

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

July 30, 2025

[Clerk's note: Except where noted, public, staff and Committee member comments are paraphrased.  
The full comment can be heard by reviewing the recording at the [MTS website](#).]

**1. Roll Call**

Chair Elo-Rivera called the Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached as Attachment A.

**2. Public Comments**

There were no Public Comments.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Elo-Rivera moved to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2025, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Committee Member Seifu seconded the motion, and the vote was 9 to 0 in favor with Committee Member Lopez, Committee Member Tasem, Committee Member Tesfagebriel, Committee Member Ramirez, Committee Member Canizalez, and Committee Member Hussein absent and one (1) vacancy.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**4. Taxicab Advisory Committee Election Results (Leonardo Fewell)**

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration (FHVA) Manager, presented on the Taxicab Advisory Committee (TAC) election results. He discussed: the election process, the number of seats allocated to each category of permit holders and lease drivers, the timeline for when self-nomination forms were e-mailed, and how electronic voting was conducted. Mr. Fewell then announced the winners in each category.

**Public Comment**

Tony Hueso – Provided a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. Hueso provided information on how the Taxicab Advisory Committee was formed in the 1990's by former San Diego Mayor Susan Golding and expressed the importance of the Committee's responsibility to articulate ideas that will benefit the taxicab industry and its customer base.

**Committee Comment**

Chair Elo-Rivera welcomed the new committee members and thanked them for their service while emphasizing the valuable contributions of taxi drivers throughout City Heights and throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> District. He expressed his appreciation for being able to serve alongside the committee members and presented certificates to former Committee members in recognition of their service on the TAC and introduced and awarded certificates to the newly elected Committee members.

### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

Mr. Fewell presented on proposed revisions to TAC guidelines. He discussed: removing the Gaslamp Quarter Association as an organizational member based on feedback given from the May 28, 2025, TAC meeting and replacing them with the Border Transportation Council (BTC). He mentioned BTC's mission and stated they are mainly focused on the San Ysidro Border area. Mr. Fewell stated that final approval to amend the TAC guidelines would be made at the September 11, 2025, MTS Board of Directors meeting. If approved, a formal introduction of the BTC representative would be made at the TAC meeting on November 19, 2025.

### **Public Comment**

Kamran Hamidi – Provided a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. Hamidi suggested the TAC Election could have been performed better, adding Non-Emergency Medical transport (NEMs) and charter representatives on the Committee, revising the categories for Committee member seats as categorizing members has less meaning, and instead elect members by majority vote. He finally suggested having a translator for Committee members who have a language barrier or lack English proficiency and hoped that Committee members still decide to participate in the meetings despite losing income between \$100 and \$200 every time they attend a TAC meeting.

### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Tegegne asked if radio dispatch companies could be included in the meetings and inquired how to retain members who have been involved from the very beginning so they may continue to assist with the changes in the industry. Chair Elo-Rivera asked Mr. Fewell how he would ensure the institutional memory remained in place once experienced Committee members transitioned off the Committee. Mr. Fewell responded that invitations were extended to former Committee members requesting they remain involved with the Committee by participating through public comment, since they are experts in the industry. He said former members were vested in the industry and expressed interest in participating in the meetings and providing feedback. Mr. Fewell stressed that anyone in the industry or the public wishing to discuss an issue or concern or wanting to provide feedback, may do so via public comment, outreach, notifying For-Hire Vehicle Administration (FHVA) inspectors in the field, or by contacting him directly at the office. Additionally, Mr. Fewell stated that anyone who wished to remain involved in TAC matters could request to be added to an e-mail list of interested parties.

Committee Member Sanchez commented that he became a taxicab driver to see what drivers go through and is excited to provide feedback and knowledge on the subject matter, as well as being a champion for taxicab drivers' rights.

Committee Member Seifu stated that drivers were looking for change and this was the reason why there were new faces on the TAC. He mentioned the radio dispatch companies also need to look at drivers' concerns since there are new tech companies providing business for drivers and more dispatch company competition.

### **Action Taken**

Chair Elo-Rivera called for a vote to forward a recommendation to the MTS Board of Directors to approve the proposed membership revisions to the TAC guidelines. The vote was in favor

with 9 members voting yes, and Committee Member Teegne voting no. Committee Member Tasem, Committee Member Tesfagebriel, Committee Member Ramirez, Committee Member Canizalez, and Committee Member Hussein were absent, with 1 vacancy.

\*[Clerk's Note: The verbal vote count mistakenly announced as 4 members absent. The total number of members absent was 5.]

#### **6. Wildcatter Enforcement Update (Leonardo Fewell)**

Mr. Fewell presented on wildcatter enforcement update. He stated this will be a standing item for future TAC meetings. He discussed the July 21, 2025, operation conducted by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) at the San Ysidro and Otay borders to deter wildcatting. He spoke about MTS's role collaborating with law enforcement, public officials and key stakeholders, as well as FHVA's efforts to report, and track wildcatting activity that threatens public safety. Mr. Fewell recommended that the most effective approach to deter wildcatters would be for the City of San Diego to enforce strict curbside parking regulations at street-side staging areas. Additionally, Mr. Fewell stated that FHVA will collaborate with the District Attorney to explore the development of new codes or ordinances to support enforcement and vehicle impound procedures.

##### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

##### **Committee Comment**

Chair Elo-Rivera expressed appreciation for the work Mr. Fewell has done with the District Attorney Office, other governmental partners, and with the drivers. He stated these efforts do not diminish the struggle taxicab drivers go through daily with wildcatters but wanted to recognize the steps being taken to address the issue.

##### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### **7. Driver Recognition Program (Leonardo Fewell)**

Mr. Fewell presented on the Driver Recognition Program. He discussed consulting with various peer regulatory agencies on similar driver recognition programs. He stated drivers of all permitted FHVA modes who receive compliments and excel in their profession should be recognized. Mr. Fewell outlined the objective, scope and eligibility requirements and mentioned the nomination and selection process. He noted a winner for each category would be selected by MTS's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee, based on recommendations and the program's criteria. Mr. Fewell listed the various awards the winners of each category would receive and discussed how the award program and ceremony would be promoted. He stated it is anticipated that the Chair of the TAC will present the award around July 2026, at the third TAC meeting of 2026.

##### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

### **Committee Comment**

Chair Elo-Rivera stated he is looking forward to witnessing the program's implementation and seeing drivers receive recognition for the good work they are doing.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked Mr. Fewell to clarify if the driver recognition decal would only be applied to large vehicles. Mr. Fewell clarified that the decal would be large in size and would be applied to any vehicle driven by the winner, regardless of the vehicle's size.

Committee Member Marty stated she loves positive recognition for drivers since a lot of them that go into the Sheriff's office have great attitudes. She mentioned a concern about whether paratransit drivers would receive the award and recognition for their good work, or if that positive recognition would be given to the company they work for. Mr. Fewell responded that MTS has no stipulation on how the drivers are required to spend the gas and car wash award and stated the recognition program is only a proposal and MTS welcomes ideas from the Committee on ways to make it better.

### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

## **8. For-Hire Vehicle Administration (FHVA) Operations Update (Leonardo Fewell)**

Mr. Fewell presented on the FHVA operations update. He provided details on email as the primary method of communication for all purposes, MTS Ordinance No. 11 § 1.8 (c), and FHVA staff availability and directory. He emphasized the importance of stakeholders notifying FHVA of any email changes to ensure they receive relevant information sent by MTS. He also noted that FHVA staff are available by appointment only. Mr. Fewell presented data on active and surrendered FHVA permits, field contacts, customer feedback cases, and issued citations and warnings. He discussed the San Diego Regional Airport Authority Board's access fee adjustment approval from \$2.98 to \$3.56 and requirements to display updated airport rate stickers. Mr. Fewell provided a summary of customer feedback cases, and airport ground transportation trips. Mr. Fewell thanked the San Diego Airport for providing ground transportation trip information to present to the committee.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Teegne requested communication and discussions before making decisions to determine flat airport rates. He pointed out that the total number of airport trips graphic showed how taxicab trips continue to be far less than those provided by Uber and believed that a taxicab flat rate could hurt taxicabs rather than help them compete.

Committee Member Seifu said the progress on airport flat rate discussions has slowed and it needs to resume as airport short trips continue to be a problem as the rates of fare are high and drivers are expected to provide good customer service. He proposed creating a small group that includes the airport, the union, and the tech dispatch companies to explore a solution and to discuss rates of fare at the airport. Chair Elo-Rivera asked Mr. Fewell if there was a way to work on some alternatives to the current rates of fare that would allow drivers to receive enough compensation based on the longer waiting times at the airport. Mr. Fewell responded that MTS wants to deliver a comprehensive, sustainable solution and believed that the root of the problem

is not the rates of fare, but the lack of taxicab trips. He stated that FHVA has been collaborating with the airport to develop methods to possibly reintroduce a permit system that would restrict certain drivers from working on designated days. Mr. Fewell mentioned that the airport was asked to address several questions and stated instead of creating a subcommittee, it would be most effective to wait for the airport's responses, present them at the next TAC meeting, and have a discussion at that time with the aim of implementing a solution at the airport level. He also mentioned that anyone from the Committee or any driver is welcome to discuss items with him in his office. He said that the problem of decreased taxicab trips is not unique to San Diego and taxi drivers in other cities are experiencing the same problem. Committee Member Seifu responded that the taxicab drivers should produce a solution instead of waiting for the airport's responses and Chair Elo-Rivera commented that he thought that was fair. Chair Elo-Rivera also suggested that MTS can act as a liaison between the taxicab drivers and the airport and reminded drivers that there is nothing that impedes them from meeting and develop solutions for further discussions

#### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### **OTHER ITEMS**

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

Mr. Fewell stated the next TAC meeting would be the last one for the year and is scheduled for November 19, 2025, where staff recommendations for topics of discussion should include: airport taxicab trips, 2026 administrative fee schedule, FHVA operations update and sustainable measures for taxicabs (Smart Meter Technology). Mr. Fewell mentioned members could email him with feedback on topics that should be considered and addressed in the agenda at the next TAC meeting.

#### **Public Comment**

No public comment.

#### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Tegegne raised the topics of brainstorming flat rates from the Airport and obtaining a duplicate Sheriff's ID. Chair Elo-Rivera suggested Committee Member Tegegne follow up with FHVA after the meeting to get his questions answered and possibly add those topics mentioned to the next meeting.

#### **10. Committee Member Communications and Other Business**

There was no Committee Member Communications and Other Business discussion.

#### **11. Next Meeting Date**

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

**12. Adjournment**

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

/S/ Sean Elo-Rivera

Chairperson

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/S/ Brenda Jackson

Committee Clerk

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: A. Roll Call Sheet

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

ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): July 30, 2025

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 1:04 PM

ADJOURN: 2:31 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	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Able Seifu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Odyssey Cab	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Alemayehu Tegegne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / AT Cab	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Gonzalo Ayala	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Heritage Cab	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Akililu Fray	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / AK Cab	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Laura Ramirez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Cristobal Cab	1:46 PM	2:31 PM
Kidane Tesfagebriel	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Western Cab	Absent	Absent
Letty Canizalez	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	SD Tourism Authority	Absent	Absent
Eduardo Gonzalez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jose Raul Alcantar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cross Border X-Press	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Mikail Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Zschiesche	<input type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers SD	Absent	Absent
Daryl Mayekawa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thanh Nguyen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SD Convention Center	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Marc Nichols	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Anderson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SD Regional Airport Authority	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
VACANT	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cesar Lopez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	1:20 PM	2:31 PM
Horacio Sanchez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
David Tasem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	Absent	Absent
Non – Voting Committee Members						
Jonathan Garcia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Austin Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	SD Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures	1:04 PM	2:31 PM
Jessica Marty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	SD County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division	1:04 PM	2:31 PM

COMMITTEE CLERK: /S/ Brenda Jackson