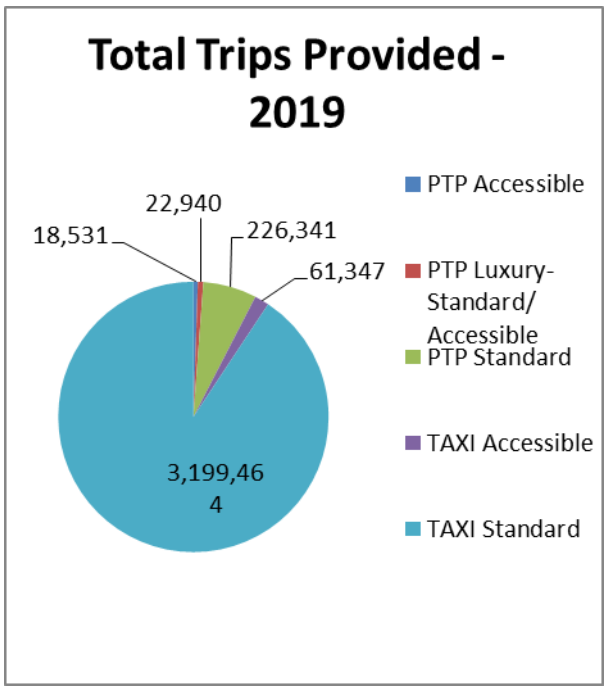
1. The total number of vehicles for hire available to the general public has nearly doubled, increasing by over 500 vehicles since the City took over regulation of the VFH industry. This is mainly due to the increase in PTPs that did not exist prior to the City regulating the industry. All taxi licences issued through the two lotteries in 2018 are on the road and providing service to the public. After the second lottery, the number of accessible taxicabs on the road increased by 85%, bringing the total number of accessible taxicabs in Winnipeg to 22% of the overall authorized fleet. The average number of taxis operating in Winnipeg has remained constant during this period.

2. The addition of PTPs within Winnipeg provides greater capacity and competition in the industry. The overall level of customer service has improved along with the availability and accessibility of service. This new segment of the industry provides an opportunity for citizens to boost both their economic situations by earning additional income while contributing to the overall transportation network.



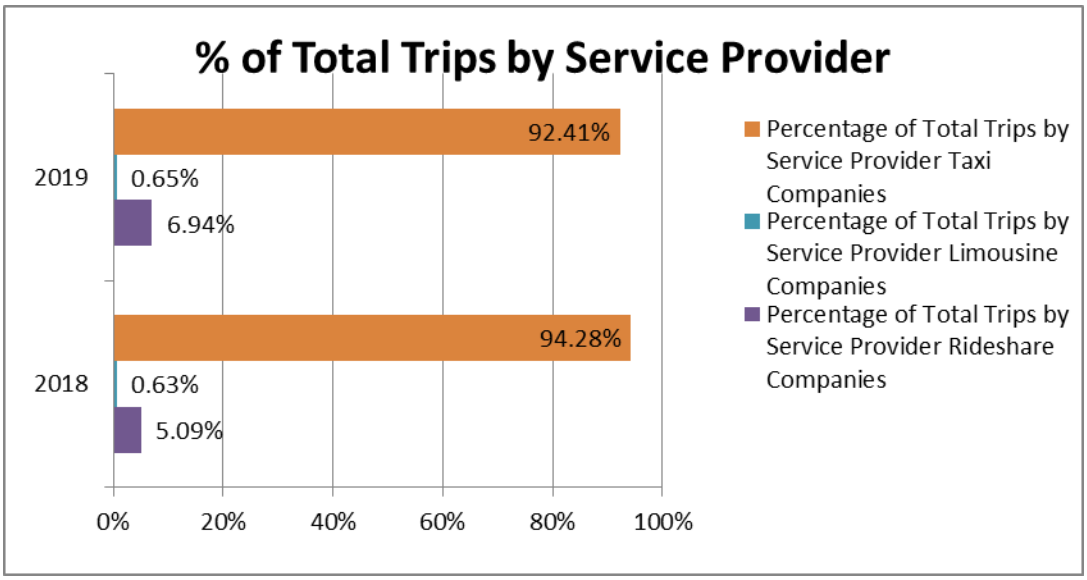
The average number of PTPs available increased significantly over 2018 (by 128 vehicles, from 355 to 483). It should be noted that there could in fact be some double-counting of vehicles and many drivers are registered with multiple PTP dispatchers and would be reported more than once. While the number of PTP vehicles and taxis are nearly even, taxis provide significantly more trips than do PTPs.





From March 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018, there were 4,309,216 reported trips in Winnipeg (an average of 430,922 trips/month). Year to date in 2019 (January to August), there have been 3,528,623 trips, which is an average of 441,078/month. This is an average increase of 2.4% in the number of trips each month. It appears as though there has been an expansion of the market, driven by improved customer service, availability and access to vehicles. This trend of increasing trips is anticipated to continue in the future. On the surface, it seems that citizens are making the decision to use vehicles for hire instead of driving, when the opportunity arises.

Both standard and accessible taxis continue to provide a large majority of the overall trips, accounting for 92.41% in 2019 (to the end of August), slightly down from 94.28% in 2018 (for the 10 months reported from March to December). Limousine/Luxury vehicle service providers have remained relatively steady year over year at 0.65%, while PTPs have increased by almost 2%, moving from 5.09% to 6.94%. There are significantly more trips being provided, and it appears as though PTPs are providing service to citizens who may otherwise drive.



Enforcement and oversight of the industry continues to be a main focus. The VFH enforcement team provides on-street monitoring of the industry, regularly attending to high-use locations and places where vehicles congregate waiting for trips. Vehicle inspection remains a major focus of the team. From January 2019 to the end of August 2019, a total of 13,913 vehicles have been inspected by VFH officers under the VFH By-law. While the majority of the vehicles being inspected are taxis, a focus in 2019 has been on PTPs as well. Of these inspections, officers have placed a vehicle "out of service" only 4.6% of the time.

All vehicles for hire are required to meet certain standards in order to pass inspections, and are expected to meet those minimum standards at all times. Roadside or call-in vehicle inspections are used to inspect critical components and systems that may pose imminent safety concerns to the public. As well, the VFH office has begun to build a relationship with MPI's Vehicle Safety Division and has worked closely over the year with them to ensure that any vehicles providing service to customers are safe, reliable, and meet the standards of the VFH By-law and the MPI vehicle inspection and safety certification program.

In 2018, the City issued 120 new taxi licences, holding two lotteries whereby applicants were selected through a randomized draw. All 120 licences have been claimed and a mix of both standard and accessible vehicles are on the road and providing service. In doing so, the taxicab to population ratio was raised to meet the original Council approved ratio of 1:1,203 people. In accordance with the original Council approval of the administrative report and VFH By-law 129/2017, within two years of taking over the industry, the Public Service was to review whether this was the appropriate ratio.

At the time of the approval of the ratio, the effect that PTPs would have on the capacity of the industry was unknown. In analyzing the total number of vehicles available between taxis and PTPs, the ratio of approved taxi licences to population appears to be appropriate and there is no need at this time to consider adjusting the ratio. The Public Service is recommending that no adjustment to this ratio occur, and that new licences will be issued when the population of Winnipeg increases.

There does not appear to be a shortage of vehicles available to provide service, and in fact it appears, as previously indicated, that the current capacity of the market has allowed for more trips to be provided.

Those who applied to be included in the second lottery will form a future wait list. They will be canvassed yearly to ensure they are still interested in retaining their place. Those who do not respond, or indicate they are no longer interested, will be dropped off the list and others will move up. This process will form the priority list for ownership of future taxi licences. It is recommended that priority be given to accessible vehicles when new taxi licences are issued and that Council should endorse this policy.

Further, given the increase in competition in the market, at this time, the Public Service is recommending that no changes are made to the maximum fare schedule. It is recommended that the fare schedule currently in place for all City of Winnipeg licenced taxicabs remain for 2020 and be reviewed for the next VFH annual update.

Since the introduction of the VFH By-law, the City of Winnipeg has consulted with VFH industry stakeholders and the public to gather input for consideration while developing future recommendations to Council on the regulation. Over the past year, feedback was gathered on safety, enforcement, and accessibility.

The VFH Advisory Committee continued to meet throughout the year. The Advisory Committee consists of 13 citizens who represent a cross-section of groups or organizations involved in or linked to the VFH industry, including: taxicab owners, taxicab drivers, PTP industry, limousine industry, safety perspective, poverty reduction community groups, Indigenous organizations, the business community, taxi dependent services, accessibility groups and citizen members at large with unique perspectives. The committee provides beneficial feedback and insight to the Public Service on the various perspectives of the VFH industry. The Advisory Committee has consistently been a “sounding board” for ideas, and has been consulted on concerns and plans, often providing valuable feedback and insight prior to implementation. The Advisory Committee provided feedback on a number of items, including driver safety, additional driver training and course content, the pre-payment pilot project and the public engagement survey related to it, and additional public safety measures. The Advisory Committee has also served as a barometer for the industry and its relationship with the public.

Other key highlights and achievements that have occurred since the VFH By-law was enacted by the City include:

- The VFH office has been working on the development of new relationships and networking with other industry-affected organizations throughout Winnipeg, including Tourism Winnipeg, and organizations, such as the Southern Chiefs Organization, that can provide insights into how VFH service affects the community as well as assisting in improving customer service and monitoring. The Public Service has also continued to strengthen the relationships it started to build in 2018 in order to ensure that a wide number of perspectives are considered in regulating and overseeing the industry.

- Ongoing cultivation of relationships continues with industry regulatory bodies, including Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), as well as further developing partnerships with the Winnipeg Airports Authority, and the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS). Over the course of several days in late October 2019, the WPS, MPI vehicle inspection division and the VFH enforcement team coordinated and executed targeted vehicle inspection days. Cars were

inspected by MPI to ensure they met vehicle maintenance and safety standards, by the WPS for *Highway Traffic Act* offences and by the VFH enforcement team for VFH By-law compliance. This coordinated effort is planned to occur again and is being undertaken in order to ensure that vehicle safety standards are met on an ongoing basis. This directly impacts the safety of drivers and passengers using vehicles for hire.

- The VFH office continues to actively investigate complaints, and work toward improving customer service through a balanced approach of communication and education along with by-law enforcement. The department takes legitimate complaints seriously, investigating them and ensuring follow-up with the complainant. Over the course of the year to date (January to end of August 2019), 61 official complaints have been received through 311. Of this amount, 33% pertain to driver conduct and road driving habits. The dispatch companies are taking more responsibility for handling complaints and dealing with customer service situations.

- From the time that the VFH By-law took effect in March 2018 to the end of September 2019, there have been 20 appeals heard by the VFH Appeal Board, 15 of which had the original decision overturned by the Board (i.e. the Appellant was successful). All appeals to date have dealt with either relevant criminal offence convictions or major driving offences for taxicab or PTP drivers. This is an open and transparent process that provides an opportunity to have a case heard by an impartial tribunal committee of citizens that considers the facts of the situation, the character of the appellant, and any relevant or mitigating factors as they weigh the risks and make a decision.

- After taking over responsibility for regulating the VFH industry in 2018, the VFH office joined the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR). This worldwide regulatory association includes a strong Canadian contingent and schedules regular conference calls to discuss insights, lessons learned, best practices, as well as issues of oversight and regulation. This provides a significant opportunity to learn from other municipalities, and to have a network of other regulators to pose questions of, get advice and provide feedback. In addition to sitting on the Canadian Regulators committee, the VFH office expanded their participation in 2019 to include sitting on both the IATR Accessibility Committee and Safety Committee. These committees provide opportunities for the Public Service to hear insights, experiences, and concerns from other regulators and stakeholders in North America in relation to improving safety and accessibility within the VFH industry. In September 2019, the public service attended the IATR conference. This yearly conference provided an opportunity to hear from different panelists on a variety of topics related to the VFH industry, focus on regulatory information, and attend a variety of sessions on a range of subjects including policy, regulation, enforcement, technology, accessibility, training, and industry changes. The VFH office would like to make attending this conference a yearly opportunity as it provides substantial benefits to the Public Service and the local VFH industry.

- Since March 1, 2018 taxis have been authorized to use transit diamond lanes in order to improve the service they provide during peak traffic hours. In June 2019, Council approved a report that authorized the use by taxis to become permanent, with ongoing and continued review by the Transit Department and the Winnipeg Parking Authority. From a VFH industry perspective, this remains a favourable opportunity for taxis and their passengers. The Public Service continues to work with and remind the taxi industry of the proper use of diamond lanes. A communication was sent in summer 2019 to all drivers reminding them of

their responsibilities in using the lanes correctly, and to ensure that they are mindful of both bus and cyclist use. This additional use of the transit diamond lanes appears to be working as intended, but the Transit Department and WPA will continue to work together to monitor and ensure there are no significant impacts to Transit operations and that the proper authorized use and the *Highway Traffic Act* continue to be obeyed by taxis. Transit and WPA are proposing that future reporting on the use of diamond lanes will be done as part of the VFH Annual Report.

- On September 30, 2019, the VFH office began implementing a mandatory minimum pre-payment pilot project in order to determine whether taxi pre-payment will reduce fare disputes between passengers and taxi drivers. Disputes related to fare payment have been identified by industry stakeholders and passengers as a source of conflict and a top safety concern. Throughout the pilot period, every day between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., all taxi passengers are required to pay a $10 deposit at the beginning of their trip, regardless of trip length. At the end of the trip, passengers will pay the remaining balance, or be refunded if the final fare is less than $10. The mandatory fare prepayment approach is supported by the Vehicles for Hire Advisory Committee.

- During 2019, PTP driver documentation audits were conducted by the VFH office as part of the ongoing enforcement of the industry. While some dispatch companies have done well in obtaining and vetting the documentation from their drivers, many had deficiencies. These audits identified a few drivers who did not qualify for registration under the By-law, and were subsequently terminated and able to go through the Appeal Board process. As well, from this audit, a number of penalty notices were issued to dispatch companies. The Public Service also worked to educate the PTP companies on their responsibility regarding the registration of drivers and collection of their paperwork. The audit process has identified that this is an area that requires specific attention from the VFH office. It is also an area that the Public Service will continue to monitor to see if further amendments to licencing responsibilities need to be proposed in the future. A step in this direction is proposed in this report and by-law amendments regarding the licencing responsibility for limousines and limousine drivers transferring to the VFH office.

The VFH office operates on a budget-neutral mandate generating all revenues needed to sustain its operations through licence revenue, fine revenue, and per trip surcharges. All activities performed by the division are within budgeted amounts. There are synergies with the existing WPA systems, and through the support provided within the department. It is anticipated that VFH will remain cost neutral during the 2019 fiscal year.

Vehicles for Hire
2018 Actuals & 2019 Budget

	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenue	$1,346,772	$1,519,000
Expenses	$1,346,772	$1,519,000
Surplus/(Deficit)	**$ -**	**$ -**

Medium to Long-Range Plans

The VFH office continues to look for ways to improve the safety for both passengers and drivers, streamline and improve compliance and enforcement, expand the capacity of the industry, and assist in providing an improved level of customer service. In order to do so, some of the plans that the VFH office has for the medium to longer term include:

- Initiation and implementation of the licencing regime for limousine/luxury vehicles. This will streamline the requirements on limousine dispatchers by transferring the administrative burden to the VFH office. As well, this will provide an opportunity for taxicab drivers to apply for a dual taxi/limousine licence, enabling them to provide additional services when opportunities arise.
- Completion of the taxi fare pre-payment pilot project and provide results.
- Roll-out of the driver refresher training program originally identified in the VFH Safety and Security report which Council approved in February 2019. It is anticipated that all drivers would have been provided this training within the next 3-4 years based on the phased-in approach.
- Introduction of plans to move to a centralized dispatch system for accessible service, including a public engagement opportunity, and subsequent request for proposals. In addition to a centralized dispatch system, to address the additional costs associated with purchasing an accessible taxi, as well as the additional level of care provided by drivers the public service will study a plan to provide incentives. These initiatives would be funded through the accessibility surcharge.
- Continued expansion of the VFH office's relationship with the MPI vehicle inspection division to ensure that safe vehicles are on the road and available to provide service.

Ongoing administration of the Vehicle for Hire industry and By-law:

The Public Service believes that the administration, oversight, and regulation of the VFH industry and By-law has been generally successful since implementation. The Public Service continues to work with the industry, its partners, and stakeholders to evolve and improve all facets of the VFH network. Further, it is the Public Service's belief that, notwithstanding the WPA SOA's operating charter, the administration of vehicles for hire should remain within the WPA.

The next annual reporting on the VFH industry, including any required By-law amendments, is planned to be submitted to Council in December 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: October 23, 2019

Project Name:

First Year of Program **2020**

Annual Update on the Vehicle for Hire Industry and Amendments to the Vehicle for Hire By-law

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
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	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments:

There is no financial impact forecasted from the proposed fee schedule updates. The proposed changes will instead provide clarity to existing fees and re-alignment categories and associated fees to better reflect the realities of the industry and future growth.

original signed by

Eva Solis, CPA, CGA
Acting Manager of Finance
Winnipeg Parking Authority

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:
Legal Services (as to legal matters)
Winnipeg Transit (as to taxis operating in diamond lanes)

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.”

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Vehicles for Hire industry supports the climate change action plan strategic opportunity #3, which is to advance sustainable transportation and shift to zero emission vehicles (page vi of the plan). The ability to access taxicabs and personal transportation providers (limousines and ridesharing) allows greater flexibility for residents to shift out of single occupancy vehicles and provides improved access to other mobility options such as transit and active transportation. For example, in other jurisdictions ridesharing has been used successfully as part of an integrated multi-modal trip planning tool for residents where vehicles for hire are used for a portion of a trip and transit is used for the remainder of the trip.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Winnipeg Parking Authority SOA
Division: Vehicles for Hire
Prepared by: G. Heather
Date: November 4, 2019
File No: WPA-032-2019

Attachments:

Appendix A - Vehicle for Hire 2020 Fee Schedule

Appendix B - Vehicle for Hire 2020 Fare Schedule

Appendix C- Vehicle for Hire By-law Amendments