

# Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee General Committee Meeting #25

## Meeting Summary

Wednesday, April 20, 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:** Andrea Urmanita, Ashley Ajayi, Carrie Madden, Darryl Goodus, Florence Annang, Charles Hammerstein, Glenda Murrell, James Wen, Jose Raigoza, Maricela de Rivera, Chauncey Smith, Constance Strickland, Mohammad Tajsar, Esteban Gallardo, Ma'ayan Dembo, Clarence Davis

**Absent:** Scarlett de Leon, Raul Gomez, Jessica Kellogg, Sabrina Howard

#### d. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 04/06/22

- i. Committee members voted to approve the meeting minutes for the April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting.
- ii. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

#### e. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Meeting Summaries

### II. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants.

- a. Commentor urged PSAC members to intervene in Metro's proposed intelligence framework and Code of Conduct because they are not consistent with PSAC's previous recommendations.
- b. Commentor shared appreciation for Metro's work on the Gender Action Plan.

### III. Discussion

#### **Dissenting Opinion: Discussion of Process and Q&A**

Committee members discussed the process for submitting a dissenting opinion on the committee's recommendations on the policing contracts that passed in January.

- a. **Context Setting:** Facilitator France reviewed PSAC's process and invited the opinion's authors to provide more information on their areas of concern.
- b. **Timing:** Member Madden shared that she voted no on recommendations because they seemed to move too fast for the disabled and older adult communities she represents.
  - i. Member Garcia agreed that the timing feels rushed but also sympathized with a sense of urgency in light of the Sheriff's recent comments.
- c. **Shift from Contracted Law Enforcement:** Member Goodus commented that he voted against the recommendations because he feels transit ambassadors and other programs will need law enforcement during their initial implementation. He cited South Pasadena as a city that did not support a non-contracted model.
  - i. Member Tajsar mentioned that Metro's crime data demonstrates that crime on Metro has either stayed the same or decreased since 2017.
  - ii. Member Raigoza shared that in the areas where he supervises Metro buses, he has seen an increase in calls for onboard disruptions in the last two to three months. He has also noticed de-escalation efforts have not been effective recently. He reiterated his support for a layered approach to security on Metro.
  - iii. Member Garcia added that it is important to involve other government partners and their resources to support Metro's public safety efforts.

#### **Review of Code of Conduct Recommendations**

Committee members discussed and voted to approve their recommendations on Metro's Code of Conduct.

- a. **Committee Reactions:**
  - i. Member Madden thanked members for reading attachment A – the memorandum from CALIF-ILC – and clarified that the authors of the document are community members, not paid CALIF employees.
  - ii. Member Raigoza shared that having the Code of Conduct in place allows operators and security to be able to have a framework for ensuring safe rides.
    1. Member Murrell thanked member Raigoza for highlighting the importance of the Code of Conduct and stressed its importance to ensure the safety of disabled and older adult riders.
  - iii. Member Wen shared concern around Attachment A's recommendation for the enforcement of 6-05-120.A, prohibiting loitering in Metro facilities and vehicles. He suggested the recommendation to increase enforcement against loitering be struck

from the recommendation.

1. Facilitator France shared that Attachment A does not represent PSAC's views and therefore will not be edited. Instead, additional clarification was added to Recommendation #11.

b. **Presentation from Metro:** Metro staff stated that ensuring all Metro users have a safe and dignified experience is a responsibility shared by riders and the agency. They will be structuring the code as expectations instead of behaviors, producing recognizable signage, separating penal code items from administrative codes, and investing in the TransitWatch application.

- i. Member Ajayi asked for some clarification on who will be enforcing the code of conduct.
  1. Gina responded that transit security officers will be handling fare enforcement and code of conduct.
  2. Member Ajayi asked what the role of transit ambassadors will be in enforcing the code of conduct.
    - a. Metro staff responded that transit ambassadors will not be enforcing code of conduct.
  3. Facilitator France asked what enforcement currently looks like on the system.
    - a. Member Raigoza shared that he has never seen someone being ticketed on a bus. He stated Metro operators try to focus on intervention.
      - i. Member Davis responded that he has not seen many being ticketed but the few he has witnessed have been Black riders.
    - b. Member Murrell also agreed that they rarely enforce fare and commented on the importance of training for operators to ensure effective communication.

c. **Discussion**

- i. **Using a different mechanism:** Member Tajsar shared that the codes are problematic because they are punitive, rather than infractions and that many of the policies are quality of life issues. He also raised concerns that the Code of Conduct is being used as a mechanism to target specific groups of people.
  1. Member Raigoza expressed support for Member Tajsar's comment. He shared an experience with a rider that would have been removed due to extreme odor but still needed to ride the bus due to life-threatening illness to highlight the gray area of the Code's policies.
  2. Member Tajsar agreed with Member Raigoza and suggested that some of

the things included in the Code of Conduct may not belong.

- ii. **Safety of Operators:** Member Davis stated that there should be more attention and resources dedicated to preventing attacks on operators and ensuring their safety.
- iii. **Street Vendors:** Member Ajayi recommended that the committee remove the prohibition against vendors and suggested more space be made to include them in Metro areas.
- iv. Member Garcia shared that they don't agree with Recommendation #9, as Metro needs to establish standards for what is allowed in enclosed spaces of the vehicles. They provided the example of excessive noise and how it may impact riders with noise sensitivities.
  - 1. Member Tajsar restated his point on the importance of establishing a model for reconciling conflicts between riders and acknowledging that the current Code of Conduct doesn't achieve that.
- d. **Modified Proposal:** Facilitator France asked members if they supported moving forward with the proposal with the following edits
  - 1. Recommendation #9: add additional context specifying that PSAC does not support a punitive Code of Conduct mechanism to solve the systemic issues on the Metro transit system.
  - 2. Recommendation #9: add sections 6-05-090.A-B to the table. This addition to the recommendations requests the removal of language barring commercial activity in Metro facilities or vehicles.
  - 3. Recommendation #14: add recommendation for a Metro public safety advertising campaign promoting safety for riders, community members, and Metro employees and vehicle operators.
- e. **Public Comment**
  - i. Commentor shared that, as a rider, they have never seen the code of conduct enforced and have had instances where they could not hear the public safety address system because of loud music being played
- f. **Voting Action**
  - i. Vote to approve PSAC's code of conduct recommendations
    - 1. Yes:10 No:0 Abstain:2
    - 2. The item was approved

#### IV. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants.

- a. Commentor wrote in support of LA County Sheriff's bid to provide police services for the LA Metro system. They referenced the violence they have experienced as a rider on Metro.
- b. Commentor asked if there has been any research in establishing a number where riders can

text or call in to have an automated message play on cars or trains regarding the Code of Conduct.

V. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

VI. Next Steps

- a. The committee will reconvene on 05/04/22.