

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

DATE: May 2, 2007

TO: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395 City Hall
Attention: Honorable Wendy Greuel, Chair, Transportation Committee

FROM: Gloria J. Jeff, General Manager
Department of Transportation



SUBJECT: **TAXICAB SERVICE FOR SENIORS IN PACIFIC PALISADES -
COUNCIL MOTION - 07-0682**

SUMMARY

On March 6, 2007, Councilmember Rosendahl introduced a motion before the City Council directing the Department of Transportation and the Department of Aging to investigate and report on complaints about the lack of taxi service for senior citizens in the Pacific Palisades community. The report is to include the number of complaints received, the number of service requests and response levels by each of the franchised taxicab companies that serve the area, the amount of Cityride scrip accepted by the franchised taxicab companies, and details on the ability of the City to issue penalties to franchised taxicab companies or terminate a franchise.

DISCUSSION

Response to Council Motion

Complaints - The Department investigated complaints and taxi dispatch data and contacted interested parties in the Pacific Palisades area. The Department of Aging was also contacted. Neither Department had any records of complaints about taxi service in the Pacific Palisades area going back as far as December of 2004 (the previous 28 months).

Service Performance - Staff determined that service response times in the Pacific Palisades area are good. Please see the spreadsheet provided as Attachment A which includes a full dispatch review of the Pacific Palisades area of the City as compared to total Zone B trips dispatched to primary service area providers. Zone B encompasses the Western portion of the City of Los Angeles (south of Mulholland Drive and west of La Cienega Blvd.) Although the City Council's motion included City Cab as a primary area provider, this is not the case. They have only been allotted vehicles in Zone A and Zone C as their primary service area.

As indicated in the attached spreadsheet, service to Pacific Palisades was considered to closely match that of the total Zone B trips. Zone B had 82.4% of trips completed compared to 81.8% for the Pacific Palisades area. This is considered as a good figure for the City. The total time to accept the trip took 3.01 minutes for all Zone B trips, compared to 3.33 minutes for the Pacific Palisades area trip requests. Additionally, total trip time was 11.61 minutes for all of Zone B trips as compared to 16.36 minutes for the Pacific Palisades area. This is also considered to be a good result due to the approximately five minutes of extra travel time necessary to reach this area of the City.

L. A. Checker Cab had the slowest service response time (at 22.93 minutes) for this area, but they also received the lowest number of service requests for the area (97 trip requests in a three month period). Therefore, it can be assumed that they would have the fewest number of available vehicles near this part of the City, causing a few more minutes of delay in trip completion.

Cityride Scrip Usage - It is not possible to obtain a specific breakdown as to the number of taxicab trips in the Pacific Palisades area in which Cityride scrip is used. There are about 550,000 taxicab trips provided annually throughout the City involving Cityride funding. The annual total dollar amount for such trips is about \$6 million. The maximum amount of scrip that can be used for a one-way taxi trip is \$12.

Company Penalties - The Board of Taxicab Commissioners has a wide range of options for penalizing companies for poor service or other significant violations of the taxicab rules or franchise ordinances. These include fines, suspension of companies from Los Angeles International Airport, and the authority to recommend franchise termination (which requires Council approval). The Department has not found any serious malfeasance by any taxicab companies regarding taxicab service in the Pacific Palisades area that would warrant strong sanctions by the Board or the City Council at this time.

Service Issues

Councilman Rosendahl's staff provided the Department with contact information for a resident who supports transportation services for seniors in the Pacific Palisades area. She said she had heard complaints that taxi companies were not accepting Cityride scrip for senior transportation. We determined that the companies in question were possibly Santa Monica and Malibu based taxi companies that are not eligible to participate in the Cityride program. Apparently, in some cases, seniors obtain rides to areas outside the City of Los Angeles and find that non-franchised taxicabs will not accept their Cityride scrip for the return trip to Pacific Palisades. Or, they call non-franchised companies that operate illegally in Pacific Palisades for their entire taxi trip.

It is entirely possible that some City franchised taxicab drivers have refused to accept Cityride scrip from seniors in Pacific Palisades, even though the Department has no recent related complaints on file. In an article written by a community activist in the February 21, 2007 edition of the Palisadian-Post, the weekly newspaper of Pacific Palisades, it was contended that many

Los Angeles taxi drivers will not provide service there. The article called for non-franchised taxis to be allowed to operate in Pacific Palisades and to process Cityride scrip. (The Department believes that sometimes taxi customers may have complaints, but either do not know how or to whom to voice them, or do not want to go to the effort to do so. These circumstances appear to be more prevalent among seniors.)

Under current ordinances, it would not be legal for a non-franchised, non-regulated taxicab company to enter into a contract with the City to provide Cityride subsidized trips in Los Angeles. Regardless, the Department believes it is not necessary for Pacific Palisades area residents to seek taxi service from outside operators.

Action Plan

The Department believes, based upon dispatch data showing an acceptable level of response times from all six companies authorized to serve Pacific Palisades, that good taxicab service is available to seniors in the community. The Taxicab Regulation Division has therefore taken a two-fold approach to resolve community concerns regarding this situation. The Department is working with the Palisadian-Post to inform the public that there are remedies in place to deal with taxicab service deficiencies. Anyone who is not satisfied with taxicab service in Los Angeles is strongly encouraged to call the Taxicab Complaint Hotline at (800) 501-0999 and voice a complaint.

Secondly, the Department contacted taxicab companies authorized to serve the area to develop an improved service plan for seniors. Nettabai Ahmed, President of the Los Angeles Transportation Group (the trade association of Los Angeles Taxicab companies), is also President of Independent Taxi. He has contacted persons in the Pacific Palisades community who have said they will distribute information to seniors regarding the authorized taxicab companies they should call for prompt taxi service. The Department will monitor taxicab operations in the area, particularly as they pertain to Cityride-funded trips. Poor service or driver discourtesy will result in administrative hearings and appropriate penalties for drivers and companies.

CONCLUSION

While no recent complaints have been filed, it appears that some residents of the Pacific Palisades area have a longstanding perception that City franchised taxi companies provide poor service for seniors and are reluctant to honor Cityride scrip as a method of payment. The Department is coordinating with residents, the media and taxicab companies to assure good service for seniors in the area. The franchised taxicab companies have the resources to fulfill their service obligations under the franchise ordinances and Cityride contracts. The Department will closely monitor conditions to assure that residents are pleased with the quality and timeliness of taxicab service in Pacific Palisades.

Attachment

**Taxicab Dispatch Service Performance
Complete Zone B Taxicab Performance
as Compared to
Pacific Palisades Area Taxicab Performance**

4th Qtr 2006 - All Trips in Zone B by Primary Providers

	4th qtr '06 Zone B trips requested	4th qtr '06 Zone B trips completed	Number of No-Show No-Load	% of Trip Requests Completed	Time to Accept	Total Time to Arrival
Bell Cab	13,423	10,813	2,610	80.6%	3.96	9.79
Beverly Hills Cab	58,665	50,649	8,016	86.3%	2.78	12.10
L. A. Checker Cab	6,600	4,975	1,625	75.4%	3.32	14.91
Independent Taxi	23,268	18,503	4,765	79.5%	3.90	14.11
United Ind. Taxi	66,720	54,739	11,981	82.0%	2.82	11.50
Yellow Cab	59,528	48,323	11,205	81.2%	2.88	10.35
	228,204	188,002	40,202	82.4%	3.01	11.61

4th Qtr 2006 - Pacific Palisades General Area Trips Only

	4th qtr '06 PP-Area trips requested	4th qtr '06 PP-Area trips completed	Number of No-Show No-Load	% of Trip Requests Completed	Time to Accept	Total Time to Arrival
Bell Cab	289	220	69	76.1%	4.25	16.77
Beverly Hills Cab	1,128	989	139	87.7%	2.81	16.13
L. A. Checker Cab	97	74	23	76.3%	4.74	22.93
Independent Taxi	235	185	50	78.7%	5.30	18.34
United Ind. Taxi	541	430	111	79.5%	5.04	18.48
Yellow Cab	1,528	1,226	302	80.2%	2.59	15.04
	3,818	3,124	694	81.8%	3.33	16.36