Wheelchair Accessible Transit Inc.

TORONTO PARA TRANSIT

PROPOSAL

On-Demand Metered Accessible Taxicab Service for the City of Toronto

Wheelchair Accessible Transit Inc. / Toronto Para Transit is pleased to submit to the Toronto Taxicab Review a proposal to address the issues of ambassador licences, wheelchair licences, and the legislative requirements of the AODA.

With the implementation of this proposal individuals with disabilities living in the City of Toronto and visitors to the city will finally have equal access to on-demand metered taxicab services. They will have an alternative means of transportation other than the city run TTC Wheel-Trans program.

The City will not have to provide any subsidies or grants to the dedicated taxicab brokerage(s) or drivers who enter into this program. The program is self-sustained and provides adequate opportunity for drivers to make the same if not more income than drivers of standard plates (sedan vehicles). The program also provides for a gradual transition of ambassador taxicab licences to standard licences ensuring the market value of the taxicab licence is not eroded due to a large influx of transferrable licences.

Establishing a dedicated accessible taxicab brokerage(s) will ensure on-demand metered taxicab service is provided in priority and effectively monitored by a qualified service provider experienced in dealing with the special needs of individuals with disabilities.

With the adoption and implementation of this proposal the City of Toronto will be one of the first cities to in the world to provide this level of accessible service and will be recognized internationally and throughout North America as the industry leader in providing on-demand accessible taxicab transportation with fare equity.

On-demand Metered Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Model:

- One (1) tier of taxi licences as opposed to the current controversial three (3) tiers.
- Guaranteed wheelchair accessible on-demand metered taxicab service, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, at no cost difference to the fare charged to any customer hiring a taxicab in the City of Toronto.
- Elimination of a significant transportation barrier for the disabled, ensuring equality in taxicab services for all Torontonians and visitors to the City.
- The proposal does not require any public subsidies in order to be successful.
- An alternative for the TTC Wheel-Trans and to individuals with disabilities who wish to have the convenience of on-demand metered taxicab service.
- Significant cost savings to TTC Wheel-Trans.
- This proposal would make Toronto compliant with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and Provincial and Federal Human Rights Legislation.

Proposal Highlights:

- All Ambassador taxicab vehicles to be converted to wheelchair accessible taxicab vehicles through a phased in approach.
- Existing "W" vehicles to be integrated into a dedicated accessible taxicab brokerage(s).
- Ambassador taxicab owners will be able to convert their "Ambassador" licence to a "Standard" licence after having converted their vehicle to an accessible vehicle and providing accessible transportation for a minimum of seven (7) consecutive years.
- During the seven (7) years of service, the converted ambassador taxicab will be required to work under contract and supervision with a dedicated wheelchair accessible taxicab brokerage(s).
- At the completion of seven (7) years, the Ambassador owner will have a fully functional standard taxicab licence (plate) which then can be sold at the going market rate, thus providing the much sought after retirement security and equality with standard plates.

- Upon sale, such licence may only be transferred to a new wheelchair accessible vehicle.

- The designated life of the accessible vehicle will be seven (7) model years, instead of the five (5) model years for a sedan vehicle. The extended years will enable the owner to recover the higher costs associated with the purchase of an accessible vehicle.

- Wheelchair Accessible vehicles will be subject to the same inspection schedules as standard taxicabs as stipulated by the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 545.

- The accessible taxicab brokerage will be required to have a state of the art Global Positioning System (GPS) and all accessible taxicabs will be required to have such system installed in the accessible vehicle. The brokerage dispatch team will monitor the service to ensure taxicab fares for the disabled community take priority over any other fares that drivers may pick up through dispatch or on the street.

- The Ambassador owner who converts his/her vehicle will be permitted to lease or rent the accessible taxicab to a qualified driver (2nd driver) that meets the City and brokerage guidelines allowing for the vehicle to operate two shifts per day.

- Surcharges shall be prohibited for accessible fares, only taxicab meter rates shall apply.

- All Ambassador taxicab operators and any other driver operating the wheelchair accessible taxicab will be required to successfully complete the 15-hour Accessible Vehicle Operator Training Program currently provided by Municipal Licensing & Standards - Training Centre.

- The Ambassador owner who converts his/her vehicle will be under contract with a dedicated accessible brokerage and will be obligated to service the disabled community in priority.

- The Ambassador owner who converts his/her vehicle will be permitted to pick up fares on the street, through dispatch and at taxicab stands when not engaged in providing priority service to the disabled community.

- The brokerage will be required to monitor drivers, to ensure priority is given to the disabled community, through the GPS, on-road supervision and mystery shopping evaluations.

- Brokerages will be obligated to report directly to Municipal Licensing and

Standard, Licensing Services any contravention with respect to a driver who refuses priority service to any member of the disabled community. The brokerage will also provide all required documentation pertaining to any such refusal and assist Municipal Licensing and Standards with any such investigation as required.

- All dispatcher's employed by the brokerage will be required to receive specialized training to deal with individuals that have speech impairments.

- All vehicles will be insured with adequate insurance coverage as required by the TTC and Municipal Licensing and Standard.

Time Frame of Implementation:

The proposed program would be structured to offer the transition of ambassador licences to accessible licences over a seven (7) year period. During this period, there will be a limited number of ambassadors allowed to enter into the program per year.

This approach allows for owners who have recently purchased new sedan vehicles to continue operating until such time when the vehicle needs to be replaced with an accessible vehicle. This allows for a controlled transition while still maintaining the market value of taxicab owner licences within the City of Toronto.

Upon adoption of this proposal, Wheelchair Accessible Transit Inc. and Toronto Para Transit can be positioned to implement the program within a four (4) to six (6) months period.

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