

Minutes
PCC Executive Committee Meeting
March 13, 2024

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Mara Math, PCC Chair; Marty Smith, PCC Vice Chair; Jane Redmond, PCC Secretary; Zuhair Sinada, PC&O Chair; Charles Posejpal; Cheryl Damico; Chuck Paschal; Jessica Felix; Joan Kwansa; Kevin Lee; Olivia Santiago; Roland Wong; Susan Kitazawa

PCC Members and Guests: Dani Soto; Nhijing Nguyen; Ya Ling Shen Kung; Hansu Kim; Fanny Lapitan; Sandra R;

PCC Executive Committee Member Excused:

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; Kevin McDonald; Justin Leong; Carol Osorio; Matthew Teixeira; Catherine Callahan; Cheryl Hac; Aurico Daga; Wayland Li; Maddy Ramos

SFMTA: Erin McAuliff; Jonathan Cheng; Kate Toran; Maddy Ruvolo

Mara Math, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

Mara Math, PCC Chair, read the agenda.

Approve Minutes of January 17th meeting

The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved.

Comments from the Chair

Mara Math provided background about her experience with the PCC and commented that she learned about this committee from a newsletter in 2017. She would like to see continued outreach to individuals who might interested in actively providing feedback regarding the service quality of the SF Paratransit program. She then opened the discussion the public.

Sandra suggested rating system for Paratransit drivers and riders. Jessica Felix mentioned that individuals can call 311 to provide feedback. Chuck Paschal asked if there is an online method for comments to be provided. Kevin McDonald replied that feedback can be provided via email at sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com. Roland Wong inquired if there a paper method for riders to provide feedback. Charles Posejpal stated that Paratransit drivers to have comment cards available upon request. Mara Math added that calling 311 is one way to provide feedback while contacting the SF Paratransit office is an informal way to provide feedback. Marc Soto corrected Mara and stated that complaints filed to SF Paratransit are formally logged and investigated. Susan Kitazawa said that during the SF Access subcommittee meeting, it was mentioned that riders also have the responsibility to be respectful/courtesy to drivers; she wondered if there are there consequences. Justin Leong stated that information and details are provided in the Rider's Guide. Marc Soto is opposed to rating system for Paratransit drivers and riders.

Hansu Kim mentioned that Flywheel has a rating system when riders are booking a ride online. Zuhair Sinada asked if there can be an adjustment when drivers are unable to cancel a ride request. Hansu replied that feature should be included in an upcoming update to the app.

Marty Smith had asked a question about survey instrument for the upcoming SF Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey. Jonathan Cheng mentioned that there is a separate meeting tomorrow to discuss the survey.

Third Party Pilot and Paratransit Data

Maddy Ruvolo presented on the findings from the first year of the SFMTA Taxi Upfront Fare Pilot, which includes taxi trips dispatched from Third Party entities.

The pilot was launched in November 2022, which allows for customers to book and pay for taxi trips in advance. This pilot includes both trips that offer upfront pricing, which allows the rider to know the estimated fare amount before requesting the trip and third party pilot trips, which are trips that are dispatched from non-taxi companies. The pilot term was extended through June 2025. SFMTA continues to issue guidance as necessary, including allowing drivers to opt out in participation, pilot participants must send data of all trips to SFMTA, and third party trips do not have to follow the meter fare rate. Among the pilot goals include maintaining a consistent level of traditional taxi trips, including paratransit, improved customer service, increases in the number of overall taxi trips, and increased driver revenue.

Among the results from the first year included:

- Taxi pilot trips increase over 353% from Q1 to Q4;
- Complaints have been consistent before and during the pilot among general public and paratransit;
- Total number of taxi trips remained flat, year to year;
- Overall proportion of taxi trips that are Paratransit remained consistent;
- Driver revenue increased 15% from Q1 to Q4 when compared to previous period;
- Upfront pricing has resulted in a 4.6% lower fare than the meter rate
- More drivers joining the taxi industry

Jane Redmond stated that she was a bit confused about the presentation. Maddy Ruvolo stated that this program is designated to allow customers to book a taxi trip with a fare upfront due to concerns from the community about knowing the price of their taxi fare. She also explained that third party trips are defined as trips provided by taxis but dispatched originally via Uber. Hansu Kim said that while trips are being dispatched to Flywheel via Uber, they are considered as taxi trips. He emphasized that there is a driver opt-out if they do not want to participate. He mentioned that new drivers are joining the taxi industry as the fees are less when driving a taxi rather than Uber while many cities are going to upfront pricing when requesting a taxi to dispel assumptions that taxis are more expensive than TNCs.

Marty Smith commented from his experience that lower upfront fares and the fact that it does not account for loss time due to congestion means that drivers are being paid 50-75% less than the meter fare. Jessica Felix is concerned about how much of the revenue is being earned by the driver and would like driver hours reported. She also pointed out that while the number of third

party trips increased, the number of overall taxi trips did not increase. Additionally, in the future, she would like the members to be provided the slides in advance. Mara Math stated that it is unclear how drivers will earn more money if the upfront fare is lower than meter fare. Kate Toran replied that drivers can see how much they would earn for a third party trip before deciding to accept the trip. Participants have been earning higher incomes because there is a greater volume of trips and third party trips are generally more lucrative from the evening peak up to early morning hours. Mara is concerned that riders will use third party apps rather than traditional taxi hailing. Zuhair Sinada mentioned from his experience, a driver may earn more staying in the city and completing a trip rather than accept a third party trip to the airport. Kate commented that there is a quarterly meeting that provides an update on the pilot and that participation is based on an opt-in system.

Marty Smith does not want these changes as the current system works well for taxi drivers, and there are more trip requests than available drivers. Mara Math concurred and does not think that this pilot is improving business for drivers who are not coming from Uber. Kate Toran emphasized that the pilot is an opt-in service for drivers and this pilot gives riders more choice; she clarified that paratransit taxi riders are not affected by the pilot as there is no participation from any SF Paratransit taxi programs in the pilot. Maddy Ruvolo thanked the committee for their input and will be continuing this conversation in the future.

PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi Subcommittee Report

The report from the February 14th subcommittee meeting is as follows:

- **Election of the Vice Chair**
Jessica Felix was re-elected Vice Chair.
- **Comments from the Vice Chair**
Jessica expressed concerns regarding the proposed Ramp Taxi upfront fare program, and suggested Access for All funds be used for a centralized dispatch.
- **Taxi Upfront Fare Pilot**
WAV Trips: Maddy Ruvolo presented a program summary. Ramp trips would come from TNC orders. Goals of the program included improving ramp driver income, ensuring ramp taxi trip incentives are balanced, increasing the ramp taxi and driver pool, improving pickup response time and ramp utilization, and making it easier for ramp riders to request rides.

Drivers and color schemes discussed pros and cons of TNC partnership. Concerns were raised about the use of Access for All funds and trip incentives. Maddy noted that incentive details were still work in progress and the SFMTA would present their plan to this group. Riders noted they would like to see more data on the topic. Concerns were raised about TNC labor issues, the differences between upfront and meter fares, the lack of safety net with TNCs, and TNCs occupying taxi stands. It was also clarified that drivers could opt out of the program.
- **Broker Report**

- On-Time Performance: Nov 96.67%, Dec 98.92%, Jan 97.56%
- Taxi Incentives paid: Nov \$16,225, Dec \$17,660, Jan \$17,470
- The SF Paratransit trip count: Nov 23,500, Dec 24,800, Jan 24,000
- Qualifying SF Paratransit ramp trips: Nov 702, Dec 719, Jan 742
- Complaints per 1,000 trips: Nov .08, Dec .04, Jan .04

The Broker and SFMTA are reviewing a hard copy proof of the new Rider's Guide prior to printing. PDF versions should be available first with hard copies to follow. This is the first big update to the guide since 2002. Work was restarted on Cabconnect's Ramp Driver IVR portal project. Work on procuring a new cloud-based phone system continues with identifying potential vendors. The Emergency Operations Plan was being updated to meet new state workplace safety guidelines. Paratransit eligibility will now be a 5-year period and a new short form application is available to riders who qualify. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission will meet soon on Clipper 2.0. A Rider Satisfaction Survey will be conducted later this year.

- **Service Quality Issues**

- Riders: Riders discussed the ability to request sedan taxis, drivers clearing orders, making reservations in advance, and drivers accepting orders but then refusing to pick up.
- Drivers & Cab Companies: Drivers discussed the overabundance of ramp vehicles and increasing the minimum pickup requirements. Regulation for drivers to service orders they accept was suggested. Drivers reported taxi access issues to certain areas of Golden Gate Park.

The next PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi subcommittee meeting will be on May 1, 2024.

PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Report

The report from the March 6th subcommittee meeting is as follows:

- **Nomination & Election of Vice Chair**

Susan Kitazawa was elected Vice Chair

- **Service Quality Update**

Charles Posejpal reported the new 800-series vehicles are undergoing inspection, and the new 600-series are currently in service. Angelica Mahmud was promoted to call center supervisor and Shavon Smith was promoted to Group Van Coordinator.

Matthew Teixeira of the Brokers Office reported service statistics:

- SF Access trip counts in December were 12,945 and January increased at around 13,225 per month, with a small decline in February at approximately 12,771.
- SF Access On-Time Performance held steady in December and January at 99.2% and a slight decrease to 98.9% in February.
- Complaints per 1,000 trips had a slight uptick, with approximately 0.83 per 1,000 in December, 1.15 per 1,000 in January, and 1.25 per 1,000 in February.
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Marc Soto reported vendors for a new phone system were identified and they are meeting with the procurement team. The MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) has asked all Paratransit operators in the region to move to five-year eligibility period instead of three years. The new Riders Guide is available and is being sent out with new application packets.

Charles Posejpal gave an overview of driver training.

- **Rider Service Feedback**

Riders discussed topics including driver training and driver assistance for riders. Riders also provided feedback regarding vehicle windows and handrails.

Susan Kitazawa was impressed with the information presented and felt heard that their concerns about disability sensitivity training was heard and will be elevated to adequate. She added that feedback from members about good drivers who would be good candidates to coach new drivers on the behind-the-wheel training would be appreciated.

Paratransit Broker Report

Service level statistics was provided prior to the meeting. Justin Leong and Marc Soto reported as follow:

- **Service Level Statistics**

SF Access operated about 12,000 trips for January and February 2024. Paratransit taxis completed approximately 23,000 trips in January and February 2024. About 6,500 Group Van trips were provided in January and February 2024.

- **On Time Performance**

The on-time performance for SF Access was 99 percent in January and February 2024. The Group Van on-time performance during the same period was 99 percent for both months while the taxi on-time performance was 97 and 96 percent.

- **New Rider's Guide**

The SF Paratransit Rider's Guide was finalized and printed. Paper copies were made available to members today. The guides will be posted online once the 503 compliant version is prepared.

- **Group Van Activities**

Stepping Stone combined its Presentation and Golden Gate programs to one location. There was lower than expected attendance in the first week and Transdev will monitor service levels. One year lease extensions for the agencies that provide 5310 funded vehicles for the Paratransit service.

- **ADA Eligibility Activities**

A short form was implemented to allow those with conditions unlikely to change to undergo a shorter recertification application. The short form would still give the certification analyst the ability to request a second level assessment. The maximum

eligibility from three years to five years as well. Additionally, as part of a regional effort, SFMTA and SF Paratransit will be implementing an option for ADA Paratransit eligible rider to concurrently enroll in the RTC program.

- **SF Paratransit Staffing Update**

There is a vacancy in the transit planner position. Maddy Ramos was introduced as the as the new certification eligibility analyst.

Mara Math wanted an update on the comments she provided regarding the railing and narrow steps on the new 600 vehicles. It was stated that while the railings were realigned, changes can not be made to the current vehicles but the comment will be noted when evaluating future vehicles.

Public Comments

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.

The next PCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 8th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.