

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM

TAXICAB ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

November 19, 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 meeting to order at 1:03 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**

Committee Member Zschiesche moved to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2025, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Committee Member Seifu seconded the motion, and the vote was 10 to 0 in favor with Committee Member C. Lopez, Committee Member Tasem, Committee Member E. Lopez, Committee Member Tesfagebriel, Committee Member Ramirez, and Committee Member Canizalez absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. **Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Amended Budget Forecast and Calendar Year (CY) 2026 Fee Schedule (Gordon Meyer and Leonardo Fewell)**

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration (FHVA) Manager, presented on the Fiscal year (FY) 2026 amended budget forecast and calendar year (CY) 2026 fee schedule. He stated that FHVA is required to be a self-funded entity per MTS's enabling legislation. He provided a comprehensive overview of the following items: budgeting goals; FHVA's budget processes and annual analysis; factors influencing revenue, expense, and contingency reserves; and FHVA's five-year forecasts. He further explained the staff's decision not to recommend a contingency reserve target because it would not align with FHVA's budgeting objectives. Mr. Fewell's presentation also included the proposed FY26 amended budget forecast and the CY26 fee schedule. He summarized feedback received during two ad hoc meetings and outlined the actions MTS and FHVA will undertake in response, emphasizing commitment to transparency, including an explanation of the proposed CY26 regulatory fees. Gordon Meyer, MTS Manager of Financial Planning, offered an overview on FHVA's budget, anticipated changes for the current year, the five-year outlook, and the rationale for the regulatory fee increase along with expectations for future trends.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Committee Member Zschiesche expressed gratitude that the staff's consideration of establishing boundaries and articulating what MTS believes to be an appropriate level provides transparency and clear information that helps drivers understand the reasoning underlying the budget.

Chair Elo-Rivera thanked Mr. Fewell for convening the ad hoc meetings and noted that these discussions were important for understanding the context behind upcoming increases and exploring ways to mitigate them. He also acknowledged that while no one likes to see fees rise, he appreciated that several fees were reduced or eliminated.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

5. Autonomous For-Hire Vehicles (Rosa Olascoaga Vidal)

Chair Elo-Rivera gave some context before his Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives, Rosa Olascoaga Vidal, presented on item #5. He noted that they have heard Waymo plans to begin operating in San Diego next year and said this could pose an existential threat to people who make their living by driving taxicabs or rideshares. He added that he wants to explore what can be done to protect workers and families who rely on that income, and to ensure there is a real conversation about the community's ability to have a say in technologies that could significantly disrupt people's livelihoods and upend the community.

Ms. Olascoaga Vidal presented on autonomous for-hire vehicles (AVs) reporting they are operating in California, with companies like Waymo rapidly expanding and positioning themselves to enter cities like San Diego. She mentioned that AVs are regulated in part by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), noting that Waymo is currently testing in San Diego, including at the San Diego International Airport (SAN). She stated Waymo does not have authorization to begin for-hire operations, but they announced they plan to conduct passenger trips in San Diego sometime in 2026. Ms. Olascoaga Vidal highlighted major concerns of AVs in San Diego, pointing out that they could threaten drivers' livelihoods, that cities have almost no authority with AV services, and that other cities have seen AVs block intersections, stop unexpectedly, disrupt transit services, and create serious public safety risks. She outlined a set of principles and proposed actions to guide the recommendations to staff considering safeguards to protect drivers' livelihoods, to ensure technology changes do not come at the expense of local jobs, and for San Diego to have a say in whether and how AVs operate in San Diego. She proposed action on protecting livelihoods, demand for local control, ensuring accountability and responsible policy. Ms. Olascoaga Vidal outlined potential next steps for the TAC, recommending a formal protest letter from the TAC be submitted to the CPUC regarding Waymo's Phase 1 Driverless Autonomous Vehicle and Deployment Program and submit a formal protest to the California DMV regarding Waymo's AV permit for San Diego. She additionally stated that the TAC could recommend the MTS Board of Directors adopt a resolution formally opposing Waymo's driverless vehicle deployment in San Diego by submitting a protest position which would urge California legislators and the Governor to restore local authority. She recommended that TAC discuss the Chair's request and provide staff with directions regarding for-hire AVs.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Chair Elo-Rivera stated that the recommendation is asking for thoughtful oversight and for a process that respects the people who work and live in San Diego.

Committee Member Zschiesche began by making a motion to recommend the MTS Board to accept the proposed steps. He pointed out that in the past, the state gave localities in California the right to regulate the taxi industry in the public's interest, knowing that all cities in California would not make the same rules. He stated there should be a carve out for "robo taxis" and that the people of San Diego should be given a say on how, when, and what the impacts are going to be. He emphasized that there is a need for local regulations and a dialogue between Waymo and MTS to clarify Waymo's goals and their potential impact on San Diego's residents.

Chair Elo-Rivera clarified the motion on the floor had two components. The first was for a letter from the TAC, to be submitted for formal protest to the CPUC and the DMV; the second part was for a recommendation to the MTS Board of Directors to support a resolution that would have the four components shown on slide #7. Committee Member Zschiesche moved to approve both parts of the recommendation, and Committee Member Seifu seconded the motion.

Samantha Leslie, MTS Deputy General Counsel, stated she wanted to clarify the next steps, and explained that if the motion is approved, MTS would implement it as best as possible. She also noted that MTS staff currently lacks the expertise required to file a protest with the CPUC and the DMV and may need to have an outside consultant or to hire outside counsel to assist in this effort.

Chair Elo-Rivera stated that as the regulatory agency for the taxicab industry and transit agency for San Diego, his understanding was that MTS had not been given clarity on how to object at the state level to the introduction of autonomous vehicles to the San Diego region. He stated this was a problem as there were many potential impacts and implications to MTS as the taxicab regulatory agency and potential disruptions to the five-year budget projections that certainly could be disrupted by the introduction of autonomous vehicles. He stated the implications and impacts for the taxicab industry and emphasized the need for local control.

Committee Member Zschiesche suggested for MTS to take action to issue the letter of protest and then stand by for feedback from DMV and CPUC if the protest was properly submitted.

Chair Elo-Rivera welcomed the input of committee members and said that as a City Councilmember he is committed to protecting peoples' jobs and stated there cannot be a level playing field against a non-human competitor.

Committee Member Anderson asked if there was a budget from TAC to carry out the suggested protest actions and if any other agencies or anyone else had challenged the deployment of autonomous vehicles.

Chair Elo-Rivera stated that there was state legislation that had been introduced urging the state to restore local control for autonomous vehicles.

Ms. Olascoaga Vidal stated the CPUC has a 21-day comment period when letters of opposition may be submitted.

Committee Member Tegegne said that autonomous vehicles are similar to when Uber started operating and that at a minimum, MTS should request a limit on how many AVs may operate in San Diego.

Chair Elo-Rivera stated that this was not about being anti-innovation but rather about being pro-people and doing both without disregarding the need for human beings.

Action Taken

Committee Member Zschiesche moved to approve the motion and Committee Member Seifu seconded the motion. The vote was 11 to 1 in favor, with Committee Member Anderson voting no, and Committee Members Tasem, Tesfagebriel, Ramirez, and Canizalez absent.

6. Wildcatting Enforcement Update (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on the wildcatting enforcement update. He thanked the leadership from the San Diego Police Department (SDPD), Captain Leo, Lieutenant Dempsey and Officer Carlos Eddington for attending the meeting. He stated that since July 21, 2025, three operations were conducted by the SDPD and CPUC, targeting wildcatting in the San Ysidro area resulted in wildcatters being detained and their vehicles being impounded for 30-days. Mr. Fewell stated that since the SDPD Border Safety Detail staff have limited overtime shifts, the cross-over enforcement they provide to disrupt wildcatting operations requires additional funding to support effective enforcement in San Ysidro and Otay Mesa. He noted that the San Diego Harbor Police (SDHP) and the Airport requested to be additional stakeholders for wildcatter enforcement.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Committee Member Zschiesche thanked the officers and staff assisting with the wildcatting enforcement effort.

Committee Member Lopez asked for more police enforcement at San Ysidro, stating that he and Committee Member Ramirez have been considered whistleblowers and have been threatened by wildcatters.

Officer Eddington stated the SDPD is aware of the wildcatting issues, understands Committee Member Lopez's frustration, and indicated they are encountering ongoing operational limitations. He mentioned the SDPD Southern Division enforcement team had been eliminated due to staffing challenges and additionally, the SDPD is now facing budget constraints. Officer Eddington discussed how SDPD is collaborating with the DA and the CPUC to create an effective operational detail, placing greater focus on drivers and vehicles, which has resulted in 30-day impounds. He noted that, despite staffing challenges and operational constraints, the team is doing the best they can.

Chair Elo-Rivera pledged his commitment to raising awareness of the wildcatting issue with the Chief of Police during the budget season and ensuring it is adequately resourced.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

7. Sustainable Measures for the Taxicab Industry (Leonardo Fewell)

Mr. Fewell presented on sustainable measures for the taxicab industry. He explained that drivers have been reporting longer wait times for airport trips and an overall decline in business. He noted that technological differences between taxicabs and transportation network companies (TNCs) are driving consumers to prefer TNCs. Mr. Fewell pointed out that half of FHVA permitted taxis already use modern technology solutions that help them compete more

effectively with TNCs. He went on to describe the technological challenges facing taxicabs, elaborating on soft meters (smart meters) and their advantages, and discussed in detail the integration and benefits of contactless payment systems.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Committee Member Seifu inquired about when actual figures on the flat rate issue would be available, noting that people are eager for an update.

Committee Member Anderson stated that, consistent with other TNCs, the Airport supports a flat rate if that is the group's preference. He also indicated that the Airport may consider requiring all taxicab drivers to use a standardized technology, enabling a consistent product, uniform customer service, and a level playing field for all.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked Mr. Fewell what he sees as the main barriers to implementation.

Mr. Fewell responded there are no challenges as far as MTS is concerned since these technological solutions have gradually entered the San Diego market and are no longer cost prohibitive. He stated three providers integrated with current dispatch services to provide these technological solutions, leaving adoption of the solutions up to the permit holders. He emphasized that technology is a key factor why consumer preferences are shifting to TNCs and pointed out that there are now viable options to compete more effectively. Mr. Fewell stated he would address Committee Member Seifu's question about flat rates in the next agenda item and addressed Committee Member Anderson's response, stating that the SAN has been able to adopt their own rules, driving the requirements for taxicabs operating at SAN.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked if there are any requirements of permit holders adopting the solutions. Mr. Fewell responded that currently, there are no strict requirements by the ordinance. Chair Elo-Rivera encouraged the group to act early to stay ahead of this and avoid having the technology solution imposed on them.

Committee Member Zschesche cautioned that regulating the taxicab industry would be difficult because drivers are highly diverse and operate as independent businesses with different priorities. He stated that since the arrival of Uber and Lyft, drivers have had to adapt to constant changes beyond their control, yet many continue to stay and persevere. He emphasized that this is a very human, decentralized industry with a wide range of experiences, and stakeholders must navigate these challenges as best they can.

Committee Member Seifu asked Mr. Fewell if the hold up for not having a flat rate was due to some radio dispatch companies not having soft meters. Mr. Fewell responded that soft meters would be part of the solution, but not the underlying reason for not implementing a flat-rate yet, and that the Airport has a major influence on how this flat-rate system is developed.

Chair Elo-Rivera stated he would address Agenda Item 11 now, stating we do not know the next meeting date and asking Mr. Fewell to combine Agenda Items 8 and 9 due to time constraints.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

Mr. Fewell presented on FHVA operations update. He outlined the following information: e-mail is the primary method of communication for all purposes, permit holders are required to notify FHVA of any changes to their contact information per the ordinance, staff contact information can be found on-line, valid certificate of insurance (COI) is the permit holder's responsibility to maintain, and to ensure consumer protection, if insurance has expired, the permit(s) will be suspended immediately (permit holder must surrender permit(s) to FHVA within 72 hours or risk permanent permit revocation), and SAN will be notified and will disconnect them from the airport queue. Mr. Fewell noted that once there is a lapse in insurance, the permit holder is required to have a vehicle inspection, ensuring the new COI matches with the vehicle being insured. He thanked Committee Member Anderson for providing statistics showing the upward trend for TNCs gaining consumer preference (about 90%) versus taxicabs preferred about 10% of the time. Mr. Fewell addressed Committee Member Seifu's question about the potential flat rate for airport-originated trips, noting that SAN has expressed support for implementing one if authorized by FHVA. Mr. Fewell pointed out that once MTS receives answers to the questions sent to the airport, MTS will be able to better analyze a flat rate option and address the drivers' concerns about short trips from the airport. He stated that MTS is looking forward to working with the airport and wants to be thorough and to have a sustainable solution, but without addressing these questions and the drivers' underlying concerns, a flat rate is not the optimal solution.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Chair Elo-Rivera commented to Committee Member Anderson that it sounded like there would be some value in having some questions answered from the airport.

Committee Member Anderson explained that the key issue among the ten items on the slides is whether there are too many drivers. He said the airport was asked if it would consider implementing a cap, and they indicated they are open to revisiting that option. He then reiterated that there are currently too many drivers at the airport.

Chair Elo-Rivera asked whether the same question is being raised about rideshare drivers and noted that a longer, more focused discussion is needed on this issue, especially once AVs are introduced, there will still be an underlying demand problem. He added that he will engage with the airport authority board members on this topic.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

This discussion was waived due to time constraints.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

There were no Committee Comments.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

OTHER ITEMS

10. Committee Member Communications

There was no Committee Member Communications and Other Business discussion.

11. Next Meeting Date: To be Determined

12. Adjournment

Chair Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 2:56 P.M.

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

/S/ Adriana Castro
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): November 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 1:03 PM

ADJOURN: 2:56 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	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Able Seifu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Odyssey Cab	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Alemayehu Tegegne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / AT Cab	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Gonzalo Ayala	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Heritage Cab	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Aklilu Fray	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / AK Cab	1:02 PM	2:10 PM
Laura Ramirez	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Holder / Cristobal Cab	ABSENT	ABSENT
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	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Mikail Hussein	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Zschiesche	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	United Taxi Workers SD	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Daryl Mayekawa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thanh Nguyen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SD Convention Center	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Marc Nichols	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Anderson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SD Regional Airport Authority	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Eric Lopez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Border Transportation Council (BTC)	1:07 PM	2:56 PM
Cesar Lopez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	1:07 PM	2:56 PM
Horacio Sanchez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxicab Lease Driver	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
David Tasem	<input 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	1:02 PM	2:56 PM
Jessica Marty	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	SD County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division	ABSENT	ABSENT

COMMITTEE CLERK: /S/ Brenda Jackson