

Minutes
PCC Executive Committee Meeting
March 19, 2025

PCC Executive Committee Members Present: Marty Smith, PCC Chair; Kevin Lee, PCC Secretary; Zuhair Sinada, PC&O Chair; Cheryl Damico; Chuck Paschal; Mara Math; Olivia Santiago; Sam Alicia Duke; Susan Kitazawa; Yevette McNeese

PCC Members and Guests: Tracey Gamedah; Shelia; Jon Gaffney; Jeff Shuman; Sri Vijayaraghav; Wing Chun; Irene Chang; Jessica Park; Jadelynn Nguyen; Erlinda Ramos; Leah Hopson; Kimberlee Mendola; Yoseph Asnake; Barry Taranto; Fanny Lapitan

PCC Executive Committee Member Excused: Roland Wong; Jane Redmond

SF Paratransit Staff: Marc Soto; Kevin McDonald; Justin Leong; Carol Osorio; Randy Hac; Wayland Li, Nichelle Williams, Angelica Mahmud; Michael Wu; Cheryl Hac

SFMTA: Jonathan Cheng; Javaun Garcia; Erin McAuliff; Kate Toran; Mona Chiu

Marty Smith, PCC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Read and Approve Agenda

Marty Smith read the agenda. The agenda were motioned/seconded/approved.

There was a request to add an agenda item for the May 14th meeting to talk about ad hoc subcommittee on membership recruitment. The committee agreed that a written summary of the meeting should be made available after the meeting given the agenda schedule.

Approve Minutes of January 15th meeting

The minutes were motioned/seconded/approved.

Comments from the Chair

Marty Smith ceded his time to Kim Walton to discuss her project, which focuses on community preservation project in the OMI area. Kim was recruiting long term residents in OMI area to learn about their history of using public transportation and other modes in getting around their neighborhood as well as the greater San Francisco Bay Area. All interviews will take place at the public library in the neighborhood. Kim mentioned that outreach was conducted to participants at I.T. Bookman Community Center with future efforts to Catholic Charities. Flyers were made available to PCC members to share with perspective individuals.

Mara Math asked if the Sunnyside area is included in this project and recommended posting the flyer on NextDoor. Kim Walton stated that she believes that the Sunnyside area is not included at this time not but will double check. Susan Kitazawa inquired whether participants are provided compensation for their time. Kim responded that Muni swag will be offered to participants for their time. Carol Osorio mentioned that she may have a prospective candidate but wanted information regarding the location of the interview sites.

Zuhair Sinada wanted further details about the project and its purpose. Kim Walton stated that SFMTA is looking to learn about the transportation/movement history of those who have lived in the community for a long period. The goal would be to develop a documentary and educate planners about the history of the area before engaging in the community. Kate Toran was excited about this project as it will provide context for planners who are not familiar with the area.

Tower Transit Presentation

Jadelynn Nguyen and Jessica Park presented on Tower Transit, an Access Provider that was successful in the inaugural Access for All program in San Francisco.

Tower Transit is an experienced service provider in San Francisco, having served as the WAV contractor for other on-demand services. The team has been working on this project for the past six months. The goal of this service is to empower people with wheelchairs to be able to move freely throughout the city. The service that is available from 6AM – 10PM. While the service is primarily focused on the western half of San Francisco, individuals can take trips to selected areas throughout the city. There is no cost to individuals who request trips that start and end in the western half of the city while a \$5 flat fare is charged for all other trips. Riders can book a trip via the Tower Transit app, website at towertransit.rideco.com, or by phone. The local team is conducting outreach via social media, vehicle branding, and efforts to community-based organizations.

Chuck Paschal wanted clarity that this is same day service. Jessica Park confirmed that trips are provided on a same day basis but that reservations can be made up to seven days in advance. Mara Math requested an explanation as to the advantage of using this service as opposed to the SF Access van service. Jadelynn Nguyen stated that this is same day, on demand service, which differs from the prescheduled van service. Chuck asked if this service is only for wheelchair users. Jadelynn answered that while they do prioritize requests from wheelchair users, this service is open to anyone with limited mobility. Zuhair Sinada inquired as to the acceptable forms of payment. Jadelynn stated that credit cards are accepted via app. Leah asked if caregivers could ride for free. Jadelynn confirmed that they could but that it should be mentioned at the time of booking. Kevin Lee asked about the service hours. Jessica replied that it is 6AM – 10PM, seven days a week. Zuhair questioned if the service is available to the general public. Jadelynn stated that for non-wheelchair users, it is intended for only those with mobility needs. Marty Smith inquired about the vehicles used for this service. Jadelynn answered that gas powered minivans are used for this service.

Marc Soto inquired if the Tower Transit team has engaged with SF Paratransit Mobility Management Center in their outreach efforts. Jadelynn Nguyen has stated they have not but will do so. Leah Hopson requested a presentation at El Bethel Terrace in the Fillmore area. Kevin Lee stated that there are lots of senior/disabled housing in the other areas that are not currently served by this service. Javaun Garcia said that local stakeholders identified a priority to service areas where there are fewer on-demand vehicles, including the western side of the city. Susan Kitawaza understood that the initial focus is on the western half of the city as it is difficult to get ramp taxis on a same day basis. Javaun Garcia acknowledged that this is the first year of Access for All program and the service area will evolve based on feedback from users.

Taxi Trade Dress Discussion

Danny Yeung led the discussion on changes to the trade dress of taxis in San Francisco. He acknowledged that the use of trade dress on taxis allowed riders to distinguish between various taxi companies. Back then, taxi companies painted their entire vehicles in distinct colors, however, recently, taxi companies have been requesting to allow them to have cars with a white body with the taxi logos on them in order to reduce costs. SFMTA has allowed these changes to occur but are cognizant that it may be more difficult for riders to distinguish between companies when they are waiting for their vehicle. They are seeking feedback from the committee on their opinions of these changes and any suggested best practices to assist riders.

Zuhair Sinada asked why SFMTA allowed the taxi companies to use a white colored vehicle scheme as it might lead to confusion if a taxi company has two different color schemes for their vehicles. Danny Yeung stated that eventually all approved taxi companies will transition all their vehicles to a uniform white color scheme and we are currently in a transitional period with two color schemes. Kate Toran added that SFMTA staff are working with the taxi industry to allow vehicles to be put into service as soon as possible. Mara Math mentioned that it may be confusing for riders if every taxi vehicle is primarily white and only small lettering distinguishing them apart; she recommended requiring large logos on their side doors. Susan Kitazawa commented that if taxis are going to be white, having large font and logos would be helpful in distinguishing and would encourage the use of high contrast colors, such black or blue as opposed to orange or yellow lettering. She included that a stripe on the vehicle might help distinguish it. Danny stated that not all taxi companies are proposing to change to a primarily white vehicle body. He added that two companies have been approved and another two seeking approval out of over 20 taxi companies. Tracey Gamedah expressed excitement about the uniformity of the taxi company colors. Mara commented that there are studies that have shown that white colored vehicles are involved in more accidents than other colored cars.

Fanny Lapitan said that there have been instances in which taxi drivers refused to pick up riders. Danny Yeung encouraged her to file a complaint if these incidents occur. Marty Smith would like the backseat ITE to be required for all taxis.

Kate Toran then spoke about upcoming changes to the 3rd Party Pilot program. There are plans to allow participating TNCs to allow wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) trips to be dispatched to ramp taxis. Such a change would require permission from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). SFMTA sees this as an opportunity to provide more service to ramp taxis and will closely monitor service levels to ensure that there are no negative impacts on wheelchair users. Kate acknowledged that even with approval from the CPUC, approval would be required by the SFMTA Board. Kate also mentioned that staff is planning to make the taxi pilot permanent.

Marty Smith asked if there would be a different price structure for the ramp taxi driver. Kate Toran acknowledged that operating and maintaining a ramp taxi vehicle is more expensive than a sedan or SUV and has encouraged TNCs to provide a similar incentive. She highlighted that all drivers would know what their share of the earnings for the trip before accepting it. Fanny Lapitan questioned if there would be a different app for WAV requested trips. Kate answered

that riders would request a WAV trip via a TNC app, and it would be dispatched to a ramp taxi. Barry Tranto stated that 90% of trips offered through the Flywheel app are priced too low and that incentives may not be able to make up the price difference. He also requested that Tower Transit clarify how to order a trip for their service. Kate Toran responded that it is important that TNCs make the price available prior to driver acceptance. Marty Smith acknowledged that he previously opposed the 3rd Party Pilot program but is fine with it as he believes it is important for drivers to maintain the right to choose to participate.

PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Report

The report is as follows:

- **Service Quality Update**

Yevette McNeese of Transdev's Operating Division reported recruiting efforts have been successful with 28 drivers currently in training with a plan to graduate six (6) per week. The goal is to reach 125 drivers. Their next shift bid begins January 10th.

Justin Leong of the Brokers Office reported on service statistics:

- Group Van trip counts were 9,293 in October, 7,447 in November, and 8,892 in December.
- Group Van On-Time Performance held steady in October at 99.3% and an increase to 99.6% in November and a slight decrease to 98.7% in December.
- Complaints received were zero (0) in October, two (2) in November, and one (1) in December.

Justin Leong and Marc Soto reported on Broker initiatives:

- They plan to host a Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), "PASS" training course around August 2025.
- The new phone system will be launched in January at the Broker's Office with Operations to follow after.
- SFMTA will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Paratransit brokerage and operations in 2025, as the current agreement with Transdev ends in June 2026.

- **Agency Quality Update**

- Tom Wong of Self-Help for Elderly reported that ridership counts were 2,998 in November, and 3,472 in December. They await the arrival of their replacement 5310-funded vehicle from Caltrans.
- Patty Clement of Catholic Charities reported overall things were running smoothly. She expressed concern about the length of time it took to add some riders.
- Mark Williams of The Arc had no updates but appreciated working with everyone.
- Rebecca Smith-Finlay of Institute of Aging reported overall things were running well but asked about a recent trip and the drop off times changing due to route changes.

The next PC&O Group Van Subcommittee Meeting is April 9, 2025.

Marc Soto thanked the previous slate of PCC officers and welcomed the new officers to their roles. He said that he will follow up on the outstanding items from Catholic Charities and his team is planning a meet and greet with the Group Van agencies for the spring.

PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Report

The report is as follows:

- **Nomination & Election of Vice Chair**

Nichelle Williams was elected PC&O SF Access Vice Chair for 2025.

- **Service Provider & Broker Reports**

Yvette McNeese of Transdev's Operating Division reported on recruiting and hiring efforts with the goal of 120 active drivers. Currently they have 97 active and 5 in training. They are seeking to hire a "B Mechanic."

Justin Leong of the Brokers Office reported service statistics:

- SF Access trip counts were 11,911 in December, 12,953 in January, and 2,475 in February.
- SF Access On-Time Performance held steady in December at 94.8% and an increase to 95.4% in January and a slight decrease to 94.3% in February.
- Complaints received per 1,000 trips were 1.09 in December, 0.91 in January, and 0.68 in February.

Justin Leong and Marc Soto reported on Broker initiatives:

- They plan to host a Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), "PASS" training course in Fall 2025.
- The new phone system will be launched soon at the Broker's Office with Operations to follow after.
- Kevin McDonald has left Transdev for another opportunity. Matthew Teixeira is filling in as Interim Manager of Administration, Justin Leong is filling in Interim Assistant General Manager. Karen Nguyen's title was updated to Manager of Fare Revenue.

- **Rider Service Feedback**

Riders discussed common locations, challenges serving specific locations, and driver communication with non-English speaking riders at locations where there may be multiple vehicles and multiple riders trying to find each other.

The next PC&O SF Access Subcommittee Meeting is June 4th, 2025.

Paratransit Broker Report

Justin Leong, Marc Soto, and Yvette McNeese reported as follows:

- **Service Level Statistics**

SF Access operated about 11,900 trips in December, 12,900 in January, and 11,700 in February 2025. Paratransit taxis completed approximately 26,500 trips in December,

26,500 in January, and 24,300 in February 2025. Group Van service completed 8,900 in December, 9,000 in January, and 8,300 in February 2025.

- **On Time Performance**

The on-time performance for SF Access was 95 percent in December and January and 94 percent in February 2025. The Group Van on-time performance during the same period was 99 percent in December, 97 percent in January, and 96 percent in February 2025 while the taxi on-time performance was 99 percent from December to February 2025.

- **Paratransit Van Fare Increase**

The fares for all SF Paratransit van services will increase from \$2.75 to \$2.85 on July 1, 2025. SF Paratransit will be communicating this fare change through various channels to all Paratransit riders, including mailings, updates to the Muzak on-hold messages, new information on the SFMTA website, and verbal reminders during the SF Access reservation process. The value of the current \$2.75 van tickets will still be valid after July 1, 2025, but riders will need to pay 10 cents in order to use them.

- **SF Paratransit Riders' Guide**

Staff will be making updates to the SF Paratransit Riders' Guide to account for the new Paratransit van fares as well as updates to some policies. Updates should be finalized by summer 2025.

- **Paratransit Ramp Taxi Driver Portal**

Staff is continuing to work with CabConnect on a portal that would allow ramp taxi drivers to check their trip transactions and submit IVRs.

- **Mobility Management**

The Mobility Management team has conducted 20 community outreaches since January 2025, which is an increase compared to five at the same time last year. 13 outreaches were done in collaboration with Office on Economic and Workforce Development in response to the closure of the Safeway on Webster. The goal is to engage the community to learn about other transportation services available, like Shop-a-Round and ETC.

The Mobility Management team will also be focused on travel training. They are planning to host in-house trainings as well as group presentations that focus on how to ride Muni, including how to pay and qualify for discounted fare programs as well as best practices.

- **CTAA Train the Trainer**

SF Paratransit is planning on hosting a training in early fall 2025 to certify individuals to become trainers. This would allow them to educate and certify taxi drivers to earn a ramp taxi training certificate, which allows them to operate a ramp taxi. Staff will be reaching out to taxi companies to ensure participation among staff.

- **SF Paratransit Phone System**

SF Paratransit has acquired the necessary licenses from Genesys and will be working internally to identify the necessary call flows. Transdev corporate staff will be responsible for the installation of the new phone system as well as training for local staff. One feature of this new phone system is that it will all be managed remotely via cloud technology. Once the installation and training are completed, it will be deployed in the Broker's office and upon successful implementation, work will begin to install and train staff at the operations call center. Hardware is being ordered to allow the option for staff to have a physical phone.

- **2025 Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Staff is in the process of finalizing the questions for the upcoming survey.

- **Changes to SF Paratransit Taxi Debit Card**

Staff is evaluating alternatives to collect and store photos for the Paratransit taxi debit card. Staff will be working with SFMTA Taxi Services to address any potential changes to the in-taxi equipment (ITE) to ensure that an updated Paratransit debit card will be processed for payment. Technology of the debit card and ITE will need to evolve as mag swipe cards are expected to be phased out by 2029. Two options for future debit cards include a QR code debit card and chip enabled debit card.

- **Vehicle Procurement**

New Paratransit vehicles will be introduced into service. 35 vehicles will be replaced and split into two batches. The first order will consist of 19 vehicles, including one electric powered bus.

- **SF Paratransit Staffing Update**

SF Paratransit is actively recruiting for operators, window dispatchers, and mechanics. The Operations team actively recruiting and training new driver trainees at all times.

The Paratransit Broker office recently reorganized the structure of the Broker's office following the departure of Kevin McDonald. There will be a new Assistant General Manager and Manager of Administration positions will be posed.

Kevin Lee requested an update on Clipper Card for use on the SF Access van. Marc Soto replied that the pilot is scheduled to start in June but there still is a lot to work to be completed on the maintenance agreement and development of procedures. Paratransit will also need to collect the rider's Clipper Card number in order to participate. Tracey Gamedah asked if SFMTA be enforcing Real ID requirements if identification is requested. Marc Soto confirmed that they will not. Zuhair Sinada expressed his appreciation to Marc Soto and his team for their work. Mara Math acknowledged Carol Osorio for her work.

Public Comments

Susan Kitazawa mentioned that postcards with a list of future PCC meetings are available and encouraged PCC members to take some to promote the meetings to fellow riders and Paratransit

drivers. She also wished Yevette McNeese well upon her imminent departure and wished her well. Barry Taranto commented that Flywheel is allowing paratransit riders to participate in the upfront fare pilot. Mara Math would like the public comments to be included in the beginning of the agenda. Tracey Gamedah asked if SF Paratransit has a Youtube channel. Yoseph Asnake asked if ramp taxis trips performed in another vehicle will be credited to driver.

Announcements

Jonathan Cheng provided a brief update on the upcoming Paratransit RPF.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.

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