

Bylaw 16482 – Traffic Bylaw Amendment No. 143

Taxi Loading near Fire Hydrants

Purpose

To amend Bylaw 5590, the Traffic Bylaw, to allow taxis to stop at pre-determined and approved fire hydrants in certain circumstances.

Readings

Bylaw 16482 is ready for three readings.

If Council wishes to give three readings during a single meeting, then prior to moving third reading, Council must unanimously agree "That Bylaw 16482 be considered for third reading."

Advertising and Signing

Advertising is not required for this Bylaw.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this Bylaw

Report Summary

This report provides information on possible amendments to the Traffic Bylaw that allow taxis to stop at pre-determined and approved fire hydrants as long as the operator remains in the vehicle and moves on request. Potential risks and benefits of the change are outlined in this report.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 24, 2013, Executive Committee meeting, Bylaw 16482 was

forwarded to City Council for the appropriate readings.

At the January 28, 2013, Executive Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Committee with amendments to Bylaw 14700 and Bylaw 5590 regarding:

- taxis stopping at fire hydrants
- 2 year licence model

This report addresses part 1 of the motion (taxis stopping at fire hydrants). Sustainable Development report CR_240, addresses part 2 (2 year licence model).

Report

Currently, taxis and all other vehicles are prohibited from parking within five metres of a fire hydrant.

The vehicle for hire industry has expressed concerns that this restriction limits public accessibility to taxis, particularly in the downtown core, due to relatively few areas where vehicles can safely and legally pick up or drop off passengers. Drivers indicate that parking space limitations create barriers for the public to use taxi services and negatively impact potential fare revenues. In 2012, 6,657 tickets were issued to vehicles that were parked at or near a fire hydrant.

Administration has prepared a bylaw amendment that would allow taxis to stop in designated hydrant areas. The bylaw amendment grants Administration the authority to designate certain

hydrants as taxi zones. Once designated, taxis may stop within five metres of the hydrant as long as the operator remains in the vehicle and moves the vehicle upon request. These taxi zones effectively provide additional temporary loading zones while the area is not required by emergency vehicles.

Administration has worked to understand potential impacts of allowing taxis to utilize hydrant areas as proposed in this amendment including a review of similar programs in other municipalities, such as Calgary. The City of Calgary trialed Taxi Hydrant Zones in 2011; the trial was deemed to be successful, and was ultimately expanded in 2012. There are currently over 100 approved Taxi Hydrant Zones in the City of Calgary.

Benefits confirmed from the Calgary pilot include:

- better protection for fire hydrants - trials demonstrated that allowing taxis to occupy fire hydrant zones prevented other vehicles from occupying these spaces
- greater access to taxis for the public throughout the downtown
- improved dispatch capability for taxi companies
- efficient use of street space
- increased public parking space due to reduced occupancy by taxis
- reduced driving for taxi drivers to seek customers
- improved air quality due to lower carbon emissions from taxis
- improved economic environment to attract and retain businesses.

Administration is supportive of the proposed bylaw amendment as the impact is expected to reflect the positive effects experienced in other municipalities.

In order to reduce the risk of restricted access to fire hydrants by unattended vehicles, the amendments require drivers to remain in the vehicle and immediately move the vehicle on request. A \$250 fine for non-compliance with these restrictions is proposed for this offence, a greater penalty than the standard parking violation fine.

Not all fire hydrants will be identified as taxi zones due to unique location and roadway design scenarios. Administration is currently developing criteria to identify which hydrant locations are suitable taxi zones. If a hydrant is not identified as a taxi zone, no vehicle (including taxi) is permitted to stop within five metres. Administration is developing proposed signage for approved taxi zones.

Administration has conducted a preliminary assessment of fire hydrant locations within the downtown core for early implementation of taxi zones. As more information is collected supporting allowing taxis to stop near fire hydrants, the number of taxi zones will increase.

Policy

Bylaw 5590 – Traffic Bylaw

Corporate Outcomes

The Way Ahead – City of Edmonton Strategic Plan 2009-2018

- Improve Edmonton’s Livability

Legal Implications

This bylaw is authorized under the *Traffic Safety Act* and *Municipal Government Act*.

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed amendments to Bylaw 5590 provide improved accessibility to taxis and enhance public safety.

Attachment

1. Bylaw 16482

Others Reviewing this Report

- D. H. Edey, General Manager, Corporate Services
- R. Boutilier, General Manager, Transportation Services
- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services