

Meeting Date: November 28, 2005

Subject: Extension For Meter-Based Sedan Taxi Contracts: Wheel-Trans Operations

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Commission approve:

1. a six (6) month service extension to the existing meter based sedan taxi contracts from January 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006;
2. an increase of \$2,200,000 to the overall contract upset limit for meter based sedan taxi contracts from \$21,894,200 to \$24,094,200;
3. the allocation of these additional funds to the current meter based sedan taxi contractors for services rendered to June 30, 2006, as follows; and

Arrow Cab Limited:	\$800,000 increase,	from \$6,881,700 to	\$7,681,700
Beck Taxi Limited:	\$800,000 increase,	from \$9,728,500 to	\$10,528,500
East End Taxi :	\$600,000 increase,	from \$5,284,000 to	\$5,884,000

4. staff reporting back to the Commission by April 30, 2006 on the recommended approach for improving the overall quality of service to Wheel-Trans customers provided by non-accessible vehicles.

FUNDING

Funding for meter based sedan taxi contracts has been provided in the proposed 2006 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget.

DISCUSSION

In Spring 2000, a 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) was developed for the supply of licensed meter based sedan taxi service for specialized transportation on behalf of Wheel-Trans registrants. At the Commission Meeting of May 31, 2000 the Commission awarded contracts to Beck Taxi Limited, Arrow Cab Limited and East End Taxi for a three year period with an option for two, one year extensions. These contracts, including the exercised options for contract extensions, expired on June 30, 2005.

At the June 2005 Commission Meeting, the Commission authorized the extension of the existing contracts to December 31, 2005 and directed staff to investigate the feasibility of setting up a non-profit corporation to provide dispatch services. Working with the City of Toronto staff from the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division (MLS), consultations were held with stakeholders from the taxicab industry as well as representatives and advocates for people with disabilities. Based on these consultations changes were introduced in October 2005 that improve the quality of the accessible taxi standards, however, these changes did not extend to sedan taxis.

The performance of sedan taxi service continues to be inconsistent. Customers still complain of drivers being rude, failing to speak English to customers, eating while operating the vehicle, not being escorted to and from the accessible door, talking on cell phones, aggressive driving, showing up late or not at all for rides and driving dirty vehicles in poor condition. Contractors have been required to address each of these complaints and service suspensions have been imposed for repeated and or serious infractions. The MLS have been made aware of by-law infractions. Despite these actions the inconsistent quality of service continues and without significant changes to the taxi

industry there is no reason to believe that service will improve.

In order to improve the quality of sedan taxi service provided to customers, fundamental issues such as improved driver training, on-street supervision, and improved communication between contractors and Wheel-Trans dispatch staff must be addressed. Sufficient enforcement of the City of Toronto By-Laws is also required.

The extension of these contracts will provide Wheel-Trans the opportunity to develop a Request for Proposal that addresses the service quality issues and at the same time explores options for the provisions of non-accessible vehicles.

The recommended increase of \$2,200,000 to the meter based sedan taxi contract upset limits will provide approximately 12% of total trips for the extension period from January 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006. This amount reflects the recently approved meter rate increase. These contracts will be extended with the same terms and conditions that are currently in place. The allocation of this additional funding will continue to be based upon the Contractor's vehicle availability and geographic service areas. These revised contract limits may be adjusted based upon service performance for the Wheel-Trans Contract.

JUSTIFICATION

Sedan taxis assist the Wheel-Trans bus and accessible taxi services in meeting peak-period demand, provide the flexibility to handle emergency service adjustments as well as provide substantial service during the off-peak periods. This request to extend the existing meter based sedan taxi contracts and increase the upset limit for the respective contractors remains consistent with the proposed 2006 Wheel-Trans Operating Budget and provides sufficient service to June 30, 2006.

November 7, 2005
18-15-15