

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM TAXICAB ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

October 27, 2021

1. Roll Call

Chair Elo-Rivera called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of Minutes

Peter Zschiesche moved to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2021, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Antonio Hueso seconded the motion, and the vote was 15 to 0 in favor with Hamid Amini absent.

3. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Flexible Fleet Procurement Presentation (Antoinette Meier and Danielle Kochman of SANDAG)

Antoinette Meier, SANDAG Director of Mobility and Innovation and Danielle Kochman, SANDAG Mobility Planning Manager presented on the flexible fleet procurement.

They presented on: a new approach to planning for the future, 5 big moves, mobility hubs and flexible fleets, flexible fleets operate everywhere, flexible fleet implementation strategic plan, regional on-call flexible fleet services, previous pilots, regional on-call flexible fleet services and next steps.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Elo-Rivera acknowledged the importance of SANDAG's participation in today's meeting to provide the committee with access to the information and allow for questions and feedback.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lily Irani – A professor at UC San Diego made a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. They encouraged SANDAG and the City of San Diego to ensure both riders and transportation workers are treated well. Irani asked SANDAG to include climate and labor equity in the evaluation criteria to align with the region's climate equity goals. They cited the Transportation for Smart and Equitable Cities as a resource. Irani stated that research shows that resistance to public regulation of TNCs has various negative consequences and results. Irani advocated to create transportation infrastructures and acknowledged benefits such as safety, equitability, sustainability in order to have a more fuel-efficient, price regulated fleet.

Jeanette Lilliane – A resident, made a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. They encouraged planning agencies to ensure that taxis remain a reliable part of public transportation infrastructure.

Sim Singh – A student, made a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. Sim urged the Committee to incorporate San Diego's taxis into the flexible fleets. They asked that the agency partner with taxi drivers and incorporate them into public transportation.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Peter Zschiesche asked the presenters to cite how equity issues will be addressed in the Request for Proposal (RFP). He was interested to understand how proposers would be ranked and asked SANDAG defines equity for this project.

Ms. Kochman distinguished the Regional Plan from the RFP and provided resources to either document. She acknowledged that the sections of the RFP were currently under development but assured the committee equity ranking criteria would be involved in the process.

Ms. Meier assured the Committee that the evaluation criteria would be listed in the RFP.

Ms. Kochman acknowledged there were three different projects in the RFP.

Peter Zschiesche asked about the long-term longevity with the IOS plan since he perceived it to bring in data and experience to assist in managing the transportation system. He acknowledged an app and taxi category as separate applications. He was concerned about integration between the industry and SANDAG.

Ms. Meier clarified that with service provider partnerships, one of the requirements will be to have data sharing agreements with both public and private sector companies. The goal of this is to monitor the performance of services.

Peter Zschiesche asked how the agency has separated the categories.

Ms. Kochman responded that there are existing transit providers that had their own vehicles that are looking to outfit those services with technology. They continued that there are other application companies that already provide that service. The expectation is not to develop a new technology but to have a mechanism to outfit existing services.

Akbar Majid asked Ms. Kochman to clarify the Guaranteed Ride Home Program since he was under the impression that the program had been discontinued. He asked that the program be reestablished. He also asked to be added to stakeholder participants.

Ms. Kochman confirmed they would follow up with Akbar Majid.

Antonio Hueso acknowledged the market is saturated and the industry has struggled to reach previous operation levels. He urged the region to seek a more thoughtful approach. He was concerned that if agencies continued to allow, Ubers, Lyfts and Free Ride Everywhere Downtown (FRED) who do not go through a formal vetting process, vested industry leaders are pushed out. He asked that particular focus be placed on providers that are financially limited and struggling to stay afloat, to provide services to the public. He requested SANDAG does not show any preference based on the transportation provider's financial capacity.

Ms. Kochman clarified that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates Uber and Lyft, SANDAG does not. They continued, that SANDAG recognized shortcomings of those services, and that they played an active role in participating with CPUC on how they regulate those types of services. She urged the industry to evaluate both the negatives and positives of the TNC industry.

Ms. Meier acknowledged that the services Uber, Lyft or bikes and scooters took the agency by storm because they were unregulated with no infrastructure. She acknowledged that the new plan aims to thoughtfully incorporate technology and to develop policies and fair regulations for flexible fleet services.

Ms. Kochman acknowledged the shortage of services for wheelchair accessible rides. She acknowledged that an obstacle is the permitting process through the taxicab administration as an expensive service adding cost and the permitting process makes it cumbersome to acquire.

Antonio Hueso noted that wheelchair accessibility was an expensive process.

David Tasem acknowledged that a strategy has not been offered to give drivers the opportunity to gain capital. He acknowledged that the presentation does not offer solutions to produce an income for the industry and asked what the agencies efforts are to provide one.

Ms. Kochman acknowledged that the Regional Plan does not have specific earmarks for specific industries or funding sources.

David Tasem claimed that the industry is being neglected since money is being allocated to Uber and Lyft.

Ms. Kochman clarified that there were no money allotments.

Ms. Meier added that there are flexible fleet service allocations and it is not specific to a type of service.

David Tasem asked for SANDAG to clarify if all industries were getting equal representation.

Ms. Kochman answered that there is funding allocation to operate flexible fleet services and taxi is one of the categories that falls under flexible fleet. There is not a specific part of the plan that's dedicated to taxi services.

Ms. Meier continued that an operator is not specified in the plan, rather the services are.

Chair Elo-Rivera thanked the presenters. He clarified that the CPUC is the regulatory agency that sets standards for ridesharing companies. He asked for intentionality about creating opportunities for the industry on the basis of equality

Ms. Kochman stating looking forward to work with Taxicab Administration of potential pilot projects.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

5. Proposed Revisions to Taxicab Advisory Committee Membership Guidelines (Leonardo Fewell)

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager presented on the proposed revisions to Taxicab Advisory Committee membership guidelines. He outlined proposed changes to Taxicab Advisory Committee Guidelines and staff's recommendations.

Margo Tanguay asked about the requirement for drivers to have transportation experience.

Mr. Fewell clarified that the industry will vote for the representative and that many of the lease drivers do already have prior experience in the industry. He assured her that he would cover this topic further in the next agenda item.

Margo Tanguay stated that the driver requirement asks that drivers hold a business license. She asked about what was needed to be in good standing with city business licenses so that responsibility falls on individual holders.

Mr. Fewell stated that a business license is one of many administrative requirements that permit holders and lease holders have, but that the agency does not enforce. He acknowledged that the agency does not have oversight to the requirements Cities impose, and it was the responsibility of the permit holders to follow-up on those requirements

Ms. Tanguay pointed out that drivers are also required to have a business permit.

Akbar Majid acknowledged that 70% of permit holders are owner operators who are drivers. He proposed reflecting the proportion of committee representation and acknowledged that it would be fair to reduce the number of lease drivers and increase the number of permit holders

Action Taken

Akbar Majid moved to forward a recommendation to the MTS Board of Directors to approve staff's recommendation to revise the Taxicab Advisory Committee Membership Guidelines with the following changes: maintain 6 permit holder seats, change permit number categories to: two (2) seats for permit holders of two (2) or more permits, four (4) seats for permit holders of one (1) taxicab and reduce lease driver representatives from 4 to 3. Margo Tanguay seconded the motion, and the vote was 15 to 0 in favor with Hamid Amini absent.

Mr. Fewell pointed out the continuous decline of lease drivers as some of them move on to become permit holders.

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

Mr. Fewell presented on the proposed changes to Taxicab Advisory Committee Election Process. He discussed: the selection of the online voting platform, outreach methods, key dates and deadlines and election validation/notification of results.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

7. Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on the Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy Update. He provided details on: requests for wheelchair taxicab trips, peer regulatory agency review and next steps.

David Tasem asked why this topic wasn't discussed when SANDAG representatives were presenting.

Mr. Fewell clarified that because the agency is a regulatory agency, the policy will be developed at MTS. He continued, once the developments progress and once possible recommendations are made, the agency will reach out to SANDAG Social Services Accessibility Committee and provide an update to them and incorporate feedback. He assured the Committee this was an update and that the agency will contact SANDAG once a proposal has been solidified further.

Margo Tanguay acknowledged that the industry needs more vehicles to supply the handicap and aging population. She explained that the industry needs more handicap equipment, and offered to assist with driver training

Mr. Fewell reiterated that the agency is working with SANDAG to address the demand for wheelchair accessibility so that policy makers can understand the incentives needed to produce an effective result.

Akbar Majid acknowledged that the acquisition and maintenance on the new vehicles is higher than the previous models. Along with the vehicle incentive upgrade, he also asked that there would be maintenance incentives included. He cited the Access program in the city of Los Angeles be used as a model here and that the taxi industry incentivizes the operators to purchase and provide service.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

8. For-Hire Vehicle Administration Quarterly Report and Operations Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on For-Hire Vehicle Administration quarterly report and operations update. He outlined the following items: number of active versus surrendered permits, 2021 July to September field inspections, per type percentages and warnings, customer feedback cases, San Diego Airport pick up trips, office relocation update, business and vehicle inspections by appointment, document and payment drop box, COVID-19 sanitary measures, AB 302 update and For-Hire Vehicle Administration acceptable insurance providers.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

9. Topics for Next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on topics for next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting and feedback for additional topics requested.

Peter Zschiesche asked to have an agenda on advertising taxi service at the airport.

Marc Nichols reported that the airport is receiving an update in activity levels. He acknowledged that trends suggest leisure travel versus business. He thanked the Committee for continuing their permits. The airport receives the final environmental a milestone approval for the new terminal one project and construction will begin in the near future. Mid-November, the airport will begin moving employee shuttle service to the Old Town Transit Center. Starting in January of 2022, the tier one parking lot will be reduced by half and then close in June of 2022 for construction on the new Terminal 1 parking plaza.

Antonio Hueso encouraged the Committee to review the meeting materials before the meeting in order to have a better dialogue.

George Abraham suggested permit holders of multiple permits be allowed to keep those permits for which the regulatory fee is not paid due to a lack of lease drivers willing to drive those vehicles. He suggested the regulatory fee can be paid later as lease drivers become available to driver those vehicles.

Margo Tanguay asked for more Taxicab stands. She was also concerned about the technology and increased operational costs. She also mentioned the handicap equipment can cost for drivers.

David Tasem commented that the SANDAG presentation should not have been brought to the Committee, he claimed there wasn't direct correlation to the industry. He recommended

charging a \$1 sur charge for gasoline and asked that this request be brought to the next Committee meeting.

Chair Elo-Rivera acknowledged an overall strategy is needed to be more proactive and less reactive. Chair Elo-Rivera noted the next meeting will focus on goals for 2022.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

10. Committee Member Communications and Other Business

Alfred Banks asked MTS to provide clarity on COVID-19 guidelines that recommend passengers sit at the rear of a taxicab to maximize social distancing. Banks stated that dependent of the length of the trip, some drivers would refuse or accept a trip by allowing passengers to sit in the front seat.


Mr. Fewell stated that drivers may not refused service based of trip length and all complaints will be investigated by For-Hire Vehicle Administration.

11. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

12. Adjournment

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.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): October 27, 2021 CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:05 am

ADJOURN: 12:01 pm

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	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Akbar Majid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/SDYC Holdings, LLC	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Alfred Banks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Antonio Hueso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	USA Cab, LTD	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Brian Hilemon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Tourism Authority	10:05 am	11:28 am
Daryl Mayekawa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Convention Center	10:05 am	12:01 pm
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:05 am	12:01 pm
George Abraham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daniel Fesshaye	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/Eritrean Cab Co.	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Guillermo Morquecho	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Hamid Amini	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jazzy Cab	-	-
Marc Nichols	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego County Regional Airport Authority	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Margo Tanguay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Michael Trimble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Gaslamp Quarter Association	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Mikaiil Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Zschiesche	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers Federation San Diego	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Nancy Gudiño	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press	10:05 am	12:01 pm
Nasser Tehrani	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kamran Hamidi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Owner/N.A.T. Cab Co	10:05 am	12:01 pm
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	10:51 am	12:01 pm

CLERK OF THE TAC: 

For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager: 