



Phase 3 – Input Compilation:

The Taxicab Advisory Committee, Driver Bill of Rights & Compliments and Complaints

This document contains a summary of stakeholder and public input received about three areas that City Council directed ML&S to initiate in advance of the final report:

1. **Create a Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC):** This committee will facilitate communication between the taxicab industry, the riding public and the City of Toronto, and will act in an advisory capacity to the Executive Director of ML&S.
2. **Create a Driver Bill of Rights:** The Driver's Bill of Rights will complement the Passenger Bill of Rights currently posted in all taxicabs, and explain the rights of the driver already outlined in the bylaw.
3. **Improve the Complaints and Compliments Process:** ML&S is working to improve customer service by streamlining the complaints and compliments process.

Information was gathered from various sources, such as consultations, email, online forms and voicemail.

Contents

Suggestions for the Taxicab Advisory Committee.....	2
Suggestions for the Driver Bill of Rights.....	7
Suggestions for Complaints and Compliments Process	10

Suggestions for the Taxicab Advisory Committee

A summary of collected input is provided here, including summarized consultation comments, followed by verbatim comments:

- **Composition:** Different suggestions were received for TAC composition, but it was generally agreed that the TAC would be comprised of stakeholders from the various licence categories, as well as City staff including enforcement, police, tourism and hospitality agencies and possibly councillors. Some people suggested that the number of member spots in each licensee category should correspond to the number of licensees in the industry, while a few comments were made that the number of licensee spots should take into consideration different group's financial stake in the industry.
- **Reporting Structure:** Many stakeholders expressed the importance of ensuring councillors would receive input from the TAC. Some stakeholders thought that the TAC should report directly to City Council or the Licensing and Standards Committee (LSC), rather than to City staff. Although a few stakeholders mentioned that they would not participate if the TAC did not report to councillors, most people present agreed that it would be better to move forward and create the committee, regardless of who it reported to.
- **Similar organizations in other places:** Many stakeholders advocated for a creation of a taxicab advisory committee similar to organizations in Mississauga and New York. Stakeholders mentioned that some committees included limousines, livery services and public transit. They also referred to committees in which roles extended beyond the advisory capacity outline in Toronto's TAC draft Terms of Reference, with the committee having abilities of Toronto's Licensing and Standards Committee and Licensing Tribunal. Some of the functions mentioned included approval of legislation and review of grievances.
- **Membership acquisition:** Some stakeholders thought the industry should be involved in choosing applicants.
- **Driver attendance:** Some stakeholders explained that money lost is a barrier to entry for drivers, suggesting they should be compensated.
- **Previous Committee:** A few participants suggested the former TAC should be reinstated.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Verbatim Suggestions

This section includes verbatim comments with identifiers removed.

Submission

Mayor Ford,

For almost four decades now, I continue to hear from bureaucrats and politicians alike at city hall, that they want to hear from the Toronto taxi membership on industry issues so that a consensus on what to do to improve our industry can be reached.

The problem that always arises is that no one at city hall really listens to our membership and staff along with the elected officials that know zero about this industry, keep putting us in a worse situation each and every time we meet.

For example, I direct you to an email I received on 30 October 2012 from the Taxicab Industry Review team informing me and I am sure others as well that a meeting will be held on Thursday 8 November 2012 in room 308 at Metro Hall to discuss three particular agenda items. The one I am going to deal with in this correspondence is the TAC (Taxicab Advisory Committee.)

During an approximate dozen and a half meetings that have already been held on taxicab reformation, this topic came up on numerous occasions. Our membership without exception, related to staff, including the Executive Director of MLS, Ms. Tracey Cook that if TAC was brought back we wanted it to follow the format, for the most part, like the committee that sits in Mississauga, which is a full fledged committee that reports directly back to council with recommendations.

I noted in the email I received that staff wants TAC to act in an advisory committee capacity to the Executive Director of MLS. So basically TAC would be a sub-committee that would report to a bureaucrat that would report to the L&S committee who then reports to council. How convoluted do you want this process to become? This idea adds two unnecessary steps to the process, which I believe is by design to frustrate our members even more than they are now considering L&S committees have usually disregarded their submissions.

Considering that over the past few years we have seen a revolving door when it come to Executive Directors of the MLS plus the every four year change we receive of new L&S committee members after each municipal election, is there any wonder why our industry keeps moving in the wrong direction? Each change necessitates a re-education as they will have no idea of what has occurred in the industry or how to fix the issues and in reality could care less.

In the Councilor Moscoe regime, I had numerous L&S committee members approach me at committee meetings telling me that they had no idea what to do

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

on this committee and supported Councilor Moscoe's proposals hoping they were doing the right thing. So now city hall wants us to leave recommendations in the hands of a senior bureaucrat who may not be here in six months and/or may say, Thanks for the information, I'll get back to you? I have heard that statement dozens of time over my tenure in this industry and rarely do they ever get back to you and I am sure those requests for the most part, are filed under File G.

For almost five decades, Toronto city hall's approach to our industry issues has not nor will it ever work in resolving our concerns. Don't you believe it is time for a new approach? What has the City got to lose? If you do not like what a full TAC committee recommends to council then send it back or turn it down. To make it clear so there is no confusion, the next paragraph will be typed in red with italics and it contains what the Toronto taxicab membership en mass would like the TAC to be.

Our membership would like the TAC (Taxicab Advisory Committee) to consist of membership from all major stakeholders that has full committee status and reports only and directly to Toronto city council. We do not want to report to a bureaucrat or another ineffectual L&S committee as we feel it is decades overdue that a committee is formed where our membership has a real say in how their industry is governed.

As I previously stated, staff and councilors are not, nor do they want to listen to our membership and the last thing they want to see is that we actually have a productive and positive say in our industry's future. If staff has made up its mind on doing the TAC setup as described in the email, then just do it, why call another useless meeting and waste our members' time as it is rather obvious you are disregarding our recommendations on this matter anyway? I am sure staff will have no problem finding members in our industry that feel it would be a prestigious position to sit on a TAC committee even though they would not have any authorities to effect positive change.

Submission

Dear Ms. Tracey Cook,

We are writing you because of a recent email we received from the Taxi Review Team regarding the formation of a Taxi Advisory Committee. We welcome the idea because we know that if it is brought about properly, it will do a lot of good for the industry. This is why we have taken this opportunity, to share with you ideas you might want to consider, as you attempt to put this body together.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Here are our suggestions which we hope you might want to consider incorporating with your master plan as you build the Taxi Advisory Committee:

- The initial number of TAC members should be between 13 to 15. We think it is important that the diverse camps within the taxi industry be represented.
- One quarter of TAC members should be taxi drivers.
- Candidates for TAC must be appointed by the various established associations within the taxi industry.
- Any established taxi drivers' related association which can demonstrate they have more than 100 members should be eligible to appoint two candidates for consideration.

We hope you will find our suggestions useful as you attempt to put TAC together.

Submission

Members should be the people who are directly involved with the taxi business such as taxi plate owners, taxi plate agents and taxi drivers. The most important thing to regulate is the role of garage people like the agents of taxi plates.

Submission

I think it is important for Licensing Enforcement Officers be part of the committee as we are the ones dealing with drivers/owners/fares every day.

Submission

My additional comments:

- The original concept of the TAC was good at the time. Unfortunately over the years circumstances have changed, including the old MLS authority.
- The TAC was NEVER legislated out of existence and technically could be utilized any time.
- I would like to remind you of the lofty goal (in the pre-amble of the 98 Reforms) of making the taxi industry self regulating.

Submission

- Create an ongoing Taxi Industry Stakeholder Committee should be created for on-going consultation.
- The purpose of this new committee will be to raise issues, make suggestions and voice the opinions of all stakeholders on a regular basis to affect positive change.
- This new committee would hold quarterly meetings and consist of fleet operators, brokerages, drivers, owners, association and city officials.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

- At present the lack of a recurring forum means that issues aren't dealt with on a continuing basis. This leads to problems that could have been easily avoided.
- Washington has driver bill of rights
- Besides bill of rights should be expectations from passengers and possible prosecution for not paying the fare

Submission

I am glad to hear that council approved the setting up of a taxicab advisory committee yesterday.

We have some ideas on how the committee could be set up.

We would like the taxicab advisory committee be made up of 9 members:

- 2 taxi drivers
- 2 taxi owners
- 2 brokerage representatives
- 1 representative from Tourism Toronto
- 1 representative from the TTC
- 1 City of Toronto councilor

The Taxi advisory committee should report directly to the Legislation and Licensing Committee.

Those wishing to be on the committee should submit their resumes to the nomination committee and membership should be vented by City council as all the other committees of council are formed, e.g., the disabilities committee.

Submission

In order for this committee to be effective it must report directly to the regulators and not the administrators. This means this committee should report to the City Executive Committee and NOT the Chief Bureaucrat who could squash any suggestions based on his/her agenda. If TAC doesn't report directly to the executive committee it loses its credibility and just creates another layer in which the industry message can be lost.

The Committee should be representative of all stakeholders; politicians, various segments of the taxi industry, special interest groups, administrators and the general public. Committee members should be appointed based on their skill and knowledge and participation in the taxi industry. A close look at the Mississauga model of their advisory committee would be a good basis for a template for the Toronto advisory committee.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

TAC should meet at least every other month with the ability to make special meetings as needed. The operational procedures should be clear and transparent. Industry members should feel at ease with the Committee and look to it to help bring resolution to industry problems.

Without TAC appearing to be independent and not under the control of either the politicians or the administrators, it will not succeed or be accepted by the majority of industry members. The composition of TAc should also be representative of the industry and not heavily slanted towards any special interest group. TAC should be composed of experienced, non-radical members that bring various experiences life experiences to the table.

Submission

TAC – Support a well balanced industry mix that should be appointed

Suggestions for the Driver Bill of Rights

All Toronto taxicabs have a Passenger Bill of Rights that outlines the rights that passengers have. Items covered include: meter rate charges, right to a silent ride, right to an air conditioned ride etc. The Passenger Bill of Rights came from the 1998 taxi review.

Throughout the review, many taxicab drivers requested a Driver Bill of Rights (DBR) to improve their treatment and working conditions, making suggestions to publicly display existing applicable legislation protecting their health and safety, in addition to requesting some new protections.

The majority of suggestions received were aimed at taxicab riders, aiming to make them more aware of appropriate and acceptable behaviour in taxicabs, as well as situations in which drivers may refuse to transport a passenger or end a trip. In addition to suggestions for riders, suggestions were also received which were aimed at the behaviour and responsibilities of other industry stakeholders, such as garages, brokerages and agents. Some stakeholders were concerned that a Driver Bill of Rights might provoke more conflict with passengers, and suggested branding the document as rules for the taxicab rather than passenger versus driver rights.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Verbatim Suggestions

This section includes verbatim comments with identifiers removed.

Submission

If possible then please allow drivers to ask for money up front in certain conditions to avoid the fare jumping incidents. Indicates clearly on the bill that customer should advise the driver which route he likes to take. Thanks

Submission

Is entitled to a well maintained vehicle

Submission

Have a method of contacting Licensing Enforcement to put forth concerns regarding vehicle safety or Licensing regarding lessee agreements or protection of any unfair financial burdens placed on drivers.

Submission

- 1) There's a huge problem with fare jumpers, notifying the police doesn't help either because they do not show up. With no other law to go to we (as taxi cab workers) lose \$40 average.
- 2) It should be our right to have a unionized industry.
- 3) Fare waiting tickets are very common but are also unfair, and this wastes our time and the cities time to deal with because after getting the pointless ticket we have to go fight it in court and the judge usually lets it go because even he/she sees no point in it. The only reason that's an issue is because we aren't given taxi stands.
- 4) Taxi industry insurance is very high for no reason, and if you use the insurance because of an unfortunate accident and you claim because of injury the insurance shoots up and on top of that there is no law implementing the limit.

Submission

I am driving taxicab in Toronto for the last ten years. I believe there should be driver bill of rights. In this regard a cab driver should have right to refuse the customer after 8 PM. A cab driver should have right to take upfront full or some portion of fare after 8 PM. There should be some surcharge on passenger if he or she threw up in the cab.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Submission

- Establish a task force that includes police and taxi drivers to proactively address taxi drivers' health and safety concerns
- Establish a Taxi Advisory Committee to ensure ongoing dialogue with Police and build stronger partnership by having regular roundtables and workshops for drivers and Police

Submission

Please re- activate a taxicab advisory committee. A committee with teeth one where the industry, staff, public and politicians can have an open dialogue and bring about constructive proposals.

Submission

We as a drivers should have drivers bill of rights. This will help or give rights as a drivers.

Submission

there should be a driver bill of rights Just like customer bill of rights

Submission

Create a Taxicab Passenger Bill of Rights: to focus the industry on customer service

Submission

After 9PM money upfront

Submission

Driver should be treated with dignity and respect

Submission

Add debit and credit card transaction to passenger Bill of Rights. Drivers would like a Drivers Bill of Rights because of rudeness and harassment from passengers.

Submission

The Drivers Bill of Rights should be established through stakeholder input by way of workshops. Many drivers have opinions that they feel are important but not necessarily relevant. Many other stakeholders also have opinions which also should be incorporated. The reality is a consensus opinion approach is quite possibly the best way to continue.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Before the City goes ahead and incorporates a Driver Bill of Rights it should again discuss these rights and obligations with the general public as well as the taxi industry stakeholders. Once a Drivers Bill of Rights is established this newly created Bill of Rights should be placed side by side alongside the Customer Bill of Rights. Perhaps an incorporation of both Bills on one sheet would create less confusion for the travelling public and clearly lay out the rights and responsibilities of both customers and drivers.

Submission

Concerns that this may lead to additional driver-customer confrontations. Not sure what the contents of this document would be. Suggest replacing "Customer Bill of Rights" with a single document that would address both customer's and driver's concerns. The connotation of having "Rights". As example "Toronto Taxi Professional Industry Service Standards". Essentially this document would contain all of the same things as the "Customer Bill of Rights", but you could add things like the four points that drivers can refuse, entitled to fair compensation, etc...

Suggestions for Complaints and Compliments Process

A summary of collected input is provided here, including summarized consultation comments, followed by verbatim comments:

- **Taxicab industry involvement:** Get members of the taxicab industry involved in responding to complaints.
- **Better technology:** Use in-car technology to help track complaints.
- **Central dispatch and compliments-complaints line:** Create a single telephone number tourists could call to order a taxicab or make compliments or complaints. This central dispatch could be especially useful in other ways, such as during large events, such as conventions, to alert the taxicab industry that an estimated number of taxicabs will be needed at certain locations at certain times. Suggestions were made that the City should assist with creating this.
- **Feedback portal:** Create a single portal to gather information about the taxicab experience, collecting information about the tourism and hospitality industry based on customers' taxicab experiences.

Taxicab Industry Review - Attachment 1

Verbatim Suggestions

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Submission

- 1) Permit a taxi union, at dispatch and central union level.
- 2) Complaint/compliment process should be handled by the taxi union.
- 3) Customer is not always right, there should always be a thorough investigation not matter how small the issue. No assumptions should be made.
- 4) There should be lawyers hired by the union to help with accident cases and advisory.

Submission

There should be one rotational dedicated officer with direct no and power to enforce the law.

Submission

The current methodology to handle complaints and compliments in the taxi industry are fairly new and have been revised and established to best serve the Toronto taxi travelling public. The use of technology should be used and expanded and perhaps a more interactive system is in order. In the end a website on which customers can launch complaints should be considered. Along with this drivers should also be allowed to complain about abusive, rude and discriminatory customers. In Canada all citizens have rights and just because one is providing a service doesn't mean the service provider has abrogated his/her rights. the City should wherever possible keep a list of abusive customers because one can be sure many of these people launch complaints against drivers. Incidents where drivers are physically, racially and verbally abused should be collected and depending on the situation be forwarded to the Police Services.