

Tax needs being surveyed by town

Does Whitchurch-Stouffville need a taxi service specifically for disabled residents?

The town, as mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, is conducting a survey to determine that answer.

The on-demand taxi service would be for wheelchair-bound residents who cannot utilize a traditional vehicle.

"This survey is not intended for people who are able to get in/out of a regular taxi. For example, those who use a walker. It's only for accessible transportation," according to Colleen Clarke, licensing and public services co-ordinator for the town.

Rides would only originate in Whitchurch-Stouffville. If the destination is out of town, such as the Upper Canada Mall in Newmarket, passengers would get a ride there, but would have to make alternate arrangements for their return trip to town, according to Ms Clarke. The fare would be the same as a regular taxi.

"They should be able to spontaneously want to go out, like able-bodied people," said Sharon Doyle, manager of Mobility Plus.

Mobility Plus is a door-to-door shared ride transit service for the disabled.

Riders must meet eligibility requirements, which are considered on a case-by-case basis. Once registered, in order to utilize the service, riders need to pre-book.

Riders can call for same-day service but "you're taking your chances. You might not get the time you want. If it's a last-minute doctor's appointment, that's a toughie," Ms Doyle said.

Mobility Plus has 133 Whitchurch-Stouffville clients registered to use the service.

Also supplying accessible transit to the municipality is Newmarket-based Association for Differently Abled People Together.

The non-for-profit organization has six vehicles equipped to transport people who use wheelchairs or walkers, according to company president Jim Knox.

The system operates 24-hours, seven days a week with a per-kilometre fee. Primary clientele are receiving dialysis treatment, he said.

The survey is available at www.townofws.ca or by contacting Ms Clarke at 905-640-1910 ext. 2225. Surveys are due Feb. 15.

- Sandra Bolan



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