

Minutes
PCC Executive Committee Meeting
March 17, 2021

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Fred Lein, PCC Chair; Marty Smith, PCC Secretary; Roland Wong, PC&O Chair; Gilda Chico; Jessica Felix; Kevin Lee; Mara Math; Olivia Santiago; Robert Grant; Roland Wong; Susan Kitazawa

PCC Members and Guests:

PCC Executive Committee Member Excused: Bruce Oka; Jacy Cohen

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; Kent Hinton; Richard Foiles; Cheryl Hac; Kevin McDonald; Justin Leong; Carol Osorio; Catherine Callahan

SFMTA: Jonathan Cheng

Fred Lein, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

Fred Lein, PCC Chair, read the agenda. The agenda were motioned/seconded/approved.

Comments from the Chair

Fred wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day as well as commemorated the one-year anniversary of Shelter-in-Place order. He is hopeful that with the vaccine rollout that things can return to a pre-pandemic time. Recently, he saw a tourist bus as well as taxis taking people to vaccination sites.

SF Access Online Demonstration

Marc Soto provided a brief overview of the project timeline. This project started in August 2017 and purchased the Trapeze Pass-WEB. Once it was purchased, staff worked with Trapeze on customization work in order have the product to align with program rules of the SF Paratransit program. SF Paratransit staff then had riders participate in pilot to help hone in on possible issues and the final product was installed December 2020. Marc thanked staff for their hard work in the development of this product, which has been named SF Access Online

Kevin McDonald led a demonstration of the SF Access Online portal. The demonstration included showing how to register, how to book a trip, how to cancel a trip, requesting subscription trip, and how riders can provide trip feedback.

Kevin Lee asked if this online portal is available as a mobile app. Kevin McDonald answered that while it is web based, if a rider use cell phone, the website will format to fit the screen.

Olivia Santiago asked why the website is not translatable to Tagalog or Pilipino. Kevin McDonald responded that according to the Title VI requirements, language assistance is only required for Russian, Spanish, and Chinese.

Susan Kitazawa stated that she thought it was a great presentation. She did ask what a rider should do if they use a white blind cane for mobility aids and want to include it in their trip request. In addition, she asked if there is any audio/written text for the vehicle location map so that riders can be informed of their vehicle's ETA on the day of service. Kevin McDonald stated that all mobility aid information should be automatically transferred from the rider's Trapeze information and that there is a line that provides updates and the text reading software should be able to pick it up. Kevin Lee asked about will call trips. Kevin McDonald stated that riders should not make a will call trip through the website portal and should call a reservationist instead.

Roland Wong asked what about the rollout plan for this website. Kevin McDonald indicated that they are planning a slow rollout due to staff constraints with other programs and will reach out to PCC members as well as those who participated in the pilot members and will advertise to members who may benefit from this online option.

PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi Subcommittee Meeting

The PC&O Taxi/Tamp Taxi subcommittee report is as follows:

PC&O Taxi and Ramp Taxi Vice Chair Bruce Oka brought the meeting to order at 10:33 am.

- **Special Report by Chris Sweis of Yellow Cab**

Chris Sweis, Yellow Cab SF Owner, attended the meeting to respond to questions previously asked by the committee. He reported feelings stuck between SF Paratransit and SFMTA in obtaining approval of the YoTaxi app. Marc Soto responded that SF Paratransit is not responsible for approving e-hail apps, only testing the app and then reporting findings to the SFMTA. Yellow Cab issue with missing GPS data on Paratransit trips is being resolved with a software update and new tablets. Chris stated that most of the vehicles have been painted yellow and very soon all will be. The Vice Chair asked about same-day ramp taxi service and Chris replied that Yellow has made some adjustments to ramp driver scheduling that should resolve any shortage previously experienced. He also announced that Yellow Cab SF has a new direct phone number for ordering ramp taxi service (415.301.6383). There was discussion about recent failures to get any type of taxi service to the Bayview area and how to address that issue. He attributed an increase in no-pays and fare evasion as likely contributing to the problem. The plastic barrier shields being installed in Yellow cabs were also discussed.

- **Election of Vice Chair**

The 2020 Vice Chair called for nominations for the 2021 Vice Chair. Jessica Felix and Bruce Oka were nominated for the office and Bruce was reelected for 2021.

- **SF Paratransit Broker Report**

Over the past three months SF Paratransit paid an average of about \$11,000 per month. Company incentives have been paid to Flywheel Taxi, Yellow Cab, and ECO. Vehicle incentives of approximately \$3,000 per month were paid. Taxi complaints are running at 1/2 of a complaint per 1,000 rides which is a relatively low number. SF Paratransit will be pushing out a new VIF (vehicle introduction form) to taxi companies. There was a software update to the CabConnect system. Updates to the Paratransit Taxi Online

website to make things easier for riders will be implemented soon. New brochures to support the online technology tools and a new Rider Guide are in the final stages of production and will be available in formats accessible to the visually impaired. Essential Trip Card Program (ETC) enrollment is ongoing, and the program will continue for the foreseeable future. Currently there are about 3,300 ETC riders and taking about 200 taxi trips per day. COVID-19 related activities are consuming a lot of bandwidth and Marc Soto asked for understanding if it takes longer to receive a response as we try to get through the next few months. Social distancing protocols are still in place so Group Van or Van Gogh services may not return until these limitations are lifted.

- **Taxi Company Service Issues**

PCC members asked about vaccinations for drivers. There was discussion that taxi drivers are not currently eligible except based upon the individual's age. Several members expressed support for trying to get taxi drivers elevated in priority.

- **Public Comment**

Several members commented in support of the SFMTA board approving the optional 5-year contract extension. Comments were also lodged regarding the length of the SFMTA board meeting which ran until 8 p.m.

The next PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi subcommittee meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2021 - 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, via Zoom

PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Meeting

The PC&O SF Access subcommittee report is as follows:

- **Election of Vice Chair**

Cheryl Damico was elected Vice-Chair.

- **Service Quality Discussion**

Mary McLain of Transdev reported the new 300-series vehicles have been deployed for service and are the first to be used daily. They recently honored 63 drivers for safe driving performance. Demand for SF Access has been around 500 trips per day while phone traffic to reservations has increased. Mary reported her staff have been resilient throughout the pandemic and while there are some fears they have maintained ongoing communication. They also had protocols in place to track COVID cases and exposures, as well as for contacting those potentially exposed. Through coordination with the Department of Public Health, drivers were eligible for vaccination under the healthcare category due to the nature of trips being provided. They continue encouraging drivers who have not yet been vaccinated, though reporting vaccination was not required. Riders discussed positive feedback on new 300-series vehicles, capacity restrictions and distancing onboard vans, conditional eligibility in the context of reduced Muni service, and changes to the Better Market Street plan.

- **Broker Report**

Kent Hinton of the Broker's office reported demand for SF Access was increasing, with weekdays at just under 50% and Saturdays at 50% or higher of their respective

pre-pandemic levels. Taxi demand was in the low-70% of pre-pandemic levels. The ETC (Essential Trip Card) program had approximately 3,500 enrollees, providing almost 300 trips per day and 40,000 trips total since April 2020. SF Access OTP (On-Time Performance) remained above 95% with Taxi OTP stable at 95%. Complaints for SF Access were about 25% of pre-pandemic levels. Taxi complaints were just below 25% of pre-pandemic levels with a trend relating to drivers experiencing issues with their equipment which the Broker is working with SFMTA and taxi providers to resolve. Installation of a new map for the Trapeze scheduling software was completed and preparations for the soft launch of SF Access Online was being finalized. Transdev continues providing vehicles and drivers for the Emergency Services and Pier 94 Shuttle programs. Group Van remains suspended, but a working group has been meeting in preparation for future reinstatement. Muni was providing free trips to and from vaccination appointments, which includes four (4) one-way van trips, \$60 value added to the balance of SF Paratransit Taxi Debit Card holders, or a one-time \$60 allotment increase for ETC and Paratransit Plus card holders. Catherine Callahan will fill the role of Mobility Manager. Automated calls were used to inform ETC riders of the allotment increase for vaccine trips and another round of calls to taxi riders would come next.

The next PC&O SF Access Subcommittee meeting date is June 2nd, 2021.

Paratransit Broker Report

Kent Hinton and Marc Soto reported as follow:

- **Service Level Statistics**
Rider demand is still down from pre-pandemic levels. SF Access is operating at about 50 percent of pre-pandemic ridership levels. Taxis are at approximately 70 to 80 percent. The ETC program has over 3000 riders enrolled with an average of 260 trips completed per day. Since its inception, over 43,000 trips have been provided; Staff continue to be monitor trip demand for SF Access.
- **On Time Performance**
SF Access on-time performance continued to perform about 98 percent in February and March. Taxi on-time performance has remained consistent.
- **COVID related service**
SF Paratransit continues to provide EMS service and the Pier 94 shuttle. SF Access and Paratransit taxi is providing financial assistance to those who want to use Paratransit to get to and from their vaccine appointments. On SF Access, four one-way trips are available at no cost to riders while \$60 of taxi value has been loaded onto the cards of all Paratransit taxi riders. For ETC riders, a one-time month allotment increase to \$60 is available with robocalls made to riders.
- **Group Van Service**
Staff is working to group van agencies to get a better sense of when they anticipate reopening. Staff is making them aware that due to the social distancing requirements that a limited number of participants could ride on a vehicle.

Barry Taranto would like the PCC to comment on Better Market Street project due to limited taxi access. In addition, he would like another way for drivers to get paid for taxi trips if the taxi driver lose the IVR form but can prove they provided the trip and would like to see the tip maximum on the Paratransit debit card to be increased.

Jessica Felix asked why taxis are required to install plastic barrier now. She commented that it makes it more difficult to communicate with riders. She also mentioned that the Flywheel app did not pay drivers for trips performed in February and March 2020. Annette Williams says that she will follow up with Taxi Services. Susan Kitazawa commented that while barriers are a hassle with passing card to driver, she does believe barrier cut down on airborne transmission. Roland Wong stated that some of the ramp taxis he rode recently didn't have the plastic barrier and that he was surprised to hear it was optional until recently.

Susan Kitazawa mentioned that Flywheel drivers have indicated to her that there have been more problems with the card reader. Kevin Lee mentioned similar issues with National/Veterans. Marc Soto stated that SF Paratransit monitors all card swipes and ask that she contact Paratransit if she encounters this issue.

Public Comments

Maddy Ruvolo was introduced as the new Sustainable Street Access Coordinator for Accessible Services.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

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