

**MEETING DATE:** February 20, 2002

**SUBJECT:** Taxi Stands At Transit Facilities

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Commission receive this report for information, noting that:

1. A memorandum dated November 26, 2001, attached hereto, details TTC staff's position with regard to taxi stands, specifically that:
  - i. The majority of TTC subway stations provide easy access to taxis, either at formal or informal taxi stands at or near their main entrances, or on the major arterial road on which the station is located; and
  - ii. TTC staff will be contacting City Works and Emergency Services staff to follow-up on those subway stations for which taxi stands were previously recommended, but never implemented;
  
1. As directed by the Commission at its meeting on November 28, 2001, the above-noted memorandum was placed before the Taxicab Advisory Committee at its meeting on January 7, 2002, also attended by TTC staff, and was received for information; and
2. TTC staff are currently reviewing the feasibility of allowing Accessible Taxis, while in service to Wheel-Trans, to enter the bus terminal areas of accessible subway stations, with emphasis on the following issues:
  - i. Development of appropriate rules, regulations, and conditions for operation on TTC properties, training of Accessible Taxi operators in those rules, and contractual agreement to all conditions by Accessible Taxi operators;
  - ii. Legal liabilities, including those concerned with vehicle damages, occupational injuries, and customer injuries, arising from non-TTC employees working for the TTC on TTC property; and
  - iii. Appropriate transfer procedures between taxis and the subway/RT for Wheel-Trans customers to minimize security and fare evasion risks, but maintain customer convenience.

### **FUNDING**

This report has no impact on the Commission's operating or capital budgets.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on April 11, 2001, the Commission requested that TTC staff report on several matters related to taxi stands at subway stations. TTC staff prepared a

memorandum, dated November 26, 2001 and titled *Taxi Stands at Transit Facilities*, responding to those directives. At its meeting on November 28, 2001, the Commission directed that this memorandum be put on the agenda for the Commission's February 2002 meeting, and that it be forwarded to the Taxicab Advisory Committee for information. Commissioner Moscoe also requested that staff report on the possibility of allowing Accessible Taxis (AT's) into the bus terminals at subway stations.

This report is a follow-up to the Commission's November 28, 2001 directive, and provides information concerning the operation of Accessible Taxis into subway station bus terminals.

## **DISCUSSION**

As directed by the Commission, the previous staff memorandum, dated November 26, 2001 is attached for consideration. This memorandum deals with several issues regarding taxi stands outside of subway stations, taxi stands within the bus terminals at subway stations, and taxi stands in off-street bus loops. The two main points to note in this memorandum are:

1. the majority of TTC subway stations provide easy access to taxis, either at formal or informal taxi stands at or near their main station entrances, or on the major arterial road on which the station is located; and
2. TTC staff will be contacting City Works and Emergency Services staff to follow-up on those subway stations for which taxi stands were previously recommended, but never implemented.

At the November 28, 2001 meeting, the Commission directed that the November 26, 2001 memo (attached) be forwarded to the Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) for information and consideration. The memo was considered by TAC at its meeting of January 7, 2002, at which it was received for information (the correspondence from the City Clerk on this matter is attached). The Committee found the conclusions of the TTC's memo to be acceptable. Some members of the Committee expressed a desire to have more taxi stands established outside of subway stations; Main Street Station was cited as an example of where more stands would be desirable. TTC staff explained that the establishment of taxi stands on City streets falls within the jurisdiction of Toronto Transportation Services, and that the TTC's primary interest would be that any additional taxi stands not affect the safe or efficient movement of TTC vehicles. The Committee discussed striking a Taxi Stand Work Group, and agreed to contact Toronto Transportation Services regarding the provision of more taxi stands throughout the city.

A suggestion was made, at the TAC meeting, that the TTC install signs within subway stations, directing customers to the locations of nearby taxi stands. Also, a deputant at the meeting stated that she found the location of the taxi stands outside of Kipling subway station to be inconvenient.

With regard to Accessible Taxis (AT's), TTC staff are currently reviewing the feasibility of allowing AT's, while in service to Wheel-Trans, to pick up and drop off Wheel-Trans customers at designated Wheel-Trans bus bays at rapid transit stations.

Wheel-Trans contracts with two different types of privately-owned taxis to supplement the service provided by Wheel-Trans-owned buses. Sedan-type taxis can be dispatched on an individual trip basis to provide service to Wheel-Trans registrants who are ambulatory or have folding wheelchairs or similar mobility aids. Their contract with Wheel-Trans is not exclusive in that the sedan taxi drivers can carry non-Wheel-Trans customers who are assigned through the company dispatch service, picked up at taxi stands, or picked up on the street. There are approximately 600 sedan taxi drivers who are employed by the firms under contract to Wheel-Trans that could respond to dispatched trips for Wheel-Trans customers. The large size and changing nature of this workforce would make it impossible to ensure that all sedan taxi drivers are properly trained to operate within the unique environment of TTC bus terminals and are knowledgeable of TTC policies. Due to the non-exclusive nature of their contract with Wheel-Trans, the TTC's inability to closely monitor sedan drivers on Wheel-Trans service, the potential for fare evasion, and the relatively small percentage of business that Wheel-Trans represents for these companies, TTC staff consider that the sedan taxis represent a safety and security risk for the TTC. As a result, sedan-type taxis should not be allowed to operate into the bus terminals at subway stations.

The second type of Wheel-Trans contracted service is provided by AT's. These minivans are designed specifically to accommodate non-ambulatory disabled people, including registrants with wheelchairs and scooters. Functionally, they are similar to the Wheel-Trans vehicles operated by the TTC, except that they are privately owned and operated, and of limited capacity. Unlike the sedan taxis, the AT's are identifiable while in service to Wheel-Trans because of signage on the outside of the vehicle that has been issued by Wheel-Trans. Under the licenses granted by the Toronto Licensing Commission, AT's are restricted to performing only contracted work; that is, they cannot pick-up or drop-off spontaneous fares on the street while under contract to Wheel-Trans. There are 62 AT's employed in Wheel-Trans contracted service. The driver and vehicle are licensed as a unit, which ensures that the same driver always drives the same vehicle. Each AT driver is Wheel-Trans certified and specially trained to serve customers with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs and scooters. Wheel-Trans issues each AT driver a pre-set schedule which makes it possible for Wheel-Trans to verify the activities and location of all the AT's in service at any given time.

Given these operating parameters, and since the AT's primary source of business is their contract with Wheel-Trans, TTC staff believe there are conditions under which these vehicles could be granted access to certain TTC stations without unduly compromising system safety and security. Such access would be restricted to stations that have a designated Wheel-Trans bus bay and have the capacity to absorb the additional congestion that may result from the AT service. There are eight stations with elevators that permit access to accessible conventional buses and/or subway/RT services, and which would be expected to be the primary transfer points on the TTC system at present.

This number will increase with the access improvements being made now and to be made by the TTC in the future.

In order to meet necessary safety and security standards, there are three outstanding issues that have to be resolved before access can be granted to the AT's. First, a set of rules, regulations, and operating parameters would have to be developed and strictly adhered to for the operation of AT's on TTC property. These would include station-specific operating and layover instructions, particularly where bus bays are being shared with conventional bus routes, and directions on giving priority to high-capacity TTC services. The AT drivers would have to be trained in any and all operating parameters to be established by the TTC, and their compliance will be ensured through contractual arrangement, with appropriate penalties for non-compliance.

Second, legal requirements regarding potential TTC liabilities for non-employees operating on TTC property would have to be detailed and agreed to by the contractors and by TTC Legal staff. Claims related to occupational injuries, vehicle damages, and customer injuries could arise and must be dealt with according to an established, contractual process.

Third, the issue of managing the transfer of Wheel-Trans customers between buses, AT's, and the subway must be worked out to minimize the risk of fare evasion, while maintaining customer convenience. This may involve development of a special paper transfer, modified fare collection methods, or other means of facilitating transfers between modes.

At this time, these outstanding issues do not appear to be insurmountable. TTC staff will continue to work towards resolution of these issues internally and with the AT contractors, to enable closer integration between the conventional system and the AT contracted service.

## **SUMMARY**

The majority of subway stations provide easy access to taxi stands. TTC staff will follow-up with City staff to ensure that previously-recommended taxi stands are implemented. The Taxicab Advisory Committee accepted these conclusions and will also be pursuing additional taxi stands throughout the city with City staff. TTC staff will continue to work on the issue of allowing AT's access to stations to improve integration between specialized and conventional transit services.

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February 5, 2002

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Attachments: Memorandum from R. Ducharme dated November 26, 2001, titled *Taxi Stands at Transit Facilities*

Letter from City Clerk dated January 16, 2002