

TAXIS AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES DIVISION
Monthly Report
February 2009

TAXIS

❖ **Meetings**

The Director met with the Board of Directors of the Medallion Holders' Association on February 7 to discuss Prop K reform and regulatory policy.

On February 10 the Director made a presentation to the Policy and Governance Committee regarding drug testing for drivers, and about the potential to make taxi and ramp taxi permits transferable.

On February 11 the Director met with Chief Fong of the SF Police Department to discuss Taxi Detail. It was decided to move the detail out of the administration division and into the patrol division of the SFPD. The Chief is going to send proposed revisions to the MOU between the SFPD and the SFMTA to reflect the change.

The Director coordinated with Reggie Smith regarding drug testing of taxi drivers and received his recommendations and suggestions. It was determined that it would be feasible to require evidence of testing once per year by sending taxi drivers to approved testing service providers. The cost to drivers for a test would be approximately \$50-\$60 per year according to the preliminary pricing provided.

The Director met with several individual representatives of the industry, including representatives of drivers, color schemes and a "cab college", and continued to receive constructive criticism of the draft regulations.

The Director toured the Paratransit Broker office and met with the Broker staff to review operations and issues.

The Director met with the taxi regulators at the Airport to discuss enforcement coordination and A-Card/Smart Card development for drivers.

The Director attended the 6 hour taxi driver school offered by the SFPD that is required for driver certification.

Public "Taxi Town Hall" meetings have been scheduled for the period between March 10 and April 10 to collect comments on regulations. (See below.)

❖ **Staffing and Facilities**

- The position of the Outreach Coordinator/Taxicab Commission Secretary became vacant because the incumbent's permanent exempt status prevented transfer of that employee to SFMTA as part of the merger.
- Taxicab Commission staff will remain at 25 Van Ness until the end of the annual filings required from taxi and ramp taxi permit holders pursuant to Police Code § 1095.
- Accessible Services began planning a move to the 7th Floor of 1 South Van Ness at the end of March.

❖ **Website**

Taxi related information for the taxi industry and taxi customers is being posted on the web. The Director is working with the IT team to create forms for website visitors that will download the information provided into an Access database. There will be separate forms for taxi customers and for people within the taxi industry. The database will create the ability for the SFMTA and the Board to hear directly from all elements of the industry in an efficient manner.

❖ **Regulations**

The SFMTA Board of Directors approved a set of regulations to govern procedures to be followed for taxi-related matters as of March 1, 2009. All other regulations adopted by the Taxicab Commission or contained in the Police Code remain in effect unless superceded by the terms of the SFMTA regulations. The Board resolution requires the Executive Director to come back with additional regulations within 90 days. The Director proposes to compile such additional regulations for the Board's consideration at its meeting of May 5, 2009.

Additional regulations will be the subject of public meetings in the Second Floor Atrium of 1 South Van Ness in accordance with the following schedule, and the text of regulations to be considered at each meeting will be posted with the meeting notice on the SFMTA website.

The Taxi Town Hall meeting schedule also includes dates and times for discussion of Prop K reform issues.

March 10, 9:00a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

9:00 a.m. – 10:00a.m.: Proposition K reform: discussion of the legal status of Proposition K.
Introduction of Proposition K reform proposals from various sources.
Announcement of Request for Information to respond to Prop K reform proposals or to offer additional proposals.

10 a.m. - noon: Taxi rules and regulations: Permit applications and eligibility.
Conditions applicable to all permits.

March 18, 1-4 p.m.

1:00 p.m. -3:00 p.m.: Taxi rules and regulations: color scheme and Dispatch Service Permit requirements.
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Proposition K reform: discussion of proposals.

March 24, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

9:00 -11:00 a.m.: Taxi rules and regulations: driver permit requirements.
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Proposition K reform: discussion of proposals.

March 30, 9 a.m. - noon.

Taxi rules and regulations: medallion holder permit requirements.

April (Dates and times to be determined)

Taxi rules and regulations: ramp taxi Permit requirements.

Taxi rules and regulations: operation and vehicle equipment requirements.

❖ Next Taxi Priorities

The top priorities for taxi side of the Division in the coming month are:

1. Issue a Request for Information for proposals and ideas about transferability of taxi and ramp taxi permits.
2. Work with ACS on developing a database for all permit and permittee tracking functions. This will enable SFMTA to take over the receipt of permit applications from the Police Department, and to take over permit issuance and fee collection from the Tax Collector's Office. It will also allow tracking of permittee enforcement history.
3. Coordinate a meeting between the color schemes and the Traffic Engineering Division to discuss the issue of taxi stands, especially enforcement and location.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

❖ Paratransit Debit Card: Program design is progressing on schedule with the Debit Card Central System (DCCS) contractor, Cabconnect. Review of software documentation and design review by the project team are underway.

- Two taxi companies participating in the pilot program (Desoto and National) have selected Verifone as their ITE supplier, and contracts between these companies and Veolia for a use agreement have been finalized. Verifone has developed a delivery, implementation and training schedule for the ITE.
- March 9th is the target date for the Debit Card pilot program to start. The project expects National, DeSoto, Yellow and Luxor to participate in the 60-day pilot. 106 paratransit customers have volunteered to participate in the pilot project.
- The agreement between Yellow and Veolia has been finalized to develop the interface between their current systems (George Anderson software with Wireless Edge equipment) and the DCCS. Luxor is currently planning on upgrading their existing DDS system to a newer DDS product. DDS has begun work on connecting to the DCCS, although they have not finalized the agreement with Luxor at this time.
- A meeting with the taxi industry stakeholders was held on February 11th to provide an update on the progress of the project. A few members of the industry raised privacy concerns about the plan to have driver's use their California driver's license to log on and off the system. A suggestion was made to develop a new, magnetized A-card, and use that to log on/off instead. This may be a longer term solution.
- A second meeting was held on February 13th to provide an opportunity for the taxi industry to view the demonstration ITE products that are available through this project.

❖ Paratransit Van Procurement:

- The 24 Type II diesel lift-equipped vans manufactured by Bus West have been delivered and registered, and the lease agreement has been signed by MPT. Two of the 24 vehicles are not in service and need to be retrofitted with back-up warning

sensors. All the new vehicles are being run on bio-diesel except mini vans, which are only available using gasoline.

- The last batch of vehicles on the procurement, five Type III lift-equipped vans, have been delivered and are awaiting inspection and acceptance by SFMTA. The SF Access provider, MPT, that was originally intending to sublease all the vehicles newly procured by SFMTA, has decided that they do not need the additional fleet capacity offered by the five Type III vehicles. Staff is working to develop a back up plan. It is likely that one of the current group van providers, Centro Latino, may lease two of the vehicles and the other three may be used for back up services.

- ❖ **Shopping Shuttle:** Accessible Services staff has developed an implementation plan and a number of meetings have been held with the community partners, paratransit broker staff and group van providers in an effort to solicit information and develop the parameters of the program. A survey has been designed to gather in-put from potential shopping shuttle riders. The survey is being translated into Russian, Chinese and Spanish to ensure language accessibility. The amount of grant funding from both the Lifeline Transportation grant and the New Freedom grant still need to be confirmed.
- ❖ **TEP:** AS Staff met with PB consultants and advised them of AS staff and MAAC concerns about the TEP and accessibility. Staff highlighted the need to improve stop amenities and assure service to areas frequently used by elderly/ disabled users- centers, hospitals and other trip generators. Staff also discussed island design for costing out new construction on the surface portion of the light rail system.
- ❖ **Next Bus Push-to-Talk:** PTT hardware has been installed at all the T-Third platforms. Signage in Braille is being produced to be affixed to the Push to Talk buttons. The project is currently awaiting a PO for new vendor.
- ❖ **Elevator Status on NextMuni Display:** AS staff is working with SFMTA construction, communications and stationary engineering to increase accuracy of the essential elevator status information displayed on NextMuni displays. SFMTA IT has approved the purchase of an iPhone which provides a browser with sufficient to access the Next Bus management system.
 - AS Staff is also working with 311 to improve communication between station agents and 311 staff to assure that elevator messages are posted as soon as possible.
 - AS Staff is working with Chas Belov on getting a page on SFMTA.com that aggregates all elevator messages as a one-stop check point for any user needing to know about elevator access. This will be tied to the NextMuni feed, so getting the message to be right as quickly as possible will make this a valuable resource to the elevator-using community.
- ❖ **ADA Observer/Spotter Program:** AS staff coordinating the transition of the clandestine disabled rider program between the former Muni security contractor and the new contractor, Cypress Security, and are working with Travis Fox on follow up on spotters reports through Trapeze and possible expansion of the scope of the current observer program.
- ❖ **Light Rail Vehicle Digital Voice Announcement System (DVAS) Program:** AS staff is working with CPUC, Grants and Fleet Engineering to develop a cost estimate and identify funding sources and technology to equip LRVs with DVAS audible announcements and text displays. Customers with disabilities have reported many instances where LRV operators do not make required transfer point announcements when operating vehicles on

surface lines. This is of utmost importance to MAAC and the blind and low vision community. This project is on the list of projects slated to receive stimulus funding. AS, Fleet and Construction staff are strategizing project implementation.

- ❖ **Balboa Park Station Improvements/SFMTA Customer Access:** AS staff met with SFMTA construction/engineering and BART facilities planning staff to discuss walkway designs to improve access to Muni stops from the new Ocean Ave Entrance at the Balboa Park Station. SFMTA is looking at integrating the walkway project with the Green track replacement project which will rebuild the K and J Accessible platform near the walkway for alighting passengers and which is constructing a new platform to provide service to those disabled persons beginning their trip at Balboa Park on the J and K lines. BART is working on design of the walkway and BART is trying to identify potential funding sources. "Stimulus" funds are being considered.
- ❖ **No-Access/ Not-Recommended Landor Sign Update:** Designed with verbiage approved by MAAC, these two signs will indicate stops that are not available/ not recommended for use by lift users.
- ❖ **Clear Channel Shelter Review:** Access staff reviewed the new shelter design and has voiced concerns regarding the lack of a back panel behind the wheelchair stationing area, this design may result in wheelchair users not feeling sheltered. The overall design of the shelter is spacious but because of the high roof and large foot print it doesn't provide the perception significant sheltering. Whether it will shelter from the elements as effectively as the current shelters is hard to ascertain without experiencing the shelter in an outdoor application. AS is working with designers and SFMTA staff on the push to talk and information signage for the shelter.
- ❖ **BART/Muni Disabled/Senior Fast Pass Pilot:** Working with SFMTA and BART Staff on implementation of the BART/Muni Fast Pass for disabled senior customers. The pilot is targeted to begin on Jan 1, 2010.