

San Francisco Paratransit Coordinating Council

c/o Muni

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Minutes

PCC Executive Committee Meeting

January 20, 2016

1 South Van Ness Avenue, 2nd Floor Conference Room

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: John Lazar, PCC Chair; Bruce Oka; PCC Vice Chair; Cheryl Damico, PCC Secretary; Marty Smith and Roland Wong; PC&O Co-Chair; Douglas Callahan; Fred Lein; Gilda Chico; Jeanne Lynch; Kaye Griffin; Mary McLain; Michael Zaugg; Rodney Lee; Roland Wong; Ruach Graffis; Sam Alicia Duke; Sandra Fancher; Wanee Ratanasanguan

PCC Members and Guests: Fiona Hinze

PCC Executive Committee Member Excused: Jacy Cohen; Jean Marie Green; Olivia Santiago

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; Kent Hinton

SFMTA: Annette Williams; Kristen Mazur; Jonathan Cheng; Gida Alvarez; Kate Toran

Cheryl Damico, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

John Lazar, PCC Chair, read the agenda. The January 13th Group Van subcommittee report was removed from the agenda. The agenda were motioned/seconded/approved as amended.

Approve Minutes of October 7th meeting

The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved.

Comments from the Chair

John Lazar mentioned that traffic congestion is continuing to grow. Previously, it would only take two to three minutes to dispatch a taxi to a rider; now takes about 20-30 minutes. He recommends that individuals order their taxis in advance, particularly with the upcoming Super Bowl XL events that will be occurring in San Francisco.

Taxi Innovations

Kate Toran introduced Kristen Mazur. Kristen will be taking a senior planner role in the SFMTA Accessible Services. Her duties will include working with the SF Paratransit program as well as focusing on the department's strategic plan to improve accessibility citywide and she will be involved with accessibility issues concerning the Muni fixed route system as well as bicycling and pedestrian projects. Her funding background and previous work experience with the regional transit agency will be an asset to this department. Kristen stated that she was excited to work with this group and looks forward to getting to know everyone.

Kate Toran introduced a new initiative that would directly affect the SF Paratransit program. Over the past few months, SF Paratransit has been working with Flywheel, a mobile application, to integrate the SF Paratransit taxi debit card as a form of payment. This integration would allow SF Paratransit taxi users to use the Flywheel smartphone application to hail a taxi and pay for their trip using the SF Paratransit taxi debit card. There will be no service fee for SF Paratransit riders. In addition, individuals will be able to filter for vehicle type; for example, wheelchair users could apply a filter that would only display wheelchair accessible taxis on the screen. A pilot will be conducted as soon and she encouraged attendees to participate. Kate stressed that this is another method of individuals to hail and pay for their taxi trips and that individuals without smartphones can still call taxi companies to order a taxi as well as do a street hail and pay with their SF Paratransit taxi debit card.

Another innovation in the taxi industry that recently occurred was the approval of a new GPS-based taxi meter from Flywheel called Taxi OS. There was a six month pilot testing period that occurred as well as rigorous screening process with approval needed by various local and state government agencies. The meter is located in a smartphone and will be mounted on a dashboard. This new taxi meter will replace the need for other items, such as a two way radio as well as a credit card reader. These taxi meters are currently being used by Flywheel taxi.

A third new feature that taxi riders may notice is the removal of the requirement for the rear seat passenger monitor. There has been many complaints from stakeholders over these devices. Upon review of the requirements, Kate noticed that the rigid standards resulted in a lack of innovation due to the need to meet every conditions. Following an extensive vetting process with stakeholders, changes were made to reduce the number of minimum requirements. Among the requirements that remain include accepting credit cards as well as being visible to those who are visually impaired. Flywheel has introduced a new device, under these new requirements, and it is currently being reviewed by the Lighthouse for the Blind and the Independent Living Resource Center and other important stakeholders.

Roland Wong asked if Flywheel will make available a telephone line for individuals who would like to order a taxi. Kate Toran replied that is not currently planned but that Flywheel has mentioned that possibility of having a centralized phone number for requests for wheelchair accessible taxis. Fred Lein wondered if there is a surcharge to drivers who use the Flywheel mobile application to pick up SF Paratransit riders. Kate answered that there would be no surcharge for drivers picking up SF Paratransit riders. Fred also questioned if anyone can select for vehicle type. Kate said that everyone can use the filter to select by vehicle type but Marc Soto clarified that SF Paratransit riders can only filter for a wheelchair accessible taxi. Fred inquired as to whether taxi drivers will know that the trip request is a SF Paratransit rider. Kate replied that taxi drivers will not know beforehand if the request was made by a SF Paratransit rider. Marty Smith asked if the Flywheel application will have the SF Paratransit taxi debit card on file. Marc affirmed that they will have the SF Paratransit taxi debit card on file. John Lazar asked if a email address is required. Marc answered that SF Paratransit riders will not need to include their email address as it will be optional.

Marc Soto asked whether the new taxi meter is visible from passengers from the backseat. Kate Toran affirmed that the taxi meter is visible from the rear seat with clicking sounds as the meter increases as well as large text sizes. Gilda Chico mentioned that she was not able to test the new

rear seat passenger monitor device when it was at the Independent Living Resource Center and would like to have an opportunity to test it out. Kate stated that they are working to have another session to test these devices. Marc added that he will be having his staff go out to the taxi companies to test the rear seat passenger monitors.

Election of PCC Executive Committee Officers

Jonathan Cheng announced that the position of chair, vice chair, secretary, and PC&O chair for the PCC Executive Committee was up for election. Individuals elected to these positions will serve for the 2016 calendar year.

For the position of chair, there were one nominee, John Lazar. By acclamation, John Lazar was re-elected chair of the PCC.

For the position of vice chair, there were two nominees, Bruce Oka and Cheryl Damico. After a closed ballot election, Bruce Oka was re-elected as vice chair of the PCC.

For the position of secretary, there was only one nominee, Cheryl Damico. By acclamation, Cheryl Damico was elected as secretary of the PCC.

For the position of PC&O chair, there was nominee, Marty Smith. By acclamation, Marty Smith was re-elected as PC&O chair of the PCC.

Transdev Progress Report

Mary McLain wished everyone a Happy New Year and hoped each had an enjoyable holiday season. She introduced Doug Callahan as the new driver representative on the PCC and Lisa Capazzi, who is the new shop steward and will be representing the drivers and bus aides. There was been an emphasis on three issues: safety, service quality, and customer care. While much progress, there remains opportunities for improvement. There is improved phone reporting, which has shown that the percentage of calls answered has increased while the percentage of calls abandoned has decreased. In addition, despite the service impacts from weather, the on-time percentage was fairly decent. 65 drivers were honored for their perfect safety records, having no collisions in 2015. There is a new group van coordinator who is cleaning the Trapeze data and is working with agencies. Additional mobile data computers (MDCs) were installed in the new vehicles to allow for real-time data and information to be transmitted. New infrastructure improvements has led to more reliable Internet service.

Upcoming SFMTA/SF Paratransit Projects

Jonathan Cheng and Annette Williams provided the following report:

- **SF Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Jonathan Cheng announced that our annual customer satisfaction survey will be conducted sometime during the spring. Prior to the survey, we would like to host meeting with interested members of the PCC to review the survey questions. This meeting is an opportunity to include any service quality questions that may be beneficial to gauge rider satisfaction with the SF Paratransit program. This meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12th at the SF Paratransit office located at 68 12th Street from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon.

- **SF Paratransit Brokerage Contract**

Annette Williams reported that the existing SF Paratransit Brokerage contract expires in June 2015. However, due to savings in the existing contract, this contract will likely be extended through 2016. As SFMTA develops the Request for Proposals (RFP), a special meeting will be held with select PCC Executive Committee to review the proposal and solicit any feedback. Select PCC members will also be part of the bid review process. The timeline is to finish this process by February 2016 in order to accommodate any potential transition.

- **SFMTA Mobility Management Project**

Annette Williams stated that the SFMTA will be receiving federal funding to implement a mobility management component in the SF Paratransit program. However, the funding is not expected to arrive until 2016. Prior to the funding, SFMTA is working to expand the scope for the existing Lifeline Shop-a-Round grant to allow us to start some of the mobility management function sooner. Some of the mobility management activities including implementing a Peer Escort program, an Information and Referral center, and expanding Paratransit Plus program. The goal is to have a broader range of service and to provide better information on transit options.

PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Meeting

Marty Smith read the following report:

1. **Service Quality Discussion**

Most service quality concerns pertained to long ride times onboard vehicles. In response, Baymed added a few small vehicles and also acquired a cutaway vehicle. The Transdev service provider hired additional drivers, leading to a potential increase in the number of Group Van drivers. Stepping Stone Management referenced an audit of Group Van trip manifests, which uncovered some unusual trip recording practices. Baymed resolved to improve the accuracy of their manifests. Other concerns regarded early pickup arrivals that led to confusion among clients. Besides these issues, much of the reported feedback was positive. On-Time Performance (OTP) for Group Van was just below 90% in July, just above 90% in August, and just below 90% in September 2015. Complaints against Group Van service providers totaled 0 in July, 2 in August, and 3 in September 2015.

2. **Broker Report**

The broker acquired 13 new and 20 used Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) for paratransit vehicles. A recent bid for additional vehicles was unsuccessful. The broker will coordinate with centers to maintain accurate client lists. Technological undertakings such as the Muni Mobile Ticket app, Flywheel e-hail app for taxi service, and an online Patron Portal for taxi debit cards, are underway.

The next PC&O Group Van Subcommittee meeting will be held Wednesday April 13, 2016.

PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi Subcommittee Meeting

Roland Wong and Ruach Graffis read the following report:

1. Comments from the Chair

Vice Chair Roland Wong said he thought all the paratransit presentations to the MTA board of directors the day before (11/3/15) were very well received and the outcome seems supportive by the Board, to which all present agreed. Roland also noted Jeanne Lynch pointed out the incorrect spelling of her name in the text of the August 5, 2015 minutes, and it will be corrected.

2. Service Quality Issues – Taxi Services

Sam Alicia Duke said though the Luxor reservation line agents and the service is excellent, she was on hold eight minutes and one message on hold that says, “We’re afraid all our agents are busy...” is off-putting and the word “afraid” should be changed. She also commented she is still noticing non-SF colors in The City that she does not recognize. Marty Smith described them as “gypsies” that have always been here, usually dropping off fares from outside The City and lingering for another fare out. Roland said his taxi experiences have been good, and asked for initiative follow-ups on ramp cab queuing at SFO, taxi e-hail apps and the new MUNI mobile payment app. Jeanne Lynch, who joined by phone, said she would defer her pending comments until she returns from her next trip to Washington DC after the annual meeting here. Cheryl Damico commented on the dedicated ramp drivers, especially Tim Weldon, in spite of the “rattling” ramp taxis. Sam Alicia Duke noted she doesn’t mind a rattling van if she knows the driver is good and the vehicle maintenance is current. Marty pointed out, besides the pot-holes all over The City, some of the rattling is because all ramp vehicles are retrofitted, not ramp-ready from the factory. Marty also commented there has been a huge increase in Ramp rides given, and driver shifts adjusted.

3. SF Paratransit Broker Report

- Kent Hinton of Transdev/SFPT announced errors were identified in the August Ramp incentives data. Drivers who were under or overpaid in August will be corrected on the September and perhaps October incentives payments. However Luxor remains the company winner for most ramp rides in August.
- **Ramp Taxi Incentives** – Kent continued the correct August ramp driver incentive payment by the broker was \$7,550 and Luxor remained the company winner of \$500 for most rides in August. The September driver incentive is \$8,370 and \$500 to Luxor; and preliminarily October is \$7,780 to ramp driver incentive and \$500 to Luxor.
- **Taxi OTP** – Kent reminded all that daily taxi On Time Performance (less than 30 minutes to pick up) survey calls were increased starting mid-June. 93 calls were made in August (two ramp) with 98.92% on time; 90 calls made in September with 92.22% on time; and 93 calls in October with 99% on time.
- **Complaints/Compliments** – In August there were 15 complaints and 2 compliments; in September there were 15 complaints and 0 compliments; in October there were 23 complaints and 4 compliments. The spike was observed to be around driver knowledge and or proper adherence in using the debit card (or else IVR).

The next PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2016 from 10:30am to 12:30pm at the Broker’s office, 68 12th Street, San Francisco.

PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Report

Marty Smith read the following report:

1. Service Quality Discussion

SF Access On-Time Performance (OTP) was just below 82% in August, just below 85% in September, just below 83% in October, and just above 87.5% in November 2015. SF Access complaints totaled 113 in August, 80 in September, 66 in October, and 32 in November 2015. SF Access compliments totaled 24 in August, 22 in September, 31 in October, and 33 in November 2015. The implementation of a recent driver shift bid, hiring of additional drivers, and increased adherence to Brisbane attendance policies have helped improve service quality by the provider.

2. Broker Report

The broker's office is progressing toward implementation of a taxi- backup service. The paratransit brokerage is currently undergoing a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Van Field Monitor, Shuttle Coordinator, and Data Analyst positions have been filled. The next PC&O SF Access Subcommittee meeting will be held Wednesday March 2, 2016.

Paratransit Broker Report

Kent Hinton and Marc Soto reported as follow:

• **On Time Performance Measures**

The taxi on time performance was 99% in October, 99% in November, and 98% in December. Group Van on time performance was 91% in October, 94% in November, and 93% in December. SF Access on time performance was 84% in October, 87% in November, and 89% in December.

• **Complaint and Compliments Statistics**

In October, there were 91 total complaints; 45 total complaints in November, and 56 total complaints in December. There was a continual drop in taxi complaints and SF Access over the three month period. There were 36 compliments in October, 36 compliments in November, and 34 compliments in December.

• **Ongoing Group Van Topics**

Staff is still working to identify adding vehicles for Baymed to assist their operation service. The Van Arrival Update for the TripInfo call will be re-introduced as all MDCs have been installed in all vehicles. In addition, staff is working on developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Group Van services as contracts with all service providers will expire soon.

• **Emergency Planning**

There is a new webpage on the SF Paratransit website that will give up-to-date information regarding any weather-related service delays. A pre-recorded message that

plays while callers are on hold is capable of giving them updates on conditions that may affect service delivery.

- **Super Bowl 50 Planning**

Staff has been coordinating with the regional paratransit partners to provide updated information regarding the Super Bowl related events in San Francisco. Publicly, there is information available regarding the street closures and paratransit drop off areas on the SFMTA website and will be loaded onto the SF Paratransit website. The street closures are primarily centered in the Embarcadero area. In addition, staff is reaching out to riders who have had regular trips in the closed area and have contacted them to notify them of the potential affected area.

- **Yellow Cab Chapter 11 Bankruptcy**

Recently, Yellow Cab filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Yellow Cab is the largest taxi company in San Francisco and does the highest number of taxi trips for the SF Paratransit program. Although they are currently going through bankruptcy, SF Paratransit riders are still able to hail and pay for their taxi trip using the SF Paratransit taxi debit card.

Ruach Graffis stated that she would like to draft a letter against the ending of the Senior Medallion program.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.

The next PCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 16th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1 South Van Ness, 2nd Floor Conference Room.