

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

MINUTES

July 7, 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 Elo-Rivera called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

3. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. 2021 Regional Transit Plan Update (Jennifer Williamson, and Krystal Ayala of SANDAG)

Jennifer Williamson and Krystal Ayala presented on the 2021 Regional Transit Plan. They outlined the following information: milestones, challenges, state and federal legislative mandates, planning for the region's future, technology trends in transportation, draft 2021 Regional Plan vision and goals, system integration, complete corridors, transit leap, mobility hub and flexible fleets, flexible fleet outreach, next OS, state laws to reduce emissions, commute trips by mode, transit access for social equity, and 2021 Regional Plan timeline.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Peter Zschiesche asked when pilot programs would begin. He stated taxicabs are an existing network but acknowledged the taxi system's platform would require some investment.

Ms. Ayala acknowledged the agency was advancing projects through the Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Planning (CMCP) projects and Flexible Fleet Strategic Plan. The programs targeted identifying opportunities to understand deployment and share findings.

Peter Zschiesche asked if the agency would offer methods to give input.

Ms. Ayala acknowledged there is a stakeholder subcommittee and invited TAC to participate.

Alfred Banks asked when the Mid-Coast extension would become fully operational.

Ms. Williamson confirmed the line would be fully operational on November 2021.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked how taxicabs fit into the vision for the future and how the industry should prepare for SANDAG's vision. He noted that part of a social justice and equity vision, should include time for the taxicab industry to adapt, and asked for recommendations to achieve this goal.

Ms. Ayala replied that predicting the direction of the industry posed a challenge however, the agency is investing and committed to establishing partnerships and infrastructure needs to integrate privately operated services with public transportation offerings. She noted data sharing and pilot operating opportunities to design near term needs with large capital planning projects.

Chair Elo-Rivera commented that, so long as the private sector is involved, that there be intentionality to include the taxi industry as it is composed of immigrant communities trying to obtain economic security in the region. He clarified that the committee is a resource for SANDAG to ensure the industry is included as a stakeholder of future developments.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Lili Irani - Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. Irani asked about social rights and social equity mandates shaping the SANDAG Regional Plan, their origin and the ways they are operationally used.

Ms. Williamson confirmed that the prioritization of plans is on a social equity basis. She noted the guidelines to transit and access to transit project development criteria provides services to social equity communities. She acknowledged that targeted funding policies and pilot programs are intentional to benefit social equity communities.

Enrique Arcilla – Provided a verbal statement to the committee during the meeting. They asked about the metrics used to measure social equity, how the agency is measuring it and the services needed to make the region more equitable.

Ms. Williamson replied that the three primary social equity populations include low income populations, seniors and minorities. She highlighted SANDAG's partnership with community-based organizations and measured the benefits of the system to access activity centers, education, hospitals and other locations, trip duration and various other categories.

Ms. Ayala added that various metrics in the social equity analysis portion of the Regional Plan, are accessible at the SANDAG website.

*Lili Irani* – Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. They acknowledged that app-based experiences are a sought-after amenity. That the software requires the ability to access up front capital expertise to manage and maintain software; and that social justice communities face inequitable access to the resources. They continued that SANDAG maintains software infrastructure in the public interest. They asked about the mechanisms to support equity on the system creation and maintenance.

Ms. Williamson clarified that the agency uses data analytics and becoming a data hub. She acknowledged that the goal of the data hub is to provide the next OS portion to allows providers to access the agencies' data. She acknowledged there was not a specific project in the Regional Plan that would provide capital for operators to integrate into the system however, there would be incentive programs to allow some interested groups to partner with the agency. She stated the regional plan is updated every four years and acknowledged that the use of pilot programs and next OS systems would help to inform the next phase of incentives to operators.

Ms. Ayala noted that the Board of Directors recently adopted a commitment to equity statement which would integrate social equity into the planning process and develop a framework. Particularly as the agency solidifies the concepts, understands the functionality of the system, and how they become functionable and equitable.

#### COMMITTEE COMMENTS

David Tasem asked how the taxi industry would benefit from the presentation.

Ms. Ayala replied that taxis are one of the providers SANDAG envisions expanding and deploying across the region as part of the flexible fleet program.

David Tasem asked about the amount of funding allotted for the taxicab industry.

Ms. Ayala cited Appendix A, programs and phasing for flexible fleet operating incentives in the Regional Plan.

Ms. Williamson made the resource available and cited Appendix V's for a breakout of operating costs.

David Tasem restated his question to ask about the funding allotted to the taxicab industry.

Ms. Williamson clarified that the agency does not have specific funding amounts allotted to any providers however there is a pool of funding for flexible fleets. She acknowledged that the system will be developed in the implementation phase.

Ms. Ayala added that in addition to operating incentives, the regional plan does include funding for infrastructure improvements, programs and other policies that expand access to flexible fleet services. She acknowledged the difficulties in providing one-dollar amount with various funding opportunities through partnerships.

David Tasem pointed out that without funding allocations designated for the taxicab industry, there is not an incentive for the industry to assume stability. He stated that for the last 25 years, nothing has happened.

Ms. Williamson clarified that the proposed Regional Plan is the first to have an in-depth analysis on a flexible fleet strategy. She continued that the agency could not commit to specific funding allocations because a broader industry implementation strategy is necessary.

David Tasem said he and the membership are still not comfortable with this approach.

George Abraham recognized the difficulties the industry is experiencing. He asked for solutions proposed from either the City of San Diego or SANDAG to alleviate the industry hurdles. He acknowledged that members are paying fees out of pocket and advocated for incentives to keep drivers in the industry.

Peter Zschiesche added that as a first step, he would like the committee to be a stakeholder on the Flexible Fleet strategic plan.

Ms. Ayala invited the committee's participation and clarified that regional plan does not include funding decisions.

Chair Elo-Rivera appreciated the discussion and was optimistic that participation from the industry at this stage of the planning process would make an impact.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

2. Approval of Minutes (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

Akbar Majid moved to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2021, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. David Tasem seconded the motion, and the vote was 13 to 0 in favor with Guillermo Morquecho, Nancy Gudiño and Nasser Tehrani absent.

5. Proposed Changes to Taxicab Advisory Committee Election (TAC) Process (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on proposed changes to the Taxicab Advisory Committee Election Process. He discussed the proposed TAC election method. Mr. Fewell explain how MTS would request the Sheriff's Licensing division to provide lease driver e-mails, to be utilized as a method of communication enabling online voting. Mr. Fewell explained how an option for physical ballots would also be available for those who would request them in advance.

Chair Elo-Rivera thanked staff for the report.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

6. Appointment to Fill Vacancy and Proposed Revisions to the Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) Membership Guidelines (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell, presented on the 2021 Regional Transit Plan. He outlined the following information: current TAC membership, appointment of a new member, current permit holder and permit numbers and proposed options for possible revisions to Taxicab advisory committee membership guidelines.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Akbar Majid acknowledged a previous change to the guidelines in order to capture an equal representation of drivers and permit holders on the committee. He proposed that the total number of industry representation be reduced to increase the level of meeting productivity.

Peter Zschiesche supported the revisions of member criteria, as the industry has experienced changes He supported the committee review the structure of membership, as taxi business may increase or decrease in the following year. . He agreed that the number permits held in order to be a member in TAC is not as important as other factors. He added that this revision could support the agencies partnership with SANDAG.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

7. Addition of Demotech Ratings to For-Hire Vehicle Administration Minimum Insurance Requirements (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell provided the history of MTS's revision to permit holder insurance requirements, current trends on insurance costs and County of San Diego insurance requirements for non-emergency medical (NEM) vehicles.

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Akbar Majid added that he used the information to contact insurance carriers provided by MTS staff. He reported the quote he received to the committee. He continued that the industry has exhausted avenues to procure insurance premiums from carriers. He acknowledged that the market would only worsen and proposed lowering limits. He compares limit rates to other states and reported that those limits are comparable to the rates for personal use vehicles.

Antonio Hueso cited past methods of costs incurred when drivers met lawsuit target levels. He acknowledged that it created an opportunity for the industry to receive a lower deductible price. This created an opportunity for reduced premiums however, it exposed them to increase liability in case of an accident. Because of this exposure, the agency reverted to a dollar one coverage. He urged the committee to utilize industry resources to come to the table with alternative methods, different from past proposals.

Peter Zschiesche announced that he wrote a letter to Assembly Member Chris Ward to assess State level options for the industry. He proposed creating an ad hoc committee and invite staff from Assembly Member Chris Ward's office.

Alfred Banks asked for potential insurance choices rather than a single provider.

Mr. Fewell clarified that before the Demotech rating revision to the agency's insurance requirements, there was a single insurance provider. He continued there are now additional providers available and encouraged contacting their insurance broker as they would have more detailed information.

Akbar Majid agreed with the formation of an ad hoc committee, He clarified there are various insurance companies willing to insure taxicab however the insurance rates seem too high.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

*Stacie Jimenez* – An Agent Broker with Kettering Rose made a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. Jimenez acknowledged the insurance expenses in the taxicab industry. She acknowledged that there are volume discounts with proof of current industry pricing. She clarified that agents in the industry want to obtain the best price for clients and encouraged the committee to procure insurance as a group rather than as individuals.

Mr. Fewell acknowledged that current rates are not within the industry's viable financial reach. He continued, that annual information will be sent to permit holders about acceptable policies. This document will allow permit holders to have an MTS sanctioned referee for acceptable policy service providers.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked staff about what the impact would be of reducing the Non-Emergency Vehicle limits from 2 million to 1 million on insurance rates.

Mr. Fewell clarified that the MTS insurance requirements are based on the seat capacity of the vehicle, this includes NEM vehicles. He clarified that the County of San Diego has a different liability limit set at 2 million dollars and stated that he did not know how that would impact rates and acknowledged additional factors, such as the current 350 thousand combined single limit being an impact on rates.

## Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

8. For-Hire Vehicle Administration Statistics Quarterly Report (2021 Permit Renewals and Permit Reinstatement Fee Extension) (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented information on permit renewals and permits voided, number of active vs. surrendered permits, 2021 year to date field inspections statistics, customer feedback cases, San Diego Airport pick up trips in 2021 and 2021 permit reinstatement fee extension.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

9. Assembly Bill (AB) 302 Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell provided an update on the passage of Assembly Bill (AB 302). Mr. Fewell stated AB 302 would go in to effect on January 1, 2022 and an additional update would be provided at the October 27, 2021 TAC.

Chair Elo-Rivera was hopeful the industry would receive more riders with the leveling off of COVID.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

10. Topics for Next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting

Mr. Fewell presented the proposed topics for October 27, 2021 TAC meeting.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

David Tasem requested a pick up and drop off report from the airport be generated.

Marc Nichols stated the San Diego Airport would provide the requested report to MTS.

Mr. Fewell clarified that the report was available as an attachment.

David Tasem asked Marc Nichols to generate a report for airport pickup frequencies.

George Abraham requested a meeting with the constituents of the taxi industry.

Samantha Leslie, Staff Attorney cautioned members that in order to abide by Brown Act regulations, the committee can not discuss issues outside a formal committee meeting.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

11. Committee Member Communications and Other Business

Julio Garcia, Council Staff for Chair Elo-Rivera provided information to the committee about COVID grants and loans available to the committee. He acknowledged that the City of San Diego will be implementing a rescue plan grant program, the program will prioritize small businesses and listed qualifying criteria. The City of San Diego's also offers a loan program with

Executive Committee Meeting – MINUTES

July 7, 2021

Page 7 of 7


low interest rates targeted to assist small business in procuring PPE equipment. The County Small Business stimulus grant program is also available. He made himself available for questions and confirmed he would follow up with updates or changes.

12. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

13. Adjournment

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.


  
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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): July 7, 2021 CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:01 AM  
ADJOURN: 11:56 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	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Akbar Majid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/SDYC Holdings, LLC	10:12 AM	11:56 AM
Alfred Banks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:33 AM	11:56 AM
Antonio Hueso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	USA Cab, LTD	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Brian Hilemon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Tourism Authority	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Daryl Mayekawa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Convention Center	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:25 AM	11:56 AM
George Abraham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daniel Fesshaye	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/Eritrean Cab Co.	10:24 AM	11:56 AM
Guillermo Morquecho	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	-	-
Hamid Amini	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jazzy Cab	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Marc Nichols	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego County Regional Airport Authority	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Margo Tanguay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:01 AM	11:56 AM
Michael Trimble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Gaslamp Quarter Association	10:19 AM	11:30 AM
Mikail Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Zschiesche	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers Federation San Diego	10:02 AM	11:56 AM
Nancy Gudiño	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press	-	-
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 type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division		

CLERK OF THE TAC: 

For-Hire Vehicle  
Administration Manager: 