Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – December 9, 2025

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – December 3, 2025

Moved by Councillor

That Rule 10(3) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended in order that the following item, which was received less than four business days preceding the committee meeting, be considered by Committee.

Item No. 1 Vehicle for Hire Industry 2025 Annual Update and Proposed Vehicles For Hire By-law and MBEA Enabling By-law Amendments

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 3, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on 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 a by-law be approved to amend the Vehicles for Hire By-law No. 129/2017 and the Municipal By-law Enforcement Act Enabling By-law No. 59/2016 in accordance with this report, a draft of which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

   A. That Part 2, Section 2 of Appendix A be amended to impose an administrative penalty of $1,000.00 for non-compliance with Section 46.3 of the Vehicles for Hire By-law, with no early payment discount.

3. That an expenditure of $100,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund be authorized for on-going expenses related to delivering the Building Cultural Competency driver training and public education program.

4. That an expenditure of up to $30,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund be approved for ongoing and expanded efforts related to a taxi driver and passenger safety campaign.

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

Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – December 9, 2025

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – December 3, 2025

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 3, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Add the following new Recommendation 2.A.

  "A. That Part 2, Section 2 of Appendix A be amended to impose an administrative penalty of $1,000.00 for non-compliance with Section 46.3 of the Vehicles for Hire By-law, with no early payment discount."

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

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 15, 2022, Council adopted the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works which included the following:

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to continue its annual report to Council on the vehicle for hire industry until December, 2027.

On December 13, 2017, Council adopted the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, which included the following:

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: Vehicle for Hire Industry 2025 Annual Update and Proposed Vehicles For Hire By-law and MBEA Enabling By-law Amendments

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
R. Topolniski	J. Berezowsky	T. Graham	J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vehicles for Hire (VFH) office continues to focus on accessible service delivery, driver training, and safety for drivers and passengers. Key highlights of the 2025 annual report include:

- Updates on the current state of the VFH industry in Winnipeg
- Updates on VFH driver training, including:
  - Accessible training
  - Building Cultural Competency (BCC) training related to the MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice and safe transportation.
- Recommended amendments to the VFH By-law to:
  - Provide clarity in licensing and operating requirements
  - Improve parity between taxis and Personal Transportation Provider operators
- Recommended amendments the Municipal By-law Enforcement Act Enabling By-law that will allow the City to issue tickets more efficiently

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the update provided on the Vehicle for Hire industry be received as information.

2. That a by-law be approved to amend the Vehicles for Hire By-law No. 129/2017 and the Municipal By-law Enforcement Act Enabling By-law No. 59/2016 in accordance with this report, a draft of which is attached as Appendix A to this report.

3. That an expenditure of $100,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund be authorized for on-going expenses related to delivering the Building Cultural Competency driver training and public education program.

4. That an expenditure of up to $30,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund be approved for ongoing and expanded efforts related to a taxi driver and passenger safety campaign.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On December 15, 2022, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and adopted the following:

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to continue its annual report to Council on the vehicle for hire industry until December, 2027.

This is the third of five additional annual reports required by Council, as per Council's December 15, 2022, direction:

> "That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to continue its annual report to Council on the Vehicle for Hire industry until December 2027."

Council approval is required to expend funds from the Safety and Security surcharge fund and amend the VFH By-law and the MBEA Enabling By-law.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are financial implications related to the proposed VFH By-law and MBEA By-law amendments, including the addition of new fines for existing offences. The frequency of these offences, and therefore their associated revenue, is difficult to predict but is not expected to have a significant budgetary impact.

There are also a number of VFH By-law changes proposed, many of which are intended to clarify obligations of VFH drivers and dispatchers, as well as improve parity in licensing and operating requirements between traditional taxis and PTP operators.

Approving the expenditure of funds from the VFH Safety and Security surcharge fund will cover the cost of continuing to deliver the BCC training, any resources required for this training, and the expenses related to creating online training modules to deliver this training remotely. This will continue to allow all vehicle for hire drivers to attend the training at no cost to register.

Approving the expenditure of funds from the VFH Safety and Security surcharge fund will expand on the driver and passenger safety campaign and allow for further rounds of education to come in 2026, in order to reach additional citizens. This will continue to drive the collaboration between the VFH Office and the Taxicab industry.

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

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 Vehicle for Hire (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 ongoing emphasis on passenger and driver safety, as well as an aim to improve and 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 ongoing modernizations, updates and further improvements in the industry.

The following amendments to the VFH By-law will continue to make oversight and enforcement more efficient, add more parity to the VFH By-law for taxis and PTPs, address feedback from industry stakeholders, and offer improvements to the VFH industry.

VFH By-law amendments

In an attempt to ensure that the VFH By-law remains current, innovative, and reactive to market and industry forces, potential by-law amendments are collected and analyzed throughout the year, captured from a variety of sources. These allow the VFH Office to continue to effectively administer and enforce the VFH By-law, and to ensure that the proper tools are in place for regulation, licencing and compliance. The proposed amendments are intended to address areas of the VFH By-law that have been identified by the VFH Office and through feedback from a number of sources including VFH industry service providers, accessibility advocates, the VFH stakeholders, and from passengers using VFH services.

Proposed amendments to the by-law and their associated implications are summarized below (the complete draft By-law is attached as Appendix A):

i. Clarify the Requirements when a Taxi wants to change Dispatchers
In order to clarify the requirements within the By-law for the issuance of a taxi vehicle licence when a vehicle owner wants to change dispatchers, and to align with current policy and practice, the addition of a letter of release is being added to the By-law. This is required so that the VFH can be assured that the vehicle owner has no further obligations to their dispatcher and that the current dispatcher is aware of them leaving.

ii. Adding the Requirement that VFH approve change of vehicle requests
Taxi and limousine owners may change the specific vehicle that is providing service and approved under their licence. This amendment will clarify that the designated employee needs to approve the change. Current practice already has this occurring. However, in order to clarify this process, it is being defined in the By-law. Typically, a vehicle being moved into operation under a licence would be inspected and approved by a VFH enforcement officer. The approval by the designated employee would be administrative and would fall in line with the authority to issue licences.

iii. Adding the Requirement of VFH drivers to Comply with Provincial Legislation related to reporting suspected cases of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation
Under the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, the Province requires vehicle for hire drivers to report instances where they suspect they have transported people who are being trafficked or sexually exploited to the Police. This amendment would make the non-reporting and violation of the Provincial Act an offence under the VFH By-law. In order to apply this offence and issue a penalty notice under this proposed section, VFH would enter into an investigation and through that, and other evidence, including possibly witness or law enforcement statements, ascertain that the driver would have reasonably known that they were transporting someone who may be trafficked or sexually exploited

and failed to meet their obligation under the Provincial Act to report to law enforcement. To correspond with the Provincial Act, this amendment applies to all VFH drivers.

iv. Amending the By-law to allow for an Immediate Suspension of Licence Holder or Registered PTP Driver or Vehicle for Failing to Comply with Terms and Conditions set out in a review hearing

Often when a licence holder or a registered PTP driver or vehicle owner have gone through a hearing process related to their conduct or actions, the designated employee, within their delegated authority, or the Vehicles for Hire Board, will place terms and/or conditions on the licence as an outcome of the hearing. At present, if the appellant fails to comply with the terms and conditions laid out in the hearing decision letter, the VFH Office may have to hold an additional hearing into the matter. Depending on the circumstances of the non-compliance, immediate suspension of the licence or registration until compliance is achieved may be warranted. This amendment makes that possible by adding this specific situation to the existing list of contraventions eligible for immediate suspension.

v. Housekeeping updates to the VFH By-law

There are a number of proposed amendments to the VFH By-law that can be considered housekeeping amendments to ensure that there is improved clarity and efficiency in the enforcement and application of the intended VFH By-law sections.

vi. Addition of new offences and associated fines related to the VFH By-law sections added above, as well as adjustments to existing fines to better align the fine with the actual offence

There are three offences being added to the VFH By-law related to penalty notices.

A fine is being added for taxis to mirror existing PTP fines for failing to ensure a vehicle meets applicable requirements while in operation.

Currently, it is an offence to improperly start a meter prior to a passenger getting into the vehicle or being notified that reasonable wait time had passed prior to them getting to the taxi/past the time requested for service. This adds a fine to that existing section of the By-law.

The final fine being added applies to all drivers and coincides with a new By-law section being added, as per above, for failing to report instances of suspected human trafficking. This will be enforceable based on Provincial legislation that already exists and upon confirmation of failure through an investigation.

All of the above sections, offences and subsequent fines are set out in Appendix A to this report.

Key achievements and VFH industry update

The VFH industry continues to be an instrumental service provider and play an important role in transporting citizens and visitors around the City, helping them get to and from daily tasks, obtain goods and services, ensuring they are able to get to work or school, medical appointments, conduct business, supporting tourism, attend sports events, concerts and shows as well as allowing people to fully participate in and enjoy all the City has to offer.

Over the last few years, the VFH industry has continued to demonstrate the desire of passengers to increasingly leave their vehicles at home and use VFH service, as well as the resiliency of the industry. This industry continues to display growth and further opportunity for expansion.

The VFH industry has seen strong growth since 2022 in the areas of trips-taken, numbers of drivers working in the industry, and the number of vehicles available to handle the increased numbers of trips. The average number of vehicles available to provide service in 2025 is 5,691 (to the end of September), which is an increase of 2,190 vehicles over the 2024 average of 3,501. This can be seen in Figure 1. The total number of vehicles available is higher than in 2024 and continues to be reactive to the increased numbers of trips that are being requested as well as the flexibility for part-time work and opportunity that is provided for drivers in the industry. This continues to demonstrate the overall resiliency and elasticity of the industry as well as the fact that as the demand for the service increases, there are interested service providers that can meet the needs of customers. The VFH industry provides an opportunity for drivers to be part-time service providers and allows them to fit this work into their schedules and other commitments.

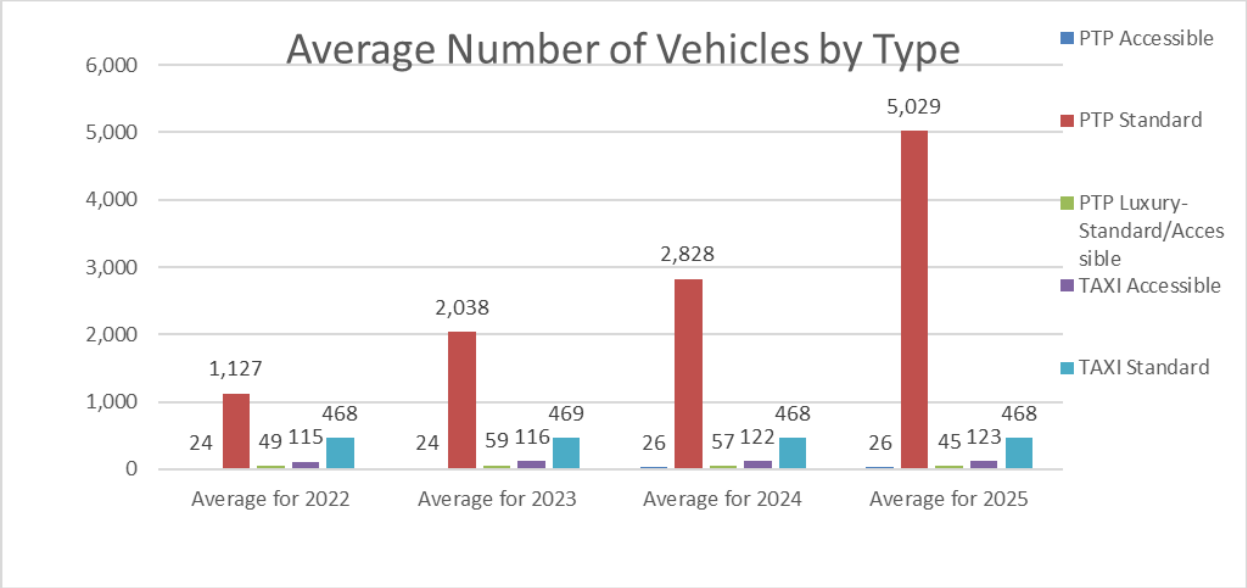


Figure 1

The maximum number of taxis (standard and accessible) available for service in 2025 remains at 600 licences issued, with an average of 591 on the road each month. Through 2025, there was an average of 5,029 personal transportation providers (“PTPs”, including accessible and standard passenger vehicles). The limousine/luxury vehicles numbers remain relatively steady when compared to 2024 although they have decreased somewhat, with an average of 45 in 2025 available on a monthly basis. Nearly all available PTPs would be considered standard passenger vehicles (including those in the limousine category). These numbers have generally remained constant throughout the year based on the increase in demand. An important point to note is that PTP vehicles register with multiple companies and are reported by each as being registered. This would impact the numbers seen on the PTP side. The average number of taxis operating in Winnipeg has remained constant during this period but can generally fluctuate and be affected by demand as well as vehicle repairs and maintenance. Taxis continue to deliver more trips per vehicle on a monthly basis than the PTP category.

While the number of vehicles in comparison between taxis and PTPs may seem disproportionate, an important statistic to consider when looking at the differences between taxis and PTPs is the number of drivers. The taxi industry tends to have significantly more full-time career drivers, with many PTP drivers driving part-time and often sporadically. Taxi vehicles generally operate on a 24/7 basis and require multiple drivers to keep them on the road. On average, the driver to taxi ratio is 3:1, while in a PTP, the driver to vehicle ratio is 1:1. During 2025, there was an average of 1,958 taxi driver licences and 2,984 being registered as PTP drivers. This can be seen in Figure 2 and demonstrates much more parity between the two sides of the industry. The main difference in the two categories is that a majority of PTP drivers are part-time and in general drive minimally or infrequently and only when convenient for them. It should also be noted that the PTP driver registration numbers may include double counting as drivers often register with multiple companies, while taxi drivers drive for one company only.

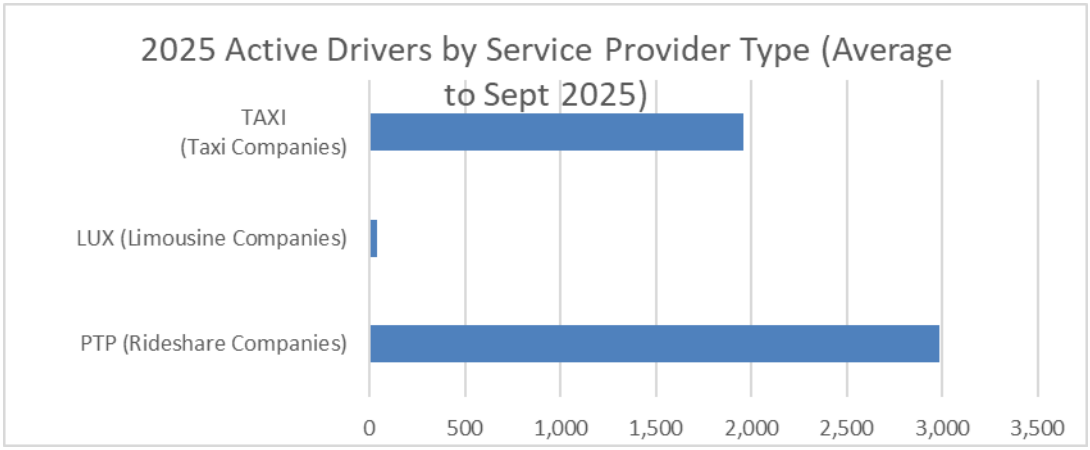


Figure 2

Taxis continue to deliver consistent, reliable service year over year. The PTP ride-share category provides significantly scalable capacity and is driving increased competition in the industry and ultimately more options for the travelling public. Throughout the entire industry, there continues to be improvements in the overall customer service, as well as the availability of vehicles and accessibility of on-demand service. For the last number of years, customers have increased transportation choices, more flexibility regarding the type of service they are able to obtain, the price they pay for their trip and are better able to manage their own transportation choices. Further, VFH continues to see customers taking steps to integrate various multi-modes of transportation into their overall plans in order to move around the City, combining VFH service with buses and active transportation. The PTP segment of the industry also provides an opportunity for residents to earn additional income to supplement other income sources or provide service on a full-time basis if they wish, as well as providing flexibility of schedule to accommodate other commitments.

The PTP category continues to see a large number of available standard vehicles. The average number of reported standard PTP vehicles per month remains the biggest category; however, their actual number of these vehicles on the road at any given time can vary greatly due to the transient nature of the drivers in setting their own schedules. There are also a number of people who are registered with PTP companies but have subsequently left the industry for various reasons. They would remain eligible in the count.

As previously shown in Figure 1, the average number of standard PTPs available during 2025 to the end of August is 5,029, which is an increase over the 2024 average of 2,828. With

previously noted increases in the demand for service remaining strong in 2025, and showing further growth throughout the year, companies continue to scale their operations and bring on more drivers to meet the ever-growing needs for transportation. As mentioned in past reports, it should be noted there could be some double-counting of vehicles and drivers in reported data between the companies. This is even more likely to be a factor in the significantly higher numbers now, given that there are two major PTP competitors who are both focussed on attracting the same drivers to their platforms.

Year-to-date (January to September) in 2025, there have been 9,523,719 trips completed in the VFH industry. This is an average of 1,058,191 trips per month. The VFH industry continued to see strong momentum carry from Q4 2024 into 2025, averaging over 1,000,000 trips per month this year. It is projected that 2025 will again set a new record high in trips provided. This is an average increase in 2025 of 23.1 percent trips per month over 2024.

The 2024 year concluded with the industry providing 10,319,465 (an average of 859,955 trips/month). This set a new record high, eclipsing the 2023 number of 8,879,397, by providing 1,440,068 more trips. See Figure 3, below, for total VFH trips per year (2018-2025).

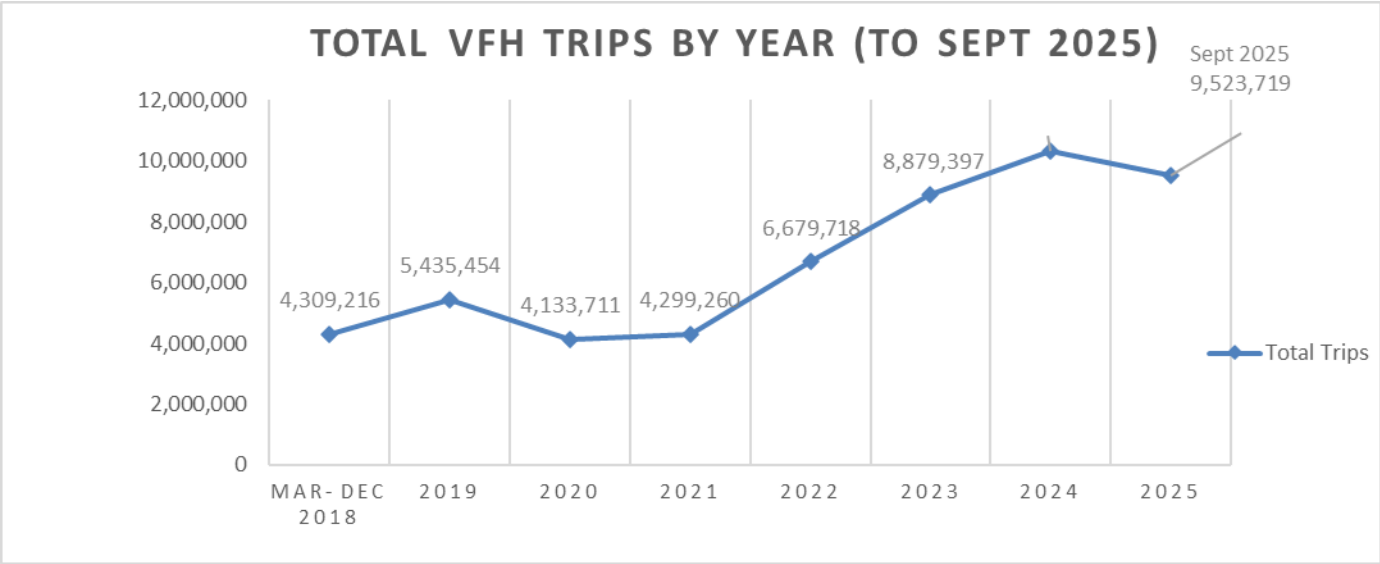


Figure 3

The VFH industry, as measured in the number of trips provided, has increased 54.5 percent between 2024 and 2022 and has nearly doubled since 2019 (the first full year that VFH was regulated by the City). These results continue to demonstrate that the size of the market is increasing and the numbers of passengers with a desire and willingness to use VFH service continues to grow. VFH users are regularly requesting more trips and shifting their modes of transportation they are choosing to use, as well as choosing to use the VFH industry for their everyday transportation needs.

The increase in 2025 can be attributed to a few items:

- Significant air travel throughout the year, as seen by numbers of travellers reported by the James A Richardson International Airport, as well as increases in the numbers of flight routes. This is one of the largest impacts on the VFH industry.

- The increasing cost of vehicle ownership, due to a number of increasing vehicle related expenses, including interest rates, fuel, repair costs, as well as a reduction in usage, leading to a shift in transportation modes with less reliance on personal vehicles.
- Residents continue to change their behaviours related to transportation and adjust their modes of transportation. People have more choice regarding the type of transportation they want, often integrating both public and private transportation into their decision-making as well as taking advantage of opportunities to use both active transportation, VFH service and public transportation. This change has been seen in the use of personal vehicles and changing parking behaviours as well.
- Professional sporting events – the Winnipeg Jets, Winnipeg Blue Bombers, concerts, performances and other various music, arts, and cultural festivals this year.
- An expansion in the use of VFH for non-emergency medical transportation and people getting to appointments. This includes the successful Winnipeg Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) program and the increases in trips seen there.
- In-person grads, weddings, holiday gatherings and other large-scale social events where people are making the decision to take VFH service both directions, instead of driving. As well, continued enforcement of impaired driving laws and the penalties that comes with non-compliance. This is partly due to changing attitudes, but also the ongoing enforcement and education around the impacts of impaired driving and people generally making better decisions due to a wider variety of options available to meet their needs.

The use of VFH continues to be a much needed and highly popular mode of transportation. Residents continue to see the benefits of having choice and competition and access to both taxi and PTP options, and the service providers in each category. VFH continues to experience generally improved customer service and increased accountability by the dispatch companies especially as it relates to responding to complaints, as well as improvements in the availability and access to vehicles, which in turn all benefits residents and transportation users.

PTP service providers (both standard and accessible) accounted for 69.3 percent of the number of trips provided to the end of September 2025. This is an increase over the 2024-year end result of 58.9 percent. Standard and accessible taxis continue to provide a significant number of trips and provide 30.6 percent market share to the end of September 2025, which is down from the 2024 share of 41.0 percent.

It should be noted that taxi companies in Winnipeg continue to play an important role and provide some of the highest trip totals in Canada when compared to results from other cities.

Limousine/Luxury PTP vehicle service providers have continued to hold a consistent share of the market year-over-year, providing a specific type of service for their passengers.

Of particular note here is that the size of the market (as measured in trips provided) has grown significantly since the beginning of 2022, with the projected trip numbers for 2025 being nearly three times as many as the trips provided during 2021.

Figure 4 displays the market share provided by the service provider type.

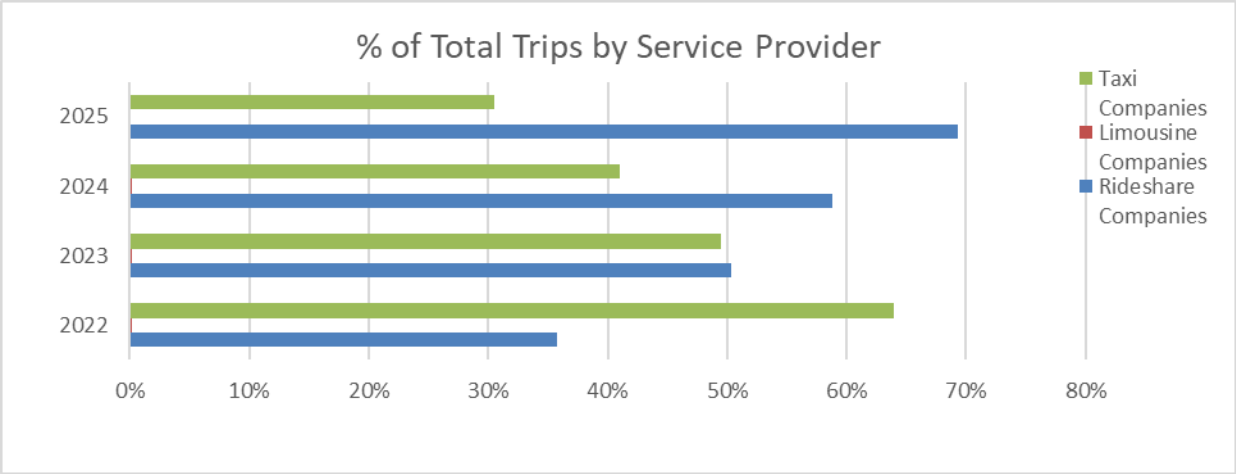


Figure 4

As a major piece of ensuring that the VFH industry is safe for drivers, passengers and other vehicles on the road, enforcement and regulatory oversight of the industry continues to be a main focus of the VFH Office. The VFH enforcement team continues to provide mobile on-street monitoring of the industry, regularly attending high-use locations and other venues where VFH congregate waiting for trips or to pick up or drop off passengers. In order to ensure that vehicles providing for hire transportation service are compliant with the VFH By-law, that they are properly decaled and identifiable for passengers and are safe for drivers and passengers, vehicle inspections continue to be a major tool used by VFH Enforcement to identify and record concerns.

From January 2025 to the end of September 2025, a total of 11,154 vehicles have been inspected by VFH officers. In comparison, there were 19,156 total vehicle inspections completed throughout 2024. Inspection numbers have dipped in 2025, due to the loss of two experienced VFH officers, and the turnover and timing created by bringing new officers onto the team.

These vehicle inspections completed may include full vehicle inspections, that are more in-depth, or walkaround inspections, which are less involved and focus more on minor or more easily identifiable concerns. With the increase in numbers of PTP drivers and vehicles, as well as the number of trips they are providing, the focus continues to be on inspecting more PTP vehicles. This has been an important step to take, especially in ensuring vehicles are properly decaled while providing service, so that passengers can identify they are in-fact being picked up by the legitimate driver from the company they requested. VFH maintains its partnership with Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) regarding vehicle safety and continues to work with MPI to identify vehicles that need further investigation to ensure they remain road-worthy. A number of analytical projects between MPI and VFH have occurred; tracking vehicles and their usage, as well as building data sets around vehicle age and mileages.

VFH enforcement officers continue to spend a majority of their time focussing on overall vehicle safety. Of all the inspections in 2025 to date, officers have placed a vehicle “out of service” only 3.1 percent of the time, which is slightly higher than 2024’s out of service rate of 2.8 percent. This rate continues to remain low mainly due to the increased numbers of inspections, the proactiveness of drivers and owners to ensure their vehicles meet compliance standards, as well as assistance from the dispatch companies in educating and communicating with their

drivers and on the need to maintain safe vehicles and remain compliant with the VFH By-law. The proactive nature of the inspection program continues to demonstrate the desire of VFH to ensure that vehicles are maintained, and those that are on the road are safe and road-worthy and those that are not in compliance with accepted standard and the VFH By-law should be taken off the road.

All VFH are required to meet certain mechanical and operating standards in order to pass inspections, and are expected to meet those minimum standards at all times while available to provide transportation service. Roadside or call-in vehicle inspections are used to inspect critical components and systems that may pose imminent safety concerns to the public and drivers. As well, the VFH Office has continued work closely with MPI to ensure that any vehicles providing service to customers are safe, reliable, and meet the standards of both the VFH By-law and the MPI vehicle inspection and safety certification program. The VFH Office continues to see that the intense inspection program of previous years is paying dividends now, in that vehicles are much more regularly maintained to ensure they meet standards and remain compliant, which ensure a safer vehicle for all and reduces the overall risk of dangerous vehicles being on the road. One area of concern is the length of time it can take for garages to get parts to repair vehicles due to on-going supply chain issues and tariffs. This does have some impact on VFH being repaired and in ensuring they are safe.

On a regular basis, and no less than yearly, the Public Service reviews the numbers of vehicles available in the market to provide transportation service in line with the Council-endorsed metric of one taxi per 1,203 residents. This metric cannot be considered on its own, and other factors affect the release of taxi licences to the market.

With the scalability of the PTP dispatcher licences, and how capacity has reacted to fluctuations in demand, as well as discussions with the taxi industry, there is no need to issue new permanent taxi licences and increase the current maximum cap number. Without a addressing a specific need, there does not appear to be a shortage of vehicles available to provide service. It appears, as previously indicated, that the number of vehicles have additional available capacity in order to meet any additional increases in trip requests.

Consistent with previous VFH Annual Reports, the Public Service continues to recommend that, when new taxicab licences are issued based on the Council-approved formula, that priority be given to adding additional accessible vehicles. This is especially important given the aging population of Winnipeggers, the versatility of accessible vans to provide both accessible and standard service, as well as to ensure that there is on-going available capacity for the Winnipeg WAV. Ensuring that accessible vehicles are available for service continues to be important in ensuring that passengers who rely on the service are served.

Council may want to consider future amendments to the VFH By-law to allow for targeted release of licences vs using the taxi licence lottery method that was used in 2018 and is presently in place under the By-law. There are specific groups who may be benefit from receiving accessible taxi licences directly and that could benefit not only them, but the entire City of Winnipeg. These accessible vehicle licences could have specific operating conditions attached to them in order to ensure they provide the most beneficial service possible.

<u>VFH Stakeholder Consultation</u>
Since the introduction of the VFH By-law, the City of Winnipeg has ensured that ongoing and regular consultations with VFH industry stakeholders and the public have occurred in order to gain valuable insights and to gather input for consideration while developing future

recommendations to Council on the regulation. Over the past year and through a variety of sources, feedback was gathered specifically on accessibility, safety, education, and licencing, as well as enforcement. The VFH Office often participates in stakeholder engagement of other organizations and interests, in order to ensure it keeps a finger on the pulse of the community and is able to best interact with passengers, the industry and interest groups, while always ensuring it maintains up-to-date information and can best react to emerging needs.

The VFH Advisory Committee last met formally as a group in early 2022. In lieu of having formal Advisory Committee meetings, the VFH Office prefers to meet with stakeholders and engage with the public as needed, on specific topics as they come up or are relevant. This method has provided better opportunities for the various stakeholders to be heard, provide feedback directly and have their points of view considered. This approach has specifically been beneficial for the VFH industry in the areas of specifically related to Indigenous relations, accessibility issues and improvements to driver safety and training.

The VFH Office and the Winnipeg Community Taxi Association (WCTA), along with their business advisors, continued to engage and have ongoing positive discussions. These meetings continue to allow both sides to discuss a variety of topics that impact the VFH industry around driver safety, training, accessibility, as well as the overall industry. Through these discussions, items of varying degrees of importance or timeliness are discussed, and initiatives are considered where both the VFH Office and the WCTA could discuss viewpoints, issues and concerns and look for opportunities to make changes or bring ideas forward. The VFH Office continues to be accessible to the WCTA, PTP companies, and other industry service providers to collaborate, discuss and assist. Ongoing discussions with stakeholders and industry participants have seen concerns brought forward earlier, thereby allowing time to consider changes, and work collaboratively on solving challenges.

The VFH Office continues to have continuity and a consistent approach regarding the administration and enforcement of the VFH By-law, as well as the policies and guidelines that have supported the VFH By-law and the overall industry. Over the last few years, there has been far more stability amongst the representation of those operating within the industry with consistency in the Board leadership and management. This consistency has fostered collaboration and improvements in its level of engagement, passenger, and driver safety, and in implementing positive changes to ensure that the public has confidence in the service providers.

Over the next several months, the VFH Office will be reviewing the current state of the Winnipeg WAV program and the Accessible Transportation Incentive Program (ATIP) . This is in line with Council's direction to bring forward recommendations in 2026 for any possible changes to the program and the accessible surcharge fund in order to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the Winnipeg WAV, ATIP and funding model.

<u>Building Cultural Competency (BCC) Driver Training: MMIWG2S+ 231 Calls for Justice and National Action Plan Implementation – Safe Transportation</u>

The BCC training continues to be delivered regularly by members of the Indigenous community. The content of the course has regular adjustments and updates, but also allows the instructors flexibility to bring their lived experience to the class and provide the impacts of actions and words that have been felt in the experiences of Indigenous passengers of the VFH industry. The training was developed with the intent that it would be reviewed and updated regularly as information changes and changing actions and attitudes could be considered and incorporated. The training is a foundation program to educate on colonization, impacts of colonization towards Indigenous women and girls and their traditional roles, as well as implementing the MMIWG2S+

Calls for Justice, both individual and industry specific. It works to provide information to educate drivers on ways to better keep passengers safe.

The first session of this training occurred on August 24, 2023. There were 11 total training sessions in 2023, 43 in 2024, and 19 in 2025 so far (with 12 more scheduled). Since August 2023, 85 Indigenous-led BCC training sessions for VFH drivers. During 2024, the VFH driver BCC training was rolled out to all drivers in the industry and has seen PTP drivers attending (as it is also mandatory training for them). In early 2025, the VFH Office set targets for PTP companies to achieve in respect of driver's attendance and completion of this training in order to ensure that they are complying. The VFH Office has been working with the PTP companies to ensure they are aware and to arrange and educate their drivers on the requirements of attending the training.

By the end of 2025, it is expected that over 1,805 VFH drivers will have attended this important training. From the inception of the BCC training and through 2025, 69.7 percent of the active and inactive taxi drivers, 48.8 percent of the active and inactive limousine drivers and 2.1 percent of the PTP drivers, have completed the training. PTP drivers only saw this become a mandatory requirement in 2025 in order to meet the same requirements that were in place for taxi drivers.

The taxi industry has shown leadership in this area and in ensuring that their drivers attend the sessions and implement the information that they learn during the course.

The VFH Office continues to communicate upcoming sessions to drivers and to the PTP companies so that they can inform their drivers. These notifications direct them to an easy online platform to sign-up, providing them confirmation and notifications. There also continues to be plans to develop additional platforms to deliver this training so that it is as accessible as it can be. Planning is ongoing between the VFH Office and the Indigenous Relations Division to have opportunities for this training to be delivered virtually, while still ensuring attendance and engagement amongst drivers.

Launching this training and adjusting its content to best reflects the needs of the community and the industry have shown Winnipeg to be a leader in this area. The leadership and guidance provided by IRD here has made this program a success. The training continues to draw interest from other jurisdictions in Canada and around the USA.

While it will take a several years to accomplish having all current drivers trained, the impact continues to be felt as more drivers are trained, with the expectation that BCC within the industry amongst drivers will not only continue to help make passengers safer, but also make drivers safer. This training will only serve to raise the individual and collective consciousness and help in having more accountability for actions and words, especially as it relates to interactions between drivers and passengers.

The original funding of $130,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund, to deliver the BCC training, was approved in July 2023 by Council so that it could be provided to all drivers free of charge. Since the inception of the training in 2023 to the end of August 2025, $94,830 has been spent, with additional planned expenditures of $21,000 to the end of 2025 for a total of $115,830. Included as a recommendation of this report is an additional $100,000 to deliver this training and public education program in 2026 and to begin the transition of training and content online for drivers to complete the requirement that way (in addition to what has not been expensed at this time from the original approval).

Winnipeg Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) On-Demand Accessible Transportation Service

On October 24, 2024, Council approved the Winnipeg WAV on-demand accessible transportation service, including centralized dispatch and ATIP, to become a permanent program beginning January 1st, 2025.

Winnipeg WAV continues to be a successful program, delivering 18,718 trips in 2024. Since its inception in 2022, the Winnipeg WAV has completed 48,456 trips. The trip numbers since the beginning of WAV in May 2022 is shown in Figure 5.

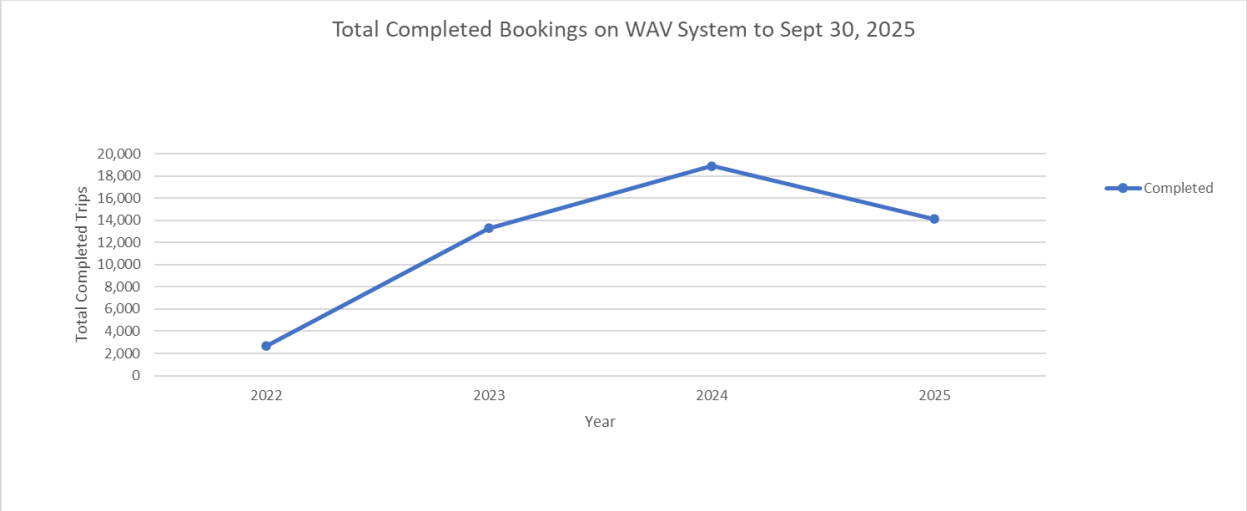


Figure 5 (note: 2025 total does not yet capture the full calendar year)

Regarding the accessible services, the length of the wait times faced by residents was the subject of significant critical feedback. Wait times were often in the 45–60-minute range and could extend upwards of 90+ minutes at various times of the day or at certain points of the year. Bringing wait times down to a more acceptable level and working towards having them on par with the wait time for standard vehicles was a major goal of the Winnipeg WAV program. During 2024 and throughout 2025, passengers are picked up within a 20-minute wait time 93 percent of the time.

Customer satisfaction of the Winnipeg WAV, obtained through ratings provided by passengers on the app, via text response and from regular surveys completed by our dispatch partner continues to see 92.4 percent provide a score of four or five-stars.

During 2024, the ATIP paid out $395,110 to accessible drivers and $133,813 to accessible vehicle owners in incentives for delivering the service. These are funds that are in addition to the regular fares paid to the drivers for the transportation. The additional incentives off-set any added costs for the vehicle owners and increase the wages for the drivers. Since inception, the ATIP has paid $495,185 to accessible drivers and $299,013 to accessible vehicles owners who are registered and providing regular service on the platform. Many of the accessible van drivers are also the owners, and therefore they are receiving both incentive payments.

The Winnipeg WAV, including the centralized dispatch and the ATIP, continues to be funded through the Accessibility surcharge fund. The success of this program lies in the partnership that exists between the Winnipeg WAV, its dispatcher, and the service providers, who are generally the taxi industry in Winnipeg, in delivering this improved on-demand accessible

service to citizens and visitors, through the centralized dispatch system and through the efforts of the Winnipeggers providing the requested service.

As 2025 is the final year of the original contract approval (and mutually agreed to extensions), the VFH Office issued a request for proposal (RFP) process to review proposals for the centralized dispatch proponent. After proceeding through the RFP process in the summer of 2025, a new contract was issued at the end of September 2025. This will allow the Winnipeg WAV to seamlessly continue into 2026.

The VFH Office continues to work with our dispatch contractor, industry service providers and accessible community stakeholders to look for ways to tweak and improve the system, so that it can remain as functional and beneficial to the accessible community as possible, providing life-changing and transformation transportation service. There remain concerns around the appropriate levels of capacity (numbers of wheelchair accessible vans) operating at specific times of the day and on certain days of the week. This remains a major focus in discussions between the VFH Office and the industry and is a place that changes are most likely to occur.

Other key highlights and achievements that have occurred over the past year:

Communications and Service

The VFH Office continues to communicate with, and provides guidance and support to, the VFH industry. The virtual access portals that were created during the pandemic have remained in place and continue to be a successful and an effective way for drivers to become licenced, as well as having a variety of options for those in the industry to access service. The VFH Office continues to ensure that it provides a high level of customer service to the industry, and continues to work on adjusting and redeveloping processes and procedures that can be implemented easily both online and in-person.

In order to make information around VFH service more accessible, the VFH Office had some passenger safety documents - “Know Your Taxi” and “Know Your PTP” – translated into ten additional languages (beyond English and French). They can be found here:

- Vehicles for Hire fact sheets - City of Winnipeg

These documents can be printed and distributed and can be used to educate people on some key points related to both taxi and PTP vehicles and service. We are also looking at having these documents translated in some Indigenous languages as well and continue to work with our partners to complete this goal.

As well, both the Taxi Driver Safety Fast Facts and PTP Driver Safety Fast Facts were translated into the same ten languages to assist drivers in better understanding some of the information available to them and ways to protect themselves as drivers.

These documents are available to the public, and this project was completed in order to improve understanding and education as well as foster a spirit of inclusivity for citizens in Winnipeg. The VFH Office will continues to look for additional opportunities to translate documents and communications in the future.

Driver Licencing and Training

The VFH Office is continuing a spirit of innovation and is always looking for ways to become more efficient and provide more flexibility to the VFH industry and review and update outdated items that impact dispatchers, vehicle owners, or drivers operating within the industry.

The provisional taxi drivers' licence that was first introduced in 2022 continues to be available for drivers as a path to become fully licenced. This program was created through discussions with the WCTA, and has been a significant benefit to the taxi industry in on-boarding drivers, allowing them to gain some practical experience while completing their driver training requirements. New applicants continue to have a 90-day window to successfully complete their training and provide confirmation to the VFH Office to become fully licenced. This brought taxi driver licencing more in line with PTP driver registration and continues to reduce a barrier to the becoming a taxi driver, making either choice comparable and on the same playing field.

Implementation of Accessible Training for all VFH Drivers

The VFH By-law requires that all taxi and PTP drivers who provide accessible service are required to take accessible driver training. This training provides education on not only proper wheelchair/mobility device securement, but also on other accessibility needs, including hearing and eyesight impairment, service animals, and physical or cognitive challenges.

All drivers in the VFH industry are required to complete accessibility training, completed through a recognized training partner. This ensures that drivers meet the requirements of the VFH By-law and are compliant with the Provincial Accessibility of Manitobans Act customer service requirements on accessible service delivery and training. The type and content of the training varies depending on whether the driver is a standard vehicle driver or accessible driver, but all drivers across the industry will take some form of this training. Drivers who drive standard vehicles will receive more general training, while those who drive accessible vehicles must take accessible training that includes wheelchair securement. As well, there is a requirement of accessible drivers to pass a securement test during their training in order to receive their certificate.

On-Going Updates to VFH Driver Training

The new VFH driver training curriculum began to be taught in Q1 2025 for drivers entering the industry. This came after significant discussion and collaboration involving the VFH Office, representatives of St James School Division Continuing Education (SJSD Con Ed), members of the taxi industry, and PTP company stakeholders. The new curriculum drastically reduced the training, from 44-hours down to 21-hours, by removing redundant and outdated information. This met the goal of reviewing and modernizing driver training and ensuring that relevant information was being provided to those who wanted to work in the VFH industry in Winnipeg.

This new training will be applicable to all new drivers entering the VFH industry, whether they be taxi, PTP or limousine drivers.

In the next phase of the revision of the VFH driver training program, the VFH Office is working on creating suggested training topics and providing these to dispatch companies so that they can supplement the training for their drivers should they choose. These topics would include more general topics, customer service expectations, company specific policies as well as training on their dispatch systems and reporting requirements.

This revised training program helps deliver on the VFH Office's goal to have all drivers entering the VFH industry trained to a minimum standard and completing the same training program. It

also ensures that, by having all drivers trained to this standard, they would have more flexibility down the road in choosing which type of VFH service they provide. This driver training would further be supplemented by the accessibility training and the BCC training to ensure that drivers have a complete training profile and meet all expectations, regardless of what type of service they are providing.

During 2025, targets have been set for companies to have their drivers trained, with the VFH Office continuing to ensure that the proper levels of training capacity exist and opportunities to have drivers get through the program are in place.

In fall 2025, at the request and direction of the VFH Office, the SJSD Con Ed department began offering the training virtually. There is still a requirement to complete and pass the test at the conclusion of the course, but this provides more flexibility to drivers to ensure they are able to complete this training.

Relationships with Stakeholders

The VFH Office continues to develop and support relationships within the community and amongst industry-affected organizations throughout Winnipeg. Engagement continues to occur with a variety of stakeholders within Winnipeg that create opportunities for industry participants, industry-affected organizations, individuals, and community members to provide feedback. The VFH Office continues to reach out and strengthen its dialogue and lines of communication with Indigenous organizations in Winnipeg. These groups continue to be a valuable resource and provide insights into how VFH service affects the community as well as assisting in improving customer service and monitoring as well as working towards improving service and the customer experience going forward. This positive dialogue and relationship-building initiative continues to bring a number of voices to the table to provide their perspective and input in shaping the industry and how VFH regulates and oversees it.

Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and the VFH Industry's Duty to Report

In November 2022, Manitoba passed Bill 40 "*The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act,"* which requires the reporting of suspected incidents of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking by VFH drivers, and obligates them to report suspected incidents when they have been part of the transportation. The VFH Office continues to engage stakeholders involved in identifying, reporting, and stopping human trafficking. The information learned in these education opportunities is then provided to the VFH industry through training, and communications with the dispatch companies. Opportunities to expand the information and knowledge base of the VFH Office and the industry are ongoing.

The BCC training also includes information related to this important topic. Drivers are also informed of their obligations to report suspected incidents and how they can go about this.

As well, new drivers continue to be trained in the area of sexual exploitation and human trafficking, often having guest subject matter experts, such as the Joy Smith Foundation, presenting to the classes at the new driver training sessions.

Often, the drivers are unaware of their role in human trafficking by being an unwitting participant. They may also realize that there are "red flags" about the situation or passenger they are transporting and complete the trip for their own safety. Educating the drivers on the potential signs of human trafficking and providing them with the phone numbers to confidentially

report suspect incidents and details has been an important step forward in this area. These are the situations that drivers need to feel comfortable identifying and subsequently reporting.

The phone number for the National Human Trafficking Hotline was added to the back of all taxicab and limousine driver's licences so that if they were to identify a possible situation, they would have the number at their fingertips to report it.

There continues to be significantly more work that can be done in this area, especially around education. However, the VFH Office continues to discuss and engage with organizations and stakeholders who are willing to provide the training and assist the industry in being part of the overall solution.

Joint Efforts with Manitoba Regulatory Partners

VFH continues to strengthen and solidify its relationships with industry regulatory bodies, including MPI, the Winnipeg Airports Authority and the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS). The Master Information Sharing Agreement that was signed between MPI and the City continues to be beneficial to both parties. It has continued to strengthen communication and the relationship between the City and MPI and made the flow of important vehicle and driver-related information much easier as it pertains to the agreement. The VFH Office continues to work with and partner on a number of initiatives with MPI, regarding insurance models, vehicle and accident data and providing dashcam footage for accidents.

Over the past year, the WPS and VFH have collaborated on a number of important initiatives that have impacted the VFH industry. The continues to be discussion and work on strategies to reduce and prevent violence against taxi drivers, as well as VFH assisting the WPS with obtaining taxi camera video in an expedited manner in order to return vehicles to service quicker.

During 2025, VFH enforcement worked collaboratively with the WPS on identifying "fake" VFH operators who were not compliant with the VFH By-law and were advertising and providing transportation service to citizens. These unregulated service providers are detriment to residents, may have no background checks or screening and there is no validity to the service they provide, which increases the risk for citizens. In partnership with the WPS and MPI, VFH actively pursued individuals who appear to be operating as illegal VFH without the required documentation, security checks, licenses and properly registered VFH vehicles. Vehicles operating or advertising as VFH, without a valid VFH licence or not registered with a licensed VFH dispatcher are in violation of the VFH By-law.
These operators often operate under the pretense of being a "safe ride," but the vehicles are often not insured properly with MPI, may not be mechanically safe, and the driver has not been properly background checked and screened in accordance with the VFH By-law.

To identify these illegal operators, Vehicle for Hire Enforcement relies on internal investigation methods and or tips from the public and legal VFH operators.

Initiatives like this are designed to support the VFH industry and those are work hard to provide transportation service to the citizens while following the VFH By-law.

Complaints

The VFH Office continues to receive and actively investigate complaints with many different outcomes, including holding the dispatch companies accountable to respond to residents when issues arise; ensuring vehicle owners and drivers in the industry are accountable to remain in

compliance with the VFH By-law and ensuring passengers are provided safe transportation. The most important goal of VFH enforcement is to enforce the By-law and reinforce the fact that improved and consistent customer service is delivered by the companies, which is accomplished through a balanced approach of by-law enforcement, communication, and education.

The VFH Office takes legitimate complaints seriously and, when appropriate, opens investigations to determine whether non-compliance has occurred. Follow-up with the complainant will occur when requested or if the situation warrants it. Though the number of reported serious incident complaints continues to fall, the VFH Office is also acutely aware that the true number may likely be underreported.

Through the end of September 2025, there have been 50 complaints filed with the VFH Office. During 2024, the total number of complaints was 95, which was an increase over the 2023 reported number of 68, however down from 2022's report of 108. In 2022, the VFH Office added some additional complaints categories namely drivers reporting fare jumping/unpaid fares, as well as complaints or issues that have arisen from the Winnipeg WAV program. The VFH Office saw higher levels of those driver reported issues in 2022 and 2024 than in 2023 or 2025.

The year to date overall drop in complaints in 2025 can be attributed to reduction in complaints related to driver conduct and road habits, as well as fewer reported incidents of passenger fare jumping. While there have been improvements on the driver conduct side that has come with better training and more care, the dispatch companies deserve some credit here for taking stronger positions and for better handling related to complaints levelled against their drivers.

Any reduction in reported fare jumping/fare evasion complaints made by drivers should not be seen solely as an improvement on the number of fare jumping/fares not paid by customers. These events continue to occur regularly but drivers are not reporting the incidents with the same frequency as there is a perception little can be done about it.

The biggest category of complaint continues to be driver customer service and driving/road habits. There continues to be improvements in this area as the dispatchers have taken more action regarding driver incidents (see Appendix C).

The VFH Office continues to acknowledge that the number of complaints filed may be under-reported, as there continues to be more work that needs to be done to educate the public on how to file a report, make reporting easier, and to ensure that those experiencing issues with the VFH industry are able to safely have their voices heard. The VFH Office makes a concerted effort to receive complaints in a variety of ways, to ensure that the proper care is paid to concerns and that legitimate complaints can be investigated.

Work continues in this area, and on-going engagement of grassroots community organizations in order to assist in providing ideas to improve complaint reporting mechanisms.

Appeals

The VFH Appeal Board remains an integral part of the enforcement process and continues to meet only when required, which is infrequently. However, it is an important component as it relates to discipline and licence appeals.

Year to date 2025, there has only been one appeal board hearing, held in April. There were three driver's licence appeals held at that time related to driver licencing based on VFH By-law required licence denials and on decisions made as a result of a licence review hearing.

The appeal process through the VFH Appeal Board remains an open and transparent process and 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 render a decision. There continues to be a number of disciplinary hearings conducted by the designated employee under the authority of the VFH By-law. Decisions from these hearings are not public, but there have been a range of outcomes, from reprimands and training/re-training, to fines, and up to licence suspensions or cancellation.

International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR)

The VFH Office continues to be a member of the International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR), which it has maintained since 2018. This worldwide regulatory association includes a strong Canadian Regulators Committee, and schedules regular conference calls to discuss insights, lessons learned, best practices, and issues of oversight and regulation.

IATR provides a significant opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions and to have a network of other regulators to pose questions of, get advice, and provide feedback. Winnipeg's Manager of VFH continues to serve as IATR's Co-Chair of the Canadian Regulators committee, which elevates Winnipeg's status amongst its fellow Canadian regulators.

In addition to this, the VFH Office continues to sit on other relevant IATR committees, including the Accessibility Committee, Safety Committee and the Technology committee. These committees provide opportunities for the Public Service to hear insights, experiences, and concerns from other regulators and stakeholders in North America regarding improving safety and accessibility within the VFH industry.

IATR continues to collaborate on VFH topics such as investing in accessibility, policy setting, enforcement, technology improvements, driver training, driver, and passenger safety, autonomous (automated) and electric vehicles, micro-mobility options (such as e-scooters), industry modernization and multi-modal transportation integration. These are areas that will be explored further in the future.

Winnipeg continues to actively participate and be a leader in a number of these areas and is often consulted by other Regulatory bodies around the world in the area of VFH.

The VFH Office continues to see benefits by participating in and being a member of IATR as well as attending this conference yearly, as the opportunity provides substantial benefits to the Public Service and the local VFH industry.

Documentation Verification and Auditing

As part of its ongoing enforcement of the industry, PTP driver and vehicle documentation audits are conducted by the VFH Office. The VFH Office undertakes this work in a continuing effort to ensure that the PTP dispatchers are complying with their responsibility under the VFH By-law. Through these audits and documentation verification, the VFH Office has concluded that, in order to ensure that vehicles and drivers consistently comply with the requirements of the By-law and to confirm the validity of all participants, that the VFH Office should be the sole licence issuing body for the entire VFH industry. While this would effectively remove the need for post-

registration documentation verification, this would then be done up front, ensuring that a licence issued to a driver or vehicle would be compliant and that all documentation would be verified and in order.

Until such time as the VFH Office assumes full licencing responsibility, the registration and subsequent vetting of background checks and documentation by PTP dispatchers will continue to remain an area of concern for the VFH Office and one of risk of non-compliance.

This will also alleviate the requirement of the smaller dispatchers, who may not have the capacity or knowledge to verify documentation, to have to perform this task.

The Public Service also continues to educate the PTP companies on their responsibility regarding the registration of drivers and collection of their paperwork. The audit process has identified that documentation continues to be an area that requires specific attention from the VFH Office. Dispatch companies that fail to properly vet drivers and vehicles present a risk to both the industry and passengers.

Driver and Passenger Safety

The relationship between VFH drivers and passengers is one that should be undertaken in the safest way possible. Passengers are reliant on drivers to get them to their destinations and drivers rely on passengers to pay their fares. Both drivers and passengers have the right to a respectful ride. In order to educate the public, as well as to highlight a number of the changes that have been made in the VFH industry since 2018, specifically with taxicabs, Council authorized the expenditure of up to $10,000 from the Safety and Security surcharge fund in April 2022 to fund a campaign that would create, distribute and promote materials that would support improvements in driver safety and to continue to improve the relationship between drivers and passengers. A number of discussions took place, with both the VFH Office and the WCTA engaging on this topic as well as working collaboratively to have it come to fruition. The WCTA has taken a lead in identifying some specific topics that more information could be made available and have brought some creative ideas forward regarding what outlets to best promote this through.

During Q2 2025, work began in earnest creating and refining some scripting and the types of messages that would best be suited for this campaign. Production of a video started with Unicity Taxi and Duffy's Taxi both coming to the table with funds to support the proposal, as well as the money earmarked by Council. This involved a conversation regarding some of the features a passenger might be unaware of in a taxi.

It was determined that social media outlets would be the best place to promote these videos, with the widest reaching audience available there. This started in Q4 2025 and will continue into 2026.

As well, to further support both drivers and passengers, print ads have been created with distribution planning to occur in local community newspapers, including those highlighting and promoting ethnically diverse languages in Winnipeg. This was important to have these be inclusive and wide-reaching, but also to support local, small print media who still have the opportunity to be impactful in their community.

This was a collaborative effort that included both the VFH Office and the WCTA in order to support drivers, educate drivers and the public and to best promote the safety of anyone getting into a VFH in Winnipeg.

To accomplish additional rounds of ads and education, this report requests that up to $30,000 in additional funds be authorized from the VFH Safety and Security surcharge fund to support these efforts in the future.

Budget

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 continue to be synergies with the existing WPA systems, and through the support provided within the Public Works Department. The VFH Office manages its finances closely, adjusting its operations as revenue moves. Further, when possible, VFH looks to reinvest in its operation through building resiliency and adding technology that will improve service and allow staff to do a better job and invest in staff to ensure that it remains effective and efficient in delivering service and support to the industry and the community. The VFH Office budgets to remain on a budget-neutral basis and ensure that operational expenses meet its expected revenues. Further details on the VFH budget can be found in the City of Winnipeg's Operating Budget.

Medium to Long-Range Plans for the VFH Industry

The VFH Office continues to engage the community, stakeholders and the industry 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 the following:

PTP Vehicle and Driver Licencing

With the work that has been done by VFH Enforcement and VFH reporting in documentation verification and audits over the last number of years, the VFH Office has continued to see areas of concern related to the proper vetting of drivers, and in ensuring that the required background checks – criminal record check, Manitoba child abuse registry, and Manitoba driver's abstract – are all maintained on a yearly basis, as well as the required vehicle checks – Manitoba vehicle safety and ensuring proper MPI insurance for the use of the vehicle – are all on file and reviewed on a yearly basis. With this in mind, the VFH Office is aware that the only way to ensure that the By-law is applied across the entire industry is to have it handle all licencing for both drivers and vehicles in the industry, whether they are a taxi, PTP or limousine. It would effectively transfer responsibility from the PTP dispatchers to the VFH Office to complete licencing.

In working with cross-functional support divisions in the City, it appears that VFH could be in a position to begin handling all licencing for the VFH industry by January 2027. Through 2026, work would be completed reviewing and identifying the sections of the By-law that would be removed and the ones that need to be amended by Council in order to ensure that the responsibility it transferred.

There is a significant amount of work that needs to take place, including IT/systems work, designing protocols and policies on receiving applications, and in communicating the change to dispatchers as well as the vehicle owners and drivers.

This will occur throughout 2026 in an attempt to be ready to implement this new licencing regime. There are benefits to the community, in that they can be assured that drivers and vehicle owners are all held to the same standard and background checked on the same yearly

interval as required by the VFH By-law. As well, those same drivers and vehicles owners will have more flexibility as they will be able to apply for varying licences and participate with different companies, whereas now they may be blocked by application time and document validity.

There are cities in Canada already handling all the licencing of their VFH drivers and vehicles, such as Calgary, so this would not be completely new in that regard. However, it would still be a significant shift in Winnipeg.

Moving in this direction would not only require a considerable amount of work by the VFH Office, as well as other departments in the City to assist and accomplish this, but also political support from Council.

It is anticipated that the additional information explaining the shift to the VFH Office, and the required VFH By-law amendments, will be brought forward in the 2026 VFH Annual Report.

Taxi Driver Fare Protection Fund

Fare jumping/fare evasion are one of the biggest risks faced by the taxicab industry, and disputes over fares and fare payment continues to jeopardize the safety of drivers and passengers alike. These can quickly escalate in closer quarters inside a vehicle. As well, fare evasion can be considered the same as “shoplifting” and amounts to a loss of income for the driver of vehicle. This issue has been discussed quite a bit between the VFH Office and taxi stakeholders. Amendments to the VFH By-law have been made and other strategies have been undertaken with varying degress of success. The VFH Office will be undertaking work to develop the possibility of creating a taxi driver fare protection fund (essentially a self-insurance fund) that could provide to support to drivers when proven cases of fare evasion have occurred. The work involved in considering this will include more definition of the magnitude of the issue, stakeholder consultation with the taxi industry and enforcement partners, including the WPS, as well as policy development.

Innovation and Modernization

The Public Service continues to look for opportunities to innovate and streamline processes in order to provide improved service for the industry. A few of the projects that have been initiated, that will show benefits in the years to come, include:

- Modernization of training materials and courses. Over the past year and a half, the VFH Office has been working with it’s training partners to update training materials and curriculum, to ensure that the most important information related to working in the VFH industry in Winnipeg is available. As part of this work, ongoing efforts to create online modules to have the training available to drivers on demand, so they can set their schedule to learn. Work continues in this area, but this has already come on stream for the new VFH driver training program and for the Independent Living Rescource Centre accessible training for standard vehicle drivers.
- Creation of an online vehicle Inspection Reporting Program (IRP). This will allow VFH officers to more effectively and efficiently complete vehicle inspection reports using the technology they already possess. This virtual inspection program will reduce the time required to fill out a paper inspection report, as well as the manual process of inputting this into the database and sending it to any affected parties. When completed and available for use, it is anticipated that the new IRP will streamline manual processes involved in completing an inspection and allow for more efficient completion of the report, better communication, and a reduction in potential errors. This will also improve

the experience of the owner or driver who has the vehicle during the inspection. This, along with PTP licencing, will allow for better communication of inspections with PTP drivers and vehicle owners. Due to IT resource constraints, project completion continues to be delayed and is now being planned for 2026 at the earliest.

- Creating an online complaint reporting portal that would allow people to report in a number of different languages (besides English and French), identify the language they are using through a list and then have artificial intelligence translate the complaint in English for VFH Office to review. This could elevate a person's comfort level in reporting an incident, and would also provide at least the basis for the complaint to VFH Enforcement. This idea is conceptual right now, and further work needs to be completed, but it something that could be employed to foster more reporting of complaints.

The VFH Office is always considering innovative ways to improve the processes of licencing, enforcement and reporting. It regularly engages with other jurisdictions to gain insights and search out opportunities.

Also, the VFH Office continues to consult and discuss with other jurisdictions in North America, the industry and the public as it continues to look for ways to deliver efficient, effective and timely customer service, programs and enforcement.

Reserve Fund

The Public Service will explore the feasibility of creating a reserve fund within the VFH Office budget in order to have funds available for initiatives to support the industry. Further research of options, including reserve usage, funding sources, and limitations will be undertaken in order to provide recommendations related to this.

Ongoing administration of the VFH industry and VFH By-law:

The Public Service believes that the administration, oversight, and regulation of the VFH industry and VFH By-law has been generally successful since implementation and should continue to reside within the Winnipeg Parking Authority. As well, given the breadth of the VFH industry, continued regulation and licencing should remain as it has been since transitioning to the City. This model works well, and the Public Service continues to work with the industry, its partners, and stakeholders to evolve and improve all facets of the VFH network, especially in the areas of training, safety and improving accessible service.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: October 17, 2025

Project Name:

Vehicle for Hire Industry 2025 Annual Update and Proposed Vehicles For Hire By-law and MBEA Enabling By-law Amendments

First Year of Program **2025**

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
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		$ 130,000			
Less: Surcharge Revenue/Deferred Revenue		130,000			
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts					
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments: There are no financial implications from **Recommendation #1**.
There are potential financial implications arising from **Recommendation #2**, which proposes amendments to the VFH By-law and MBEA By-law, including the introduction of new fines. The frequency of these offences, and consequently the associated revenue, is difficult to predict but will be managed within existing budgets.
Dircet costs above result from **Recommendations #3** and **#4**. These costs are funded by the Safety & Security surcharge account, which had a balance of $490,339.85 as of September 30, 2025.

Lioubov Gavrilova-Crozier Oct 17, 2025

Lioubov Gavrilova-Crozier, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration
Winnipeg Parking Authority

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Legal Services
- Indigenous Relations Division

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Goal: Environmental Resilience

Goal: Leadership and Good Governance
Objective #1 – Establish and implement priority actions through evidence-informed decision-making processes.
Objective #2 - Promote trust and government responsiveness through meaningful, inclusive and informed community engagement
Policy 1.5 – Evidence-Informed Decisions
Policy 1.7 – Equitable Service Access

Goal: Economic Prosperity
Objective #3 – Address poverty as an unacceptable and costly outcome of systemic barriers, through collaboration with the community and government bodies.
Policy 3.12 – Poverty Reduction

Goal: Social Equity
Objective #2 - Build bridges spanning ideas, cultures, identities and generations on a foundation of truth, understanding, and rights-based reconciliation.
Policy 5.4 – Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
Policy 5.5 – Indigenous Lens
Policy 5.6 - Equitable Service Access

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic opportunity #3 – Advancing Sustainable Transportation – Increase Mobility Options and Shift to Zero Emission Vehicles

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Goal 5 -Transportation System Equity is Enhanced
Goal 6 – All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Winnipeg Parking Authority SOA
Prepared by: G. Heather
Date: November 7, 2025
File No: WPA-021-2025

Attachments:

Appendix A: Vehicles for Hire By-law and MBEA Enabling Bylaw Amendments

Appendix B: Vehicle for Hire Market Share by Category

Appendix C: Vehicle for Hire Complaints