

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway  
Committee Room, 14th Floor

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I. DANEEK MILLER, Chairperson

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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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GREEN CAR DRIVER

IFTIHAF AHMET  
OWNER OF PAE CAR LIMO

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good morning Commissioner, eh, good morning everyone, afternoon, sorry, good afternoon and welcome to today's hearing of the City Council Transportation Committee. My name is Ydanis Rodriguez, the Chair of the committee, who also was a former livery taxi driver in my year when I was a student at city college I used to be 112 of livery car service, so I would say that I am revolved, eh, the experience that I have as a former livery taxi drivers I also as a council member now. Eh, first, I would like to recognize my colleague here, Mark Weprin, and today we're here to discuss the initiative, that is to literally changing the City's landscape before our eyes. As eye connect... New York City's taxis are, and we continue to be, our new Apple Green New York Taxis are quickly becoming just as recognizable in many neighborhoods across our City. Today, nearly one year after the first street hail livery permit was issued, this Committee intends to evaluate how well the program is performing, eh, challenges that it has and how we might be improved. TLC's Streets Hail Livery Program is an effort to address an important goal. For too long legal street hail taxi service was virtually non-existent outside

the central business districts of Manhattan forcing many New Yorkers to, by necessity, rely on unregulated cars which cruise neighborhoods and illegal pick up passengers, cars which are often uninspected, uninsured and completely unlicensed. At the same time, licensed livery drivers were faced with the choice of either ignoring a large amount right in front of them that yellow taxis were simply not coming close to meeting or breaking the law by picking up unauthorized street hails. This Street Hail Livery Program was designed to meet business men and allow drivers to finally provide this needed service legally. At the end of the day the program is about bringing equality to the transportation system of the outer boroughs or lower Manhattan and other parts of the City. Because both taxis will be searching for growing industry in the City in the years to come my colleague and I have many questions about the program and how we can fully realize the potential. At the same time that I want to be sure that those driver permits, that those permits selling to, the, instead of putting the markets is provided and is always under the driver's control. While many While maintaining fairness for everyone involved, and

specifically an interest in finding out more about the system in selling and transferring "street hail livery permits". Owning a rural taxi permits is potentially a great small business opportunity for New Yorkers, particularly many immigrants who were previously prevented from legally meeting the obvious demand for a street hail taxi service outside a central businesses district. However, I feel that that opportunity could easily be lost if this permit went up in unintended hands through illegally obtaining an illegally sold permits. Therefore I look forward to hearing from the TLC regarding their plans to strictly regulate the purchase and transfer of this new permit. We need to make sure that a system is working as intended and we need to stop anyone who tries to elicit and take advantage of the system for their own gain. We also must be sure that adequate enforcement accompanies this expansion of the borough taxi program. This means enforcements against bill codes not authorized to pick up a street hail who choose to do so anyway or fairly... on the current board... taxi drivers who have invested time and money into obtaining the permit. Buildco and equipment necessary to pick up a street hail legally

and the same approaches apply for green taxi getting into the area protected for yellow taxis. Any means enforcement against more taxis illegally picking up fares in the so called "yellow sign" in Manhattan and at the airport. For the Street Hail Livery Program to be a true success we must make sure that that everyone is playing by the rules. Of course, rules enforcement need to be honest and fair at all times. Abuse of enforcement of authority is not only wrong, it undermines the credibility of all enforcement TLC needs to do every day. They have been report in the press recently about this TLC enforcement and the committee looks forward to hearing what TLC is doing to ensure its own enforcement person play by the rules. TLC has also recently share with the council persons to a state law their plans to make taxis in for higher billable services in New York City more accessible to people who use wheelchairs. The plan is promising, aiming to ultimately, make the whole taxi fleet 50% accessible, along the lines of previous announced plans to make the yellow taxi fleet 50% accessible. My colleague and I want to ensure that TLC's accessibility plans are in the best position to succeed. We must make sure that people

with disability in all neighborhood of the five borough have a chance that they deserve. It is also important to remember that under the plan it is the passengers who will be bearing the cause of implementing this increased levels of accessibility through the New York, through the new thirty cents per ride surcharge and TLC needs to be vigilant to ensure that strict oversized and moratorium of the fund collected and ongoing reevaluation of the necessary, the necessity of the surcharge. Green taxis represent a new way for life for many passengers and drivers alike. We on the council look forward to hearing from the stakeholders today about how the program is performing on the ground and ways it might be improved and we look forward to working with TLC to make sure it continue to roll out in a way that is fair to all and achieves its goal, improve taxi services in five borough, in the five boroughs. I want to end by saying thank you to the TLC Commissioner Joshi for her commitment to partnership and communication with the council about this and a number of other issues, including Vision Zero and the recently passed legislation to be signed on Wednesday of this week. We hope to continue this

great partnership as we work on a number of full hard-core related issues in the future. We believe that we need to reform the ticketing system that TLC had used in the previous administration. We know there will always be challenges with social accomplished and vital industry but through communication, transparency and honest action we can improve services for all New Yorkers in a way that is fair to all who operate this industry. I will now ask the committee council to swear in the representative of TLC who will testify today and then invite the TLC Chair Meera Joshi, to deliver her opening statement.

LIONEL FRANK: Ok, Lionel Frank, committee council. Um, whoever is gonna testify, please raise their right hand. Do you affirm the testimony given to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this committee today?

TESTIFYERS: Yes.

LIONEL FRANK: Please state your name for the record.

MEERA JOSHI: Meera Joshi. Now it's on. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak. I'm just going to begin by reading my prepared

testimony and then I'm available to answer any questions you may have. Good afternoon Chair Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee, I am Meera Joshi, Commissioner and Chair of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. Thank you for this opportunity to speak today about the Street Hail Livery Program, also known as "Borough or Green Taxis". Your hearing is timely, it falls almost exactly on the anniversary of the first issuance. On June 12, 2013, the first permit was sold to a Bronx resident who I had occasion to speak with just two weeks ago at a Vision Zero Town Hall Meeting in the Bronx, it was hosted by Chair Rodriguez and we have much to report on the program's operation since the first permit was sold. The goal and purpose of the program is simple. Replace an illegal system prevalent in the boroughs with one that provides customers and drivers with safe and legal means of obtaining and providing for hire service. This goal has been met. Since inception, street hair liveries have completed over 5.8 million trips for approximately 6.9 million customers. Prior to the creation to the Street Hail Livery Program yellow taxis were the only vehicles that were

permitted to pick up street hailing passengers and 94% of all yellow taxi pickups occurred in Manhattan or at the airport, leaving Northern Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island without any meaningful legal street hail service. Today, street hail liveries are completing over 43,000 trips per day and are providing much needed hail service in the boroughs. In Northern Manhattan they made 1.8 million trips since the program started. That's closely followed by Queens with 1.6 million trips and Brooklyn with 1.4 million trips. In the Bronx street hail liveries made 600,000 trips and in Staten Island 1,600 trips. A large majority of these trips start and end in the same borough. For example, of the 1.6 million trips starting in Queens, 1.4 million of these trips also had a destination in Queens. Street hail livery trips are taking place all across the boroughs and are not limited to certain areas. As more street hail liveries come into service, we're seeing more and more trips spread across Northern Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens and even Staten Island. And street hail liveries are bringing benefits to passengers and drivers beyond simply from getting from Point A to Point B. Borough hail

passengers can get a car that will charge regulated metered fare, is equipped with a credit card reader and whose passenger trips can be identified through GPS. These features allow the TLC to monitor data, monitor payment data for potential overcharges, let passengers use credit cards for payment, a feature that over 39% of street hail livery passengers are taking advantage of and allow us to reunite passengers with lost property. These are critical benefits yellow cab passengers have long enjoyed. Street hail liveries have also created small business opportunity for permit owners to legally provide service they had been illegally providing for many years. Apart from the increased earnings they report, permit owners have also been quick to share their excitement about the benefits associated with small business operation. They have gone from simply having a job to owning a tangible stake in our City and in their own future. Their pride and ownership is apparent and others want to join them so much so that we currently have over 6,300 pre-qualified licensees on the second issuance "wait list". That's more than the number of permits that will be available, but we've learned a lot from the first

issuance of 6,000 and as we begin the next issuance, we're cognizant of the fact that we need to continue an increase enforcement against illegal operators and increase our outreach about the program to our licensees and to the riding public. Part of how we promote safe and reliable service to the public is by protecting licensees who play by the rules and provide service within the scope of their license. Today we have 171 inspectors and we plan to add 50 more this summer. Our enforcement team, together with our unlimited towing capacities, gives us the necessary tools to remove illegal operators from our streets. In this calendar year we've issued over 4,600 summonses for illegal street hails and have ceased over 3,600 unlicensed vehicles. Ceasing unlicensed vehicles ensures that only licensed drivers who pass drug tests and vehicles that have passed inspection are offering service to the riding public. We're also enforcing against street hail liveries that pick up against our rules and against state law in the exclusionary zone, which is south of West 110<sup>th</sup> Street and East 96<sup>th</sup> Street and at the airports. In this calendar year, we've issued over 870 summonses to drivers and owners for picking up

illegally in the exclusionary zone. Additionally, in response to confusion about where passengers can hail an "SHO" we're considering a door decal that clearly defines the no-hail zones and going forward we'll continue to focus on unlicensed operators and street hail liveries making illegal pickups in the exclusionary zone. In terms of outreach, because of *Vision Zero* Town Halls have proved to be so helpful and informative we will be holding similar town halls throughout June and July as one method educating the public on the benefits of using legal transportation and an opportunity to review for potential purchasers the "ins and outs" of permit ownership and operation. We welcome all drivers and members of the public to attend. In addition to enforcement and outreach we are also working on a plan to approve accessibility options. Before we move forward with the next issuance of SHO permits, we will be submitting the disabled accessibility plan or the DAP, to the New York State Department of Transportation for its review and consideration and we look forward to City Council's input on our draft DAP before it is submitted. The DAP is required by State Hail Law, the law authorizing the creation of the Street Hail

Livery Program and must be approved prior to selling additional wheelchair accessible yellow taxi medallions. The DAP provides a framework for dramatically improving wheelchair accessibility taxi service and wheelchair accessible "for hire" service in all five boroughs. Right now 1,200 wheelchair accessible street hail livery permits have been sold and 400 additional yellow taxi, yellow accessible taxi cab medallions have been sold. Once approved and implemented, the plan will facilitate the creation of more than 16,900 accessible hailable vehicles operating "for hire" in New York City making it the largest fleet of hailable accessible taxis in America. This means that ultimately 54% of all hailable vehicles in New York City will be wheelchair accessible offering passengers in wheelchairs true access to spontaneous "for hire" transportation. I'd like to thank the advocates and the Mayor's office for People With Disabilities for working so closely with us to reach this goal. In closing, we believe the Street Hail Livery Program has gone far in filling a transportation gap in areas underserved by mass transit with safe and legal service and we recognize the continued growth requires the continued

discussions with and feedback from council, passengers, drivers and owners and I thank you very much for this opportunity to testify today and would be happy to answer any of your questions.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you Commissioner, and, and before asking a few of my question I, I would like to recognize Council Member and also Council Member Greenfield who also was here. Eh, my first question is about the process of transferring a permit from a person who buy, eh, to somebody else who buy, eh, to somebody else who, whose, who buy from. From the 6,000 that we already, a street permit that we had sold how many of those has been already sold to a third person?

MEERA JOSHI: Um, your first question was about process and the process is governed by the state law and as well as by TLC rules and the process is simply that you cannot transfer a permit without authorization from the Taxi and Limousine Commission so, to date that we have between 10 and 15 authorized transfers of Street Hail Livery Permits. There are occasions, um, that we are aware of where transfers had been made without our authorization, um, three come to mind. One of them, three, all three of them

came to our attention when the purchaser came to the Taxi and Limousine Commission and tried to sort of loop, you know, do the next steps in being a licensee and was there informed that they had been the part, been the recipient of an unauthorized transaction. Um, in the first case, the owner was fined, which is a provision of our rule, \$10,000 for making an unauthorized transfer. There are other, two other cases, both of them are currently apart of the adjudication process, one is pending hearing and a second one went before an administrative law judge. The judge found credible the owner's defense that he was unaware of the TLC authorization process so the judge ruled in favor of the owner, but the TLC is appealing that decision and we expect to be victorious on appeal. But I think this brings up another point about public outreach, we really need to make sure everybody who buys the permits understands that they can only sell them when authorized by the TLC and that there is a limited number of, a limited category of people that they can sell them to. They can only sell them to FHP Drivers and FHP Vehicle Owners.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So by State Law those permits, only can be sold, only they can be sold only to another drivers.

MEERA JOSHI: They can only be sold to a person who has a FHB Driver's License or an FHB Vehicle Owner's License.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So a base owner or a dealer can no buy from a driver.

MEERA JOSHI: They can if they also hold an FHB Driver's License or an FHB Vehicle Owner's License.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you describe those license?

MEERA JOSHI: The license?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

MEERA JOSHI: The driver's license is simply the license that you get when you go to the Long Island City Office.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No I say the license for the, a base to, a base or the dealer to buy, also permit.

MEERA JOSHI: If, if a base or the dealer happens also to be the holder of an FHB Driver's License or an FHB Owner's License, it was, it would

be that, the fact that they own an FHB Driver or Vehicle Owner's License, would be what would enable them to buy the permit. The fact that they owned a based or a dealership would be irrelevant.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So that would be only one permit that they can buy?

MEERA JOSHI: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So no, we cannot have, we should be aware right, in this year celebration again, eh, eh, looking to improve and identify, you know, thing that can be better is that a dealer company they can now be offering buying permits to it, to taxi drivers?

MEERA JOSHI: Right. They can only sell to an auth..., to someone who meets the qualifications for purchase and then the transfer has to be authorized by the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What about bases? Have you identify any cases where some bases they will be trying to buy the permit back from the driver?

MEERA JOSHI: Um, I'm not aware of those circumstances but if, if the Council is aware of those circumstances I'd encourage you to bring them

to our attention because we actively investigate and enforce against illegal transfers.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And that's illegal right?

MEERA JOSHI: If the person that they're selling to doesn't have the pre-qualifications for purchase, and they haven't come to us for authorization, then yes, it's illegal.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How many application do you have in waiting list so far for the new...

MEERA JOSHI: I think we have about 6,300, those are pre-qualified licensees, so these are people that our licensing department has already determined that they have an FHB Driver's or an FHB Owner's License and they've been in good standing for a year or more.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I will come back, do you have any questions?

UNKINOWN SPEAKER: Thank you Chair, I guess, uh, what Council Member Rodriguez is eluding to, when a base owner or a base buys, or a base owner or person, with a qualified license, gets a permit transferred to them, they are the ones now to drive

the vehicle. They would be the ones permitted to drive the vehicle or can they have someone else do it?

MEERA JOSHI: They can have someone else drive the vehicle but limitations knows how many permits can they hold and they can only hold one and if the permit is unrestricted and they can only hold five if the permit for a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Ok, what we're trying to do here is limit, uh, uh, we, we know how folks take advantage of, or a cap some basis... some basis, some bases and some owners take advantage of purchasing as many of these, uh, permits as possible, and then selling it down at a, a, unreasonable price at times or unregulated price and we just want to prevent that from happening.

MEERA JOSHI: So you just described two transactions that would violate our rules, so please let us know about it. One, you cannot own an unlimited amount of permits, you can only own one and two, you can't transfer it without us knowing about it so, um, we would definitely look forward to working with you if you identify those situations.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And I haven't it's just precautionary want to be proactive and more so than being reactive, so I'm just grateful to hear that, that you guys are taking that into consideration.

MEERA JOSHI: And we can stress that point and we plan to when we do public outreach sessions so people understand that these permits have a lot of strict transfer requirements.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Now I want to speak to, uh, the Access a Ride, uh, to a certain degree on the work that you guys are gonna be doing with that, to be able to, uh, assist folks with a disability, or people with a disability just so, can you go into more detail on how exactly that's supposed to relieve or, or assist people with disabilities and being able to get access to vehicles?

MEERA JOSHI: In relation to Access a Ride?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes in relation to Access a Ride.

MEERA JOSHI: So what we propose in the DAP, um, is that we will work with the, disa..., disa..., um, disability advocates, in fact, we'll meet with them twice a year and one of the goals that we'd all

like to reach is the way to leverage what will end up being a 16,000-plus hailable accessible fleet of vehicles into transferring some of the work that Access a Ride does to those hailable vehicles.

That'll do several things, one, it will give that people who currently depend on Access a Ride the way to get transportation on demand. Today they have to make a 24-hour reservation, um, and that's a lot of planning, um, when you're making a trip, so it will give them increased mobility and it will also take away to the extent people think there's a stigma, um, associated with riding the Access a Ride, it will take that away, because you will be able to just take your trip in a, in a taxi cab. Um, but it will do some other things for the City and for the State. It will re..., um, should result in a savings for the State and a savings for the City because the City has a significant contribution every year to the Access a Ride Program. Uh, the Access a Ride trips today costs about \$66 per trip, and we anticipate, uh, we predict actually that if you did those trips through a street-hailed livery that's accessible or a yellow taxi that's accessible, the amount paid would be much less, probably at least half.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Oh, you are in negotiations or in conversations about pricing and figuring that out so that it's a subsidized price for the full...?

MEERA JOSHI: We are not that far yet, um, but we're hopeful that we will. The first step is the disability, the disabled accessibility plan and if that is approved I think that will go a long way towards showing our commitment towards accessibility and, um, be productive when we engage with the MTA.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I have one more question, just wanted to speak to the level of satisfact..., level of satisfaction that, uh, the Street Hail Livery Program has reached or has? Has a survey been done or any type of work to see if folks are actually enjoying, uh, the program that is, is a satisfaction of the public?

MEERA JOSHI: Sir, I think that there's a general sense, um, in the press that people are satisfied with the program. I know, um, firstly, you know, earlier in the year when we announced that we wouldn't be opening the window on June 12, 2014, there was some outcry in the press to the extent that

represents public sentiment, I think that that would be a good indicator. But I think the primary indicator for us is sort of the spread of service that we see so after two months we saw, and if you assume about 500 trips a day, which is sort of low but we do a lot more. About two months, two months into the program, in two council districts we were doing 500 trips a day. Four months into the program we were in 12 council districts doing 500 trips a day, at least. And eight months into the program we were into 19 council districts doing 500 trips a day or more. So it shows a pattern of, um, spreading and a pattern of increased usage and I think that that's a very encouraging sign of public welcoming of the program.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And this is a, just wanting to get clarity, um, some information, green cab versus yellow cab or not versus they are against each other.

MEERA JOSHI: They work together...

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: There you go. Just speak to, uh, a green cab can go from let's say from Brooklyn to Manhattan but when they're in Manhattan in one of these exclusionary zones they can't pick up

1 drivers, let's say they are going back to the outer  
2 boroughs, but a yellow cab that picks somebody up  
3 from Manhattan to go to let's say to Brooklyn, and  
4 then in Brooklyn can pick up another passenger let's  
5 say on their way to Manhattan. Um, I just wanted you  
6 to speak to that, to help me understand, because it  
7 seems like a double standard there, um, or if it even  
8 exists, uh, so I just want information to get clarity  
9 on that.

11 MEERA JOSHI: Sure, um, under the, under  
12 the adcode, the yellow taxi is the only for-hire  
13 vehicle that has the ability to pick up a hail  
14 anywhere in the five boroughs. The green cab is  
15 actually, a sub-category of the livery and the hail  
16 law gave it a limited ability to pick up hails and  
17 the limited ability is it can pick a hail passenger  
18 anywhere in the boroughs and any in Northern  
19 Manhattan but it cannot pick up a passenger either  
20 because of dispatch or hail, below 110<sup>th</sup> Street and  
21 below 96<sup>th</sup> Street on the East Side. So yes, you're  
22 correct, if you pick up a passenger driving a green  
23 taxi and you pick up a passenger in Brooklyn and you  
24 drop them off in Mid-town, you're gonna have to turn  
25 around and come back out without a passenger.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you I appreciate your time.

MEERA JOSHI: You're welcome.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

Commissioner, going back to the question about the transferring of permit, eh, the information that you share about the judge that he went over the case, eh, in the case where the judge ruled against TLC, was the transfer, eh, notified?

MEERA JOSHI: Was the...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: ...the transfer...

MEERA JOSHI: ...the person who purchased?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

MEERA JOSHI: Um, I will find out for you. I don't have those details on hand.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

MEERA JOSHI: I, I, I think they would have because the reason that the, that the circumstance came to our attention I the first place was the person who purchased it came to licensing to sort of complete the rest of the paperwork any new purchaser would need to do and it's at that point of where they were informed that they had been, sort of

the victim of an unauthorized transfer, so I assume that the purchaser knew about it, but I will definitely verify and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, and on the, the rule, right? The tool that you have to build enforcement, eh, so the, eh, eh, permit holder, he can, he or she cannot sell it, eh, unless is a somebody that has a TLC license. Eh, what is in the rule about anyone that is trying to make those offer? It's the driver..

MEERA JOSHI: It will be like an attempt.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Or is the market, you know, we are the honest means of society, we have created like a market where you know, there's gonna be, eh, you heard right now, it's an open secret, people are trying to offer \$20,000 for permits. So they offer been there, people are trying to break the rule, eh, how, how can you, what will be consequence, uh, for people who is trying to play with the rule and try to take advantage so a taxi driver who need \$20,000?

MEERA JOSHI: Right, so I think the rule addressed is if you actually complete the act and what you're describing is, do we have a rule that

addresses if you attempt to complete, do an unauthorized transfer but you don't actually complete it, um, and we don't have a rule that specifically addresses that but we do have some general conduct rules that we can use in those situations, um, because there's always a fitness process to see if you're fit to hold a license, so that definitely could factor into whether someone's fit to hold the license.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay, so I think this is something that, you know I hope that...

MEERA JOSHI: Yeah I think it is something that needs further development and we look forward to working with you on it.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.  
Has...another question, uh, related to the inspection, has the inspection person been able to keep up the additional need for inspections?

MEERA JOSHI: Yes they have. We also have some vacancies that we're looking forward to fill and that will increase our inspection capacity and we're contemplating, we have increased our hours in the past and that's always a possibility in the

future to open a little earlier or stay open a little later.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Have the TLC done any survey to determine the level of satisfaction with the Street Hail Livery Program?  
[Cannot Understand Speaker]

MEERA JOSHI: Yeah, we've done some surveys, it's, it's always difficult to figure out when you do surveys if you're getting, you know, the entire group of relevant, of the relevant population, but the bas...but the surveys that we've done so far have shown that people are encouraged that they have an alternative, which is legal hail service, um, versus the otherwise what they would have to resort to, which is illegal hail service.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Are regular meeting held with the industry to see what the industry's opinion are or how this street hill [sic]... new program is operating?

MEERA JOSHI: Yes, we're actually in the middle of doing, a, a um, a, a whole series of separate group, industry group meetings and industry includes passengers, drivers, permit holders, base owners. Um, one-on-one with each of these groups to

find out basically how has the first year gone. It also includes companies that provide insurance, companies that lease the vehicles, micro-financers, so there's several entities that are impacted by the program and we really want to hear what each one of them has to say about the first year.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you please describe the role that the L, LPEP System plays in the, in this enforcement action and is there a, is there any geo-fencing technology working as intended?

MEERA JOSHI: There is geo-fencing, the LPAP is basically the mirror image of the TPAP System that's in the yellow taxis, except it has to have a different name, so it's an LPAP. It's in the green taxis, we're not that creative, um, and it includes geo-fencing which obviously is not in the yellow taxis, so if you watch a green taxi travel over the border on the West Side 110<sup>th</sup> Street or in the East Side 96<sup>th</sup> Street, you'll watch the, if the, if it's available above 96<sup>th</sup> Street and it comes below 96<sup>th</sup> Street, you'll see the light dim so that the passenger will, the passenger's understanding is that that vehicle is no longer available for pick up and the meter will lock so they can't put in a new fare.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you, can you elaborate a little bit more on how the, how the, the, the TLC has taken again the Street Hail Livery Driver's Rule, eh, unlawfully hail in the "yellow only" exclusionary sign?

MEERA JOSHI: Yes, we, um solved, started selling the permits in June and pretty much sold all of them by November, um, but didn't really start any enforcement against people who had "street hail livery vehicles" and were picking up, we'll call it, the "yellow zone" for ease, um we didn't really do much enforcement against those, not until March of this year. But March of this year, we've dedicated at least one squad of every tour that simply does enforcement against street hail liveries that are picking up hails in the exclusionary zone. And to date, we've issued, um, over 800 summonses. Those are against drivers and owners. We are not settling any of them they are all going through full prosecution. The first violation is \$700..., \$500, the second violation is \$750 and, um, possible 30 days suspension and the third violation is revocation of the permit.

UNKNOWN VOICE: Just wanted to follow up with that. If the geo fencing locks their ability to start again, how do they do it?

MEERA JOSHI: Exactly, if you take a fare completely off the meter the geo fencing doesn't really stop it, you know it doesn't enforce against that. That's where we need actual inspectors in the yellow zone posing as passengers, hailing the vehicles and then when they get picked up, they're issued the summons.

UNKNOWN VOICE: So you're saying they, they keep the meter running?

MEERA JOSHI: They just turn...the meter's off...

UNKNOWN VOICE: So that's...

MEERA JOSHI: ...The biggest hurdle we have here, and I think the same thing happened, you know historically in the yellow industry, so for example, when we brought in credit card readers in all taxi cabs, there was a time of public education for people to understand this is how you for credit card...this is how you pay for a taxi cab with a credit card. The same is true here, we really need to educate the public, you should not get into a green taxi in the

1           yellow zone and you certainly should not agree to  
2           take a trip where the driver says "don't worry about  
3           the meter, just give me \$20" and we actually, I refer  
4           to it in my testimony on working on a decal that we  
5           can put on the front door of the street hail livery  
6           that clearly shows the customer that it's a "no hail  
7           zone" and they shouldn't even enter the car. But  
8           public outreach is sort of key to the success of the  
9           enforcement in this area.

11                   UNKNOWN VOICE: I, I at one point saw  
12           something happen and tried to report it to 311 and  
13           the process to report an action, or something that's  
14           going wrong to 311 was one of the most frustrating,  
15           frustrating things that I can do that I forgot the  
16           number of the cab so I could no longer report the  
17           action that was committed. Is there a reporting  
18           system where the public can be, can play a role in  
19           trying to make sure that enforcement is happening?

20                   MEERA JOSHI: Yeah it's, I'm, I'm, I'm  
21           disappointed to hear that it was troublesome because  
22           we have a very active call center in the field and  
23           hundreds and thousands of calls and complaints. I  
24           mean even this weekend we took in 200 customer  
25           complaints over the weekend, um, and have a very

efficient process in dealing with them. Um, but yes, it's 311, we're happy to work with 311 to make sure they understand what comes through us and how to transfer them to us. Um, but that process should be seamless, and it's disappointing to hear that it wasn't.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So you know, like I believe that we have to protect the market for every sector that, that we been able to create, eh, starting with a market that you know, it says exclusive pick up for the yellow, yellow taxi to do the pickup in certain area in Manhattan also the airport. As also, we need to protect the market for the green car and, and either for, eh, those that they do the pre-arrangement, eh, still Gypsy cabs is a problem? As, as, as I, as I, as I have the concern about green car getting into the area is exclusive for the yellow one, we also have area where still we have Gypsy cab affecting the pre-arrangement and, and, and the green car. How are we doing on expanding the enforcement in those cases?

MEERA JOSHI: We are, we have been expanding enforcement against, um, what we call "straight plate" continuously for the last year so we

1  
2 have 171 inspectors now, we're adding 50 more and,  
3 um, we probably ceased almost a thousand, if not a  
4 thousand, um, straight plate cars every month, so  
5 we're very vigilant on that and we will continue when  
6 we add more inspectors to put those enforcement  
7 powers to work against the Gypsy cabs.

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And, and I would  
9 like to bring to attention a situation on February  
10 25<sup>th</sup>, eh, eh, eh, between Broadway and Bailey, in  
11 front of the Target. If you send anything, in  
12 addition of Saturday or Sunday, you will see a number  
13 of Gypsy cabs doing illegal pickups from the Target  
14 store, putting the passenger in race, because they  
15 don't have the insurance...

16 MEERA JOSHI: Right...

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: and, and  
18 unfortunately we even lose like a will how, eh, eh,  
19 eh, the problem was addressed was making like 15  
20 parking spots "no standing" and I believe that we  
21 need, I'm working right now to bring back those  
22 parking spots to the resident of this community, but  
23 at the same time we need to be sure that for the  
24 benefit of the green car the pre-arrangement that no  
25

Gypsy cab is allowed in areas, such as the one, eh, as Target on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

MEERA JOSHI: Okay, thank you for bringing that to our attention. Our deputy commissioner for enforcement is actually right here and I am sure he heard it and we will devote some of our resources to that area.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. On the accessibility, eh, one of the more local person is a resident of my community, eh, and you know her very well.

MEERA JOSHI: Yes I do.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I have a lot of respect for her, her dedication and, and I know that she will always be there, a phone call away from me or in my office and I appreciate that, that level of contribution and commitment, expertise that she also bring on this discussion on accessibility. Eh, how much the TLC engage with the accessibility community, eh, when making this new plan of 50% accessible?

MEERA JOSHI: First of all I'd also want to thank Edith Prentice, who does bring up a lot of real, um, real practical problems to our attention and actually, um, in the, in formulating the disabled

accessibility plan. I actually think it was one of Edith's comments that became sort of touchstone for the realization that we needed to put a centralized dispatch program as part of the disable accessibility plan, but in general, um, we've been working very closely with the disability advocates, first on yellow taxis, how many of, what percentage of the yellow taxi fleet should be accessible and the rules implementing that and then again straight after that, um, those rules were passed, we jumped right in to the disabled accessibility plan and focused on the green taxis. We don't always agree, but I think it's extremely encouraging that we have an open dialogue and in continued discussions with the disabled community on the issues surrounding accessibility.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Eh, would there be any attempt to make them side entry as preferred by the disabled community?

MEERA JOSHI: We allow both side entry and rear entry and there are pros and cons to each and their pros and cons, you know, depen..., those pros and cons change depending on who you speak to so right now we plan to leave the choice, um, because there are some passengers who prefer the side entry

and there are some passengers who prefer the rear entry. Um, I think our key motivating factor is that we want to make sure that there is choice in the availability of accessible vehicles that people can purchase, especially where the growing number that we're gonna need to meet the requirements on both the green and the yellow side.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Can you please describe the current status of the available accessible vehicle models and do you expect any more to come in the line in the near future?

MEERA JOSHI: Um, currently the most popular models are the Toyota Sienna, the Dodge Caravan, the MV-1, and for Transit Connect is also an accessible version. There will be in the future the MV-200, which we expect to be available in September of this year. Um, we speak frequently with the Upfitters, those are, um, the companies that do the conversion and, um, as the last few weeks, we've been giving them the numbers on what we anticipate the volume levels will be with the yellow conversion as well as the green conversion so that we make su..., so that they're capable of meeting those volume

requirements and, um, to date, they assure us that they are.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I would recognize Council Member Mealy and also, eh, together, also Council Member Margaret Chin has a question, and, and also Council Member Constantinides.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Thank you Chair, um, hi Commissioner.

MEERA JOSHI: Hi how are you?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Sorry I missed your testimony, um, but just looking at it, um, it's really good to look at all the number trips that you cited in your testimony, that is mainly focus in the other boroughs? Uh, so in that sense you think that the "street hail" program has been a success?

MEERA JOSHI: I, I think so, but I think especially when you look at the number of trips between boroughs, because these are trips, hailed trips that were, were never addressed legally prior and the volume there I think is impressive and Queens is a good example where you have over a million trips within Queens with a legal licensed credit card

taking metered vehicle and that just didn't exist two years ago.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: So have you also tracked some numbers on how many of those trips do come into Manhattan? Is there a large number or not?

MEERA JOSHI: Um, if you give me one moment I will pull out my cheat sheet and give you number.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Because I didn't see that in your testimony, but...

MEERA JOSHI: So from, if you're looking for trips that come from another borough into the exclusionary zone, from the Bronx 4% of the trips, from Brooklyn 21%, from Northern Manhattan 33%, from Queens 9% and from Staten Island 2%. And I'm happy to leave this chart with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Yea, yeah, that would be great. I mean I have, I haven't seen too many of the green taxis in Manhattan, but unfortunately I did see one, um, this weekend, they were picking up "street hail", picking up a lot of tourists, um...

MEERA JOSHI: And it was below 96<sup>th</sup> Street?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Yes.

MEERA JOSHI: So please write down those numbers and give us a call.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: But unfortunately, the black cars were also picking up people too, because there were a lot of people on the street and there weren't enough yellow cabs, I guess at that time, but, um, I have, personally have not seen too many, uh, green cabs down here in lower Manhattan, but, but have you also done some study to see if the regular, um, livery cab industry? Are they okay? I mean have they, have you heard any complaints whether the green hailed cab is hurting their industry, hurting their work?

MEERA JOSHI: We haven't heard, um, you know, it's sort of hard because the traditional livery vehicles don't have the technology that the yellows and greens have in them so we can't track trips to the extent that we can track trips in the greens and the yellows. Uh, but we do know is there is, uh, um, an incredible jump in the number of applications for becoming a livery driver or to

become a livery vehicle owner so that gives us some sense that those, that the traditional livery industry is stable, if not growing.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Just want to follow up on the Chair's question about accessibility, are you meeting the, the target? Because I mean 20% of the, uh, veh..., of the department is supposed to be for accessible vehicles.

MEERA JOSHI: Yes, in the first issuance, 20% of those sold were restricted to accessible vehicles, 1,200 and all the accessible permits were sold.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN: Okay, alright. Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Peter?

PETER [last name ?]: Thank you Chair, good to see you again?

MEERA JOSHI: Good to see you.

PETER: Always enforcement with me now. Um, but, but as it, as it pertains to accessibility, what impact would this have on, uh, Access a Ride? Do, do, do you know, because obviously the MTA has been a large part of the problem really providing

that service? Is this going to uh, assist them in any way? Do you see that happening?

MEERA JOSHI: That's, uh, one of our goals. Um, as I said earlier, I think we'll have a fleet of 16,000-plus hailable accessible vehicles and I think that they could be, uh, a great benefit to the MTA and providing Access a Rides service and they could sub-plant the existing method that they have and do it cheaper and more efficiently and make it easier for the passengers because it would be on demand versus 24-hour reservation.

PETER: And um, in the outer boroughs, such as the borough of Queens, uh, aside from the, uh, some of the traditional hot spots, uh, how do you, what is your provision for providing this service in the outer boroughs and what is the, uh, um, the, have there been many, uh, applications in, uh, what do you see for the future of the borough of Queens in terms of the green cars?

MEERA JOSHI: What we seen is an incredible amount of interest in the second wave of 6,000. We have over 6,000 pre-qualified licensees on our waiting list to purchase new permits and what we've also seen in the first 12 months of the program

is that as cars are added, the radius of service area grows.

PETER: Okay, thank you Commissioner I appreciate you coming in.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Hi Commissioner good afternoon, good to see you again, uh, just very quickly how are we doing as far as enforcement on, uh, green taxis picking up that are in the outside the exclusionary zone but maybe wanna go somewhere else? I mean on Saturday, I'll just give you a quick story. The first question the driver asked me, before, "where are you going?" and I felt like I had to negotiate out, um, where, because I was going close to the bridge, it seems like he was more inclined to pick up my ride and even though that the green taxis, that's kind of like their role, is to move people around the outer boroughs, to move them either, ou..., into the exclusionary zone but not pick up any more hails but this driver seems to be very interested in, uh, finding a good sort of fare.

MEERA JOSHI: Sounds to me like what you're describing is a driver that was about to refuse you based on the location of where, of your destination.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Correct.

MEERA JOSHI: And we have rules in the ad..., there's rules in the **Adcode[?]** and our own TLC rules that prohibit. You're not allowed to refuse a customer no matter what you're driving...

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I'm aware.

MEERA JOSHI: Um, based on their location and again, when those are brought to our attention we fully prosecute those.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, I appreciate that.

MEERA JOSHI: If, if you should take down the permit number and give us a call, you know that's the eyes and ears on the street and without that, um, you know our rules, our rules are meaningless...

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Of course.

MEERA JOSHI: ...unless people tell us about problems of their experience.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Well I definitely want to build on, you know Council Member Reynoso, stream lining and making sure that we can...

MEERA JOSHI: Yes and we definitely, you know, work with 311 because it should be an easy process because for many it is, so it's unfortunate to hear about instances where it's not.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Alright I have also, and just to give you, I have a very similar story that Chair Rodriguez, who had, uh talked earlier about Ditmars Boulevard. We have, um, some hails going on there that shouldn't be happening, that's supposed to be for yellow, for green and we've got some livery, gypsy cabs, where they defer to picking up, uh, you know, in front of that train station for years, it's, it's been a problem, I've lived in Astoria 39 years and is a 39 year old problem.

MEERA JOSHI: Well, thank you for bringing it to our attention and we'll definitely make sure that our enforcement inspectors are out there regularly.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Alright, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks. Commissioner, eh, just to clarify, eh, with another question that I asked at the beginning. A person who

buy a resold green cab permit cannot own any others unless accessible, right?

MEERA JOSHI: First of all they have to have bought it, pursuant to an authorized transfer but if they did, they can only own one, um, and they can't own an Accessible. You either own five Accessible or one non-Accessible. You can't combine and do mix and match.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Can, have you identify that as a problem?

MEERA JOSHI: The people owning an Accessible and non-Accessible?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No. The effort of trying to create a market of selling and buying hail street permits?

MEERA JOSHI: We have, I told you the three occasions that were brought to our attention, which we prosecuted and we also have a system in place where every person or entity. By entity that means every principal and shareholder of that entity is given a unique identifier so when they purchase a permit that unique identifier or group of unique identifiers is associated with that permit. Should another business or person come to buy another permit

from us, we do a cross-check to make sure that unique identifier is not already attached, the name is not already attached to any permit. Um, and so through that process we hope to make sure the one to one ratio is kept, but if we find instances where it's not, then we would of course take action to revoke the permit.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So how, how the, can you explain to me so that I have a better understanding, how a dealer gets to have hundreds of car with a permit and then leasing those car to drivers?

MEERA JOSHI: The dealer may, can lease, but they shouldn't be holding hundreds of permits so I would definitely want to find out if...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How many, how many can they, can they hold?

MEERA JOSHI: They can hold one.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: One.

MEERA JOSHI: They can lease as many as they want but if you're..., in your example you're telling me they're actually owning more than one, then please give me the details on that so we can...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now you had not seen this problem... in the City. You had not seen, beside bringing to your attention now you don't, you was attended in TLCU had not seen that as a problem?

MEERA JOSHI: We've heard, in addition to you telling me, I've heard on occasion people explaining the same scenario, but I would like to get the specifics, the name of the dealer, the permit number, so that we can actually do an investigation and take action, but I have heard anecdotally of the problem.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Who are behind those advertising of the green cars saying, "Drivers...We Need Drivers"?

MEERA JOSHI: That I wouldn't know but it might be a base that's looking for additional drivers.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But so far, what, what you heard from many drivers is that, that instead of, instead of buying a car and getting the licenses going through a base it is more easy for them to get a car through a dealer.

MEERA JOSHI: To lease a car?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: To lease a car, a green car, yes.

MEERA JOSHI: Which they're permitted to do.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So how is someone able to accumulate so many green car permits?

MEERA JOSHI: That's I think where we're having a disconnect. You're describing to me a dealer that owns several green car permits...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

MEERA JOSHI: which would violate our rules.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

MEERA JOSHI: so they shouldn't, but if I had the specifics on who that dealer is, then I can take action, but without that it's hard for me to take an enforcement step. I would need more information about a specific dealer so that I could look into what permits they're holding, how they obtained them and then take enforcement action to make sure that those permits are voided.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Have you identify any problem between brokers and dealers or in working together to who, eh, insuring those drivers and then

1  
2 sending those, eh, eh, drivers to that part or that  
3 dealer?

4 MEERA JOSHI: Um, not that specifically  
5 been brought to my attention. If it's part of the  
6 problem that you described earlier then again, I  
7 would just encourage you, or anyone else who would  
8 have that type of information to come forward with  
9 it.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right. Well  
11 thank you Commissioner. First of all, I would like  
12 to again, so you know when I said, say thank you for,  
13 aside since the beginning you been from day one  
14 someone that, eh, we are very comfortable working  
15 together, and, and, and that I had no doubt that you  
16 will be continuing to being a fair person to everyone  
17 in, in the pre-arrangement in the green car and the  
18 yellow taxi industry, eh, again like for me it is  
19 important to be sure that every market, every group  
20 market is protected, eh, **[SPEAKING SPANISH 01:00:54-**  
21 **01:01:31]**...Thank you Commissioner.

22 MEERA JOSHI: Thank you very much for  
23 your time.  
24  
25

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Commissioner, if you don't mind, sorry, sorry Commissioner, somebody. Ed[?] Miller has a follow up question.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I'm sorry. Commissioner could you just speak to, very briefly, uh, uh give us a comparison of invested of funding to per driver as it pertains to enforcement and training?

MEERA JOSHI: Per driver, you mean?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Just in general what would the numbers be?

MEERA JOSHI: How much money, how much of our budget is dedicated to enforcement?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And training.

MEERA JOSHI: ...enforcement. We basically have a number that's, that, that's allotted for personnel and that includes training and I'm happy to describe training. If you one, one moment, I'm gonna check with my budget person, TALKING TO BUDGET PERSON: "he asked me to figure out what the personnel number is for enforcement", it's at least 171 officers.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Right

MEERA JOSHI: So multiply that by their salary.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Fifty thousand-ish? Well it doesn't include fringe.

MEERA JOSHI: So it's about \$50,000 annual salary each 171 inspectors.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Training?

MEERA JOSHI: Training is um, provided by, we have a few people at the TLC who do just training for new inspectors and that would fall under the salaries of the training person now, which is about four people and their salaries range between probably \$40,000 and \$80,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I'm sorry could you speak to the training or the required training of the drivers? Operators?

MEERA JOSHI: For licensed drivers? For a yellow taxi drivers? For green taxi drivers?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yes.

MEERA JOSHI: They have to attend taxi school to be a driver, um, and which is a, now it's a either a 24-hour course that they pay for, um and then they have to go through a fitness process with TLC licensing.

MAN'S VOICE: And they get drug tested.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay, so moving forward, we would like to certainly like to have further conversation to make sure that it is consistent with the *Vision Zero*, uh, that, that we worked so hard on...

MEERA JOSHI: ...that, that there's a safety component, yes, definitely. And we are actually looking at revamping our curriculum and this would apply for green taxi drivers and for yellow taxi drivers which will have a large component of it will be *Vision Zero* Safety, which will be working with the DOT to tell people where dangerous intersections are and teach people the techniques of safe driving.

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Commissioner and thank you so much Mr. Chairman for hosting this.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Eh, thank you Commissioner.

MEERA JOSHI: Oh, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: The next panel is by, composed by Peter Mazer, Senior Analyst, Bill Landenberg, and [cannot understand speaker].... Now

we're getting to the next panel and everyone will be swearing.

LIONEL FRANK: Could everyone on the panel please raise their right hands? Do you affirm the testimony given before this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MAN'S VOICE: I do.

PETER MAZER: Good afternoon Chairman Rodriguez and members of the Transportation Committee I am Peter Mazer, General Counsel to the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, a 65 year old organization comprised of 38 taxi fleets...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, sorry for interrupt. We're gonna be inputting the clock on three minutes.

PETER MAZER: ...representing, uh, 5,500 yellow medallion taxi cabs with garages throughout Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Manhattan. More than 60% of all corporate medallions are part of MTBOT as are independent medallion owners. MTBOT fleets lease taxis to more than 20,000 drivers each year and employ thousands of mechanics, dispatchers, managers of other direct and indirect employees to ensure that taxi service is provided to the riding public 24/7.

The Street Hail Livery Law went into effect last year. The MTBOT was involved in litigation opposing the law specifically how it circumvented that the City Council ignored the legitimate concerns of the industry who want to make it clear that if properly licensed and regulated street hail liveries can provide an important service for New Yorker's for the borough of Upper Manhattan, however, many mistakes were made in the legislative process and we are seeing effects today. Significant number of drivers of green taxis are turning off their meters and picking up fares in prohibited locations in Manhattan - South of 96<sup>th</sup> Street, West of 110<sup>th</sup> Street. Other SHL Drivers are overcharging passengers throughout the City by working without engaging their meters. As a result, yellow taxi fares are being poached in the yellow zones and passengers everywhere are being hurt. Unfortunately, the level of enforcement has been virtually non-existent. The Street Hail Livery Program was created to provide service to underserved parts of New York City and it's clear that not all these areas are benefiting from this service. According to its 2013 Market Analysis by the TLC, Street Hail Liveries are congregating in areas like

North Brooklyn around Barclay Center, Astoria, Forest Hills and Upper Manhattan and not servicing many other neighborhoods. The 2013 Analysis goes on to claim that an injection of new green taxis specifically to 6,000, expected to hit the streets this fall, will even the distribution across these neighborhoods. There is no evidence that this pattern will, uh, emerge. This issue is not just greens. Taxi space is dramatically different today than it was just two years ago when we believe a comprehensive look or a master plan, at how these new pieces fit together for taxi and for-hire space is needed. Just look at the numbers. As of now there are 5,100 Street Hail Liveries hacked up and on the road, 479 community car service bases operate 27,885 licensed for-hire vehicles and 149 black car bases have 14,731 affiliated vehicles. At one location in Queens alone, operated by Uber - 7,371 black cars affiliated and presumably dispatched. Add to that, that total 6,139 luxury limousines and 472 commuter vans, that's a total of 54,327 non-medallion vehicles providing service, an increase of 16,542 vehicles or about 30% in just three years, without any marketing study or environmental or economic analysis with

respect to the necessity of such services. Each new base submitted an EIS and business plan for TLC reviewed... [BELL RINGS]...can I just have one, but after the base is approved, additional vehicles can be added at any time without further review or analysis while only a new handful of new bases have been added, yet more than 16,000 new cars are on the road. One street hail-livery base has 960 cars and at 6,000 or even 12,000 more street hail liveries are added an unspecified number of Uber affiliated cars, other black cars, community car services continue to proliferate in our streets, we will see added congestion, cut-throat competition for fares and a general decline in service quality. Drivers could spend more time cruising around making illegally picking up fares rather than time looking for fares in other boroughs, one has to ask whether the purpose of the law is being met. With these livelihoods of thousands of hard working yellow taxi drivers and businesses on the line as well as hard working for-hire vehicles and other legitimate businesses, the Street Hail Livery Program deserves smart, careful and responsible management. I would like to thank

the committee for the opportunity to speak and be happy to answer any question you may have.

CIRA ANGELES: Good afternoon, uh, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee and district colleagues, my name is Cira Angeles, spokes person for the Livery Base Owners Association. An organization composed of over 125 base owners, uh, with approximately 10,000 vehicles affiliated to their bases. I want to thank, uh, Chairman Ydanis Rodriguez and the members of the New York City Council on Transportation Committee for allowing us to speak about the Street Hail Livery Program today. I just wanted to clarify that, uh, the word "Gypsy" we feel that is no longer used in our industry. Um, as we call the private plates, basically private plates, it's understand that those are the ones who are illegally doing, uh, they were called "Gypsies" but we just call them straight plates because they don't have taxi and limousine, uh, plates, uh, and therefore no insurance and no compliance. As many of you know the green taxi is also known as borough taxis debuted a year ago. There are now more than 5,000 of them picking up residents and parts of the City that were rarely served by the traditional yellow cabs. The Street Hail Livery Program allows for legal hail service to millions of residents in Northern Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn outside the downtown central business district.

It was born out of hard fought battle that brought together a coalition of support of thousands of livery base owners, drivers, elected officials throughout New York, espec...specifically members of the City Council, the New York City Black, Latino & Asian Caucus, uh, the State Legislator, Puerto Rican Hispanic & Asian Caucus, uh, State Assembly Puerto Rican Hispanic Task Force. They all recognize that New Yorkers across the City needed safe and reliable service in the livery industry had already been provided that service for over four decades. New York Taxi and Limousine testimony of April 3, 2014 and a review of trip records, show that the green taxis are indeed fill in a service gap having provided over 5 million trips since the summer of 2013. Drivers are eagerly ceasing the opportunity to legally service street hail passengers in the outer boroughs and Northern Manhattan as evidence with the first issuance of the 6,000 permits selling in just six months. There continues to be strong interest in the next round of issuance of outer borough licenses with over 6,000 pre-qualified potential purchasers. Signing up already it is a clear indication the program provides a worthwhile a small business opportunity. There is still need for additional borough taxis. After the issuance market analysis shows that FHB industry remains strong and the yellow industry has not adversely been impacted as some feared independent of medallion sales. Prices, uh, have

increased 47% between 2012 and 2013. A lot of people fear that those values were going to be decreased. The green taxis have been able to extent reach to public transportation system with minimal impact on traffic congestions. We will continue with our very productive working relationship with the TLC to continue to evaluate the program. Our bases and drivers have been serving passengers with disabilities for decades. Helping them into the cars, loading the wheelchairs, we fully support providing mobility to all New Yorkers, however, we believe that it should be based on actual in quantifiable assessment of demand in need. One of many challenges of our drivers are still facing from the first issuance, is the delay from vehicle manufacturers to retro fit the vehicles and the potential lack of ca...capacity and ability to have these vehicles ready to meet the demand. We further urge the TLC and the administration to help be avail additional revenue opportunities such as medical, contracts, uh, trips that will provide incentives to purchase accessible licenses and continue to service the wheelchair accessible community as we all want. Street Hail Livery Program brings safe, accessible, legal taxi service to the outer boroughs. Thank you.

BILL LINDAUER: I'm Bill Lindauer, I'm with the New York City Taxi Workers Alliance and drove a yellow cab for thirty years. The Taxi

Workers Alliance once was a borough plan as opposed to the plan proposed by the taxi tycoons, which Mr. Mazer represents, because that is a blatant greed grab that would service no one but themselves. Now it's important to have green cabs in these outer boroughs. Of course but enforcement as Chairman Rodriguez and Chairwoman, uh Millie Joshi said is very important. Now with this increasing number of green cabs coming enforcement has to keep pace with this otherwise cab driver, yellow cab driver income will be hurt and I call for as I think, uh, the Alliance had agreed to the City that you have to have an economic impact study of the effects of all these green cabs on the, uh, the plans of the yellow cab drivers. I understand from my fellow drivers that the certain areas in the outer boroughs which were very good for yellow cab drivers like Brooklyn Heights and Williamsburg have allowed the City of virtually taken over by the green cabs so yellow cab driver income is hurt. Yellow driver income cannot be hurt. We have to make sure that drivers are able to make a livable income and, uh, so, we don't know how many actually green cabs are will be necessary. I think, uh, my personal opinion, personal opinion is

that the Taxi and Limousine Commission seems to overestimate the real need for, uh, green cabs in the outer boroughs, but be that as it may. I just wanted to stress the enforcement and, uh, the economic impact on yellow cab drivers. I thank you for this hearing.

ERHAN TUNCEL: Hello? Good afternoon Chairman Rodriguez and the council members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Erhan Tuncel, managing director of the League of Mutual Taxi Owners. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. It is extremely important that street hail livery industry be kept vibrant to ensure that high quality service is provided to the riding public. Drivers are essential to the success of the industry and must be allowed to make a living wage so that they remain happy and profitable. This will not be possible if it supplies more than what the market demands. I ask you to carefully consider how many new Green SHL licenses are issued so that the supply does not exceed the demand. We support the TLC on their decision for 50% of SHL's to be accessible on par with the yellow medallion industry bringing a fair and equitable service to all of the people in New

York City. Enforcement of illegal street hails is a very important part of a balanced approach of providing service to the riding public. Certain individuals call 311 to register complaint, register a complaint concerning a green SHL pick up in the hail exclusionary zone and the operator refused to take that complaint. We commend Chairwoman Joshi and her staff for immediate, immediately taking action and starting the process of adding this particular violation to the 311 Operator's List for Hail and For-Hire Vehicles. The TLC's taken all appropriate steps in this matter and we want this committee to be aware of what is happening with the most serious problem. Enforcement of Street Hail Rules is very important for keeping the drivers honest at their tasks and providing the service they're assigned to provide. We respectfully request this council to consider recruiting the NYPD offices to actively assist the TLC to enforce rules. Similar taxi service already exists in Chicago, where medallion taxis and suburban taxis bring hail service to the riding public in Chicago's Downtown and suburban areas. Suburban taxis are not allowed to pick up a street hail in Chicago, Chicago's downtown business

1 district. That rule is almost never broken because  
2 the Chicago Police Department enforces the law. The  
3 consequences of breaking the law can be significant.  
4 The rule violators spend the night in jail, have  
5 their vehicle impounded and receive a hefty fine.  
6 Impounding vehicles alone with heavier fines and  
7 having the NYPD keep a close eye on all for-hire  
8 vehicles is a huge step towards providing an  
9 environment where a safe and speedier transportation  
10 service is guaranteed to the riding public of our  
11 great City. Thank you for your time.

12  
13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, I have  
14 a few questions, one relating the yellow taxis and  
15 the other one to the livery. Eh, on the yellow part,  
16 how are you doing to comply with the agreement in  
17 many of the law suits who made the, eh, 50%  
18 accessible in 5, 2024?

19 PETER MAZER: Well the TLC has, um,  
20 enacted the rules and, um, we will be complying with  
21 the rules, uh, the first, uh, accessible vehicles  
22 will be going on to the road with a hack up and  
23 vehicle timing will be after January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2016. So  
24 with respect to any vehicle that retires as of that  
25 date, um, 50% of the vehicles must be replaced with

an accessible vehicle, so in the case of let's say a fleet, uh, which usually are made up of many fleet corporations owning two medallions, the first one of the two that, uh, retires from service, uh, will be required to replace with an accessible vehicle and, uh, our main concern right now is that there be, uh, an adequate number of vehicles that are available...

PETER MAZER: ...ok, that...We see problems right now, uh, with the roll out of the MV-200 that there has been a vehicle shortage, uh, so we are very concerned about that.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Ok thanks, with, with a, a relation to delivery taxi, with a permit, with a livery taxi industry, eh, how many base owner do you, does your association have?

CIRA ANGELES: 125.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Base owners?

CIRA ANGELES: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Eh, what, what is your interpretation of the owners about the person transfer a street hail livery license?

CIRA ANGELES: Basically our owners don't interpret the law, they follow the law. Um, it is clear...clear that it basically states that you either

you buy one because you own a driver's license, uh, uh, um, FHB License or you own a vehicle that has a license so you can buy either or, or you can purchase five, up to five if they are wheelchair accessible.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Have you been aware with any situation when a livery, with a taxi owner offer a driver money for them to buy the permit and then for the owner of base to have control of that permit?

CIRA ANGELES: Well our industry has always been one in which drivers usually request from other people who being base owners, or anybody else a friend or, or, or anyone, uh, for money if they need to. I mean I don't know of a specific situation in which the money what the use of the money is, but I really don't know what, what the situation is, I, you know, that's between the owner, the driver and that person who's lending the money in the case that they are doing that.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well what about with the, with the billers, are you aware since you provide the insurance that, of any way or how the dealers are controlling some permit?

CIRA ANGELES: The dealers do not have any ways to control permits other than just a leasing agreement. Uh, they equip the vehicles. It is my understanding that they equip the vehicles and the driver goes to the TLC, files an application to purchase the permits and they provide all the equipment that comes with it and actually sell the car painted and ready to be on the road.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. The next panel is Zyear Achmad[Sp?], Richard Phaler[Sp?].

LIONEL FRANK: Please raise your right hands? Do you affirm the testimony given before this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

IN UNISON: Of course. I do.

RICHARD PHALER: My name is Richard Phaler, uh...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, please let's stay under three minutes since we want to also be having the opportunity for the audience...

RICHARD PHALER: I'll be as fast as I can.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Three minutes each.

RICHARD PHALER: My name is Richard Phaler[Sp?], although I have two companies, one is a Certified First Data Gateway Processor for Credit and Debit Cards, the other is a, uh, we are a vendor for a dispatch management fair payment system sold across the United States and here in New York. I'm here as a long time resident of Manhattan to address the needs to insure borough wheelchair user quality of SHL Service. For the 20% of wheelchair accessible SHL's, consideration must not be limited to only to SHL Operations isolated from the operation of City-wide livery and medallion taxi accessible service. The highest priority must be to ensure equivalent service for all SHL users, but as Mayor Bloomberg recognized anywhere in the City street hail for wheelchair users is really inherently dangerous. Accordingly, rapid response pre-arranged on-demand accessible service for wheelchair users must provide an acceptable alternative to street hail, including a mobile pre-arrangement application, which is now faster and safer than the street hail. While the number of accessible SHL's are likely adequate to the borough wheelchair user service of the non-exclusionary zones, it will be virtually impossible to

meet quality service objectives due to the distributed nature of the independent affiliation of the SHL's, with each of the 40 livery bases for calls for service of dispatch management. To overcome this inherent obstacle, it will be necessary to operate an independent integrated location-based dispatched management service by pooling the entire group of the SHL's in addition to, but without conflicting, with a standard affiliated livery-based dispatch service. Essentially by providing a universally accessible dispatch phone number for immediate access to the pooled available SHL's, it would be a mirror-image of the current dispatch service for wheelchair accessible medallion taxis. In this case the call to service would be immediately forwarded to the base affiliated with the selected HL...SHL determined by a location-base search of the entire pooled group of accessible SHL's. The dispatch operator should be a qualified New York City licensed livery base realizing that the leading Dispatch Operations Management System have originated in New York City and is a related matter its time, the accessible medallion taxi dispatch service located in Connecticut, they return to New York City. For

example, a qualified livery operator will monitor 2015 MV-1's, the CMG-OEM crash-tested wheelchair accessible vehicles for livery service and operate the industry's most advanced location-based dispatch management system, dispatch management fair payment system with an integrated passenger mobile pre-arrangement app. Such a qualified operator is authorized to also take over dispatching the wheelchair accessible taxis it is also solve the problem for wheelchair passengers who can't reach ...can I go on for?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: It is alright.

RICHARD PHALER: I'm sorry?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I said it's alright. 30 seconds.

RICHARD PHALER: Uh, I'll just go to, I'll go right to the end. I would like to mention of equal importance there is a need to return accessible medallion taxis to Street Hail Service with the greatest numbers possible due to the dangerous conflict between new *Vision Zero* Rules for yielding a right of way to pedestrians and driver distractions caused by dispatch communications and the hail rules. For this purpose the dispatch location search, if a

medallion taxi is within a very close proximity to the pickup location or the next closest SHL or Livery should be dispatched to minimize the number of dispatch distractions to medallion taxis, the Connecticut Dispatch System Operation would no longer be needed as a dispatch function would be returned to New York City and considerable cost savings with the advantage of a fully-integrated City-wide accessible dispatch service which would fulfill the objectives of the Commission's Disabled Accessibility Plan - DAP, mobility for all New Yorkers and finally pave the way for the transfer of Access a Ride Services from the MTA, NYCT to New York City Accessible Dispatch Operator. Thank you for your time.

BERISH PORTSIMMONS: Uh, good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and the City Council, my name is Berish Portsimmons[Sp?], I'm from South Jamaica, Queens and I'm with the Taxi Workers Alliance. Okay, uh, I'm also a permitted driver, uh, rider of the Access a Ride that I refuse to use at any time so I think there should be a major major investigation into the Transportation Committee. I'm on dialysis and I used the, uh, David[Sp?], as a matter of fact I invited the David if people to be here today but I

1           see they haven't showed up, but I'm telling you  
2           ladies and gentlemen that there is a necessity for  
3           the industry to make this major change. But to make  
4           the change there is a something, uh, and I also a  
5           yellow cab driver, I've been doing this for over 40  
6           years. As a matter of fact, I'm one of the first  
7           wheelchair car drivers in New York City and, uh, I  
8           can tell you today that, uh, the dispatch system that  
9           they have is not working properly and to give these  
10          major brokers, uh, a 30 cents increase for, uh,  
11          transferring their vehicle into a wheelchair  
12          accessibility is not necessary, this money should go  
13          to the DUB drivers and I don't know if you guys know  
14          what a DUB Driver is, but DUB Driver is a guy who  
15          owns, buy the car and lease the medallions. So the  
16          brokers do not need any more money to their, uh, bank  
17          accounts. It should go basically to the drivers, and  
18          the green chairs, uh, green cars, as far as I'm  
19          concerned, they are not fulfilling the, the, the, the  
20          situation that there was, uh, supposed to be doing  
21          and, uh, they have taken over a major part of the  
22          yellow cab industry, especially in, uh, Forest Hills,  
23          Queens, where the yellow cabs used to sit at 71<sup>st</sup> and  
24          Continental, you'll see no more yellow cabs there.

1           Uh, Union Turnpike, uh, no more yellow cabs and  
2           Jamaica Station - Railroad Station, which are very  
3           economical for the yellow cab, for the taxi industry.  
4           And again, I live in a two-fare zone in South  
5           Jamaica, Queens and, uh, the taxi industry is not  
6           doing a good service for us out there and it's  
7           costing us more to take a bus to the train and to get  
8           into the City, so, uh, I'm happy to be here to  
9           testify in front of you City Council people and if  
10          there is anything else you should need to know about  
11          industry at which I've been involved in, like I said  
12          over 40 years, uh, we the Taxi Workers Alliance are  
13          willing to, you know, help you guys to work with us  
14          and to help make this City and the Transportation  
15          System a better, uh, thing for New York City People.  
16          Thank you very much.

18                   CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now, now, now is,  
19          now is.

20                   AHEED AHMUT: Ya?

21                   CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: It's ok.

22                   AHEED AHMUT: My name is Aheed Ahmut[Sp?]  
23          and I am a green cab taxi driver. I have been  
24          driving the black car before I'm driving the cab, for  
25          the last about last 10 years. About six months back

1 I've started, I purchased the five, uh, wheelchair  
2 accessible permits and I transferred them to the  
3 cabs, and one of the cab I'm driving myself and the  
4 four I'm trying to lease out. Well there is a  
5 difficulty because of some restrictions, although  
6 driving a green cab it does raise my, the standard of  
7 living and my income also. Before this, it was all  
8 bargaining and this and that and fighting with the  
9 customers. All that, that has finished now. I am  
10 very comfortable. I am making a good living for  
11 myself, for my children, for my family and  
12 everything. With the green cab there is no doubt,  
13 but the problem comes in as far as the wheelchair  
14 accessible because there are some restrictions for,  
15 because 5,000 can't drive myself. I have to lease  
16 them out. I have to rent them out but I can't find  
17 the drivers, why?, one, there's a restriction of one  
18 year old licensee, that the TLC License should be one  
19 year old. I can't fight that, because one year old  
20 license, the man goes and gets his own green cab  
21 license. Why should he come to me and drive my car?  
22 One thing. Secondly, the, the thing is that I have  
23 to pay a lot of, all these are all brand new cars,  
24 all leased from the company, so I have to pay the

1           lease, monthly lease. I have to pay insurance for  
2           that, the full coverage insurance, so all that money  
3           I'm still paying from my pocket. Even after for  
4           years...four months, I'm paying all the money from my  
5           pocket. Whatever I'm earning is earning from one  
6           car. The rest I find a driver for one week, two  
7           weeks, he goes away because of the wheelchair  
8           accessible restrictions so what I want to suggest  
9           please lift these restrictions of one year old driver  
10          and, and his going to the school and taking the 20,  
11          let this training be given by the base so that a base  
12          can give out training because people don't want to  
13          spend \$70-\$80, go to the school for two, three, four  
14          hours and get the training. What they are really to  
15          get the training from the base. So in that case, we  
16          are all facing problems and the next people who will  
17          get the wheelchair accessible green cabs will face  
18          the same problems. So this is what I wanted to  
19          convey and otherwise it's a very beneficial, it's a  
20          very good living, it is, it is very convenient for us  
21          to deal with the customers, with the people around  
22          and everybody's happy. There's no, no complaints.  
23          As for these restrictions of Manhattan and all, it's  
24          ok. Thank you very much.

BHAIRAVI DESAI: Good afternoon, I'm Bhairavi Desai Executive Director of the New York City Taxi Worker's Alliance. Before I address the issues on the table today, I would just like to say to Chairman Rodriguez and the other council members that about a week ago we had a yellow cab driver, um, Mr. Mohammad Ali Fahd, who was viciously attacked by his passenger. Will make a very long story short, when he had gone over a speed, gone over a bump on the road, when he pulled over to check on the car, the passenger had gotten out and when Ali looked up, the man had a, had a skateboard and he smashed Ali's face with that skateboard. His, his eye is swollen shut. He has three rafters in his nose and, um, you know, he has stitches all above, um, above his eye and his face is completely swollen. We need the Taxi Driver Protection Act. You have it before you in the council. Some of you have already endorsed it. We really call upon the Transportation Committee to move that bill. This is the year that hundreds, you know, over a hundred thousand workers in this industry, yellow, green, livery, black car, deserve protection after serving one million strangers every single day. This City cannot run without their labor. The very

1 least that this City can do is to protect their  
2 lives. On the issues of the day, Bill has already  
3 addressed on our behalf, you know, we have, we  
4 continue to support the Borough Taxi Program and as  
5 this brother just said, it is an important source of  
6 livelihood for an increasing number of drivers in  
7 this City. There is no question that enforcement is  
8 critical. It was always a central component of when  
9 the program was first discussed, and it needs to be  
10 implemented with the same integrity with which it was  
11 promised to us. Um, I'd also like to say though,  
12 that while we're all out here kind of bickering with  
13 each other, what's important is that all workers have  
14 a right to earn a livelihood. We should not be  
15 pitted against each other because of wrongly guided  
16 policies by the City of New York. Green, yellow,  
17 livery, black car drivers should not be out, I know,  
18 trying to out-compete each other. This is a wealthy  
19 industry that wealth needs to trickle down to the  
20 drivers who can earn a dignified living without  
21 needing to compete with each other. I'd also like to  
22 say that while we're out competing each other, a very  
23 important statement was made by the TLC. The Access  
24 a Ride Program, there is no question that it must be

1 better run from the disability advocates, the  
2 passengers, the drivers themselves, certainly the  
3 economic means of the City and the State require that  
4 the Access a Ride Program be properly fixed but I  
5 would like to state, if I can have one more minute.  
6 I would like to quickly state that without a doubt  
7 that money that the City and the State save from  
8 converting the Access a Ride to yellows and greens  
9 and liveries, that money needs to go back to the  
10 drivers. It would be unbelievably opportunistic of  
11 this administration and if the City Council were to  
12 support it, for that money to only go back for  
13 general budgets to the City and the State. Since  
14 2009 taxi drivers have been paying 50 cents every  
15 single fare that was used to bail out the MTA and  
16 Mass Transportation. In other words, "our  
17 competition", and today when there is an alternative  
18 that is possible by changing Access a Ride that money  
19 needs to go back to the health care, the livable  
20 incomes for the men and women who drive in this  
21 industry and have created that wealth. The 30 cents  
22 is not necessary. The meter is sacred for taxi  
23 drivers. The money can easily be generated by the  
24 conversion into Access a Ride and that's how the  
25

2 wheelchair conversion should be funded, not on the  
3 backs of taxi drivers. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Now let's call  
5 the next panel - David Pollock, James Weissman,  
6 Prentiss, eh, Edith Prentiss, Justine Jotes[Sp?].

7 [OFF MIC]: Ladies and gentleman, if your  
8 name was called and you have any copies of your  
9 statements please bring them up with you. Let's get  
10 some chairs. We have everybody in? Uh, why don't we  
11 put one person on one side. Gentlemen you move in  
12 the middle, we'll put one person on one side there  
13 and that person in the middle.

14 [OFF MIC WOMAN'S VOICE]: Sir?

15 [OFF MIC MAN'S VOICE]: I'll take it, I  
16 got it.

17 [OFF MIC WOMAN'S VOICE]: Thank you.  
18 Okay.

19 [OFF MIC MAN'S VOICE]: Could you put  
20 that here?

21 [OFF MIC WOMAN'S VOICE]: Sure.

22 [OFF MIC MAN'S VOICE]: Ok sir you stand  
23 here.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'd also like to,  
25 sorry that I had not done it before but I would also

like to recognize Council Member Carlos Menchaca, who are also here with us.

[OFF MIC WOMAN'S VOICE]: I am. I could run you over there.

LIONEL FRANK: This panel, please raise your right hands. Do you affirm the testimony you give before this committee to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

EDITH PRENTISS: My name is Edith Prentiss and I am the Chair of the Taxis For All Campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before, I'm sorry testify about the TLC's Street Hail Livery Program. My organization us Taxis For All Campaign is a coalition of City Major Disability Services and Disability Rights Organization and has advocated for wheelchair accessible taxis since 1996. Our goal is that all residents and visitors to New York City, whether they use a wheelchair or not, should have the equal chance to hail a taxi, whether those cabs are yellow, green or black or community car services. Well, we shouldn't be hailing community car services, but I live in Northern Manhattan. So far the answer is, that question is ultimately simple, no wheelchair users are getting

the services they need and deserve. With just 1,500 of the first 6,000 green taxis slated to be wheelchair accessible and many few of these accessible vehicles actually are on the street, no wheelchair user can yet depend on green taxis for transportation. Even with the full 20% on the street, we ran a risk of not getting an accessible taxi in one direction or the other and are being stranded. The City has created a new taxi system that is not yet accessible that's the 20<sup>th</sup> Century thinking. That is why we are heartened by the long-term commitment of TLC Chair, Meera Joshi, who has made in the, who has made a disciplinary action plan which will require at least 50% of all green taxis be accessible. The commitment is modeled after the City's agreement in the late 2013, to require that at least 50% of all yellow taxis be accessible by the end of 2020. We congratulate the TLC for being a national trailblazer setting a standard that we expect other cities will follow across the nation. Chicago, L.A., Miami, Houston and other cities should take note. The future for taxi services, at least 50% accessibility vehicles in all taxi fleets. We applaud the TLC Chair and Mayor De Blasio's

foresighted disability action plan and in putting in place that will make the rules that will make the yellow taxis fully accessible. Spontaneous, efficient and safe travel has so far only been the fantasy for tens of thousands of New Yorkers and visitors, but their leadership and the TLC follow-through will make it a reality. We look to the Council to advocate some key changes in the DAP. Chief among them is that the minimum 50% requirement be guaranteed whether or not the third round of green taxi permits is sold. The Council should require that the TLC commit themselves to no less than 50% accessibility, whether there are 12,000 or 18,000 green taxis, and ensure that the mechanisms to make that happen are included in the plan. The TLC must also set a date by which the green taxi fleet will be at least 50% accessible. The DAP currently has no firm date by which this would happen. The council should require a firm date that matches to the extent possible the 2020 deadline yellow taxis must meet. There is straight-forwarding proof that would allow the City to guarantee what it should consider a basic right. [TIMER GOES OFF] One paragraph. Um, the ability of all New Yorkers to travel by every aspect

1 in our extensive transportation system. We're not  
2 done yet. While the studies, while the strides  
3 toward yellow and green fleets successfully  
4 tremendous, there is still a long way to go toward  
5 the outer borough access. Only a small handful of  
6 the City's estimated, well, they say 25,000 on the  
7 website we know it's 54,000, livery vehicles are  
8 accessible, um, just as the yellow taxis move into  
9 increasing accessibility for this City puts together  
10 a plan for the green taxis, the TLC must increase  
11 livery accessibility as well. I would rather call  
12 that for-hire vehicle accessibility. We look forward  
13 with working to the TLC and the Council to ensure  
14 progress there. I'd like to very quickly respond to  
15 a couple of previous speakers. Um, while the, it's  
16 very nice that the livery fully serving their  
17 customers, and helping them get in the taxi, and  
18 folding their chairs, I would like to point out that  
19 the greater portion of chairs, scooters, etc.,  
20 utilizing New York City, are utilized by individuals  
21 whose chairs don't fold. My chair weighs 300 pounds.  
22 You want to try to get it in their trunk? Good luck.  
23 Um, also the reality is, if they had accessible  
24 vehicles people will come out of the woodwork.

1  
2 People who have the chairs that cannot be folded will  
3 gladly use green cars in my community, in Northern  
4 Manhattan. It's not an option so why should I try to  
5 do it? Thank you very much.

6 DAVID POLLOCK: Good afternoon Chairman  
7 Rodriguez and members of the Committee. On behalf of  
8 the Committee for Taxi Safety and represents licensed  
9 leasing agents and drivers and the driver-owned  
10 vehicle segment of the yellow taxi industry, we like  
11 to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you  
12 today. My submitted testimony goes into, uh, some of  
13 these issues in more in-depth and I'm gonna summarize  
14 a position to you here right now. What we've heard  
15 about the disabled accessibility plan as outlined by  
16 the TLC today does not take into account of all the  
17 conflicting policies of the TLC, which make obtaining  
18 any goals outlined by the Disabled Accessibility Plan  
19 is almost unattainable. We are not here today that  
20 there will be no accessibility, however, a true and  
21 meaningful plan would provide that anyone who gets a  
22 license from the TLC, whether it be yellow, a green  
23 street hail livery, a for-hire livery base, or a  
24 super base, like Uber, should provide 100% of all of  
25 their cars to be accessible. Unfortunately, the

TLC's Disable Accessibility Plan does not take into account any basic and fundamental flaws of its overall analysis. Namely, driver aversion to driving accessible vehicles and the influence of a super base, which is valued at \$18 million with hundreds of millions spent from ventured capital and unlimited revenue from its surge pricing policies on rainy days like today, and it doesn't put on the road one single accessible car! Uber has purchased over 200,000 from Toyota, with the purpose of deploying and leasing these vehicles to drivers around the world and presumably here in New York City as well. Not one of these vehicles is accessible. We've all seen the billboards and bus signs asking taxi drivers to join Uber with promises of thousands of dollars in income. Is it a coincidence that this advertising is occurring at the same time the greater accessibility requirements are being placed on taxis? And yet no such requirement is being placed on a super base like Uber? A fundamental fact and problem of the plan outlined today by the TLC's Chair is that drivers actively avoided using an accessible vehicle yet the costs associated with time and money for drivers may sound cold-hearted, but we cannot sweep the fact

1 under the rug. The only way to make sure driver's  
2 choice does not port greater accessibility is to  
3 insure 100% of vehicles that receive licenses to  
4 operate in whatever segment they are serving be  
5 accessible. Further, we must be on the same timeline  
6 to achieve these goals. If one segment has a  
7 lengthier timeline they will drag it out in the hopes  
8 of the future administration will not care about the  
9 mandate and will not implement the program. The only  
10 way to ensure that New Yorkers have the access they  
11 need to private transportation when they need it  
12 most, is to require that every single vehicle  
13 licensed by the TLC and every driver with a license  
14 issued by the TLC, are required to provide accessible  
15 service. The time of leaving disabled New Yorkers  
16 without equal transportation is passed, let's move  
17 forward.

19 JIM WEISSMAN: Thank you. My name is Jim  
20 Weissman, I'm the Senior Vice President and General  
21 Counsel of United Spinal Association. I've been in  
22 the transportation fight for people with disabilities  
23 a long time and I can tell you where the problems  
24 started. It started at MTA, relying on Access a Ride  
25 as its workhorse and attempting to limit access to

mass transit. When we sued them, back in '79 and settled in '84, they and all right-thinking liberal democrats agreed that only 100 key stations out of 466 should be made accessible then the MTA eliminated its inter-borough bus routes because they're not lucrative routes for MTA because most people use rapid rail to get between boroughs for longer trips. That created a huge burden on Access a Ride, inter-borough travel and expensive inter-borough travel making trips \$66 a ride. In addition to that, by the way, MTA spent \$575 million Access a Ride just last year. Only a few years ago it was \$275 million. People are living longer, they're all using wheeled mobility aids to stay active, they're gonna make demands on Access a Ride. In addition to that, Medicaid spends \$200 million in 2010, I don't have current numbers, \$200 million a year on taking poor wheelchair users on medical trips on ambulettes. Immediately as soon as green vehicles that are accessible or available, Medicaid riders are gonna switch because Medicaid trip planners are gonna go for the cheapest alternative and they're gonna deluge the green, accessible greens, when they list with Medicaid riders. That's why you need a high number

of vehicles because Medicaid trips are guaranteed rides, they gotta get there. Um, Access a Ride trips, as the previous speaker pointed out, there's going to be a huge load chipped, whether it's planned or not. First of all, people with disabilities will not, will want spontaneous travel so it's not calling Access a Ride and switch to cabs. Second of all, taxis can deliver the ride cheaper than Access a Ride can the average ride. So somebody at the MTA will get smart, it's still isn't really happening, but somebody will get smart and say "why can't we provide more rides for less money?". On what you do with the savings and how you finance the system is a political choice that has to be made by this deliberate body but there's definitely tens of millions of dollars to be saved even in the be...first few years by switching riders from Access a Ride and Medicaid Ambulettes to taxis. It's important to understand that all of this evolving without really responsible planning. You've heard it a lot from every segment of the population today. We've been doing it as advocates and it's terrible. You know, when lawyers are solving your problems you know there's gonna be a bigger problem when it's over. And, and, and you need responsible

1 transportation and city planners to be putting this  
2 plan together so that you could provide the most  
3 rides for the least amount of money that are most  
4 profitable to the industry. We compliment TLC for  
5 meeting us half way on making things accessible. We  
6 compliment the industry also for really waking up to  
7 our needs and concerns. I mean if you listened to  
8 things a year or two or three ago, things were pretty  
9 different and, uh, we really thank the De Blasio  
10 administration for hanging in there with us and Mayor  
11 Bloomberg for changing his mind after 12 years of  
12 opposition.

14 DUSTIN JONES: Good afternoon, my name is  
15 Dustin Jones, I'm with Disabled in Action of  
16 Metropolitan New York. Disabled in Action of  
17 Metropolitan New York applauds the reality of borough  
18 taxis which can be called or hailed in the outer  
19 boroughs of Northern Manhattan. The need to be able  
20 to hail a cab in the outer boroughs where the  
21 majority of New Yorkers live and tourists visit  
22 brings equality and the same option to everybody, not  
23 just people who are at the airport or in the main  
24 tourist and business districts of Manhattan where  
25 yellow cabs are...where yellow cabs mostly are. In

neighborhoods in south, in South West Brooklyn, it's a rare, it's rare to see cabs. You would never count on finding a hail anymore than you could find a helicopter to hail. We need more outer borough hail vehicles so count, so we can count on getting one. Until a year ago, most people in the outer boroughs and Upper Manhattan could never legally hail a vehicle and would have to hail an illegal vehicle at Costco, hospitals, Barclay Center, stadiums or train stations. People who, people would have to know, one, two or three numbers of local car services and patiently wait until a vehicle was available. That might not be so bad if you're calling from home but if you are on the street trying to catch a car service, waiting for a car service, a different, in a different neighborhood wait on the rain, cold or cold or show up, it's not ideal. That's how legal hails come into being because it's the demand to hail service in the outer boroughs. Borough taxis are also an improvement over people taking illegal hailed vehicles because the new vehicles are regulated and insured and makes and drivers are licensed. Doing that increased training and safe, and safety drivers, for drivers to make sure that their vehicles are kept

in good condition. It also makes it safer for passengers, we know we are riding in an insured vehicle. When there are more accessible green cabs, people in wheelchairs will be able to count on being able to count on green taxis when we are needed to go somewhere. It is also possible medical transportation and para-transit will be used in borough hails, people who are stranded and save money for those in the program. I have 16 seconds left, I'm reading the statement so I sound a little bit rambled, um, my personal opinion, I think it's a great opportunity. I myself, I live in Queens, in Hollis. I think it's a great thing. I'm starting to see a lot more green cabs. I think it's a great thing to be able to go when I want, I do use Access a Ride from time to time but I do take the bus. I think the green cabs are great. I think there should be a lot more of them. I think everybody in the disabled community would agree that we need more of these things and it will help us live like regular citizens. On a daily basis people don't have to call 24 hours before they go to work to get ride. People don't have to call 24 hours to go to grocery stores

or anything like that. Why should we? This is why we need disabled cabs and it's important. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I have two questions, one is like related to the input of the City. If the City has been getting you in fifty percent accessible?

EDITH PRENTISS: Up to about a week and a half ago the City, the TLC was pushing us to 33% by 2024, um, I think we had a coherent, um, counter-point, which was the size of the livery and for-hire vehicle fleet, which is totally inaccessible. So if you're talking 50% of approximately 13,000 then it was 15,000, yellow vehicles being accessible by 2020 and theoretically 33% at that point was going to be accessible as of 2024, we just really said "no". This is not equitable when you have the entire for-hire vehicles fleet, and yes the Ubers, you know, come on. So one of the things that I personally have pushed for was the implementing the final implementation of the for-hire vehicle rule, which probably perceived everyone on the dais. That was to require every livery base to have an accessible vehicle or to be in contract with a base authorized to contract. Well unfortunately what we saw happen

the first go-round was the bases that were in contract, uh, were able to be contracting, had like 100, you know sub-bases and four vehicles or two vehicles. So we are pushing, the City has been responsive. Yeah we want to be wanted. I'll be honest, we want 100% but right now 50 is looking a lot better than it did a year ago.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And that was my question I had...

EDITH PRENTISS: Yeah, 50 looks a hell of a lot better than a year ago. You know, 2020 is gonna be a great year. We'll have all 100 accessible elevators done, the Part-D donut hole will be closed, and we'll have 50 of the yellow taxis accessible.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. And, and that was my point because I was one of those, together we only could support the bill so I think that what I heard was that disability community, even though it is not the ideal plan, but at least at 50% was seeing a good progress.

EDITH PRENTISS: And we look to your support to continue setting that percentage going up.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We will and also as we will be working together to also make the MTA to be more elevator for our disability community.

JIM WEISSMAN: They have been meeting with us. One thing we requested which hasn't happened is the industry included in those meetings with us so that we can all be at the same table, sharing the same information and hearing each other instead of all going back through TLC because it's impossible to, to, it's always a moving target otherwise.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well I'm committed, I'm committed to put a meeting together with we as a meeting together with the TLC and the whole disability community, we can sit here round table conversation.

JIM WEISSMAN: With, with, with both the green side, and the yellow side.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We Will.

JIM WEISSMAN: So that the industry's concern gets heard when ours are being heard so that they can be addressed and solved simultaneously. The other thing is, as Mr. Pollock pointed out, Uber is this sleeping giant, it's not even sleeping, it's

quite awake and is coming and is going to change the nature of this industry. As far as we're concerned, um, whatever you do, you should be regulating these guys and whatever you do should require that we be included in the system.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We will...

JIM WEISSMAN: It shouldn't be the only greens and the yellows.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We will, eh, eh, do whatever it is in our abilities to be sure that the market is regulated, eh, and I will continue working with all the industry. Eh, as I had said before, in other area related to you know, the transferring the permits, the, eh, eh, from the green car I, I am all about being sure that I am fair that I that, we hear everyone in, in that, and no one is here taking advantage of another, like we know that this is like, eh, eh, it's a challenge that we have as a City. Eh, eh, as New Yorkers we always demand. And we have like a strong voice demanding what we believe is the best for us but I am committed to be sure that no, eh, one is organizes or try to take advantage of the other but we have the consumers as a priority.

JIM WEISSMAN: The last piece of the, DAP, the DAP, is that third sales of green permits, which is iffy, you don't know if it's really gonna happen, if it doesn't happen, you can't get to the 50% access level that TLC has described. What could happen is a plan to if you don't sell those permits when vehicles are replaced, remember we're collecting 30 cents a fare...

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right.

JIM WEISSMAN: ...so when vehicles are replaced, the second generation of inaccessible green vehicles will become an accessible green vehicle so you'd at least get to the 50% of the smaller number, which the plan does not include.

RICHARD PHALER: I'd just like to make one last comment if I may? There's a difference between this wheelchair accessible green permits and wheelchair accessible green permits that are sitting on someone's desk not being attached to a vehicle after a year and not being implemented for the purpose the law was passed. If in fact we have 80% of the residents in the outer boroughs, it is pertinent that every single one of those vehicles

that has been, that has been applied for and sold, be on the road before the next phase.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Right, and I have a question related to you. You're saying you represent also eh, the leasing group, right, leasing company. Eh, are you also doing, do you also participate on leasing the green car?

RICHARD PHALER: No.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: No, you're yellow, yellow cab?

RICHARD PHALER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay, thank you. The next will be Fernando Garcia, Walter Suasso[Sp?], Ceasar Paolino[NAME ?], and \_\_\_\_\_

[OFF MIC -LIONEL FRANK]: If your name was called and you have any copies of statements...

[OFF MIC - SPEAKING SPANISH]: 02:06:47

LIONEL FRANK: Do you affirm the testimony given before this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: **SPEAKING SPANISH**  
**02:08:24-31.**

CEASAR PAOLINO: My name is Ceasar Paolino, um, hello to everybody in this room. I'm a

1 green taxi driver and I feel, uh that my life had  
2 changed after I become a taxi driver, uh, uh green  
3 taxi driver because now, uh, I have some money in the  
4 bank, I can save some money and, uh, I, uh, is less  
5 problem for me to work in the street with the  
6 customer because now that I can get like a, a credit  
7 card, person I used to, something I never had before  
8 and I think this is very good idea that the green car  
9 so I also wanna tell that we being a like a with a  
10 lot a people that are tried to fight with the driver  
11 and I think that, uh, the City to a show a like a a  
12 with a person that a a fight with the driver they do  
13 like that a a like the like they do with the City uh,  
14 employee that they they you know, they dependently,  
15 uh we be like did giving, like a a crime, they put  
16 wound. Somebody a, hurt one of the drivers they  
17 don't take them to court and proceed them as a crime.

19 FERNANDO GARCIA: [SPEAKING SPANISH]

20 TRANSLATOR: Um, I am going to interpret  
21 to the best of my knowledge Mr. Fernando Garcia, he  
22 represents ASOTINY, the New York Association...

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: eh, [SPEAKING  
24 SPANISH]

LIONEL FRANK: Sorry. I apologize.

Everybody please raise their right hands. Do you affirm the testimony given before this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: In Espanol.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

TRANSLATOR: Si. Ok so as I was saying, I will be interpreting for Fernando Garcia, he is the President of the New York Independent Taxi Drivers of New York Association ASOTINY.

FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:11:34-54

TRANSLATOR: He wants um, you guys to know, everybody here that by all the information and everything and all the feedback we are getting from our green cabbie-owned colleagues, are very positive and that they all say this in common that their life has completely changed.

FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:12:11-27

TRANSLATOR: And that um, they're asking that please that it's been a long ways and it's been very successful so far and that nobody please stop

2 the sale of any of the next batch of 6,000 because  
3 it's been a great success so far.

4 FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

5 02:12:41-53

6 TRANSLATOR: Um and we have committed to  
7 pick up signatures from our passengers who are  
8 willing to give us signatures to show the  
9 neighborhood they live in that they appreciate the  
10 outer borough taxi services.

11 FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

12 02:13:05-27

13 TRANSLATOR: Um, yes and we, um, had  
14 numerous, um, meetings with the Commissioner Joshi  
15 and we did ask her that there was previous, um, a  
16 little bit of a promotion a couple of months ago. It  
17 wasn't so big. We asked that there'd be more  
18 promotions so there could be more outreach through  
19 communities about what outer borough taxis are and  
20 especially for drivers. A lot of drivers have  
21 started this industry completely unknown and what  
22 working with a meter in this industry actually is.

23 FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

24 02:13:53-02:14:35

25

TRANSLATOR: In regards to what somebody said earlier, I wasn't sure who it was, he said that he had stopped a green cab and he was asking him his destination, he wants you guys to know that Street Hail Livery cab based through base dispatch and they do Street Hails, so sometimes they want to know where you want to go just in case they have a reservation later on in the day through a Street Hail, um, through the base, through a pick up. So maybe that's why this driver, I'm not saying it was, but it could be a chance why the driver wanted to know where this passenger was headed to.

FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:15:14-51

TRANSLATOR: Yes, and um, to finish it off, he wants you guys to know if there's any help with the Commission to, with a, um, summonses and the tickets that are coming out with, um, Taxi and Limousine Commission and they are excessive, they're high, they don't only affect green they affect obviously yellow and um, FHB drivers also, so we want to see what can be done to help out with these excess summonses and tickets which, um, he says that can actually take away the livelihood of many drivers.

FERNANDO GARCIA: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:16:20-24

TRANSLATOR: And thank you and I hope you take us into consideration to further up our commitment to this City.

MAN SPEAKING SPANISH: 02:16:19-02:17:06

TRANSLATOR: Okay, so hi, I'm interpreting from Walter Suasso, he has a borough taxi permit, 88041 and he's also a member of ASOTINY. He wants you guys to know his number. He's really good at taking control of numbers. He said when he was a livery driver he had about 12 pickups, excluding Fridays that would be between 25-30 passengers. This would be 12 hours of work, from 12-14 hours of work daily. Today, with a borough taxi he has a number of 18 passengers daily in 9 hours of work.

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:17:47-02:18:15

TRANSLATOR: Okay, so when his number show that when he was a livery cab, he had about 12 hours of work, about \$160 without, or maybe, sometimes, some tips. But his income has come up to about \$240 daily with the borough taxi. Um, job now.

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:18:42-02:19:16

TRANSLATOR: So, he wants to tell you that 50% of the passengers he's picking up actually paying with debit or credit cards, which shows, uh, a segment of the consumer market. It has some bigger options to pay with the credit cards and you will actually be charging them what legitimate and what's on the for the time run and on the meter. Problems that used to originate between a passenger and a cab driver are more controlled now, now there won't be any more discussions because of prices. So this is why meters are really the best judge in all of this.

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:19:50-02:20:13

TRANSLATOR: Okay, so he's saying that till today he has contributed with \$917 towards MTA tax and he has also contributed in a better way for his taxes because he actually has a 1099 document which shows what he's making and it gives him the security of reporting all his income. He feels now he has a better assured future.

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:20:38-02:21:01

TRANSLATOR: And he says he is ...market.  
85% of passengers that wouldn't want to ride in  
livery cabs on Street Hail Pickups because they  
actually don't have the metered system which a lot of  
passengers preferred, but more important I say that  
the green cab has given me back my dignity. I don't  
have to work under the shadows exposing myself to big  
summonses for picking up on the street. Today I feel  
more organized and I feel I have a more stable, um,  
medium of money. And then he says, "I feel very  
committed to do a better and excellent job".

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:21:43-50

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:21:54-02:22:09 I'm surely comfortable to share  
that the City will be selling the next 6,000 green  
card permits. SPEAKING SPANISH 02:22:19-0:23:02.  
You already heard based on the Commissioner, there's  
more than 6,000 pre-qualified drivers that already  
has applied to buy interest or buying the green card  
permit. SPEAKING SPANISH 02:23:13-02:23:34

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:23:35-49

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2 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

3 02:23:49

4 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

5 02:23:50-02:24:50

6 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

7 02:24:51-02:25:09

8 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

9 02:25:09-20

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

11 02:25:21-22

12 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

13 02:25:24-46

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

15 02:25:46-50

16 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

17 02:25:51-02:26:31

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

19 0:26:32-34. I'm trying to find out like the whole

20 dynamic into like how the dealer, they are lending

21 money for a taxi drivers who have a permit but they

22 don't have the money. So what he is saying that they

23 have a problem in which they lend him the money, eh,

24 eh, but I, they lend the money for the drivers so

25 that driver will bring back the money by still the

drivers that hold in which they lend the money, eh,  
eh, but I, they lend the money for the drivers so  
that driver will pay back the money but still the  
drivers is the one that hold a, the ownership of the  
permit. SPEAKING SPANISH 02:27:01-02:27:10

WALTER SUASSO: 02:27:11-50

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: 02:27:50-52.

What he's saying is that people who saying that  
there's people from Queens and other places to  
offering to buy those permits so, so, eh, but he been  
advising those drivers not to do it and only sell it  
to, eh, eh, all the drivers that they have the  
license. SPEAKING SPANISH 02:27:52-02:28:20.

WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:28:22-02:29:03

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. What he's  
saying that eh, he does what basically he want to be  
clear to get all the information and regulation  
because, eh, eh, eh they heard in the street that  
there's people offering to buy those permits so that  
you want be sure that they regulation is clear so  
that the driver know who they can sell the permit to.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

02:29:26-28

WOMAN SPEAKING SPANISH: 02:29:28

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Okay.

NANCY SORIA: I'll do this in English, um, we don't need interpretation. Good afternoon to all council members and all attendees, my name is Nancy Soria, I am obviously, with ASOTINY and I'm also a Street Hail Livery Driver Borough Taxi, which I probably say I do, I have AA001, the first one that was sold last year and I can speak on behalf of my colleagues but mostly my personal experience, I was a livery driver for four years till last summer when I began my new journey as a green cabbie. I believe it was the best choice I've ever done. The peace I have while on my job is quite a reward, also the incredible feedback from New Yorkers who appreciate the service is enough to put a smile on my face every day. To myself there is no greater satisfaction then providing legal street hail service to the people of New York. I thank all the people who made it possible and most of all, thank to all my fellow residents who daily ride in need our services. Let's keep our borough taxi working in giving citizens of New York a much needed service and I will quote out on something that a passenger told me a couple of

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2 months ago. She said "you guys are not taking

3 anything away from the yellow cabs, you are providing

4 service where there is a gap for yellow cabs, that's

5 where you come in". So I leave you with this, thank

6 you so much Phyllis.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Gracias.

8 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

9 02:30:52-02:31:47

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

11 02:31:47-49. He's saying that based on what they..

12 WALTER SUASSO: SPEAKING SPANISH

13 02:31:42-47

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: SPEAKING SPANISH

15 02:31:48. He's saying that based on what the State

16 Law say in the regulation is that a base can buy or

17 someone that has a corporation, they can buy five

18 accessible car, eh, and I understand and I encourage

19 not only the bases in the, in the, the corporation to

20 do it by any livery taxi who can also buy accessible

21 car to invest in our...SPEAKING SPANISH 02:32:14-

22 02:33:39. My concern is that you know, now like a

23 permit like is basically a few thousand dollars. We

24 will have a situation where driver they will have,

25 they will need ten or twenty thousand dollar because

we are working class people so I don't want no one take advantage of the situation of the working class and try to go and buy into so they can accumulate permit eh, eh, eh, from the green car. SPEAKING SPANISH 02:34:05-02:34:44. Thank you, gracias. The next one Muhammed and [phonetic]Iftihaf Ahmet[Sp?].

LIONEL FRANK: Sir would you please raise your right hand? Do you affirm the testimony given before this committee will be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

IFTIHAF AHMET: I do. Mr. Chairman, members of City Council, respected attendants. My name is Iftihaf Ahmet, I am the owner of PAE Car Limo in Queens[?]. I would to thank the City Council to give me an opportunity to present what I personally have seen and happens with a driver on my base with regard to the Street Hail Livery Essential Permit. I am a person who have assist more than 1,000 person getting SHL permit and my base, myself, we pay all the application, it was free of cost. In the past between the jobs it was not uncommon to see a driver to do illegal street hail, park at certain areas, and have a lot of pedestrians for traffic to get the job. Yes the driver was aware of this if he caught he

could get plenty but the urge to support their families justifies the risk that understand that why driver needs this behavior. You must understand the position of the driver. Most driver leased the vehicle, they must make the lease payment at all costs. Sitting at the base for, wait for a call does not make them leave sometime, not even a gas, and they don't make anythings. The driver make only little money and then need a public assistant to end their meat. Not many had filed a tax return, had no credit card, did not own any real property. These were the people who were living hand to mouth waiting for their next dollars. When these SHL permit comes out these, the same people recognize the opportunity on the way so demand justifies their illegal pick up to legalized. And amazing things happen that probably was not the attention of SHL law. I have seen five families want together to put his apartment. Our office helped them and the tax was filed, credit was build, they paid the taxes. Before so long I will request one more minute. Was an amazing watch the people feel very proud to have essential apartment and the owned the car, they feel like they have something which they never had before.

1 If this program is stopped or changed they will to be  
2 many thousands of people will suffer here, linked  
3 with overseas. Many drivers comes from overseas with  
4 many countries. I will request this program should  
5 not be stopped and give them American Dream so they  
6 can live very healthy and happy life. Thank you very  
7 much.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Eh,  
10 and with that this meeting is adjourned. Thank you  
11 everyone. Eh, we are committed to continue  
12 supporting the green car initiative as the Chairman  
13 of this committee, eh, eh I will be working with  
14 everyone in this industry. The drivers, the  
15 consumers, the green, the pre-arrangement, the  
16 limousine and the yellow taxi industry and the unions  
17 too. You are very important as I was believing in  
18 including everyone in this particular journey where  
19 we are committed to continue making tran...eh, making  
20 our taxi transportation and limousine a fortunate  
21 service in our City but also increasing jobs and  
22 opportunity for working class and middle class to  
23 invest. Eh, gracias, eh SPEAKING SPANISH 02:40:07-08

24 [GAVEL]  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date June 17, 2014