I believe the task is more complicated than the stakeholders and other interested parties imagine. There are political considerations too regarding the extended hours absolutely essential for public transport –trains, trams & buses and the ferry schemes being discussed. And the VTD, VTA, Melbourne City Council, Mr Fels, the State Government, Taxi owners, Taxi depots and taxi networks and finally the major contributors in my view, the taxi drivers, all of these have their own ideas which ESC has the unenviable job to collate and meld into a pilot scheme.

I'd like to see the scheme get off the ground but I won't hold my breath. Eddie McGuire’s newspaper article some months ago had the best idea. His rank split idea was north and south. Go further and split the rank into north, south, east and west areas. Residential development in “boom areas” may need an area split. South East out to Pakenham and Cranbourne are booming along with the West development areas down to Geelong. The established areas need inclusion as well
- Cheltenham, Moorabbin and Frankston direction etc.

Customers could assemble for each "loose" destination area.
However ANY taxi should be permitted to pick up. Bear in mind "some"
drivers are wanting to end their shift (say,2am – 3am) and head in a certain direction, so the display of "a destination card" on the passenger side window should suffice.

The incentive for the SRTP fare to be less than the metered fare should
attract custom, but the multi-hire 75% existing must stand. But if an additional incentive is required let's reduce the percentage to 70%. Both customer and driver are happy.(NB: Owners and operators do NOT favour this multi-hire arrangement because the driver is making more money “above the meter reading”.)

If zones were decided upon, I'd like to see the Melway klm circles used as the
starting base. These circles extend at 10 klms increments "as the crow flies”. A zone would fall between two circles. Once the inner klms measurement is reached that becomes the "set fare". Then, as an example, add $2.00 for each extra klm travelled within the zone. This would overcome a customer argument that why should he/she pay the same as a customer travelling 7klms further into the zone!

At start of zone meter is read and put on "stop", then trip meter is zero'd and a $rate per klm added. Fare is 70% of that total - $flat zone + $rate per klm within. The same would apply for next customer and so on. Obviously this idea would need some revamping for complete fairness and accuracy.

If the 1st fare drop-off is within a 20klm radius of the CBD rank the metered fare at 70% is paid. If 2nd drop-off is 5klms into 20 – 30klms zone, client pays the metered fare to 20klms + add-on per klm $rate for 5klms and 70% of total is paid. If 3rd fare is only an extra 4 klms,ie,9klms past the 20klms, then same calculation occurs – metered fare to 20klms + $rate per 9 klms @ 70% of total.

Naturally many more examples must be calculated. Eventually a chart could be set for each klm zone incorporating the extra klms travelled within a zone.

chptr 1:
fare zones as for trams, trains and buses. I prefer the Melway circle idea. A test review for each circle zone could be run to north, south, east etc. Establish "a mean", the most common fare, NOT the average, which would then take in various anomalies etc. Averages can be quite misleading.

Q1 - Melway circles.
Q2 - NOT to be based on suburban boundaries.
Q3 - difficult to transact if driver is to receive fare equal to or more than
metered fare, so stick with multi-hire.
Q4 - Melway circles
VTA want $30 set fare for all passengers!! Totally unfare!
Q5 - disagree with all options mooted. Difficult for driver to negotiate. Who would authorize? Maybe a group is going to same drop-off destination?
Q6 - maxi cab owners/operators/drivers are reluctant to take large groups for obvious reasons
5 or 6 would be a reasonable size.

Discounts:
A rank marshall should not discount the fare before discussing with the driver seeking his agreement. Any third party in a discount discussion causes problems. Does marshall report driver if he/she disagrees?
The unexpected can and does happen. What about an accident situation or a
tyre change not going properly? What if the driver needs to call another
taxi to takeover the fare(s) for whatever reason?

Q7 - discounts ONLY allowed if multi-hire fare started with. Say 75% is now down to 70%.
Q8 and Q9 both need intensive "team discussion" in ESC!!

3.1
Some people don't like sharing, particularly women with drunk male strangers!
SOLUTION: Public Transport MUST BE a 24 hour system, end of argument!!
SUGGESTION: Public Transport Drivers (trams, trains, busses) could work 10pm to 6am on Friday Saturday and Sunday nights and then be offered 3 or 4 days off as the incentive. Rotating shifts + penalties to apply if driver numbers available

3.2
Fare must be attractive to customer and driver.

3.4
"Loosely" pre-determined routes impossible. (Refer Melway circles idea).
VTA's four areas seem to have overlooked direct south to Moorabbin/ Cheltenham/ Sandringham/Frankston?
Customers should split into destination zones at the rank using both
sides of the street. Any standard 4 or 5 seater taxi can go specifically to any zone to pick up. Marshalled zone used only by HOVs.

Marshall payment:
Marshall issues numbered docket to driver detailing cab number, network name, driver’s first name as per photo & driver DC. Marshall's book in triplicate. Driver hands in original marshall docket with pay-in - no cash involved. Owner/operator or depot accumulate dockets and send payment to City of Melb. OR, the whole taxi industry contributes towards the hourly $rate hours worked total for marshalls.

Just a quick partial overview for what it's worth.