



Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Policy
Effective 11/8/2023

I. Introduction

It is the intent of San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) For-Hire Vehicle Administration (FHVA) to develop a WAV policy that will maintain the current number of taxicab WAVs and incentivize the entry of taxicab WAV's to the San Diego for-hire vehicle transportation market.

MTS, through the MTS FHVA, regulates for-hire vehicles, which includes taxicabs, that operate in the following cities: San Diego, Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, National City, El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee and Poway. The City of San Diego (City) retains the right to make decisions or provide recommendations to MTS regarding fundamental policy matters relating to the regulation of taxicabs, which is set forth at City of San Diego Council Policy No. 500-02 (Policy No. 500-02).

MTS FHVA responsibilities include: determining permit eligibility; inspecting vehicles; monitoring compliance with administrative and operational safety regulations; and investigating passenger complaints. MTS Ordinance No. 11 sets forth the various minimum safety and vehicle inspection standards that all for-hire vehicles must meet. All oversight activities by the MTS FHVA must be full cost-recovery. Fees, which are adopted annually by MTS, fund the MTS FHVA operations.

It is MTS FHVA's aim that its regulations and requirements ensure public safety and protect consumers. Ensuring there is an adequate number of taxicab WAV operating in MTS FHVA's jurisdiction is an important consumer protection measure as individuals using a wheelchair, and individuals requiring a ramp in order to enter into a taxicab, require a WAV in order to travel for work, medical appointments, recreation, entertainment and other activities. Without a sufficient number of taxicab WAV operating may result in unreasonably long wait times and/or no available taxicab service for individuals using a wheelchair and individuals requiring a ramp. To ensure accessible and equitable transportation options for all residents and visitors to MTS FHVA jurisdiction, it is MTS's aim to increase the number of taxicab WAV in service.

II. Background

A taxicab WAV is a taxicab that is wheelchair accessible. It is a vehicle equipped with a side entry wheelchair accessible ramp, allowing a wheelchair to be secured throughout the duration of the trip. It can be factory built (vehicle manufactured originally as a WAV) or a converted WAV (post-manufacture mechanical conversion/modification of a vehicle).



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) establishes certain requirements regarding the provision of service to individuals with disabilities. Per 49 CFR Section 37.29 (c), taxicabs are prohibited from: refusing to provide service to people with disabilities who can use taxicab vehicles; refusing to provide service to people using service animals; charging higher fares or fees for assisting riders with disabilities or their equipment than are charged to other riders; and refusing to assist with the stowing of stowable mobility devices.

Per 49 CFR Section 37.29(b), private entities providing taxi service are not required to purchase or lease taxicab WAV (i.e. accessible taxicab, such as a sedan). However, if a taxicab provider purchases or leases a van, that vehicle must be accessible unless the taxicab provider can demonstrate equivalent service to individuals with disabilities.

Since the ADA does not require that all taxicabs be an accessible vehicle, a requirement was added to Policy No. 500-02 as a way to increase the number of accessible vehicles. Effective November 25, 2014, Policy No. 500-02 required that taxicab permit holders with two (2) or more vehicles must have 50% of their fleet be a taxicab WAV¹. Unfortunately, this requirement was not successful in increasing the number of taxicab WAVS. The result was that existing permit holders avoided purchasing more vehicles so as not to fall under this requirement. According to permit holders, the high price of WAVs, as well as WAV higher operational costs, were cited as the main reasons for not seeking additional permits.

On October 27, 2020, the City of San Diego approved various revisions to Policy 500-02 which included the removal of this 50% taxicab WAV requirement for permit holders of two (2) or more vehicles. In its place, the City of San Diego required that all taxicab holders comply with any future adopted MTS Taxicab WAV Policy.

III. Development of WAV Policy and Research Findings

In order to develop the appropriate strategies and incentives to maintain and increase the number of taxicab WAV, MTS FHVA conducted the following research.

a. Reviewed FHVA Historical Data on the Number of Taxicab WAV Permitted Vehicles

The table below shows the total number of FHVA permitted taxicab vehicles, including the number of permitted taxicab WAV.

¹ This requirement was applied to any new permit holders and any existing permit holders that added a vehicle to their existing fleet.

Table 1: MTS FHVA Permitted Taxicabs

Calendar Year	Number of all Taxicab Permits	Number of Taxicab WAV Permits
2019	841	3
2020	683	3
2021	588	3
2022	652	3
2023 (as of 5/10/2023)	737	7

Although each taxicab permit holder is required to maintain a trip log, FHVA does not collect trip log information from the permit holders. Therefore, MTS does not have data in terms of the number of taxicab WAV trips provided.

b. Requested Data on the number of Taxicab WAV trips

i. Taxicab Industry

There are currently three (3) dispatch organizations that have a subscriber with a taxicab WAV, which are Orange Dispatch, Patriot Dispatch and USA Dispatch.

As of May 10, 2023, Orange Dispatch Service has a total of 92 subscribers, one (1) of which is a taxicab WAV. Before COVID-19, Orange Dispatch Manager Ben Hafezi reported providing an average of two (2) to three (3) taxicab WAV trips per day to an individual requiring a taxicab WAV (i.e. requiring the deployment of the ramp). However, WAV trips fell from one (1) to three (3) per week between 2020 and 2021. Orange Dispatch reported that WAV trip counts are back to pre-COVID levels for the first quarter of 2022. MTS did not receive data from Orange Dispatch of the total number of all taxicab trips during this period.

As of May 10, 2023, Patriot Dispatch has a total of eight (8) subscribers, two (2) of which are taxicab WAVs. Patriot Transportation Services is also the owner operator of Patriot Dispatch and maintains eight (8) taxicab permits. During the first week of April 2023, Patriot Dispatch reported that they provided about three (3) taxicab WAV trips per day (i.e. six (6) in total for the two (2) taxicab WAV vehicles) to an individual requiring a taxicab WAV (i.e. requiring the deployment of the ramp). MTS did not receive data from Patriot Dispatch of the total number of taxicab trips dispatched during this period.

As of May 10, 2023, USA Dispatch has a total of 52 subscribers, four (4) of which are taxicab WAVs. USA Cab is also the owner and operator of USA Dispatch and maintains 14 taxicab permits. USA Dispatch Manager Alfredo Hueso reported a yearly estimate of 1,200 WAV trips for 2019, 2020, and 2021 to an individual requiring a taxicab WAV (i.e. requiring the deployment of the ramp). It should be noted that USA Dispatch maintains private contracts with several organizations and businesses to provide WAV trips. MTS did not receive data from USA Dispatch on the total number of all taxicab trips dispatched during this period.

In addition, USA Cab lease driver David Tasem that operates a taxicab WAV reported providing a total of 141 WAV trips between January 1 and June 30, 2022, with an average of 23.5 trips per month to an individual requiring a taxicab WAV (i.e. requiring the deployment of the ramp). Mr. Tasem did not provide data on total number of all taxicab trips provided.

ii. MTS Data

MTS provides fixed route bus and trolley service as well as complementary paratransit service (MTS Access) in the greater southern San Diego region.

MTS fixed route bus provided information on ramp deployments for each fiscal year (FY), which may include passengers using a wheelchair or passengers who request a ramp deployment due to mobility concerns. Please note, this is not a completely accurate data point, since the ramp would also be deployed to de-board the vehicle. This number could be divided by two (2) to reflect this however there are instances in which one (1) ramp deployment actually assists more than one (1) passenger (for example, after a ramp is deployed, two (2) wheelchair passengers board and one (1) passenger that needs a ramp due to mobility concerns). For these reasons, this data is an estimate only on the number of fixed route passengers using the ramp to board the bus.

Table 2: MTS Fixed Route Bus Ramp Deployments

FY	Ramp Deployments	Total Fixed Route Bus Boardings	Percentage of Fixed Route Bus Passengers that Used Ramp to Board
2019	878,865	47,571,263	2%
2020	782,829	38,877,093	2%
2021	645,358	19,591,318	3%
2022	782,319	27,684,586	3%

MTS trolley no longer collects data on number of ramp deployments or wheelchair boardings.

MTS Access (MTS’s complementary paratransit service) provides public transportation service for individuals with disabilities whom cannot use MTS fixed route service. MTS Access provided data on the number of trips of passengers using wheelchairs per fiscal year. Please note, this number does not include the number of trips of passengers using the lift or ramp due to mobility issues.

Table 3: MTS Access Total Trips and Total Passengers Utilizing a Wheelchair

FY	Total Access Trips	Passengers Using Wheelchair	Percentage of Access Passengers Using Wheelchair
2019	453,943	122,564	27%
2020	318,876	86,096	27%
2021	93,476	27,108	29%
2022	173,110	45,009	26%

iii. SANDAG Data

SANDAG is the metropolitan planning organization for San Diego County. SANDAG stated they had no data regarding the number of people in the San Diego using a wheelchair or needing a ramp to board a vehicle.

iv. NCTD Data

North County Transit District (NCTD) is a public transportation operator. NCTD services include the BREEZE bus, SPRINTER hybrid rail, COASTER commuter trains, FLEX demand response, and LIFT ADA paratransit service. NCTD operates in the coastal and North San Diego County region.

NCTD fixed route bus provided information on ramp deployments for each fiscal year (FY), which may include passengers using a wheelchair or passengers who request a ramp deployment due to mobility concerns. Please note, this is not a completely accurate data point, since the ramp would also be deployed to de-board the vehicle. This number could be divided by two (2) to reflect this however there are instances in which one (1) ramp deployment actually assists more than one (1) passenger (for example, after a ramp is deployed, two (2) wheelchair passengers board and one (1) passenger that needs a ramp due to mobility concerns). For these reasons, this data is an estimate only on the number of fixed route passengers using the ramp to board the bus.

Table 4: NCTD Fixed Rate Bus Deployments

FY	Ramp Deployments	Total Fixed Route Bus Boarding's	Percentage of Fixed Route Bus Passengers that Used Ramp to Board
2019	76,884	6,404,923	1%
2020	46,832	5,166,163	1%
2021	74,742	3,012,173	3%
2022	78,521	3,944,001	2%

v. FACT Data

Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation (FACT) serves seniors over 60 and persons with disabilities. Between April 2019 and October 2022, FACT brokered a total of 13,508 trips for passengers requiring a wheelchair. FACT did not provide data on the total number of trips brokered to all passengers.

vi. Airport Data

In FY 22, the Airport served 19,830,645 total passengers². It currently allows 510 taxicabs to provide trips to airport passengers. For FY 22, about 373,358 (2%) passengers utilized a

² Per San Diego County Regional Airport Authority Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY 2022.

taxicab from the airport to their requested destination³. Airport did not provide data on the number of wheelchair requests at airport gates.

c. Identify Demand for Taxicab WAV trips

i. Survey

MTS partnered with the San Diego State University's (SDSU's) Center for Community Research and Engagement to conduct a survey between December 1, 2021 to January 31, 2022 to identified stakeholder groups and to all certified MTS Access passengers with an email address regarding their needs for taxicab WAV trips. Respondents were able to complete the survey on a computer or a mobile phone. Versions were available in both English and Spanish. A high-level summary of the results of this survey is provided under Attachment A. The following general feedback was received:

- A total of 124 responses were received from persons who identified as having a physical impairment that required them to use a WAV;
- The top two (2) modes respondents use for WAV transportations are Fixed Bus Public Transit (Bus or Trolley), and having a friend, colleague or caregiver drive them in a privately-owned WAV;
- Over 80% of respondents were not aware of taxicab WAV options;
- Over 70% of respondents would like to use taxicab WAV transportation for medical appointments and leisure (entertainment) purposes; and
- 24 hours on demand service, affordability, and being driven by a WAV certified taxi driver would make it more likely for respondents to utilize WAVs.

ii. Committee Meetings

The City of San Diego Accessibility Advisory Board was established to advise the Mayor and City Council of San Diego on policies and issues relating to accessibility. On November 10, 2021, FHVA presented a Taxicab WAV policy update to the City of San Diego Accessibility Advisory Board. The following general feedback was received:

- FACT is eager to collaborate in the effort to provide additional WAV trips, and is applying for funding to obtain 25-40 additional WAV vehicles;
- Public transit infrastructure for WAVs is not meeting expectations;
- In San Diego, taxicab WAVs are unreliable and difficult to find;
- Transportation Network Companies (TNC), such as UBER and Lyft, use drivers do not follow ADA guidelines; and
- Passengers that require WAV transportation need to plan ahead of time as there are no on-demand WAV services.

The MTS Accessible Services Advisory Committee advises the MTS Board of Directors and staff on accessibility matters and is comprised of individuals with disabilities that ride fixed

³ Per San Diego County Regional Airport Authority Ground Transportation Department for FY 2022

route and complementary paratransit services and various public agency and social service organization representatives. On December 16, 2021, FHVA presented the Taxicab WAV policy update to the MTS Accessible Services Advisory Committee. The following general feedback was received:

- It is important to maximize outreach on this topic; and
- The current number of taxicab WAVs is insufficient and MTS should review having a high aspirational goal in terms of number of taxicab WAVs.

The SANDAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Council oversees work on federal and state requirements and local concerns regarding transportation accessibility issues for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council reports to the Transportation Committee, which in turn reports to the SANDAG Board of Directors. On November 15, 2022, FHVA presented a WAV policy update to the SANDAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Council. The following general feedback was received:

- Other cities like Washington D.C. have available taxicab WAVs at their airports and other areas. San Diego should be no different and there is a need for WAVs; and
- TNCs, such as UBER and Lyft do not operate WAV but rather pay the state of California a fee to avoid this requirement. Taxicab WAV could be an alternative.

d. Feedback from Permit Holders and Drivers on the Operation of Taxicab WAV

i. Survey

MTS partnered with the SDSU's Center for Community Research and Engagement conducted a survey via email to all Taxicab Permit Holders, as MTS does not maintain a complete list of email address for taxicab lease drivers, in order to understand their concerns about operating taxicab WAV and possible incentives that may be successful. Respondents were able to complete the survey on a computer or a mobile phone. Versions were available in both English and Spanish. Below was the general feedback received:

- High operating costs, depending on make and model. Purchase costs for a new WAV are typically 30% to 40% higher than a regular sedan;
- WAV conversions (i.e. adding hydraulic or mechanical ramp) can be up to \$20,000;
- Increased time needed to assist and secure passenger during boarding and de-boarding; and
- Permit Holders stated a desire for the following incentives to purchase and or operate a WAV: financial assistance towards the purchase of the vehicle, guaranteed number of daily trips, lower or no permit fees, lower insurance premiums, and more driver training.

ii. Taxicab Advisory Committee Meetings

The Taxicab Advisory Committee advises the MTS Board of Directors and staff on taxicab related issues. The Taxicab Advisory Committee is comprised of taxicab lease drivers, taxicab permit holders, and other industry stakeholders.

On May 25, 2022, FHVA presented the results of the survey and other researching findings and received the following general feedback:

- WAVs are expensive to acquire and financial incentives should be available for the purchase of WAVs;
- Taxicab WAV rates should be the same as non-WAVs, however, taxicab WAV drivers require additional training;
- Taxicab WAVs require subsidies to remain on the road; and
- More outreach is needed for passenger awareness.

On May 24, 2023, FHVA present the draft Taxicab WAV Policy to the Taxicab Advisory Committee and received the following general feedback:

- Guaranteeing a minimum number of trips for drivers of a taxicab WAV would be a helpful incentive for drivers;
- More outreach about the availability of taxicab WAVs and non-emergency medical vehicles is needed; and
- More taxicab WAVs are needed now and going forward.

e. Peer Agency Reviews of Taxicab WAV Regulations and Incentives

MTS reviewed other peer regulatory agency taxicab WAV programs, in terms of strategies and incentives. MTS focused on the following cities: Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. In addition, MTS conducted a comparison of overall active taxicab permits and active taxicab WAVs to determine the WAV ratio. See Attachment B Peer Regulatory Agency WAV Review. MTS analyzed the implementation feasibility for each measure and incentive, resulting in final recommendations, as described further below in this Policy. The following were the general takeaways:

- Only the Cities of San Francisco and Chicago offered additional incentives on top of WAV policy requirements; and The City of Chicago provides substantial financial assistance in the form of per-trip subsidies and reimbursements for the purchase, conversion and/or maintenance of WAVs;
- City of San Francisco combined incentives include, fee waivers, per-trip subsidies, airport short-line privileges and available grants; and
- Of all the peer agencies reviewed, the taxicab WAV percentage of total taxicab permits operating varied between 2.5% and 20.5% of the total number of all taxicabs.

IV. MTS Aspirational Goal for Taxicab WAV

As of May 10, 2023, there is currently seven (7) taxicab WAV, out of a total of 639 operating taxicabs (there is a total of 737 total taxicab permits, but a total of 98 taxicab permits are in voluntary surrender status and therefore are not operating or providing trips to passengers). This results in **1.1%** of current operating taxicabs being a taxicab WAV.

Although MTS did collect various data points, none provided a clear conclusion on the total number of passengers needing a taxicab WAV compared to the total number of passengers needing a non-taxicab WAV. The closest data point in terms of demand would be MTS fixed route bus boarding's. This data point does show the number of passengers using a ramp to board, whether it be because they use a wheelchair or have limited mobility, which may be the same passengers that need a taxicab WAV in order to use taxicabs. Further, the service area that MTS fixed route bus serves is almost identical to the service area that FHVA regulates and allows taxicabs to operate in (with the exceptions of the City of Coronado and the unincorporated area of the County of San Diego, as these two (2) jurisdictions perform their own for-hire vehicle regulation at this time). As shown in Table 1, the percent of passengers using a ramp to board a fixed route bus ranged from 2% - 3%, depending on the FY.

It is MTS's goal to at a minimum, maintain the current number of taxicab WAV, and to increase the number of currently operating taxicab WAV. It is also MTS's intent that any aspirational goal adopted be of a percentage that can be reasonably achieved over a several year period.

MTS believes adoption of a goal of **2.5%** of taxicabs being WAV would be an achievable goal, assuming MTS continues to increase the number of taxicab WAV by about two (2) each year over a five (5) or more year period. Exhibit A of this Policy will be updated each year to reflect the appropriate current and aspirational number. If MTS achieves a 2.5% goal at any time, MTS will review and update this Policy accordingly.

Table 5: MTS FHVA Aspirational Goal

Aspirational Goal of 2.5% Taxicab WAV			
	Current	Aspirational	Notes
Number of Taxicab WAV	7	16*	*If total number of all operating taxicabs increases overtime, the number of taxicab WAV that FHVA aspires to have operating would also accordingly increase.
Number of Operating Taxicabs	639		
Taxicab WAV Ratio %	1.1%	2.5%	Exhibit A of this Policy will be updated each year to reflect the current number of operating taxicabs permit, and the associated aspirational goal for taxicab WAVs.

V. Recommended Strategies

Achieving a 2.5% taxicab WAV Aspirational Goal will necessitate various strategies and incentives. Some are within MTS FHVA control, while others will depend on support from other partner agencies and/or financial assistance to become available.

a. Waive FHVA Regulatory, Application, Transfer and Other Fees for Taxicab WAV

Per MTS's peer review research, waiving regulatory, application and transfer fees was one of the most common incentives used. Example FHVA Regulatory Fees are listed in Table 6.

Table 6: FHVA Regulatory Fees

CY 2023 FHVA Regulatory Fees	Amount
Annual Regulatory Fee for Taxicabs	\$350
Application Fee (if new permit holder)	\$1,500
Transfer Fee (if existing permit holder transferring)	\$875

MTS FHVA recommends waiving any applicable WAV regulatory, application or transfer fees for several years to encourage and incentive the industry to acquire and operate a taxicab WAV. Offering a one (1) year only waiver of fees may not be enough to encourage more taxicab WAV to remain in operation. A longer-term waiver of fees may provide permit holders more financial stability in order to make an investment into purchasing and operating a taxicab WAV. This will have the impact of reducing operating costs for taxicab WAV operators, which may encourage new taxicab WAV permit applicants as well as current taxicab WAV permit holders to continue operations.

To implement, MTS should review and budget annually the appropriate dollar value to incentive the introduction and renewal of taxicab WAV permits for at least the next 5-10 years, for up to 2.5% of the number of operating taxicabs each FY. Prior to implementation of the fee waivers, MTS FHVA should develop guidelines for how fee waivers will be distributed and apportioned.

b. Recommend other Regulatory Agencies Waive Taxicab WAV Related Fees

i. San Diego International Airport (Airport)

The Airport charges a \$200 processing fee for the issuance of a Ground Transportation Permit and \$200 subsequent annual renewal fee. Additionally, the Airport collects a surcharge currently set at \$2.98 for each trip. It is recommended that MTS request the Airport to waive its permit fee for any taxicab WAV. This will have the impact of reducing operating costs for taxicab WAV operators, which may encourage new taxicab WAV permit applicants as well as current taxicab WAV permit holders to continue operations.

To implement, MTS should aim to contact the appropriate staff at the Airport to explain the benefits of such a strategy.

ii. County of San Diego Agriculture, Weights and Measures (Weights and Measure)

Weights and Measure inspects taxicab meters. Taximeter annual fee for re-certification is \$132. It is recommended that MTS request Weights and Measure to waive its fee for any taxicab WAV. This will have the impact of reducing operating costs for taxicab WAV operators, which may encourage new taxicab WAV permit applicants as well as current taxicab WAV permit holders to continue operations.

To implement, MTS should aim to meet with the Weights and Measure to explain the benefits of such a strategy.

iii. County of San Diego Sheriff's Department's (Sheriff)

The Sheriff driver identification card initial application fee is \$121 and a subsequent annual renewal fee of \$44. It is recommended that MTS request the Sheriff to waive its driver identification application fee and renewal fee for any taxicab WAV driver. This will have the impact of reducing operating costs for taxicab WAV operators, which may encourage new taxicab WAV permit applicants as well as current taxicab WAV permit holders to continue operations.

To implement, MTS should aim to meet with the Sheriff to explain the benefits of such a strategy.

c. Designated Taxicab WAV Spot at Airport Taxicab Stands

Taxicab stands at the Airport can be very busy with taxicabs waiting to pick up passengers. To incentivize the operation of taxicab WAV, it is recommended that the Airport implement a method that allows taxicabs WAV front of the line access at each of its taxicab stands after serving a passenger(s) requiring the ramp in order to board a taxicab WAV, and preferential queue positioning for every other trip. This will have the impact of: 1) reducing taxicab WAV operators wait times at the airport before it can pick up passenger(s) by giving them priority in the queue; and 2) increasing the number of trips a taxicab WAV can operate in any given day, which therefore can increase revenues.

To implement, MTS should aim to meet with the Airport to recommend its inclusion within the taxicab stands, and if so approved, assist in identifying the appropriate taxicab stand markings and/or signage, as well as discuss ways to evaluate its effectiveness.

d. Exemption to Potential Airport EV requirement for Taxicabs

The Airport has a CY 2030 target for ground transportation provider fleets to be total zero emission⁴. Therefore, the Airport may institute Electric Vehicle (EV) requirements to reach this goal. It is recommended that taxicab WAVs be exempt for a period of five (5) or more years from the date of entry from possible future Electric Vehicle (EV) requirements by the Airport. This incentive would assure permit holders a set period to recover their investment and operate their WAV without having to replace it with an EV.

To implement, MTS should aim to meet with the Airport to recommend the above exemption to any future EV requirements.

e. Including Taxicab WAVs in Airport Clean Vehicle Conversion Incentive Programs

The San Diego Airport has a Clean Vehicle Incentive Program to encourage taxicabs and other vehicles for hire to switch to alternative fuels (e.g., hybrid, electric). Future revisions or enhancements may include providing support through EV charging infrastructure or financial assistance towards the purchase of an EV. It is recommended that WAVs be included and receive special consideration for all available incentives provided by the Clean Vehicle Conversion Incentive Program. This would provide permit holders who wish to acquire Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible EVs with additional incentives.

To implement, MTS should aim to meet with the Airport to recommend inclusion of WAVs in future revisions or enhancements of Clean vehicle Incentive Programs.

f. Research Available Grant Opportunities for Taxicab WAV

Another strategy identified per MTS's peer review research was the utilization of financial assistance for purchase of taxicab WAV and/or subsidizing the cost of taxicab WAV provided trips. It is recommended that when a grant, subsidy or other financial assistance opportunity is identified, MTS should relay this information to the for-hire vehicle industry.

To implement, MTS will monitor federal, state and local available grant, subsidy or other financial assistance opportunities that may be available to permit holders or drivers and provide information on how to apply and/or learn more on the MTS FHVA website and/or through other outreach measures.

g. Increase Outreach on the Availability of Taxicab WAV to the Public

Per the Passenger Demand Survey, it was found that 82.3% respondents stated they did not know there were any taxicab WAV operating. This shows further outreach is key in this area.

⁴ Per San Diego Airport Clean Transportation Plan, Road to Zero Emissions Ground Transportation, July 2020.

To implement, MTS should aim to identify ways to provide better notice to the public about the available taxicab WAV service. This may include: more signage at the airport on which dispatch organizations and/or permit holders to contact when needing a taxicab WAV, highlighting on the MTS website which dispatch organizations and/or permit holders to contact when needing a taxicab WAV, working with community groups and/or social service agencies and other partners to provide information on referrals they can provide to their clients and constituents on who to contact when their clients need a taxicab WAV.

h. Increase Outreach on Information, Available Incentives and Benefits of Operating a Taxicab WAV to the For-Hire Vehicle Industry

To implement, MTS should develop a dedicated MTS FHVA Webpage on Taxicab WAV. The website should include: the estimated costs to acquire a taxicab WAV, the list of known operating expenses to maintain a taxicab WAV on a yearly basis, any known grant opportunities the MTS Grants Administrator has identified that me used to acquire and/or maintain a taxicab WAV, the list of incentives available to a taxicab WAV permit holder and the overall benefits for operating a taxicab WAV, and types and models of vehicles that may be appropriate to use as a taxicab WAV.

Exhibit A of MTS Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Policy

Achievement of Aspirational Goal for Taxicab WAV

Exhibit A of this Policy will be updated each year to reflect the current number of operating taxicabs permit, and the associated aspirational goal, for taxicab WAVs. If total number of operating taxicabs increases overtime, the number of taxicab WAV that FHVA aspires to have operating would also accordingly increase.

Table 1 of Exhibit A – Achievement of Aspirational Goal for Taxicab WAV

FY	Current Number of Operating Taxicabs	Current Number of Operating Taxicab WAVs	Current % of Operating Taxicab WAV	Aspirational Number of Operating Taxicab WAV	Aspirational % of Taxicab WAV
2023	639	7	1.1%	16	2.5%

History of Updates:

Exhibit A –FY 2023 Taxicab WAV Goal (number of total operating permits current as of 5/15/2023)

Peer Regulatory Agency WAV Policy Review

	City of Sacramento (Permits & Taxes)	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (Muni)	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)	City of Chicago
Population	526,126	715,717	3.9 million	2.7 million
Active Permits	110	1675	1920	2450
Collect TNC Trip Fee's	No	No	No	Yes (congestion pricing) (\$1.25-\$8.00) (\$0.10 accessibility fund fee)
Insurance Limits	\$500,000 (CSL)	\$100k / \$300k /100k (per person /per accident / max for property damage	\$100k / \$300k /100k (per person /per accident / max for property damage	\$350,000 (CSL)
Number of WAV Taxicabs	12	100	45	515
WAV % of Total Permits	11%	6%	2.5%	20.5%
Policy Requirement	At least 1 WAV Taxicab for every 25 Taxicab Permits. If more than 25, 1 WAV Taxicab for every 25 additional Taxicabs	Applicants for "Ramp Medallions" must have completed 60 wheelchair trips (w/minimum of 40 trips to Paratransit wheelchair passengers) or 90 Paratransit Trips (both wheelchair and ambulatory) over a 6-month period + "ramp taxi" 4-hour training.	Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles shall constitute at least two percent (2%) of the taxicabs for which the Taxicab Services Company is providing branding and administrative services.	WAV cannot be more than 15 model years old, No more than 150,000 mi. Those who own 5 or more permits must place one WAV in to service within 5 years of issuance of 5 th permit
Incentive Program(s)	No incentive other than policy requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective July 2018, Suspended Application and Renewal Fee's for Ramp Taxis \$10 per paratransit / general public wheelchair trip incentive \$15 per trip (same as above) for trips after 8pm and before 6am \$15 per trip (same as above) originating in outlying areas \$500-\$600 Capital and Operating incentive (for owner/operators if they complete more than 20 wheelchair trips per month) (Funded by local grant) SFO Short Pass (allow drivers to have a max of 15 short (2.5mi) trips/month) Expedited SFO Airport Access (P Line) Clean Air Grant (up to \$11,800) for purchase of new or used 2017 or newer WAV vehicle) (Bay Area Air Quality Management District) 	No incentive other than policy requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$25,000 reimbursement for WAV aftermarket conversion \$35,000 reimbursement for purchase of new WAV \$9,000 annual reimbursement for maintenance and repairs \$25 subsidy reimbursement per 12 hr. lease agreement, \$50 per 24 hr. lease agreement

Accessibility & Transportation

The Need for Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in San Diego

A Project Supported by

- MTS For-Hire Vehicle Administration
- University of California San Diego Design Lab
- University of Cambridge Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy &
- The Center for Community Research & Engagement and the students in Department of Sociology San Diego State University

Study Design

For passengers:

The survey was distributed via email throughout the San Diego region from November 2021 through the end of January 2022.

Respondents were able to complete the survey on a computer or a mobile phone.

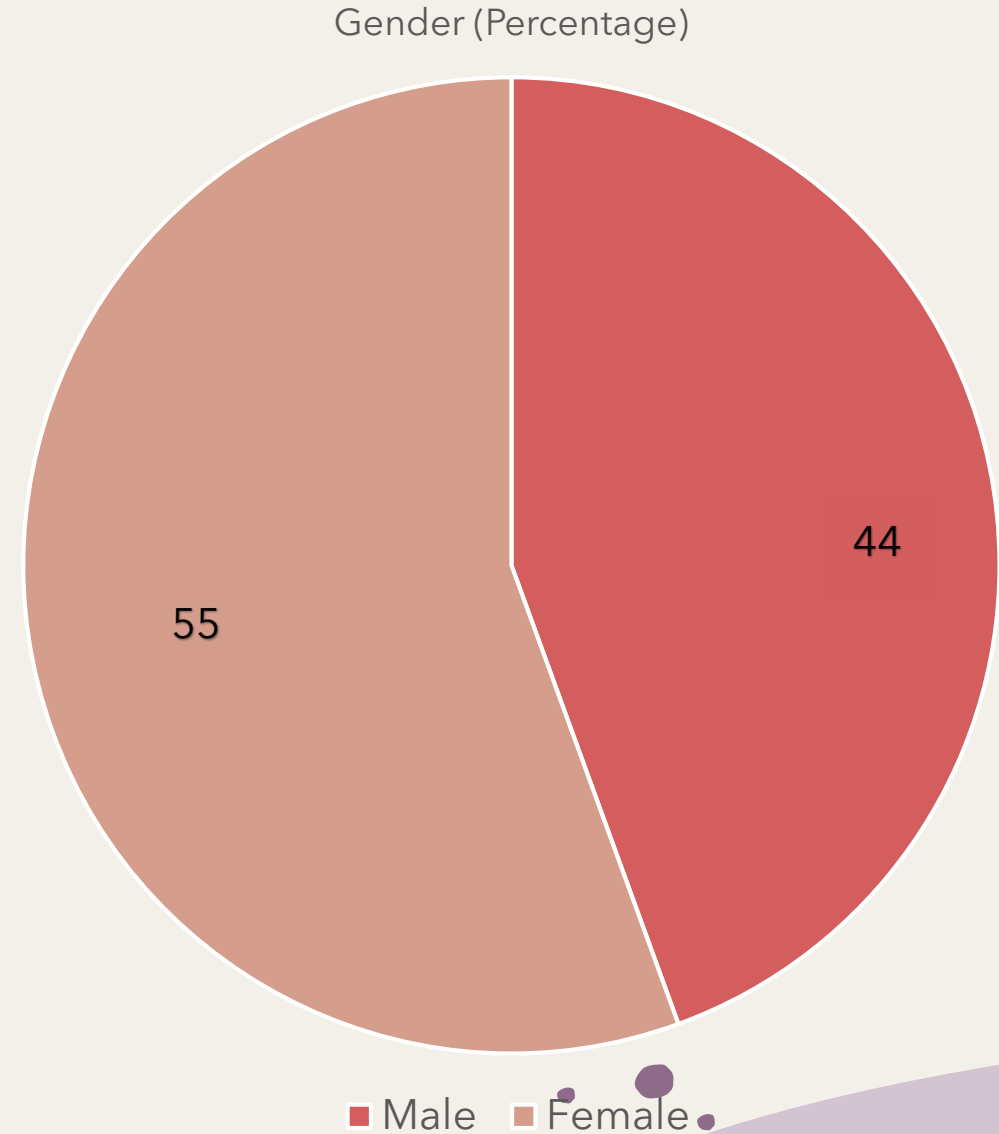
Versions were available in both English and Spanish.

Study Design

Responses for taxi drivers and owners were solicited from an email list provided by MTS. While there were approximately 400 emails on the list, it did contain duplicates and out of date email addresses. Email “blasts” were sent on December 4, 2021 and on December 14, 2021. These blasts resulted in a sample of thirty-three usable surveys, an acceptable number on which to conduct the analysis for this report.

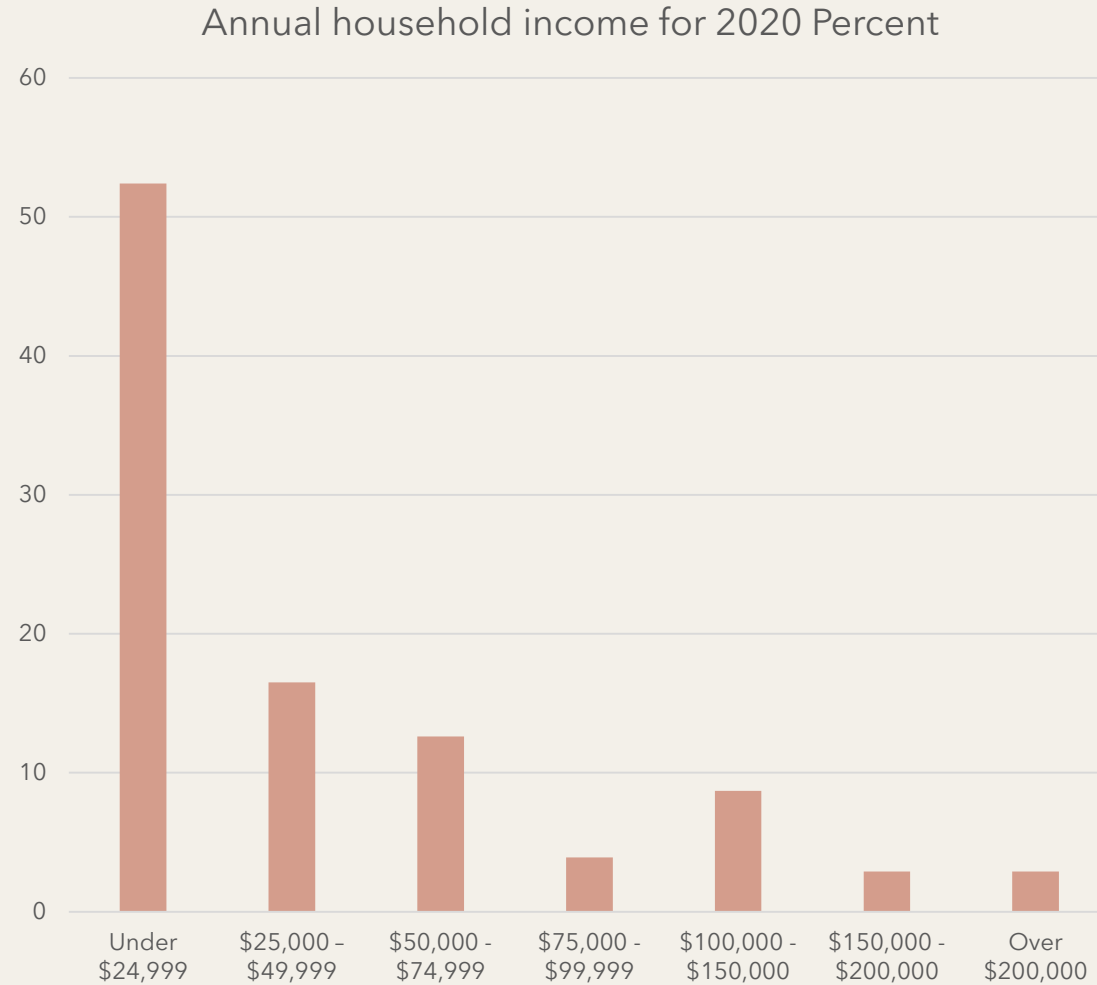
The Sample of Passengers for Today's Presentation

The respondents that we are focusing on are those who replied "yes" to the question: **Do you have any physical impairments that require you to use a wheelchair accessible vehicle, defined as a vehicle equipped with a ramp or lift allowing side entry.**
(124 respondents)



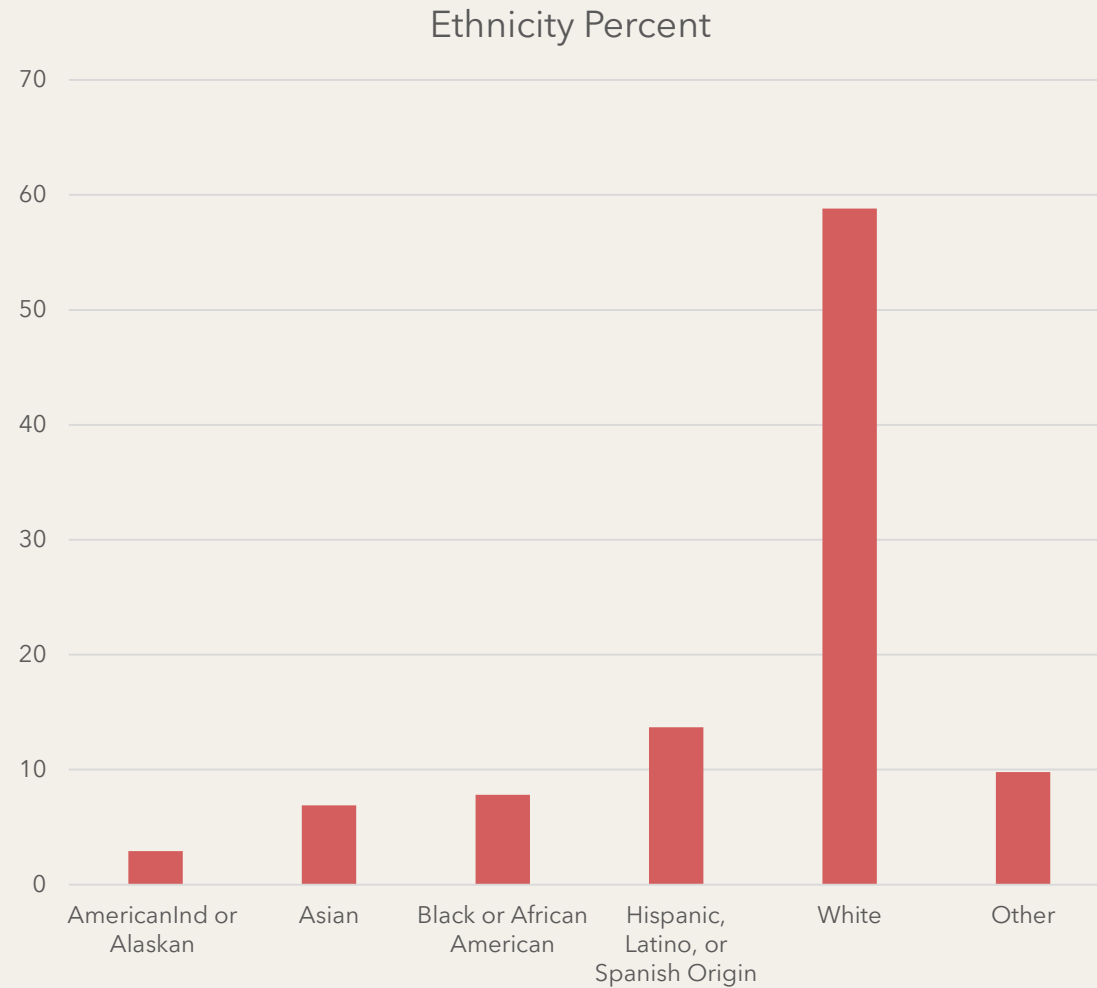
The Sample of Passengers for Today's Presentation

This distribution a lower household income than the general population in San Diego. That is not unexpected with this population.



The Sample of Passengers for Today's Presentation

While this sample overrepresents White respondents and underrepresents Latinx respondents an analysis of their responses on selected outcome variables indicated no significant nor meaningful difference.



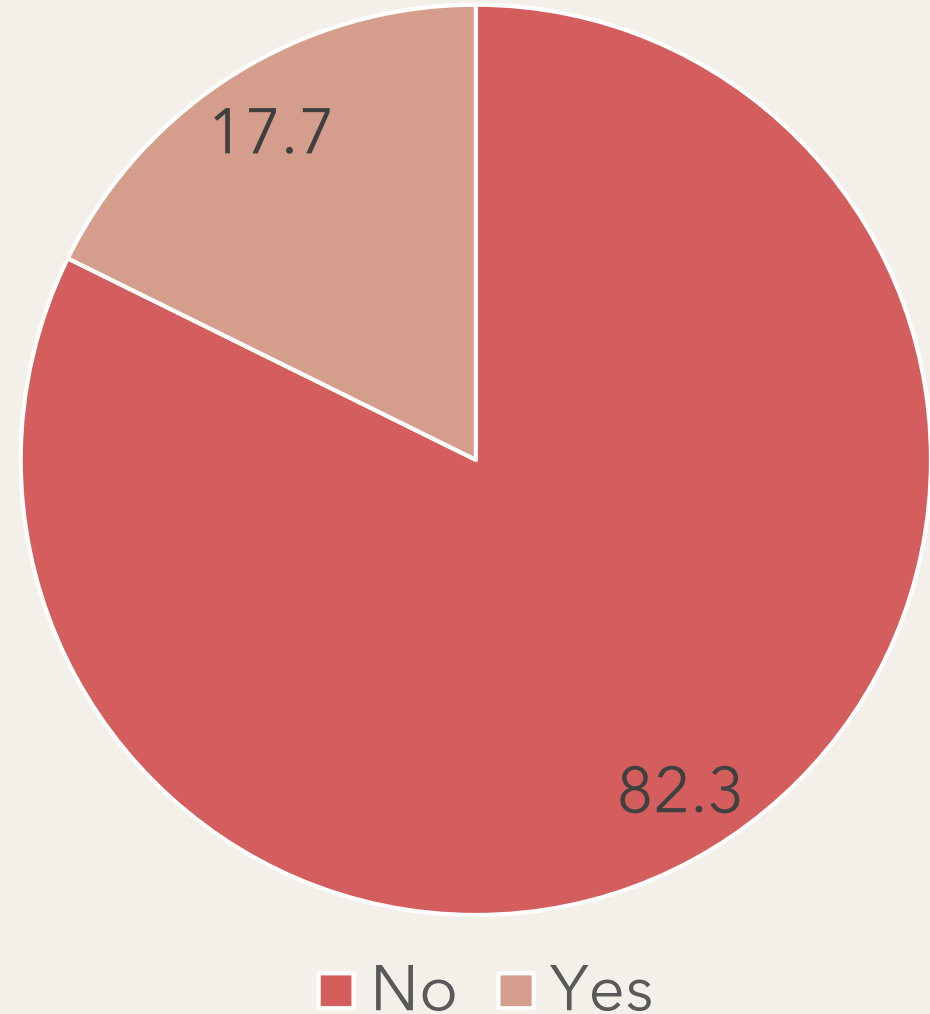
What did the
passengers report?



Awareness of Current WAV Taxicabs

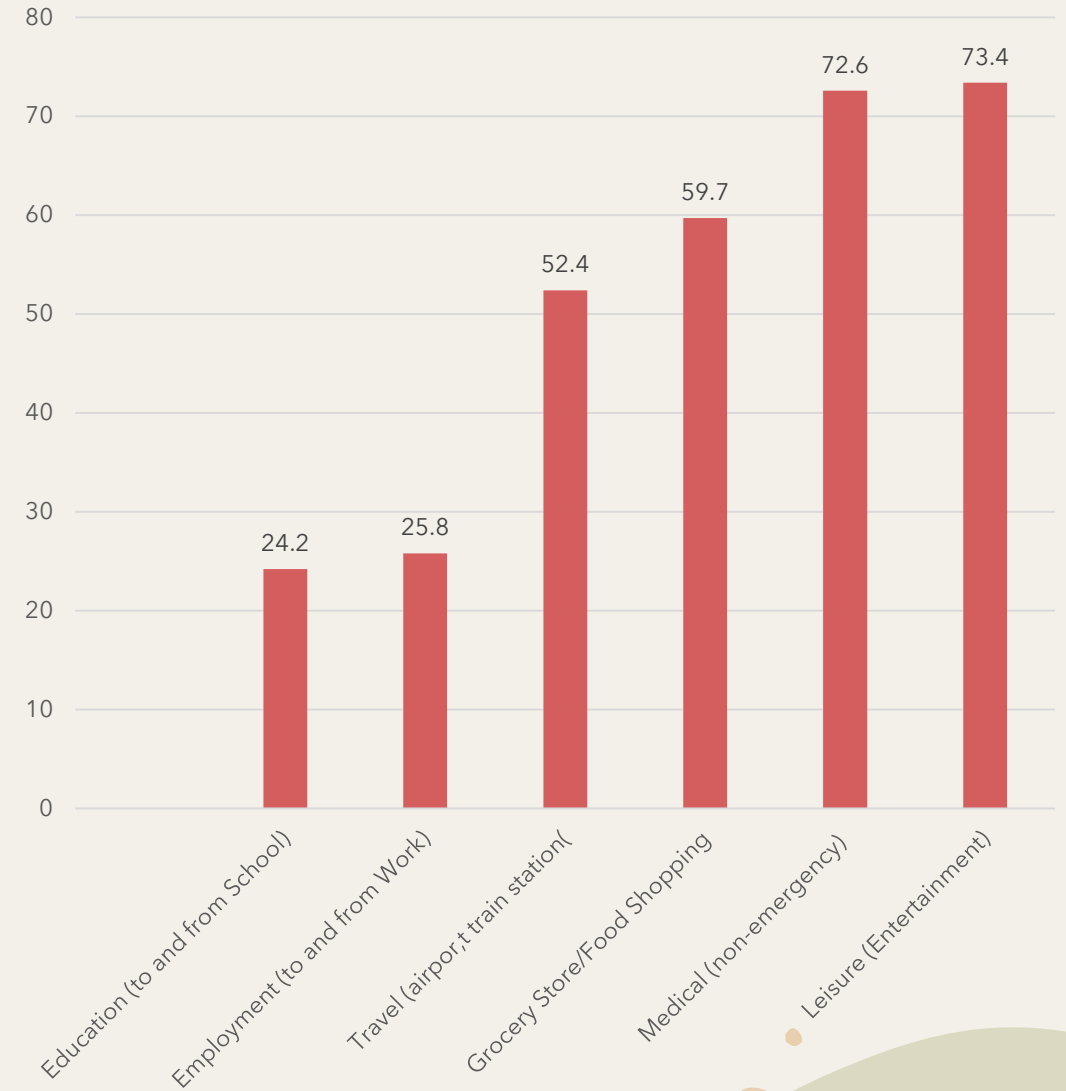
NOTE: Given the fact that there are only three WAV Taxicabs currently available, these results may indicate that respondents were responding as if they were not aware of any or there are so few there are essentially not any viable WAV taxicab options.

Are you aware of Taxicab WAV service in the San Diego region? Percent



“I need transportation to and from my daughter’s house, medical appointments, nail salon, Balboa Park, Zoo, Sea World, restaurants, shopping, my Dad’s home, beaches, the outside world (outside from my nursing home).

Wish for Better Form of Transportation (Percent)



Which options are used most at this time?

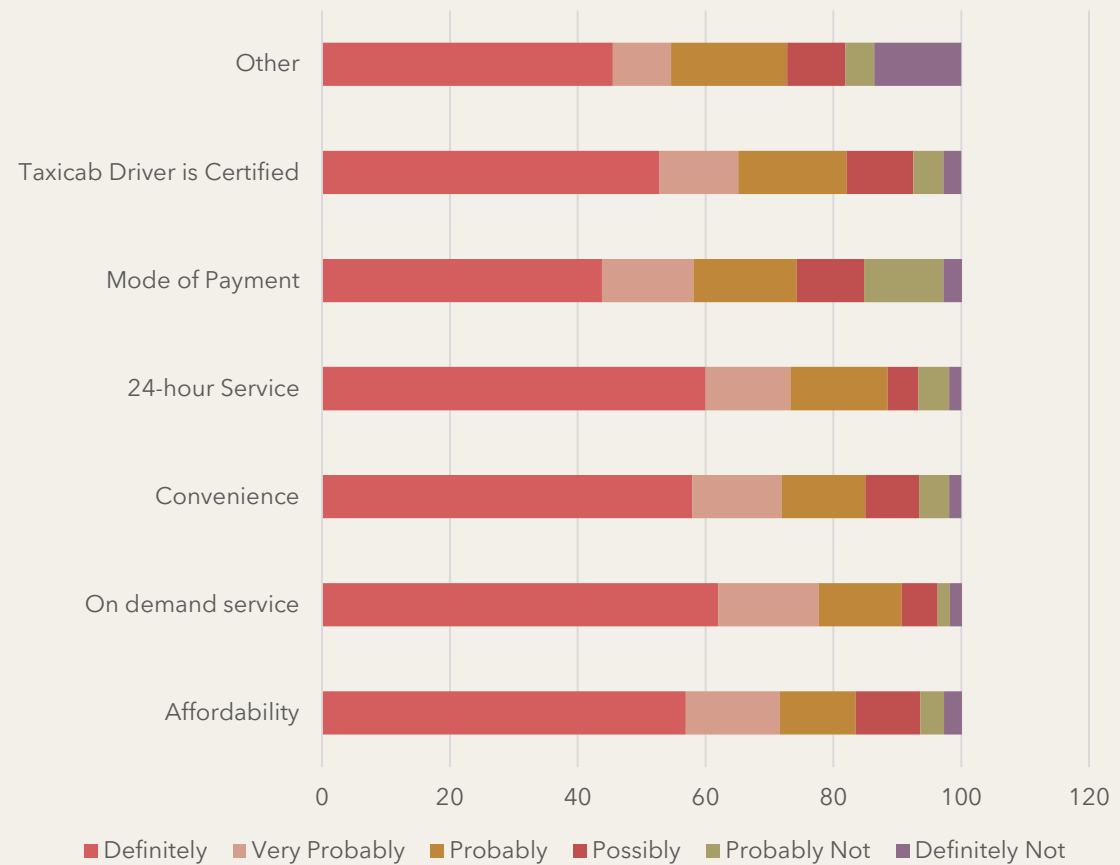
For the majority of destinations, the top two options chosen were Fixed Route public transit (Fixed route bus, trolley) and having a friend, colleague or caregiver drive the respondent in a wheelchair accessible vehicle [Travel and medical emergency varied slightly from this pattern]



What would make someone more likely to use a Taxicab WAV?

There is no such service in our county, trust me I have looked. Our county is not wheelchair friendly at all! Now with COVID and a lot of w/c users being high risk its [sic] a huge risk to take public transportation so drivers would need to be considerate professional, caring for others and non smoking!

What would make you more likely to use a Taxicab WAV service?



And what about the Drivers?

85% believe it is important for San Diego (or any city) to have Wheelchair Accessible Taxis

However only 45.5% are interested in acquiring or operating a wheelchair-accessible taxicab

Why aren't the
taxi drivers
interested if
they
understand the
need?

48% noted higher operations costs
(i.e. gas, insurance)

35% notes increase time needed to
assist passenger

*The flag drop and per mile is to [sic]
low for wheelchair accessible cab.
Wheelchair accessible companies for
example Secure Transportation
charges almost 4 times more for the
same ride.*

What incentives do the taxi drivers believe are necessary for increasing the number of WAV taxicabs in San Diego?

-
- ❖ 45.5% indicated Financial assistance towards the purchase of vehicle
 - ❖ 18% indicated Guaranteed number of trips
 - ❖ 6% indicated Lower or no permit fees
 - ❖ 3% indicated Lower insurance premiums
 - ❖ 3% indicated More driver training

And two added "all of the above"



Thank you!

Questions?

