TO: Chair and Members
Emergency & Community Services Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: September 22, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Taxi Transportation for Clients of Special Supports (CS10082) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY:
Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services

PREPARED BY:
Kerry Lubrick (905)546-2424, Ext. 4855
Erica Brimley (905)546-2424, Ext. 4815

SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the provision of taxi services for eligible Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program participants, and individuals with a low income, be exempt from the Purchasing Policy to reduce the City of Hamilton's exposure to potential risk.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Services Department, Special Supports Unit, approves the cost of taxi services for transportation of eligible Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) participants and individuals with a low income when the individual is unable to use regular or accessible transportation.

Currently, once eligibility for taxi service is determined:

- the client chooses the taxi company;
- Special Services staff arrange for that taxi company to transport the client to the approved destination;
- the taxi company invoices Special Supports for payment of the service; and,
- Special Supports reimburses the taxi provider at the metered rate.

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
In an effort to be compliant with the City of Hamilton’s current Purchasing Policy By-Law and to realize cost savings, the Special Supports Unit developed tender specifications for the provision of the taxi service. However, after a staff review of the tender for the provision of taxi services to this vulnerable population and further consultation with our Legal Services and Risk Management staff, it was determined that the cost savings would be relatively small while the City of Hamilton (City) would be exposed to the inherent liability risk in directing vulnerable sector persons to use a specific service provider.

Therefore, staff are recommending that eligible OW, ODSP and Low Income clients continue to select the taxi company of their choice to provide service and no tender be issued.

### FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

**Financial:**
No savings will be realized.

**Staffing:**
There are no staffing implications to Report CS10082.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On December 15, 2004, Council approved the Special Income Business Process Review (HCS04073). Report HCS04073 recommended changes to three existing business procedures within the Special Supports Program (formerly known as Special Income) and to advise Council of the outcomes of the Business Process Review (BPR). Since that time, Special Supports staff has actioned the 27 recommended changes which were identified as potential process improvements. Several of the recommendations pertained to tendering. Staff was unfortunately unable to achieve a tender for all of the recommended areas; namely, cribs¹, taxi service and dentures².

The cost of taxi services is provided to eligible OW, ODSP³ and Low Income residents. To qualify for this service, the client must be unable to take regular modes of transportation (e.g. Hamilton Street Railway; DARTS). The BPR, conducted on the

---

¹ No bids were received on contract #C5-23-09; therefore, the tender was cancelled. Report “Change in Procedure for Car Seats and Cribs 2010 (CS10001)”.
² Staff was unable to obtain a tender for the provision of dentures. Report “Increase to Discretionary Denture Program 2007 (ECS07054)” was presented and approved by Council in August 2007.
³ Special Supports is approved to assist residents of Residential Care Facilities with transportation not covered by mandatory benefits through ODSP.
Special Supports program in 2004, flagged Travel - Taxi as a high priority for actioning due to:

- potential cost savings (estimated at 5% which was $6,597 gross);
- compliance with the corporate Purchasing Policy; and,
- efficiencies with a streamlined process.

A tender was developed and issued in 2007; however, it was cancelled because the specifications in the tender were in contravention of the taxi licensing by-law. This tender requested a lower metered rate; however, the metered rate is set out in the by-law. The taxi licence by-law was revised in 2008, which allowed for a discount when a taxi company entered into a contract. In 2009, the specifications for the taxi tender were revised to re-issue and solicit bids.

There are currently three taxi companies utilized by eligible clients by their choice: Blue Line Taxi, Hamilton Cab and Wentworth Taxi. In 2009, a total of $145,527 gross/$69,998 net was paid for taxi services for eligible clients.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Purchasing Policy for the City of Hamilton By-law No. 09-230

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Financial Services, Corporate Services Department
(The Purchasing Division suggested presenting the situation to Council in order to provide authorization to exempt this service from the purchasing policy).

Risk Management, Treasury Services, Corporate Services Department
Legal Services, City Managers Office
(Risk Management and Legal Services recommended not to proceed with a tender due to the level of risk associated with clientele using the services).

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The tender specifications were reviewed with Licensing, Legal and Risk Management staff. The review identified the increased risk to the City in directing Special Supports clients to a specific taxi company as compared to permitting the client to make their own choice of service provider. In directing the client, the City could be held to be vicariously liable for damages these vulnerable persons could potentially sustain arising from the use of the service.

It is recommended that Special Supports not tender for the provision of Taxi Service due to the potential level of risk associated with directing our clients to a preferred taxi
company and continue the practice of permitting eligible OW/ODSP and low income clients to select their own taxi service providers.

Staff consider the potential savings of approximately $7,276 gross/$3,500 net that may be achieved with tendering do not adequately offset the risk. This figure is based on receiving a 5% saving.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

There are no alternatives for consideration to CS10082.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**

- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus

**Financial Sustainability**

- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

**Social Development**

- People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

**Healthy Community**

- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

There are no appendices to Report CS10082.