

Subject: Press Release: NYC Reaches Historic Accessibility Milestone
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NYC REACHES HISTORIC ACCESSIBILITY MILESTONE

More than 50% of all active NYC taxis are now wheelchair accessible

Overall TLC fleet now includes more than 12,000 accessible vehicles

WOODSIDE, QUEENS – In a milestone for accessibility in the United States, the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) announced today that more than 50% of the city's active taxi fleet is now wheelchair accessible—a goal the City has been pursuing for more than 10 years following a 2013 legal settlement.

"With more than 50 percent of the active taxi fleet accessible, along with thousands of for-hire vehicles, New York City continues to set new accessibility standards," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "Balancing our obligations to New Yorkers who deserve equal access with a medallion industry severely impacted by market disruptions and the pandemic has been a narrow road to navigate, but we're getting it done. This administration stands firm in its commitments and remains dedicated to building a stronger, more equitable city for every New Yorker.

"Accessibility isn't just a nice-to-have. It is the difference between accessing a job or a doctor's appointment and the alternative," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Jeff Roth**. "I know how long passengers and disability advocates have waited for this moment as we navigated our desire to do better for our neighbors with the crisis in the medallion industry. We are deeply grateful for their patience and partnership, and to the hardworking civil servants of the TLC who made this possible."

"The accessibility milestone we celebrate today is something no large city in the United States has achieved until now, and that's also true for most cities in the world," said **Taxi & Limousine Commissioner and Chair David Do**. "It's been a long journey getting here, most of all for the thousands of passengers who rightfully demanded these taxis and waited too many years for them. Our work is far from over as we continue expanding accessibility even more. People from almost every unit in TLC have played a part in getting us here, and I'm so proud of them."

As of this morning, the exact number of accessible taxicabs on the streets is 5,140, or 50.7% of the active fleet.

The TLC first agreed to transition half of the 13,587-strong taxi medallion fleet to wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in late 2013, when there were only 213 WAVs in operation. The following year, the TLC enacted rules requiring medallion owners to alternate between accessible and non-accessible vehicles every seven years.

After rapid initial progress, the transition was delayed by complicating factors, including the Medallion Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, the latter of which struck the same year the fleet was expected to hit the 50% mark. Due to the high costs of converting to WAVs, TLC initially sought more time to convert the fleet while focusing on stabilizing the industry via initiatives such as the [Medallion Relief Program](#), which has provided \$472 million in debt relief to medallion owners.

Last August, the federal judge presiding over the case ordered that all new taxi hack ups must be wheelchair accessible until the 50% mark is reached. To get it done, the TLC has taken radical and innovative steps. Along with requiring that every new taxi be wheelchair accessible, the agency has restructured the Taxi Improvement Fund (TIF), which helps medallion owners convert to WAVs. Most recently, it launched a \$5 million pilot program to help small medallion owners bear the expenses of transitioning to WAVs, which can cost as much as \$99,000.

With more than 7,500 for-hire vehicles that are also wheelchair accessible, the TLC's overall fleet is by far the most accessible in the nation, with 90% of wait times for WAVs being 10 minutes or less.

"We applaud TLC for reaching this historic milestone and expanding accessible transportation options across New York City. For the disability community, this progress means more than just numbers, it translates into greater independence, reduced isolation, and better access to work, school, healthcare, and everyday life," **said NYC MOPD Commissioner, Christina Curry**. "While having over half of the taxi fleet now wheelchair accessible is a significant achievement, we know our work is not yet done. True equity means ensuring every New Yorker with a disability can count on reliable, inclusive transportation, whenever and wherever they need it."

"Hallelujah! In a time when things seem to be rolling backwards, finally something to celebrate!" said **Joe Rappaport, executive director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled**. BCID is a member of the Taxis for All Campaign, which won the landmark federal court agreement in 2013, obligating the TLC to get to 50% wheelchair accessibility in the yellow taxi fleet. "There's more work to do, including making sure passengers in wheelchairs get picked up when they want an accessible taxi and, ultimately, getting to 100% accessibility across all for-hire services. In the meantime, we applaud the TLC and all those who have worked to get us to this extraordinary milestone."

"Reaching 50% wheelchair accessibility in New York City's active taxi fleet is a critical milestone on the path to full inclusion," said **Taxi & Limousine Commissioner Sarah Kaufman**. "It reflects our city's ongoing commitment to ensuring that all New Yorkers — regardless of mobility needs — can move through, fully participate in, and enjoy life in the city. I commend the TLC for its leadership and the taxi drivers who are helping to drive this progress forward."

"Taxi accessibility is truly life-changing for members of our community who require wheelchairs," said **Taxi & Limousine Commissioner Kenneth Mitchell**. "Being able to travel is a right everyone is entitled to, especially our most vulnerable. This is a historic step forward in equalizing transportation for all."

I applaud the leadership of Commissioner Do (and his predecessors) and the entire TLC staff and management team over the past years in setting the path for reaching this milestone," said **Taxi & Limousine Commissioner Thomas Sorrentino**. "Having more than 50% of the taxi fleet being wheelchair accessible is vital to so many individuals who can hopefully have a much easier time navigating our city for their personal and business needs. We must continue to push for further regulations to best serve the needs of all our riders.

About the NYC TLC

Created in 1971, NYC TLC is the agency responsible for licensing and regulating New York City's medallion (yellow) taxi cabs, for-hire vehicles (community-based liveries, black cars, and luxury limousines), commuter vans, and paratransit vehicles, along with the businesses that operate them. It is recognized as the largest and most active taxi and for-hire vehicle regulatory body in the United States.

Almost 180,000 TLC licensees complete approximately 1,000,000 trips each day. To operate for hire, drivers must first undergo a background check, have a safe driving record, and complete 24 hours of driver training. TLC-licensed vehicles are inspected for safety and emissions at TLC's Woodside Inspection Facility.

To find out more about the TLC, or to review its rules, regulations, and procedures, we encourage you to visit our official website at www.nyc.gov/taxi or contact 311/311 Online.