

*San Francisco Paratransit Coordinating Council*

*c/o Muni*

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**Minutes**

**PCC Executive Committee Meeting**

**August 7, 2013**

**1 South Van Ness Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Candlestick/Corona Conference Rooms  
San Francisco**

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Stu Smith, PCC Chair; Cheryl Damico, Vice Chair  
Laurie Graham, PCC Secretary; Roland Wong, PC&O Chair; Anna Krevets; Claudia Grubler;  
Fred Lein; Gilda Chico; Jacy Cohen; Kaye Griffin; Olivia Santiago; Sandra Fancher; Sue  
Cauthen; Wannee Ratanasanguan

PCC Members and Guests: Diann Stevenson; Lurilla Harris, Rodney Lee, Athan Rebelos of  
Desoto Cab, C. Mike Stewman, MV Transportation; Bob Planthold; Jessie Lorenz; Carla  
Johnson;

PCC Executive Committee Members Excused:

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; John Sanderson; Gregory Strecker

SFMTA: Kate Toran; Jonathan Cheng; Lisa Foster

Stu Smith, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

**Read and Approve Agenda**

Laurie Graham, PCC Secretary, read the agenda. Marc Soto requested that he be permitted to  
present the summaries for the PC&O subcommittee meetings. The agenda was  
motioned/seconded/passed.

**Approve Minutes of May 8 meeting**

The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved.

**Comments from the Chair**

Stu Smith stated that one of the agenda items is about the proposed reform to the disabled  
parking placard policy. Stu said that he served on the committee and wants to the PCC to focus  
on the details of the proposals. One of the major reforms proposed is to require every individual  
with a disabled parking placard to pay while parked at a metered spot. He encouraged the PCC to  
keep an open mind and listen to the details of the plan. Stu also said that the committee sent a  
letter to the CPUC regarding rideshare programs. The motivation behind this letter was a concern  
that these companies are not accessible to SF Paratransit taxi users as well as abide by the same  
safety regulations as taxi companies. Currently, temporary approval has been given to rideshare  
companies to continue operate.

**Ramp Taxi Medallion Reform**

Kate Toran summarized the proposed reforms to the ramp taxi medallion program. The goal of these reforms is to develop a ramp taxi program that will benefit both customers and drivers. Currently there is a plan to expand the number of sedan medallions. This will affect the ramp taxi program as all ramp medallion holders will be given the opportunity to purchase a sedan medallion within the next couple of years. When a ramp medallion holder purchases a sedan medallion, at a discounted price, the ramp medallion will be returned to the SFMTA. Once the ramp medallion is returned, it will be leased to taxi companies as opposed to individuals. Ramp medallions will be distributed to taxi companies that have a record of providing a high level of service to wheelchair users. In addition to leasing the ramp medallions to companies, there are incentives being proposed to encourage companies and drivers to provide a high level of service to wheelchair users. One proposal is to reduce the lease rate for a ramp medallion to \$1,000 per month due to the increased maintenance and fuel cost of operating a ramp taxi. In addition, taxi companies can further reduce the lease payment by another \$500 if they provide incentives to their drivers, which range from reduced gate fees to paying for health care insurance. One significant incentive for drivers is that a ramp taxi driver could earn a credit of ten dollars per wheelchair pickup if they complete more than ten wheelchair trips in a month. This credit, in which drivers can earn up to a total credit of \$12,500, would be applied towards the purchase of a sedan medallion. Another reform is to require ramp taxi drivers who do not complete six wheelchair pickups per month, or 72 wheelchair trips per year, to undergo ramp taxi training every year. Also, there is a plan to allow taxi companies with six or more ramp medallions to operate half of these medallions in a sedan vehicle as long as 100 percent of wheelchair trip requests are filled. Another important piece of reform is a requirement that taxi companies with ramp medallions achieve a fleet wide average of ten wheelchair pickups per medallion every month. For example, if a taxi company has ten ramp medallions, it must perform at least 100 wheelchair pickups per month. Failure to meet this standard will disqualify the taxi company from the \$500 discount on the lease. This will replace the current monthly requirement that every ramp medallion holder complete eight wheelchair pickups, six of which must be SF Paratransit customers.

Stu Smith asked how many ramp medallions are currently in use and how many trips are performed. Kate Toran replied that there are 100 ramp medallions and that they are currently providing about 1,300 wheelchair trips per month. Stu also inquired whether these incentives will increase the number of wheelchair trips provided. Kate was optimistic as she had reviewed the most recent customer satisfaction survey and many wheelchair users indicated that they wanted to use a ramp taxi but were hesitant due to a perceived lack of service to wheelchair users. She was hopefully that these incentives will improve the level and quality of service. Sue Cauthen asked how taxi companies feel about the proposed ramp taxi reforms. Kate Toran mentioned that there were concerns from Desoto Cab as to whether it is financially viable to continue to operate ramp taxis even with these proposed incentives. She did say that she believes that there are other taxi companies interested in operating ramp taxis. Athan Rebelos stated he is concerned that there is not enough incentive for individuals to operate a ramp medallion. Previously, ramp medallion holders provided service in hopes of getting a regular sedan medallion later on. Now that incentive is gone and he feels drivers will not want to operate a ramp taxi due to the higher fuel and maintenance cost associated with the vehicle. Athan believes that getting rid of the lease payment requirements to SFMTA is needed in order to make providing ramp taxi service financially viable to drivers and taxi companies and improve the

quality of service. He feels that any taxi company with ramp taxis will be at a disadvantage as drivers would rather operate a sedan. Kate reiterated some of the incentive drivers may receive, including a reduced cost to the purchase of a sedan medallion. Cheryl Damico stated that recently there has been low participation in the ramp taxi training course. She believes this is indicative of an aversion by taxi drivers to operating a ramp taxi. Laurie Graham agreed with this assessment.

Stu Smith raised the issue as to whether these rideshare programs are willing to participate in the SF Paratransit program. Kate Toran mentioned that in the CPUC ruling on these rideshare program, it emphasized a need for these companies to serve low income and disabled community. However, she questioned the enforcement by the CPUC of this requirement. Kaye Griffin said that is difficult to hail a taxi as many taxi drivers utilize mobile applications in order to get customers. Athan Rebelos replied that although many of his drivers utilize these mobile applications, he encourages his drivers to take customers who hail for a taxi rather than those who are dispatched because the dispatched calls can be easily redirected to another taxi driver. Fred Lein mentioned that he saw a ramp taxi operate with a pink moustache. Anna Krevets added that Uber recently approached Baymed for a possible partnership in order to provide service for wheelchair users. Although their plan was not viable, she said that this could mean that there is pressure for these rideshare services to provide service to the disabled community. Kaye stated that she wondered how individuals without access to a smartphone could utilize these mobile applications.

### **Disabled Placard Parking Reform Proposal**

Lisa Foster, Carla Johnson, Bob Planthold, and Jessie Lorenz presented on the proposed reforms to the disabled parking placard program. They provided background on the disabled parking placard. According to state laws, individuals with a disabled parking placard may park at any general meter, blue, or green zone for an unlimited time without payment. However, currently many individuals with these placards are often unable to find accessible parking. This committee, which was comprised of over a dozen stakeholders, looked at this issue and possible solutions. One of the key steps this committee did was look at the policies of several cities and discovered that combination of providing more blue zones, conducting sufficient enforcement on placard use and blue zones, and charging placards at meters was required to have a successful program. The committee discovered that cities that implemented only one or two of the elements were not as successful. They used following criteria to determine which group of policies would work best for San Francisco:

1. Will the policy make it easier for people with disabilities to find parking in blue zones?
2. Will the policy make it easier for people, especially those with disabilities, to find parking in general metered spaces?
3. Will the policy reduce placard misuse?

Based on their findings from other cities, they came up with several proposed recommendations to reform the disabled parking placard program in San Francisco.

#### **1. Increase Blue Zone**

They recommended increasing the number of blue zones by almost 70% to reserve more spaces for people with disabilities. This will increase blue zones to a minimum of four

percent of metered spaces and requires installing at least 470 new zones. Additionally, the committee recommended the Mayor's Office on Disability and the SFMTA reevaluate current blue zone placement guidelines to enable zones in more locations.

#### 2. Increase Enforcement of Placard Misuse

The committee wanted SFMTA to explore options to improve and increase placard enforcement. This may include increasing the number of parking control officers that enforce placards, increasing stings, conducting outreach regarding placard enforcement, or considering a volunteer program. However, they left enforcement tactical decisions up to the enforcement division

#### 3. Increase Oversight of Placard Approvals

The committee recommended that the DMV upgrade its database to include information about medical providers who certify placards. They wanted more steps to be taken to ensure that the providers are legitimate and the signatures are valid. One possible model is that of the Bay Area Regional Transit Card system, which has been effective. By doing this, it increases the chances of identifying placard issuance fraud. In addition, the committee also recommends clarifying the eligibility criteria on the DMV placard application, without removing any of the existing criteria. This ensures that placards are issued to people with a functional need for them. Existing language such as "disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility" is too broad and they would like to see new language with more defined mobility conditions used.

#### 4. Remove the Meter Payment Exemption

The committee discovered that while the disabled parking placards were meant to increase parking access for people with disabilities, the payment exemption has reduced access. The original intent of the placard program was a disability program intended to provide access, not an income-based program. Based on experiences in other cities, meter payment is the most effective way to reduce placard misuse and open up parking spaces. They found that California is one of only 15 states that require a meter payment exemption for placard holders. When local jurisdictions without the meter payment exemption began charging placard holders for parking spots, such as Philadelphia, downtown parking availability increased by over 500%. The committee also thought that at the state level, this policy should only be allowed as an option for jurisdictions that have accessible payment options. This would require a state law change.

#### 5. Direct Revenue to Accessibility Improvements

The committee also recommended that the SFMTA should work with the disability community to channel funds from metered blue zones into accessibility improvements that would enhance mobility for people with disabilities.

#### 6. Establish Reasonable Time Limits

The committee did recognize that establishing reasonable time limits helps open up parking spaces. They recommended that placard holders should have four-hour time limits at regular and blue meters, unless posted time limit is longer. They reported that disability advocates in cities with three-or four-hour time limits for placard holders report that it seems to provide sufficient time for people with disabilities. For green zones, they

recommended that placard holders should be able stay up to 30 minutes, not counting time spent getting in and out of the vehicle. By doing so, it will support local business and reduce double-parking by opening up parking spaces in front of businesses like dry cleaners and florists.

Carla Johnson stated that this committee has given presentations to a variety of stakeholders. The next steps are to continue their community outreach and present these recommendations to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. In addition, they are looking for a member of the legislature to sponsor an amendment that would allow local jurisdictions to start charging placard holders for metered parking spots. This committee plans on presenting to the SFMTA Board of Directors for a public hearing.

Anna Krevets asked whether transportation service providers such as Baymed, which are issued a placard to transport clients, will be charged when they are loading, unloading, and escorting passengers. Bob Planthold replied that as long as they are only loading and unloading passengers they will not have pay. Carla Johnson added that this issue will have to be looked at when a local jurisdiction is coming up with its enforcement plans. Kaye Griffin inquired about the implications for residential areas that have on-street metered parking. Carla responded that most residential areas do not have metered parking and would therefore not be affected by these proposed changes.

### **PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Meeting**

Marc Soto read the following report:

#### **I. SFMTA Bike Share Presentation**

A representative from SFMTA spoke on SFMTA's new bike share program. The Bike share project was discussed and any questions answered regarding the new program.

#### **II. SF Paratransit Broker and Service Quality Report**

A discussion was held about a plateau in SF Access On-Time Performance. In addition, many issues with the maintenance inspections were discussed especially regarding the 700 series vans that have created lots of issues for MV's maintenance program.

#### **III. SF Paratransit Provider Report**

MV said that they are hiring more drivers to help with their on-time performance. In addition, MV is planning on moving their operations to a new facility which they hope will also help them with their on-time performance.

#### **IV. Announcement**

Kate Toran of SFMTA said that the isolation reduction service is now being expanded. Marc Soto of Veolia stated that the new website will be up soon.

The next SF Access subcommittee meeting is scheduled for September 4th from 10:30 to 12:30 at the SF Paratransit office on 68 12th Street.

Cheryl Damico asked what the name of the new program is. Kate Toran replied that the name is "Van Gogh" and it is intended provide transportation to social and cultural events for seniors and

persons with disabilities. This program has been presented to various committees and there have been pilot trips with senior centers.

### **PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Meeting**

Marc Soto read the following report:

#### **I. Service Quality Issues**

A discussion was held about the problems Group Van has been having with efficiency. The system the way it currently runs is unrealistic, in the past catchment areas were used which worked. However, with the loss of these areas providers have to travel all over the entire city to take clients to the center which increases ride times. The broker has come up with two plans depending on the size of the center. For smaller centers, SF Paratransit will combine two center's routes into one. For larger centers, SF Paratransit will do two rounds of pick-ups to ensure that ride times are decreased while increasing van efficiency.

Stepping Stone mentioned that their population is getting frailer. They said that 48% of their population has a mental health diagnosis and an additional 38% have some form of dementia. They are working with their provider Baymed to decrease ride times for their clients.

#### **II. SF Broker Report**

- a) 5 new minivans will be added to the SFMTA fleet for SF Access service later this year.
- b) The IVR program Pilot was discussed and started in mid-July.
- c) Ride times and vehicle capacity are an issue with the Group Van program. All centers should expect a call from the Broker's office soon regarding their center's transportation.

#### **III. Announcement**

Annette said there is a new Isolation Reduction service that will be using the lifeline grant that the shop-a-round program currently uses. Senior centers will be able to get transportation to help them with day outings to places such as museums, the movies, or parks.

The next Group Van Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for October 2nd, 2013 from 10:30-12:30pm at the SF Paratransit Broker's office.

Jacy Cohen asked if there were any discussions to set up a meeting with Paul from R&D and Lisa or from GGRC in order to leverage and maximize resources. Marc Soto replied that a meeting has not been set up but that it was a possibility for the future. Jacy asked about contact information in regards to setting up a trip with the new "Van Gogh" service. Marc replied that she should contact John Sanderson and that there will soon be informational pamphlets about the program. Kate Toran added that she has more information available.

### **Paratransit Broker Report**

Marc Soto reported as follows:

- **SF Access Service Quality Report:**

Mike Stewman was introduced as the interim general manager of MV Transportation. There has been improvement in the on time performance and has been moving closer the upper 80 percentile. This is attributed to better utilization of the MDC devices as well as

better training of dispatchers on how to respond to the information from these devices. In addition, there has been an increase in engagement between management and staff. There have also been improvements in the maintenance goals; however, there are concerns that remain. This is essential as it helps extend the life of important resources. MV Transportation has been an integral partner in the IVR pilot program. The feedback has been mixed as some of the participants have reported that they did not receive a phone call about their trip while others have not reported any problems. The goal is to ultimately extend this service at all SF Access riders. MV Transportation has also relocated to a new facility which better meet their space needs. Also, a new planner was hired by MV Transportation.

Mike Stewman elaborated Marc Soto's report. He announced that the new facility has many amenities that were not at its previous facility. For example, the new facility has only one large parking, as oppose to two smaller lots. This allows for an easier rollout of vehicles. There has also been ongoing training regarding customer service and operation in order to improve service quality. Mike also noted that at the previous PCC meeting, the union stated that there was a lack of communication between management and staff. Since then, there has been meetings and communications with the union in order to address their concerns. One concern that had been raised was the lack of breaks for lunch. To address this issue, Mike has assigned a dispatcher whose primary duty is to make sure that lunch breaks are being taken by drivers. Kate Toran added that the union was invited to attend this meeting to provide an update to the PCC; however, they were unable to attend and they will be invited to the next meeting.

- **MDC Project:**

There is a high level of participation from MV Transportation and Baymed. Centro Latino, Self Help for the Elderly, and Kimochi are also participating and their usage has been steadily improving. Several of the devices had to be removed due to defects. In addition to installing these devices in the SFMTA owned vehicles, MV Transportation has also these devices on additional vehicles that are used to supplement existing service.

- **SF Paratransit Website:**

There have been several glitches with the new website. Several of the links are broken and do not direct users to the right page. This problem lies with the website hosting company and SF Paratransit had issued a ten day notice to fix this problem. However, their results were not satisfactory and there are plans to have a new company host the website.

- **BART/AC Transit Strike:**

Updates regarding these strikes and their potential effect on paratransit service have been regularly posted on the SF Paratransit website. Both AC Transit and BART funds East Bay Paratransit service and there is an agreement between SF Paratransit and East Bay Paratransit to provide service to customers between both jurisdictions. There were concerns about the potential impact of the strike on East Bay Paratransit service. However, AC Transit has reached a tentative agreement with its union and SF Paratransit will continue to monitor the BART strike.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Ramp Taxi Incentives:**

A total of \$12,525 worth of incentives was paid out in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2013. \$11,075 was paid to ramp drivers, a majority of which are at Luxor, Desoto, and Yellow. The remaining \$1,500 was paid to Luxor and Alliance which had the highest average number of wheelchair pickups per medallion.

- **2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey:**

A short summary of the final results from the 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey was read to the committee. There was an 83 percent satisfaction rating with SF Paratransit service in 2013, compared to 82 percent in 2012 and 78 percent in 2010. In addition, there was an 88 percent satisfaction rating with the SF Paratransit Broker's office, compared to 89 percent in 2012 and 81 percent in 2010. There was a 92 percent satisfaction rating with the SF Paratransit taxi debit card. One interesting piece to note is that about two thirds of SF Paratransit clients have a cell phone. There has also been a jump in the satisfaction with the ramp taxi program, with 81 satisfaction percent in 2013 compared to 72 percent in 2012. This positive movement is likely reflective of the reforms SFMTA and SF Paratransit have been implementing over the past year. A full presentation by Jon Canapary will occur at the next PCC meeting.

- **Staffing Changes:**

It was announced that Aaron Bonfilio and Nagina Azizi will be leaving SF Paratransit and SF Paratransit is currently accepting applications for their positions. In addition, there is a third available position, a Mobility Management Specialist, which is also accepting applications.

### **Public Comments**

Lurilla Harris requested that the meeting times be changed as it conflicts with the lunch programs provided by senior centers. Stu Smith announced that the committee received a letter by Ed Portugal in regards to concerns about emergency preparedness. Jacy Cohen mentioned that she went to a town hall meeting regarding the proposed Geary BRT. She would like the committee to look at this project and provide feedback at an upcoming meeting. Roland Wong suggested that SFMTA staff give a presentation about the project to this committee.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.

**The next PCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 18, 2013  
10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1 South Van Ness, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Candlestick/Corona Conference  
Rooms**