

Vehicle-for-Hire Public & Stakeholder Engagement

June 2024

How Will Decisions Be Made?



GPA – Third Party Engagement Consultants

- ✓ Host Consultation Activity
- ✓ Ask Questions
- ✓ Record Feedback
- ✓ Report What We Heard



City Staff

- ✓ Review Engagement Report Prepared by GPA
- ✓ Review Transportation Study and Other Materials
- ✓ Write Staff Report and Prepare Recommendations to be Considered by Council



Decision Maker



City Council

- ✓ Review City Staff Report
- ✓ Ask Questions
- ✓ Make Decision
 1. Adopt Recommendations
 2. Make Amendments
 3. Reject

Collecting Feedback

Feedback from today's session will inform a City Staff report expected to go to Council by the end of 2024.

Your feedback will be summarized and included in a final engagement summary report that will be prepared by GPA. You can submit feedback in the following ways:

- Consultation Sessions
- [Online Survey](#)
- Email (vehicleforhirereview@toronto.ca)

Context

- In 2021, City Council directed City staff to report back on a comprehensive review of vehicle-for-hire regulations. The last bylaw review was conducted in 2019.
- This review is ongoing and includes various topics, such as:
 - On-demand wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire service
 - The Accessibility Fund Program
 - Inactive Taxicab Licences
 - Impact of licensing limits
 - Current state of driver wages
- The City is also conducting a transportation study with independent researchers to help understand the impacts of vehicle-for-hire and inform an industry framework.
- Staff intend to report on their review to Committee and Council by the end of 2024 with bylaw recommendations and responses to outstanding City Council directives.

Purpose

The purpose of our bylaw review is to:

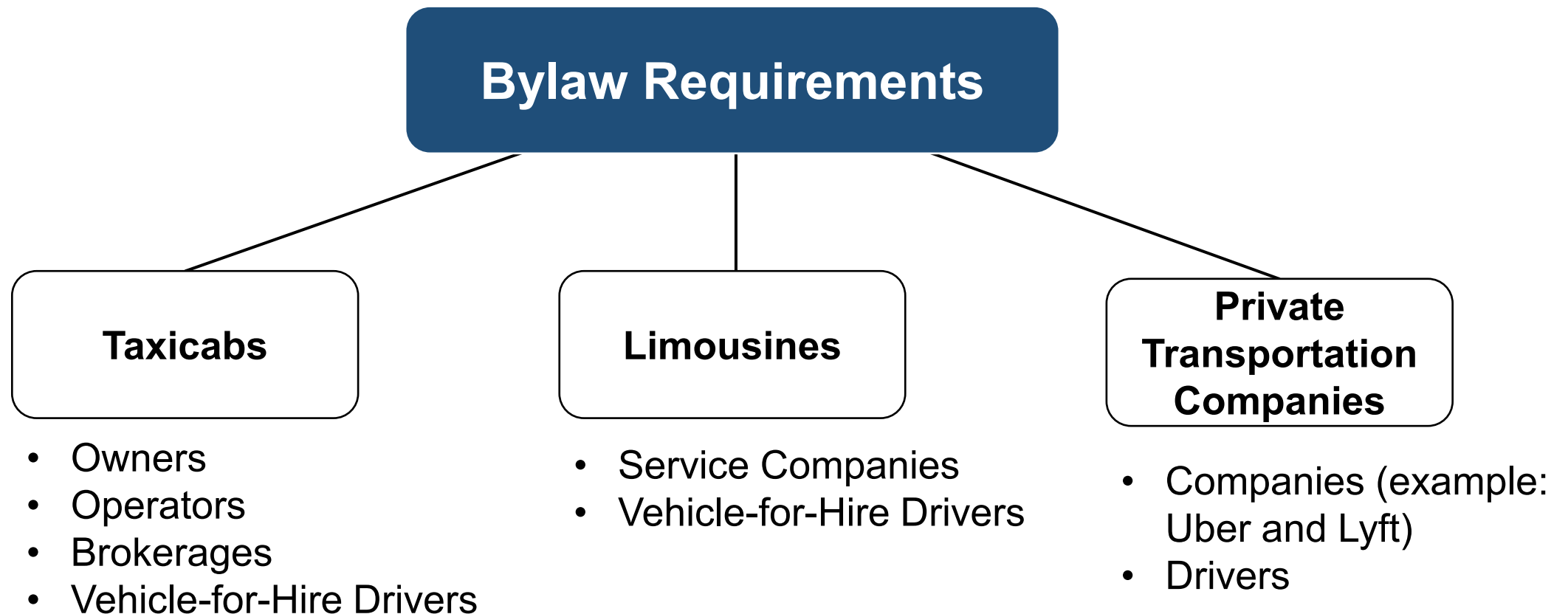
1. Address user and industry needs
2. Update the City's Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw



The purpose of our consultations are to:

1. Understand your experiences with vehicle-for-hire
2. Provide the opportunity for you to share your thoughts on how to improve vehicle-for-hire
3. Collect your feedback to help inform staff's recommendations for City Council

Toronto's Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw



Licensing Stats

As at June 5, 2024, there are:



6,655 vehicle-for-hire drivers*



4,890 taxicab owners*



20 taxicab brokerages



7 taxicab operators



65,059 active private transportation company drivers



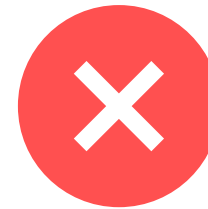
2 operating private transportation companies

What does the Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw currently regulate?



Regulated by the Bylaw

- On-demand, non-accessible and accessible taxicab, limousine and PTC services
- Accessibility Fund Program
- Number of taxicabs
- Insurance requirements
- Trip, shift, and collision data reporting
- Driver training standards
- Taxicab fares
- Safety standards



Not Regulated by the Bylaw

- TTC Wheel-Trans
- Availability and cost of insurance
- Driver wages
- Value of taxicab owner licences



Wheelchair Accessible Service

Accessibility Goals

To work towards the goal of improving the quality and availability of accessible vehicle-for-hire services, the City is aiming to:

1. Remove user barriers to accessible service
2. Make it easier for the industry to provide accessible service
3. Ensure the City is meeting its requirements within the Province of Ontario's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*

Accessibility Requirements for the Industry

All Vehicle-for-Hire and PTC Drivers

- Training program, which includes accessibility and anti-racism and discrimination training
- Must not charge increased fares to people with disabilities

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Drivers

- Accessible training program and a refresher course every four years
- Must accommodate customers with accessibility needs

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Owners

- Ensure their vehicle is within the bylaw's age limits and safety standards

Private Transportation Companies

- Must provide accessible service that have the same fares as non-accessible service with comparable wait times

What did we hear in 2018 & 2019?

The last vehicle-for-hire bylaw review was conducted in 2018-2019. Key takeaways from the review include:

Users

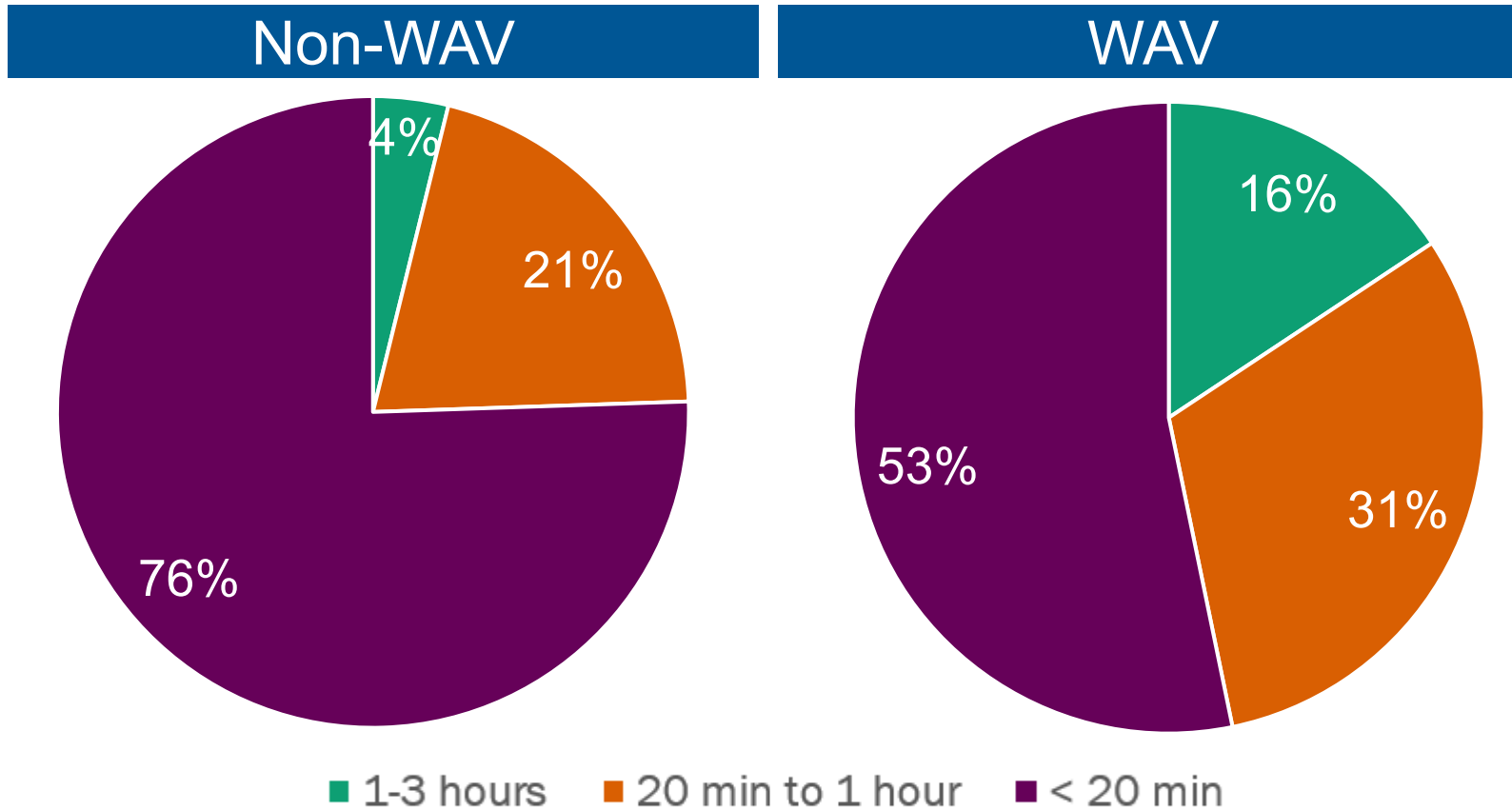
1. Wheelchair accessible service is not readily available
2. Quality of service is inconsistent
3. Suggested a dispatch service and reviewing training for wheelchair accessible vehicle drivers

Industry

1. Providing wheelchair accessible service is costly and demand is low
2. Wheelchair accessible rides take longer to complete
3. Suggested a program to subsidize the cost of operating a wheelchair accessible vehicle

2023 Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAV) wait times

From request time to driver arrival time



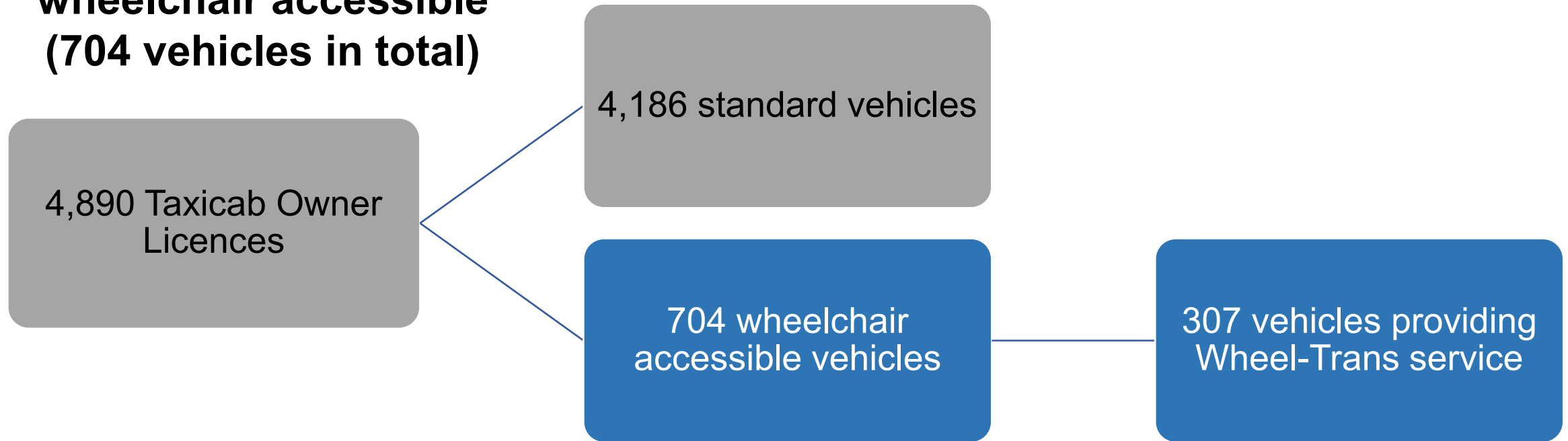
Almost half of WAV trips have wait times **greater than 20 minutes**.

Over three-quarters of non-WAV trips have wait times **less than 20 minutes**.

Based on a full year's span of data from three taxi brokerages; Customer trips hailed on-street are not included in the calculation
Trips where customer request time to driver arrival time is greater than 3 hours is excluded to differentiate between pre-booked and on-demand trips

Number of Taxicab Vehicles

14% of the taxicab fleet is wheelchair accessible (704 vehicles in total)



As at June 5, 2024

Proposed Approaches

City staff are proposing the following changes:

- 1. Create a centralized dispatch service for wheelchair accessible taxicab users and service providers**
- 2. Update the Accessibility Fund Program**

Note: Proposals are in draft form, may be changed, and are subject to approval by City Council. For discussion purposes only.

What is a centralized dispatch service?



Better user experience

All users requiring a wheelchair accessible ride submits their requests through one point of contact



More efficient dispatching

Dispatch system sends the closest available taxi, regardless of brokerage



Lower wait times

Driver arrives at pick-up location to complete the trip

Examples of centralized dispatching in other cities

Winnipeg WAV

1. Launched in May 2022
2. Wait times down from 1 hour to 20 minutes
3. Number of wheelchair accessible trips expected to increase by 50% in 2024



WAV Calgary

1. Launched in December 2019
2. Wait times down from 45 minutes to 20 minutes
3. Number of wheelchair accessible trips increased by 75% since launch



Accessibility Fund Program (AFP)

What is the AFP?

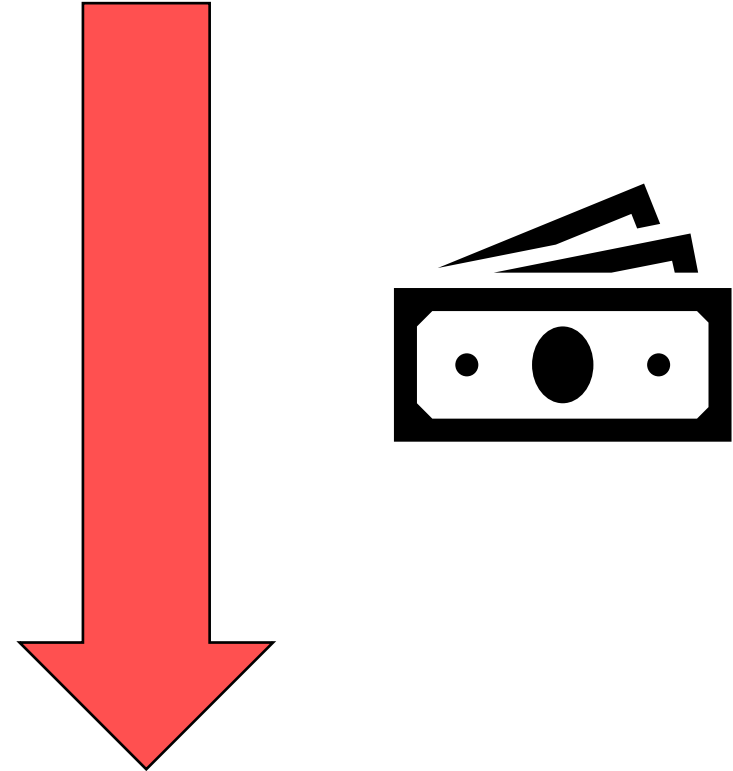
- Program supporting on-demand, wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire service, the program began in 2020 to help offset the higher cost of providing this service
- Funded by a regulatory charge on members of the vehicle-for-hire industry that do not provide wheelchair accessible service

How does the program currently work?

- Grants and incentives are provided to wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire owners and drivers
 - Grant helps cover vehicle conversion costs over 7 years
 - Incentives are based on meeting service standards

What has happened since 2020?

- From 2020 to 2023, the number of AFP applications has **decreased by 41%** and total funds disbursed has **decreased by 39%**
- Staff recognize this trend may be due to rising industry costs making it difficult to operate



Factors to consider for the AFP

The goal of the AFP is to **make it easier for the industry to provide wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire services.**

Staff have identified the following factors to consider while working towards this goal:

1. A grant over seven years does not address the immediate upfront cost of vehicle conversions
2. Operating costs for a wheelchair accessible taxicab are higher (for example: fuel and maintenance)
3. Trips usually take more time to complete because they require more driver-passenger interaction, and the pick-up location tends to be further

What other factors should the City be considering?

Proposed updates to the AFP

1. Upfront grant for vehicle conversion for owners

- Provide the entire grant upfront in the first year instead of disbursing over seven years
 - For example, grant over \$20,000 upfront rather than ~\$2,900 every year for seven years.

2. Add a \$10 per-trip incentive for drivers

- Drivers would be eligible to receive \$10 for every wheelchair accessible trip they complete

To be eligible for the AFP, recipients would be required to participate in the City's centralized dispatching service

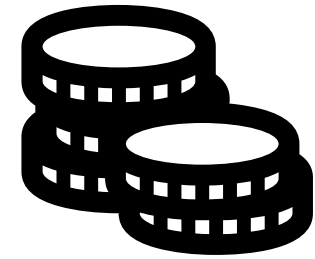
Why are staff proposing this?



Increase number of
wheelchair accessible
taxicabs



Improve wheelchair
accessible service



Further lower operational
costs for the industry



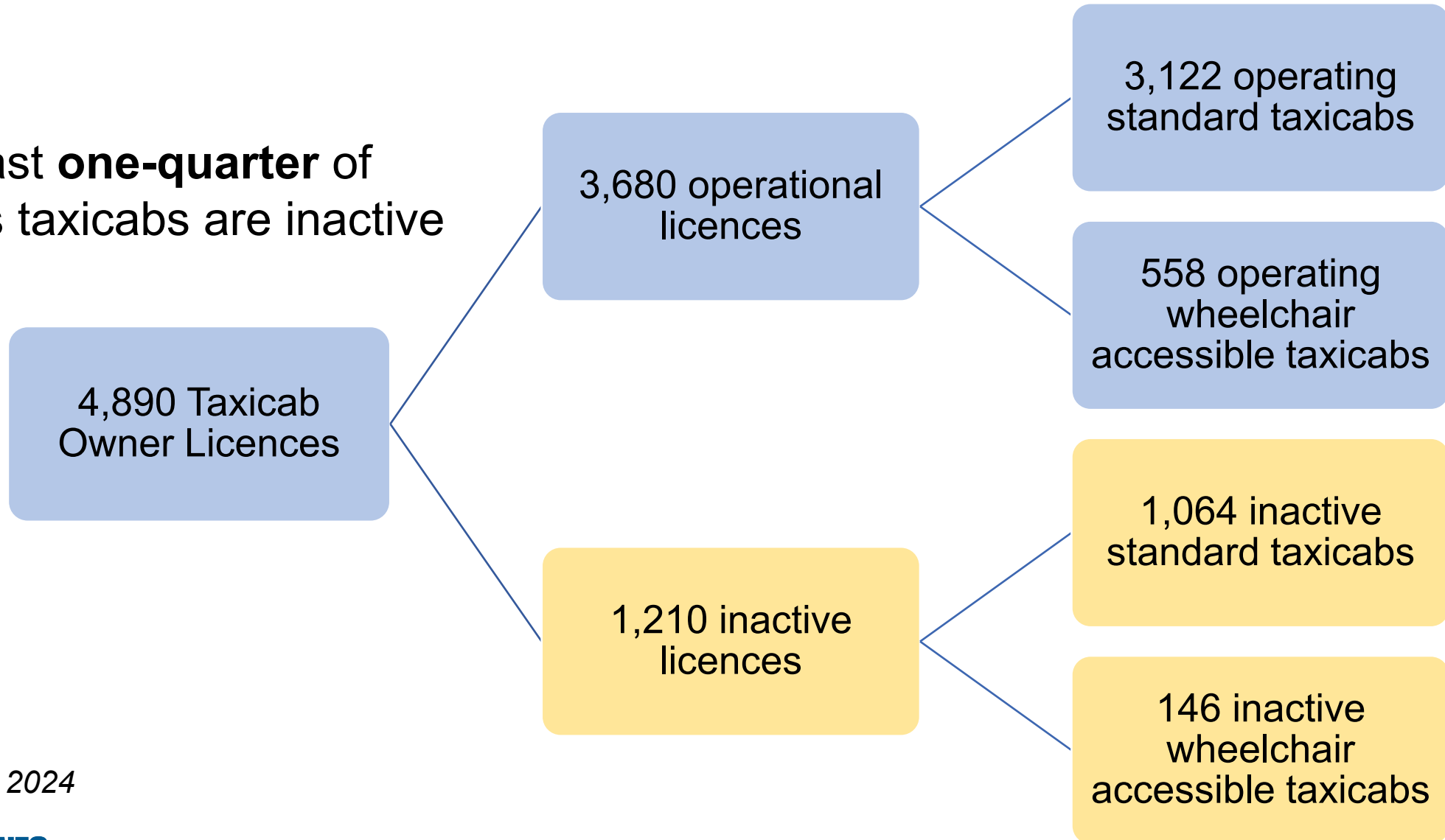
Inactive Taxicab Licences

Context

- City staff have identified over 1,200 taxicab owner licences that are currently inactive
- Staff have accommodated owners who wish to be inactive as a courtesy by putting their licences “on-the-shelf” – the bylaw does not have an official process for inactive licences
- Inactive taxicab owners must pay renewal fees to maintain their licence
 - Since 2021, taxicab renewal fees have been discounted by 50%

Current Status

At least **one-quarter** of Toronto's taxicabs are inactive



As of June 5, 2024

Current Issues

- Taxicabs are an important part of Toronto's on-demand transportation network, particularly for people who require accessible transportation.
- Taxicab owners go inactive for various reasons, including vehicle supply chain issues, lack of drivers, and/or increasing cost of doing business
- Taxicabs cannot remain inactive indefinitely:
 1. Reduces availability of taxicab service in Toronto
 2. Licences could be given to people willing and able to provide taxicab service.

The intent of the bylaw is for taxicab owners to operate and provide vehicle-for-hire services to customers

Proposal

Allow taxicab owners to keep their taxicabs inactive for one more year

- After one year, inactive licences would be cancelled unless the owner:
 - Registers an eligible vehicle; and
 - Provides proof of insurance and a safety standard certificate for the vehicle.
- Re-issue licences to replace cancelled licences.
 - Offer these licences to drivers on existing waiting list
 - If the drivers' waiting list is exhausted, the City may consider a lottery or first come, first serve process to re-issue the licences.

Note: Proposals are in draft form, may be changed, and are subject to approval by City Council. For discussion purposes only.

Why are staff proposing this?

- Provide one year grace period
- Balance between needs of taxicab owner and the need for on-demand, taxicab service in Toronto
- Allows renewed investment in vehicle-for-hire service for those willing to operate a taxicab
- Provides business opportunities to those who wish to operate a taxicab



Driver Wages

Mayoral Directive

On February 29, 2024, the Mayor directed staff to **analyze driver wages**.

Quote from the Mayor's letter:

Report back with an “analysis and consideration of driver wages in the forthcoming report on options regarding vehicle-for-hire licensing.”

What is the City doing?

While the Province has the authority to regulate wages, City staff are working with academic researchers to better understand the current state of driver wages.

This involves:

1. Giving the public and drivers the opportunity to provide their perspective on driver wages
2. Conducting an independent academic study of driver wages
3. Collecting data and information from other jurisdictions



Licensing Limits

Council Directive

On October 11, 2023, City Council directed staff to **develop options to limit the number vehicle-for-hire and private transportation company licences.**

Quote from City Council:

Report back to City Council “on options to limit the number of vehicle-for-hire and private transportation company driver licences, including advice on whether it is appropriate to exempt zero emission vehicles and taking into consideration congestion, climate targets, public transit, and transportation planning, and measures the City may take if Council imposes a cap at a number less than the number of existing licences at the time Council decides.”

Examples of Licensing Limits

Type	Licensing Cap	Licensing Pause
Description	<p>Limit the number of licensed PTC and VFH drivers to the number currently licensed.</p> <p>(previously in place from October to December 2023)</p>	<p>Immediately pause issuance of new PTC and VFH driver licences. Renewals still permitted.</p> <p>(previously in place from November 2021 to April 2022)</p>
Impact	<p>Restricts further growth of number of licenced drivers, maintains current levels.</p>	<p>Reduces number of drivers at rate of attrition.</p>
Exemption	<p>Exempt wheelchair accessible and/or zero-emission vehicles.</p>	

What is the City doing?

To help inform future recommendations related to licensing limits, City staff have undertaken the following:

1. Giving the public and industry the opportunity to provide their perspective on licensing limits
2. Conducting research on the potential impacts of a licensing limit
3. Collecting data and information from other jurisdictions



Next Steps

Next Steps

1. **June 12 – July 12:** Public survey response period
2. **June 12 – June 25:** Consultation session period
3. **Summer 2024:** Develop policy recommendations
4. **November 26, 2024:** Report to the Economic and Community Development Committee
5. **December 17, 2024:** Report to City Council

We want to hear from you!

- Submit Feedback
 - Email vehicleforhirereview@toronto.ca
 - Fill out [Online Survey](#)

Thank you