

Accessible Taxi & Vehicle for Hire Services

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Background: On-demand accessible transportation

The City of Toronto

- has the largest population of people with disabilities (PWD) across Canada
- is the most visited place among PWD in Canada
- hosts the majority of business meetings & conferences for PWD across Canada
- hosts the most entertainment and tourist attractions in Canada
- Is visited by most PWD around the world during their lives

City of Toronto has the potential to become the gold standard for accessibility.

A photograph showing a person in a wheelchair being assisted into a vehicle. A person in a light-colored shirt is leaning over the wheelchair, which is on a metal platform. The platform is part of a lift system that is being lowered into the open back door of a dark-colored vehicle. The person in the wheelchair is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The background shows a building and trees, suggesting an urban or suburban setting. The lighting is bright, possibly from the sun, creating a warm glow on the left side of the image.

The Problem: On-demand accessible transportation

- Since the 2016 reforms, people with mobility challenges were accessing on-demand taxi & vehicle for hire services within industry standard wait times
- Since the pandemic in 2020 to present, the taxi & vehicle for hire companies have not been able to meet the regulations
- MLS has opening stated to the public that the Vehicle for Hire PTC are not meeting regulations without consequence

Toronto Municipal Codes on Accessibility: Chapter 546

- There are approximately 15 regulations on accessibility under the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 546
- Handout

Question:

Do these regulations ensure equitable and accessible on-demand transportation services to all people with disabilities in Toronto?

How can we tip the scales and create a regulatory framework that results to more accessible vehicles than sedans?

546-119. Accessible vehicle service to be offered by PTCs

- a) Any PTC with more than 500 PTC drivers licensed by ML&S shall provide wheelchair accessible service to the public.
- b) Providing wheelchair accessible service to the public requires a PTC to: (1) Ensure wheelchair accessible vehicles are available when requested by a passenger through the PTC's platform within the average wait time for non-accessible taxicab services; and (2) Charge fares for accessible vehicles that are the same or less than, the fare charged by that PTC for its lowest cost non-accessible service.
- c) The average wait time for non-accessible service shall be determined yearly by the Executive Director and calculated based on the average time that elapses between a passenger's request for non-accessible taxicab service provided to passengers in Toronto and the arrival of a taxicab at the passenger's location.

546-13.1. Creation of accessibility fund program

[Added 2019-10-30 by By-law 1517-201915]

- a) At any time, at their sole discretion, the Executive Director may establish or amend an accessibility fund program, which may, among other things: (1) designate the individuals, or classes thereof, who are eligible to apply for funding; (2) set the amount of funding available with respect to any individual or service, or class thereof, and set corresponding funding formulae for the allocation of funding to recipients; and (3) set criteria for granting funding, which criteria may include accessible service standards. B. At any time, at their sole discretion, the Executive Director may suspend the application process for or the disbursement of funds under the accessibility fund program, or recalibrate the existing funding formula, based on the Executive Director's assessment of funding availability.

Regulatory fractures over time

- Currently, the accessible vehicle fleets across all companies have been reduced by 50% compared to 2016 with significantly more retired accessible vehicles to come (77%)
- The Accessibility Levy instituted by the city of Toronto intended to increase accessible vehicles on the road by subsidizing accessible conversion – it has failed in its objective
- TTL's are sitting on shelves and independent contractors don't want them
- Uber, Wave and Lyft have ended many of their incentive programs on accessibility

The Current Problem

- There is a major shortage of wheelchair accessible Taxi and Vehicle for Hire vehicles available in the GTA. As a result, people with mobility disabilities are stranded and being excluded from the same services other residents have access to. This is a human rights issue.
- People who require accessible service are not being charged by the meter and incur additional fees
- There is no accountability from companies to improve accessible services
- The City of Toronto is not addressing the situation
- There is nowhere to make a complaint
- People cant wait until by-law reviews finish in 2025. People need service now.



From the community...

"I recently attended a concert which would have been a \$13 ride, but I had to pay \$55 just because I took an accessible vehicle. It's a human rights issue and it doesn't align with the AODA." Josh, Toronto

"If I want to visit friends or family that are slightly outside of Toronto, it gets really tricky. I can sometimes get a ride to say, Richmond Hill through a cab company or Uber, but getting a ride for the way home is nearly impossible." Chris, Toronto

See the comment section:

<https://www.change.org/p/make-taxi-service-and-vehicles-for-hire-accessible-for-wheelchair-users>

"Depending on the medical condition, when I need to go to the ER at a particular hospital, an ambulance may not be able to take me there, due to regulations. Wheel-Trans is not able to provide immediate service. Therefore, an accessible Taxi or Uber is the only option remaining. But now, that also has become hit and miss, mostly miss." Eddie, Toronto

"It is nearly impossible to get on demand service. Most of the time, the apps simple say 'NO CARS AVAILABLE.' It's a major issue." Nikoletta, Toronto

Recommendations

- Accessibility Advisory Committee investigate the problem with executive council, including licensing and standards committee to ensure compliance with the existing Taxi and Vehicle for Hire regulations specific to wheelchair accessible transportation and report back to the community before reviews are over
- Accessibility Advisory Committee request evaluation of effectiveness and eligibility of the wheelchair accessible levy to ensure that it is adequately offsetting vehicle modification costs.
- The TAAC recommends that the City of Toronto launches reforms **specific to accessibility**, to revisit bylaws and regulations of Taxi and Vehicle for Hire Services **separately**.
- The City of Toronto has not done its due diligence to ensure PWD are included in the [consultations](#) of Vehicle for Hire bylaw updates.
- **The ultimate goal:** To restore industry standard wait times and fares for accessible services 24/7.





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**Lésions Médullaires
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QUESTIONS:

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