

**ADMINISTRATION, TAXIS & ACCESSIBLE SERVICES DIVISION****Monthly Report**

November 2009

**TAXIS**

- **Weights & Measures certification of taximeters:** The Department of Public Health, Weights and Measures (DPHWM), which inspects taximeters pursuant to state regulations, has reached an accommodation with the taxi companies that installed paratransit debit card equipment regarding taximeter certification. All previously inspected vehicles that had been taken out of service following DPHWM's prior inspections were re-inspected and placed back into service while an application for state certification of the debit card equipment is pending.
- **New Driver Applications and Training:** Following extensive planning efforts by Danelle Carey and Vicky Siu to develop appropriate forms and procedures, the Taxi Section attempted to begin accepting new Driver Permit Applicants at the end of October. Difficulty coordinating particulars with the SFPD Taxi Detail has resulted in delays in implementation. We are working with the Finance and Information Technology division to resolve various accounting issues with the SFPD that will allow us to begin taking applications in the very near future. We are receiving escalating complaints from taxi companies that they are getting short of drivers and that any shift that they can't cover for lack of a driver is a direct hit to the company revenue. We are also fielding constant inquiries and complaints from applicants desperate for employment.

Danelle Carey has carefully reviewed the curriculum of the three authorized private taxi driver schools. Other individuals are interested in starting schools as well, now that Flag-a-Cab, which had a virtual monopoly on student applicants, has been decertified. Students who completed the Flag-a-Cab curriculum are still being accepted.

- **Electronic Waiting List:** Vicky Siu completed the conversion of the taxi medallion waiting list to an electronic, searchable format. Before Vicky's innovation, the waiting list consisted of a scanned copy of a dot-matrix print out.
- **A-Card Seniority Project:** Monlia Wu and Chadwick Lee have diligently and thoroughly compiled information on the driver permit seniority and birthdates of each one of 6500 active taxi drivers. This never-before-available information will finally put to rest the speculation about the demographics of the taxi industry and help immensely with crafting a Charter reform proposal that reflects good public policy and accurate information.
- **Regulations:** The Taxi Section drafted revised regulations to address the issue of discovery in administrative hearings. This amendment was time-sensitive because we are preparing to process large batches of medallion revocations and administrative enforcement against illegal operators who do not have permits with the SFMTA and who are not bound by the regulations. We also took the opportunity to clean up a few other matters that required amendment. We remain committed to the goal of publishing a comprehensive set of regulations in a booklet for the industry early in 2010.
- **Charter Reform:** The Taxi Section has held 30 hours of town halls meetings in November. Each meeting date had a 3 hour session scheduled in the afternoon and a second 3-hour session scheduled in the evening. The same information was presented in each session so that day drivers and night drivers could participate and get the same information. Participation continues to be vigorous and productive, and we are beginning to see new faces in the Town Hall meetings.

These November meetings included presentations of reform ideas by various interested parties. All proposals received in 2009 will be compiled into a draft report that will be initially presented to the CAC Taxi Subcommittee at its meeting of November 30. During December staff will formalize a recommendation and conduct outreach on the plan so that by the time it is offered to the Board it has been truly vetted by the industry. We intend to present a recommendation on Charter reform to the SFMTA Board of Directors in January.

In addition to Town Hall meetings, in November staff attended the Yellow Cab Coop and the Medallion Holder Association's annual meeting, and a Saturday meeting of the San Francisco Cab Drivers Association for a 2 1/2 hour question and answer session.

- **Illegal Operator Enforcement:** The Taxi Section worked with the City Attorney's Office to develop legal pleadings for California's first-ever judicial filing to remove illegal operator listings from the Yellow Pages pursuant to state law. We expect to file those pleadings within the next week before the Yellow Pages publication deadline so that we can prevent the illegal listings in the 2010 edition of the phone book.

Enforcement by the SFPD Traffic Company has been happening weekly; however, given the size of the problem the enforcement efforts have not been very visible. The Taxi Section is planning with SFPD a large-scale enforcement in order to generate publicity to educate the public about illegal operators, and to achieve higher enforcement visibility to the taxi industry.

- **Criminal Enforcement:** Criminal enforcement is going to need an overhaul in the taxi context. The old model, left over from 20 years ago when the SFPD issued taxi permits, was to appoint a special detail to focus on taxi enforcement. That model has been the basis of enforcement for many years with reasonable success.

But times have changed. Today the SFPD is interested in reducing its administrative functions, such as the Permits Bureau where taxis once resided within the SFPD organization. The enforcement model is moving out to the district stations, where each captain is responsible for keeping up enforcement statistics in their own district. We have seen this with the Muni safety program—the distribution of responsibility for enforcement to each police district, where the officers can become familiar with their own neighborhood routes. The SFPD's adoption of the ComStat crime tracking system should be very supportive of this kind of enforcement distribution. However, the SFPD MOU still contemplates a specific detail, and should be revised to reflect the new enforcement model.

Our frustration is that despite this positive change, during the transition period, and with all the focus on SFPD presence on Muni vehicles, the criminal enforcement needs of the taxi industry continue to be unmet.

The absolute lack of any visible enforcement against illegal operators is having a detrimental effect on the Charter reform negotiations, as the parties would like to see the SFMTA address the rampant criminal competition that keeps business away from drivers who need it. In addition, there are larger criminal enforcement issues that we would urgently like to address, such as theft of deposits from drivers and illegal kickbacks to hotel doormen and airport personnel. There are no criminal investigation resources available given the current makeup of the Taxi Detail.

- **Disciplinary Enforcement:** The Taxi Section has spent the last month or two screening enforcement cases for permit revocation. Scott Leon has compiled data sufficient to bring revocation actions against a very large batch of medallion holders who are not elderly, who are not disabled, and who have egregious driving records. These revocation actions help the SFMTA's credibility with the people on the list who are anxious that permits are not being issued fast

enough. These enforcement efforts are extremely helpful to the Charter reform negotiations. Scott's efforts represent more than \$2.5 million in potential revenue to the SFMTA, and counting.

- **Taxi Fleet Conversion to Hybrids:** In response to the Mayor's inquiry about the percent of taxi vehicles that have been converted to hybrids we enlisted the assistance of an intern generously loaned by the Mayor's Office to catch the data entry up to date, which took a single person 7 working days. We are currently checking some of the uncertainties in the data with the taxi companies, and will have to enter that data and all of the subsequent vehicle changes that have occurred in the past two weeks. As soon as we are able to verify that data we will provide it to the Mayor's Office.

**Compliance and Training**

- We had a total of 66 interactions which have an average of 37 days in duration for handling from the time the complaint is received, until it's resolved and/or addressed. In this time period our complaint staff consists of; one borrowed officer from the SFPD Permits Unit and one staff member from the SFMTA Taxi Section. With our limited staff we continue to process/handle each complaint as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- SFMTA Taxi Section and the SFPD Taxi Detail hold a Taxi Re-Training every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month at the Hall of Justice for drivers that receive service complaints and are in violation of the regulations.
- With the highest volume of complaints coming in for unsafe driving and rude and discourteous service, we will continue to focus on disciplining these drivers with a goal to decrease the complaint volume and to increase public safety and good public service.
- With the continued assistance from Donna Figone of DPT, we are current with our lost and found claims.

**Complaints**

Type of Complaint	Number of Complaints
Failure to Comply	7
Fare Refusal	7
Impaired Driver	2
Overcharging	6
Rude & Discourteous	10
Unsafe Driving	24
Vehicle Condition	1
Violence and Physical Altercations	2
Other	7

**Driver Re-Training & Discipline**

Type of Disciplinary Action	Number of Disciplinary Actions
Taxi Driver Re-Training	18
Taxi Driver Admonishments Issued	1

**Lost & Found**

Type of Claim	Number of Claims
Lost & Found	162

**Operations and Permits**

- The Medallion Waiting List is now updated and has been posted on the Taxi Section website. The public and taxi drivers may now view the list on any computer and taxi drivers can follow the instructions on the web page to calculate their current position on the waiting list. Additionally, the updated list is now easily searchable and taxi drivers can find their name on the list within seconds. The San Francisco 311 Customer Service Center is still available for taxi drivers to call in to get their current position on the waiting list if taxi drivers do not have computer access. The center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Notices were sent to the Color Schemes informing them of the upcoming 2010 Key Personnel designation. Color Scheme managers must fill out the 2010 Key Personnel Designation form if they wish to designate individuals as employees of their company and reduce the full-time driving requirement for these selected individuals for the year. Forms are due by December 1, 2009 and two reminders have been sent to the companies to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to designate staff if they wish to do so.
- The Transportation Code regulations are being continually updated to help streamline and improve the procedures for medallion issuance.
- The medallion database is being continually updated and maintained, primarily by Vicky Siu, to reflect color scheme changes and newly issued medallions throughout the months.
- Ms. Siu has also assisted with gathering statistical data for the Taxi Performance Measures Report.

### Applications

Type of Application:	Number of Applications Received:
New Driver	
Public Convenience & Necessity	1
Taxi Medallion	0
Ramp Medallion	3
Color Scheme Change	3

### Permits Issued

New Driver	62
Taxi Medallion	0
Ramp Medallion	1
Color Scheme	
Dispatch	

### Other

Number of Lost Medallions Reported	0
Temporary Medallions Issued	0
Temporary Permanent Medallions Issued	0