

Minutes
PCC Executive Committee Meeting
May 8, 2024

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Mara Math, PCC Chair; Zuhair Sinada, PC&O Chair; Cheryl Damico; Chuck Paschal; Craig Nelson; Joan Kwansa; Kevin Lee; Olivia Santiago; Sam Alicia Duke; Susan Kitazawa

PCC Members and Guests: Fred Lein; Tracey Gamedah; Barry Taranto; James Greenblatt; Amy Yang; Shao Hui Lu

PCC Executive Committee Member Excused: Jane Redmond; Marty Smith

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; Kevin McDonald; Justin Leong; Carol Osorio; Matthew Teixeira; Bob Saunders; Nichelle Williams;

SFMTA: Erin McAuliff; Jonathan Cheng; Phil Cranna; Adrienne Mau

Mara Math, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

Mara Math, PCC Chair, read the agenda.

Approve Minutes of March 13th meeting

The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved.

Comments from the Chair

Mara stated that she would like to PCC bylaws revised to address the quorum requirement. Cheryl Damico agreed with that action. Kevin Lee mentioned that Roland Wong may have been a part of it in the past.

General Public Comments

Barry Taranto would like to revisit the minimum trip requirement to maintain a ramp taxi medallions. Kevin McDonald stated that this will be discussed at the next PC&O Taxi subcommittee meeting in August.

Amy Yang stated that the Paratransit taxi debit card would like to use the Paratransit taxi debit card to go to the airport. Zuhair Sinada echoed these sentiments. Jonathan Cheng explained that the Paratransit taxi debit card can only be used for trips within San Francisco. Marc Soto added that SF Paratransit is an extension of Muni and since it does not serve the airport, SF Paratransit is not required to as well.

James Greenblatt asked to confirm that enrollment in SF Paratransit would make one eligible for Redi-Wheels, which is Paratransit service for San Mateo County. Susan Kitazawa confirmed that ADA eligibility is available throughout the country once they qualify in their home county.

Tracey Gamedah rode SF Access to the meeting today and there were three riders who had appointments within the hour; she is concerned that there was a mishap with scheduling and that these individuals will not be

Presentation on SFMTA Taxi Enforcement

Phil Cranna presented on the taxi enforcement for the city's taxi service.

SFMTA Taxi Services are responsible for the enforcement of existing taxi regulations and policies. Staff are responsible for issuing driver's A-cards as well as medallions and dispatch permits. In terms of complaints, Taxi Services receives them through various means, including in-person, email, and 311. There are stickers posted in every taxi with information about how to provide feedback in taxis. Once a complaint is received, they are reviewed to determine how best to respond. The complaint is assigned to a taxi investigator, who would then contact the taxi company to identify the driver based on the information provided. Taxi investigators would try their best to collect the video at the time of incident to detect if there is a violation; however, if the complaint is filed several days following the incident, the video may no longer be available. If violation is found, SFMTA practices progressive discipline, which initially may be requiring the driver to undergo refresher training, where tips are offered on customer service and taxi rules are reinforced. Repeated violations can issue monetary citations. If vehicle is reported to be in poor condition, taxi investigators can ask the driver to bring the vehicle in for inspection. If there are safety concerns, taxi investigators will work with SFO Ground Transportation Unit to do an inspection; all taxis need to be inspected every year while older vehicle must undergo more frequent inspections.

Susan Kitazawa asked what the training is for driver to interact with those who are low vision/blind. Phil Cranna stated that the Lighthouse for the Blind previously provided training as part of the onboarding and will follow up with Eric Richholt as to what the procedures are now. Marc Soto agreed with Phil and can assist to validate the training for drivers. Barry Taranto stated that the onboarding training needs specific details about how to deal with customer service for Paratransit.

Barry Taranto mentioned would like to limit the number of IVRs allowed for each company to minimize any potential fraud. Mara Math disagreed with this statement as she has often encountered issues with the ITE and would not like to limit the number of IVRs that can be submitted if they are legitimate. Justin Leong stated that both Carol Osorio and Michael Wu monitor all taxi transaction, including IVRs, to see if there are any patterns from specific drivers or companies. Marc Soto concurred and stated that the most stringent procedures are in place. Taxis must submit a separate invoice for IVRs and currently there are much less IVRs submitted than the two percent guideline.

Kevin Lee asked whether a rider could attend a hearing in order to discuss the issue with the taxi driver. Phil Cranna replied that, typically, a rider does not need to attend a hearing as the taxi investigator will generally contact the rider to get information and their perspective prior to meeting with the taxi driver.

Cheryl Damico stated that she has encouraged a ramp taxi with an unusual seating configuration.

Jonathan Cheng stated that he will follow with her following this meeting for more details. Zuhair Sinada asked if there are separate insurance requirements for completing general public and Paratransit taxi trips. Marc Soto confirmed that the insurance requirement for transporting Paratransit riders is higher than the general public.

PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Report

The report from the April 10th subcommittee meeting is as follows:

- **Election of Vice Chair**
Election was tabled for the next meeting.
- **SF Paratransit Status Update**
Justin Leong reported that group van on time performance 99.2% in January, 99.7% in February, and in March was 99.8%. Trip counts have been increasing, approximately 8,300 in January, 7,500 in February, 8,860 for March. There was one complaint in January and two complaints in March.

Nichelle Williams of Transdev Operations reported Angelica Mahmud was promoted to Call Center Supervisor and Shavon Smith to Group Van Coordinator. They received 25 new buses with 12 of those deployed on the road.

- **Agency Status Reports**
Self-Help reported they are operating normally. Self Help provided around 3,400 trips in March. They also are working on replacement of three vehicles. SteppingStone Mission Creek reported they were maintaining communication with the Group Van team on scheduling and otherwise operating as normal Institute on Aging (IOA) reported they have seen an uptick in ridership, however had issues with some participants being outliers and are working with Paratransit staff to reduce this number.

The next PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Meeting date is July 10, 2024

PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi Subcommittee Report

The report from the May 1st subcommittee meeting is as follows:

- **Broker Report**

OTP Q3 2024		Minutes of Wait Time		
Month	% On Time	% <=10	% 11 to 20	% >21
January	97.85	72.04	19.35	8.60
February	96.55	72.41	22.99	4.60
March	100	83.87	11.83	4.30

- April OTP through the 26th was 97.44%
- Taxi Driver Incentives paid: January \$17,470, February \$17,295, March \$16,905
- Ramp Vehicle Incentives paid: January \$8,600, February \$8,600, March \$10,600
- The SFPT trip count: January 24,093, February 24,061, March 25,804,

- Qualifying SFPT WC trips: January 767, February 737, March 822, April 839 thru 26th
- Complaints per 1,000 trips: January .042, February .24, March .27
- Compliments: Feb 1, March 3

Marc Soto reported on availability of the new Rider's Guide, an anticipated January 2025 SF Access fare increase to \$2.75, the ongoing phone system replacement project, and compliance with new credit card banking requirements. Marc recently participated in two emergency preparedness conferences. SF Paratransit is also prepared to participate in the testing for Clipper II. The 2024 Customer satisfaction survey will be happening soon.

- **Service Quality Issues**

- Riders: Kevin Lee reported an issue that e-hail app trips are not being picked up. Hansu Kim gave overview of changes they are implementing on Flywheel to prevent drivers from doing this, adding they have other well-known third parties who are interested in using his services.

Marc clarified that while good, taxi apps are not directly part of the SFPT program, although useable by our riders. Riders and drivers also discussed the issues of cancellations, drivers talking on the phone, and drivers needing more retraining following complaints. It was also suggested that color schemes need to enforce their own rules for drivers and requested action by SFMTA. Riders discussed the new white painted Flywheel vehicles. Jonathan asked that e-hail complaints be sent to 311. Riders and drivers discussed raising the number of paratransit wheelchair trips required for access to SFO. A motion was passed to add an item to the next agenda for driver service issues. Additional efforts would be made to increase participation by the color scheme owners.

- Drivers & Cab Companies – Hansu and Chris noted concerns about negative perceptions of the City and resulting loss of tourists and conventions impacting their business. Cheryl suggested drivers be required to attend in person taxi school to improve customer service.

The next PC&O Taxi/Ramp Taxi subcommittee meeting will be on August 7, 2024.

PC&O Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report – Membership Recruitment

Mara Math provided an update on this ad hoc subcommittee focused on increasing membership on the PCC Executive Committee.

The goal of this subcommittee is to increase participation in the PCC from paratransit riders. She mentioned that there is a focus on new initiatives including tabling at event, PSAs, and posting on bulletin boards at public location. Additionally, Mara wanted to gauge the willingness of the committee to have an opportunity for socializing with refreshments before the next meeting.

Susan Kitazawa agreed with the idea of having a social gathering before the next meeting because based on her experience, that will encourage individuals to come.

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 February, 12,800 trips for March and 12,700 trips in April. Paratransit taxis completed approximately 23,600 trips in February, 25,800 in March, and 23,300 in April. About 6,200 Group Van trips were February, 6,700 in March, and 7,300 in April.
- **On Time Performance**
The on-time performance for SF Access was 98 percent from February to April. The Group Van on-time performance was 99 to 100 percent for the same period while the taxi on-time performance was 96 to 100 percent.
- **Operational Information Updates**
SF Paratransit staff is working on clarifying a rider's disability type on the manifest to make it more understandable for drivers. This will ensure that proper support is given to the rider. Staff is also working with City College staff to ensure that drivers can find the correct accessible entrance at the John Adams campus location.
- **SF Access Van Fare increase**
The SFMTA Board of Directors approved the two year budget, which included a fare increase on Muni that is applicable for the SF Paratransit van services. Fares will increase from \$2.50 to \$2.75 on January 1, 2025 and \$2.85 in FY25/26. This fare increase will affect the van service, including SF Access, Shop-a-Round, and Van Gogh.
- **Paratransit Broker and Operations Phone System**
SF Paratransit is in the process of updating their existing phone system. There are three interested firms and staff is in the process of reviewing the proposals. Updates will continue to be provided to the committee but there will be no changes to the current phone number.
- **Clipper 2.0**
MTC and SFMTA is finalizing the agreement with Trapeze, which will allow Paratransit riders to pay their ride with a Clipper Card. SF Paratransit will be the pilot agency for this new payment method.
- **2025 Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey**
SF Paratransit will be conducting a customer satisfaction survey with its riders this year. The results of the survey will be reported out at a future PCC Executive Committee meeting.

- **SF Paratransit Staffing Update**

SF Paratransit is in the final hiring process for the vacant transit planner position. Angelica was hired as the call center supervisor and Shavon is the new group van coordinator. The SF Access General Manager position is now vacant with active recruitment occurring. Mary McLain will be rejoining us temporarily until the position is filled.

Mara Math stated that she had a rude reservationist who told her that she can not call again to inquire if there is new availability for her scheduled trip. Marc Soto clarified that there is no limitations to how many times a rider can call the reservations line. James Greenblatt inquired as to how he could provide feedback about a positive experience he had with taxis. Craig Nelson thanked him for his feedback.

Zuhair Sinada wanted to confirm that fare increase from \$2.50 to \$2.75 and the Clipper Card will eventually be usable for all Paratransit services. The fare increase was confirmed and explained that the new Clipper Card option would only be applicable to SF Paratransit van services.

Susan Kitazawa reiterated that because Muni does not serve the airport, SF Access does not serve the airport. Joan Kwansa asked if someone is recertified for ADA eligibility, do they need to resubmit their eligibility information for service for other Bay Area Paratransit programs. Marc Soto stated that it was not necessary as the Regional Eligibility Database system should be updated.

Tracey Gamedah wanted to confirm that April taxi statistics is preliminary. Justin Leong confirmed this statement. She also inquired as to the methodology of the Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey. Justin replied that phone interviews are conducted through a third party vendor.

Tracey Gamedah also asked how accessible entrance information is updated. Justin Leong stated that staff is reviewing the information for all common locations to make sure that the accessible entrance information is up-to-date. Mara Math stated that the accessible entrance information for parks need to be addressed. Joan Kwansa asked who she should contact if she has issues with specific pick up locations. Justin informed her that she should call the SF Paratransit office and staff can route her to the appropriate staff.

Public Comments

Barry Taranto praised the work of Marc Soto and Carol Osorio. James Greenblatt had an incident with a Flywheel taxi at Whole Foods on Ocean Avenue when the driver started meter before he entered the vehicle.

Announcement

The Jewel McGinnis luncheon was announced for June 12, 2024. Susan Kitazawa welcomed all new participants and encouraged them to join the PCC Executive Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

The next PCC meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 14th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.