

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Committee - Taxi Concerns

During the February 22, 2010 meeting, the Committee raised the following points and concerns regarding taxi related matters:

- taxi drivers are not authorized to pick up passengers from a zone they do not work in, even if they have just dropped off a fare from that location
- certain taxi drivers are not aware of the information guide for taxi drivers in HRM regarding passengers with disabilities; the information guide should be more widely distributed
- certain taxi drivers are refusing to take people with service dogs, in a wheelchair or with groceries; drivers are not obligated to take a call when it comes in for their zone
- there is no audio system in place for visually impaired people to confirm that the fare is accurate when they reach their destination; visually impaired people are reliant on driver providing them with the fare amount
- there is an incentive for taxi drives to expedite receiving a taxi license for an accessible taxi; this is not proving to be successful because many drivers do not chose this option and it does not seem to generate the same revenues as standard taxi service
- one option would be that there be two accessible licences for a certain percentage of taxi licences
- an objection could be to integrate accessible taxis into the regular fleet; drivers would be taking regular and accessible fares
- when HRM had accessible taxis, they were used in conjunction with Access-A-Bus; Access-A-Bus had taxi money and made up a number of calls
- accessible taxis ran mostly during the day, which created problems because those taxis were not available during the evenings
- money was cut for accessible taxis being used by Transit
- concern that people with disabilities do not have the ability to get around HRM past 10:30 p.m. because they can not get an accessible taxi
- there are approximately 250 taxi drivers who want to get a permit for a light for their roof and are not able to

Following the February 22nd meeting, Ms. Helen McFadyen submitted the following concerns and questions:

1. Taxis calls are dispatched (for Yellow Cab in my personal experience, and perhaps other companies) to all taxis located within a 'zone'. Drivers have the right to pick and choose calls and to 'pass' on any call coming over their computer system. They do so because of location sometimes (barareas at night). But this practice also means, that when the fare information includes such details as "has a service dog" or "has groceries", "with a wheelchair", and are displayed, some drivers (often) 'pass' and these types of calls go unresponded for long periods of time. What can be done to ensure that call

response is improved?

2. Taxi meters now have audible messaging capability on their computer interface. Is it possible to adapt them to audibly announce the fare amount? This would prevent drivers overcharging passengers who can't see the meter.
3. The ACPD produced a very useful guide last year ("important information for taxi drivers in HRM about passengers with disabilities"). It seems to be limited in availability to taxi drivers because there is no incentive for them to pick it up or read it. What can be done to increase availability to drivers?
4. Follow up to Question #3: Why not incorporate it (and translations of it) into the taxi driver testing. In my opinion, drivers are failing in knowledge of how to behave, respond appropriately with passengers with disabilities (all disabilities, and seniors, and minorities).