

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting

December 6, 2017

10:00 a.m.

James R. Mills Building
Board Meeting Room, 10th Floor
1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

1. Roll Call

Lori Zapf, Chair of the Committee, called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 20, 2017

Mr. Majid moved for approval of the minutes of the September 20, 2017, Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Hueso seconded the motion, and the vote was 11 to 0 in favor with Mr. Chasteen, Ms. Mercer, Mr. Seifu, Mr. Terzi and Mr. Weldegiorgis absent.

3. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Mr. Hamidi made a non-agenda public comment regarding FRED (Free Ride Everywhere Downtown). He stated that Civic San Diego approved \$5.7 million to double the number of FRED's in San Diego. He said that this is unfair to the Taxi industry and is further subsidy to take away from the existing Taxi industry already struggling with Uber. Mr. Hamidi requested that MTS take up regulation of FRED as stated in Section 7.0 of Ordinance 11. He questioned FRED's Minnesota license, dealer plates, and insurance coverage. He stated that if MTS were to regulate FRED then they would be able to oversee insurance coverage. He said that the application solicits tips which are a form of compensation under 1.1.F of Ordinance 11. Mr. Hamidi said that MTS should be regulating FRED as they are not a "free" service. He feels that funds could be better used for other downtown items such as feeding homeless and fixing roads.

4. Management and Committee Member Communications

Chairperson Zapf introduced Mr. Ken Nelson as the new Taxicab Administration Manager. Mr. Nelson acknowledged Mr. Fewell for information and support thus far.

Mr. Nelson presented a verbal report on Ordinance 11 items for review:

A. Taxicab Administration Committee requested Ordinance 11 to be reviewed and amended to better address taxi industry issues. All Ordinance items were reviewed and included several suggested amendments.

B. Change to 2018 Fee Schedule: majority of one time fees were reduced by half the cost based on staffing requirements and costs. The regulatory fee was previously agreed last year to be reduced one time to \$300.00 and to go back up to \$600.00 for 2018. The attachment of the MTS Taxicab Administration 2018 proposed fee schedule is included in the final meeting packet.

C. For hire vehicle insurance review: current insurance requirements are very expensive for drivers. MTS is currently discussing the potential of reducing coverage from \$1 million to \$750,000, which could take some time for approval.

D. Vehicle inspection results: a total of 1,221 vehicles were inspected in 2017. The attachment of the 2017 vehicle inspection results are included in the final meeting packet.

E. Driver Training Course: driver training course was taken over in-house due to the retirement of the prior instructor and closure of business. MTS course will need to be attended by everyone regulated by MTS, not just taxi drivers. Classes are anticipated to start by January of 2018 and MTS will hold as many classes as possible to allow driver attendance without impact to license renewal. The class should take approximately 2-3 hours.

Public Comment

Mr. Kwiatkowski, President and CEO Transportation Alliance Group, stated his support of revisions to Ordinance 11. He stated that it will allow taxi industry more flexibility with rates of fare, communication requirements, and markings. He stated he would like to see insurance requirement below \$750,000, and fleet insurance vs individual coverage. Mr. Kwiatkowski discussed the fact that Uber training is 5 minutes in comparison to MTS training which is very lengthy and would like to see equity with required training.

Mr. Hamidi welcomed Mr. Nelson and thanked Mr. Fewell for work thus far. Mr. Hamidi requested clarity on what a taxi will look like going forward. Mr. Hamidi shared general questions regarding colors and markings and would like MTS to provide drawings or illustrations to help make clearer. Mr. Hamidi also noted on issue of insurance coverage that MTS had prior \$300,000 insurance coverage and MTS voted to increase to \$1 million despite John Scott's recommendation of \$750,000. He said there have been few, if any, \$1 million dollar accidents. Mr. Hamidi expressed looking forward to working with Mr. Nelson and continuing work Mr. Fewell has started.

Mr. Majid stated that changes were discussed at the Workshop on Regulatory Matters (WORM) committee but language and updates were not reflected on record, such as page 32 related to credit card processing. Mr. Nelson confirmed changes were made but appears incorrect packet was mailed out. It was confirmed that board version does reflect changes and updated version will be distributed to members.

Mr. Palmeri commends WORM, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Fewell for looking out for the industry with issues such as insurance, regulatory fees and other expenses. Mr. Palmeri stated these changes may help with retaining drivers and would like to see continued support of drivers and industry with MTS funding. He said that additional costs were incurred with implementing the soft meter but feels changes are moving in the right direction. Mr. Palmeri thanked all committee members and those who provided input for the largest accomplishments seen in last 10 years.

Mr. Afifi stated that the City has large buses taking people to Convention Centers and reducing fares for taxis and asked if MTS can do something. Chairperson Zapf explained that this is done as large numbers of people are transported at one time and this is paid for and prearranged with conventions which are not regulated by MTS. She suggested meeting with the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau (ConVis).

Ms. Tanguay shared that cabs are sometimes banned from certain convention and meeting transportation. In some instances security has been called on drivers, and feels the situation is not clear and would like someone to look into it.

Chairperson Zapf responded that a representative from the tourism authority is on TAC and they may be able to share further information on the matter.

Mr. Afifi would like to know the contingency plan for those who surrendered their medallions and want to come back to service without high expenses or difficulty. Mr. Afifi stated that by next year Uber or Lyft will be gone and wanted to know how MTS plans to address the matter. Mr. Nelson responded that that matter will be addressed if, or when, the issue arises.

Ms. Tanguay commented logos have "radio service" but thought intent was to reduce cost and will be difficult to have savings if this needs to be changed. Mr. Nelson clarified the Ordinance 11 language for Ms. Tanguay. Ms. Tanguay said that she agrees with member Afifi on streamlining those drivers who have surrendered medallions. She feels there is a shortage of taxi stands and parking, particularly downtown, due to lack of enforcement and emphasized what a vital part of the taxi industry taxi stands are.

Mr. Hueso additionally thanked members and shared thoughts on potential and opportunity in transportation industry and the part this committee plays in addressing this.

Chairperson Zapf commented on continued changes in industry, particularly with millennials and the need to tap into this generation in regards to different transportation methods, such as driverless cars, and their attitudes towards ride sharing and public transportation.

Mr. Mayekawa spoke of upcoming changes being addressed such as signage, the way cabs are called and other items. He stated that although there is nothing formal yet, he will share information as it is available.

Mr. Afifi, in agreement with Ms. Tanguay, shared experience of difficulties at convention center.

5. Downtown Community Parking District Request to Remove Taxicab Stand at 410 Sixth Avenue Presentation by Downtown Parking Management Group (DPMG).

Mr. Verdugo, Project Manager at Civic San Diego and Administrator of Downton Parking Management Group (DPMG), along with Michael Donahue, GM of Pendry Hotel, who initiated the request for removal of stands, provided a presentation related to the relocation and removal of taxi stands. Tanner French, Senior Traffic Engineer with Economic Development, attended the TAC meeting and provided details on the relocation of 410 Sixth Avenue taxi stand. Mr. Verdugo provided background of DPMG and explained that this group reviews parking matters, provides input and makes recommendations of findings. He stated that the City of San Diego then implements changes within 60 days. Mr. Verdugo clarified that the requested action was for the relocation of existing taxi zone on Six Avenue and not removal.

Public Comment

Ms. Tanguay made comments about the importance of taxi stands.

Mr. Erigo made comments regarding taxi driver concern of safety of the area due to homeless. Mr. Erigo stated that he feels more taxi stands were given to yellow cab. Mr. Erigo also stated that he feels taxi industry is shrinking due to lack of opportunity and incentive. He said that more taxi stands are needed rather than removing existing stands and that the safety issue with homeless impacts willingness to take taxi's in many areas such as convention center and downtown. Mr. Erigo feels resources are being incorrectly allocated to developing ride shares rather than focusing on existing issues such as homeless and safety of the city.

Mr. Afifi shared concerns about cross traffic being issued at stands when picking up fares in front of hotels.

Ms. Tanguay talked about her history of driving cabs in downtown San Diego and her personal experiences with cab stands, safety and driving concerns for cabs. Ms. Tanguay stated she appreciates the compromise made, but two taxi stands are still missing and would like to see those replaced.

Mr. Hueso stated that taxi stands are for necessity and convenience of the consumer and new stands need to be developed and become established. Mr. Hueso questioned the impact to passengers that use the current stand that is being proposed to be moved. Mr. Hueso had additional comments on usefulness of stands and that he would like to see more driver input and opinions shared before enacting changes.

Mr. Nelson shared that both he and Mr. Fewell did receive input from drivers regarding usage, revenue generated and other impacts to driver business. Based on this information the proposal was made to relocate stand.

Mr. Hueso stated that Low Speed Vehicle signage at stands should be reviewed to create more space for taxis particularly on Sixth Avenue due to the number of hotels in this location. Mr. Hueso shared his concerns about the removal of stands and public visibility of taxis.

Mr. Afifi stated that the stand should be maintained due to many stands already being lost.

Chairperson Zapf closed the meeting by thanking the participants and stating her enjoyment as serving as an advocate and Chairperson of the Taxicab Administration Committee.

Action Taken


No action taken. Informational item only.

6. Next Meeting – June 13, 2018.

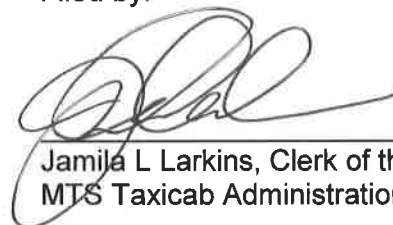
7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Accepted:


Lorie Zapf
Chair of Taxicab Advisory Committee

Filed by:


Jamila L Larkins, Clerk of the Committee
MTS Taxicab Administration

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet
Non-Agenda Public Comment Handout: Kamran Hamidi Re: Free Ride San Diego "FRED"