What is Paratransit?

- Door-to-door taxi and van services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Minimum requirements include:
  - Eligibility - narrowly defined
  - Service Area - within ¾ mile fixed route
  - Service hours - mirrors fixed route
  - Reservations - 1 to 7 days in advance (negotiated within one hour before or after the requested time)
  - Maximum fares - twice the fixed route adult fare
History of the SF Paratransit Program

• 1978: Van services initiated with input and review by Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC)
• 1982: Taxis introduced to serve ambulatory customers
• 1983: Contracted with a Paratransit Broker to manage service all modes
• 1991: Passage of ADA
• 1994: Introduction of Accessible Taxis
• 1998: SF Access expanded to all users
• 2000: Contracted with Transdev (formerly Veolia)
• 2010: Implemented Shop-a-Round
• 2011: Full implementation of taxi debit card
• 2014: Implemented Van Gogh
SF Paratransit Program Overview

- 13,700 eligible riders completed 780,000 trips in FY15

FY15 Budget: $22.6 M

- Prop K ($9.6M)
- Muni ($5.67M)
- BART ($1.5M)
- STA ($892K)
- Federal 5307 ($3.89M)
- DAAS ($723K)
- Grants ($250K)

Average cost per trip: $29.04
Paratransit Coordinating Council

• **Community Advisory Committee**
  Includes community-based organizations, paratransit users, senior and disabled advocates, service providers, and government agencies

• **Active participation**
  Meets on a bimonthly basis, quarterly subcommittee groups for each service mode

• **Involved in development of programs and policies**
  Provides service feedback and troubleshooting, serves on ADA eligibility appeals panel

• **Important part of SF Paratransit Success**
Role of the Paratransit Broker

- Service Quality Monitoring
- ADA Eligibility Certification
- Fare Media Sales
- Subcontracting of Transportation Services
- Customer Interface
SF Access

• Traditional ADA service -- prescheduled, door-to-door shared van
• Intercounty agreements with Whistlestop (Marin County) and East Bay Paratransit (Alameda County)
• Fleet of 112 cutaway vans and five minivans

- Provides stair assist for wheelchair users
- Completed 238,000 trips, including 71,000 wheelchair trips, in FY15
Group Van

• Prescheduled, groups of individuals going to a single location
• Services such as Adult Day Health Centers (ADHC), social service agencies, group work sites and nutrition programs
• Multiple service providers
  – Baymed, Transdev, Self Help for the Elderly, Kimochi, Centro Latino
• Completed 245,000 trips in FY15
Taxi Services

- Same day, general public taxis, includes 100 ramped taxis
- All taxis in San Francisco required to participate

- All taxi riders receive a paratransit taxi debit card to track trips, pay fares
- 260,000 trips completed, including 8,100 trips for wheelchair users, in FY15
Paratransit Taxi Debit Card

- Each rider monthly allotment based on trip needs
- Only for trips within San Francisco
- For every $5.50, eligible riders get $30 worth taxi value
- Allows for detailed trip monitoring
Shop-a-Round and Van Gogh

- Door to door services available to all seniors and persons with disabilities
- Funded by New Freedom and Lifeline grants
- Provides taxi and van service to grocery stores
- Provided 6,500 trips to 1,100 registered riders
- Provides group van transportation to groups of seniors and persons with disabilities to cultural and social events
Paratransit Plus

• Limited value taxi debit card ($60 per month) safety net, for non ADA eligible persons who need extra assistance
  – About 175 individuals in program
  – Generally older and more frail (80+)
  – Selected by analyst based on age and mobility function
Helping Wheels Funds

• Provides fare assistance to riders with special or urgent needs
  – low income
  – unexpected need (medical or loss of possessions/residence)

• Funded through private contributions

• Fare assistance to 70 individuals – approx. 45 trips per person
Customer Satisfaction Survey

- Conducted by Corey, Galanis, and Canapary
- Interview 400-500 riders by telephone, multi-language capability
- Statistically significant sample

Overall Customer Satisfaction Rating of SF Paratransit Program

Year: 2010, 78%
Year: 2012, 82%
Year: 2013, 83%
Year: 2015, 86%
Challenge: Meeting the Transportation Needs of Adult Day Health Centers

• More fragile riders (Needs exceed minimum requirements of ADA)
• Fewer ADHCs citywide
  – Clients who attended ADHCs that closed were relocated to centers further from their residences
  – Strict hours of operation reduces ability to stagger pickup/drop offs
• Road congestion makes group van trips longer
  Increased ride times
Current Initiatives

• Peer Escort Program
  – Trained escorts for riders with cognitive disabilities

• Efforts to reduce ride times
  – Increased per-trip reimbursement, reducing number of people per van
  – SFMTA owned vehicles subleased to provider
    • Encouraged ADHCs to apply for 5310-funded vehicles
  – Attempted to merge agencies’ riders for better rider distribution – did not improve service
Challenge: Permanent Paratransit Facility & Fleet Expansion

• SF Access operations facility currently located in Brisbane
  – Additional costs (fuel, wages) associated with travel to and from facility (deadhead)

• Real estate competition and high costs = difficult to find long term space for operations and maintenance facility

• Increased vehicle demands, often need to be operated beyond 5 year “useful life”
Current Initiatives

• Working with SFMTA Real Estate to identify an appropriate operations and maintenance facility

• Rehabilitation of 12 vehicles
  – Replacing wheelchair lifts, floor, shocks, engine transmissions
  – Extends use for an additional 2-3 years

• One ADHC center successfully applied for 10 replacement vehicles
Challenge: TNCs on Taxi Industry

• Taxis perform 1/3 of all paratransit trips
  – Preferred by some riders due to same day service and trip flexibility
  – Cost-effective service delivery

• Proliferation of Transportation Network Companies (TNC) affecting industry
  – Drawing drivers away harder to recruit
  – Particularly ramped taxis due to additional fuel and maintenance costs, time securing riders
Current Initiatives

• Ramped Taxi Incentives
  – $10 per wheelchair trip
  – Reduced down payment future sedan medallion (up to $12,500)
  – Monthly Airport Short Pass

• Individual ramped taxi medallion leases
  – Recruiting experienced ramp taxi drivers
  – Interviews with the PCC

• E-Hail
  – integrating Paratransit debit card into existing taxi hailing mobile app
  – Users can also filter for only ramped taxis
Upcoming Endeavors

• Issue RFP, select vendor and finalize new Broker contract
• Identify a new Operations and Maintenance Facility
• Expand SF Access fleet to meet service demands
• Increase use of mobility management tools
• Collaborate with community organizations to better meet service needs with particular attention to ADHC group van