

MARIN GENERAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2008
TO: MGSA Board of Directors
FROM: Paul Berlant, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM D: UPDATE ON TAXICAB REGULATION PROGRAM

Recommendation: Accept this update report.

Background:

Since the January Board meeting, staff met with the company owners on February 13th in San Rafael City Hall. Seven current and one potential taxicab company operators attended. The session was to provide owners with applications and other materials they need to complete the permitting process as well as receive application materials. A drug and alcohol testing and monitoring training session for company supervisors is scheduled for March 6th. At that meeting, representatives of Norten Medical Labs, the firm that will oversee the drug/alcohol testing, will provide information for company management as to their responsibilities. (Staff will report orally at the Match 13th Board meeting on the outcome of this session.) Staff and contract staff will then conduct four enrollment sessions for the cab drivers who will receive drug/alcohol testing instructions and other permitting requirements. Since we have not received all of the information required of the companies, we are not certain of the number of drivers who may attend these meetings. However, we believe approximately 140 drivers may be involved in these sessions.

A number of issues have arisen in the course of initiating this program. The company owners have raised concerns about what they consider to be drug/alcohol testing and background checks when such requirements are imposed on them through contracts with other agencies such as schools. Some owners have indicated that the fees are high and burdensome, particularly for the drivers. Almost all in attendance indicated that the MGSA should have a limit on the number of taxicab permits that are issued in the county.

Staff indicated that we are obligated to do the testing and background checks, that such procedures are in the interest of public safety and that we expect the companies to comply. As to fees, they have been set to recoup a portion of program cost. As to limiting the number of operators or cabs, our ordinances and regulations are silent on this matter and MGSA has no authority to impose any limits.

Some of the company owners indicated an interest in attending the MGSA Board meetings and addressing the Board. As such, we have notified all who requested via email, including an agenda and copy of this report. Attached to this report is a copy of an email from North Bay Co-Op Taxi expressing their views about the issues summarized above.