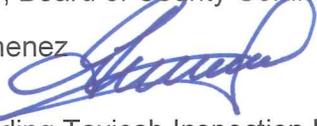


**Date:** September 25, 2015

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor 

**Subject:** Report Regarding Taxicab Inspection Process

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On April 8, 2014, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Resolution No. R-359-14 directing the Mayor or Mayor's Designee to prepare a report evaluating ways in which to improve the effectiveness of the County's taxicab inspection process. This report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-359-14.

Taxicabs are inspected to verify compliance with Section 31-89 of Chapter 31 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, which describes the vehicle standards applicable to taxicabs. These standards address safety and aesthetic components of the vehicle. The Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER) For-Hire Transportation Division's Vehicle Inspection Station performs approximately 20,000 vehicle safety and cosmetic inspections annually and is the primary mechanism utilized by RER for ensuring that regulated for-hire vehicles are in compliance with the County Code.

In addition to the inspection facility, RER maintains a For-Hire Enforcement Unit responsible for ensuring compliance with the various for-hire ordinances. These officers conduct field inspections on all regulated for-hire vehicles including taxicabs and chauffeurs for compliance with specific standards contained in the County Code. During a field inspection of a for-hire vehicle, an enforcement officer is required to verify the status of the driver's chauffeur registration, and inspect for violations of chauffeur standards, and inspect the vehicle to confirm that there are no deficiencies that create an unsafe condition such as worn tires, cracked windshields and/or windows, and inoperative headlights. The officer also inspects the for-hire vehicle for cosmetic and aesthetic standards. All of this activity is expected to be conducted within 5 minutes so as to minimize the amount of time a taxicab is prevented from providing for-hire transportation. Vehicles found to be in non-conformance with vehicle standards are issued a Field Enforcement Report describing the deficiency and requiring the deficiency to be corrected within a specific time frame.

In an effort to ensure that taxicab vehicles are in conformance with cosmetic and aesthetic standards at all times, and to improve the overall condition of taxicab vehicles, as of April 2014 RER has implemented the following changes to existing enforcement and inspection protocols:

1. RER has directed its Enforcement Unit to be more proactive in cosmetic inspections of for-hire vehicles during field inspections; and
2. RER is requiring staff at the vehicle inspection station to conduct full cosmetic inspections of all vehicles issued a Field Enforcement Report, in addition to specific vehicle deficiencies identified in the report.

The cosmetic inspections at the inspection station are done at no additional charge to the drivers or vehicle owners. Staff at the Vehicle Inspection Station have been entering the results of the vehicle inspection into the division's shared license information database as the inspections occurred. These entries include descriptions of any vehicle deficiencies. This provides real-time vehicle inspection data for management and enforcement personnel and provides the customer with concise details regarding any vehicle deficiencies noted during the inspection. As of July 2014, RER staff is also utilizing an updated vehicle inspection standards manual to establish specific inspection guidelines and standards

for identifying vehicle deficiencies to provide a more uniform inspection process and to address current concerns.

In addition, RER has implemented enhanced quality control measures at the Vehicle Inspection Station. As a new quality control measure, the Vehicle Inspection Station Manager conducts spot checks of vehicles inspected by each Vehicle Inspector on a daily basis. RER has also installed cameras in each of the inspection bays. These cameras are monitored by both station and division management, and capture the activities of both staff and customers.

Based on the Board's adoption of Ordinance No. 14-09 (Ambassador Cab Program), the For-Hire Transportation Division has existing Enforcement Unit personnel at both Miami International Airport and PortMiami monitoring and enforcing vehicle aesthetics standards prior to picking up passengers. Each Enforcement Officer assigned to Miami International Airport and/or PortMiami is conducting at least 15 vehicle inspections daily to ensure that vehicles are in compliance.

In addition, the Ambassador Cab Ordinance provides for new vehicle age requirements for these vehicles, which is anticipated to enhance the quality and aesthetics of the taxi fleet. Currently the Code allows for eight (8) year old vehicles, and the Board had approved temporary extensions on vehicle age requirements during the period of the economic downturn that resulted in vehicles potentially as old as 11 model years in service. However, as of April 1, 2015, any Ambassador Cabs initially inspected can be no older than three (3) model years of age and must be retired after six (6) model years. On April 1, 2016, the same vehicle age requirements in effect for Ambassador Cabs will take effect for all taxicabs. The oldest vehicle currently being used as a taxicab is the 2007 model year vehicle. There are approximately 270 model year 2007 vehicles that are scheduled to be retired by December 31, 2015 and replaced with newer vehicles. There are 591 model year 2008 vehicles and 487 model year 2009 vehicles that will retire by December 31, 2016 and December 31, 2017, respectively. These vehicles will be replaced with vehicles that are not older than three (3) model years in accordance with the requirements adopted by the Board during consideration of the Ambassador Cab Program.

It is expected that, with the implementation of these enhancements to the inspection and enforcement process in conjunction with the mandates of the Ambassador Cab Program requiring the retirement of the oldest taxicabs, the quality and aesthetics of the vehicles will improve and the number of vehicle condition complaints will be reduced.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Joe Mora, For-Hire Transportation Division Chief, at (786) 469-2366, or me directly.

c: Jack Osterholt, Deputy Mayor/Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources  
Lourdes M. Gomez, Deputy Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources  
Joe Mora, Division Chief, For-Hire Transportation Division, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources