

MINUTES

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

May 25, 2022

1. Roll Call

Chair Elo-Rivera called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of Minutes

Akbar Majid moved to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Margo Tanguay seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Brian Hilemon, Guillermo Morquecho and Michael Trimble absent.

3. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy Survey Results (Norah Shultz, SDSU)

Leonardo Fewell, For Hire Vehicle Administration Manager, introduced Dr. Norah Shultz, who presented on the taxicab wheelchair accessible vehicle policy survey results. She outlined the following information: study design, passenger sample, passenger survey results, and taxicab permit holder survey results.

PUBLIC COMMENT

George Sadat – A taxi driver at San Diego Airport made a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. Sadat asked about recent rate changes, the airport holding lot and the bathroom sanitization problems. Sadat noted that the recent rate changes would not help the drivers.

Chair Elo-Rivera replied that the remarks being presented did not align with the agenda item. He encouraged these comments be made during the appropriate agenda item.

Sadat asked that the flat rate be adopted instead based on a specified radius around the airport, and asked that the holding lot restroom be sanitized frequently. Sadat stated that the flat rate would positively impact long-distance riders.

William Aloze – A taxi driver at the San Diego Airport made a verbal statement during the meeting. Aloze believed that taxi drivers should have been involved in the development of the survey research questions. Aloze also noted that the wheelchair accessible vans are not an economically feasible acquisition for fleets and encouraged incentives. Aloze asked that the agency assist with fare recovery for this service.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Antonio Hueso acknowledged the difficulty for the taxicab industry to serve the clientele requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles. He acknowledged the difficulty to find drivers that would drive these vehicles. He acknowledged the MTS regulated Non-Emergency Vehicles (NEM) services, but noted the obstacles in promoting the services because of the qualifying

criteria needed to attain the service. He stated that while taxicab rates should be the same for the provision of wheelchair transportation, it requires a different level of driver in terms of training and passenger sensitivity. He acknowledged that not only is there a need for WAVs but also a sustainable demand for WAVs. He states the shortage of WAVs relates to the various obstacles including automotive replacement parts, supplies, and a shortage of drivers that are interested in providing WAV service.

Akbar Majid noted that a successful Wheelchair Accessible program is one that is subsidized. He noted that otherwise that service would not be profitable for a contract to be successful. He encouraged the agency to research other models throughout the state to compare its incentives.

Margo Tanguay acknowledged her educational background with the disabled community and her current involvement facilitating taxicab service through the use of medical vouchers. She noted a statistic that 45% of riders needing financial assistance. She advocated for subsidies that included reduction of permit fees, insurance premiums, and guaranteed number of trips. She encouraged driver training to include equipment handling, CPR certification and passenger sensitivity training.

David Tasem stated that he has driven for both Yellow and USA cab as a WAV driver and stated there are no WAV announcements or advertisements from dispatch services to passengers, or ways to refer passenger to a dispatch service offering WAV service. He provided an anecdote to acknowledge that while the service was creating revenue, it wasn't as much revenue as management at the time hoped for, and so the program was discontinued. He noted that dispatchers could refer customers to the organization that could accommodate the request. He noted that drivers, not only permit holders, should have also been involved in the development of the survey questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Louise Hickman – Louise Hickman is a researcher at the University of Cambridge who assisted in the project. Hickman cautioned member comments as they described the need for special drivers to accommodate wheelchair accessible riders. Hickman asked that the committee focus instead on the training of drivers, and suggested a disability-based organization host the training. Hickman asked that awareness for WAV taxis be advertised.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

5. 2022 TAC Election Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on 2022 TAC Election Update. He outlined: voting information, upcoming tasks, and election deadlines.

Chair Elo-Rivera commended staff for their efforts on the item.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

6. 2022 Regulatory Fee Payment Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on 2022 Regulatory Fee Payment Update. He discussed: permit billing information and permit statistics.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

Mr. Fewell presented on the For-Hire Vehicle Administration quarterly report and operations update. He discussed: number of active vs. surrendered permits, FHVA operations update, per type percentages and warnings, customer feedback cases January-March 2022, San Diego Airport taxicab and TNC trips, FHVA operations update, presentation to SANDAG Transportation Committee on AB 302, SANDAG regional flexible fleet procurement, overview of 2022 maximum rates of fare, comparison taxi rates of fare in other cities, 2022 taxicab maximum rates of fare, and reasons why MTS will not approve fuel surcharge at this time.

Public comment

Abel Seifu – Seifu commented on lack of formal meetings to address issues with MTS and suggested the creation of a small group to discuss ongoing driver issues with MTS. Seifu stated that the change of rate does not improve the industry's conditions and asked to impose a flat fee rather than a per mile distance. Seifu also asked MTS to facilitate a conversation with Cross Border XPress (CBX) to allow all taxicab to access and provide service at CBX.

William Aloze – Aloze reiterated Seifu's request to establish a small driver group to address ongoing concerns with MTS. He mentioned the upcoming TAC election and how drivers have no opportunity to express their concerns during the time period between TAC meetings. Aloze said that the idea of having only two porta-potties and one can of water at the Airport's taxicab holding lot for over 200 hundred drivers is not the best. He mentioned that fare increases are a good start but would like the adoption of a flat rate for airport originated trips. He finalized by mentioning the surge pricing utilized by TNCs.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Alfred Banks stated that a flat rate for short trips would force taxi riders to Uber. He stated that the current increase should be sufficient to accommodate the current industry's needs.

Michael Anderson acknowledged that the Airport will address the bathroom issues at the taxicab holding lot. He expressed excitement on the launch of the electronic queue dispatch for taxicabs. He was curious to see other industry comparisons for flat rate fees.

Peter Zschiesche noted that the airport once hosted Taxi Associations meetings. Later on, the airport decided to disperse the association and rely on MTS to communicate with drivers on airport related matters. He encouraged committee members to contact the Airport's Board members to raise issues in between TAC meetings.

Alfred Banks asked if the MTS can facilitate meetings with the Airport issues with on behalf of taxicab drivers. He asked MTS to facilitate an incentive program with the state to fund the taxicab industry.

Akbar Majid stated that issues with the Airport are not in the authority of MTS to address. Prior to the Taxi associations, the airport hosted an ad hoc committee for taxi operations and met on as needed basis to discuss issues. He asked that the Airport explore the idea of creating an ad-hoc committee to address taxi drivers concerns outside of the Taxicab Advisory Committee.

Michael Anderson replied that he would relay the information to management.

Alfred Banks requested a bi-monthly meeting with the airport to discuss driver concerns and to include ACE parking and the Airport Traffic Officer personnel.

Margo Tanguay – Margo Tanguay stated Airport short trip fare refusals have been a long lasting problem, but did not believe a flat rate provides a solution. She supports the idea of establishing regular meetings with the Airport.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

8. 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Abel Seifu – Seifu emphasized the importance to adopt soft-meter technologies to help the taxicab industry and how MTS can require dispatch services to offer soft-meter technologies to their subscribers.

William Aloze – Aloze requested MTS help taxi drivers gain access to CBX.

9. Committee Member Communications

There was no Committee Member Communications discussion.

Akbar Majid replied to a comment made earlier about asking CBX allow all taxi owners into the property. He asked MTS staff if CBX was a private entity and can choose who is allowed on their property.

Mr. Fewell replied that CBX is a private entity and are not subject to the same public agency guidelines or rules as does the Airport. CBX is a member of this committee, and such dialogue can occur in this forum.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

/S/ Sean Elo-Rivera
Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/S/ Dalia Gonzalez
Committee Clerk
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 27, 2022

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:04am

ADJOURN: 12:01pm

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	10:04am	12:01pm
Able Seifu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Odyssey Cab	10:49am	12:01pm
Agustin Hodoyan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Soul Cab	10:01am	12:01pm
Alfred Banks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:45am	12:01pm
Akbar Majid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / SDYC Holdings	10:45am	12:01pm
Antonio Hueso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / USA Cab, LTD	10:04am	12:01pm
Brian Hilemon	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Tourism Authority	ABSENT	ABSENT
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:03am	12:01pm
George Abraham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daniel Fesshaye <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Eritrean Cab	10:03am	12:01pm
Louis Vasquez	<input type="checkbox"/> Claudia Rubio <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Convention Center	ABSENT	ABSENT
Marc Nichols	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Anderson <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Regional Airport Authority	ABSENT	ABSENT
Margo Tanguay	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	ABSENT	ABSENT
Michael Trimble	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Gaslamp Quarter Association	ABSENT	ABSENT
Mikail Hussein	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peter Zschiesche <input type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers SD	10:04am	12:01pm
VACANT	<input type="checkbox"/> VACANT <input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press	VACANT	VACANT
Zewdu Girma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Beezee Taxi	10:04am	12:01pm
Non – Voting Committee Members				
Austin Shepherd	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures	ABSENT	ABSENT
Edna Rains	<input type="checkbox"/> Stacie Smith <input type="checkbox"/>	SD County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division	ABSENT	ABSENT

COMMITTEE CLERK: /S/ Dalia Gonzalez