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**PRESS RELEASE
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**TLC RELEASES RFP FOR NEW
ACCESSIBLE DISPATCH SYSTEM**

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is pleased to announce the release of a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the creation of a Medallion Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Dispatch System. This System will allow wheelchair users whose trips originate in Manhattan to call 311 to request (on a 24/7 basis) a wheelchair-accessible taxicab at the regular metered fare, and with the highest standards of service. (A parallel solution for service to wheelchair users outside Manhattan is shortly forthcoming.)

At the center of the need for this program is the fact that New York City has, at present, 232 wheelchair-accessible medallion taxicabs, but no coordinated or practical way for wheelchair users to access them. The goal of the RFP process is to create a centralized dispatch service that will direct these taxicabs to wheelchair users who need them. Passengers calling 311 will be connected with the dispatcher, who (based on GPS technology) will be able to determine the closest wheelchair-accessible taxicab.

Some of the most salient provisions of the RFP include:

- The dispatcher must respond to trips originating in Manhattan and ending anywhere in the five boroughs, Westchester and Nassau counties, and the three regional airports;
- The dispatch system will be supported through a fee levied on all medallion owners;
- All drivers who operate a wheelchair-accessible taxicab will be trained in passenger sensitivity and wheelchair assistance;
- Drivers who operate a wheelchair-accessible taxicab cannot refuse any dispatches, and will be paid, by the dispatcher, in addition to the metered fare, an amount to cover the "deadhead", or travel time, portion of the trip; Rulemaking is required to ensure that drivers, vehicle owners and medallion owners participate in the dispatch program and provide service to persons in wheelchairs;

- The dispatcher will be responsible for conducting passenger and driver satisfaction evaluations via focus groups, and to collect data to gauge the system's ongoing performance.

This RFP follows the December 2010 release of a Request for Information (RFI) relating to accessible dispatch solutions and a report on a 2-year accessible dispatch pilot program (which is available at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/downloads/pdf/accessible_dispatch_pilot_report_final.pdf.)

“We’ve made it a priority to increase the number of safe, reliable options for everyone who requires accessible modes of transportation” said Deputy Mayor for Operations Stephen Goldsmith. “The dispatch system, which will make better use of our existing resources, is an important step toward accomplishing our shared goal of increased access. We are going to continue to work with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities and the community to exchange ideas and continue to look for new ways to improve access.”

“The TLC has spent considerable time and effort working with the taxi and FHV industry and the disability advocacy community on learning the best ways to match the availability of our wheelchair-accessible taxicabs with the people who need them,” said TLC Commissioner Yassky. “And now is the time to make use of the lessons learned to create a system that is practical, efficient, and works for all stakeholders.”

“We are happy to support the Accessible Dispatch program, as we hope it will provide increased access to our city’s taxi fleet for people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids,” said Mayor’s Office for People With Disabilities Commissioner Matthew Sapolin. “My office was created with a mandate to advocate for people with disabilities, which we do each and every day. As such, we will continue to aggressively pursue long term accessibility solutions for our city’s transportation system.”

“I welcome this proposal for a wheelchair accessible taxi dispatch system to be offered to New Yorkers with disabilities,” said Council Member G. Oliver Koppell, Chair of the Council’s Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services Committee. “However, we view the proposal as a first step toward the ultimate goal of an accessible taxi fleet.”

When the Administration announced plans for an improved Accessible Dispatch System several months ago, we were pleased to

welcome and highlight the support and participation of such industry organizations as the Metropolitan Taxi Board of Trade, the Greater New York Taxi Association, the Livery Roundtable, and the NY Taxi Workers Alliance.

The RFP will be officially released today, with responses due no later than May 26, 2011. It may be viewed through WWW.NYC.GOV/TAXI.

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) was created in 1971, and is the agency responsible for the regulation and licensing of almost 200,000 yellow medallion taxicabs and For-Hire Vehicles, their drivers, and the businesses that operate and support their industries. It is recognized as the largest and most active taxi and limousine regulatory body in the United States.

To find out more about the TLC, or to review its rules, regulations and procedures, we encourage you to visit our official web site at WWW.NYC.GOV/TAXI or call 311 in New York City, or 212-NEW-YORK from outside of New York City.