



**SFMTA**  
Municipal  
Transportation  
Agency

# Overview of SF Paratransit Program

SFMTA Board of Directors  
November 3, 2015

# What is Paratransit?

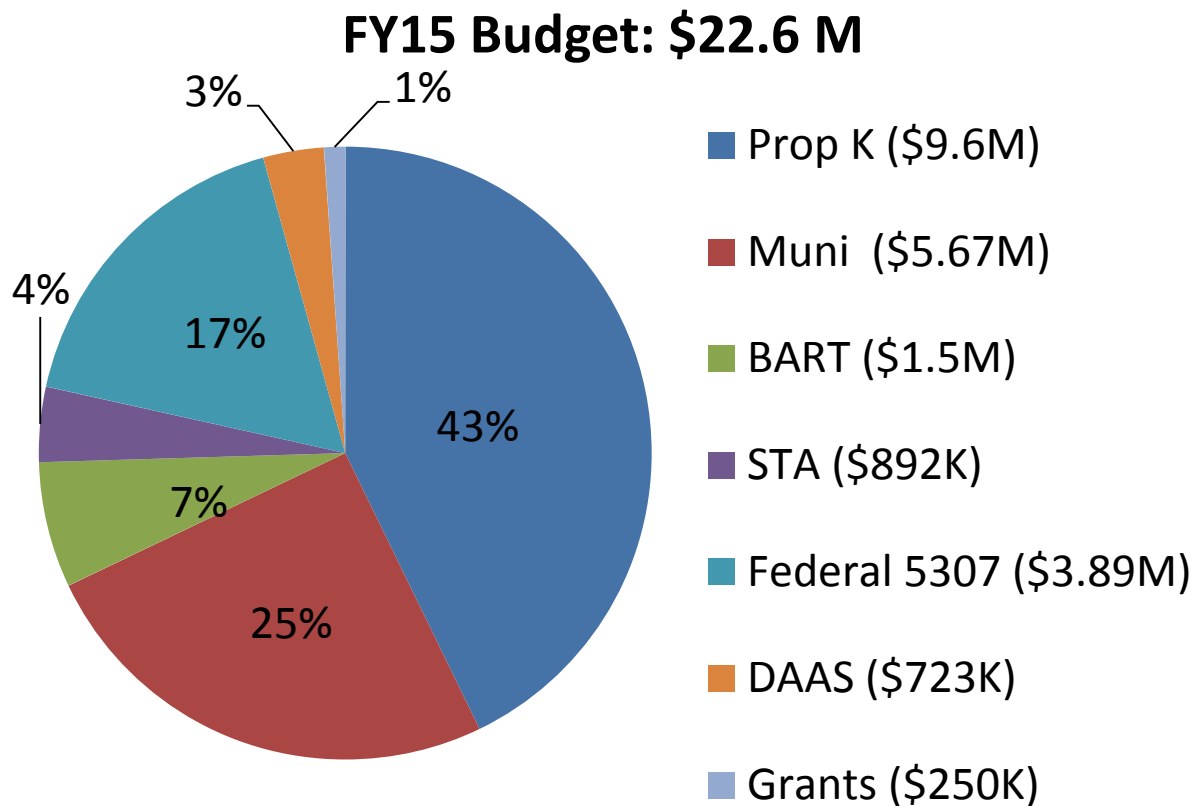
- Door-to-door taxi and van services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Minimum requirements include:
  - Eligibility - narrowly defined
  - Service Area - within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile fixed route
  - Service hours - mirrors fixed route
  - Reservations - 1 to 7 days in advance (negotiated 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

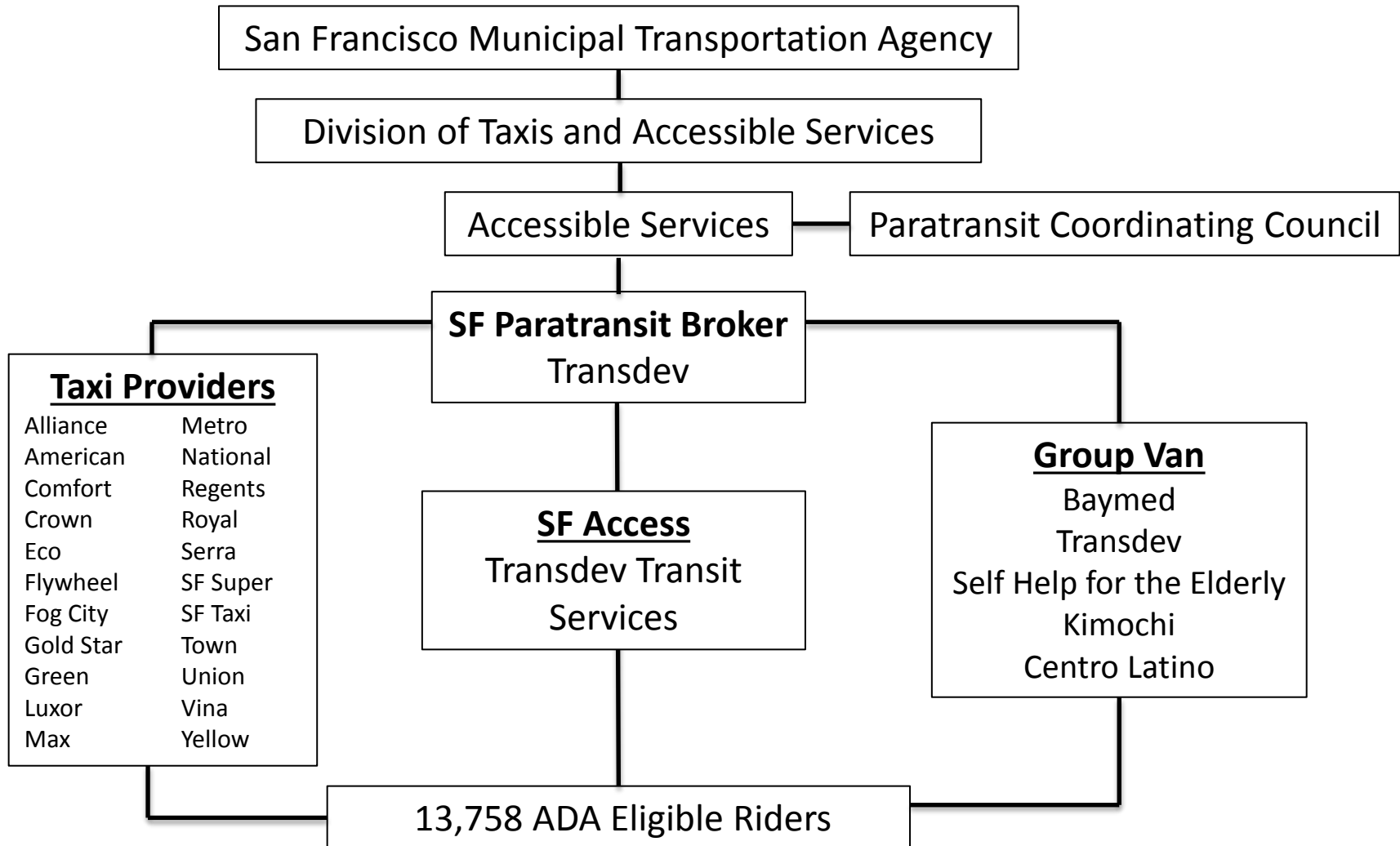
# SF Paratransit Program Overview

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



Average cost per trip: \$29.04

# Structure of SF Paratransit Program



# 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

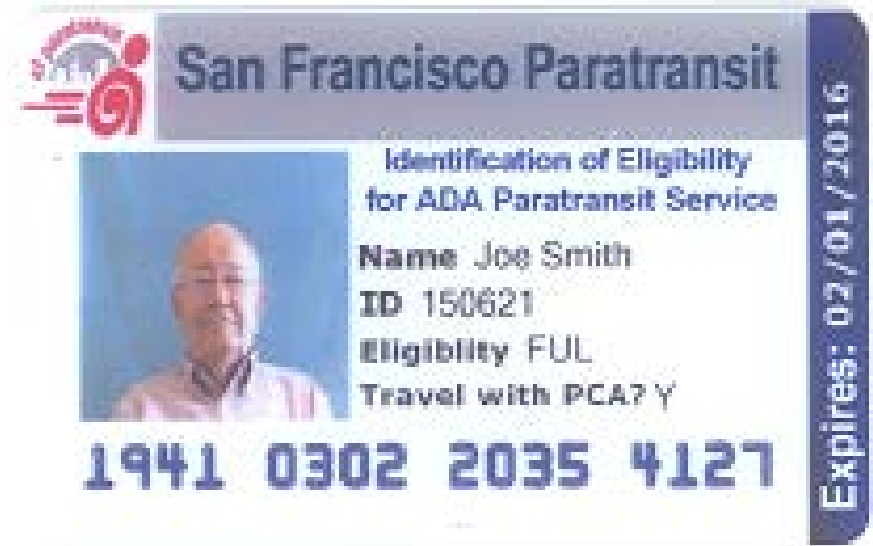


- Same day, general public taxis, includes 100 ramped taxis
- All taxis in San Francisco required to participate

- 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

shop@round

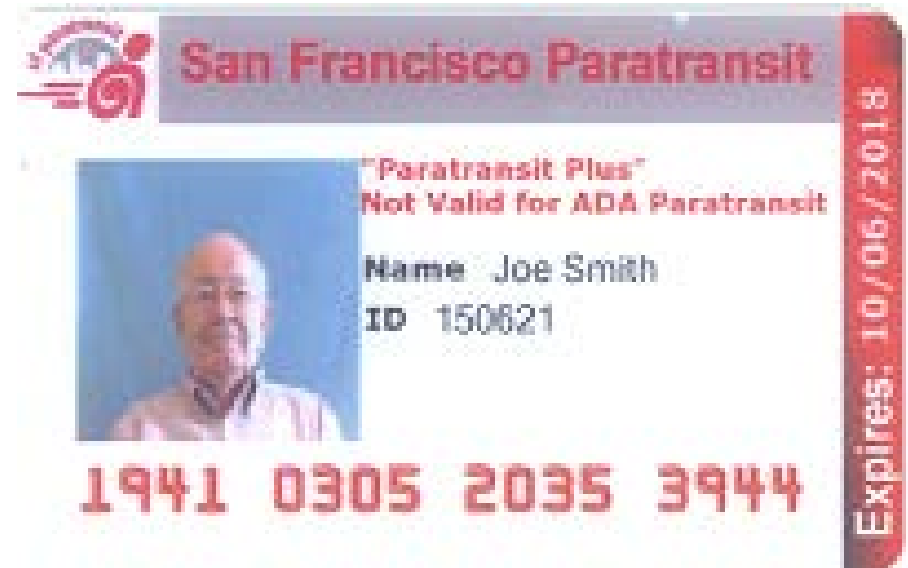
- Provides taxi and van service to grocery stores
- Provided 6,500 trips to 1,100 registered riders

- 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



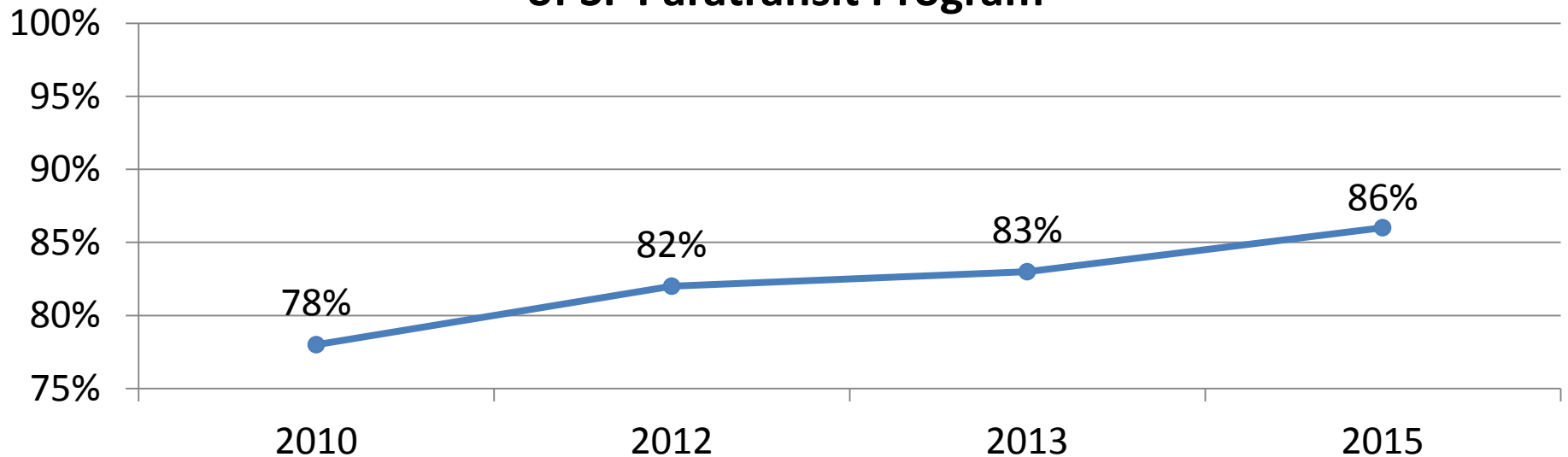
# Helping Wheels Funds

- 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**



# 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