

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
TAXICAB ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

MINUTES

April 28, 2021

[Clerk's note: Except where noted, public, staff and board member comments are paraphrased. Note that the meeting was conducted via webinar to comply with public health orders].

1. Roll Call

Chair Member Elo-Rivera 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 Minutes

Marc Nichols moved to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2021, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Peter Zschiesche seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Nasser Tehrani, Antonio Hueso, Margo Tanguay, absent.

3. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Proposed Changes to the Election Process for Taxicab Advisory Committee Representatives

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager presented on proposed changes to the election process for Taxicab Advisory Committee representatives including: background on Taxicab Advisory Committee election process, proposed alternatives to current election process and next steps.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Chair Member Elo-Rivera encouraged the committee to give MTS staff feedback in order to ensure a functional election for the industry.

David Tasem suggested that the agency move forward with option three (3). He requested that the taxicab owner's information be used only for voting purposes. David Tasem commented that an in-person voting process would be the most effective.

Peter Zschiesche was in support of the combination of option two (2) and three (3). He noted the importance for the agency to communicate with permit holders and the inclusion of lease drivers.

Marc Nichols noted a similar process at the Airport Authority with open taxi transition and explained the obstacle in obtaining information with lease driver information. He agreed the agency could go forward with an online voting platform once the agency has the ability to have permit holder and lease driver email addresses.

Akbar Majid asked for information on whether option one (1) and two (2) were a viable option if the agency were to have access to the contact information from the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Fewell clarified the purpose of the third option would be to obtain a list of email addresses for lease drivers.

Akbar Majid asked for information on whether option one (1) and two (2) would be eliminated if the agency were to obtain all the email addresses from the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Fewell clarified the third option would create a repository to gather lease driver emails, while continuing to allow ballots to be submitted by mail or in person.

Samantha Leslie, MTS Staff Attorney clarified the data collection portion of option three (3) was to make information about the election process more available to drivers.

Akbar Majid noted that he was in support of an online process. He noted this process was accessible and simple and would like an online submission be the goal for the agency.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera thanked the committee for their input and MTS staff for their recommendations.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

5. For-Hire Vehicle Administration Permit and Statistics Quarterly Report

Mr. Fewell presented on for-hire vehicle administration permit and statistics quarterly report including: total number of permitted companies and permits by type, number of active and surrendered permits, first quarter 2021 field inspections statistics, customer feedback cases from January-March 2021 and San Diego airport pick up trips in 2021.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Akbar Majid advocated on behalf of certain permit holders, which noted they would not be able to pay taxi regulatory fees next month. As a resolution, he suggested Taxicab Advisory Committee seek out funding from the City of San Diego. He asked for financial alleviation due to the impacts of the pandemic.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera asked staff for information on the eligibility of taxicab drivers for small business fee relief throughout the city, county or other levels of government.

Mr. Fewell noted the taxicab permit holders are required to have a business tax certificate from the City of San Diego to apply and maintain a permit and thus may be considered small businesses. He clarified that the agency cannot act as a representative in this capacity for the industry. He noted that as small businesses, the industry is able to seek out government relief.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera asked the Taxicab Advisory Committee their experience in accessing that funding as a small business.

Mr. Fewell stated that the United Taxicab Workers supports the industry by assisting drivers to seek relief and would be the best party to reference.

Peter Zschiesche responded, that as small businesses, taxi drivers have been able to submit applications for pool reimbursements. He noted the difficulty taxi drivers experience in the application process for this funding. He stated the industry needs outside help to understand the loan application process. He asked if the City of San Diego could provide resources so that drivers can learn what funding is available.

Akbar Majid agreed the application process is a complicated to navigate. He was concerned about a significant number of Uber, Lyft and other taxi drivers filing unemployment rather than

continueing working. He notes that there is a dependence on taxicab service for vulnerable populations and fears there will be less drivers in the upcoming month and noted the May 10th regulatory fee due date as a crucial deadline.

George Abraham was frustrated about the struggles and lack of financial relief the industry has faced during the pandemic. He stated a lack of lease drivers as one of the biggest challenges facing the taxicab industry.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera announced to the committee that the Chair's office would provide information on small business and alternative forms of relief including utility and rental assistance. He noted information accessibility and application assistance as immediate next steps. He acknowledged current funding is insufficient and highlighted cultural competence, language accessibility and technolocical barriers as current obstacles. He noted that the industry is not able to function at the capacity that it should which, further jeopardizes the industry as clients look elsewhere to support their needs.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

6. For-Hire Vehicle Administration Operations Update

Mr. Fewell presented on for-hire vehicle administration operations update including: administrative staff and offices, business communications and payment methods, required driver safety training, development of wheelchair accessible vehicle policies.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Akbar Majid asked why the annual statement cannot be submitted via email and the regularly fee can not be sent via mail.

Mr. Fewell clarified both documents could be submitted via email however, the vehicle inspection form is required to be submitted jointly with the invoice provided by the mechanical inspection facility. He noted permit holder's preference to submit payments in person.

David Tasem asked the administrative staff list be emailed to Taxicab Advisory Committee Members so that they can directly talk to staff about complaints.

Mr. Fewell clarified this list will be emailed to Taxicab Advisory Committee Members after the meeting. In addition, Mr. Fewell made himself available to Taxicab Advisory Committee Membersl.

Alfred Banks asked for information on whether MTS and the Airport Authority could get involved and provide insurance for the taxicab industry.

Mr. Fewell explained the insurance industry is a private market where public agencies could not intervene in facilitating cost negotiations and encouraged the industry to resolve the issues directly with the insurance provider. He was hopeful additional insurance companies would be willing to come in to the San Diego market to underwrite needed policies and provide additional options to the permit holders. He continued to explain the limitations of MTS intervention in the insurance market.

George Abraham asked for a payment extension similarly to the extension provided in 2020.

Peter Zschiesche commented, he has been in communication with Assembly Member Chris Ward to determine what limits insurance companies to enter to the San Diego taxicab market. He noted his contact with the former Taxicab Advisory Committee Chair in order for the State to facilitate insurance providers. He noted additional insurance companies offering coverage in San Diego is the best option.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera thanked the Taxicab Advisory Committee Members for their participation. He hoped to turn their comments into an action plan.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

7. Updated COVID-19 Sanitary Measures for Taxicab, Jitney, Low-Speed, Charter and Nonemergency Medical (NEM) Vehicles

Mr. Fewell presented an update of COVID-19 Sanitary Measures for taxicab, jitney, low-speed, charter and NEM vehicles.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Peter Zschiesche encouraged more agency interference to relieve driver confrontations with passengers over mask policies. He suggested the agency follow up with passengers to inform them of the agency's mask policy. He encouraged the agency to market the industry as a safer and better transit alternative and suggested the advertisement of this on a banner at the airport or through public service announcements.

Marc Nichols thanked the agency on the COVID-19 mitigation efforts. He noted the extensive COVID-19 requirements in place for daily operations and commended the agency's vigilance and support. He acknowledged the agency had advertising guidelines that would limit some forms of advertisement but was happy to promote the industry through social media outlets.

David Tasem noted the taxicab industry is the only ride hailing service that could provide handicap accessibility.

Alfred Banks added, some passengers have mask exemptions.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

8. Topics for Next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting

Mr. Fewell presented on potential topics for next taxicab advisory committee meeting on July 7, 2021.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera remarked, the item was added to ensure priorities of the industry are being considered.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Peter Zschiesche encouraged the participation of San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to advocate for state and federal funding on behalf of the industry. He stated SANDAG is currently working on their transportation plan for the region which includes all forms

of transportation including taxis and flexible fleets. He noted the importance for the agency to be involved in the SANDAG Regional Plan.

Chair Member Elo-Rivera encouraged Taxicab Advisory Committee Members to add their input. He noted feedback regarding short- and long-term goals were encouraged.

Marc Nichols offered an update on airport operations at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

9. Committee Member Communications

Marc Nichols gave an update on behalf of the San Diego Airport Authority including: COVID-19 business impacts, permitting issues including taxi transition on airport trips and airport construction. He also noted the Airport Ground Transportation Association "Let's Talk About It" zoom meeting which covered COVID-19 recovery challenges, and other airport operational issues. He offered the presentations for distribution amongst the Taxicab Advisory Committee members. He continued with the current airport taxi activity and stated that they are experiencing taxi shortages at the Airport, particularly during weekend peak hours, with a drop-off in transportation network company trips. He reminded the committees that airport permits can be obtained by emailing the airport's ground transportation department at gtpermits@san.org.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for July 7, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

Chair Member Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.



Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
TAXICAB ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING
ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): April 28, 2021 CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:00 am
ADJOURN: 11:36 am

COMMITTEE MEMBER	(Alternate)		ORGANIZATION	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Voting Committee Members					
Sean Elo-Rivera (Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	MTS Board of Directors/ SD City Council	10:00am	11:36am
Akbar Majid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/SDYC Holdings, LLC	10:00am	11:36am
Alfred Banks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:00am	11:36am
Antonio Hueso	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	USA Cab, LTD		
Brian Hilemon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Tourism Authority	10:00am	10:10am
Daryl Mayekawa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Convention Center	10:00am	11:36am
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:00am	11:36am
George Abraham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daniel Fesshaye	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/Eritrean Cab Co.	10:10am	11:36am
Guillermo Morquecho	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:02am	11:36am
VACANT	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Marc Nichols	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego County Regional Airport Authority	10:02am	11:36am
Margo Tanguay	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver		
Michael Trimble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Gaslamp Quarter Association	10:17am	11:36am
Mikaiil Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Zschiesche	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers Federation San Diego	10:00am	11:36am
Nancy Gudiño	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press	10:00am	11:36am
Nasser Tehrani	<input type="checkbox"/> Kamran Hamidi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/N.A.T. Cab Co		
Non – Voting Committee Members					
Garret Cooper	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures		
Edna Rains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division	10:00 am	11:36am

CLERK OF THE TAC:



For-Hire Vehicle
Administration Manager:

