

Report Overview

Municipalities across Durham Region have worked together to address the feedback from residents about a shortage of accessible taxis. Through this work, it is recommended that the municipality amend its Vehicle for Hire Bylaw to allow licensed accessible taxicabs to engage conveyances within any of the eight (8) Durham Region municipalities.

By removing barriers to accessible cross-municipal transportation, the Municipality is advancing its commitment to removing accessibility barriers and create a community where everyone is welcome.

1. Background

- 1.1 Municipalities across Durham Region have received feedback about a shortage of accessible taxis. This situation has made it difficult for some members of our community to travel to medical appointments, groceries/activities of daily life, to visit family/friends, and/or to participate in employment, volunteer and leisure opportunities.
- 1.2 Accessibility Coordinators' and Municipal Law Enforcement staff from across the Region have identified several reasons that have contributed to overall shortage of accessible taxis in Durham. The reasons are intertwined but the heart of the issue is municipal boundaries.
- 1.3 [Section 156 of the *Municipal Act*](#) permits municipally licensed taxis to operate where conveyance of a trip takes place wholly within the municipality or from any starting point within the municipality to any point outside of the municipality. However, this provision does not apply where:
 1. *The purpose of the conveyance is to transport persons with physical, emotional or mental disabilities from any point in the municipality to any point outside the municipality, and*
 2. *The conveyance is made pursuant to a **written contract** for the use of a taxicab which can legally operate in the municipality in which the conveyance begins or ends.*
- 1.4 The taxi industry operates without written contracts. Instead, charges for taxi services are determined by a metering device that calculates the fare based on the distance traveled and the waiting time, according to the tariffs set by local regulations.

2. Discussion

Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service in Clarington

- 2.1 The Municipality's only taxi brokerage has two accessible vehicles that operate on a limited timetable.
- 2.2 Staff have heard feedback from Clarington residents who require an accessible taxi but are unable to receive that service from our local brokerage.
- 2.3 The current Vehicle for Hire By-law prohibits taxis, including accessible taxis licensed outside of Clarington from accepting a pickup within our Municipality. This is common practice in communities where taxis are regulated by municipal by-laws.

The Need for Cross-Municipal Accessible Taxicab Service

- 2.4 Individuals with disabilities often require transportation that extends beyond municipal borders. Additionally, not all accessible transportation needs can be met by Durham Region Transit (DRT), DRT Specialized Service or Go Transit.
- 2.5 This change would allow for easier travel for residents who may need to access medical services, educational programs, or other essential services located outside of their home municipality.
- 2.6 Ensuring that accessible taxicabs can operate across all eight municipalities in Durham Region would provide a seamless transportation experience for individuals with disabilities, regardless of municipal boundaries. Examples of situations where accessible taxi service would be required could include:
 - A wheelchair user is invited to go to the movies/restaurant with friends on a whim. They want to go but it's across town, so they'll need an accessible taxi to get there.
 - Someone who uses a wheelchair was released from the hospital with limited notice of their discharge. They need an accessible taxi to get home.
 - A wheelchair user has a very important medical appointment across town and does not want to risk being late or missing their appointment, so they want to call for an accessible taxi.
- 2.7 Accessible taxi services provide on-demand independent travel options; where DRT on-demand and specialized services require pre-planned booking, up to seven days in advance.

- 2.8 The recommended amendment may also encourage taxi companies to ensure they have one or more licensed accessible vehicle on the road, as they will be able to serve potential fares from people with disabilities from a wider customer base across the region. The amendment provides an opportunity for growth in the accessible taxicab sector within the Region, which could improve service availability and benefit both operators and customers.

Community Consultation

- 2.9 A cross-municipal Accessible Taxi Survey was launched in Fall 2024. The survey received 148 responses, and the results are summarized in [Attachment 2](#) to this report. Notable highlights include:
- 58% of respondents do or would use accessible taxi service, if available.
 - 79% of respondents indicated that they were not able to access or book an accessible vehicle when needed.
 - Most respondents indicated that accessible taxi service was primarily required to access health and medical appointments, employment/volunteer opportunities, or personal errands (e.g. groceries, prescription pick-up).
 - The top challenge identified with accessible taxis was that a physically accessible vehicle was not available at the time pick up was required/too few accessible taxis were on the road.
- 2.10 In addition to the survey, feedback was sought from municipal licensing staff, individuals with disabilities, and licensed taxicab operators.
- 2.11 Clarington's Accessibility Advisory Committee discussed the proposed By-law amendment at their January 28th, 2025 meeting and were supportive of the change.

3. Proposed By-Law Amendment

- 3.1 Clarington's current Vehicle for Hire By-Law does not permit accessible taxicabs to cross municipal boundaries to pick up a fare.
- 3.2 Lower-tier municipalities across Durham are seeking comparable By-law amendments to ensure consistency for taxi operators and users across the Region.
- 3.3 The proposed amendment in [Attachment 1](#) provides an exemption for the Brokers or Drivers of licenced accessible taxicabs from any lower-tier Municipality within the Regional Municipality of Durham from engaging in conveyances when the purpose of the conveyance is to transport persons with a disability as defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11.

- 3.4 The passenger would be required to pay the tariff rate of the municipality in which the vehicle is licensed. The tariff rates across the Region are within (.25 of one another).

4. Financial Considerations

Not Applicable.

5. Strategic Plan

C.3: This amendment supports the Connect pillar by reducing barriers within our community.

6. Climate Change

Not Applicable.

7. Concurrence

Not Applicable.

8. Conclusion

It is respectfully recommended:

That the By-law attached to Report LGS-012-2025, as attachment 1, be approved to permit accessible taxicabs licensed within the Region of Durham to operate within the Municipality of Clarington; and

That all interested parties listed in Report LGS-012-2025 and any delegation be advised of Council's decision.

Staff Contact: Kristina Bergeron, Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement,
kbergeron2@clarington.net and Jeannette Whynot, Accessibility Coordinator,
jwhynot@clarington.net

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Draft Vehicle for Hire Amendment

Attachment 2 – Accessible Taxi Survey Results

Interested Parties:

The following interested parties will be notified of Council's decision:

Bowmanville Taxi