



TO:	GENERAL COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	TAXI INDUSTRY CONSULTATION PROCESS
PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:	B. RUSSELL, MANAGER, MUNICIPAL LAW AND PROSECUTION SERVICES, EXT. 4586
SUBMITTED BY:	I. PETERS, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES, EXT. 4561 
GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:	E. ARCHER, GENERAL MANAGER, CORPORATE SERVICES 
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:	C. LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That a Taxi Industry Working Group with the mandate of facilitating consultation and communications between the taxi industry and the City, be established.
2. That the Taxi Industry Working Group be composed of the following:
 - three (3) members representing the taxi company's sector, as selected by the industry
 - three (3) members representing the taxi cab owner's sector, as selected by the industry
 - three (3) members representing the taxi cab driver's sector, as selected by the industry
 - two (2) Municipal Law Enforcement representatives
 - _____ member of Council
3. That each taxi industry sector, namely Taxi Companies, Taxicab Owners and Taxicab Drivers, be requested to select its representatives from among individuals in the licensing classification holding a valid City of Barrie Business Licence, in a manner satisfactory to such sector members, and to communicate the names of such representatives to the City.
4. That such taxi industry representatives be required to maintain their City of Barrie Business Licence in good standing at all times while serving as a representative on the working group.
5. That any individual failing to maintain his/her business licence in good standing shall immediately forfeit his/her position as a representative on the working group.
6. That such individual and the working group be immediately notified and the industry sector be required to select a replacement for such representative for the balance of the term.

7. That the term of the industry representatives on the Taxi Industry Working Group be established firstly for the period ending December 31, 2014 and in each instance thereafter, for a term of five years to correspond with the review period previously approved by Council for the Transportation By-law particularly as it relates to the Taxi Industry.
8. That the Taxi Industry Working Group be chaired by an industry member, selected from among the industry representatives by the industry representatives, at the first meeting of the working group.
9. That meetings be held twice yearly.
10. That as a first order of business after the selection of the Chair, the objectives of the Taxi Industry Working Group for the period ending December 31, 2014, be established.
11. That the Taxi Industry Working Group be requested to consider the following as a potential objective for the period ending December 31, 2014:

"To engage in regular communications with the taxi industry as a whole, and at a minimum conduct an industry wide survey, as part of the by-law review process to gather comments and concerns regarding the current regulatory provisions of the by-law, required or proposed changes, and challenges within the industry."
12. That staff in the Municipal Law and Prosecution Services Branch of the Legal Services Department provide the Finance and Corporate Services Committee with either a memorandum or report after each Taxi Industry Working Group meeting outlining the discussions and/or recommendations of the working group.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

13. The purpose of this staff report is to establish a mechanism to ensure regular and ongoing communication between members of the taxi industry, including taxi company operators, taxi cab owners and taxi drivers and the municipality.
14. On April 30, 2012, City Council adopted motion 12-G-108, which read in part as follows:

"12-A-062 That staff in the Legal Services Department propose measures for ongoing consultation with the Taxi Industry...."

ANALYSIS

15. A working group composed of representatives of the various taxi industry sectors as well as staff and Council representatives will provide a well-structured environment through which members of the taxi industry can communicate information, suggestions, feedback and comments regarding the regulatory provisions of the by-law, operation of the taxi industry, and including matters of operational or strategic interest to staff and members of Council.
16. The working group will also provide an avenue through which Council and staff may enhance communications with the taxi industry.
17. It is recommended that the working group not be structured as a decision making body nor hold any delegated authority from Council, but that recommendations arising from the working group be reported to Finance and Corporate Services Committee by staff subsequent to each meeting through either a memorandum or report, as required. Recommendations of the working group may be supported by Finance and Corporate Services Committee to Council as appropriate.

18. The working group would serve to define industry issues, engage departmental or industry input as may be appropriate (eg. designation of additional taxi stands, tariff rates) assist in educating licensees regarding regulatory provisions and changes, and gather information to assist the industry and the City, including the by-law review process, or as otherwise directed by Council.
19. These elements would be reflected in the objectives of this working group, which would be established as a first order of business of the new group.
20. The recommended Taxi Industry Working Group is, in the opinion of staff, a good first step in opening the doors of communication and partnership with the taxi industry. With the passage of time, the functionality of the working group can be assessed to determine if such a structure best serves the objectives of the municipality and the interests of the industry. As the City grows, the working group may evolve into a formally structured Committee of Council, such as the Town and Gown Committee did over the years.
21. Staff investigated the types of industry stakeholder committees/commissions in a number of other municipalities. None of the municipalities surveyed had established a working group or committee for the purpose of enhancing communication or achieving input from the industry. The only type of structure that existed in the municipalities surveyed were Licensing Commissions.
22. Staff are of the opinion that a Licensing Commission, which is a regulatory body holding full decision making powers and authorities is beyond the scope of what is currently required within the City at this time. This additional regulatory layer would require additional staff resources and add unnecessary costs to the licensing system. The establishment of a Licensing Commission is not recommended at this time.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

23. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

24. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1

General Committee could consider directing staff to undertake steps to establish a feature on the City of Barrie website to enable members of the public, and in particular representatives of the taxi industry including taxicab owners, taxicab companies and taxicab drivers, to provide input, suggestions and comments to the City on matters of interest or concern regarding the taxi industry. This feature could also be utilized by staff to post communications to the industry, as appropriate from time to time.

By designing a web-based feature on the City's website individuals could post their message at a time most convenient to them.

The potential staffing implications to manage and support this consultation and communication model are difficult to predict as the workload will be driven by volume and nature of use of the feature. The establishment of this feature would require staff to develop, design, and maintain the feature as well as regularly monitor, review, analyze and compile the content of the messages received.

This alternative is not recommended. It is the opinion of staff that while it may provide a convenient means of communication between the City

and the taxi industry, it does not adequately establish a forum for discussion, consultation and partnership between industry representatives, the municipality and its staff.

Alternative #2: General Committee could consider the establishment of a Licensing Commission.

This alternative is not recommended as the mandate of Licensing Commissions relates to the review and approval of specific business licences and they are not consultation and communications forum.

Alternative #3: General Committee could alter the composition of the Taxi Industry Working Group or recommend the establishment of a formal Committee of Council.

The composition of the Working Group as proposed is intended to provide appropriate representation by all interested stakeholders in the taxi industry.

Staff are of the opinion that an informal consultation group would more appropriately address the intent of consulting and collaborating with the taxi industry sector. A Committee of Council that would achieve appropriate representation by all taxi industry stakeholders would be relatively large, typically resulting in significant challenges in achieving quorum. The Committee of Council structure is more formal in nature and may be seen as inhibiting the intended input and collaboration. In addition, the frequency of meetings proposed is not conducive to a formalized Committee type of structure. A Working Group allows the industry to select replacement representatives when vacancies occur, permitting the group to continue to function during transition periods. The industry selecting their own representatives will ensure that Council is not seen as trying to influence the input it may receive from this new initiative and will allow the industry to choose individuals who best represent their members.

FINANCIAL

25. The recommended working group, if structured in the manner as recommended will require support from the Municipal Law Enforcement branch to provide representation at the meetings and further to carry out the work associated with developing and distributing agenda, reports and other communications as may be necessary as a result of the work of the group.
26. The impact on workload and staff resources will be driven by the objectives, once established by the Committee and the general activity of the working group. The impact will be monitored and where additional staff resources are necessary to continue to support and sustain this working group, staff will report to Council to seek approval.

LINKAGE TO 2010-2014 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

27. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2010-2014 City Council Strategic Plan:

- * Improve and Expand Community Involvement and City Interactions