

# MINUTES

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

November 16, 2022

1. Roll Call

Chair Elo-Rivera called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of Minutes

Chair Elo-Rivera moved to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2022, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. David Tasem seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Able Seifu, Brian Hilemon, George Abraham and Karen Higareda absent.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

### COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. County of San Diego Agriculture, Weights and Measures Update (John Kinkaid)

John Kinkaid, Senior Agricultural/Standards Inspector at the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures, presented on how his department operates, how they conduct taxi inspections, and what to expect during the inspection process. The presentation first described the different commercial devices that Weights & Measures inspects/regulates to ensure accuracy of product weight, measure, and price.

The presentation also described the Taximeter Inspection Program, which is an annual inspection of all registered taximeters. The presentation had reminders to respond to inspectors when contacted to schedule an inspection, as they only occur one week out of each month, and to be conscious of the 24-hour notification that is required to reschedule an inspection. The presentation also had a reminder to update contact information with Weights & Measures periodically.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Hamed Yazdi from *RideshareMechanic* – Wanted to make a public comment but was not sure if this was the correct moment to speak. The Clerk asked that they hold their comment until the end of the meeting.

### MEMBER COMMENTS

Antonio Hueso had a question about updating the information online for their hours of operation, but he later recognized that he meant the comment for another agency.

Able Seifu asked about any status updates or new information on the use of soft meters in San Diego county. Mr. Kinkaid said that there were currently six different soft meters approved for use in the state of California, but that they had not encountered any in San Diego, yet. Mr. Kinkaid also informed the committee that they were still working out the logistics of installing a soft meter seal.

David Tasem asked for clarification about having a meter with two rates in a cab and having both posted at all time. Mr. Kinkaid responded that both rates must always be posted where the public can access them.

Akbar Majid stated that Uber and Lyft provide similar services as taxis, but that the Weights & Measures department does not conduct any inspections on their vehicle or charge fees. Mr. Majid wanted to know what soft meter technology taxis could use without having inspections or fees charged. Mr. Kinkaid stated that they would have to use the same approved software as the Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)(Uber and Lyft), but that he was not aware of any currently in use in California for taxicabs.

Mr. Majid had a follow up question, and asked if they were using an approved soft meter technology that they would not require inspections or fees. Mr. Kinkaid clarified that it was not enough to have approved soft meter technology that still ran off of the OBD from the vehicle, but that they would have to use the same software/algorithm as TNCs which was not currently available to taxicabs in the state of California.

Mr. Hueso also commented that many drivers were looking into moving to electric vehicles, which required different technology to access the information needed for meters. Mr. Tasem commented that there was a new OBD device that was being developed for hybrid and Tesla vehicles to access that information.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### 5. 2023 Fee Schedule (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented that the 2023 Regulatory Fee rates would remain the same as the previous years. Invoices would be emailed out during the first week of January 2023. The Regulatory Fee would be due March 3, 2023. There would be a late renewal period until March 31, 2022 to pay the Regulatory Fee along with a \$100 late renewal fee. There would also be an increase in the fee to change a DBA corporation name from \$10 to \$50 to cover administrative costs.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

#### MEMBER COMMENTS

David Tasem wanted to know why there was an extended period allowed for payments with a late fee. Mr. Fewell responded that this was a logistical decision to allow staff adequate time to process payments.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### 6. Proposed Ordinance No. 11 Revisions (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on Proposed Ordinance No. 11 Revisions. The first proposed revision was the lowering of the minimum age to hold a permit from 21 years old to 18 years old. The second proposed revision was to remove the five (5) year waiting period to apply for a permit after a conviction, as long as the applicant has satisfactorily completed parole or probation. The third

proposed revision was to reduce the waiting time after providing false information on an application from 5 years down to 1 year. The fourth and final proposed revision was to allow out-of-state corporations to apply for permits.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

#### MEMBER COMMENTS

Akbar Majid pointed out that lowering the minimum age would be in direct conflict with the age requirements of most commercial insurance policies. Mr. Majid was also concerned that applicants would not find out about the conflict until they had already begun the application process and paid the nonrefundable fees.

Able Seifu commented that he wanted to have a discussion with this group regarding a possible pause on issuing new taxicab permits after witnessing altercations involving new taxicab drivers at the San Diego International Airport. Mr. Seifu felt that his concerns were not being heard or addressed. Chair Elo-Rivera suggested that Mr. Fewell speak to how the proposed ordinance might affect the number of permit holders.

To Mr. Majid's comment, Mr. Fewell acknowledged the difficulties that permit holders face when obtaining commercial insurance, and stated that the proposed revision was more to align MTS's policies with those of the California Vehicle Code and the Sheriff's Department Code of Regulatory Ordinance. In response to Mr. Seifu's concerns Mr. Fewell said that the management of airport permits was under the purview of the San Diego Regional Airport Authority, and that concerns regarding the behavior of other permit holders at the airport should be taken up with that group.

#### Action Taken

David Tasem motioned to move forward with the proposed revision, minus the proposed revision to lower the minimum age from 21 years old to 18 years old. There was no second to his motion.

Akbar Majid motioned to forward a recommendation to the MTS Board of Directors to approve the proposed revisions to MTS Ordinance No. 11. Antonio Hueso seconded the motion, and the vote was 11 to 1 in favor with Alfred Banks, Brian Hilemon, Peter Zschiesche, and Karen Higareda absent.

#### 7. For-Hire Vehicle Administration Operations Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on For-Hire Vehicle Administration Operations Update. Mr. Fewell briefly discussed the current permit holder statistics and said that more in depth details can be found in the final meeting packet. Mr. Fewell also provided updates on the enforcement statistics regarding For-Hire Vehicles. Mr. Fewell finally touched on the annual mechanic inspection that is required for taxicabs.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Hamed Yazdi from *RideshareMechanic* – Thanked Mr. Fewell for the opportunity to speak to the committee and explained how RideshareMechanic was a California BAR and ASE certified service that conducts virtual inspections via video chat, which satisfies the MTS requirements.

#### MEMBER COMMENTS

Akbar Majid wanted to confirm that electronic trip sheets were still acceptable. Mr. Fewell confirmed that this was still the case.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### 8. Topics for the Next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on the topics for the next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting, which tentatively included: maximum rates of fare, wheelchair accessible taxicab recommendations, emergent topics in the For-Hire Vehicle industry, the 2023 FHVA budget overview, and the FHVA quarterly report. Mr. Fewell urged TAC members to reach out to him directly if they had any comments or suggestions on topics for the next TAC meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

#### MEMBER COMMENTS

Margo Tanguay expressed her concerns regarding unauthorized parking in taxicab stands, rendering them unusable to safely drop off passengers.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### 9. Committee Member Non-Agenda Communications

Zewdu Girma wanted to comment on one of the previous agenda items; he did not agree that there should be caps on the number of airport permits issued.

Marc Nichols clarified that the San Diego International Airport would not be taking any action to limit the number of taxis operating at the airport. Mr. Nichols updated the committee on the increasing level of activity at the airport and the continued operation of the Ground Transportation (GT) Permit department. Mr. Nichols also wanted to thank the permit holders for their continued patience and cooperation during construction at the airport. Additionally, Mr. Nichols assured that there was continued effort to convene a GT Ad Hoc committee.

Able Seifu asked Mr. Nichols if it was possible to set up “office hours” so that permit holders could speak directly with ACE parking employees, as it was difficult for many permit holders to communicate solely via email. Mr. Nichols asked Mr. Seifu to email him regarding this question so they could set up a time to speak on the matter.

#### Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### 10. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee was still in the process of being scheduled. Chair Elo-Rivera noted that going forward, committee members would be required to attend the TAC

meetings in person. Chair Elo-Rivera thanked both Samantha Leslie and Leonardo Fewell for the work that they do for the TAC meetings.

11. Adjournment

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 11:22 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): November 16, 2022

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:02 am

ADJOURN: 11:22 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	10:02 am	11:22 am
Able Seifu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Odyssey Cab	10:02 am	11:22 am
Agustin Hodoyan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Soul Cab	10:02 am	11:22 am
Alfred Banks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:02 am	11:22 am
Akbar Majid	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / SDYC Holdings	10:02 am	11:22 am
Antonio Hueso	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / USA Cab, LTD	10:02 am	11:22 am
Brian Hilemon	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Tourism Authority		
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:02 am	11:22 am
George Abraham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daniel Fesshaye <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Eritrean Cab	10:02 am	11:22 am
Louis Vasquez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claudia Rubio <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Convention Center	10:02 am	11:22 am
Marc Nichols	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Anderson <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Regional Airport Authority	10:02 am	11:22 am
Margo Tanguay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	10:02 am	11:22 am
Michael Trimble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	SD Gaslamp Quarter Association	10:02 am	11:22 am
Mikail Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Zschiesche <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers SD	10:02 am	11:22 am
Karen Higareda	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press		
Zewdu Girma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Beezee Taxi	10:02 am	11:22 am
Non – Voting Committee Members				
Austin Shepherd	<input type="checkbox"/> John Kinkaid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SD Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures	10:02 am	11:22 am
Edna Rains	<input type="checkbox"/> Stacie Smith <input type="checkbox"/>	SD County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division		

FOR COMMITTEE CLERK: /S/ Samantha Leslie