

Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee General Committee Meeting #15

MINUTES

Wednesday, November 17th, 2021

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

A. Zoom Meeting Protocols

Facilitator Richard France called the meeting to order. Facilitator Thomson Dryjanski announced Spanish and American Sign Language interpreter services would be available throughout the meeting.

B. Agenda

Facilitator France reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

C. Roll Call

Present: Andrea Urmanita, Ashley Ajayi, Carrie Madden, Charles Hammerstein, Chauncey Smith, Clarence Davis, Constance Strickland, Darryl Goodus, Esteban Garcia, Fabian Gallardo, Florence Annang, Glenda Murrell, James Wen, Jessica Kellogg, Jose Raigoza, Ma'ayan Dembo, Maricela De Rivera, Mohammad Tajsar, Dr. Sabrina Howard, Scarlett de Leon

Absent: Raul Gomez

D. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 11/03/21

Committee members voted to approve the meeting minutes for the November 3rd, 2021 meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

E. New Co-Facilitator Introduction

The facilitation team introduced their new co-facilitator, Asma Mahdi, Senior Policy Director of Better World Group, who will be co-facilitating the PSAC General Committee meetings with Facilitator France.

II. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commentor from the Labor Community Strategy Center praised the action PSAC took at the previous meeting, where they approved a memorandum to not support the extension of the multi-agency policing contracts.
- B. Commentor phoned in on behalf of the union that represents Metro's maintenance workers to indicate he did not support PSAC's action to not support the extension of the multi-agency policing contracts, citing lack of police responsiveness. Additionally, he indicated the new position of Transit Ambassadors must be union positions.
- C. Commentor requested additional surveillance cameras in and around elevators at transit stations.
- D. Commentor indicated that he is a frequent rail rider and has not seen police officers enforcing the code of conduct on transit.
- E. Commentor indicated that the removal of police officers does not ensure the safety of riders, particularly for female riders.

III. Discussion

A. **Discussion and Approval of the Non-Law Enforcement Ad hoc Committee's Recommendations on a Forthcoming Transit Ambassador Program**

The committee discussed and then approved the recommendations from the Non-Law Enforcement ad hoc committee (NLEA AHC) pertaining to the goals, objectives, roles, and responsibilities of a Transit Ambassador program.

- a. **Context-setting:** Facilitator Mahdi indicated that these recommendations are high-level and will require further consultation between the NLEA AHC and Metro staff. Additionally, she encouraged members to provide feedback at the appropriate level, with more detailed feedback coming at a later phase of the process.
- b. **Presentation from NLEA AHC representatives:** Members Raigoza and Wen provided an overview presentation on the recommendations, sharing the objectives and reasoning behind each recommendation.
- c. **Objective:** Member Raigoza described Transit Ambassadors as community-facing unarmed individuals who would help welcome and support riders on the transit system. He described the recommendations as a high-level framework that describes a mature program.
- d. **Deployment:** Member de Rivera shared the importance of deploying transit ambassadors in high need areas.
 - i. Member de Leon shared that these are ideal recommendations and there will be discussions about deployment at a future phase.
- e. **Ambassadors as Metro employees:** Member Ajayi shared her concerns that Ambassadors would not have a vested interest in the program's success if they were contracted employees.
 - i. Member Raigoza replied that the AHC had discussed this topic and at a future phase would discuss a system of performance standards for this role.
 - ii. Member de Rivera indicated that she feels this position should begin as Metro employees, despite the possible extended timeline and difficulties of standing up this program.
- f. **Use of de-escalation techniques:** Member Strickland felt there should be multiple categories of Ambassadors, where one group focuses on customer service but does not intervene in situations, and another group that is focused on de-escalating situations.
 - i. Member de Leon shared that the AHC agrees with this concept, and they had envisioned multiple levels of Ambassadors with different levels of training and responsibilities.
 - ii. Facilitator France proposed to amend recommendation #4 to specify that certain classes of Ambassadors will engage in de-escalation and other classes of Ambassadors will not engage in this activity.
- g. **Edit to recommendation #10:** Member de Leon proposed to add an additional amendment to this recommendation that specified the different classes of Ambassadors, to better align recommendation #10 with the amendment to recommendation #4.
- h. **Ad hoc committee response to Metro staff recommendations:** Members Wen and Raigoza laid out the committee's response to Metro's recommendation that this program should initially be staffed by an outside contractor during the pilot phase. They shared a series of questions and next steps that Metro staff must address. This includes:
 - i. Questions:
 1. How will Metro ensure that contracted staff have access to professional development opportunities?
 2. How will Metro ensure that the selected contractors have diverse leadership/management overseeing the scope of work?
 3. Will the contract require bilingual pay differentials?
 4. Will contracted staff have access to health care?
 - ii. Next Steps for the AHC to consider:
 1. Determining a deployment strategy for the pilot Transit Ambassador program
 2. Working with Metro to define contracting and/or hiring parameters for the pilot program launch

3. Identifying evaluation metrics and recommendations for accountability measures
 4. Defining training requirements and providing input on a job description
 5. Further defining the supportive ecosystem (e.g., additional service providers) for Ambassadors
- i. **Metro's response to this proposal:** Metro Chief of Staff Englund shared the process that would occur following this vote. She indicated that all recommendations from the ad hoc committee would be provided in tandem with Metro staff recommendations to the Metro Board.
 - i. Member de Rivera wanted to ensure that there was a clear distinction between PSAC memorandums and Metro staff memorandums in the documents shared with the Metro Board.
 - ii. Member de Rivera also requested that for future reports to the Board PSAC recommendations are presented to the Board before Metro staff recommendations, in the order they are attached to the Board report.
 - j. **General Committee response to the ad hoc committee's response:** Members responded to the proposal of questions and next steps from the ad hoc committee to Metro staff.
 - i. Member de Rivera indicated that this job must support PSAC's values of uplifting and investing in BIPOC communities.
 - ii. Member Tasjar echoed Member de Rivera's comment. He also recommended removing the words "access to" from recommendation #13.
 1. The committee agreed to remove these words from the recommendation.
 - iii. Member Goodus indicated that he wanted the committee to be rolled out in a timely fashion.
 - k. **Language Barriers:** Member Davis indicated the importance of hiring Ambassadors with language competencies.
 - l. **Timeline:** Member Ajayi asked if Metro had an idea of the timeline required to begin this program.
 - i. Metro Chief of Staff Englund indicated that there are several variables, such as whether they will be working directly with one community-based organization or several providers.
 - m. **Modifications to the recommendations:** Facilitator France proposed the following modifications to the recommendations that the committee would be voting on. He laid out the following:
 - i. Amend recommendation #4 to describe different job classifications for ambassadors;
 - ii. Amend recommendation #10 to align with recommendation #4 by describing a system of advancement through job positions;
 - iii. And remove the words "access to" from recommendation #13.
 - iv. The committee agreed with these amendments.
 - n. **Public Comment**
 - i. Commentor from the Labor Community Strategy Center supported the committee's decision to recommend the Ambassador positions are union jobs. They also expressed concerns that Metro staff is sharing their own recommendations that differ from the committee.
 - ii. Member representing Metro's maintenance worker unions indicated that the timeline for setting up a program with union jobs is not as time-intensive as Metro claimed during the meeting. He used the Metro microtransit program as an example. He supported setting up the ambassador program with union jobs.
 - o. **Test for consensus:** Facilitator France proposed approving the ad hoc committee's recommendations with the modifications.
 - i. The committee agreed with this proposal.
 - p. **Vote to approve modified Non-Law Enforcement Alternatives ad hoc committee recommendations**
 - i. Yes: 12 No: 0 Abstain: 0
 - ii. The item was approved.

IV. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commentor shared their dissatisfaction with the current state of public safety on the Metro system.
- B. Commentor shared the importance of having police officers walking up and down transit vehicles to enforce the code of conduct.

V. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM

VI. Next Steps

- A. The committee will reconvene on November 29th, 2021.