



STAFF REPORT

Title: Alternative Transportation Mode - Ridesharing

Meeting Date: September 17, 2024

Executive Summary:

Ridesharing is an alternative to traditional taxis that is commonly available throughout many jurisdictions. It involves the practice of using a typical passenger vehicle to provide pre-arranged, one-way transportation on short notice in a vehicle that is not as visibly identifiable as a taxi, which may be used for both personal and commercial purposes. A well-known rideshare service provider is the company named Uber.

Ridesharing may currently be occurring in Cold Lake, however existing regulations in the Taxi Bylaw #760-PL-22 require a ridesharing service to operate as a traditional taxi service.

Administration is seeking Council's input to determine if amendments should be made to the Taxi Bylaw No. 760-PL-22, to allow ridesharing services in Cold Lake.

Background:

According to section 6.2 of the City of Cold Lake Municipal Development Plan, the goal for Transportation in the community is to ensure all parts of the city are connected by a comprehensive and well-maintained multi-modal transportation network, while introducing a gradual shift to alternative modes of transportation that provide the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.

Currently, the City of Cold Lake transportation network includes the use of personal and commercial motor vehicles on public roadways, public transport options such as free busing and the Adaptive Transit Service for those with mobility challenges, and the sidewalk and trail systems such as the Millennium Trail that accommodate pedestrian and recreational traffic.

Options for the public who require transportation by motor vehicle are generally limited to either personal vehicles, public transit, or the use of commercial taxis.

Alternative to Commercial Taxis:

To increase commercial transportation options for residents and visitors to Cold Lake, the possibility of ridesharing is an interesting opportunity that has been successfully used by other municipalities.



A ridesharing service is described as pre-arranged, one-way transportation, on short notice, in a vehicle that resembles a typical passenger vehicle rather than a traditionally marked vehicle for hire such as a taxi. For example, a commonly known ridesharing service is the company operating as Uber.

Benefits to ridesharing include increasing options for consumers, and the potential for additional employment to those interested in being a ride sharing operator.

The consequences of ridesharing may include increased competition with locally established taxi operators, the potential for reduced use of public transportation, and safety concerns about the qualifications of operators and the vehicles they use to deliver ridesharing services.

Bylaw Regulations:

The Taxi Bylaw No. 760-PL-22 currently allows taxi businesses to operate in Cold Lake. According to the existing rules, a vehicle used in the business of conveying passengers for hire is considered a taxi, which must be licensed by the municipality to ensure the taxi operator and the vehicle are able to safely transport people.

For example, a taxi is currently required to prominently display the name of the taxi business and unit number, have an approved vehicle inspection, and be insured and registered for commercial usage.

Ridesharing companies may be operating without any approvals and could possibly operate as a taxi if they met the current Taxi Bylaw requirements. However, additional regulations specific to ridesharing may be needed to clarify how a private vehicle may be used in Cold Lake to safely transport people for compensation.

Options for Consideration:

- 1) Do nothing – ridesharing providers will need to comply with existing regulations and operate as a Taxi.
- 2) Amend the Taxi Bylaw to allow ridesharing and regulate it.
- 3) Amend the Taxi Bylaw to explicitly prohibit ridesharing.

Recommended Action:

Administration is recommending that the Corporate Priorities Committee direct Administration to prepare amendments to Bylaw No. 760-PL-22, being the Taxi Bylaw, to allow and provide framework for ridesharing in Cold Lake.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No



City of *Cold Lake*

Submitted by:
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