

MARIN GENERAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

555 Northgate Drive, Suite 230, San Rafael, CA

PHONE: (415) 448-0359

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 3, 2011
TO: MGSA Board of Directors
FROM: Paul Berlant, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM: C: Taxicab Regulation Program Update

Recommendation Accept this update report. No action is requested.

Program Update There are currently 14 permitted companies, using 17 names on their vehicles (Belaire, etc.). There are currently 86 vehicles and 155 drivers with permits.

Of the permitted companies, one is currently without a vehicle, but it is anticipated it will soon be replaced. Most of the vehicle permits come up for renewal in the winter and spring periods and the companies have been generally cooperative with renewals, with a few that require more attention.

Recently, a significant number of complaints have been received from taxi companies about advertising methods and activities. It seems that taxi companies feel it is to their advantage to use multiple addresses in advertisements, thus appearing to be local to more potential customers. One company was also using the brand name of another permitted company. The use of the Internet makes it more difficult to track the advertisements of one company because search engines match key words with multiple names. For example, if one types "Marin taxi" or "taxi Marin," many choices will appear. Staff has spent considerable time trying to stop some of the more blatant advertisements that might mislead the public. We have had some success in this regard. In order to straighten out some of the confusion between competing company advertising, staff sent a memo to all permitted companies advising that State law requires a permit number in all advertisements.

Companies and drivers alike have been complaining to local law enforcement regarding similar issues as outlined above, or identifying a specific taxi cab without a permit. Staff received a copy of one complaint made to the Marin District Attorney's Office and others to local police departments. One Officer from the Sausalito Police Department has been particularly helpful in working with MGSA staff to sort out complaints and assist with taxi permit enforcement.

A consistent concern comes from the newer companies that do not have access to the Golden Gate Transit Center in San Rafael. Because the taxi stand at the transit center is located where the Smart Train will eventually travel, Golden Gate Transit staff view the taxi stand as temporary and have not issued additional permits for its use. MGSA staff has no authority with regard to this issue, but remains in contact with GGT staff and frequently shares information to monitor taxi activities.