

# Improving Accessible Vehicle-for-Hire Services

June 24, 2024

Accessibility Advisory Committee



Municipal Licensing & Standards (MLS)





# Purpose

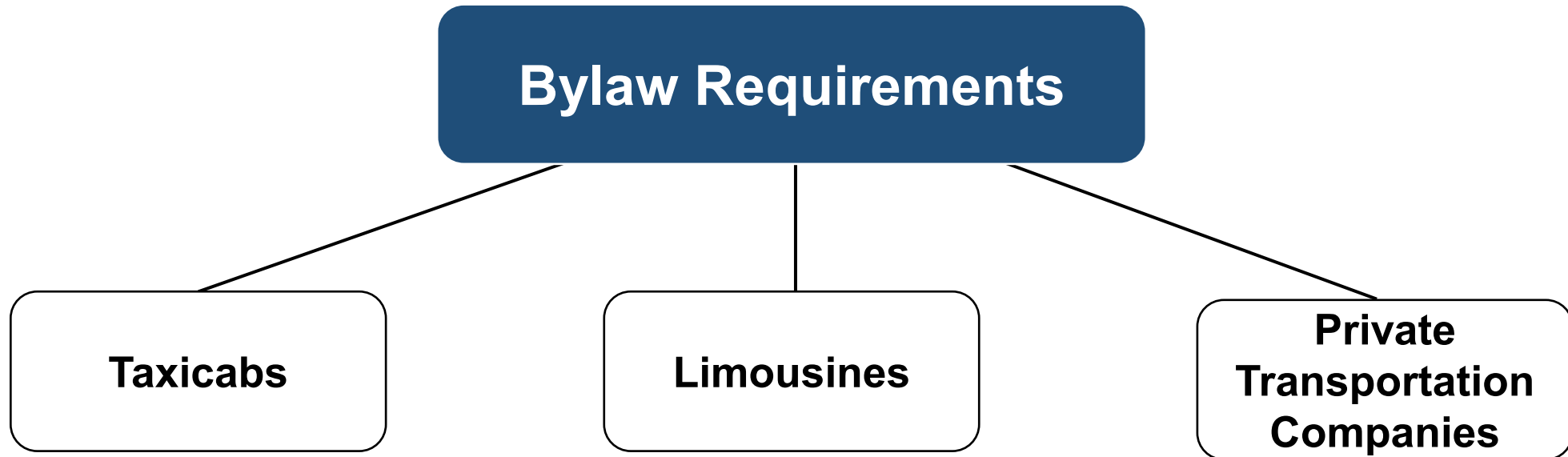
Today staff will:

1. Provide an overview of accessible vehicles-for-hire and the ongoing vehicle-for-hire review
2. Seek feedback from TAAC on draft proposals

# Context

- In 2021, City Council directed City staff to report back on a comprehensive review of vehicle-for-hire regulations. The last bylaw review was conducted in 2019.
- This review is ongoing and includes accessibility-related items, such as:
  1. On-demand wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire service
  2. The Accessibility Fund Program
- The City is also conducting a transportation study with independent researchers to help understand the impacts of vehicle-for-hire and inform an industry framework.
- Staff intend to report on their review to Committee and Council by the end of 2024 with bylaw recommendations and responses to outstanding City Council directives.

# Toronto's Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw



# Licensing Stats

As at June 5, 2024, there are:



**6,655** vehicle-for-hire drivers\*



**4,890** taxicab owners\*



**20** taxicab brokerages



**7** taxicab operators



**65,059** active private transportation company drivers



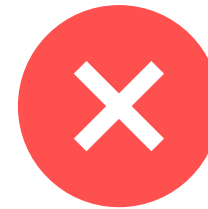
**2** operating private transportation companies

# What does the Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw currently regulate?



## Regulated by the Bylaw

- On-demand, non-accessible and accessible taxicab, limousine and PTC services
- Accessibility Fund Program
- Number of taxicabs
- Insurance requirements
- Trip, shift, and collision data reporting
- Driver training standards
- Taxicab fares
- Safety standards



## Not Regulated by the Bylaw

- TTC Wheel-Trans
- Availability and cost of insurance
- Driver wages
- Value of taxicab owner licences

# Accessibility Goals

To work towards the goal of improving the quality and availability of accessible vehicle-for-hire services, the City is aiming to:

1. Remove user barriers to accessible service
2. Make it easier for the industry to provide accessible service
3. Ensure the City is meeting its requirements within the Province of Ontario's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*

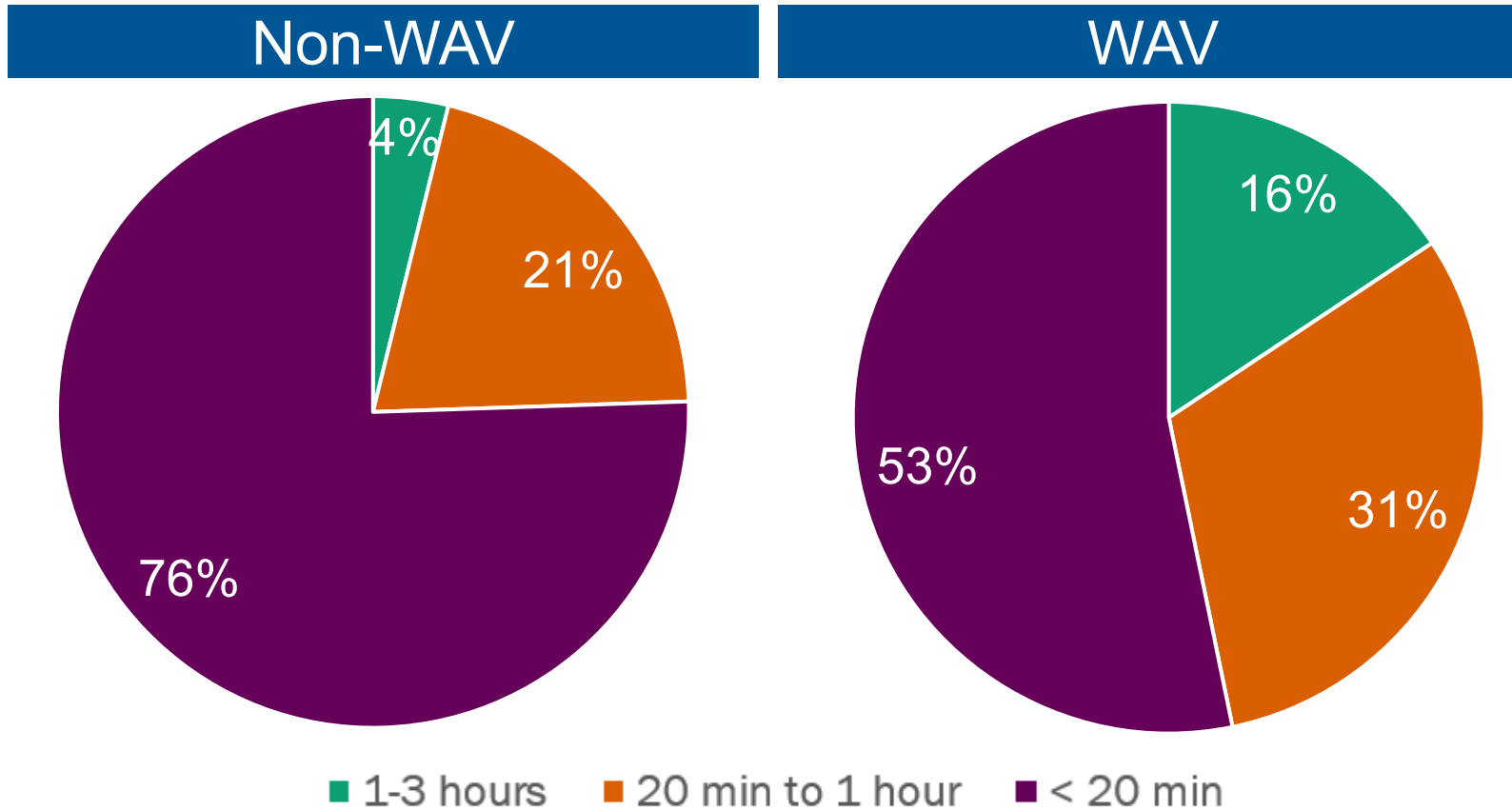


# Background



# 2023 Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAV) wait times

From request time to driver arrival time



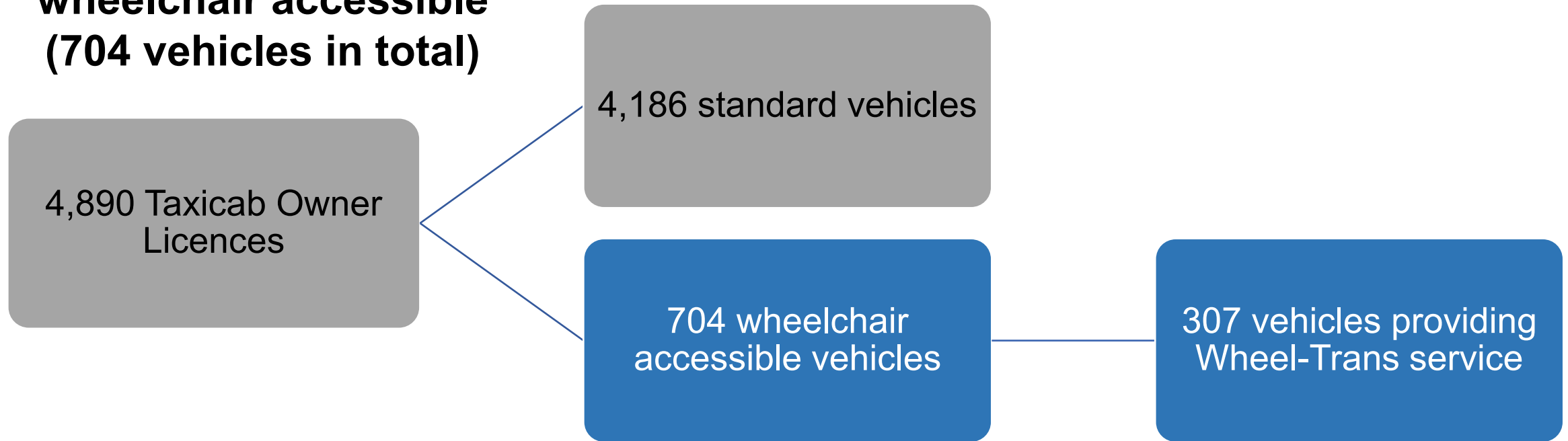
Almost half of WAV trips have wait times **greater than 20 minutes.**

Over three-quarters of non-WAV trips have wait times **less than 20 minutes.**

Based on a full year's span of data from three taxi brokerages; Customer trips hailed on-street are not included in the calculation  
Trips where customer request time to driver arrival time is greater than 3 hours is excluded to differentiate between pre-booked and on-demand trips

# Number of Taxicab Vehicles

**14% of the taxicab fleet is wheelchair accessible (704 vehicles in total)**



*As at June 5, 2024*



# Draft Proposals

# Proposed Approaches

City staff are proposing the following changes:

- 1. Create a centralized dispatch service for wheelchair accessible taxicab users and service providers**
- 2. Update the Accessibility Fund Program**

**Note:** Proposals are in draft form, may be changed, and are subject to approval by City Council. For discussion purposes only.

# What is a centralized dispatch service?



## Better user experience

All users requiring a wheelchair accessible ride submits their requests through one point of contact



## More efficient dispatching

Dispatch system sends the closest available taxi, regardless of brokerage



## Lower wait times

Driver arrives at pick-up location to complete the trip

# Centralized dispatching in other cities

## Winnipeg WAV

1. Launched in May 2022
2. Wait times down from 1 hour to 20 minutes
3. Number of wheelchair accessible trips expected to increase by 50% in 2024



## WAV Calgary

1. Launched in December 2019
2. Wait times down from 45 minutes to 20 minutes
3. Number of wheelchair accessible trips increased by 75% since launch



# Accessibility Fund Program (AFP)

## What is the AFP?

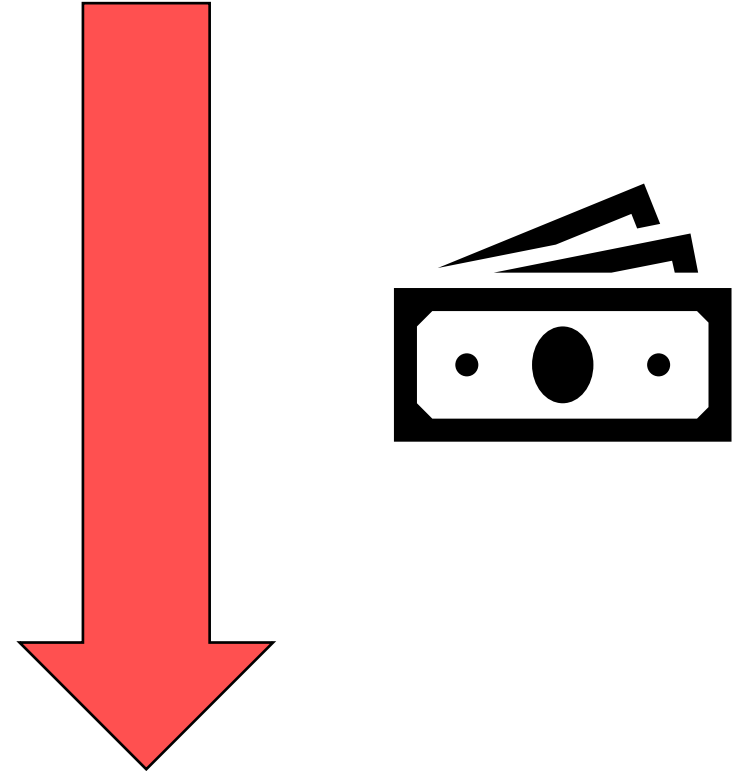
- Program supporting on-demand, wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire service, the program began in 2020 to help offset the higher cost of providing this service
- Funded by a regulatory charge on members of the vehicle-for-hire industry that do not provide wheelchair accessible service

## How does the program currently work?

- Grants and incentives are provided to wheelchair accessible vehicle-for-hire owners and drivers
  - Grant helps cover vehicle conversion costs over 7 years
  - Incentives are based on meeting service standards

# What has happened since 2020?

- From 2020 to 2023, the number of AFP applications has **decreased by 41%** and total funds disbursed has **decreased by 39%**
- Staff recognize this trend may be due to rising industry costs making it difficult to operate





# Proposed updates to the AFP

## 1. Upfront grant for vehicle conversion for owners

- Provide the entire grant upfront in the first year instead of disbursing over seven years
  - For example, over \$20,000 upfront rather than ~\$2,900 every year for seven years.

## 2. Add a \$10 per-trip incentive for drivers

- Drivers would be eligible to receive \$10 for every wheelchair accessible trip they complete

**To be eligible for the AFP, recipients would be required to participate in the City's centralized dispatching service**

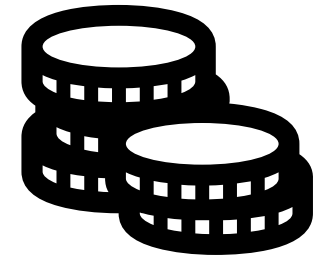
# Why are staff proposing this?



Increase number of  
wheelchair accessible  
taxicabs



Improve wheelchair  
accessible service



Further lower operational  
costs for the industry

# What we would like to hear from the Community

1. Feedback on the current state of on-demand, accessible vehicle-for-hire service
2. Initial thoughts on a potential centralized dispatching service and how it could impact people's experiences with on-demand, wheelchair accessible service
3. Other considerations for improving the availability and quality of on-demand, accessible service



# Next Steps

# Next Steps

1. **June 12 – July 12:** Public survey response period
2. **June 12 – June 25:** Consultation session period
3. **Summer 2024:** Develop policy recommendations
4. **November 26, 2024:** Report to the Economic and Community Development Committee
5. **December 17, 2024:** Report to City Council

More information on vehicle-for-hire consultations, including the online public survey, can be found [here](#).



# Contact

## **Fiona Chapman**

Director, Business Licensing and Regulatory Standards

[Fiona.Chapman@toronto.ca](mailto:Fiona.Chapman@toronto.ca)

## **Tobiah Abramson**

Policy & Planning Advisor, Policy & Strategic Support

[Tobiah.Abramson@toronto.ca](mailto:Tobiah.Abramson@toronto.ca)

## **Josh Cho**

Policy Development Officer, Policy & Strategic Support

[Josh.Cho@toronto.ca](mailto:Josh.Cho@toronto.ca)