

PROJECT BACKGROUND
May 11, 2011

What is it?

rollDC is the name given to Washington, DC's new wheelchair accessible taxi service. This new accessible service began a testing phase in early 2010, with only 5 taxis. Twenty ramp-equipped taxi vehicles are now available for service, operated by Yellow Cab of D.C. and Royal Cab. The mini-van taxi vehicles are designed to serve people who use wheelchairs and scooters and who cannot use traditional taxi sedans.

How did it start?

Disability advocates asked for accessible taxi service for DC for many years. The city tried to get accessible taxis, but the unique regulatory structure of the city's taxi industry proved a significant challenge. Recent local plans identified a strong need for accessible taxi service for the Nation's Capital, and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) took the initiative in 2007 to plan a pilot project, working with several local organizations. One of the key catalysts for the pilot project was the availability of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Freedom funding, which is intended to improve accessible transportation. The FTA granted funds for the pilot project in 2008, and the TPB facilitated planning meetings with the two taxi companies, the DC Taxicab Commission and the DC Office of Disability Rights to develop parameters for the accessible taxi service and coordinate the components necessary to start accessible taxi service in D.C.

How was it funded and implemented?

Today's launch of rollDC is truly a partnership success story. While the TPB led implementation of the project, many people and agencies played a role in making the service a reality. Funding came from the FTA which provided a \$1 million New Freedom Grant and the D.C. Taxicab Commission which gave \$200,000 in matching funds. Yellow Cab of D.C. and Royal Cab also provided financial support as well as inordinate amounts of time and effort. Their dedication to implementation of the pilot was critical. Also, the D.C. Office of Disabilities Rights provided key input and guidance. Numerous national organizations and other taxicab companies shared innovative practices. And Robert Coward, of DC Adapt, deserves special credit for his role in the pilot. Finally, in early 2010, selected taxi drivers from the two taxi companies received professional training and the pilot began, with accessible taxi service available 24/7 in DC.

Has the pilot been successful? Ridership on the service has grown significantly from the early months, without any formal marketing. During the first full month of service in February 2010, with just five accessible taxi vehicles in service, 49 wheelchair taxi trips were provided. By March of this year, with all 20 accessible taxis available, ridership reached 349 monthly wheelchair taxi trips. The May 2011 launch of rollDC is expected to generate even greater demand for the accessible taxis.

More Information: A User's Guide, FAQ's and link to a customer survey at: www.tpbcoordination.org

Yellow Cab Co. of D.C.
(202) 544-1213
www.dcyellowcab.com

Royal Cab
(202) 398-0500
www.dctaxionline.com