

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

May 13, 2026

[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

Leonardo Fewell called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached as Attachment A.

Committee Comment

Mr. Fewell opened the meeting announcing the passing of Regulatory Inspector Tom Lee and paid tribute to his life and service. He highlighted Tom's nearly 24 years with MTS Taxicab Administration, his respected standing in the taxi industry, and his dedication to his family and colleagues. Mr. Fewell led a moment of silence in Tom Lee's memory and thanked UTW for their assistance with Tom's remembrance.

Mr. Fewell introduced Mr. Yona Tekeste as the newly appointed TAC member for the owner of one permit category, and stated that he looked forward to his contribution to the industry.

2. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Committee Member Peter Zschiesche moved to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2025 and February 27, 2026, MTS Taxicab Advisory Committee meetings. Committee member Aleayehu Tegegne seconded the motion, and the vote was 9 to 0 in favor with Committee Members, Able Seifu, KidaneTesfagebriel, Letty Canizalez, Cesar Lopez, Horacio Sanchez David Tasem, Chair Elo-Rivera and absent.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Proposed Amendments to For-Hire Vehicle Services Regulations (Leonardo Fewell and Samantha Leslie)

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager, and Samantha Leslie, MTS Deputy General Counsel, presented on Proposed Amendments to For-Hire Vehicle Service Regulations. They outlined the proposed amendments to For-Hire Vehicle Regulations MTS Ordinance 11 and Board Policy No. 34, which included, County of San Diego Sheriff's Office (Sheriff) licensing of drivers, rates of fare for non-emergency medical, charters, jitney, low-speed vehicles, removal of annual fee schedule appeal, airport access fee and refusing trips based on trip destination into private property, non-emergency medical vehicle requirements, interior posting withing vehicles, removing physical map requirement, electronic trip receipts to passenger, agreements with private businesses, contactless payments, days to place a vehicle in service removing permit transfers, and removing taxicab stand filing fee.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

There were no Committee Comments.

Action Taken

Chair Elo-Rivera moved the motion that the MTS TAC forward a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve the proposed revision to MTS Ordinance No. 11 and MTS Board Policy No. 34, "For-Hire Vehicle Services". and called the vote to order. Vote was 9 in favor (Aklilu Fray, Eduardo Gonzalez, Francisco Bates, Gonzalo Ayala, Gonzalo Ayala, Peter Zschiesche, Chair Elo-Rivera, Thanh Nguyen, Yona Tekeste Kahsai) to 1 not in favor (Aleayehu Tegegne) with Able Seifu, Cesar Lopez, David Tasem, Horacio Sanchez, Kidane Tesfagebriel and Letty Canizalez absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Sustainable Measures for Taxicabs: Smart Meter Technology (Leonardo Fewell)

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager, presented on Sustainable Measures for Taxicabs: Smart Meter Technology. He presented on Smart Meter Technology, core features of Smart-Meter, GPS-based fare calculation, up-front pricing capability, integrated digital payments, trip data and cloud connectivity, passenger and driver apps integration and digital functionality. Key benefits for taxicabs, better competition and enabling integration with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), increased transparency and customer trust, operational efficiency, regulatory & reporting, and improved rider experience. Key benefits of Up-front pricing, predictability and transparency, better customer experience and next steps.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Committee Member Alemayehu (Alex) Tegegne stated they were new to the concept and admitted that he did not understand how the system would work, especially in the context of taxi services. He explained that customers still had to physically come to his car to find out the fare, which put taxis at a disadvantage compared to TNCs such as Uber, where pricing was visible in advance. He noted that he had missed the last meeting and was therefore unsure if this topic had already been addressed.

Leonardo Fewell explained that the current effort was focused on enabling technology for upfront pricing, noting that some dispatch services using soft meter systems could already provide this feature within existing regulations as long as fares stayed below maximum rates. He encouraged broader adoption of this technology so all taxi drivers could offer upfront pricing and contactless payments, adding that future discussions, including Ad Hoc Committee meetings, would explore policy changes to better align with these tools and invited participation for feedback.

Chair Elo-Rivera expressed appreciation for the presentation and acknowledged the significant research and effort involved. He noted the importance of the topic for the industry and emphasized that adopting such measures could help taxi services remain competitive in an increasingly challenging environment.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager, presented on For Hire Vehicle Administration Operations Update. He discussed: The primary method of communication, Ordinance 11, FHVA staff availability, future online permitting portal, Ad Hoc meeting on taxicab

rates of fare and next steps, Number of Billed vs renewed For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) permits, number of active vs. surrendered FHV permits as of 05/07/2026 and 2026 quarterly (Jan-Mar) FHVA field inspection statistics, Customer feedback cases and airport trips for Calendar Year (CY) 2026.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Chair Elo-Rivera asked whether “overcharge” referred to a customer’s perception of being overcharged or if it was something that had been formally verified. Mr. Fewell explained that customer overcharge cases were tracked through complaints submitted via phone or QR code, which are then investigated by field staff. He stated an overcharge was confirmed based on findings such as the meter not being activated or a fare exceeding the allowed maximum limits, while misunderstandings were marked as unfounded. Only verified issues were recorded as sustained cases in their system.

Committee Member Alemayehu Tegegne expressed concern about penalties for not displaying a Sheriff issued ID, describing a case where a driver received a ticket and had to appear in court over what he felt was an accidental oversight. He argued the fine was excessive given that drivers often work outside the airport and could easily forget their ID, and he criticized enforcement practices as disruptive, particularly when inspections occurred during busy convention periods rather than slower times when education might be more effective. Mr. Fewell explained that enforcement aimed to ensure drivers complied with regulations, including displaying ID badges. He emphasized that reminders were regularly sent through emails and outreach, noting that ID display was a basic requirement distinguishing taxi drivers from TNC drivers and was mandated by both MTS and the Sheriff’s office. He added that inspections and citations were necessary due to repeated noncompliance and public complaints, stressing that visible IDs helped assure passenger safety and professionalism. Mr. Fewell noted that while warnings and education were used, they were not always effective, and suggested that future technology solutions, such as digital ID displays through smart meters, could help address the issue while maintaining compliance and customer service standards.

Committee Member Peter Zschiesche raised concerns about the transition to digital systems, noting that many taxi drivers struggled with technology and would likely need ongoing support from dispatch offices, creating an issue for both drivers and staff. He emphasized that drivers should have a voice in setting fares, sharing that UTWSD had successfully allowed drivers to provide feedback on rates through surveys, leading to an alternate method rather than relying on rigid formulas like Consumer Price Index (CPI), which he argued could push prices too high. Mr. Zschiesche also highlighted confusion among younger passengers unfamiliar with taxi services, suggesting the need for better public education and marketing, particularly at the airport and through city outreach, to promote taxi availability and benefits.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

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

Leonardo Fewell, MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager, presented on Topics for Next Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting. He recommended including Sustainable Measures for the Taxicab Industry and FHVA Operations Update. He also suggested adding an item to the agenda to consider updates to the Taxicab Advisory Committee Guidelines, specifically to revise membership and attendance requirements in order to ensure quorum and support more effective discussions

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

Committee Comment

Committee Member Peter Zschiesche referenced prior MTS action on the Waymo issue and suggested that it would be helpful to receive an update at the next meeting on developments and potential options. He recommended that Chair Elo-Rivera provide this feedback, noting it would be valuable information for the industry. Chair Elo-Rivera agreed to provide an update on the Waymo issue at a future meeting and noted that Rosa Olascoaga-Vidal, Deputy Chief of Strategic Initiatives, could also share information on related city efforts. He expressed concern that emerging technologies, such as automated vehicles, posed a significant threat to drivers' livelihoods by potentially removing labor from the equation, and he highlighted additional concerns about their readiness for public roads. Chair Elo-Rivera added that actions had already been taken with the city to advocate for local control over decision-making and that a more detailed update, along with committee feedback, would help shape both short- and long-term strategies.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

OTHER ITEMS

8. Committee Member Communications

There was no Committee Member Communications and Other Business discussion.

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

10. Next Meeting Date

The next Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

Chair Sean Elo-Rivera adjourned the meeting at 10:18 a.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): May 13, 2026

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 9:10am

ADJOURN: 10:18am

COMMITTEE MEMBER		ALTERNATE		ORGANIZATION	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Voting Committee Members						
Sean Elo-Rivera (Chair)	☒	None	☐	MTS Board of Directors/ SD City Council	9:28am	10:18am
Able Seifu	☐	None	☐	Permit Holder / Odyssey Cab	Absent	Absent
Alemayehu Tegegne	☒	None	☐	Permit Holder / AT Cab	9:10am	10:18am
Gonzalo Ayala	☒	None	☐	Permit Holder / Heritage Cab	9:10am	10:18am
Aklilu Fray	☒	None	☐	Permit Holder / AK Cab	9:10am	10:18am
Yona Tekeste Kahsai	☒	None	☐	Permit Holder / Yonisam Cab	9:10am	10:18am
Kidane Tesfagebriel	☐	None	☐	Permit Holder / Western Cab	Absent	Absent
Letty Canizalez	☐	None	☐	SD Tourism Authority	Absent	Absent
Eduardo Gonzalez	☒	Jose Raul Alcantar	☐	Cross Border X-Press	9:10am	10:18am
Mikail Hussein	☐	Peter Zschiesche	☒	United Taxi Workers SD	9:10am	10:18am
Daryl Mayekawa	☐	Thanh Nguyen	☒	SD Convention Center	9:10am	10:18am
Marc Nichols	☒	Michael Anderson	☐	SD Regional Airport Authority	9:10am	10:18am
Francisco Bates	☒	None	☐	Border Transportation Council (BTC)	9:10am	10:18am
Cesar Lopez	☐	None	☐	Taxicab Lease Driver	Absent	Absent
Horacio Sanchez	☐	None	☐	Taxicab Lease Driver	Absent	Absent
David Tasem	☐	None	☐	Taxicab Lease Driver	Absent	Absent
Non – Voting Committee Members						
Jonathan Garcia	☒	Austin Shepard	☐	SD Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures	9:10am	10:18am
Jessica Marty	☐	None	☐	SD County Sheriff's Department Licensing Division	Absent	Absent

COMMITTEE CLERK: /S/ Adriana Castro