

MARIN GENERAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 10, 2009

TO: MGSA Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Berlant, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM D: TAXICAB REGULATION PROGRAM UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF LIMITATIONS ON THE NUMBER OF PERMITS ISSUED

Recommendation: Receive this update and review and discuss the issue of limiting the number of permits to be issued to taxicab companies, vehicles and drivers and find that no such limitation is needed at this time.

Discussion: A number of issues warrant discussion.

Permitting: Jeff Rawles has directed a greater share of his time to enforcement rather than responding to new applications. However, several new firms are seeking or have received permits. As of the end of August, we have issued permits to 15 companies, 82 vehicles and 137 drivers. Approximately 30 drivers' permit applications have been withdrawn, rejected or rescinded. A list of permitted taxicab companies, vehicles, and drivers has been posted on the MGSA web site. We will periodically update the list.

As noted, Jeff Rawles has shifted emphasis from getting our initial list of companies and drivers permitted to dealing with the few new applicants and with enforcement issues. We have received complaints from the public as well as company owners and drivers about taxicabs that are not permitted. As this information comes to Mr. Rawles, he follows-up with phone calls or other available means of communications to attempt to obtain compliance. In addition, we continue to work with local police. I have been asked to attend a hearing on October 27, 2009 on a citation issued to a Novato Taxi driver. The defense attorney in the case has claimed that Novato Taxi and MGSA continue to negotiate an agreement regarding their lack of permit. No such negotiations exist, and the Novato Police Department has asked that I testify to that effect. Mr. Rawles continues to work with Novato and San Rafael police as well as the Golden Gate Transit staff regarding the San Rafael Transit Center.

Regulations: As of August 15th, five of the seven MGSA members that need to adopt resolutions confirming our latest amended Regulations have done so. Ross and Mill Valley have scheduled Council action on the Regulations for August or September.

Limitations on number of permits: I attended the July 21st Board of Supervisors' meeting when they considered and approved our latest amendments to the Regulations. In response to a question, I told the Board that the MGSA Board had discussed the issue of limitations on the number of permits on at least two occasions and had opted to not take any action, but leave it to the towns/cities/county take the lead on this issue. Notwithstanding your previous discussions, the Supervisors requested that I ask the MGSA Board to, once again, discuss the option of limiting the number of permits issued to cab companies and vehicles.

Subsequently, one of Supervisor McGlashan's aides passed this question along to Larry Chu, Councilmember from Larkspur and member of the JPA Oversight Committee. Councilmember Chu and I have since discussed taxi regulation issues, particularly as relates to possible limitations on the number of permits to be issued. At their August 19th Council meeting, the Larkspur City Council asked City Manager Jean Bonander to raise this question with the Marin Managers' Association at their August 27th meeting. I understand that the city managers did discuss this issue and concluded that no limitations were called for.

Company owners meeting: Councilmember Chu has been told that some company owners have scheduled a meeting prior to the September 10th MGSA Board meeting to establish certain "rules of engagement" regarding their interaction at taxi stands and as they compete for business. We would be very pleased if they did so, since many of the complaints Jeff Rawles receives are from taxi drivers and owners about other drivers attempting to bully their way into taking fares away from them or other negative behaviors at taxi stands.