



DC TRANSPORTATION EQUITY NETWORK

DC Council Public Works & Operations Committee DFHV Performance Oversight Hearing February 16, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairperson Nadeau and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kai Hall and I'm the coordinator for the **DC Transportation Equity Network (DC TEN)**. The DC TEN is a cross-sector coalition of nonprofits committed to seeing a complete transportation system that ensures vulnerable residents are accounted for in the District. Our membership includes the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, DC Families for Safe Streets, MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Friends of the DC Streetcar, HIPS, Citizens Climate Lobby DC, the Washington Interfaith Network, Disability Rights DC, the DC Primary Care Association, and Greater Greater Washington.

Some of our coalition member organizations serve clients who rely on mobility devices to get around. Depending on where their clients live, ride-hailing services and taxis are sometimes the preferred, or, in some cases, the only way to get to and from their appointments. The lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles in both the ride-hailing and taxicab fleet poses a major barrier to mobility for the clients served by some of our coalition's member organizations, and no doubt poses the same challenges for thousands more Washingtonians who rely on ride-hailing services and taxicabs as an option for door-to-door transportation. While our understanding is that the Taxicab Service Improvement Amendment Act of 2012 set specific benchmarks for the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles in taxicab company fleets, in practice, there are still many challenges in reliably being able to access taxis for people who use wheelchairs.

We would like to know what progress is being made in addressing this issue and what barriers exist to meeting the requirements set by the Taxicab Service Improvement Amendment Act of 2012.

With that said, we would like the Committee to ask DFHV leaders the following questions:

- What are the barriers inhibiting taxicab companies from reaching the 20% benchmark of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in their fleets set by the law, given only one out of the twelve companies listed in the pre-hearing questions met the legal requirement?
- How might the \$500,000 WAV incentive best be used to quickly deliver results to provide people who rely on wheelchairs reliable access to wheelchair accessible vehicles?
- Does DFHV have a sense of the cost incurred by people who rely on wheelchair users when they're not able to access wheelchair accessible taxicabs? By cost, this may include the price of ride-hailing services, the cost of missing medical appointments because of no-shows due to lack of WAVs, and the cost of lack of access to jobs due to limited mobility options.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kai Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kai" and last name "Hall" clearly distinguishable.

Kai Hall
Coordinator, DC Transportation Equity Network