

Project Charter

Taxi Standards Project

~ abridged edition ~

October 16, 2013

Purpose of Document

This document defines the Passenger Transportation Board’s (Board) Taxi Standards Project (TSP) in terms of objectives, scope, stakeholders and key deliverables. Acceptance of this document allows project work to proceed on a path that has been agreed upon by Board members and staff.

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1.0 Project Sponsor

Passenger Transportation Board (Board).

2.0 Project Purpose

The first purpose of the Taxi Standards Project is to enable and encourage taxi companies to provide the Board with relevant and reliable data when applying for additional taxis. The Board can use this information to make timely decisions based on reliable information that reflects changes and trends in the applicant's business and community.

The second purpose is to encourage licensees to set measurable performance targets for their taxi operations and monitor performance against those standards. Promoting the use of standards and monitoring by taxi operations should improve passenger satisfaction, instill confidence and build loyalty for individual taxi companies, and perhaps local taxi markets as a whole.

The Board recognizes that taxi companies know their business better than anyone. The TSP project helps taxi companies develop their capacity to keep records that are useful for setting targets, managing their businesses and making applications to the Board. Work on this project will also help the Board clarify the parameters of what it expects applicants to include in their applications. Overall, the TSP brings focus to information that is collected and used for more-informed decision making.

3.0 Background

The Board makes decisions on licence applications to operate passenger directed vehicles (PDVs) such as taxis, limousines and inter-city buses. In response to an application, the Board makes decisions on matters such as whether an applicant may operate, where the applicant may operate, and certain aspects of how they may operate.

In 2012, the Board published a report on Wheelchair Accessible Transportation. This report includes a commitment to research the future use of taxi service standards and review accessible taxi policy in light of the initiative. The report notes that the Board will consult with industry on this project. In 2011, the City of Vancouver recommended that the Board set requirements for ongoing and standardized measurements for taxi companies on trip volumes, wait times and taxicab availability to enable evaluations of taxi service levels and changes in the numbers of taxicabs. Among stakeholders generally, interest is growing in the potential use of operational taxi data to improve transportation services for passengers.

The Board's interest in these issues relates to its statutory mandate that includes making decisions on taxi applications after considering the public need for taxi services, the economic implications of an application, and the fitness and capability of an applicant to provide the service they propose. When considering applications, especially applications for additional taxis, the Board has experienced challenges. These challenges relate largely to variations in the quality and relevance of data and information that the Board receives from applicants. Thus, the Board sees a need to develop guidelines and tools that help licensees know what data to collect and summarize for future applications, and which may help them decide when to apply for additional taxis.

The success of this project depends on both advance work by the Board and direct involvement with industry stakeholders during the main work phases. This approach should enhance the ability of the Board to gather reliable information about industry practices and build support for potential new policies and practices prior to implementation. In addition, the Board's TSP committee members will keep current with trends and new developments in other jurisdictions.

In June 2012, the Board integrated TSP into its strategic plan as a top priority project which lies outside its core decision-making responsibilities.

In March 2013, two Board members met with representatives of the BC Taxi Association, Vancouver Taxi Association and Greater Victoria Taxi Association to start discussions and collaboration by establishing a Joint TSP Steering Committee. However, industry participants raised concerns about potential implications of multi-stakeholder discussions on other applications and Court proceedings. Out of respect for those concerns, the Board revised its project design. This project charter reflects those revisions.

4.0 Objectives

To receive consistently the following as part of applications for additional taxis:

1. A set of relevant and reliable data about taxi operating levels and trends
2. A description of measurable standards with comparable data that shows performance over time

5.0 Scope

The Taxi Standards Project (TSP) initially focuses on taxis that serve a market of at least 60,000 people. Thus, the project covers taxi companies in these population centres:

1. Capital Regional District
2. Fraser Valley Regional District
3. Kamloops
4. Kelowna
5. Metro Vancouver
6. Nanaimo
7. Prince George

The project relates to both conventional and accessible taxis. After completing the project, the Board may expand the TSP to smaller markets. Moreover, companies in smaller markets may voluntarily adopt some guidelines or use some tools made available through the TSP.

6.0 Major Deliverables

1. Taxi company survey results
2. Local Government Taxi Standards Survey
3. Meetings with 1 to 3 vendors of taxi dispatch systems
4. Meetings with 2 to 4 taxi licensees of varying sizes
5. Field testing of enhanced data reporting materials for applications
6. Publish TSP Preliminary Outcomes
7. Final Board Report

7.0 Stakeholders

Project Sponsor:

Passenger Transportation Board

Taxi Industry

1. Taxi Licensees in markets with a population of 60,000 or more
2. BC Taxi Association
3. Vancouver Taxi Association
4. Greater Victoria Taxi Association

Other Regulatory Agencies

1. Passenger Transportation Branch
2. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
3. Local Governments
 - a. Local governments in each of the 7 target population centres (e.g. Greater Vancouver, Greater Victoria, etc.)
4. Airport Ground Transportation Managers (YVR primarily)
5. TransLink and BC Transit (especially with respect to wheelchair accessible taxis)

Passengers / Consumers

1. People with disabilities
 - a. BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
 - b. Committee for Promotion of Accessible Convention Transit (COMPACT)
 - c. Richmond Centre for Disability
2. Seniors
 - a. Council of Senior Citizens' of BC (COSCO BC)
 - b. Seniors
3. Tourism Associations

7.1 Stakeholder Interests

Table 1 (on page 8) identifies the major stakeholders and their interests, expectations and concerns related to the Taxi Standards Project.

8.0 Issues and Constraints

This section notes potential issues and constraints that could impact project success. Actions are suggested to address the issues.

- **Competitive Interests and Application Proceedings** As noted in the background, an earlier TSP design included collaboration with taxi associations and multi-party meetings and information sharing. Open-sharing of information among competitors was identified as an industry concern with possible negative implications for application and Court proceedings. **Action:** The project was redesigned by replacing *collaboration* with industry associations with *involvement*. Further, all investigative work (e.g. interviews and information-gathering meetings) will be conducted by the Board and single parties.
- **Resistance to Change** Implementation of project outcomes without prior industry engagement and buy-in may diminish the extent to which taxi companies enhance their data collection, performance reporting and standards setting practices. **Action:** Starting early on, it is important to communicate project aims and key developments. All taxi companies should be invited to comment on initiatives being considered.
- **Cost Resistance** Taxi companies may resist changes that cost money and time. **Action:** The Board should take a broad view of options and include options where companies can develop performance standards with equipment they have. It may help to benchmark *best practices* in the industry and share licensee stories that identify both the costs and benefits.
- **Sharing Proprietary Information** Concerns regarding the protection of proprietary business information in applications may be raised. **Action:** The Board should research how other cities approached such information reporting matters—including competitive and legal implications.

Table 1: TSP Committee Scan of Stakeholder Interests, Expectations & Concerns

| Stakeholder Group | Stakeholder Interests, Expectations, Concerns |
|--|---|
| Taxi Licensees <i>(communities >60K) including licensees with small and large fleets</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profitability (short term especially) • Protection of proprietary and operational information • Improvements in customer service • Improvements in application processes • Confidentiality of any information that is shared • Risk of impacts on other applications and proceedings • Initial resistance to change • Potential costs resulting from changes to application requirements |
| Taxi Licensees <i>(communities <60K)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interests are similar to taxi licensees in cities with at least 60K people. • Greater concern about any additional resource burdens that are perceived. |
| Taxi Associations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall benefits for taxi markets and member companies • Fairness and practicality of possible changes • Confidentiality • Risk of impacts on application or Court proceedings • BCTA will, in part, be concerned about impacts on small operators and small markets. |
| Passengers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service quality, reliability, universality and affordability • Timeliness of implementing standards for seniors and people with disabilities |
| Drivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair distribution of any project benefits |
| Ministry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress toward project aims |
| Other Regulators <i>including local governments</i> | <p>Project impacts and benefits relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service levels • Satisfaction of passengers, licensees and drivers with the regulatory system • Regulator resources and efficiencies • Compliance and enforceability |

- **Accessing Technical Expertise** Technical expertise will be needed for discussions of dispatch systems, telephone systems and software programs for converting raw data to useable reports. **Action:** Expertise

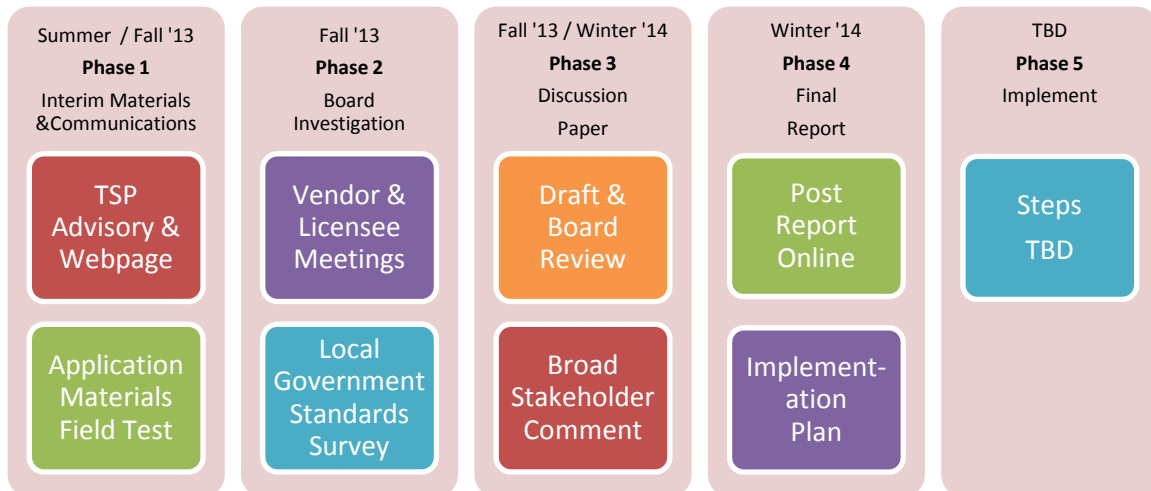
may be accessed through discussions with dispatch system vendors and companies or individuals recommended by taxi associations.

- Geography** The participation of taxi companies and associations across the province may be cost prohibitive. **Action:** Teleconferencing or video conferencing will be needed. As well, the number of meetings may be limited to what is required to understand the type of information that is needed to achieve project aims.
- Scope Creep** A lot of information is available on taxi data and standards and uses. **Action:** Maintain a focus on the Board mandate, needs relating to additional taxi applications and the project objectives to prevent scope creep or delays.
- Small Operators** The scope includes some small operators that work in large urban areas. **Action:** It is important to canvass the views of small operators during consultations and consider how future policies may affect these operators.

9.0 Milestones

Table 2 presents project milestones between Summer 2013 and March 2014.

Table 2: Phases for the TSP Project



10.0 Group Roles

The following groups will be necessary for this project:

Table 3: TSP Groups

| <i>Groups</i> | <i>Roles</i> | <i>Membership</i> |
|----------------------|--|---|
| TSP Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Planning • Research • Writing and Analysis • Communications with project participants | TSP Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Board Members (One as Committee Chair) • Manager, Policy & Communications Ex Officio: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Chair • Director & Secretary |
| Meeting Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will set up information-gathering meetings with individual stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 – 4 taxi companies (General Managers, Owners, Directors) • 2 – 3 dispatch system vendors • 1 – 2 local governments |

The Board provides regular project updates with a broad group of stakeholders at twice-annual meetings of its Passenger Directed Vehicle Advisory Committee (PDVAC).