NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

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Matthew W. Daus, Commissioner/Chair

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TLC REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR "TAXI TECHNOLOGY 2.0"

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) will begin the distribution of a Request for Information (RFI) tomorrow (Tuesday, April 14, 2009) to seek information on ways to enhance the technology systems in each taxicab for the benefit of passengers, drivers and owners alike.

The RFI's goal is to proactively seek and gauge input from the riding public, the taxicab industry and the technology community on the ways that we may bring the Taxicab Passenger Enhancement Program (or T-PEP) to the next level of functionality before the expiration of the City's contracts with service providers in approximately two years. The systems, which feature credit/debit card acceptance, passenger monitor screens featuring entertainment and informational content and an electronic map, a driver screen to facilitate 2-way text messaging for drivers to receive business opportunities and various messages, and the automatic collection of trip sheet data, were conceived in 2004 as a means of enhancing customer service in return for a comprehensive 26% fare increase. These never-before-seen systems were designed, extensively tested and phased-in over a three-year period, with 100% implementation achieved in 2008.

"This has truly been a pioneering exercise for the TLC," said TLC Commissioner and Chairman Matthew W. Daus. "Virtually all of our predictions about how these systems would perform have essentially come true, such as seeing the usage of credit cards gradually increase from about 6% to now more than 20% of all rides; seeing drivers' tips increasing from between 12% and 15% to more than 20% of the fare total on average, and using them on a daily basis to find lost passenger property more quickly and efficiently.

"These custom-made integrated TLC systems were the first of its kind anywhere, and are now being cloned for use in other cities. Now that they have performed beyond expectation and have become woven into the fabric of the New York City taxi experience, it is time for us to take the process to the next level. We are soliciting input from the taxicab industry, the technology community and passengers to help us engineer the evolution of these systems from 'Taxi 1.0' to 'Taxi 2.0'."

Concepts to be discussed and explored include, but are NOT limited to:

Potential Driver Benefits:
- *Navigation systems*
- *Driver Information Monitor Screens to feature traffic information; pinpoint restroom, gas station and relief stand locations;*
- *Reduce credit card transaction costs;*
- *Driver debit card (income deposited directly into drivers' bank accounts) linked to benefits, i.e. discounts on car washes, fuel, restaurants, etc.*

Potential Passenger Benefits:

- *Improved Passenger Information Monitor (PIM) screen content could include…..*
  - Games;
  - Enhanced Driver Information (photo, hack license no.);
  - Interactive "point of interest" maps based on cab location;
  - Wayfinding (knowing location, finding best routes)
  - Multiple languages
  - Music & music video menu;
- *Internet or WIFI capability (check e-mail, surf Web, shop, etc.)*
- *iPod or MP-3 plug-in capability*
- *Better Serving Passengers with Disabilities Via….*
  - Captioning of PIM content;
  - Hearing Loop Technology for Audio Assistive Device users;
  - Accessible Dispatch System compatibility;
- *Real time interactivity with TLC to facilitate surveys, complaints, compliments*
- *Better, More Informative Receipts with –*
  - Driver information
  - Easier to read/larger print
  - Coupons, advertising, promotions
  - Delivered electronically to an e-mail address
- *Taxicard*
  - Pre-paid debit or taxi-specific credit card accounts
  - Passenger benefits, including passenger profile, frequent rider miles, etc…

Potential General and Public Safety Benefits:

- *Multiple metered rate of fare & split fare capabilities*
  - Everyday Group Ride facilitation;
  - To assist during citywide, major emergencies when the facilitation of widespread group riding is appropriate (i.e. strikes, blackouts, etc.);
- *Driver integrity/security – to prevent unlicensed taxi operation*
  - Bar code scanners
  - Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) readers or biometrics to ensure use by authorized drivers;
- *Cell phone blocking technology (for drivers while engaged, but not passengers!)*

The comment period for the Request For Information officially opens April 14, 2009 and ends June 15, 2009. The RFI will be posted on the TLC Web site www.nyc.gov/taxi, and those interested may comment either through the Web site, via US Mail at NYC TLC, 40 Rector Street, 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10006; via Fax at 212-676-1002, or by e-mail at policymail@tlc.nyc.gov.

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) was created in 1971 and is the agency responsible for the regulation and licensing of more than 150,000 vehicles and businesses, including 13,237 yellow medallion taxicabs and more than 47,000 medallion taxicab drivers. It is recognized as the largest and most active taxi and for-hire vehicle 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.