

San Francisco Paratransit Coordinating Council

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Minutes

PCC Executive Committee Meeting

January 22, 2014

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

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Cheryl Damico, Vice Chair, Roland Wong, PC&O Chair; Adrienne Humphrey; Aisha Jackson; Claudia Grubler; Fred Lein; Jacy Cohen, Jane Redmond; John Lazar; Kaye Griffin; Linda Murley; Marty Smith; Olivia Santiago; Pam Martinez; Rodney Lee; Ruach Graffis; Sandra Fancher; Sue Cauthen; Ursula McGuire; Wanee Ratanasanguan

PCC Members and Guests: John Murphy; Kerry Brown; Christian Got; Jean Marie Greene; Sam Alicia Duke; Lurilla Harris; Catherine Crayne; Efren Alarcon; Andrew Sun

PCC Executive Committee Members Excused: Gilda Chico; Joseph Flanagan; Laurie Graham; Stu Smith, PCC Chair

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

SFMTA: Annette Williams; Kate Toran; Jonathan Cheng

Cheryl Damico, PCC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

Cheryl Damico, PCC Vice Chair, read the agenda. The agenda was motioned/seconded/passed.

Approve Minutes of September 18 meeting

Kate Toran mentioned that Jeanne Lynch wanted to note that she was the recipient of the Golden Circle Plus Five Award at the PCC Annual Meeting. The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved as amended.

Comments from the Chair

Cheryl Damico did not have any comments.

Election of Vacant Seats

Kate Toran announced that there were a number of unfilled seats on the PCC Executive Committee. Several individuals expressed interested in running for these vacant seats. Christian Got and Jean Marie Greene were elected to the Affiliated Elderly and Low Income Representative caucuses respectively. Seats remain in the Affiliated Elderly and Non Profit caucus.

Election of PCC Executive Committee Officers and PC&O Chair

Kate Toran also announced that all PCC Executive Committee Offices are up for election.

- For the office of PCC chair, Cheryl Damico and John Lazar were nominated. After a second round of balloting, Cheryl Damico was elected PCC chair.
- For the office of PCC vice chair, John Lazar was nominated. As there were no other nominations, John Lazar was elected as PCC Vice Chair by acclamation.
- For the office of PCC secretary, Jane Redmond was nominated. As there were no other nominations, Jane Redmond was elected as secretary of the PCC by acclamation.
- For the office of PC&O chair, Marty Smith and Adrienne Humphrey were nominated. After a round of balloting, Marty Smith was elected as PC&O Chair.

Ramp Taxi Medallion Reform Implementation

Kate Toran gave the committee an update as to the status of the ramp taxi medallion reforms. On January 8, the SFMTA Board of Directors approved a series of changes to the ramp taxi medallion program. Included among the changes are:

- Allowing direct lease of ramp taxi medallions by color schemes and individual drivers
* Previously assigned ramp taxi medallions in operation can remain at their respective companies until the end of the useful life of the vehicle.
- A lease fee of \$500 per month, reduced from \$2,000 a month, acknowledging the higher capital and operating costs of the ramp taxi vehicle, including fuel, and ongoing maintenance
- Allowing companies with at least six ramp medallion to operate up to half of those medallions in non-ramp vehicles from 4PM-4AM only if they fulfill 100 percent of all wheelchair trip orders during these hours.

Kate also encouraged wheelchair users to provide feedback, particularly those who ride ramp taxis from 4PM-4AM, to ensure that they are provided with adequate service. In addition to the changes to the ramp medallion program, there are changes to the ramp taxi incentive program. These changes are:

- A \$10 bonus for every paratransit wheelchair trip completed in a ramp taxi;
- A \$10 per trip credit towards the cost of a medallion down payment if drivers complete 10 or more paratransit wheelchair trips in a month (up to \$12,500); and,
- An Airport Short Pass for every two paratranist wheelchair pickups completed in a ramp taxi from the outlying neighborhoods in San Francisco including Treasure Island.

Kate stated that the \$10 per trip bonus and the \$10 per trip credit will be retroactive to December 1, 2013. In addition, Kate said that details are being finalized with officials at the airport regarding the airport short pass. Drivers will be allowed to accumulate up to five passes per month and all passes must be used the same month they are issued. The goal is to increase the number of wheelchair trips delivered on ramp taxis and improve service for wheelchair users in the outer lying areas of the City.

Marty Smith mentioned that Luxor does a lot of work with various hospitals through a voucher program and wondered if ramp taxi drivers who complete wheelchair trips under this scheme would be eligible to receive the new incentive bonuses. Kate replied that at the current time they would not be eligible. However, hopefully SF Paratransit, with the help of the new Mobility Management Specialist, could work with these hospitals and possibly other organizations to work out a way to have the current paratransit debit card system or other comparable solution replace the current voucher programs so that it may be possible for those trips to be validated so they could count towards this incentive award program. John Lazar asked whether a taxi company providing backup wheelchair service for MV Transportation could be eligible for this incentive. Kate answered that this question has not been looked into. Marc added that there may be an opportunity for MV Transportation to work with various companies to address this issue. John is looking forward to these incentives as it would allow ramp taxi drivers to earn more money and thereby make the ramp taxi driver position more attractive and more feasible.

Marc Soto commented that the initial plans for the new incentive program was to only have a \$5 per trip bonus but that this amount increased to \$10 per trip to take acknowledge the non paratransit wheelchair trips many ramp taxi drivers complete. Jane Redmond asked what an airport short pass is. Kate said that the airport short pass allows the drivers to jump to the head of the queue at the airport. She added that in her conversations with officials in Chicago and New York City, which has a similar program in their cities, have said these short passes have been beneficial to their ramp taxi programs as it has shortened the wait time at the airport and has allowed these ramp taxis to return to the city sooner and be readily available for wheelchair users. Lurilla Harris asked whether if there is a time limit for ramp taxi drivers to earn the \$12,500 credit toward the down payment of a medallion. Kate replied that there is no time limit for ramp taxi drivers to earn that maximum credit amount as long as they remain an active taxi driver. Rodney Lee asked whether a driver who bought a medallion could be eligible for the credit. Kate said that they would not be. Kaye Griffin asked how wheelchair users at the airport are able to get a ramp taxi. John replied that the starter at the taxi line would note the wheelchair user and would radio for a ramp taxi specifically for that individual.

Marc concluded by stating that the SF Paratransit is drafting a contract amendment that would allow them to pay the new driver incentives to the ramp taxi color schemes. In addition, although SF Paratransit would not be issuing the airport short pass, but would be responsible for collecting the data for SFMTA.

PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Meeting

Jacy Cohen read the following report:

- **Service Quality Discussion**
 - ARC BAY/Howard – They have received recent complaints regarding their driver for ARC Bay. They are working closely with MV and the Broker's office to try to resolve these issues.
 - Baymed – Baymed said they are constantly trying to stay in full communication with all of the centers they operate, in addition to the broker's office. Overall, they said they have not heard too many concerns regarding the provision of their services. SF Paratransit is working with Baymed to address any excessive ride times for patrons.

- **SF Paratransit Broker's Report**

- Self Help for the Elderly is in the process of acquiring two new 5310 buses. This will allow them to be able to operate service for their Jackie Chan Center directly. This process is currently being held up by Caltrans, however, the broker's office is working very hard with Self-Help to try to get this process through as quickly as possible in order to alleviate some of the pressure MV experiences with SF Access service.
- Marc announced that the SF Paratransit will receive a new phone system in the next few weeks to replace their current 14 year old system.
- Marc said that we are working with MV to try to increase driver morale in a real and positive way. Marc reminded the group that the driver's job is still the hardest job in paratransit.

The next Group Van PC&O meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2014, at the SF Paratransit Broker's 1st floor conference room from 10:30-12:30pm.

Paratransit Broker Report

John Sanderson and Marc Soto reported as follows:

- **SF Access Service Quality Report:**

On time performance for December is 78.3% and current January's on time performance is 85.1%.

- **SF Access Reminder Line Pilot and Roll Out:**

The new name for the SF Access Trip Reminder Line is called the "TripInfo" line. A brochure will be distributed after an unrelated technical issue is resolved. This issue has the potential to affect the call out system's ability to make additional phone calls to clients. The decision to delay the brochure was made to ensure that once it is distributed, the "TripInfo" system could handle a higher volume of phone calls anticipated by the mailing of the brochure. However, current riders can use the "TripInfo" system and feedback and comments are greatly welcomed.

- **New Phone System:**

A new phone system is in the process of being procured for the Broker's office. It will help provide a smoother call flow and better customer service to callers. The Broker expects to have the new system fully deployed by March 2014

- **SF Paratransit Audits**

SF Paratransit and SFMTA Accessible Services are in the midst of an audit from the Controller's office. There have been many meetings with staff from the Controller's office and documents from the SF Paratransit office are being produced for them to review. In addition, a recent triennial review of the SF Paratransit program was concluded in December with positive feedback from the Federal Transit Administration reviewers.

- **CalAct Grant**

This grant program has finally started up again following an audit on the program's procedures. There are plans to move forward with the purchase of five replacement ramp equipped vans for SF Access to help transport people to areas where the streets are too narrow for our vans. In addition, there are plans on getting 35 replacement vehicles for the 700-series buses.

- **Group Van Service**

Self-Help for the Elderly has acquired two new 5310-funded vehicles as well as two additional vehicles from their San Jose operation. These will be used to operate some existing SF Group Van service (SFMTA) and will free up 7 SFMTA-owned buses to be reintroduced on the SF Access service immediately. This will help alleviate some peak time demand. Work also is continuing to help reorganize the group van routing to make it more efficient and reduce ride times for specific centers.

John Murphy mentioned that on January 16, MV Transportation had an unusually high shortage of drivers that affected service on that day. Kerry Brown commented that it is currently the flu season and that the high number of drivers who called in sick was purely coincidental. Efrén Alarcon reiterated this statement. Jane Redmond thanked and commended the high quality of drivers working at MV Transportation.

Olivia Santiago asked who initiates the phone call that will be sent to riders regarding their arrival of the vehicle. John Sanderson replied that a computer (IVR known as the "TripInfo" system) makes the phone call 10 minutes before the promised pick up time and provides a status. Cheryl Damico recommended that riders also provide their cell phone number as their call number because otherwise, they might not get a phone call if they are not at home to receive it. John added that due to the structure of the phone system, the computer can only make a phone call to one of the rider's phone numbers. Olivia also questioned the accuracy of the phone calls as there were instances in which riders received a phone call stating that the vehicle would be late but in reality arrived on time. MV driver Aisha Jackson mentioned that what has been impacting the accuracy of the phone calls has been the late add-ons to the route that may force vehicles to arrive outside the pick-up window. John Sanderson also mentioned that another reason can be that the ride is rerouted after the phone call has been made. Rodney Lee said he experienced that very situation this morning. Kaye Griffin asked what the "TripInfo" line was. John answered that this was the new SF Access Reminder Line rebranded to the "TripInfo" line. John reiterated that this phone system is relatively new and that dispatchers are still learning how to effectively use the system.

Wanee Ratanasanguan said she recently had a bad experience with a driver.

Public Comments

Lurilla Harris stated that MV dispatchers needed to better communicate to drivers that riders have an appointment time and stress that it is important to be picked up on time. She also mentioned that she had to wait for over an hour for a ramp taxi at Safeway.

Ruach Graffis would like to send a letter to Assemblyman Tom Ammiano and Senator Mark Leno, requesting that they sponsor legislation to require rideshare services to provide driver and safety training. This comes in response to recent pedestrian fatalities by drivers who were

operating for these rideshare programs. Ruach has volunteered to draft a letter to send these legislators. Andrew Sun would like this committee to insert itself into the debate regarding the existing transportation system in San Francisco as they are the most dependent on public transportation and are greatly affected by these changes. He stated that Luxor Cab will endorse the Vision Zero plan. Roland Wong said he would like to see these rideshare services operate with the same requirements as taxi companies under regulations mandated by the SFMTA. Marty Smith mentioned that another concern was that the \$1 million dollar insurance policy that these rideshare services claim to have does not kick in immediately. Kate Toran proposed that Ruach draft a letter and get approval from the PCC officers. This action was approved.

Jane Redmond asked how MV Transportation service is now that Troy Barnes has left the company. John Murphy stated that there are some challenges, including on time performance. He hopes that Catherine Crayne who in the interim has replaced Troy can contribute to improvement in service to riders

Announcements

Kate Toran updated the PCC stating that the City Attorney is reviewing the Paratransit Rules of Operation which were reviewed and updated by the working group in 2013, and once the review is completed, she would like to work with Marty Smith and convene another subcommittee meeting. She also mentioned that as several members are currently undergoing health issues, she would like members to keep them in mind.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

The next PCC Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1 South Van Ness, 7th Floor, Union Square Conference Room