

# Increasing Accessible Taxi Options for People with Disabilities

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## **ABSTRACT**

Taxis have the potential to increase the mobility of many travelers with disabilities—if **they are fully accessible to the wide range of people with disabilities**. However, the implementation of accessible taxis has not been widespread. This paper reports on the first phase of a study funded by Easter Seals Project Action designed to assist communities 1) to recognize and overcome barriers to expanding the role of accessible taxis and 2) develop strategies to encourage their wider use. The paper compares the experiences of the US cities which have implemented some measure of taxi accessibility, discusses common barriers to implementing accessible taxis, and summarizes the three major ways in which US cities have achieved accessible taxi services.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Otherwise “ordinary” taxis accessible to travelers with disabilities have the potential to be a key component of a system of accessible options. Accessible taxis could provide people with disabilities the same demand-responsive service throughout the community and at airports as regular taxis offer other travelers. Unfortunately few US cities have been able to full advantage of these opportunities; at the same time there are over two dozen US cities where accessible taxis have become part of the transport system. This paper reports on an Easter Seals Project Action funded study of the impact of a range of factors on the successful implementation and operation of accessible taxis in different service environments. The study’s ultimate goal is to develop guidelines and best practices for the use of communities struggling to develop a range of accessible options for travelers with disabilities.

The major focus of the research is on vehicles which can accommodate people in wheelchairs. However, the study also focused attention on the barriers to taxi use facing people with disabilities who didn’t need special vehicles. The Research Team began with a comprehensive literature review; that review coupled with the guidance of a national Partnership Team, identified 23 US cities which had implemented some type of accessible market taxi services. From that number thirteen cities, representing a range of size and service environments, were selected for in-depth case-studies; they are listed in Table One. This paper reports on the first phase of this on-going project: the comprehensive literature search and the comparison of the experiences of the US cities which have implemented some measure of taxi accessibility.

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Table One about here

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The following major section describes the methodology and research approach used to identify case studies and to develop a survey protocol. The next major section below discusses common barriers to implementing accessible taxis; the following section

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summarizes the three major ways in which US cities have achieved accessible taxi services, briefly contrasting these experiences to those abroad. The next section summarizes the complexity of the accessibility issue.

Overall, the initial phases of the study found that the taxi industry and taxi regulators, on one hand, and advocates and people with disabilities on the other, often have very different views of the same set of facts. This makes it difficult to evaluate how successful accessible services have been in the cities in which they have been implemented. We concluded that accessibility is complicated; it involves more than vehicle design and more than policy mandates. These findings lead naturally into the next phases of the Study, designed to assist communities to develop or expand their accessibility options for people with disabilities.

### **METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH**

In the **first** phase of the project, the Research Team compared and evaluated the cost and service dimensions of accessible taxi and van services over time, contrasting different US experiences to one another and to the comprehensive examples available internationally. The **second** phase of the Study identified and analyzed the institutional, regulatory, and policy structures associated with successful implementation and operation of market accessible taxi services in these cities. Later stages of the work will identify *transferable* strategies which have successfully overcome those barriers. The ultimate goal of the Study is to develop ways to expand or extend accessible taxi and van services, both in the communities where they already exist and in other cities and regions by evaluating and rating a variety of techniques, or “best practices” which provide useful ways for other communities to implement various types of accessible taxi and van service in ordinary street service.

The actual cities chosen for in-depth study, the organizations and agencies interviewed, and the survey protocol were developed in consultation with ESPA staff and the National Partnership Team composed of representatives from national level advocacy organizations and the transit, taxi, and paratransit industries. Of particular interest: many of these decisions were facilitated by a two round Delphi process in which Partners were *individually* asked their opinions or views about key accessibility issues related to the project. Then the collection of individual opinions was distributed, anonymously, to all of the Partners who were then asked the same questions again. In each successive round the Partners generally came closer and closer to consensus on key items.

To understand which factors may be crucial in the successful implementation of accessible taxis the Study Team evaluated each of the following issues in the thirteen case sites:

- existing taxi regulation and licensing
- potential for contract services
- services provided
- driver training and accountability
- passenger response to vehicle and design
- jurisdictional issues

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- capital and operating subsidies
- the local taxi market
- political and economic incentives
- the structure and condition of the local taxi industry

### **WHY IS ACCESSIBILITY DIFFICULT?**

Some communities have had accessible taxi services at some level for years; operators in communities as far flung as Pomona, CA, Colorado Springs, CO, and Pensacola, FLA have developed accessible services which are entirely supported by the market. Why then is it so difficult for other communities to achieve a meaningful level, or any (!), accessible service, if accessibility is defined as having vehicles which can accommodate people using various kinds of wheelchairs?

First, the taxi industry argues that the market for accessible service is not very large since only about 5% of the population with handicaps use wheelchairs—and many of them can transfer to the seat of a regular sedan. This market niche is further reduced by the low income of many members; local operators often contend that not many people using wheelchairs have the financial ability to use a full-fare taxi very often—an assertion, ironically, often supported by local disability advocates. Although there may be local exceptions, such as cities like Fort Lauderdale with a large older tourist market, it may be difficult to make a profit providing services for such a small segment of the population.

Second, providing accessible service is usually more expensive than providing regular services, although it is generally agreed that the ADA prohibits a taxi operator from charging more for passengers with disabilities. To begin, a ramp- or lift-equipped van costs substantially more to purchase than does a regular sedan. Moreover accessible vehicles are generally more expensive to maintain; vehicles used in this kind of service have, until very recently, been very poorly made requiring fairly expensive up-keep.

In addition, boarding and de-boarding a person in a wheelchair usually requires more time; for example it takes additional time to deploy, use, and re-stow a lift or ramp, even if the driver and user are fairly experienced at the process. In addition, drivers feel that users in wheelchairs often travel very short distances so the additional boarding and deboarding time is a substantially percentage of the total trip time. Drivers are usually forbidden to charge extra for such services or the additional time consumed. Insurance may also be more expensive both because the vehicle is more costly to purchase and maintain, and because people with disabilities may be more at risk being helped on and off the vehicle.

Third, in certain cities some people who use accessible vehicles pay with vouchers or coupons of some kind—in many cities, the driver must pay his company or radio circuit from 5 to 10% of the value of the voucher to redeem it in cash. Thus a trip supplied to a person using a wheelchair is absolutely less profitable than other trips. Moreover, drivers complain that users often do not tip at all; even drivers with regular customers with disabilities report that they are rarely tipped.

Fourth, operators argue that it is difficult to use accessible vehicles for any other kind of traveler. Drivers report that users without visible handicaps routinely refuse service by such vehicles either sitting in taxi lines at airports or hotels or responding to calls. As a result companies report that it is sometimes difficult to lease accessible vehicles to drivers. While this may be partially true, it is also true that accessible vehicles can be used for large groups or excess luggage, which makes them attractive to some travelers who might be unable to use a sedan.

There are, other, more complicated, reasons why more accessible taxis are not implemented. Operators, regulators, and advocates alike often argue or admit that some taxi drivers and companies are not very entrepreneurial. Even if they see the possibility of gaining a new market niche, they may be unwilling to try unfamiliar or different services if they are doing well with their old services and markets. It does seem that most interesting examples of accessible services are associated with fairly entrepreneurial individuals, as briefly described below.

Moreover, simply recognizing that a potentially profitable market might exist does not overcome the larger initial capital and training costs associated with the delivery of accessible services. In Boston, for example, drivers of accessible vehicles are required to undergo twice the hours of training as drivers of regular sedans, surely a deterrent. Even if direct or indirect subsidies allow companies or drivers to ultimately make the same net income with an accessible vehicle (as with a regular sedan), they may still have to pay out more initially in cash and time.

### **HOW HAVE CITIES ACHIEVED ACCESSIBILITY?**

There are three major ways in which accessibility was initially achieved in the case sites and in other US cities; they are briefly identified in Table Two. **First**, some accessibility was actually *market driven*; in spite of the additional costs often associated with providing such services some operators felt they could make money doing so. **Second**, some accessibility was associated entirely or largely with government incentives designed to offset additional costs or overcome market inertia. **Third**, some accessibility was associated with government mandates; firms were required to have a certain number of accessible vehicles in order to operate at all.

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Table Two about here

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### Market Driven Accessibility

In several US cities one or more operators voluntarily began providing accessible on-street taxi services. Sometimes the operator saw an underserved market niche and took the opportunity to serve it. Fort Lauderdale has had accessible service for roughly a decade; currently 21 taxis in a fleet of 541 have been modified with rear ramps. The taxi owner started the service voluntarily for a friend who used a wheelchair and has done most of his business ferrying people from the airport to cruise-ship terminals. In Dayton, Ohio Miami-Liberty cabs began a service for people with disabilities in August of 1995 because they had formerly been ADA contractors to the regional transit authority which decided to perform all functions in house. When the transit contract was cancelled a local disability consultant convinced the owner of Miami-Liberty cabs that he could run a successful full-fare accessible taxi program—as he has. The entry of the UK firm, USA Coaches, into a number of US cities created market driven services in several communities.

In other communities an operator was already providing some contract accessible service for the local transit authority or social service agencies; the operator viewed street services as a way to make better and more productive use of vehicles and drivers at a time when they weren't required for contract services. In Raleigh the widespread use of taxi vouchers by the transit authority for ADA services and by other social service agencies created a vehicle and driver base from which the operator could provide regular accessible taxi services. Portland, OR, which has both the highest absolute number as well as percentage of accessible taxis in the US, developed their accessible fleet in response to a large and well-developed user-side subsidy program for people with disabilities (although services have gone in other directions lately). At the same time, operators in Portland are required to have 20% of their fleet wheelchair accessible—although there are moves to reduce this requirement (still unmet).

### Government Incentives

The **second** way in which taxi accessibility has been achieved is through **government incentives**, sometimes but not always combined with regulations or mandates. In the few cities where a medallion system exists, a city can increase accessible taxis by offering them lower medallion prices. Technically a medallion is merely a license to operate; in cities like Boston, New York and San Francisco these licenses have a substantial market value because the city keeps the number of licensed taxis below those that would exist in a free market<sup>\*</sup>; the extra value associated with a medallion is what economists call “monopoly rent” which can easily be as high as \$225,000 per taxi. However, in most cities, and in Boston until

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\* Cities with this system argue that it is necessary to keep a constant vehicle fleet with long term operators who can be easily “policed.” In reality, whatever the original rationale, because the medallions have such a high value, existing license holders act forcefully to prevent more from being issued because it would dilute the value of their investment in a medallion.

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recently, all the extra value (*ie* monopoly rent) has been captured by the private sector and capitalized into the price of the vehicle while the cities themselves collect only a small annual re-licensing fee.

In 1996 the city of Boston was given legislative permission to directly sell or auction off additional medallions; they designated a substantial number as **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)** and set a reserve price for these accessible vehicles (that is the price below which they would not issue the medallion) at roughly high that of regular medallions. Over the last six years the City has used this approach to put approximately 75 WAVs on the street; their goal is to have 100 WAVs in the city within the next two years. San Francisco has also used a variant of this approach to add more accessible vehicles although they have not been as successful in increasing the number of accessible taxis. In December 1993 San Francisco authorized 50 new taxi “medallions” with the requirement that five be fully accessible (to people in wheelchairs). In August 1998 the City agreed to issue 175 more taxis medallions, 100 only at peak times and 50 equipped with ramps. Ottawa, Canada is currently considering adding 48 new taxi licenses but only for accessible taxis.

Another kind of incentive is to waive certain restrictions or requirements on taxi companies in the cities in which the companies are directly regulated. In some communities, for example, operators are required to have a minimum number of taxis on the streets at all times as a condition of being licensed. For example Charlotte, NC requires taxi companies to have a minimum fleet of 30 vehicles—but they can count one fully accessible taxi as five vehicles. This provides the motivation to acquire, but does not actually require operators to have, accessible vehicles.

A third kind of incentive is for government or other agencies to provide accessible vehicles at little or no cost, again reducing the extra costs which might be associated with accessible service. In 1997 the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) leased 16 old accessible vans and small buses to two taxi companies to operate in regular taxi service—at full fare and with immediate dispatching. The RTD is considering offering a subsidy for ADA certified riders who decide to take a regular taxi. At the same local advocates are demanding that all taxi operators be required to offer accessible services. A New York City livery company, Symphony Transportation, established an accessible private car service (*ie* no street hails) with five Chrysler minivans in a joint project with Easter Seals. ES donated the minivans, each adapted to carry two wheelchair riders; they also provided driver training.

### Government Mandates

Finally, some cities have achieved a measure of accessibility without any concessions or incentives by requiring firms to operate a minimum number of accessible taxis as a condition of operating at all. In 1996 the City of Los Angeles required that all taxi companies make at least 2% of their fleet accessible. In 2000 10 major LA companies operated a total of 127 accessible taxis in regular street operation; one company, Checker,

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had 24 accessible taxis in its fleet of 290 cabs. Las Vegas has had accessible cabs for over ten years; the City mandates that each company have a minimum of two accessible taxis. Currently 14 Las Vegas cab companies have 27 accessible vans, one company being given an exemption.

In September of 1998 the City of Chicago, over the strong opposition of local taxi operators, required that each taxi company with more than 10 taxis have at least one wheelchair accessible, ramp-equipped mini-van operating as a taxi. Serious penalties were mandated for refusing to pick up disabled people. However by 2001 there were still only 33 cabs in the city licensed to handle wheelchairs. Taxi operators are currently asking to phase out those 33 vehicles; instead they insist that the City should issue a whole new category of license for accessible taxis. Although the disability community is unhappy with that idea, they are supportive of the centralized dispatching system for the accessible vehicles which the companies voluntarily created in 2000.

At the same time, these kind of mandates are often coupled with incentives, in the best tradition of utility regulation. The City of Boston coupled its medallion pricing incentive with a mandate that 2% of the vehicle fleet of each radio circuit or company be accessible although they admit that they do not enforce the requirement on smaller companies. Several communities, such as Fort Lauderdale, which initially achieved some accessible services through market forces, later began to require a minimum level of accessible vehicles in service.

### International Experience

It is interesting to briefly contrast the US experience to that of countries abroad. Great Britain has had by far the most impressive record in making taxis accessible. The UK Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 gives the Government powers to make taxi accessibility regulations “to ensure that disabled people, including those who use and wish to remain in their wheelchairs can get into and out of, and travel in, licensed taxis in safety and reasonable comfort.” As a result of these regulations, and the history of the London cab, Britain is the only country with a substantial proportion of purpose-built accessible taxis. In London, accessible cabs, built by London Taxis International (LTI) account for almost half the local taxi fleet. However there may be wider adoption of purpose-built taxis throughout Europe with the advent of the Anglo-Swedish purpose-built “Taxi for All” which is now starting volume production in Sweden (developed in an EC research project).

Interestingly, a Boston businessman has bought the North American distribution rights for the London taxi and has begun to actively market it in Boston. Unfortunately the London taxi does not meet ADA standards and cannot be advertised as an accessible vehicle; in general the doorway is too narrow and too low to accommodate all people using chairs. At the same time, probably between 60 -75% of all travelers using wheelchairs and practically 100% of all those who do but can transfer will be able to safely maneuver on and off the vehicle. This suggests that, if the vehicle is widely used by US operators, many people with

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disabilities will find it easier to get an accessible vehicle without direct government intervention.

Some counties, like U.S. cities, use a combination of regulations and incentives to increase taxi accessibility. **Finland** allows all taxis a partial exemption from high vehicle taxes but accessible taxis are completely exempt. The **Ile-de-France** region (Paris) makes subsidies available to taxi operators who modify taxis for accessibility: the regional government pays 50% of costs to a maximum of 100,000 FF for equipping a vehicle with a lift, and up to 20,000 FF for a vehicle with a swivel seat. However, this subsidy can only be used for taxi companies who contract with local authorities.

In the Netherlands there has been a market lead move to taxi accessibility, but this has been largely by operators who contract with local authorities and nursing homes. Several operators in Spain voluntarily added accessible taxis and found that ridership increased significantly. In a 2001 study for the ECMT and the International Road Transport Union, Philip Oxley found that **Hungary, Norway, Romania, and Sweden** as well as the UK have national regulations on the designs of accessible taxis. Hungary just published regulations in 2000; the UK is going beyond the London cab and is considering design standards to improve on that design. Both Finland and Sweden have detailed regulations on the design of accessible vehicles.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IS COMPLEX**

The main focus of the research study was on vehicles which could accommodate people in wheelchairs who could not or would not transfer. However, accessibility is a complex concept that clearly means more than just vehicle design. It includes addressing the needs of all travelers with disabilities, as well as driver training and regulatory enforcement.

#### Accessibility Means More than Vehicles

Taxi accessibility actually has three components:

- 1) how people with disabilities who do not use wheelchairs are served by and accommodated in ordinary sedans or vans
- 2) how people with disabilities who do use wheelchairs--but who can transfer from those chairs to vehicle seats-- are served by and accommodated in ordinary sedans and vans
- 3) how people with disabilities who use chairs and cannot transfer are served and accommodated

Most of the accessibility efforts we studied have focused on the third component, sometimes without any concern for the first two. At the same time, there may well be a number of

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cities who have focused serious attention on the first and second accessibility components without addressing the third—so their efforts may have fallen below our radar screen.

Our initial analyses suggest that to develop accessible taxi services, communities must first pay attention to the needs of those who can ride in ordinary sedans or vans but who may have other problems. People who have visual impairments have to be a) alerted to the arrival of a taxi, particularly in street operation, b) driven the shortest route or the route they specify, and, c) assured that they are being charged the fare shown on the meter. The ideal situation would be for all vehicles to have audible meters; failing that, taxis could have meters which automatically print a receipt allowing a traveler to later review the fare with a sighted person (or scan it onto a “talking” computer). If the receipt included some way to identify the driver, a traveler with a visual impairment could later seek redress. These travelers also need the same in-vehicle information about rates, complaints, and regulations as given to other travelers; ideally this information would be available audibly and in braille and large type print in the vehicle.

People traveling with service animals have increasingly faced resistance from individual drivers, on grounds ranging from religious to medical (*ie* allergies). Most regulatory agencies have taken the position that taxis serve the public and that drivers are not permitted the luxury of asserting their beliefs or needs above those of the passengers. In fact, a recent court case in Cleveland upheld this view. But this is a stance easier to state than to enforce. People with visual or multiple impairments are rarely in a position to argue with an individual driver or even to get his name or vehicle identification to be able to report him. Agencies serving many people with visual impairments report being unable to get taxis to respond at all to their calls. Unless these issues are rigorously enforced, many people with visual impairments will not be able to count on accessible taxi services.

Second, communities must address the needs of those who use wheelchairs and can transfer. How well are drivers trained to assist such travelers? How well are they able to appropriately stow the traveler’s wheelchair? Drivers of sedan taxis often do not know if someone can transfer and may pass up travelers in wheelchairs who can. Users report that drivers often charged additional but non permissible fees. It is not uncommon, for example, for drivers to try to collect the charge they are allowed to levy against excess baggage for carrying wheelchairs. A city may have to institute both rigorous driver training and enforcement programs to ensure that such travelers are treated fairly.

Third, and the primary focus of this research, is how people in wheelchairs who cannot transfer are treated and the level of service they are offered. The case studies reveal that the three different US approaches to increasing accessibility all have lead to an increase in accessible vehicles on the street. But each approach has created different problems and lead to different constraints.

What is the Market for Accessible Vehicles?

Advocates and increasingly planning agencies are convinced that there is a viable market for accessible market rate taxis. This view is certainly supported by the successful experiences of operators who began accessible services without any government mandates or subsidies. Outside these few cities, however, the industry is less sure that a market does exist. Some operators contend that the only long term market for accessible vehicles comes from tourists or business travelers since local residents are largely eligible for ADA paratransit services and would need only the occasional regular taxi (even if they could afford them, which many operators doubt).

However, the rationale underlying each of the two governmental approaches to increasing taxi accessibility is largely that there *is* a meaningful demand for accessible taxis which operators are either unwilling or unable to serve. Cities which have provided incentives to operators assume that there is a profitable market for accessible services if either higher start-up or long term operating costs are offset. Cities which simply require operators to have a certain percentage of accessible vehicles—without offsetting additional costs—assume that if forced to do so, operators will become more entrepreneurial and actively seek to develop the latent market for accessible vehicles in their service areas.

But most cities which mandate accessible vehicles, with or without subsidies designed to offset additional costs, adopted their requirements in response to the demands of advocacy groups. Thus the regulations often represent the assumptions (and the political power) of the advocates and not necessarily the regulators or the industry. In fact, both regulators and operators in several cities were fairly certain that the “experiment” created by the regulations would fail—in short, that with or without subsidies, there was only a very small market for accessible taxi services. The case studies show that the accuracy of both views depends on your perspectives.

In fact most accessible taxi operators or drivers do not appear to carry very many people with disabilities in their accessible vehicles; the major exceptions are cities with large tourist groups and those with major taxi voucher programs. While none of the cities had a very good way to count the number of people in wheelchairs using accessible vehicles, most operators (and individual drivers) reported rarely being asked to provide such service—most operators felt it accounted for less than 3% of the trips carried in accessible vehicles. Several regulators reported that the market was “saturated” with the relative small number of accessible taxis available in the community.

But advocacy groups and people with disabilities themselves tell another side of the story. Many advocates, unhappy with the local ADA service, wanted to occasionally use a full-fare accessible taxi but had been unable to do so. Others mentioned that they wanted to use taxis late at night or in areas not served by public transit (and thus not served by ADA paratransit) but had been unable to receive service. People with disabilities reported routinely being told an accessible vehicle would arrive which never did; others reported calling multiple

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companies and still having to wait hours to receive service. The Commissioner of a major state's Disability Commission (himself a wheelchair user) had been refused accessible taxi service so many times that he has simply stopped calling and made other arrangements.

The experience of users is a response to both capacity and quality constraints—constraints which make it difficult to assess how large the market for accessible service really is.

### Capacity constraints

Accessible taxis are designed to serve a variety of travelers in addition to those using wheelchairs. Unfortunately, in many cities other riders and markets are more profitable than the accessible market; when this is so it appears that drivers make little effort to accommodate people in wheelchairs—**whether or not they are subsidized to do so**. In fact, some of the incentives may aggravate the problem. For example, as an incentive and a practical matter, accessible vehicles are often allowed to jump to the head of the queue at the airport if they are requested—and they are often requested by large groups (of people without serious disabilities) traveling together or those with a lot of luggage. This makes it more attractive to wait in queues at the airport although accessible vehicles which sit at the airport do little good for local residents.

At the same time, in some cities operators with accessible vehicles also have a contract or voucher market for accessible service. In theory this allows an individual accessible vehicle to be more productively used, and more often for people with disabilities. It also makes it possible for transit systems and social service agencies to obtain accessible service at costs far below dedicated vehicle arrangements. However, the theory and the practice don't always meet. In some cities, operators, for obvious reasons, were far more concerned about meeting their contractual obligations than serving "ordinary" travelers with handicaps. This meant that regular accessible taxi service was effectively available only a few hours per day to people in wheelchairs.

Voucher programs also had a mixed impact. In smaller cities where they constituted a fairly large share of the market, drivers were relatively happy to take vouchers—and willing to serve non-voucher wheelchair users as well. However, in other (generally larger) cities, vouchers were not as profitable to the driver who would try to avoid people who had them—or people *likely* to have them such as those in wheelchairs hailing a taxi or calling for an accessible vehicle. (In Boston's taxi voucher program for the elderly, users are warned not to tell the dispatcher ahead of time that they will be using a voucher.)

### Quality Constraints

In addition to often being unable to get an accessible taxis, people with disabilities reported a variety of problems with the service they did receive. Advocates and even regulators suggested that drivers were often unwilling or unable to manage the ramps and/or wheelchairs. Advocates also reported frequently encountering drivers who collected additional charges for the use of the accessible vehicles. (In fact, some advocates to whom we spoke actually assumed it was permissible for drivers to collect extra charges!)

The capacity constraints in some ways became a self-fulfilling prophecy. People using wheelchairs admitted calling multiple operators for service, assuming that only one accessible taxi of the two or three called would show up. However, occasionally all the drivers called did show up; burnt by the experience many drivers refused to respond to other calls for accessible service (again even if they or the vehicle was subsidized in some way).

Overall it appeared as if a few drivers in each city decided to concentrate on users with disabilities and the rest of the accessible vehicles operated as if they were ordinary taxis. Several drivers of accessible vehicles carried cell phones and would only serve people they could call-back to reconfirm the trip. Not surprisingly, the users most satisfied with accessible service were those who had worked out individual arrangements with individual drivers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It is difficult to determine the actual dimension of the market for accessible vehicles because it is still marked by both capacity and quality constraints. There may a latent market for accessible service which would develop if people with disabilities were able to get quality service when they asked for. It is equally true that the latent market might still be very small—but we are unlikely to know until and unless communities can overcome the capacity and quality barriers.

Overall, in order to achieve more accessible market taxis on the street, a City must find a way to help develop the latent market for accessible service, surmount the inexperience and inertia of the industry, offset the higher initial—or long term—costs of providing accessible service, while ensuring that market forces do not deliver an inferior or inappropriate service to people needing accessible service.

## **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH**

In the next stage of the study, the Team will identify *transferable* strategies which have successfully overcome those barriers. The Team will then evaluate the potential for expanding or extending accessible taxi services, both in the communities where they already exist and in other cities and regions. In particular, the Final Report will identify, examine, and rate a variety of techniques, or “best practices” which provide useful ways for other

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communities to implement various types of accessible taxi service. The analysis will consider a) the environment in which each practice would work best (or worst), b) the resources, institutions, or policies needed to make these practices operational , c) how these practices can be modified or customized to meet local needs, and d) and the expected outcomes in the short and long run.

**Table One**  
**Accessible Taxi Cabs**  
**Case Sites Selected**

<i><b>CITY</b></i>	<b>City Pop (000)</b>	<b>Number of Taxis</b>		<b>Interesting Elements</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>W/C</b>	
<b>Chicago</b>	2,896	7,000 (est)	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently increased accessibility requirement to 2% fleet minimum; 14 months ago operators adopted centralized dispatch for accessible taxis only</li> </ul>
<b>Boston</b>	589	1,825	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auctioned additional accessible medallions; easier to get accessible taxi medallion</li> </ul>
<b>Indianapolis</b>	791	150	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market driven accessibility; "most successful" Coach USA project</li> </ul>
<b>Austin</b>	656	596	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City sets maximum number of cabs per company; allows up to 11 additional accessible vehicles</li> </ul>
<b>Portland, OR</b>	529	382	76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possibly highest percent US fleet accessibility; current 20% fleet requirement may be <b>decreased</b></li> </ul>

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		<b>Total</b>	<b>W/C</b>	
<b>Las Vegas</b>	478	1,680	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 2 accessible taxis per company; market supports more; often praised by disability advocates</li> </ul>
<b>Long Beach, CA</b>	461	125	15	<p>Transit operator bought accessible vehicles;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leases them to operator for nominal fee</li> </ul>
<b>Colorado Springs</b>	360	140	3	<p>Market driven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessibility</li> </ul>
<b>Raleigh, NC</b>	276	375	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City supports system-wide accessibility through user-subsidies for registered users</li> </ul>
<b>Arlington, VA</b>	189	324	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 2% fleet accessibility requirement</li> </ul>

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		<b>Total</b>	<b>W/C</b>	
<b>Fort Lauderdale</b>	152	345	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 3.5% fleet accessibility requirement; originally market driven; expansion fueled by 2 for 1 medallion option--each new sedan license holder can operate one additional accessible vehicle</li> </ul>
<b>Pomona, CA</b>	149	85	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market driven service in many small communities</li> </ul>
<b>Pensacola, FLA</b>	56	220	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market driven accessibility; Coach USA site</li> </ul>

**Table Two**  
**MAJOR REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING ACCESSIBLE TAXIS**

<u>CITY</u>	MARKET-DRIVEN			GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION			MANDATES
	Market Niches	Vehicle Productivity	User Subsidies	Discounted Medallions	Operating Concessions	Vehicle Subsidies	
ARLINGTON, VA							•
AUSTIN, TX					•		
BOSTON				•			•
CHARLOTTE, NC					•		
CHICAGO							•
COLORADO SPRINGS	•						
DAYTON	•	•					
DENVER						•	
FORT LAUDERDALE	•						•
HOUSTON		•	•				

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<u>CITY</u>	MARKET-DRIVEN			GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION			MANDATES
	Market Niches	Vehicle Productivity	User Subsidies	Discounted Medallions	Operating Concessions	Vehicle Subsidies	
INDIANAPOLIS	●						
LAS VEGAS							●
LONG BEACH, CA						●	
LOS ANGELES							●
PENSACOLA, FLA							●
PITTSBURGH		●	●				
POMONA, CA	●						
PORTLAND, OR			●				●
RALEIGH, NC			●				
SAN DIEGO					●		
SAN FRANCISCO				●			
WEST PALM BEACH, FLA	●						