

November 2024

### **A More Accessible Future**

October was disability awareness month, and the month certainly brought some important changes for our industry. On October 16, TLC passed rules to ensure we comply with a federal court order regarding the medallion fleet. If you haven't heard yet, TLC must institute 100 percent wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) hack ups until 50 percent of the active fleet is accessible.

We are bound by court order to make that a reality by March 31, 2025. The order also requires that half of all authorized medallions (active or not) be wheelchair accessible by the end of 2028.

I'll be honest: This situation isn't easy. We argued in court that the March time frame would place yet another burden on an industry that is still recovering from the advent of rideshares, the medallion crisis, and the pandemic. We believe that the spirit of the settlement is being met, and a little more flexibility was needed to meet the legal mandate.

We are absolutely committed to increasing accessibility, and over the last decade we have made tremendous progress. Back in 2014 when the court first made this decision, just 2 percent of our yellow medallion taxis were accessible. Currently, about 43 percent of active yellow taxis are accessible, but nearly 8,000 Uber and Lyft vehicles are WAVs. Additionally, the [Green Rides Initiative](#) has also pushed our rideshare fleet to new accessibility heights. In March 2024, rideshare drivers completed the most WAV trips in the TLC's history with 1.9 million – and a 32% increase from March 2023. In the last year, 90 percent of passengers taking FHV WAV trips had a wait time of 10 minutes or less. This makes us the most accessible for-hire fleet in America -- and we're getting more accessible by the day.

While the court may not have listened to us, we are listening to you. That's why we have added a one-time, six-month retirement extension for owners of a single medallion who can show real hardship when it comes to hacking up a WAV. We will also explore how the Taxi Improvement Fund (TIF) can be tweaked to increase up-front payments for hack-ups and best serve the sector through this transition.

On a parting note, I want to plug (see what I did there?) the one-year anniversary of the landmark [Green Rides Initiative](#). Since it passed on Oct. 18, 2023, Green Rides has helped many drivers blaze a trail to owning their plates and becoming their own small business. There's many important EV and charging updates in our recently released report, [Electrification in Motion](#), but one critical takeaway was that roughly nine in ten of the almost 10K license applications went to individual drivers, not corporations.

And EV licensees now have a new fast-charging hub in Manhattan at 299 South Street, New York, NY 10002 (Located at Pier 36). Thanks to Revel, Manhattan's first 24-hour, seven-day-a-week public EV charging location will help drivers juice up and stay on the road.

See you out there,

David Do  
Commissioner, NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission