

The Corporation of the Town of Lakeshore

Report to Council

Legislative & Legal Services

Legislative Services



To: Mayor & Members of Council

From: Brianna Coughlin, Manager of Legislative Services

Date: January 17, 2020

Subject: Taxi and Vehicle for Hire Consultation

Recommendation

Direct Administration to bring forward a new Taxi and Vehicle for Hire By-law, taking into consideration the public consultation feedback as described in the report of the Manager of Legislative Services presented at the January 28, 2020 Council meeting.

Background

The Town of Lakeshore currently licences and regulates taxicab owners, as well as drivers of taxicabs, buses or other vehicles used for hire under By-law LA017-LC-98. This by-law was originally passed by Lakeshore Township in 1998 and was incorporated as the regulation for the Town of Lakeshore as part of the amalgamation process in 1999.

On August 13, 2019, Administration brought forward a report to Council outlining a proposed public consultation process relating to taxi and vehicle for hire licencing. Council then passed the following resolution:

Council direct Administration to conduct a public consultation process in order to receive input relating to regulating taxicabs and vehicles for hire.

Carried

The Town of Lakeshore licenced two taxicab owners and two taxicab drivers in 2019. The licencees, along with previous licencees and applicants, were invited to participate in the public consultation process as further described below.

Comments

Following the direction of Council, Administration undertook a three-part public consultation process. This included a stakeholder meeting, public open house and online consultation.

Stakeholder Meeting

Administration organized a stakeholder meeting in order to receive targeted comments relating to the current by-law, as well as suggestions for improvements. Invitations were sent to current and former licencees (taxi owners and drivers), as well as vehicle for hire companies such as Uber and Lyft.

The meeting was held September 25, 2019 and although Administration received some phone calls expressing interest prior to the meeting, only one licencee attended. Unfortunately, the licencee had to leave before the meeting started and was not able to provide comments at this time. However, the licencee did subsequently attend the Open House.

Open House

An open house was held at the Atlas Tube Centre on December 11, 2019 and was advertised on the Town website and in local newspapers. Administration provided an overview of current regulations and held one-on-one conversations with several residents, including three current licencees.

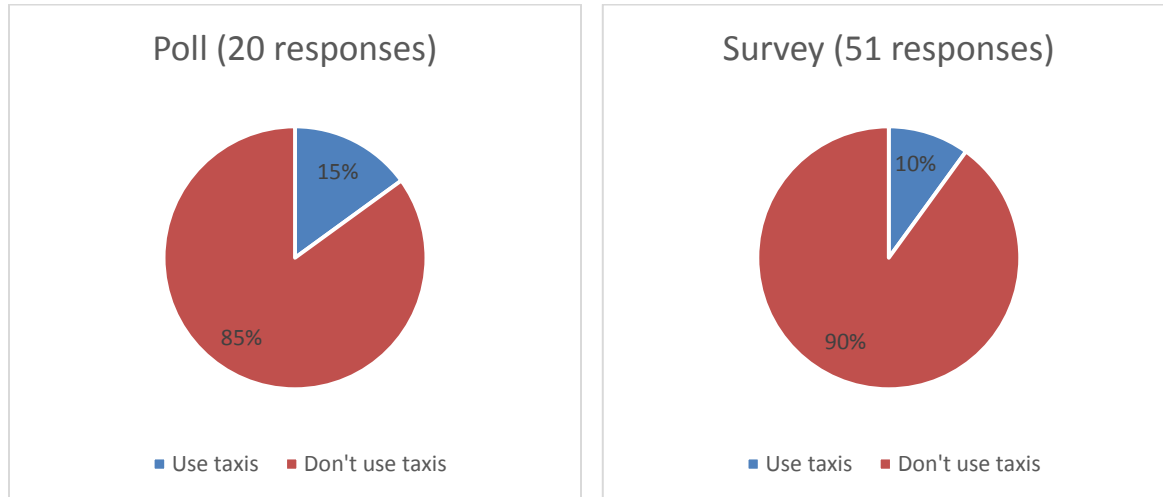
The information boards used for the open house were left in the lobby of the Atlas Tube Centre for several weeks. This included a link to the online consultation as described below.

Online Consultation

A poll and survey was posted on the Town's PlaceSpeak site and advertised on the Town's website throughout December and early January. The online consultation site was viewed by 302 people, 20 answered the poll and 48 answered the survey. Hard copies of the survey were also provided at the open house and three surveys were submitted at that time, the results of which are included in the data below.

Results - Taxis

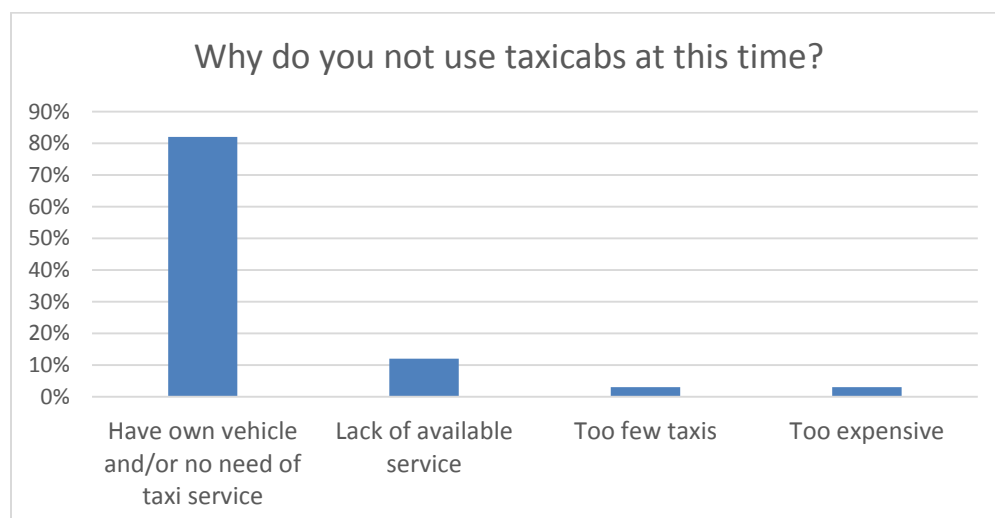
The question “Do you currently use taxis in Lakeshore?” was asked in both the poll and the survey.



The survey then asked participants to identify their top concerns relating to taxicabs in the Town of Lakeshore. Only 2 respondents identified concerns in this section; one respondent identified a concern relating to the safety of passengers, while one respondent felt that taxis were too expensive for passengers.

Respondents were also asked the following question: “When requesting a taxicab, would you request an accessible taxicab if available?” 100% of respondents answered no to this question, suggesting that accessible taxicabs are not a priority of the community at this time.

The survey then asked participants to explain why they do not use taxicabs at this time.

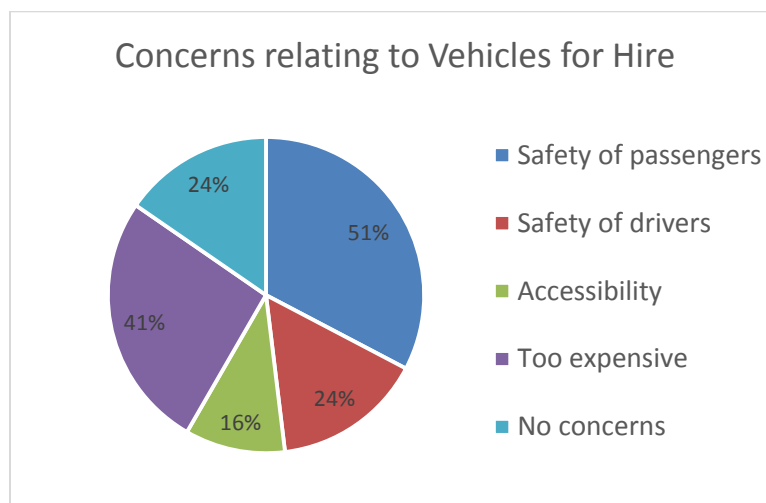


Those respondents who identified a lack of available service, as noted in the chart above, all self-identified as residents of the Lighthouse Cove and Stoney Point areas.

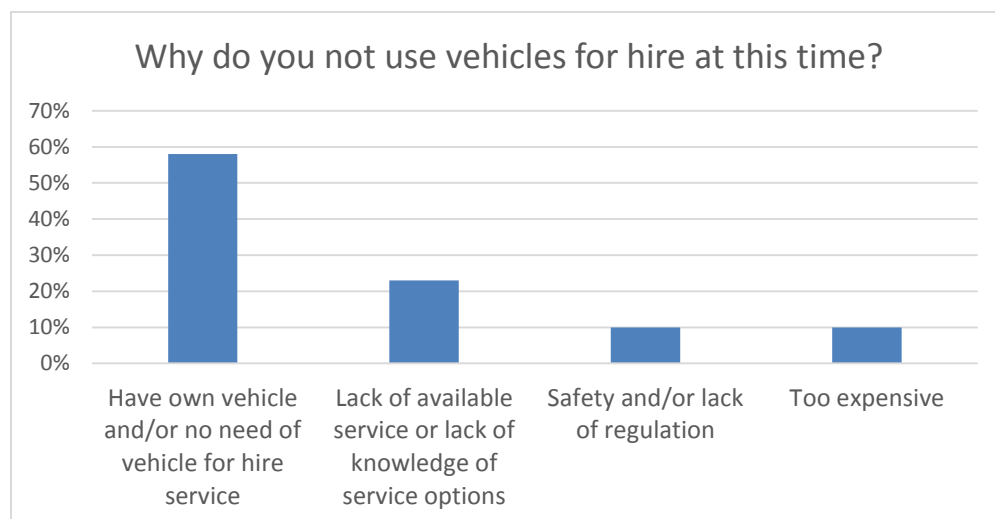
Results – Vehicles for Hire

Six respondents (12%) stated that they currently use vehicles for hire in Lakeshore, while 45 respondents (88%) do not. It is important to note that there are currently no vehicles for hire licenced by the Town of Lakeshore at this time.

When asked for the top concerns relating to vehicles for hire, the following responses were provided. Note: respondents were able to provide multiple answers, therefore the total will not equal 100%.



The survey then asked participants to explain why they do not use vehicles for hire at this time.



Additional Feedback

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments outside of the pre-set questions noted above. Thirty-one percent of respondents provided comments, as stated verbatim in the table below.

I am driving taxi in Lakeshore, we are not getting a lot of fares. It's a small town and everybody has own cars. Not a lot of taxi business. Please stop Uber.
We are operating taxi company in Lakeshore. There is not a lot of business. My opinion, stop Uber.
I have no objection to UBER, LIFT or taxis I feel they are necessity for some people.
Transportation for seniors who no longer drive and young adolescents who want to have transportation to and from work (after school) should be considered and reviewed during this consultation
Maybe we could implement a free ride program for the residents of Belle River during the holiday season. New Years eve....etc.
I am concerned that some drivers who drive for Uber or Lyft may not be as knowledgeable about the area as a taxi driver. another concern I have is whether the vehicles are properly maintained who takes care of that?
I have no issue with either service
Uber should/"must" be following same rules as taxis – one rule for all.
Uber and Lyft are more affordable methods of transportation. They are easy to use as they have apps you can download right to your phone that make booking and riding with them very easy. I would be more susceptible in using one of these if they became available in lakeshore as I have always had good experiences.
Set a standard for the safety of the vehicle and the passengers and a fee for the taxi license and then stay out of who or which company is allowed to participate as a taxi/car of hire. The town should not listen to the fear-mongering of taxi company owners about Uber/Lift who see their monopoly and excessive fares disappearing with competition.
Taxi cabs need to be clean and in good working condition along with yearly safety inspections. The drivers need to have a valid drivers permit and a police clearance.
I think vehicles for hire should be allowed for the convenience and productivity of citizens

Recent statistics show an abnormally high number of assaults/robberies etc. in Uber vehicles in the USA. Although I like the idea of the Uber/Lyft concept, they seem to do a poor job of vetting their drivers. Who regulates & administers their Police Clearances? Do they go through the same training & regulations as taxi drivers? Do they pay the same fees for licencing, etc.? It is only fair to existing taxi drivers to 'EVEN the playing field' in this competitive market. Ultimately, I would like to see a reliable, inexpensive transportation service available that ALSO provides service to those with accessibility issues. A 'regional BUS service' must also be added to include those with accessibility issues.

No public transit or taxi cans in my area and would like to have it available. I live at Lighthouse Cove.

If I did have to hire/take a cab or uber, I would have to be sure the driver is reliable, non-drinker, non drug user. Too many criminals out there, I would hesitate unless they had police clearance and were bonded etc.

Analysis

In general, the results of the public consultation process demonstrates that there is not a strong demand to change the current practices as it relates to taxis and vehicles for hire. However, it is important to take the concerns that were expressed into consideration when modernizing Town taxi and vehicle for hire regulations.

Concerns were associated primarily with access, safety, cost and a fair playing field in terms of regulating both taxis and vehicles for hire. Administration will prepare a new by-law that reflects these considerations and incorporate trends in taxi and vehicle for hire regulation that are consistent with best practices in the industry and the growth of vehicles for hire across the Province.

Others Consulted

No outside agencies or organizations were consulted in writing this report, however an environmental scan of licencing practices in other municipalities has been undertaken in anticipation of drafting an updated by-law.

Financial Impacts

There are no financial impacts in receiving this report. Financial impacts relating to the implementation of a new by-law will be presented at the time of consideration.

Attachment(s): None.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Taxi and Vehicle for Hire Consultation.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 21, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Kristen Newman

Truper McBride