



NEW YORK CITY TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

- [Home](#)
- [About TLC](#)
- [Taxi of Tomorrow](#)
- [TLC Rules and Local Laws](#)
- [Court Administration](#)
- [Passenger Information](#)
- [Licensing](#)
- [Safety & Emissions](#)
- [Industry Information](#)
- [Commission Meetings](#)
- TLC News**
 - Proposed Rules
 - Newly-Passed Rules
 - TLC Regulatory Agenda - Fiscal Year 2011
 - Average Medallion Prices
 - Photo Gallery
 - Industry Notices
 - Press Releases
 - Public Notices
 - Informational Presentations
 - Testimony
 - Newsletters
 - Sign up for official e-mail updates, news and Industry Notices from the TLC
- [Current Licensees](#)
- [Employment Opportunities](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contact / Visit TLC](#)
- [TLC Site Map](#)

TLC NEWS | TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NYC COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Delivered May 16, 2002 Good afternoon, Chairman Liu, Chairman Weprin, and members of the City Council Transportation and Finance Committees. My name is Matthew Daus, the Chair/Commissioner of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to present testimony specific to the Fiscal Year 2003 Executive Budget for the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

I am pleased to report today that the TLC continues to remain true to its mission of protecting the riding public through the effective licensing, regulation and enforcement of the taxicab, for-hire vehicle, paratransit and commuter van industries.

As always, the TLC's actions are highly reflective of the agency's goal of achieving a high standard of customer service through the creation of innovative programs and initiatives as well as regulatory reforms that maintain appropriately high standards for our licensees.

The TLC's Expense Budget for Fiscal Year 2003 is \$22,392,825. Of that amount, \$17,835,971 is for Personal Service and \$4,556,854 is for Other Than Personal Service (OTPS). The Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2003 provides for an authorized headcount of 412 full-time employees.

I am pleased to report that, while the TLC did absorb budget reductions, the agency has been able to effectively provide all of its core services at either normal or, in some cases, enhanced levels. One of the key tools the TLC utilized to make this possible is our MAPP (or Management Accountability and Productivity Program) Unit, which was an outgrowth of the NYPD's successful COMPSTAT program and the Department of Correction's TEAMS concept. Through the MAPP Unit's detailed statistical analysis of each division and responsibility center in the agency, we have been able to streamline our processes and operations to boost performance while improving the delivery of services. These improvements are most notable in our Licensing, Enforcement and Adjudications Divisions.

The TLC intends to absorb the aforementioned budget reductions through an effective combination of reductions in administrative expenses. For example, the TLC plans to significantly reduce its mailing costs by using computers more effectively to communicate with its regulated industries. I will report in greater detail on our use of computers to streamline operations later in this testimony.

Currently, the TLC is embarking on Phase III of our Woodside Facility's Lane Upgrade Capital Project. Phases I and II are near completion and include repairing the roof of the building, re-paving the yard at the facility, and creating a more comfortable waiting area and interior restrooms for the 12,187 medallion taxicab drivers whose vehicles are inspected at this facility three times per year. Phase III, scheduled to begin this summer with a completion goal of December 2003, entails upgrading the medallion inspection section of the facility with state-of-the-art OBDII (On-Board Diagnostic) testing equipment, new vehicle lifts, and updated computerized inspection stations. We are excited about the lane upgrade as the TLC's inspection facility is a keystone to ensuring that New York City maintains the highest standards of safety and comfort for the nearly 1 million passengers who ride taxicabs everyday. This is a \$9 million dollar capital project. In addition, the TLC has sought \$800,000 in federal CMAQ reimbursement funding (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program) for software and inspector salaries over a four-year period as it is participating in a program to test the effectiveness of this inspection facility towards improving air quality. Approximately \$319,000 of this funding has thus far been certified for distribution upon our claim.

The LIVESCAN Electronic Fingerprint Capital Project is also near completion. LiveScan is a \$138,000 Capital Project that will allow the TLC to scan licensees' fingerprints so that the Division of Criminal Justice Services can provide vital criminal background check information to the agency within 24 hours of transmittal. All LiveScan hardware has been delivered to the Agency, and the TLC is in the final stages of linking the LiveScan information to the TLC's computer database and photo imaging systems. It is anticipated that LiveScan will be fully operational in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2003.

Another capital project that is currently underway is the enhancement of the TLC's computer systems. The computer upgrades will assist the agency in doing more with less through the use of technology. This technology includes using e-mail to communicate with licensees, and allows licensees to access their records and the records of affiliated drivers and vehicle owners through the Internet. Ultimately, licensees will be able to submit renewal applications and complete a variety of other licensing transactions directly from their personal computers. This initiative will benefit the TLC's many licensees who would prefer to transact their business with the agency via the internet rather than take time off from work to visit the TLC's Licensing facility, while also further easing congestion at this facility.

The TLC is constantly striving to improve its interactive service options by encouraging our licensee customers in the direction of conducting transactions by computer, which simultaneously enhances both customer service and agency efficiency.

A number of new initiatives have been very successful in terms of addressing longstanding problems with creative solutions. One example is the TLC's enforcement initiative entitled "Operation Street Hail." In this initiative, undercover TLC Inspectors hail illegal liveries or licensed liveries operating outside of their licensed authority. In the case of licensed liveries, summonses are issued. Illegal, unlicensed liveries are subject to seizure and for certain repeat offenders, forfeiture of their vehicles. This has sent a strong "zero tolerance" message to the industries we regulate, and the positive results are being felt.

While Operation Street Hail began as an outgrowth of the TLC's Industry Recovery Plan to assist our regulated industries in the aftermath of 9/11, it also benefits the public by protecting them against potentially unlicensed, underinsured drivers. We began the initiative in December 2001 and, as of May 3, 2002 we have issued a total of 3,746 summonses, and have seized 220 vehicles. In part, Operation Street Hail has also fulfilled my pledge to the Council to once and for all eradicate the problem of illegal liveries.

In terms of protecting the public, I am also proud to report that we have actually tripled our Mayor's Management Report target for the commencement of padlocking procedures against illegal bases, for the purposes of getting these unlicensed operators out of our communities. This was made all the more challenging by the fact that we have chased these illegal bases from the storefronts they once operated, into places such as restaurants, flower shops and residential apartments. Despite these attempts to evade enforcement, the TLC has continued to gather intelligence from a number of sources that has enabled us to stay at least one step ahead of these illegal businesses.

Another revolutionary initiative greatly reduced the traffic at our Long Island City facility during the months of March and April - often referred to as "March Madness." In the past, March Madness had been a product of the annually recurring rush of FHV transactions that resulted in long lines and a chaotic atmosphere at the agency's licensing facility. This year, we shifted from a system where as many as 90,000 individuals would need to visit the facility in person to transact their business, to one in which the approximately 800 licensed FHV bases would batch and transact their work by a smoothly executed appointment system. This change enhanced both customer service and our efficiency significantly.

Another initiative on which we are embarking is the creation of an agency-wide correspondence unit that will centralize and improve the manner in which we respond to information requests, compliments and complaints. We will also be enhancing and reorganizing our Consumer Relations Unit so that it will provide true one-stop shopping for TLC services for both the public and our licensees.

In conclusion, while I have limited my testimony to only a few of the many areas in which we are doing more with less, I believe that our accomplishments show the TLC to be an agency on the move that is both responsive and proactive, and flexible enough to evolve as circumstances require. I now look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

