

# ACCESSIBLE DISPATCH PROGRAM

November 17, 2011

# Accessible Dispatch – Background/Timeline

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- July 2008-June 2010 – TLC conducts accessible dispatch pilot program.
- Dec 2010 – TLC issues report on accessible dispatch pilot and RFI soliciting input on improvements for permanent accessible dispatch program.
- April 2011 – In response to input from RFI, TLC issues RFPs for permanent medallion accessible dispatch and FHV accessible dispatch programs.
- Sept 2011 – TLC selects respondents for dispatch programs.
- Oct-Dec 2011 – Contract negotiation/execution with selected vendors, and vote on accessible dispatch rules.
- March 2012 – Scheduled launch of permanent accessible dispatch programs.

# Pilot Dispatch Program – Results/Lessons

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- Pilot program results
  - 5, 828 trips; approx. 2, 700 unique customers
  - Average 8 trips/day
  - Average wait time (call to pickup) for “on-demand” trips was 44 minutes; median wait time was 29 minutes.
  - Average wait time for “scheduled” trips (schedule pick-up for 30 mins or more in advance) was 23 minutes; median wait time was 10 mins.
  
- Lessons learned
  - Wait times too long – a function of voluntary nature of driver participation
  - Not subsidizing pickup meant drivers were forced to bear cost of trips
  - Driver reluctance – 97% of trips done by 28% of accessible medallion taxis; 68% of trips done by 18 individual vehicles
  - Focus on yellow taxis effectively limited program to Manhattan CBD, even though drivers were expected to make pickups outside Manhattan
  - Insufficient marketing/outreach

# FHV “Equivalent Service” Requirement

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- TLC Rule 59B-17(c) requires all FHV services to provide “equivalent service” to wheelchair users or contract with another FHV service to provide this service.
- There are only 23 TLC-approved wheelchair-accessible vehicles for approximately 760 FHV bases. This amounts to only one accessible vehicle provider for every 33 FHV bases.
- There are no limitations on the number of FHV bases that a provider can contract with, and no restriction on where these vehicles must be located.
- High cost to serve – FHV bases pay an annual affiliation fee to these providers, as well as a per-ride fee.
- As a result, there has been widespread non-compliance with this rule. In FY’11, TLC issued 201 summons to bases as a result of targeted enforcement operations.

# Permanent Accessible Dispatch – Overview

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- Passengers access dispatch via 311, regardless of trip geography
- 311 sends trips originating in Manhattan to medallion taxi dispatcher, and trips originating outside Manhattan to FHV dispatcher
- Medallion taxi dispatcher will manage fleet of all current and future wheelchair accessible taxis via GPS/TPEP
- Medallion taxi dispatch program funded by annual fee on medallion owners (\$98 in Year 1; estimated \$54 in Year 2), with unspent amount rolled over to subsequent period
  - ▣ Assumes 50 trips/day in Year 1; and 70 trips/day in Year 2
  - ▣ Re-assess dispatch fee after 6 months
- FHV dispatcher will manage own drivers and own fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles located throughout boroughs outside Manhattan
- FHV dispatch program funded by annual fee on FHV base owners (\$57 in Year 1; projected \$51 in Year 2), with unspent amount rolled over to subsequent period

# Medallion Dispatch Program – Features

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- Driver subsidy – drivers will be paid for the “dispatch” portion of the trip (incl tolls), as well as for no-shows
- Driver non-responsiveness or decline of trip treated as a service refusal
  - Participation not voluntary; if meter is engaged, vehicle is available for a trip
- All current and future accessible taxicabs must accept dispatches
- Driver training – all medallion taxi drivers will receive appropriate training for assisting passengers in wheelchairs
  - Assistance from curbside to taxi; and taxi to curbside
  - Meter not activated until passenger seated/secured in vehicle
- Service level standard requirements on dispatcher will include:
  - Response time to calls and/or website and app requests for service
  - Response time to address system errors/failures
  - Regular metric reporting to TLC
- Dispatcher will conduct a \$500K+ outreach/marketing campaign (including focus groups), to ensure sufficient awareness

# FHV Dispatch Program – Features

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- All drivers will be employed and trained by dispatcher
- All vehicles will be solely-owned by the dispatcher and positioned throughout Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island to ensure compliance with agreed-upon response times
  - 50% of pickups within 15 minutes; 75% within 30 minutes; and 100% within 45 minutes.
  - 100% of pre-scheduled pickups on time
- Service level standard requirements on the dispatcher will include:
  - Response time to calls and/or website requests for service
  - Response time to address system errors/failures
  - Regular metric reporting to TLC
- Dispatcher will conduct a \$200K outreach/marketing campaign to ensure awareness of dispatch option