

# Recommendations on PSAC's Recruitment and Outreach for Future Committees

## About these Recommendations

This document lays out the Public Safety Advisory Committee's (PSAC, the committee) vision for recruiting future cohorts of the committee, as defined during an group discussion at the July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 General Committee meeting. Currently, Metro staff are working to produce a detailed workplan for the next term of the advisory committee and have requested committee members' input on recruitment and outreach processes. The following recommendations include identifying key constituencies from which Metro should recruit new members, outreach strategies to reach these groups, barriers to participation, and improvements to the application process. Implementing these recommendations are an opportunity for new advisory committee members to more accurately reflect the transit-dependent populations of Los Angeles County and to build upon the foundation the committee has laid over the past year.

## Key Constituencies

Consistent with the key constituencies identified in both the [Public Safety Ecosystem](#) and [Community Engagement of Public Safety Topics](#) recommendations, the following describes the communities and population groups Metro should engage to recruit future committee cohorts:

Metro should recruit new PSAC members that are transit-riders, particularly **low-income and unhoused transit-riders** who make up a majority of Metro's existing users. The agency should also aim to have the committee composition represent the demographics of the riders, paying special attention to **Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities; women; youth; older adults; people with disabilities; LGBTQIA+ individuals; victims of crime; formerly incarcerated; immigrant; and neurodivergent** riders. It should work collaboratively with organizations representing these populations to recruit and support potential committee members throughout the application process. Equally important to the process, the inclusion of **frontline Metro employees** and participants with firsthand experience in **public safety and social services on Metro** will provide necessary insight into the on-the-ground workings of the system. Metro should also **reach out to members of the public who have attended PSAC meetings** and invite them to apply.

## Recommendations on Outreach

PSAC has articulated the following recommendations to improve outreach strategies for committee member recruitment:

- **Importance of including key constituencies:** PSAC members acknowledge the successful diversity of the first committee cohort, and through the lessons learned over the past year, have expanded the range of key constituencies to recruit from more underrepresented communities. Engaging and recruiting from the identified key constituencies to provide feedback on Metro's public safety topics is essential as transit riders from different groups will experience safety differently on the system. Metro's public safety strategies will benefit from this increased diversity

as more perspectives will shape their implementation and outcomes. However, the committee cautions against forcing members to out themselves as members of a specific committee in order to join the committee. Consultation with Metro's Office of Equity and Race can help address this sensitivity.

- **In-Person outreach:** PSAC highlighted the need for prioritizing in-person engagement as part of the recruitment for future committee cohorts, with particular focus on in-station engagement and at other locations where high numbers of Metro riders are present. This engagement strategy will be best actualized through the employment of CBO representatives, on-system advertising, and in-person events. CBOs have established relationships working with their constituencies and can identify strong champions with the necessary experience to participate in PSAC. Additionally, thus advertising on vehicles will expose riders to the opportunity to join the committee. Potential PSAC members must have regular interaction with the Metro system. Lastly, in-person outreach at transit stations and community events meets riders where they are at and advertises the opportunity to those riders with limited access to technology. Potential Metro representatives for this outreach can include current committee members as volunteers, transit ambassadors, and elevator attendants.
- **Social media:** PSAC recommends using social media to expand the reach of recruitment activities to a wider audience. Metro can host live-streaming sessions to discuss PSAC and share information about the recruitment process. Additionally, social media is a valuable tool to increase engagement with youth riders. Metro has experience of partnering with social media personalities to promote advisory committees and other Metro initiatives. Previous examples include the *Metro Manners* campaign starring Anna Akana or *Safetyville* campaign for rail safety. By making promotional content for PSAC and other advisory committees, the committee's work is exposed to a wider audience and it can facilitate an increase in applications to the committee. However, Metro should not eschew more traditional forms of advertisement. The committee also recommends utilizing advertisements on television, radio, and local newspapers to boost participation.

## Barriers to Participation

- **Overcoming technology barriers:** Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, PSAC meetings have been conducted online via the Zoom platform. Several committee members shared challenges of lacking adequate broadband connectivity and necessary technology to fully participate in PSAC meetings. This will likely pose an issue for future PSAC participants as well, with many low-income communities in the Metro service area lacking access to reliable and affordable internet. PSAC recommends that Metro subsidize access to broadband services and provide the necessary equipment when required to bridge the digital divide for future members. Additionally, PSAC encourages the use of in-person meetings at accessible times to combat this difference in digital access, within COVID safety protocols.
- **Accommodating parents and working members:** Many PSAC members are working parents and have specific needs that offer a barrier to meeting committee commitments. Committee meetings have been scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, when many members are just leaving work. While virtual meetings have alleviated the challenges of travel time, future in-person meetings will present difficulties. Access to childcare is unequal for different communities. The provision of childcare can help parents to more fully participate in committee meetings. PSAC recommends providing child care resources for both members and the attending members of the

public at in-person events. Additionally, holding meetings at times outside of working hours will help parents and working members be present and reduce stress from commuting. The committee recommends adjusting meeting times to include nights and weekends, which will increase access for working people to attend as committee members or audience participants.

- **Language accessibility:** PSAC calls for written, spoken, and recorded outreach materials to be written plainly and translated/interpreted into as many languages as possible. Plain language reduces barriers for committee members to understand complicated professional jargon. One of the key challenges for first-term PSAC members was learning how to read and access Metro-drafted materials, notably Board reports. Metro staff can draft written materials with this layperson audience in mind or can host learning opportunities with advisory committee members to build understanding of these materials. Additionally, proactive translation and interpretation services, meaning providing these services/materials without public request, should also be standard to improve the experience of English as a second language committee members and attending members of the public. There are more than 180 languages spoken in LA County and Metro should act proactively to ensure recruitment materials are ready to meet the needs of these various communities.
- **Building understanding of Metro's public safety ecosystem:** PSAC members cite getting up to speed on Metro's current public safety ecosystem and all associated programs as one of the key challenges to the early phases of PSAC. The committee recommends that more emphasis is placed on educating members in the early stages of their tenure. This will ensure higher levels of participation and a more robust understanding of the context that the agency is operating within. Special "bootcamp" sessions, one-on-one check-ins with members, or change in the agency's approach to presentations can help educate new members. The committee also recommends that there is a continuity of committee members between the first and second terms, to ensure that the institutional knowledge that has been built up remains.

## Application and Interview Process

- **Drawing on the experience of current members:** PSAC recommends having current and former members be involved in the application review and interview process as advisory members. This will help to provide insight for applicants and Metro staff to the requirements of being a committee member. During the interview process, members would be able to identify strengths in potential candidates that are best suited to work in the committee and provide recommendations as to gaps in the current recruitment selection regarding the communities represented.
- **Application Assistance:** PSAC's application and interview process can be confusing, especially for people who may not have experience applying for advisory committees or navigating municipal bureaucracy. Offering application and interview assistance would help low-income and disabled applicants be more competitive in the recruitment process. This support may include providing translations of the application, assistance with filling out forms, and interview preparation assistance.