

Agenda: Item 2

Staff Report and Commissioner Announcements [INFORMATION]



COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE (415) 554-7737

PAUL GILLESPIE, PRESIDENT, ext. 3
PATRICIA BRESLIN, VICE PRESIDENT
RICHARD BENJAMIN, COMMISSIONER, ext. 1
TOM ONETO, COMMISSIONER, ext. 6
MIN PAEK, COMMISSIONER, ext. 7
SUSAN SUVAL, COMMISSIONER, ext. 5

JORDANNA THIGPEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Honorable Commissioners
FROM: Jordanna Thigpen
RE: Staff Report 09.09.08
Date: September 4, 2008

Administration/Policy

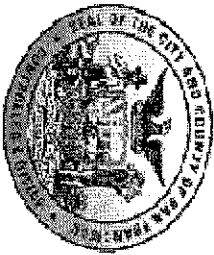
- **The Annual Blessing of the Taxicabs** took place at St. Boniface Church on Golden Gate on September 3 and September 4. Representatives from National, Luxor, and Yellow were on hand along with San Francisco Taxi Commission and SFPD Taxi Detail staff.
- **New Office Hours:** The office is open from 9-11:30 and 2-5 PM for customer service drop-ins.
- **Open Forum:** Open Forum will occur this Friday September 12, 2008 at 2 PM.
- **Vehicle Grant Funding: March 2007 Funding:** We still have 6 grants at \$4,000 remaining for CNG vehicles. **June 2007 Funding:** The Commission is beginning to distribute funds.
- **IATR Conference:** I will be in attendance at the IATR Conference from September 14-17 and presenting at a panel on Monday, September 15, 2008 in Redondo Beach, California.
- **Rules & Regulations Subcommittee:** We had a meeting on August 11, 2008. The next meeting is still being scheduled, but the topic will most likely be worker's compensation rules applicable to taxi companies.
- **Charter Reform Working Group:** The Group will meet on September 25, 2008 at 10:30 AM in Room 305 of City Hall.
- **Taxi Wraps:** No new ones have been approved.
- **SFMTA's Taxi Advisory Group:** the group held its first meeting on August 21, 2008 and will meet again on September 5, 2008.
- **Budget:** Our budget from last year is nearly complete. I made a supplemental appropriation request from the Controller's Office to request that a portion of our reserves be used to satisfy the City Attorney balance for FY 2008. I was able to cobble together over \$100,000 in savings from other line items to satisfy the majority of the overage but it is not enough.

Enforcement/Regulation

- **Bay Cab:** Bay Cab is almost 100% in compliance with the Commission's directive. There are two medallion holders holding out on the purchase of worker's compensation. They claim to be single shifting and refuse to purchase worker's compensation.
- **Summary Suspensions:** The Commission and the SFPD summarily suspended Driss Ellassali for driving without a California driver's license. He was then arrested on August 31, 2008 at a DUI checkpoint for operating a taxicab vehicle without an A-card and without a driver's license. Notices have been sent to all color schemes regarding this individual's conduct and a copy is attached to this report.

- **Administrative Hearings:** There are several hearings pending. On September 12, 2008, the hearing officer will consider the summary suspension of Taxi Commission v. Rahimi (Rahimi II), Taxi Commission v. Bains, Taxi Commission v. Singh, and Taxi Commission v. Hunger. On September 19, 2008, the hearing officer will consider Taxi Commission v. Ellassali (Ellassali I) and Taxi Commission v. Ellassali (Ellassali II).
- **Administrative Complaints:** The Commission will file Taxi Commission v. Keys, Taxi Commission v. Ikarouien, and others. We are still awaiting a decision on Taxi Commission v. Rahimi (Rahimi I). The Commission will hear Taxi Commission v. Neilly and Taxi Commission v. Ennazer on September 12, 2008.
- **Board of Appeals:** There are no updates since the last Commission meeting.
- **Superior Court:** Robert Friedman appealed the revocation of his medallion to Superior Court on a writ petition, alleging that the Board of Appeals and the Taxi Commission “bowed to public pressure” in revoking his medallion after evidence was presented of four DUIs.
- **311 Complaints:** We have submitted our requested updates to 311 which will enable greater reporting and tracking of complaints by driver, medallion number, and by company. We are doing very well with processing the backlog of lost and found and complaints with the assistance of SFPD.
- **Medallion Applicants:** Staff continues to process and investigate each medallion applicant as they arrive at the top of the list.

City and County of San Francisco
 Office of the Controller
 Monthly Economic Barometer - July 2008



	Most Recent Month/Quarter	Value	Month-to-	Year-to-	Five-Year Position	Trend
			Month Change	Year Change		
Economy-Wide						
San Francisco Labor Force ¹	July-08	447,100	0.5%	2.5%	Strong	Positive
Number of Unemployed in San Francisco ¹	July-08	25,700	1,800	5,300	Neutral	Negative
San Francisco Unemployment Rate ¹	July-08	5.7%	0.4%	1.1%	Neutral	Negative
Total Employment, San Francisco MD ¹	July-08	999,700	-0.5%	0.8%	Strong	Neutral
Real Estate						
Median Home Sales Price - DataQuick ²	July-08	\$749,000	3.1%	-6.3%	Strong	Neutral
Median Home Sales Price - CAR ³	July-08	\$766,250	0.8%	-4.1%	Strong	Neutral
Tourism						
Domestic Air Passengers ⁴	June-08	2,615,055	4.3%	7.3%	Strong	Positive
International Air Passengers ⁴	June-08	827,773	5.7%	2.9%	Strong	Positive
Hotel Average Daily Rate ⁵	June-08	\$203.73	7.0%	15.2%	Strong	Positive
Hotel Occupancy Rate ⁵	June-08	85.8%	6.2%	3.4%	Strong	Positive
Retail						
Parking Garage Customers ⁶	July-08	373,825	6.2%	-6.4%	Neutral	Negative
Powell St. BART Average Saturday Exits ⁷	July-08	26,188	2.6%	1.2%	Strong	Positive

Month-to-month change is the percentage change to the most recent month or quarter from the prior one.
 Year-to-Year change is the percentage change from a given month or quarter to the same one last year.
 Five-year position is a relative measure of how strong or weak the indicator is compared to the trend over the last five years.
 Number of unemployed is shown as an absolute change, not a percentage change.
 Unemployment and hotel occupancy rate changes are shown as a percentage point difference, not a percentage change.
 Parking garages include Union Square, Fifth/Mission, Sutter-Stockton, and Ellis-O'Farrell.

Discussion

The July Monthly Economic Barometer continues to show a weakening job market in San Francisco, being offset by continued strength in the tourism sector. Unemployment is rising rapidly in the city, rising 0.4% in July alone, to a 5.7% level. But San Francisco's jobless rate remains among the lowest among California's counties, and far below the state level of 7.6%. Moreover job growth in the three-county Metropolitan Division remains steady, on a year-over-year basis. San Francisco may be receiving unemployed migrants from more hard-hit parts of the state, who have come to the city to look for work. San Francisco's labor force (employed plus unemployed) has grown at twice the state rate over the past year, and the unemployed make up nearly half of that growth.

Hotel average daily room rates, and occupancy rates, both rose to record highs in June, the latest month data is available. This contrasts with the May data, which suggested a slowing of the city's hotel sector. Both San Francisco and airport-area hotels continued to be buoyed by strong growth in both domestic and international arrivals at SFO.

In the retail sector, the City parking garage business around Union Square continues to show significantly lower numbers than last summer. While high gas prices have encouraged many shoppers to take transit, BART's Saturday traffic through Powell St. is only up slightly over last year. Together these trends suggest the city's retail sector may be cooling after several years of rapid growth.

Sources:

- [1] - California Employment Development Department. MD refers to the San Francisco Metropolitan Division. San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo counties.
- [2] - DataQuick
- [3] - California Association of Realtors
- [4] - San Francisco International Airport
- [5] - PKF Consulting
- [6] - Municipal Transportation Agency
- [7] - BART

For more information contact Ted Egan, Chief Economist at 415-554-5268, or Kurt Fuchs, Senior Economist, at 415-554-5369.