

# Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee

## General Committee Meeting #32

### Meeting Summary

Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 Dryjanski announced that 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, Darryl Goodus, Glenda Murrell, Maricela de Rivera, Chauncey Smith, Esteban Gallardo, Scarlett de Leon, Clarence Davis, Constance Strickland, Florence Annang, Glenda Murrell, Mohammad Tajsar

**Absent:** Raul Gomez, Jessica Kellogg, Jose Raigoza, Sabrina Howard, Charles Hammerstein, Ma'ayan Dembo, Ashley Ajayi

##### d. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for 07/20/22**

- i. Committee members voted to approve the meeting minutes for the July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, General Committee meeting.
- ii. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

#### II. General Public Comment

The facilitators opened public comment. No comments were provided.

#### III. Discussion Items

##### **Item 1: ACT-LA Activation Event Announcement**

Scarlett de Leon (Alliance for Community Transit LA & PSAC) provided an overview of ACT-LA's upcoming event. The event is being held in partnership with Metro and LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell's office.

- a. **Context setting:** Member De Leon provided an overview of the activation event. Located at the Compton station, the event will demonstrate community safety strategies through temporary environmental design strategies. It will also feature other tactics endorsed by PSAC such as station programming, public education campaigns, the presence of social services, notification of

- job opportunities, and other care-centered spatial tactics.
- b. Transit Ambassadors:** Metro staff shared that transit ambassadors will not be able to join the activation, but Metro will be providing “blue shirt” security staff instead.
  - c. Expanding program:** Member Garcia asked if the group was interested in conducting these events in other supervisorial districts.
    - i. Member De Leon replied that the goal is to have activations in every district but currently the organization needs to identify additional capacity and funding.
  - b. Volunteers:** Members Tajsar and Annang shared that they plan to volunteer to participate in the activation.

## **Item 2: Vote on the Public Safety Analytics and Bias-Free Policing Policy Recommendations**

Committee members voted to approve these recommendations from the Non-Law Enforcement Alternatives ad-hoc committee.

- a. Context Setting:** Facilitator Dryjanski noted that the recommendations were discussed and modified during the 7/20 General Committee meeting but were not approved because the committee did not have the attendance to reach a simple majority in a vote.
- b. Voting Action**
  - i. The committee voted to approve the modified recommendations on Metro’s Public Safety Analytics and Bias-Free Policing Policy:
    - 1. Yes: 10 votes No: 0 votes Abstain: 0 votes
    - 2. The recommendations were approved.

## **Item 3: Transit Ambassadors Update**

Committee members received an update on the status of Metro’s new transit ambassador program.

- a. Context Setting:** Metro staff Gina Osborn provided an overview of Metro’s new transit ambassador program. The program will have a phased launch this fall. PSAC’s recommendations played a key role in the development of the ambassador’s training curriculum.
- b. Discussion:** Committee members provided feedback on the pilot transit ambassador program.
  - i. **Ambassador Safety and Protocol:** Member Davis asked if PSAC could view uniform mockups. He also asked for more information on Metro’s plans for ensuring ambassador safety.
    - 1. Metro staff replied that they are exploring designating any assault on Metro staff as a felony. They also indicated that staff would provide an update on uniforms when possible.
  - ii. **Contracting and Supervision:** Member Tajsar asked for clarification on what party – Metro or the subcontractor – will oversee hiring and transit ambassador supervision.
    - 1. Metro Staff responded the transit ambassador program will be supervised by the

- Customer Experience team at Metro. Regarding hiring, the subcontractor manages hiring but Metro has the authority to dismiss workers that do not meet Metro's standards.
2. Member Tajsar requested that Metro share recruitment opportunities for the transit ambassador program with PSAC members to aid by publicizing the job postings to their networks.
- iii. **Pilot Region:** Member de Rivera asked whether there is a location or region that is targeted to deploy the program or if it will be launched systemwide.
1. Metro staff replied that deployment areas are still being determined but they highlighted areas where the Respect the Ride program is occurring as key locations. They added that ambassadors may also be deployed at the Crenshaw Line opening.
  2. Additionally, Member de Rivera noted that the committee's goal for ambassadors is to improve safety for riders of color. She hopes the program will not lead to increased policing for these communities.
- iv. **Ambassador Communication with Security Staff:** Member Garcia asked Metro staff about the process for transit ambassadors to communicate with other Metro security personnel when confronted with a situation beyond their capacity i.e., a violent incident.
1. Metro staff replied that as part of the agency's multi-layered approach, Metro will train ambassadors to be knowledgeable of the appropriate security partner to call in those instances.
- v. **Customer Experience Headquarters:** Member Davis suggested having a customer experience location at the Crenshaw station to serve as a hub for community resources.
1. Metro staff shared the new Customer Experience chief Jennifer Vitas is working on improving the resources Metro offers.
- vi. **Funding for Transit Ambassadors Contractors:** Member Smith shared concerns that most of the program's funds are going to RMI International. He is concerned because the company offers armed security staff. He recommended that a larger portion of funding be awarded to the other subcontractor because they are working directly with community organizations.
1. Metro staff replied that transit ambassadors will not be armed. Additionally, they noted that RMI will be hiring new employees specifically for this program and will not be using the security staff they currently employ.
  2. Metro staff added that Strive Wellbeing, the other contractor, only proposed to provide coverage on rail stations/vehicles, whereas RMI will be providing coverage at all Metro locations, hence the difference in funding.
- vii. **Ambassador Schedules:** Member Annang asked for more information on the proposed schedules for ambassadors.
1. Metro staff responded that there will be two shifts: 6 AM to 2 PM and 2 PM to 10

PM. For safety reasons, transit ambassadors will not be deployed overnight.

2. Member Annang also asked how riders will be able to identify where ambassadors are stationed as the program rolls out.
  - a. Metro staff replied that they have not discussed whether the deployment schedule for ambassadors will be publicized, but they will consider that possibility.
- viii. **Deployment & Mental Health Services:** Member Goodus commented that he hopes the ambassador's deployment will be determined through an equitable process to ensure that stations in need are not overlooked. He also shared that he hopes mental health services will be supporting ambassadors.
- ix. **Ambassador Schedule:** Member Davis suggested Metro revisit the scheduling for ambassador shifts. Citing his experience as a security guard, he noted that 2-10 PM is a difficult time for workers and that may lead to low-performing staff.
  1. Member Murrell suggested an earlier start time of 4 AM, citing this as the time when she experiences the most incidents where additional staff is needed.

#### **Item 4: Onboard Bus Safety Strategies Recommendations**

Members discussed and voted to approve the Onboard Bus Safety Strategies Recommendations. Developed in the Non-Law Enforcement Alternatives ad hoc committee, these recommendations propose strategies to improve bus operator and passenger safety on Metro buses.

- a. **Context Setting:** Facilitator France reviewed the key themes of the recommendations, including a focus on operator safety, additional data requests to inform care-centered deployment of these strategies, and an expansion of what measures contribute to public safety on buses.
- b. **Discussion:** Committee members provided feedback on the recommendations and offered modifications for the final draft of recommendations.
  - i. **Emergency Buttons:** Member Davis recommended there be different buttons available to operators for medical reasons and other emergencies. He added that the buttons could also correspond to a lighting system outside of the bus or train that signals responding staff the type of emergency on board.
    1. Metro staff confirmed there is an SOS button available for operators.
    2. Member Murrell shared that there is a "Call the Police" alert that is visible outside of trains and buses when prompted by drivers in an emergency. She also shared that drivers already have two-way radio that is used to call dispatch for medical emergencies.
  - ii. **Operator Teams:** Member Garcia asked about the practicality of deploying operators in pairs given current staffing shortages. He also asked if Metro could partner with LA County to better serve unincorporated areas.
    1. Member Murrell shared that operators already go out in pairs in the morning, and she appreciates having a partner to split responsibilities.

- iii. **Funding Priorities:** Member de Rivera expressed appreciation for the acknowledgment of Metro's budget constraints. Given this, she recommended that adding staff and expanding Metro's cleaning capacity should be a priority over an additional panic button.

**c. Public Comments**

- iv. No public comments were provided

**d. Proposal:** Facilitator Dryjanski put forward a proposal to approve the recommendations with the following modifications:

- i. Modify "deploy bus operators in pairs" to "use a buddy system that deploys vehicle operators with additional staffing support."
- ii. Add "LA County" as a potential partner to serve "unincorporated areas."
- iii. Add a recommendation calling for "modifications to the operator panic button" and note that members requested this item be "lower priority when compared to staffing and rider environment improvements."

**e. Voting action**

- i. The committee voted to approve the modified recommendations on Metro's bus safety strategies:
  - 1. Yes: 9 votes No: 0 votes Abstain: 0 votes
  - 2. The item was approved.

#### IV. General Public Comment

General public comment was taken.

- a. A commentator recommended that PSAC use more accessible language in their documents to reach participants with different reading comprehension levels.
- b. A commentator urged Metro to improve cleanliness on trains and platforms.
- c. A commentator asked for more information on the uniforms used by transit ambassadors, to ensure riders with disabilities can identify ambassadors.
  - i. Metro staff took the commenter's contact info and will reach out with more information.

#### v. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.