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CITY POISED FOR MAJOR EXPANSION OF ACCESSIBLE TAXIS UNDER NEW TLC RULES

Conan Freud
Chief Operating
Officer

Allan J. Fromberg
Deputy Commissioner
Public Affairs
212-676-1013
press@tlc.nyc.gov

33 Beaver Street
22nd Floor
New York, NY
10004

50 percent of all yellow cabs to be wheelchair accessible by 2020, expanding the largest accessible taxi fleet in the nation

NEW YORK—The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission today announced new proposed rules that will significantly expand the number of accessible cabs on city streets. By 2020, half of all yellow taxis—7,500 total—will be wheelchair accessible.

The transformation will be funded through a 30-cent per-ride Taxi Improvement Surcharge integrated into the yellow medallion taxicab fare as of January 1, 2015. A similar surcharge in green Street Hail Liveries would support improvements for those vehicles.

The new wheelchair accessible cabs will begin to join the fleet starting in January 2016, joining the existing 631 accessible medallions. The commitment represents the next step in satisfying the terms of a settlement with disability advocates to ensure greater access and equity for New Yorkers with disabilities.

“We are turning a corner here. New Yorkers with disabilities have fought for years to secure basic fairness in transportation. With the concrete rules and plans we are putting in place, we’re finally making an accessible taxi fleet a reality. This is a major step forward,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio.

“The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities is committed to making New York City the most accessible city in the world,” said Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. “MOPD has worked closely with TLC to come up with a plan that works for people with disabilities, the taxi industry and the city. We look forward to seeing more accessible cabs on the streets of New York City.”

“Aside from honoring our unprecedented settlement agreement with disability advocates,” said TLC Chief Operating Officer Conan Freud, “These rules signal the most significant advance in taxicab accessibility in the nation’s history. We are poised to make this a taxi fleet that is truly for all.”

The rules will be the subject of a public hearing and vote on April 30 at 10 a.m., and if approved by the TLC’s board of commissioners, would be officially adopted the following month. The TLC is encouraging all New



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Yorkers to contribute to the process. The hearing and vote will be available for viewing via LiveStream.

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio and the TLC’s commitment to upholding the settlement to bring 7,500 accessible taxicabs online by 2020. I was proud to sponsor legislation to that end with former Council Member Koppell in the last session, in a major win for the disabled community. As we move toward this important goal, I am interested in examining this new proposal further and look forward to continuing conversations with the TLC and the mayor’s office to best serve the riding public of New York,” said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the City Council Transportation Committee.

“If we are to provide meaningful cab access to the handicapped, then a small fare increase is not only fair, but appropriate. This will allow us to take a gigantic step towards meeting the needs of elderly and disabled cab users,” says Council Member James Vacca, former Transportation Chair.

The rules call for taxi fleets to phase-in wheelchair accessible taxicabs through their normal replacement cycle, starting on January 1, 2016, and continuing until each “minifleet” (pairings of two taxi medallions) is 50 percent accessible. For “Individual” medallions, owned in single units, lotteries will be held to establish which owners must bring accessible vehicles into service.

Taxi operators obligated to bring accessible taxis into service as part of this program will be eligible for grants to subsidize the cost of taxi conversion, and additional annual grants dedicated to higher maintenance costs associated with accessible vehicles.

A driver training component of the proposed rules package provides that all new, incoming taxi drivers who apply for their “hack” license after June 1, 2014 must receive wheelchair passenger assistance training, while all taxi drivers must receive training by the time of their first license renewal following January 1, 2016.

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission was created as a charter-mandated agency in 1971, and is acknowledged as the most active regulator of for-hire ground transportation service in the nation. For more information about the TLC’s rules, regulations and functions, visit www.NYC.GOV/taxi.

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