



160 John Street South | Hamilton ON L8N 2C4

October 9, 2020

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in follow up to a letter dated September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 sent to all Members of Hamilton Council and the Licensing and By-Law Service Team. The letter is also in response to the Letter received from the Licensing and By-Law Service group on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 related to Outstanding Taxi License Fees.

In our letter of September 29<sup>th</sup> Blue Line Transportation Limited (BLTL) made a clear and compassionate appeal to speak with City Council and the Licensing Office to arrive at solutions that could assist the Taxi Industry in the City of Hamilton operating under extremely harsh conditions as a result of both Covid-19 and relative Commercial Insurance challenges that happened to coincide with the timing of the pandemic.

We are now very specifically writing and responding to the issue surrounding Taxi Plate Licensing. The Taxi Industry is thankful that Council agreed to defer this issue to a September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 date, in the hopes that impacts from Covid-19 would decrease by this time. This remained the aspirational hope of all members of the Taxi industry also.

The reality on the ground remains dramatically different. At the beginning of the pandemic the industry only had some 20% of the City's taxi vehicles on the streets of Hamilton. Since March, there has been a very slow and steady increase in the number of Vehicles operating, together with a very slow and steady increase in customer demand. Even during the most difficult times, Hamiltonians could rely on Taxi service to provide them with transportation. At the outset of the pandemic nearly 100% of taxi vehicle travel was dedicated to those in Hamilton who are vulnerable, those needing to make a trip for food, prescription drugs and necessities of life. Blue Line partnered with Hamilton grocery stores to enable easier distribution of groceries to those unable to venture out.

At the present time, Blue Line is operating with a little over 58% of its "normal" fleet size servicing Hamilton customer demand that has grown since March, but only sits at roughly 60% of where it was in October of 2019. The pandemic has created a long-term shift in operations and consumer behaviour. At the present time, Blue Line Transportation together with the entire worldwide Taxi industry is forecasting a longer than expected return to full operation. Like so many other businesses, we are hopeful that there will be a return to normal at some point in the future. Until then, we continue to work with all partners to arrive at interim solutions that are practical given the change in conditions. The City of Hamilton is the most important partner the Taxi Industry has here in the City.

Blue Line Transportation Limited, on behalf of the taxi operators in the city is asking the City to work together to arrive at both an immediate solution to the issue of Licensing and to prepare a longer term framework aimed at getting as many vehicles back on the road. As a made in Hamilton Company, Blue Line had over 600 Hamiltonians employed

directly and indirectly in 2019. This number is hardly one-third of that at the moment. The issue of Taxi Plates is substantially more profound than just the issue around licensing.

## **SPECIFIC SHORT TERM REQUESTS OF HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL**

In an effort to arrive at a sensible outcome with the City of Hamilton, Blue Line Transportation Limited (BLTL) is making the following suggestions to Council and the City's Licensing and By-Law Service team:

- 1) BLTL is asking Council to pass a motion to defer the September 30<sup>th</sup> licensing deadline date to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 to ensure there is no ACCIDNETAL abandonment of taxi plates.
- 2) BLTL is asking both Council and/or the City's Licensing and By-Law team to meet virtually between now and this new deadline date, to arrive at a sensible program around the issue of Taxi Plate licensing, operations, fees etc. given the drastic changes in the market as a result of Covid-19.
- 3) As a sign of good faith and cooperation, BLTL would be ready to volunteer a 15% deposit for all Outstanding Plates listed in the City's letter dated October 7<sup>th</sup> paid to the Licensing office by the end of the month of October 2020, with the intention of continuing conversation aimed at finding a viable longer-term solution.

Blue Line Transportation Limited is proud of a very long and meaningful history in the City. Thousands of people in the city have been given the opportunity of employment as a result of Blue Line's commitment to Hamilton. Millions of passenger trips have been completed. Blue Line remains the ONLY company in this area of Taxi and personal transportation that remains a fully Hamilton owned and operated business. Ownership, Dispatch and Call Centre Operations and Taxi Owners, Operators and Drivers are Hamiltonians.

Over the course of time, there have always been Taxi Plates that might have sat dormant for a short period of time. The City and the Licensing office would never have noticed this as those respective Taxi Plates would invariably drop into circulation quickly and owners and operators would have happily paid their respective licensing fees.

This Covid-19 reality with Taxi Plates sitting dormant is fundamentally different. We ask for some understanding in light of these very unique circumstances, and appreciate tremendously the support the City is able to provide.

Regards,

Anthony Rizzuto  
Blue Line Transportation Limited  
On behalf of the City of Hamilton's Taxi Industry

Cc: City of Hamilton Licensing and By-Law Services, City Councilors, Clerk & Mayor