



# SFMTA Taxi News

## Taxi Task Force

### Work Plan Progress Report, October 2016

Updates since the last meeting are highlighted.

#### Taxi Driver Recruitment/Retention:

- **Recruitment/retention initiative:**
  - Driver outreach events:
  - Western Addition spotlight event: 2/11
  - Civic Center spotlight event: 2/18
  - Veterans Job Fair: 2/23
  - Chinatown spotlight event: 3/18
  - Mission spotlight event (planning stage)
  - Professional Driver Job Fair: 4/21
  - Taxi Driver Appreciation Events held quarterly: over 200 drivers appreciated to date
- **Improve English language assessment:** SFMTA has reached out to City College ESL experts to work on this effort. Ruach Graffis has volunteered to help.
- **Improve waiting area at front window:** new chairs, suggestion box, new blinds and Customer Service Commitments Posters hanging. Frontline staff training completed.
- **Expedite A-Card renewal:** letter sent to individuals whose A-Cards have expired within the last six months and who prior to that held an A-Card for at least two years, offering an expedited renewal process. Taxi Services has revised the policy and will offer the expedited A-Card renewal process to individuals whose A-Cards have expired within the last 12 months.

To date, notices have been sent to 1,850 drivers. Of this number, 113 drivers (approx.16%) have renewed their A-card permit.

- **Waive A-Card and Medallion Renewal fees for FY15-16:** Approved by SFMTA Board on 5/5/15. Estimated savings to the taxi industry: \$2,215,900.

- **Increased SFO Customer Pass-Through:** Approved by SFMTA Board on 5/5/15 and in effect on 6/5/15. Drivers will be able to pass through \$4.00 of the \$5.00 SFO trip fee charge.
- **Smoking cessation effort:** Three events held at SFO (2/25, 3/25 and 4/22). Increased fine for drivers smoking in vehicle and updated regulations to include a prohibition on vaping (e-smoking). SFMTA is making stop-smoking stickers available upon request.
- **Improve work environment for drivers at color schemes**
  - Shorter shifts
  - Improve amenities
  - Don't charge drivers for parking
- Develop plan for Driver's Fund: discussed at Subcommittee meeting on 3/2/16. Considered for inclusion in scope of work draft for Economist analysis- TBD.
- Articulate and post Taxi Drivers' rights.
- Develop a hiring hall with centralized info. This could be real or virtual. Make it easy for drivers to work for multiple companies.
- **Improve driver safety:**
  - Include security camera and notice inspection in GTU inspection checklist: Completed
  - Finalize and make available felony warning stickers: completed. Verifone has added the graphic for display on their M10 screens in SF.



- Include SFPD in new taxi driver training: Taxi Services Staff has set up a train the trainer session with SFPD and will incorporate safety tips into the new driver training.
- **Positive reinforcement of taxi industry culture change:** SFMTA posted Customer Service Commitments and SFO has developed similar commitments and will use them as a training tool with their staff.
- **SFPD Exercised Felony Charges for assault on a driver in April 2016.**

## Improve Customer Service

- Better serve all neighborhoods in SF: was discussed at TTF Customer Service Subcommittee meeting. Three undercover surveys were conducted to test dispatch response rates. Results are included in a separate document. In conjunction with industry experts, SFMTA has developed a “tip sheet” for new drivers with tips on how to best benefit by servicing the outer neighborhoods. The tip sheet has been emailed to the outreach list and is distributed as part of the new taxi driver training class at SFMTA.
- Add Customer Service training component to driver training: New driver training conducted by SFMTA and the Taxi Training Schools include a strong focus on customer service.
- **Free ESL class for taxi drivers:** Two sessions offered. There was low attendance so the class will not be continued.
- Update taxi driver materials to be more user-friendly: SFMTA is working with City College to develop user-friendly brochures. Still in process- TBD.
- **Develop/implement progressive discipline schedule:** draft plan on 4/8 agenda and has been sent to Taxi Town Hall outreach list. Updated draft on agenda for 5/13. Discussed at Color Scheme meeting on 5/12. On TTF agenda 6/10. Discussed at Color Scheme meeting on 9/1. On TTF agenda for 9/9/15. Progressive discipline schedule completed and currently being piloted by taxi investigators as a policy document.
- Front office member trained to offer translation services.
- **Taxi Driver Appreciation:** Quarterly events to honor taxi drivers who provide outstanding customer services. Recipients are chosen based on customer compliments, and receive a gas card and a certificate from a state senator. The events are sponsored by the SF Federal Credit Union. Over 200 drivers have been honored to date. **Held Taxi Driver Appreciation event in September and honored 22 drivers.**

## Better Integrate Taxis into SFMTA:

- **Increase Taxi Representative Presence on committees and planning efforts:** Charles Rathbone is representing the Taxi Industry on the Better Market Street Plan and the representative on the Late Night Transportation Working Group.
- **Increase Transit/Taxi only red carpet lanes:** Taxis were able to access Transit Only Lanes as part of the Super Bowl 50 traffic re-routes. New Transit Only

Lanes recently legislated. Updated Transit Only Lanes map provided as part of 3.9.16 TTF agenda packet.

- **Integrate Taxis in Vision Zero efforts:**
  - Added VZ training video to new taxi driver training class.
  - On-Line Driver Safety Training: As part of the A-Card renewal process, all Taxi Drivers will be required to complete an on-line safety training course developed specifically for taxi drivers. After conducting research on various on-line training courses, SFMTA will pilot the STOP Safety Course. After the pilot, SFMTA anticipates to roll out the course to all drivers renewing their A-Cards in spring 2017.
  - Taxi Safety Video completed and in use in new taxi driver training class and will be incorporated in the On-Line Safety Course noted above.
  
- **Clarify taxis use of bus stops and train PCOs:** Completed. Internal memo issued March 2016 was provided in TTF 4/13/16 agenda packet.
  
- **Improve flow of taxis in SF: develop list of intersections to advocate that cabs can make left hand turns:** in process. Internal SFMTA staff meeting to review list. Still in process.
  
- **Safer Market Street:** Turn restrictions for private vehicles onto Market Street from 3rd to 8th Streets. Taxis will not be subject to the turn restrictions because they are commercial vehicles. The Safer Market Street project will be implemented this summer pending SFMTA Board approval June 16th. Safer Market Street is one of 24 fast-track Vision Zero projects that will address the high number of severe and fatal collisions along high-injury corridors like Market Street. The project will be a key step toward achieving Vision Zero, our goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities in San Francisco. The project will improve safety across all transportation modes by reducing conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, reducing conflicts among turning vehicles, extending transit-only lanes, restricting turns onto Market Street and other supplemental safety treatments between 3rd and 8th streets. Approved by SFMTA Board on 2/16/15. Turn restrictions will be implemented on August 11, 2015.
  
- **Improve Taxi Stand Placement at AT&T Park:** Staff has worked with industry representatives and SFMTA internal staff to develop a plan to improve taxi access at AT&T Park. Taxi Services staff has submitted an application to have five spaces of the lower 700 block Taxi Stand moved to the east side of 2nd Street and add two additional spaces for a total of seven spaces on the east side of 2nd Street and leaving two spaces on the west side in the 700 block. The taxi stand in the 600 block of Second Street will remain in the same configuration. This item will be on the September 25, 2015 ISCOTT agenda and will be implemented immediately following approval at ISCOTT.

A fixed-post PCO for special events and baseball games will be tasked with keeping both taxi stands on 2nd Street clear of non-taxi vehicles and will remain on post for up to one hour after the event. Additionally, Taxi Services staff will work to identify a location adjacent to AT&T Park for the location of a ramp taxi stand. Both Taxi Stands on 2nd Street will remain after completion of the 2nd Street streetscape improvement project.

The stand on 3rd Street will remain the same, however, a roving PCO will keep the stand clear of non-taxis and Taxi Services will increase advertisement of the location of the 3rd Street stand to encourage Taxi Drivers to make greater use of the 3rd Street event Taxi Stand.

- Taxi investigators are now an on-going presence at AT&T Park during onset of most Giants games to assist with flow of taxis and enforce against TNCs illegal use of taxi stands.
- SFMTA Board approved left turn exemption for taxis at 21st Street. DPW will include ramps when designing the new bulbs at 16th street. The bulbs are anticipated to be built next year.
- **Taxis and Special Event Planning:** Meet with small group of taxi driver reps to discuss advance planning for special events, such as Outside Lands and Hardly Strictly Bluegrass and placement of potential new taxi stands in the city.

#### **Medallion Sales:**

- **Improve medallion sales transparency and process:** A-Card Seniority List posted to website and sent to outreach list. 4129 letters of interest sent to all A-Card holders on the list. Developed a streamlined process to expedite sales.
- **Re-Transfer Fee:** Reduced re-transfer fee from 20% to 5%. Estimated savings to the industry in FY15 and FY16: \$2,212,500.
- Medallion Sale Program Subcommittee met on 9/2/15. Report back on TTF agenda, 9/9/15. Subcommittee met again on 10/7/15. Report back on TTF agenda, 10/14/15.
- **Amended Medallion Purchase Eligibility Requirement:** Per TTF recommendation, successfully requested SFMTA Board to amend the Transportation Code to reduce the barrier to entry to purchase a Medallion – reduced the driving requirement from four out of the past five years to the past 12 months. Approximately 7,000 letters of interest sent to all potentially eligible A-Card holders. To date, SFMTA has received approximately 350 responses.

## **Ramp Taxi Program:**

- Clarify program rules and requirements: completed. Memo detailing ramp taxi standards has been issued to taxi industry and posted on the SFMTA website.
- Ramp Taxi Medallion Use Agreements for color schemes have been finalized and executed with those that meet the requirements.
- Ramp Taxi Medallion Use Agreements for individual drivers have been finalized. TAS staff is conducting outreach to drivers that meet the requirements about the opportunity to enter into a Use Agreement. Drivers have been interviewed by the Paratransit Coordinating Committee subcommittee.

## **8000 Program:**

- **Series Program Revisions:** Completed. Industry memo sent out 5/5/16.

## **Implement Late Night Transportation Working Group Recommendations:**

- **Develop cab sharing regulations:** sent to DOT with recommendation. Discussed at Color Scheme meeting on 9/22/15. On TTF agenda 10/14/15. On TTF agenda for 11/18/15. Still under review. Bandwagon taxi sharing app is interested in working with the SF fleets on cab sharing. Developed draft cab sharing discussion document. On TTF agenda 1/13/16.
- **Pop up cab stands:** sent to DOT with recommendation.
- **Subsidized taxi rides for low-income late night workers:** sent to DOT with recommendation.

## **TNC regulations**

- **Taxi Industry White Paper:** sent to DOT with recommendation.

## **Color Scheme Standards**

- Articulate what color scheme should provide to medallion holders and drivers: On TTF agenda for 11/18/15. Still under review and discussion. This was the topic of the TTF subcommittee meeting on 12/2/15.
- Eliminate deposit.
- Require standard language in lease agreements.

## **Enforcement**

- Taxi Investigators now have the authority to issue citations for additional parking violations. Ordinance 56-15, by which the Board of Supervisors amended Section 3.1 of the Transportation Code, eliminated language specifying the particular parking laws that Taxi Investigators may enforce, and clarified that the Director of Transportation has authority to determine which SFMTA employees may enforce parking laws in San Francisco. The Director of Transportation has specified that Taxi Investigators have the authority to issue parking citations for the following violations:

- Sec. 7.2.25. Curb Parking – Red Zones (NEW)
- Sec. 7.2.27. Curb Parking – White Zones
- Sec. 7.2.38. Parking in Stands
- Sec. 7.2.39. Parking Within Transit-Only Lanes
- Sec. 7.2.70. Obstructing Traffic – Vehicle
- Sec. 7.2.80. Vehicles for Hire and Taxis; Parking prohibited in Certain Use Districts
- VC22500h Double Parking (NEW)
- VC22500i Bus Zone (NEW)

- Paratransit fraud case.
- Summary suspension of A-Card holder.
- Gold Star revocation case heard on 11/20. Revocation upheld by Neutral Hearing officer on 1/25/16. Upheld by board of Appeals on 3/30/16.
- American dispatch permit denial case heard on 3/4/16. Permit denial upheld by the Neutral Hearing office.
- Parking violations: 3,287 parking citations issued from 7/1/15 – 9/30/16.
- Administrative citations: 244 administrative citations issued from 7/1/15 – 9/30/16.
- Gold Star last day of operation was May 31, 2016.
- Taxi Investigators conduct on-going sting operations in conjunction with SFPD to identify illegal street-hails and drivers operating without proper permits. Stanley Roberts of KRON 4 News joined the latest efforts and produced a 3-part expose of the enforcement activity which aired May 17-19, 2016:
  - <http://kron4.com/2016/05/17/in-depth-ride-sharing-drivers-pretending-to-be-taxis-in-violation-of-state-law-getting-huge-fines/>



- <http://kron4.com/2016/05/18/sfpd-sfmta-confront-rideshare-drivers-caught-picking-up-fares-that-didnt-call-for-service/>
- <http://kron4.com/2016/05/19/in-depth-stanley-roberts-confronts-rideshare-drivers-picking-up-fares-that-didnt-call-for-service/>

#### Other SFMTA Actions/Information

- SFMTA Board approved contract with Energetix to provide drug and alcohol testing services.
- SFMTA Board passed the drug and alcohol testing program.
- SFMTA Board passed the elimination of the ban on taxi wrap advertising on 11/17 and the elimination of the requirement for metal badges and color scheme ID cards.
- Revised Rear Seat Payment device requirements.
- Drug and Alcohol Testing implementation. Internal meeting for staff and mandatory meeting for taxi companies on 1/11/16. Reasonable Suspicion training for industry reps conducted on 1/25/16. A second Reasonable Suspicion training for remaining industry reps held in April 2016. Drug testing for new drivers, annual re-certifications, Reasonable Suspicion, and Post-Accident was implemented in March 2016.
- Hosted International Association of Transportation Regulators Conference Successful event attended by representatives from Australia, Abu Dhabi, London, Singapore, Canada and across the U.S.
- Legislative Affairs
  - **Assembly Bill 650:** Discussed at TTF 5/4/16 Subcommittee for industry concerns and recommendations. Call occurred between SFMTA and Assembly member Low's office 5/10/16. Discussed at TTF 6/1/16 Subcommittee. **Bill vetoed by Gov. Brown.**
  - **Assembly Bill 2763:** DOT letter to Gov. Jerry Brown requesting a veto. **Passed.**
  - **Assembly Bill 1289:** DOT letter to Gov. Jerry Brown requesting a veto.
  - **CPUC Proceedings:** Submitted opening and reply comments regarding the concept of Personal Vehicles. **Passed.**
  - **CPUC Proceedings:** Submitted opening and reply comments regarding background checks of TNC drivers.



- Staffing Update

Jarvis Murray has been hired as the Taxi Director in Los Angeles and is no longer with the SFMTA.

Chadwick Lee's last day with SFMTA is 10.7.16

David Kashani has been hired as an Administrative Analyst.