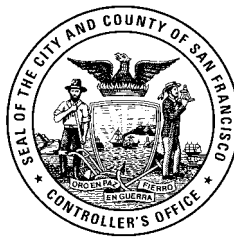


**OFFICE OF THE  
CONTROLLER**

City Services Auditor  
2005 Taxi Commission Survey Report



*February 7, 2006*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION.....	3
SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS.....	5
I. The Survey Respondents.....	5
II. The Reasonableness of Taxi Service.....	6
III. The Length of Time Waiting for Taxi Service.....	7
IV. The Method of Reaching Taxi Service.....	9
V. The Time of Most Recent Taxi Service.....	10
APPENDIX.....	11
City of San Francisco Map by Zip code.....	11
Demographic Data – Zip code 94114.....	12
Demographic Data – Zip code 94121.....	14
Demographic Data – Zip code 94124.....	16

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## INTRODUCTION

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This is a summary report of the results of the Taxi Commission Survey that the Controller's Office conducted in October/November 2005. Out of six thousand surveys mailed to citizens in three San Francisco Zip codes (94114, 94121, 94124), 548 responses were received. Adjusted for bad addresses (139 of the original 6000 surveys were returned by the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable), this corresponds to an overall response rate of approximately nine percent.

The three San Francisco Zip codes used in the survey correspond to three distinct areas of the City, demographically as well as geographically. Zip code 94114 corresponds to the Castro and Noe Valley neighborhoods, located in the heart of the City. This Zip code is predominantly white (83%), educated (67% hold a bachelor's degree), and is one of the wealthier areas of the City (median household income of \$75,000). On the other hand, Zip code 94124, known as Bayview/Hunter's Point is located in the extreme southeastern corner of the City. This Zip code primarily consists of minority residents (90%), is relatively less educated (11% hold bachelor's degrees), and poorer (median household income of \$37,000). Zip code 94121 is located in the extreme northwestern corner of the city in neighborhoods called the Outer Richmond and Seacliff. Demographically, 94121 lies between the other two Zip codes. This Zip code is comprised of a roughly equal mixture of white and minority residents, is relatively educated (46% hold bachelor's degrees), and on the wealthier side (median household income of \$62,000). See Appendix – Maps and Demographic Data for more information about these three Zip codes.

We have analyzed the results of the survey data in two ways – through a series of descriptive tables and cross-tabulations. Interesting findings include:

- A quarter of respondents believe that they can “usually not” get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time, and a similar percentage of respondents report waiting longer than a half-hour for a taxi the last time they took one.

- Respondents from the Zip code 94124 report that they do not take taxis nearly as often as their counterparts, and that when they do, their wait times are longer – 79% of the time they wait more than fifteen minutes, and 40% of the time they wait longer than a half-hour. This long waiting period may help to explain why residents of 94124 are less likely to use taxi service. It may also help to explain this Zip code’s lower survey response rate, as perhaps its residents are relatively disillusioned about taxi service in the City. Conversely, less demand for taxis in this area of the City may result in fewer taxis nearby and therefore longer wait times.

With a total sample size of 548 responses, the estimated sampling error for this survey is about +/- 4% at the 95% confidence level. This means that we are 95% confident that all residents of the areas surveyed would produce responses to each survey question within approximately four percentage points of the results obtained from this sample. For example, 34% of survey respondents say they can “almost always” get a taxi in San Francisco within a reasonable amount of time. Statistical theory suggests that if we repeated additional random samples of this size, we could expect between 30% and 38% of the population to answer this question “almost always.”

Sampling errors are larger for individual Zip codes. For 94114, with 269 survey responses, the margin of error is +/- 6%; for 94121, with 174 survey responses, the margin of error is +/- 8%; and for 94124, with 105 survey responses, the margin of error is +/- 10%. Unless otherwise noted, all tables are statistically significant.

These and other statistical conclusions are explained more fully in the tables and analysis below.

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# SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

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## I. Survey Respondents

Of the six thousand surveys that were mailed to the residents of the three San Francisco Zip codes 94114, 94121 and 94124, less than ten percent of the surveys were returned. The response rates by Zip codes ranged from five percent in 94124 to fourteen percent in 94114. (See Table 1.) As such, nearly half (48%) of the total returned responses came from the Zip code 94114; whereas a disproportionately smaller amount (18%) was returned from the Zip code 94124. (See Tables 2 and 3.) Responses have not been weighted to adjust for varying response rates.

**Table 1. Zip code response rate**

Zip Code	Sent	Responses	Percent	Margin of error
94114	1916	269	14%	6%
94121	1982	174	9%	8%
94124	1963	105	5%	10%
Total	5861*	548	9%	4%

**Table 2. Zip code to which survey was addressed**

Zip Code	Frequency	Percent
94114	269	49%
94121	174	32%
94124	105	19%
Total	548	100%

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\* Of the 6000 surveys mailed, 139 were returned by the post office as invalid addresses.

**Table 3. Zip code reported by respondent**

Zip Code	Frequency	Percent
94114	258	48%
94121	157	29%
94124	99	18%
Other	23	4%
Total	537	100%

## II. The Reasonableness of Taxi Service

Respondents reported that they get taxis in a reasonable amount of time “almost always” or “sometimes” about three-quarters of the time (77%). Only 23% of respondents reported that they usually can not get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time. (See Table 4.)

**Table 4. Can you get a taxi in SF in a reasonable amount of time?**

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Almost Always	182	34%
Sometimes	227	43%
Usually Not	121	23%
Total	530	100%

However, when the same question is analyzed by Zip code, a stark difference appears. Only 23% of respondents in the Zip code 94124 report that they “almost always” get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time; while 33% of 94124 respondents report “usually not” being able to get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time. This assessment contrasts sharply with the other two Zip codes, where more respondents (35% and 41%) report getting a taxi “almost always” in a reasonable amount of time. Additionally, respondents from 94114 and 94121 are less likely to report “usually not” being able to get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time (21% and 19%). (See Table 5.)

**Table 5. Can you get a taxi in a reasonable amount of time? by Zip code**

Answer	94114	94121	94124	Total
Almost Always	35%	41%	23%	34%
Sometimes	44%	40%	44%	43%
Usually Not	21%	19%	33%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

### III. The Length of Time Waiting for Taxi Service

The survey also asked respondents to report how long it took from the last time calling or flagging a taxi until it actually arrived to pick them up. Correspondingly, 41% of people were picked up within fifteen minutes, and 74% within a half-hour. Only 26% of respondents waited for more than thirty minutes before arrival of the taxi. (See Table 6.)

**Table 6. How long did it take from the last time you called or started trying to flag a taxi until it arrived?**

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Less than 15 mins	212	41%
15-30 mins	172	33%
More than 30 mins	132	26%
Total	516	100%

When this data is cross-examined by Zip code, it is apparent that wait times are longer in Zip code 94124 than in the others. Taxis arrive within fifteen minutes only 20% of the time in 94124, compared with rates in the mid-40 percent range in the other two Zip codes. Furthermore, taxis arrive more than thirty minutes after the last call or flagging 40% of the time in 94124, in contrast with the mid-20 percent range in the other two Zip codes. While taxis arrive within thirty minutes at rates approaching 75-80% in 94114 and 94121, the corresponding rate in 94124 is only at 60%. (See Table 7.)

**Table 7. How long did it take from the last time you called or started trying to flag a taxi until it arrived? by Zip code**

Answer	94114	94121	94124	Total
Less than 15 mins	45%	47%	20%	41%
15-30 mins	35%	27%	39%	33%
More than 30 mins	20%	26%	40%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The data on wait times was also cross-examined by two other measures – time of day and method of reaching taxi service. It appears that wait time does not vary much by day and time of service. Roughly 40% (range: 39-44%) of taxis are arriving within fifteen minutes, and approximately 70% (range: 67-77%) are arriving within a half-hour. Differences by the time of day were not statistically significant. (See Table 8.)

**Table 8. How long did it take from the last time you called or started trying to flag a taxi until it arrived? by time of day**

Answer	Weekday	Weeknight	Weekend Day	Weekend Night	Percent
Less than 15 mins	42%	39%	44%	41%	41%
15-30 mins	35%	35%	35%	26%	33%
More than 30 mins	23%	26%	22%	33%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Cross-tabulating wait times by method of reaching a taxi shows that, as would be expected, flagging down a taxi is likely to correlate with a short wait time. Of respondents who attempted to flag a taxi, 59% received a taxi within fifteen minutes, and 88% within a half-hour. On the other hand, calling from home or somewhere else usually correlates with a longer waiting time. Respondents reported that roughly 35% of the time waiting longer than thirty minutes, and roughly 70% of the time waiting longer than fifteen minutes. (See Table 9.)

**Table 9. How long did it take from the last time you called or started trying to flag a taxi until it arrived? by method of reaching taxi service**

Answer	Call from Home	Call from Somewhere Else	Flag down Taxi	Other	Percent
Less than 15 mins	28%	27%	59%	79%	41%
15-30 mins	38%	36%	29%	5%	33%
More than 30 mins	34%	36%	12%	16%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



#### IV. The Method of Reaching Taxi Service

The survey also asked respondents what method they used to reach a taxi the last time they used taxi service. Nearly half of the respondents called the taxi from home (48%), but a large percentage (35%) simply flagged the taxi down on the street. A smaller proportion (13%) called the taxi from somewhere other than home. (See Table 10.)

**Table 10. How did you try to reach a taxi?**

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Call from Home	260	48%
Flag down Taxi	190	35%
Call from Somewhere Else	68	13%
Other	22	4%
Total	540	100%

When this question was broken down further by Zip code, some interesting data presented itself. For instance, while nearly half of survey respondents called a taxi from home, 70% of respondents from 94124 used that method to procure their last taxi. Correspondingly, while 35% of survey respondents flagged down a taxi the last time they used the service, only 14% of respondents from 94124 did so, whereas 46% of respondents from 94114 did so. This would suggest that there are fewer opportunities to flag down taxis in 94124, and that residents of 94124 do not flag down taxis frequently in other areas either. Those living in the Richmond (94121) flag down taxis less frequently than residents of centrally-located 94114, but considerably more often than those who live in 94124. Residents of 94121 report calling taxis from places other than home more frequently than those in the other two Zip codes. (See Table 11.)

**Table 11. How did you try to reach a taxi? by Zip code**

Answer	94114	94121	94124	Total
Call from Home	41%	47%	70%	48%
Call from Somewhere Else	10%	17%	12%	13%
Flag Down Taxi	46%	31%	14%	35%
Other	3%	5%	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

## V. The Time of Most Recent Taxi Service

When queried as to the time the respondent last sought taxi service, the results were fairly predictable. Given that the survey was mailed in October/November 2005, a vast majority (87%) of the respondents reported their most recent taxi service was also in 2005. (See Table 12.)

**Table 12. What year did you last seek taxi service?**

Answer	Frequency	Percent
2005	466	87%
2004	32	6%
Before 2004	36	7%
Total	534	100%

The survey also asked respondents to share the time of day of the last time they used taxi service in the City. Weekday taxi rides were the most common (45%), while weeknights and weekend nights were roughly equal (24% and 22%, respectively). Weekend day trips were the least common, representing only 9% of trips. (See Table 13.)

**Table 13. What day and time did you last seek taxi service?**

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Weekday	241	45%
Weeknight	130	24%
Weekend Night	118	22%
Weekend Day	47	9%
Total	536	100%

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## APPENDIX – MAP AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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## Demographic Profile - 94114:

<u>General Characteristics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total population	30,574	
Male	18,273	59.8
Female	12,301	40.2
<u>Median age (years)</u>	37.7	(X)
18 years and over	28,384	92.8
65 years and over	2,478	8.1
<u>One race</u>	29,365	96
White	25,349	82.9
Black or African American	679	2.2
American Indian and Alaska Native	145	0.5
Asian	2,200	7.2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	54	0.2
Some other race	938	3.1
Two or more races	1,209	4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2,655	8.7
Household population	30,357	99.3
Group quarters population	217	0.7
<u>Social Characteristics</u>		
Population 25 years and over	27,211	
High school graduate or higher	25,954	95.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	18,149	66.7
Foreign born	4,747	15.5
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	5,252	17.7

### Economic Characteristics

In labor force (population 16 years and over)	22,705	79.6
<u>Median household income in 1999 (dollars)</u>	75,727	(X)
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	56,892	(X)
Families below poverty level	109	2.6
Individuals below poverty level	1,975	6.5

Housing Characteristics

Single-family owner-occupied homes	3,195	
Median value (dollars)	672,300	(X)

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3)

## Demographic Profile - 94121:

<u>General Characteristics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total population	42,473	
Male	20,231	47.6
Female	22,242	52.4
<u>Median age (years)</u>	39.1	(X)
Under 5 years	1,619	3.8
18 years and over	36,217	85.3
65 years and over	7,047	16.6
<u>One race</u>	40,970	96.5
White	20,649	48.6
Black or African American	664	1.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	98	0.2
Asian	18,849	44.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	51	0.1
Some other race	659	1.6
Two or more races	1,503	3.5
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,862	4.4
Household population	42,112	99.2
Group quarters population	361	0.8
<u>Social Characteristics</u>		
Population 25 years and over	33,056	
High school graduate or higher	27,686	83.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	15,308	46.3
Foreign born	19,024	44.5
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	22,684	55

Economic Characteristics

In labor force (population 16 years and over)	24,847	66.9
<u>Median household income in 1999 (dollars)</u>	61,776	(X)
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	32,881	(X)
Families below poverty level	485	5
Individuals below poverty level	2,979	7

Housing Characteristics

Single-family owner-occupied homes	4,695	
Median value (dollars)	484,500	(X)

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3)

## Demographic Profile - 94124:

<u>General Characteristics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total population	33,170	
Male	15,867	47.8
Female	17,303	52.2
<u>Median age (years)</u>	31.6	(X)
Under 5 years	2,352	7.1
18 years and over	23,128	69.7
65 years and over	3,451	10.4
<u>One race</u>	31,820	95.9
White	3,190	9.6
Black or African American	15,922	48
American Indian and Alaska Native	138	0.4
Asian	8,100	24.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,168	3.5
Some other race	3,302	10
Two or more races	1,350	4.1
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5,528	16.7
Household population	32,654	98.4
Group quarters population	516	1.6
<u>Social Characteristics</u>		
Population 25 years and over	19,553	
High school graduate or higher	12,426	63.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	2,180	11.1
Foreign born	10,202	31
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	13,367	43.6



Economic Characteristics

In labor force (population 16 years and over)	12,677	52.8
<u>Median household income in 1999 (dollars)</u>	37,146	(X)
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	14,200	(X)
Families below poverty level	1,538	21.6
Individuals below poverty level	7,033	21.7

Housing Characteristics

Single-family owner-occupied homes	4,336	
Median value (dollars)	254,100	(X)

(X) Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3)