



QUANTIFYING DEMAND AND USE OF

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

TAXIS, LIMOUSINES, PRIVATE HIRE and CAR SERVICES.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This document sets out a review of the issues affecting accessibility in the use of taxis and transit in the District of Columbia and concludes with an analysis of the demand for such services, and the methods by which such demand may be met.

The paper is based on a detailed analysis of use, based on primary data collected from the DCTC Taxicab Data Management System (TDMS), data from WMATA, and a user survey, detailed in subsequent sections of this report.

The analysis concludes that, on the basis of current observed and suppressed demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles, a minimum of 218 wheelchair accessible taxis and 1427 wheelchair accessible private vehicles for hire are required across the DC fleets. The figure includes an estimate of trip suppression, being those trips that would be made if appropriate vehicles were available, using data from the accompanying survey, detailed below. It is noted that this figure relates to wheelchair use alone.

It is also noted that the need for accessibility is not limited to taxis alone, and extends to all other forms of transit and transportation. Not only is it equitable for all forms of transit to take an active role in provision of accessible transit, but important to recognize the fact that issues beyond physical design affect use, including driver and staff attitudes, price and reliability. Metrobus and Metrorail appear to be significantly underutilized for wheelchair trips compared to measured demand. The study further concludes that private vehicles-for-hire should be provided to meet the demand for such services.

Differences are observed in the use of differing services across the district, see map below, highlighting that geographical differences exist, often based on transport availability, income level and demographics. Differing combinations of income, geography and demographics may influence demand. The observation of differences can be positive in allowing for specific consideration of service provision, for example by ward, and/or methods by which disparities in income may be considered in the provision of services.



Given that few trips are based on the consideration of one mode of transportation alone, the report recommends that policies are developed on a holistic or joined up basis, reducing multiple barriers to access as well as enhancing service provision. Policy enhancements should include:

- The provision of a minimum of 218 WAV taxis to accommodate demand of taxi users.
- Measures to ensure that drivers of WAV taxis are able and empowered to pick up wheelchair users, including training and priority bookings.
- The provision of 1427 WAV private vehicles for hire.
- Measures to ensure that drivers of WAV private vehicles for hire are able and empowered to pick up wheelchair users, including training and priority bookings.
- Measures to ensure that, where the private vehicle for hire fleet contracts WAV services from the taxi fleet, or other specialist fleet, the count of WAVs is summative. IE: WAV vehicles used by the private vehicle for hire fleet must be in addition to the base supply within the taxi fleet.
- Operational information on the numbers of trips made, particularly those using WAVs, are collected and made available to analysis for ALL modes.
- Measures are taken to consider the physical needs of other users, including visual enhancements, such as high contrast colors, brail or speech based information, hearing loops and/or other appropriate modifications
- A clear and transparent information system is adopted by each provider of such services
- A clear and transparent complaint process is adopted with appropriate feedback mechanisms and realistic sanctions to reduce the occurrence of poor service, low levels or absence of service
- At no point should a disabled user be required to pay more or expect lower service levels than those provided to any other user of the same service.