

KINGSTON ACCESS SERVICES

Providing Specialized, Non-Emergency Medical, and Community Transportation

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January 7, 2019

Kingston City Council
City of Kingston
216 Ontario Street
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 2Z3**RE: Communication to Kingston City Council regarding Kingston Access Services 2019
Operating Funding request and potential impacts to service levels.**

Members of Kingston City Council,

Kingston Access Services (KAS) initial 2019 operating funding request of the City of Kingston was for an increase of \$431,244 in total funding. Following multiple meetings and discussions facilitated by Treasurer Desiree Kennedy, Kingston Access Services was requested to resubmit a revised budget with a lower funding increase. The revised budget submitted is for an increase of \$328,445. Treasurer Kennedy recommended that I provide a communication to Council, with an explanation of the effect of the lower funding request on the citizens of the City of Kingston who are reliant on KAS for transportation.

We understand the lower funding amount of \$328,445 still represents a significant increase in funding, however this lower amount will result in reduced service levels to those who rely on our services for transportation to attend employment, school, medical appointments, programs, or participate in the community. We are requesting that City Council consider providing the extra \$102,799 of funding. The majority of the "savings" within the reduced budget submission come from increased unmet trip availability for passengers.

With conventional transit, a small increase in passengers can be accommodated within existing routes. This is not the case for specialized transit services. Due to the "door-to-door" nature of specialized transit, most increases in demand result in increased driver hours and extra vehicles on the road. Based on previous years trends, we are projecting an increase of 6.4% in passenger trips to 88,942 in 2019. The growth in demand for specialized transit in Kingston far exceeds that of the Provincial averages. The twenty largest urban municipal specialized transit systems in Ontario (Toronto excluded) averaged a cumulative 10.7% increase from 2014 to 2017, whereas during the same period Kingston has seen a cumulative 19% increase (Canadian Urban Transit Association 2014-2017). In 2018, Kingston Access Services has seen another 6.3% increase, bringing the 4-year increase to over 26%.

It is impossible for specialized transit to accommodate every trip request received. In 2018, approximately 2% of trip requests Kingston Access Services received were “unmet” due to not having a vehicle available at the requested time, or within a reasonable period close to the requested time. The revised budget submission would permit only 3% more trips to be accommodated in 2019, as opposed to the 6.4% projected increase in demand.

As a result, the percentage of trips unable to be accommodated in 2019 would be well over 5% between the existing unmet rates of 2%, and the additional 3.4% from 2019 (based upon a 6.4% overall increase in demand, less the 3% accommodated within the revised budget). From a numbers perspective this is over 6,000 trips that KAS would be unable to be accommodate. A small number of our passengers have the resources, be it the support of family/friends to get to their destinations, or the financial resources for taxi costs. However, most KAS passengers do not have those resources. Thus, limiting passenger’s ability to be socially included within the City of Kingston and reducing their ability to attend employment, school, appointments, programs, or participate in the community.

The increased demand for KAS services is only one item resulting in the significant increase in costs of operating specialized transit services. Other major influences include:

Efficiencies:

Specialized transit is labour intensive due to the “door to door” transportation of passengers, as opposed to vehicles travelling on a fixed route similar to conventional transportation. Our efficiencies have decreased from 1.95 passengers/hour in 2016 to 1.73 passengers/hour in 2018. Key influences on this include:

- In 2017 AODA legislation on “hours of service” mandated that specialized transit match the hours of conventional transit. As a result, KAS is now required to operate during hours when demand for specialized transit is extremely low.
- From 2016 to 2018 the trip distance per passenger has increased by 6.2% thus negatively impacting efficiencies.
- In 2017 AODA legislation introduced eligibility for specialized transit based on cognitive disabilities. The vast majority of the increase in demand for our service has been due to passengers with cognitive disabilities. This has had an unforeseen impact on efficiencies as passengers living with cognitive disabilities such as dementia, Alzheimer’s, or developmental delays in most instances take more time to service and require more supervision than passengers living with mobility impairments or physical disability.

Cost of fuel:

As the 2nd largest expense behind wages, fuel alone adds nearly 4% onto our overall budget increase in 2019. Kingston Access Services uses fuel price projections from the City of Kingston. The projected fuel price our 2019 budget is based on is \$0.22/litre higher than that used in 2018. Between increased demands for service and the additional trip distance per passenger, the total kilometres travelled annually has increased 21% over the period of 2016 to 2018. A noticeable increase in the number of trip requests from those residing in the rural areas of the City has been seen.

**CITY COUNCIL
MEETING OF:**

COW - January 28, 29 & 30, 2019

COMMUNICATION

No: 2019-01