

STUDY ON TAXI ACCESSIBILITY OF HONG KONG

REPORT



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

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Background and Study Objectives

1. The Equal Opportunities Commission (“EOC”) has the statutory responsibility to promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination. The EOC is responsible for implementing the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”), a legislation that prohibits discrimination, harassment and vilification on the ground of disability. Under section 26 and 27 of the DDO, it is possibly unlawful for public transport operators to discriminate against persons with disabilities (“PWDs”) by providing facilities for transport or travel which are inaccessible to PWDs.¹

2. In this regard, this study aims to conduct a preliminary review on taxi accessibility in Hong Kong, with specific objectives as follows:

- To review the current situation of taxi accessibility, in relation to government policies and regulations, and relevant statistics indicating the supply and demand of wheelchair-accessible taxis (“WATs”) in Hong Kong;
- To outline the views of different non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”) representing PWDs on the issue of taxi accessibility;
- To review overseas experience on the issue of taxi accessibility and WATs, especially focusing on cities of comparable size and population to Hong Kong;
- To make recommendations on improving the accessibility of taxi in Hong Kong, especially for the premium taxi (later renamed as “franchised taxis”) first proposed by the Government in June 2016 which offered taxi service of higher quality than ordinary taxi.²

Current Situation of Taxi Accessibility of Hong Kong

¹ *Disability Discrimination Ordinance, Cap 487 § 26-27.*

² Legislative Council (June 21, 2016). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport Public Transport Strategy Study – Role and Positioning Review: Premium Taxis and Increasing the Seating Capacity of Public Light Buses*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20160621cb4-1124-1-e.pdf>

Supply and Demand of Wheelchair-accessible Taxis

3. Taxi is the fourth most commonly used public transport in Hong Kong, with 966,400 daily passenger journeys on average in 2015.³ As of July 2016, there are a total of 18,163 taxi licences in Hong Kong. Of these, 15,250 are for urban taxis, 2,838 are for New Territories taxis and 75 are for Lantau taxis.⁴ There are over 40,000 taxi drivers, with the majority of them being self-employed rentee-drivers or owner-drivers.⁵

4. Two existing taxi operators, namely Diamond Cab (鑽的), and SynCab (星群的士), are providing passengers with WATs and service of higher quality in the form of hire-as-a-whole service.^{6,7,8} The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation has also provided the Accessible Hire Car service (易達轎車) since 2008. Examples of these taxis and vehicles are at **Appendix I**. The following table is a comparison of services of the three operators:

	Diamond Cab (鑽的)	SynCab (星群的士)	Accessible Hire Car (易達轎車)
No. of wheelchair-accessible vehicles (as of December 2016)	7	74 ⁹	20

³ Census and Statistics Department (2016). *Monthly Digest of Statistics: October 2016*. Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10100022016MM10B0100.pdf>

⁴ Legislative Council (July 13, 2016). *LCQ21: Premium Taxis*. Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201607/13/P2016071200628.htm>

⁵ Legislative Council (November 6, 2015). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport: Taxi Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20151106cb4-119-8-e.pdf>

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ PrimeCab (派的), a taxi operator, introduced 10 taxis with extra-large cargo space in 2016, but those taxis are not wheelchair-accessible.

⁸ Another operator, Jumbo Taxi (珍寶的士), introduced 60 taxis with a spacious interior and extra-large cargo space in December 2016. Yet, its taxis are not wheelchair-accessible which aim to target business travellers. (Yau, C. (December 2016). *Hong Kong taxi trade fights back with dozens more cabs offering a premium service*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2050861/hong-kong-taxi-trade-fights-back-dozens-more-cabs>)

⁹ SynCab's fleet also contains 32 taxis which are not wheelchair-accessible. (Hong Kong Economic Journal (January 12, 2017). 「星群的士推繁忙地區特選服務試驗計劃」. Retrieved from <http://www2.hkej.com/instantnews/current/article/1472417/%E6%98%9F%E7%BE%A4%E7%9A%84%E5%A3%AB%E6%8E%A8%E7%B9%81%E5%BF%99%E5%9C%B0%E5%8D%80%E7%89%B9%E9%81%B8%E6%9C%8D%E5%8B%99%E8%A9%A6%E9%A9%97%E8%A8%88%E5%8A%83>)

Established since	2011	2015	2008
No. of seats for wheelchair users	2	1	2
Wheelchair specifications	Front seat: 0.58m (w) x 1.31m (h), 200 kg; Back seat: 0.63m (w) x 1.32m (h), 200 kg	0.7m (w) x 1.4m (h), 200kg	Front seat: 0.66m (w) x 1.3m (h) x 200kg; Back seat: 0.66m (w) x 1.32m (h) x 200kg
Price (as of December 2016)	Point-to-point charge: by quotation, with minimum charge of \$115; Hourly rental: \$300 per hour with minimum booking of one hour	Charged according to the metre, with \$80 fee for advance reservation	First 16km or any part thereof: \$160; Every subsequent km or part thereof: \$10

Sources: Operators' websites; Legislative Council Paper¹⁰; South China Morning Post¹¹.

5. Currently, only 0.5% of taxis in Hong Kong are wheelchair accessible, the figure is significantly lower than other cities or regions worldwide with similar income level. For instance, in England, 58% of all taxis were wheelchair accessible in 2015 while all 22,500 London taxis were wheelchair accessible (refer to paragraphs 18 to 28 for overseas experience in detail).¹²

6. According to Census and Statistics Department's report in December 2014,¹³ there are 320,500 people (4.5% of the total population) with restriction

¹⁰ Legislative Council (November 6, 2015). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport: Taxi Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20151106cb4-119-8-e.pdf>

¹¹ Yau, C. (July 19, 2016). Road Rage: Why Hong Kong's Cabbies Want to Bump New Players Off the Road. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/1991872/road-rage-why-hong-kongs-cabbies-want-bump-new-players-road

¹² U.K. Department for Transport (2015). *Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics: England 2015*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/456733/taxi-private-hire-vehicles-statistics-2015.pdf

¹³ Census and Statistics Department (2014). *Special Topics Report No.62: Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases*. Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11301622014XXXXB0100.pdf>

in body movement in Hong Kong. Among those, 90,700 people always or sometimes required a wheelchair to move or walk around. On average, the taxi-to-population ratio is 2.47 taxis per 1,000 residents,¹⁴ whereas the figure for WAT is 0.25 WAT per 1,000 persons with restriction in body movement. As WAT is available for both people with or without disabilities, the WAT-to-population ratio is indeed 0.011 WAT per 1,000 residents. This illustrates the supply of WATs is significantly lower than the supply of ordinary taxis in Hong Kong.

Current Policies and Regulations on Taxi Accessibility

7. The Transport Department's Transport Planning and Design Manual ("TPDM") lays out some guidelines in Volume 6, Chapter 8 regarding public transport services for PWDs, including for taxi services.¹⁵ For instance, there is a scheme that allows PWDs to board and alight from taxis in restricted zone except 24 hours restricted zones and expressways (paragraph 8.8.2.10, TPDM), braille and tactile taxi registration mark plates are required to be installed on the rear left hand door of the taxi (paragraph 8.8.2.11, TPDM), and talking taxi metre is introduced to facilitate passengers with visual impairment to know the taxi fare (paragraph 8.8.2.12, TPDM).

8. TPDM also stated that access ramps should be provided at taxi stands to facilitate wheelchair users to board and alight from taxi (paragraph 8.8.2.13, TPDM). However, unlike buses and railways, there is no specific design and construction requirement in the manual for taxis to have accessible facilities such as taxi loading wheelchair ramp, low floor or wide compartment design.¹⁶

9. According to Transport and Housing Bureau's ("THB's") study in April 2016, about 11,000 taxis (near 60% of all taxis in Hong Kong) have been installed with taxi metres which can announce the taxi registration number and taxi fare.¹⁷ The study also proposed to study the designation of taxi stands for WATs at major public facilities like hospitals that are frequently used by

¹⁴ As estimated by the Census and Statistics Department, the population of Hong Kong is 7,346,700 in mid-2016

(<http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp150.jsp?tableID=001&ID=0&productType=8>).

¹⁵ Transport Department (2015). *Transport Planning and Design Manual*, Vol.6, Ch.8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Legislative Council (April 15, 2016). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport: Public Transport Strategy Study – Topical Study Barrier-free Facilities of Public Transport Service*.

Retrieved from

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20160415cb4-831-5-e.pdf>

PWDs.¹⁸

10. Moreover, the same study mentioned that some vehicle manufacturers are developing a liquefied petroleum gas-driven vehicle model which is wheelchair accessible and should be suitable for use as taxis.¹⁹ Although THB's study stated the authority has made on-going effort to encourage the taxi trade to introduce WATs, it did not specify any plans to formulate legislation or policy to mandate taxis to be wheelchair accessible.

11. Two motor companies, Nissan and Toyota, announced in 2014²⁰ and 2016²¹ the release of their new model of WATs, respectively. Toyota currently has a market share of over 90 per cent of taxis in Hong Kong and it estimated that about 10,000 existing Toyota Comfort taxis on road have a car age of over 13 years old and will need to be retired and replaced.²² The company is planning to cease the production of the older generation of ordinary taxis once the new WATs are launched and approved by the Government.²³

The Introduction of Franchised Taxi

12. The Government is currently studying the feasibility to introduce franchised taxis (originally named as premium taxi) under the Role and Positioning Review of the Public Transport Strategy Study. The proposal for franchised taxi was first formally introduced at the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Panel on Transport on 21 June 2016.²⁴ A follow-up policy paper was submitted by the Government to the Panel on Transport on 17 March 2017 for LegCo members to discuss.²⁵ The policy objective of introducing franchised

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Oriental Daily. (December 24, 2014). "日產 NV200 無阻礙的士 明年起投入服務". Retrieved from http://hk.on.cc/hk/bkn/cnt/lifestyle/20141224/bkn-20141224115836505-1224_00982_001.html?refer=hn2

²¹ Yau, C. (October, 2016). Could This HK\$300,000 Hybrid Taxi be the New Look of Hong Kong Cabs? *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/2038545/hk300000-hybrid-taxi-hit-hong-kong-market-next-year-toyota>

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Legislative Council (June 21, 2016). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport Public Transport Strategy Study – Role and Positioning Review: Premium Taxis and Increasing the Seating Capacity of Public Light Buses*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20160621cb4-1124-1-e.pdf>

²⁵ Legislative Council (March 17, 2017). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport, Public Transport Strategy Study - Role and Positioning Review, Personalised and Point-to-Point*

taxis is to set new service standards for the taxi trade, enhance quality of service and meet the community's demand for diversified services.²⁶

13. According to Government's paper submitted to the LegCo, THB proposed to grant three franchises which each comprise 200 franchised taxis under the trial scheme. This adds up to a total of about 600 franchised taxis, which is about three per cent of the 18 000-odd taxis in Hong Kong at present. The franchise will be time-limited lasting for five years.²⁷ The fare level of franchised taxis will be higher than ordinary taxis, in order to offset expenses arising from higher operating cost. The Government proposed to set the fare level of franchised taxis at about 35% to 50% above the ordinary taxi fare.²⁸

14. Regarding the accessibility requirement of these franchised taxis, the operators will be required to provide at least 50% of WATs (instead of all 600 franchised taxis). The Government also proposed that if a bidder of franchised taxis proposes a percentage of wheelchair-accessible vehicles higher than the requirement, the application will be accorded with a higher score under the assessment.²⁹

15. THB also proposed for franchised taxi to prescribe the basic service standards on the compartment facilities, such as providing free Wi-Fi and mobile phone charging facilities for passengers' convenience. Apart from the basic service standards and vehicle price requirement, THB proposed that the operators can decide on its own the type of vehicles to be used, such as the use of environment-friendly vehicles (including electric vehicles), vehicles with larger compartment and luggage storage space, etc.³⁰ The Government also proposed to require operators of franchised taxis to provide training courses to the drivers.

Transport Services. Retrieved from

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20170317cb4-666-5-e.pdf>

²⁶ Legislative Council (June 21, 2016). *Panel on Transport Meeting on 21 June 2016: Background Brief on Premium Taxis*. Retrieved from

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20160621cb4-1124-2-e.pdf>

²⁷ Legislative Council (March 17, 2017). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport, Public Transport Strategy Study - Role and Positioning Review, Personalised and Point-to-Point Transport Services*. Retrieved from

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20170317cb4-666-5-e.pdf>

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Legislative Council (June 21, 2016). *Legislative Council Panel on Transport Public Transport Strategy Study – Role and Positioning Review: Premium Taxis and Increasing the Seating Capacity of Public Light Buses*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20160621cb4-1124-1-e.pdf>

Views on Taxi Accessibility from NGOs Representing PWDs

16. The Transport Department has set up a Working Group on Access to Public Transport by People with Disabilities (“WG”) which comprises around 20 NGOs representing PWDs. The WG normally holds meeting on a quarterly basis for members to exchange views on ways to further improve the accessibility of local public transport.

17. Below are some summarised views on taxi accessibility from these NGOs, extracted from the meeting minutes of the WG from February 2014 to February 2016 (translated from Chinese):

- The height of taxis in Hong Kong is currently restricted by regulations, which created difficulties for wheelchair users who are tall or using relatively large wheelchair, to board and alight from taxis. Some NGOs therefore suggested the Government to ease the height restriction accordingly.
- Some NGOs suggested the Government to provide monetary incentive for the taxi industry to purchase WATs, or even to pass a legislation which requires taxi owners to only purchase WATs.
- Some NGOs suggested the Government to conduct a study to explore the possibility for taxi to use smaller car wheels in order to lower taxi’s height. They also suggested the Government to amend the current provision which requires taxi to install its “illuminated taxi sign” on the top of its roof. The sign is suggested to be installed at the side of the car instead.
- Some NGOs said that some WAT’s wheelchair restraint system fails to tightly lock the front wheels of the wheelchair, which may lead to overturning of the wheelchair.
- Some NGOs said there were WAT drivers who refused to pick up PWDs. The drivers claimed that their taxis are not for picking up wheelchair users, but for carrying luggage only.

Overseas Experience

18. This study has also reviewed the accessibility of taxis and the availability of WATs in some overseas cities. Examples of those WATs are at **Appendix II**. The following table is a comparison of the percentage of WATs available in Hong Kong and other overseas cities:

Cities	Hong Kong	London	Sydney	New York City
No. of WATs (as of December 2016)	81	22,500	609	1,557
Total no. of taxi fleet	18,163	22,500	~5,000	20,746
% of WAT / all taxi fleet	0.5% ³¹	100% ³²	12.1% ³³	7.5% ³⁴
Population	7.35 million ³⁵	8.67 million ³⁶	4.92 million ³⁷	8.55 million ³⁸

19. As shown above, the percentage of available WATs of Hong Kong is significantly lower than other overseas cities. In addition, New York City (“NYC”) has promised to make 50% of its yellow medallion taxis wheelchair accessible by 2020.

London, United Kingdom: Licensing Policy by Local Authorities

20. In 2015, 58% of all taxis in England were wheelchair accessible and all 22,500 London taxis were wheelchair accessible. In England outside London, 84% of all taxi fleets are WATs in metropolitan areas.³⁹

³¹ Refer to paragraph 3-5 of this study.

³² Data of 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/456733/taxi-private-hire-vehicles-statistics-2015.pdf

³³ Data of mid-2012:

<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/transport-nsw-disability-action-plan-2012-2017>

³⁴ Data of 2016: http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/downloads/pdf/2016_tlc_factbook.pdf

³⁵ Data of mid-2016:

<http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp150.jsp?tableID=001&ID=0&productType=8>

³⁶ Data of mid-2015:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalescotlandandnorthernireland>

³⁷ Data of mid-2015:

<http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3218.0Main%20Features12014-15?open=document&tabname=Summary&prodno=3218.0&issue=2014-15&num=&view=>

³⁸ Data of mid-2015: <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-81.html>

³⁹ U.K. Department for Transport (2015). *Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics: England 2015*. Retrieved from

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/456733/taxi-private-hire-vehicles-statistics-2015.pdf

21. To attain such a high proportion of WATs, the UK Government mainly relied on local licensing authorities to issue regulations and policies on taxi fleets. For example, Transport for London has issued a “Conditions of Fitness” taxi licensing policy which required every taxi operating in London to be wheelchair accessible.⁴⁰ The Government has not provided any financial incentive scheme to encourage taxi operators to opt for WATs.⁴¹

22. Similar to London, Edinburgh and other 175 authorities (61%) required wheelchair-accessible vehicles in all or part of their taxi fleet as at March 2015.⁴²

Sydney, Australia: Subsidy Schemes for Drivers and Passengers

23. For Sydney of New South Wales (“NSW”),⁴³ the Government launched multiple subsidy and incentive schemes to increase the uptake of WATs. For instance, the Government offered an interest-free loan for operators to purchase WATs and removed the AU\$1,000 (equal to around HK\$5,758) licence fee for WATs in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.⁴⁴

24. In addition, drivers of WAT are provided with incentive payment of AU\$15 (before tax, equal to around HK\$86) for each wheelchair passenger they carried, from 1 July 2016. The payment aims to incentivize the drivers to take wheelchair passengers, in order to improve WAT’s reliability and response times. The payment is made to WAT drivers at no cost to passengers.⁴⁵ Also, drivers of WATs are required to undergo special training after being issued with a driver authority.⁴⁶

25. A Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (“TTSS”) is provided for NSW residents who are unable to use public transport because of a disability. The scheme

⁴⁰ Transport for London (2007). *Construction and Licensing of Motor Taxis for Use in London: Conditions of Fitness*. Retrieved from <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/taxi-conditions-of-fitness.pdf>

⁴¹ Legislative Council (July 2007). *Information Note: Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Services in Sydney and London*. Retrieved from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/sec/library/0607in15-e.pdf>

⁴² U.K. House of Commons (2016). *Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in England & Wales*. Retrieved from <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN00601/SN00601.pdf>

⁴³ Taxis operating in Sydney are regulated by the NSW government.

⁴⁴ Transport for NSW. *Wheelchair Accessible Taxis*. Retrieved from <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/operators/taxis/wheelchair-accessible-taxis>

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

covers 50% of the total taxi fare and maximum of AU\$60 (equal to around HK\$345) for eligible passengers, which also increases the utilisation rate of WATs by PWDs.⁴⁷

New York City, United States: Court Case under Americans with Disabilities Act

26. In January 2011, a federal class lawsuit was filed against NYC and the New York Taxi and Limousine Commission (“TLC”) to address the severe lack of WATs. When the case was initiated, 231 of the City’s 13,437 yellow taxis – just 1.8% – could accommodate wheelchairs. The case was settled in 2014 which TLC agreed to make its yellow medallion taxis fleet 50% wheelchair accessible by the end of 2020.⁴⁸

27. Half of existing unrestricted medallions retiring each year will be converted to wheelchair-accessible vehicles and the authority will establish Taxicab Improvement Fund to help fund additional owners and drivers providing accessible service, funded through a passenger surcharge beginning in 2015.⁴⁹ In June 2014, the New York state legislature was sent a plan to make NYC’s outer borough cabs – fleets not covered by the settlement – also 50% accessible.⁵⁰ In 2015, 596 of 13,587 (4.2%) yellow taxis and 961 of 7,159 (13.4%) street hail liveries were accessible for wheelchair users.⁵¹

28. The TLC also is in-charge-of the Accessible Dispatch Program (“ADP”), which provides wheelchair accessible dispatching services for yellow cabs. Passengers using this service pay the normal metered taxi fare and incur no extra cost. In 2015, 47,000 trips were booked through the ADP.⁵²

⁴⁷ Transport for NSW. *Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme*. Retrieved from <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/community/concessions-and-schemes/taxi-transport-subsidy-scheme>

⁴⁸ *Taxis For All Campaign. v. Taxi and Limousine Commission, et al. (TLC)*. Retrieved from <http://dralegal.org/case/taxis-for-all-campaign-v-taxi-and-limousine-commission-et-al-tlc/#files>

⁴⁹ New York Taxi and Limousine Commission. *Wheelchair Accessibility: Proposed Rules and Phase-in Plan*. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/downloads/pdf/wheelchair_accessibility_rules.pdf

⁵⁰ *Taxis For All Campaign. v. Taxi and Limousine Commission, et al. (TLC)*. Retrieved from <http://dralegal.org/case/taxis-for-all-campaign-v-taxi-and-limousine-commission-et-al-tlc/#files>

⁵¹ New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (2016). *2016 TLC Factbook*. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/downloads/pdf/2016_tlc_factbook.pdf

⁵² New York Taxi and Limousine Commission. *Wheelchair Accessibility: Proposed Rules and Phase-in Plan*. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/downloads/pdf/wheelchair_accessibility_rules.pdf

Conclusion and Recommendations

29. In conclusion, this study found that there is an insufficient supply of WATs for PWDs, comparing to ordinary taxis, in Hong Kong. While there are 2.47 taxis for each 1,000 residents, there is only 0.25 WAT for each 1,000 persons with restriction in body movement (or 0.011 WAT for each 1,000 residents). Currently, only 0.5% of taxis in Hong Kong are wheelchair accessible, the figure is significantly lower than other cities with similar population and income level worldwide.

30. In addition, multiple NGOs representing PWDs have raised concerns regarding the accessibility of existing taxis and advocated for introducing more WATs.

31. According to Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (“CRPD”) (rectified by the People’s Republic of China and also applied to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region):

“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to PWDs access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, ... open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities...;” (emphasis added)⁵³

32. Therefore, it is recommended that the Government to take prompt actions, with reference to overseas experience, to increase the uptake of WATs in Hong Kong. As a first step, the Government should consider requiring all 600 franchised taxis in the trial scheme to be designed as wheelchair accessible. This will increase the proportion of WATs from 0.5% to 3.6%.

33. Also, given that most of the existing taxis on road have a high car age and will need to be retired and replaced in the near future, the Government should consider seizing the window of opportunity and require all newly purchased taxi and retiring taxi to be converted to WATs, similar to the approach done by

⁵³ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

NYC.

34. To maintain a stable supply of taxi and not to impose substantial burden to the taxi trade, the Government may consider launching financial incentive schemes, similar to the ones of NSW, to encourage operators and drivers to opt for WATs over ordinary taxis.

35. As the Government is proposed to require franchise operators of the franchised taxis to provide training courses to drivers, it is recommended that the courses should also include equal opportunities and disability awareness training to minimise the attitudinal barrier for PWDs to ride a taxi. The Government may also partner with the EOC and the taxi trade to provide similar training to ordinary taxi drivers.

36. Looking forward, it is suggested that the Government should not only limit its accommodation measures on taxis for wheelchair users, but also for persons with other types of disabilities, in order to create a fully inclusive environment for all PWDs.

Equal Opportunities Commission
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Hong Kong

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Appendix I – Examples of Wheelchair-accessible Taxi/Vehicle in Hong Kong

Diamond Cab



SynCab



Accessible Hire Car



Appendix II – Overseas Examples of Wheelchair-accessible Taxi

New York City, U.S.



London, U.K.



New South Wales, Australia

