

Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee

General Committee Meeting #22

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

a. **Zoom Meeting Protocols**

- i. Facilitator Richard France called the meeting to order. Facilitator Thomson Dryjanski announced Spanish and American Sign Language interpretation services would be available during the meeting.

b. **Agenda**

- i. Facilitator France reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

c. **Roll Call**

Present: Ashley Ajayi, Clarence Davis, Carrie Madden, Ma'ayan Dembo, Esteban Gallardo, Darryl Goodus, Florence Annang, Charles Hammerstein, Sabrina Howard, Glenda Murrell, James Wen, Jose Raigoza, Maricela de Rivera, Chauncey Smith, Constance Strickland, Mohammad Tajsar

Absent: Andrea Urmanita, Jessica Kellogg, Scarlett de Leon, Raul Gomez

d. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for 02/16/22**

- i. Committee members voted to approve the meeting minutes for the February 16th, 2022, meeting.
- ii. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

II. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants.

- a. Commentor from the Alliance for Community Transit shared that the committee should be concerned by the proposed flexible dispatch system and the predictive policing approach because it goes against the Board's mandate to shift towards non-law enforcement alternatives to community safety.
- b. Commentor agreed with the previous comment and added they would like to see more community-based policing solutions.
- c. Commentor urged PSAC members to discuss not renewing the policing contract and instead pursue community-led approaches, such as those highlighted in the ACT-LA's Metro as a Sanctuary Report.
- d. Commentor highlighted the need for reliable and safe public transportation. They urged PSAC to consider transit ambassadors and other options as job creation tools for the community.
- e. Commentor shared the contributions of working-class immigrant mothers and elders to ACT-LA's Metro as a Sanctuary Report and asked members to consider the recommendations within the report.
- f. Commentor uplifted the earlier comments related to flexible dispatch.
- g. Commentor expressed support for the community led safety alternatives described in the Metro as a Sanctuary Report.

III. Discussion

Panel Discussion

Alfonso Directo Jr. (ACT-LA), Channing Martinez (Labor Community Strategy Center), and Chris Van Eyken (TransitCenter) were panelists for a discussion on reimagining public safety on transit.

- a. **Alfonso Directo Jr.:** Directo presented a vision for public safety on Metro that is rooted in the organizing work ACT-LA does in LA County and detailed in their *Metro as a Sanctuary* report.
 - i. He discussed the quality of transit stops and stations in Los Angeles, community safety through environmental design, and the importance of alternatives to public safety.
 - ii. Directo shared the Metro as a Sanctuary [one-pager](#) and [report with the committee](#).
- b. **Channing Martinez:** Martinez shared the work the Labor Community Strategy Center has done through the Bus Riders Union, organizing Black, Latinx, & Korean bus riders.
 - i. He shared historical and current data that showed discrimination against Black riders on the Metro system. Martinez cited a previous successful lawsuit against Metro where the transit system and its resources were distributed unfairly. He also called out that Black riders are disproportionately ticketed on Metro currently.
 - ii. Martinez called on PSAC and Metro to acknowledge the context of the agency's historical discrimination, provide fareless transit, as well as abolishing the code of conduct and policing contracts.
- c. **Chris Van Eyken:** Van Eyken shared TransitCenter's *Safety For All* report that investigated public safety reforms on transit systems across the country and provided a national perspective to the committee.
 - i. He shared a variety of alternatives that would increase presence on the system, reduce reliance on police, and increase customer service for riders on the system. This included unarmed transit ambassadors, reduced fare programs, and unhoused outreach workers.
 - ii. He noted that transit systems need to effectively communicate their efforts around public safety to riders, constituents, and those populations most aided by these efforts. Van Eyken recommended that agencies are clear and transparent with their data and the results of any pilot programs.
- d. **Member questions and comments:**
 - i. Member James Wen asked if the funds for the fare evasion citations flow to Metro or law enforcement partners. He also asked if Metro has data on how many citations are paid to see if revenue generated outweighs the community feeling overpoliced.
 1. Van Eyken highlighted Member Wen's point, noting that if the current model for fare enforcement was an effective deterrent, we would see the rates going down, not remaining consistent.
 2. Metro staff responded that funds from citations come back to the agency into the general fund.
 - ii. Member Tajsar asked Alfonso to share more about ACT-LA's proposal regarding the physical spaces that Metro owns and their cost.
 1. Alfonso replied that bus lanes are a cost-effective strategy, do not require street widening, and would greatly improve the reliability of bus service that

- carries most of Metro's existing ridership.
 - 2. Regarding property that Metro currently owns, he noted that the 7th & Metro station may present opportunity to provide services and support for unhoused riders.
- iii. Member Smith asked presenters what recommendations they would most like to see PSAC undertake.
 - 1. Directo replied he would like to see funding going toward community safety strategies instead of police.
 - a. Van Eyken echoed this comment and highlighted the importance of making riders feel welcomed in transit spaces and vehicles.
 - 2. Martinez cited the importance of Metro acknowledging the racially disparate harm the agency has done and recommended that agency representatives come to the table as honest negotiators with civil rights groups.

Public Safety Budget Presentation

Metro staff presented a draft of the FY23 System Security and Law Enforcement (SSLE) budget and received feedback from members.

- a. **Context setting:** Metro Chief Safety Officer Gina Osborn reviewed components of the FY23 SSLE budget draft including the costs for SSLE administrative staff, the new analytics division, security and law enforcement operations, physical security, Metro Center Street Project, and emergency management.
- b. **Questions and comments:**
 - i. Member Smith asked for more information on the type of data the intelligence gathering unit will be using and cited the ineffective ways crime data has been used in the past.
 - 1. Osborn replied that the analytics safety program is an effort for Metro to be more preventive and proactive. They will be taking from different types of data, including data from law enforcement.
 - 2. Member Smith responded that preventive measures should focus on the root causes of issues such as homeless outreach, free transportation, housing, and other issues outside of policing crime.
 - 3. Member Smith requested that Metro share with PSAC the specific law enforcement data that will be used.
 - a. Osborn replied that law enforcement analytics will only be one piece of the information they use to create actionable intelligence.
 - b. Osborn indicated that this effort was focused on curbing bad behavior on the system to increase rider safety.
 - ii. Member Davis shared that predictably technology has historically been harmful to vulnerable communities and should not continue to receive so many resources. He suggested efforts go into strengthening law enforcement alternatives.
 - 1. Officer Osborn replied that a goal of the analytics division is to break down silos to increase information sharing and close information gaps.
 - 2. Metro staff added that data being looked at also includes social indicators of health, not solely crime data.
 - iii. Member Tajsar expressed concern with having a program that is heavily invested in policing as a solution to problems because these programs have been shown to be

detrimental to the lives of vulnerable populations. He asked what the purpose of predictive data was besides increasing policing.

1. Osborne replied that law enforcement will only be part of preventive efforts.
- iv. Member de Rivera shared concerned that policing “behavior” – in response to Osborn’s earlier comment – is inherently racist because it has been used as a selective enforcement tool that discriminates based on skin color and does not take into consideration cultural differences.
- v. Member Annang questioned what “behavior” means in the context of Osborn’s earlier statement and stated that leaving the interpretation of behavior up to law enforcement makes for a very dangerous situation for people of color and other vulnerable communities. She stressed that changing the language Metro uses to ensure humanity for all is a goal of PSAC’s efforts.
- vi. **Next Steps:** Facilitator France announced that the facilitation team will work with Metro to discuss what the follow-up to today’s conversation will look like.

Budget Allocation Exercise

Facilitator Mahdi provided a brief overview of the budget feedback from committee members and will provide a deeper dive at the following PSAC meeting.

IV. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants.

- a. Commentor shared concern with the public safety budget presentation and the fact that it does not address racial inequities. They added they are disappointed in the direction Metro is going with their public safety approach, despite the popularity and transformative potential of alternatives that have been raised through the PSAC process.

V. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

VI. Next Steps

- a. The committee will reconvene on 03/16/22.