

# **Open Taxis**

## **On-Demand Accessible Transportation**

**Katy O'Reilly**

**Open Doors Organization**  
**Chicago, Illinois, USA**

**WHO GATE Forum on Assistive Technologies**



**Friday, February 23 at 10:30**



## Open Doors Organization (ODO)

- Chicago-based non-profit founded in 2000
- Mission: To create a society in which persons with disabilities have equal consumer opportunities as those without
- Focus on travel, transportation and tourism
- Market research into travel patterns for individuals with disabilities and older adults
  - 2002, 2005 and 2015
  - Researched spending, destinations, technologies, obstacles faced, and frequency of travel
- Began operating Open Taxis in 2013





# Open Taxis

## Centralized Dispatch for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis

(Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles = WAV)

- Initially operated by one taxi company
  - Nearly 200 people per month not being picked up due to lack of vehicles
  - Company's drivers favoured over others
- Open Doors Organization began operating Open Taxis in 2013 following a Request for Proposals issued by City of Chicago
- Open Taxis began with:
  - Less than 150 vehicles on the road
  - Less than 200 drivers
  - Working on a Google doc spreadsheet
  - 3 employees





## Now...

- 309 vehicles on the road with a City of Chicago goal for 400 by end of 2018
- Over 400 drivers
- Software developed for tracking drivers and fares, dispatching fares to drivers, customer communication, driver/dispatcher communication
- Accessible mobile application for requesting rides (similar to Uber/Lyft)
- 6 full-time dispatchers, 3 part-time dispatchers, 4 administrative staff





## How It Works

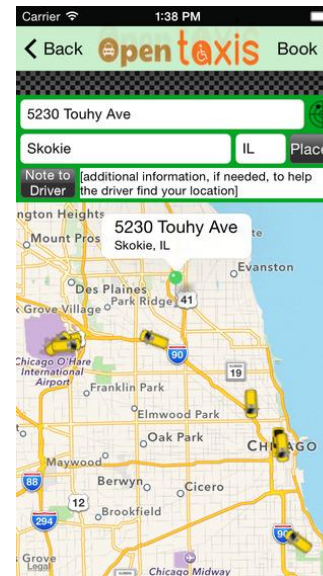
- Open Taxis open 24/7, 365 with dispatchers on site at all times
- Customers can book a ride within Chicago's city limits, or to/from Chicago suburbs, by calling dispatchers or using the mobile application
- Payment for service through corporate account or "pay as you go" with cash or credit
- Pre-arranged ride service or call when transportation is needed



Telephone

855.WAV.1010

855.928.1010





# Growth Since 2013

- Airport short-lane voucher incentive program
  - Projected monetary value of \$50.00 USD per voucher
  - Increased number of drivers interested in driving accessible taxis

**Open taxi**  
WAV TAXI  
AIRPORT VOUCHER

Driver's Name: «Drivers name»
Chauffeur License Number:
Date Voucher Issued: «Issue Date»
Date Voucher Expires: «Exp# Date»
WAV Taxi Medallion Number:
WAV Taxi Affiliation:

**DRIVER'S COPY**

---

Driver's Name: «Drivers name»
Chauffeur License Number:
Date Voucher Issued: «Issue Date»
Date Voucher Expires: «Exp# Date»
WAV Taxi Medallion Number:
WAV Taxi Affiliation:

**STARTER'S COPY**

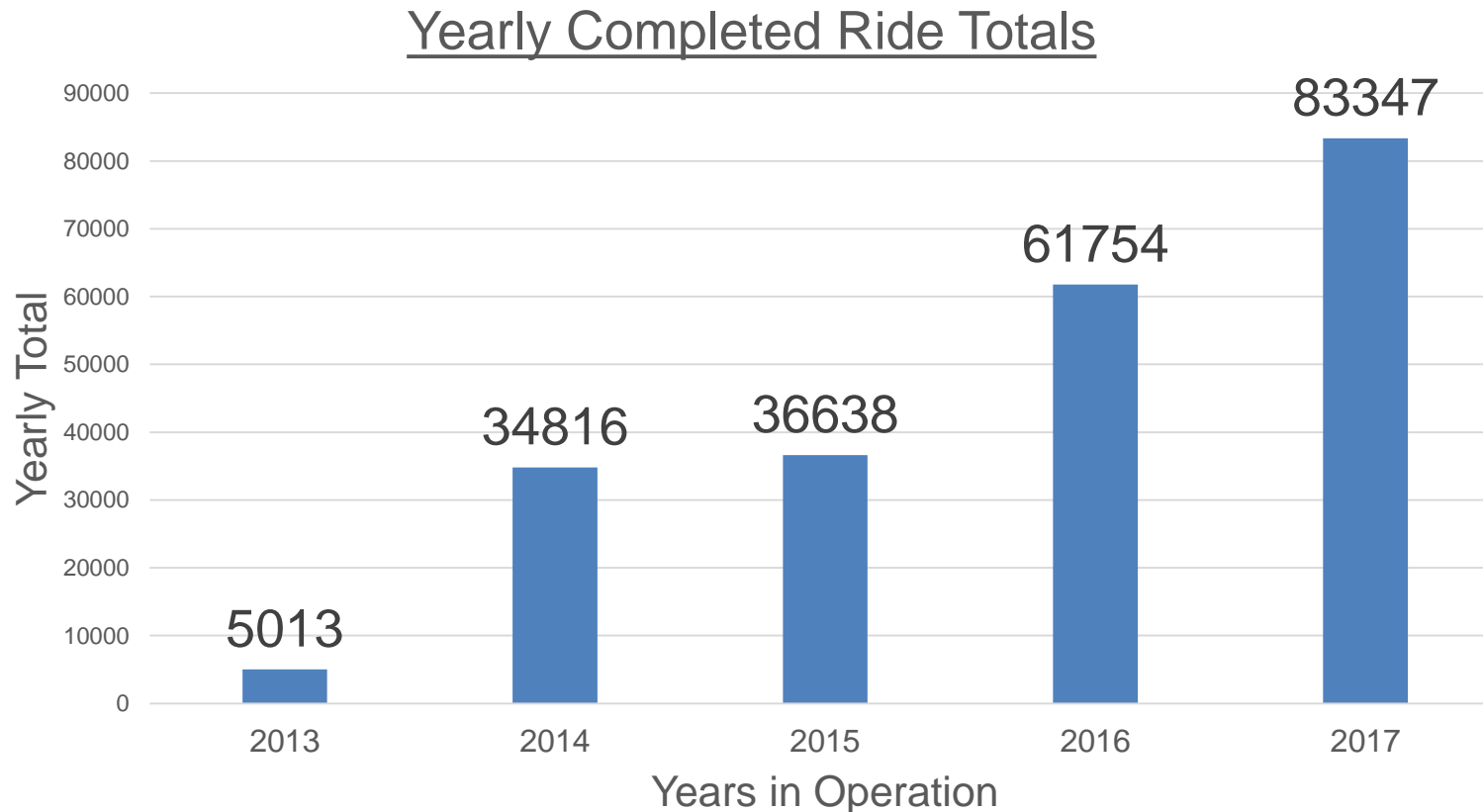
Passenger Pick-Up	Voucher Awards	Total for the Day
1 <sup>st</sup> Pick Up	2 Vouchers	2 Vouchers
2 <sup>nd</sup> Pick Up	2 Vouchers	4 Vouchers
3 <sup>rd</sup> Pick Up	1 Voucher	5 Vouchers
4 <sup>th</sup> Pick Up	1 Vouchers	6 Vouchers





## Growth Since 2013

- Since the first full year of operation, completed ride totals have increased by 48,531 rides.





## Social Impact

- With Open Taxis, the need to utilize paratransit services is lessened.
- Access to medical appointments, education, employment, religion, shopping, and any other need is **more reliable and available**.







# Challenges to Open Taxis Operation

- Demand needs to continue to increase as driver numbers continue to increase
- Lack of cooperation from airports' parking departments for voucher program

 **open taxi**  
Chicago's Centralized  
Wheelchair Accessible Dispatch



 *Open Doors  
Organization*  
 **open taxi**  
Chicago's Centralized  
Wheelchair Accessible Dispatch



# Thank You!

Katy O'Reilly

Katy@opendoorsnfp.org

