



Upcoming Events

UTWSD
Membership Meetings
4265 Fairmount Ave. Suite 180

Monday, Feb 16, 3pm

Membership Drive
March 9, 10:30-4:30pm

Information Sessions
4265 Fairmount Ave. Suite 180

Every Week Tuesday 1:30-4:30

Taxicab Advisory Committee
1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

- Thursday, March 26, 10:00am
- Thursday, June 25, 10:00am
- Thursday, September 24, 10:00am
- Thursday, December 17, 10:00am

Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)
1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

- Thursday, Jan 28, 9:00am
- Thursday, Feb 12, 9:00am
- Thursday, March 12, 9:00am
- Thursday, April 16, 9:00am

*For more information about important industry meetings and events, **contact UTWSD today!***

Mission:

The mission of UTWSD is to unify taxicab workers, to improve working conditions through direct advocacy and empowerment, to increase education and civic participation by taxi drivers and their families, and to improve professional transportation services for San Diego communities and visitors.

Vision:

We envision a driver-led taxi Association that provides exceptional, efficient, and safe service for residents and visitors, and that meets the comprehensive and diverse needs of taxi drivers. We also envision a taxi industry environment free from humiliation, intimidation, discrimination, and exploitation, which will improve the transportation services of San Diego County.

UNITED TAXI WORKERS OF SAN DIEGO (UTWSD)

UTWSD was founded in January 2010 to sustain and advance the leadership and empowerment of the Dec '09 drivers' strike.

The *UTWSD Meter* is published to support driver leadership, to document and disseminate drivers' voices, and to inform and educate drivers and allies for better organizing.

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PERMIT CAP LIFTED!

UTWSD Members Help Make History In The City of San Diego

Since December 18th, 2009 with few resources but limitless determination, UTWSD has been able to make significant impacts in the taxi industry and on the lives of drivers and our community.

On Monday, November 10th hundreds of UTWSD drivers and allies filled Golden Hall to support lifting the cap on taxi permits for hard working drivers and we WON!

For far too long drivers have been working long hours to pay off high weekly leases and other expenses like gas with little left to bring home to their families, nevermind being able to afford buying a coveted medallion for more than \$100,000.

"It's about offering an opportunity for those who want to work in this industry and to achieve for themselves the American Dream," said Councilwoman Marti Emerald.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Thanks to our drivers and supporters we had another great year fulfilling major accomplishments in 2014!

We attended and advocated at countless MTS, TAC and City of San Diego meetings in order to represent the interests of drivers and were able to earn the support of elected officials at the local, state and national level.

Our goal is to ensure that drivers are a political force and are able to give input about the issues they face every day.

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At the meeting hundreds of UTWSD drivers wearing blue shirts waved their signs and spoke about the need for reform. UTWSD gave a formal presentation that highlighted the problems in the industry, including the fact that a majority of drivers, 89%, do not have their own permit. After an almost four hour meeting the policy passed 8 to 1 with bipartisan support from Councilmembers Emerald, Cole, Alvarez, Gloria, Harris, Lightener, Sherman and Kersey.



Drivers cheer on Councilmember Marti Emerald in front of Golden Hall

What's Next?

Now that the cap has been lifted we have a lot of work to do to help revive the taxi industry. First we are headed to MTS on **Thursday, February 12th at 9a.m.** to find out further details about the implementation plan.

When UTWSD attended the Taxi Advisory Committee Meeting in December the projected permit release month was April.

Going forward it will be vital to stand together as one to ensure that the policy is implemented in a way that will benefit both drivers and the public. There are many issues including rates of fare, the type of car drivers will be able to buy and more. After that we will need to continue to be voices for the industry and ensure that we deal with issues

such as increasing taxi stands and the better regulation of unfair competition.

Lastly, at the request of our drivers, UTWSD is creating an app and dispatch for drivers to use to help provide excellent service while supporting driver advocacy and empowerment. Also don't forget which many dispatches fought against you getting your own permit!

As always, UTWSD is here For YOU, our members. Get involved and stay informed! Together we will continue to win!

For more pictures and media coverage visit: www.utwsd.org/category/lift-the-cap

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It seems like yesterday that a group of drivers were sitting together in our office with no furniture talking about how we wanted to change the industry. November 10th, 2014 was a true testament of the power of never giving up and drivers standing together despite all the odds and winning.

Our goal was always to return the permits to our hard working members, the people who move our city to drive tourists, elderly and more to where they need to go safely.

For the New Year of new opportunities my advice to our members and non-members is to get connected. Build a strong and positive relationship with UTWSD. Support your cause! Give input, volunteer! And join today!

This is only the beginning. We have more work to do but together we can rebuild our industry.

With continued competition from rideshares we must innovate and give safe and quality service to our San Diego neighbors and visitors.

This year we will have many exciting programs to make sure that our members have the competitive edge to excel as the best in the business.

Through UTWSD we have built a base of supporters that have not only been following your story but are willing to exclusively use UTWSD drivers every time they take a taxi.

Let's continue this momentum and build on the amazing successes of 2014 to make 2015 the best year yet now that YOU the drivers are in control.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year!

In Solidarity,
Mikail Hussein
Executive Director/President, UTWSD



Top: Drivers give standing applause. Left: Ralph Damarucut receives award on behalf of Marti Emerald. Middle: Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez speaks. Right: Liibaan jokes with crowd.

UTWSD Celebrates Permit Victory and 5 Year Anniversary!

December 18th, 2014 marked the five year anniversary of the taxi driver strike of 2009. Since then UTWSD has been the *only* organization consistently fighting for driver's rights and a better San Diego taxi industry. But we could not have done it alone.

We invited drivers, friends and allies to join us so we could say thank you for making all of this possible. The driver strike was a momentous event for drivers but if it wasn't for the hard work throughout the five years, educating the public and our elected officials, building alliances, mobilizing our community to vote and so much more we would not be where we are today.

The victory party was held at United Domestic Workers (UDW) Hall where hundreds of drivers and supporters came out to enjoy food by our sponsors UDW and Fatuma Restaurant and honor our special guests.

UTWSD Lifetime members, the drivers who sat on the floor of our office with no furniture back in 2010 and who are still organizing today accepted awards with Liibaan Ahmed giving a speech on their behalf. Next we honored emerging leaders. These are drivers who have helped us organize in the past few years and even months leading up to our big win at Golden Hall. These drivers are rising star organizers who believe in the cause and

are dedicated to building UTWSD.

We also honored all our elected officials who have not only voted for our recent policy reform to lift the cap but also have stood by UTWSD throughout the years including Councilmember David Alvarez and our City Attorney Jan Goldsmith. Our friend Assemblywomen Lorena Gonzalez spoke about her history with UTWSD going back to when she was head of the Labor Council and how she always believed in our cause!

Our champion Marti Emerald was not able to attend because of her last treatment of chemotherapy but, her Senior Council Representative Ralph Dimarucut who was instrumental in helping pass the lift the cap reform received the award on her behalf while also presenting UTWSD with a city proclamation naming December 18th, 2014 UTWSD Day in the City of San Diego!

Lastly we were able to honor all the organizations, researchers and labor leaders who have been key to our campaign for a better, more equitable taxi industry.

If all this is possible in five years can you imagine what we can do in another five? If we stand together, anything is possible.

To see additional pictures from the party visit: <http://utwsg.org/2014/12/19/victory-party-pictures/>



City Proclaims December 18th UTWSD Day!

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2014 United Taxi Workers of San Diego (UTWSD) celebrates the fifth anniversary of drivers coming together in Colina Park to organize a historic city-wide strike to call attention to issues in the taxi industry; **AND**

WHEREAS, UTWSD is recognized as a multi-ethnic grassroots organization that grew out of that strike and whose mission it is to unify taxi drivers, improve their working conditions through

direct advocacy and empowerment, increase education and civic participation of taxi drivers and their families and to improve professional transportation services for the San Diego community and visitors; **AND**

WHEREAS, UTWSD has for the past five years, consistently attended City Council and Metropolitan Transit System board meetings and engaged in dialog and input on policy issues in order to facilitate fair treatment and positive cross cultural communication throughout the industry; **AND**

WHEREAS, UTWSD fosters civic engagement and activism in San Diego through empowering taxi drivers and community leaders, registering hundreds of people to vote and encouraging them to be involved in the policies that affect their everyday lives; **AND**

WHEREAS, UTWSD has helped achieve various policy reforms including equalizing the Cities Tax Advisory Board, requiring vehicle age limits and lifting the artificial cap on publically owned taxi permits; **AND**

WHEREAS, UTWSD seeks to create a driver-led taxi industry that provides exceptional, efficient, and safe services for residents and visitors while also meeting the comprehensive and diverse needs of taxi drivers and their families; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT PROCLAIMED, that this Council, do hereby proclaim December 18th, 2014 to be United Taxi Workers of San Diego Day in recognition of their many contributions to the City.

Signed By: Councilmembers Sherri Lightener, Marti Emerald, Todd Gloria, Myrtle Cole, Mark Kersey, Scott Sherman, David Alvarez, Ed Harris, Lori Zapf and Mayor Kevin Faulconer.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR UTWSD DRIVERS! THIS DAY IS DEDICATED TO YOU!

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Councilmember Marti Emerald

UTWSD honors District 9 Councilmember Marti Emerald, a champion of taxi drivers and the community.

To say that Councilmember Marti Emerald has been a champion for taxi drivers is an understatement though. Since becoming Chair of the Taxi Advisory Committee in 2011 Marti has been and standing beside UTWSD for a better, safer and more equitable taxi industry.

Councilmember Emerald was there for our peaceful protest to call attention to violence against taxi drivers and has fought to get video cameras in cabs to protect drivers lives.

She led the way for equalizing the Taxi Advisory Committee and first ever historic taxi driver elections, giving lease drivers a voice on an influential MTS board.

Councilmember Emerald fought alongside former Mayor Bob Filner to reform the taxi industry, including ending a long term contract with MTS to regulate the taxi industry.

The City is still contracting with MTS but, the contract includes a cancellation clause that could allow the City to take over if they want to.

And Marti did not stop there. Even after new power shifted at City Hall that temporarily ended the possibility of the City cancelling its contract with MTS, she took our taxi issues to the Public Safety Committee to make sure that taxi industry reform was addressed.

Councilmember Emerald has done this and so, so much more for not only taxi drivers but all of San Diego. Recently she has been doing all this while also bravely battling cancer.

Thank you Marti, for being a true advocate. We are eternally grateful and look forward to many, many more years fighting alongside you.

