

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS COMMITTEE
FROM:	LONDON TAXI ASSOCIATION
SUBJECT:	ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED TAXI/LIMOUSINE BY-LAW SEPTEMBER 2011

RECOMMENDATION

That on the recommendation of the London Taxi Association this alternative draft by-law, supporting study for limousine fares, and five excerpts from the BMA report (2004), **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes; it being noted that a public participation meeting will be scheduled for November 2011.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

April 26, 2010 – Taxi/Limousine By-law Review – ETC

June 7, 2010 – Summary of May 2010 Workshop – ETC

December 14, 2010 Policy Options – CNC

July 19, 2011 Proposed Taxi/Limousine By-Law – CNC

BACKGROUND

A proposed by-law was presented to the CNC committee by the Director of Building Controls and Chief Building Official on July 19, 2011. The effort required to rewrite the current has been an enormous undertaking and the department should be commended for the work already done to date.

In 2004 the city commissioned the BMA report on the Taxi and Limousine industry. Many of the issues identified at that time including issues reported by city staff in 1998, are still existing today. The by-law that has been proposed by the Director of Building Controls and Chief Building Official does nothing to address these issues.

Included in the original proposed by-law summary, was a table of 41 test trips comparing the fares charged by Limousines and Taxicabs for identical trips. Historically, and including the current by-law, Limousine fares must be at least 15% greater than the equivalent taxi trip. It was stated in the summary that 15 (36.5%) trips were cheaper in a Limousine. However, upon closer analysis, 27 (65.8%) of the trips were actually less than the 15% requirement in the current bylaw. This inequity has given the Limousine industry an advantage over the Taxicab industry. Also, the proposed by-law included a small increase to limousine fares of 75 cents per zone more than 3 zones to address this issue. However, this only reduces the number of fares from 27 to 18 (43.9%) that are non-compliant and there are still 7 (17%) that are cheaper than a taxi. The London Taxi Association has included “A Comparison Study of Taxicab and Limousine Rates in London, Ontario.” initially commissioned in May 2011 and subsequently updated for this recommendation and in September. This comparison is our basis for setting limousine rates in Schedule Y 2.1(a) of the London Taxi Association's proposed bylaw.

One question that was asked at the last CNC committee meeting was: “What is the difference between a Limousine and a Taxicab?” The difference is that a Limousine is a premium service that provides a luxury vehicle with a uniformed chauffeur, is contracted or dispatched at least 15 minutes prior to when the customer requests it, does not pickup street fares, does not line up in front of bars, and charges an accordingly premium price as compared to a Taxicab. Historically, Taxicabs have always provided an on demand service, accepts street hails, and generally uses non-luxury vehicles at reasonable prices. Limousines do provide a valid and needed higher tiered service within the City of London. The by-law that the Taxi Association is submitting provides a balanced approach to continue the sustainability of both services.

SUMMARY

- Bylaw Format

The reformatting of the current by-law into the proposed by-law format by Mr Katolyk makes it easier to read and understand and is a breath of fresh air. However, the London Taxi Association has found many small errors and omissions in the proposed by-law. Rather than listing all of errors and omissions, along with our proposed changes, The London Taxi Association has elected to submit the corrections and proposed changes into a new proposed by-law using Mr Katolyk's framework. The London Taxi Association's proposed by-law provides a fair and balanced approach to both the Taxicab and Limousine industry.

- Limousine Fares

The proposed by-law included a small increase to limousine fares of 75 cents per zone more than 3 zones to increase the difference between Taxicabs and Limousine fares. However the proposed rate increase is still not enough of an increase to meet the 15% requirement. Since there will be a prohibition in street hails for Limousines, setting a proper rate structure that reflects the 15% difference will provide an equal counterbalance. The by-law that the Taxi Association is proposing addresses this issue directly and ensures Limousine drivers continue to earn a decent living.

- Taxi Flat Rates

The London Taxi Association agrees that there should be no flat rates for Taxicabs.

- Issuance of Licences

The London Taxi Association agrees with most of Mr Katolyk's proposed bylaw. However, efficiency is not the justification for one person to have revocation powers exclusively. The London Taxi Association's proposed bylaw addresses this issue.

- Criminal Background Checks

The London Taxi Association agrees with Mr Katolyk's changes for criminal background checks.

- Licence renewals

Mr Katolyk's proposal for staggering renewals based on birth month is an efficient approach to reduce costs.

- Vehicle Age Restrictions

The London Taxi Association believes that the current bylaw age restriction should not be changed with the exception of hybrid vehicles having one extra year. The age restriction for putting a vehicle on as a Taxicab should be 4 years old and vehicles starting as Limousines is correct to be starting at 2 years old.

- Security Cameras

The London Taxi Association agrees that all licenced vehicles should have a security camera for the driver and passengers. However, a front facing camera is not in the scope as a safety issue for the driver or passenger, thus it shall not be mandatory. CNC needs to set a date to have the cameras installed in vehicles not currently requiring cameras.

- Vehicle Standards

Much has been made in the London Free Press about Taxi and Limousine vehicle safety. Enforcement officers have conducted several surprise safety blitzes in in the past few months. In the December 14th report to the CNC committee by G. Kotsifas who said "...additional

artificial costs to a taxi driver...are then passed on to the public...” proves that fines imposed because of safety issues would better be spent on mandatory safeties instead. The London Taxi Association is proposing to exceed what Mr. Katolyk proposed by making mandatory Safety Inspection Certificates every 60,000 km for all city licenced vehicles rather than a yearly inspection.

- Enforcement

The London Taxi Association wants to see two full time by-law enforcement officers.

- Bandit Cabs

The London Taxi Association agrees with Mr. Katolyk to enforce the by-law against bandit taxis.

- Highlights of the London Taxi Association Proposed Changes:

- An Executive Limousine fare structure that is at least 15% higher than taxi fares for the same trip.
- All major Ontario municipalities limit Limousine owner licenses. Allowing unlimited limousine owner licenses has diluted the market and has caused harm to both limousine and taxicab drivers.
- Passenger safety – vehicles are required to perform a safety every 60,000 km, reviewable by an enforcement officer at any time.
- Renewal periods that are the birth month for all renewals. It spreads the renewal process throughout the year, reducing peak workload saves money. Money saved from not hiring peak load temporary employees can be used towards having two full time by-law enforcement officers.
- The London Taxi Association has removed the requirement for a driver to have a GPS device.
- The London Taxi Association has removed the requirement for the driver to switch off a stereo before picking up a passenger.
- Advertising is a staple in many communities and such as New York City and St. Thomas ON, and the prohibition has been removed.
- The London Taxi Association has included a new Schedule regarding Taxi Stands
- The London Taxi Association has removed Schedule 'J'
- We have corrected numerous incorrect references to vehicle types and license types in many places of the proposed bylaw.
- The arrangement of Schedules has been simplified to having common sections as Schedules and Schedules containing the differences.

PREPARED BY

This document, attached study, and proposed by-law has been prepared by London Taxi Association.