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TAXI STANDS ALONG REGIONAL ROADS

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, February 16, 2005, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Requests for taxi stands be treated on a specific case-by-case basis through each local municipality as is the case for planning applications.
2. Regional staff offer assistance to the local municipalities to pursue this matter further.
3. This report be distributed to the Clerks of each of the local municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

A resolution (*Attachment 1*) from the City of Vaughan dated November 29, 2004, was referred to staff for a comprehensive report by the Transportation and Works Committee. The resolution requested staff to identify and recommend locations for taxi stands where TTC and York Region transit services do not meet, particularly along Steeles Avenue.

3. BACKGROUND

This resolution, presented through the City of Vaughan, petitioned the Region to recognize taxis as an important adjunct to the range of necessary transportation services. Regional staff have been directed to identify and recommend locations for the establishment of taxi stands along Steeles Avenue where TTC and local transit services do not meet and at other major intersections.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

From a Regional transportation standpoint, taxis are considered to be an important element in the range of transportation facilities provided to Regional residents, businesses and visitors. They provide a useful adjunct to the overall transportation system and reduce the need for car ownership, particularly for occasional car users.

Taxis may indeed also be necessary for transit riders connecting to areas with no local transit service. For the most part, York Region Transit and the TTC offer comparable, integrated services during normal commuting time periods. In fact the majority of

services crossing Steeles Avenue use TTC contracted buses which eliminates the need to transfer between vehicles. However, during evenings, late night and weekend times, TTC offers some full service routes that are not matched with local transit extending north into the Region. Table 1 lists those areas along Steeles Avenue where such a situation may exist and indicates the areas adjacent land uses for off street taxi waiting areas. It should be noted however that York Region has no operational authority along Steeles Avenue. Both sides of Steeles Avenue are under the operational control of the City of Toronto and any applications within the road allowance would be reviewed by them.

Table 1
Existing Steeles Avenue Off-Street Taxi Layover Areas

Transit Routes West	Adjacent Land Uses	Transit Routes East	Adjacent Land Uses
Martin Grove	vacant	Don Mills	mall
Kipling	commercial	Victoria Park	none
Islington	commercial	Warden	mall
Steeles West	commercial	Kennedy	mall
Jane	vacant	Midland	mall
Keele	commercial	McCowan	seniors bldg
Dufferin	mall both sides	Steeles East	south side mall
Bathurst	mall both sides		

Yonge and Bayview bus services have the same hours of service north and south of Steeles Ave., consequently there is little need for transit transfers.

There are a variety of factors which naturally occur for taxi operators to determine sites from which they would prefer to operate. Preferred sites for taxis are generally in malls, hotels, hospitals, or in other local commercial areas. Most operators in the suburban areas of Toronto and the surrounding “905” district prefer to locate in large shopping malls. These malls generally welcome taxis since they bring local customers and reduce overall parking lot requirements.

Moreover, hotels, transit terminals – particularly GO stations, theatres, hospitals and sports complexes may all be suitable sites for operators to generate significant business. These areas normally allow off street parking which, from a Regional operations standpoint, is a far safer alternative than on street taxi stands, and such off street sites generally bring taxi vehicles closer to door front locations.

Regional roads however are generally not good locations for taxi stands. Off-street locations are much better and safer. The collision experience for on-street parking and waiting locations is several times higher than for off-street parking. The only contemplated application that could directly effect the Region would be along Regional road sections with high volumes of pedestrian traffic where off street parking and standing opportunities did not exist. Such sites would generally be within the commercial core areas of the historic centres around the Region – such as Markham Main Street, Unionville Main Street, Kleinburg, Woodbridge Avenue, Stouffville Main Street, which

are generally under local municipal jurisdiction. However, some of these historic main street areas such as in Sutton, Keswick, Maple and King City do have Regional roads that could possibly be suitable for consideration of taxi lay-by areas and the Region would be willing to work with local municipal staff to determine the most appropriate applications.

Since any such on street lay-by areas solely benefit the taxi industry, it is considered appropriate that construction costs for them would be borne by the industry directly. All applications for on-street taxi standing areas therefore should be prioritized by the operators and reviewed from an operations and safety standpoint whether it be a local or Regional road. Licence distribution and regulation of operators has been a long standing local municipal jurisdiction for which each local area generates income from licence fees. Local bylaw officers are generally the contact with taxi operators. Applications for taxi stands should therefore be processed through these officials who will have a better understanding of the taxi market demands for such facilities at particular locations and their priority from a public standpoint.

Since taxi operators are independent businesses, it is believed most appropriate for the taxi industry itself to make any such decisions regarding need and priority. Notwithstanding any perceived need for them however, there may be significant factors from a traffic operations standpoint that may preclude on street taxi stands along most Regional roads. It is believed most appropriate to consider requests for taxi stands on a case by case basis for review and approval by the Transportation and Works Department Development Approvals Branch upon application in a manner similar to proposals for new commercial driveways. Given that any stands would be expected to benefit the entire fleet of local municipally licensed vehicles, any such applications should be processed through the local municipal bylaw offices that administer the licences.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All applications for taxi stands should be initiated through the local municipal approvals process.

7. CONCLUSION

Taxis are considered a beneficial element in the range of transportation services available to residents, visitors and businesses. As the Region grows, both in terms of residents, businesses and visitors, taxis become a more important element in the total range of publicly available transportation services. However, the industry is basically a privately operated system.

Since the taxi industry in York Region is administered by each of the local municipalities, it is considered most appropriate that any applications for taxi stands be reviewed on a case by case basis on application through the local municipalities. Regional staff are available to local municipalities to review and advise on the safest and most effective areas for new taxi stands.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)