



## Board Report

File #: 2015-1667, File Type: Informational Report

Agenda Number:

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### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 18, 2016

#### **SUBJECT: SAFE SPACE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

#### **ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the quarterly status report on **Metro's sexual harassment campaign and preview of fall 2015 Customer Satisfaction Survey.**

#### **ISSUE**

Metro is continuing with a ground breaking campaign against sexual harassment called "It's Off Limits." The campaign was launched on April 1, 2015 and updated on October 1, 2015. Advertisements are in place on buses and rail cars across the system. The fall 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 22 percent of respondents answered "yes" to the question "in the past six months, while riding on Metro, have you personally experienced unwanted sexual contact including, but not limited to, comments, touching and exposure." As a result of the unacceptably high percentage of riders affirming their exposure to sexual harassment, Metro formed a high-level, cross-departmental task force with representatives of Mayor Garcetti and Supervisors Antonovich and Kuehl. The "It's Off Limits" campaign resulted in a decline of reported incidents of sexual harassment from the fall 2014 to the spring 2015 survey from 22 percent to 19 percent. To double down on the successful campaign, Metro's Sexual Harassment Awareness task force updated messaging with a call to action of "Speak Up" and re-launched "It's Off Limits" with a press conference on October 15, 2015. Metro is one of only a handful of transit agencies worldwide that regularly asks passengers about experiences of sexual harassment. Independent studies of large, international transit agencies indicate that New York City is considered to have one of the safest systems for women with a sexual harassment reporting rate of 63 percent.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### **Results**

Metro is successful in placing the issue of sexual harassment awareness before riders and the public at large in a method that empowers victims and witnesses of occurrences by encouraging them to make reports to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Metro has been conducting the most

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recent Customer Satisfaction Survey in February and the question related to sexual harassment is included. Full result should be available in March.

### **Analysis**

The Customer Satisfaction Survey queries about 20,000 Metro bus and rail riders and, with an error rate of  $\pm$  two percent, is considered the most thorough of its kind in the transit industry on sexual harassment. Nearly all other large transportation agencies rely on studies from academia or news organizations for data on sexual harassment but those surveys are done infrequently. Metro believes any level of sexual harassment is too high and efforts will continue to reduce the number of incidents to make Metro a safe place for all passengers.

### **Actions Compliant with Item 55**

**Task Force** - Designed updates messaging for "It's Off Limits" and held a press conference on October 15, 2015 to disseminate continued action to ensure a positive experience for all riders. The Task Force reconvened in February 2016 to update and refresh outreach to keep Metro's safety message top-of-mind for our customers.

### **Community Input**

- Community Roundtable: Metro has approved a Statement of Work and a procurement process is underway to identify a qualified contractor to form, engage, and manage a Community Roundtable on issues of safe space and sexual harassment to better connect with customers and inform Metro's response to these issues. The Community Roundtable is envisioned to meet periodically for one year. It can be extended at the Board's instruction.
- Review APTA best practices: There are no universally accepted standards for best practices, however, most advocacy groups and/or university studies include the following.
  1. Provide universal Wi-Fi and cell service underground
  2. Develop an app directly linked to the police and/or transit authority
  3. Have a dedicated phone number for victims of sexual harassment or abuse
  4. Install an alarm system to alert all conductors onboard
  5. Install phones on subway platforms that connect directly to the police
  6. Place cameras in subway cars (along with signs that let people know they are being watched)
  7. Ensure that public transport employees have been properly trained and are authorized to intervene
- Metro complies with all points except number one. Metro has exceeded best practices with its awareness campaign.

### **External Policy**

- The Metro Customer Code of Conduct has been updated to explicitly prohibit unwanted sexual attention and identity-based harassment.
- Metro has an on-going relationship with Peace Over Violence to provide non-law enforcement support options for victims.

## Internal Policy

- In April, Metro circulated to all front-line personnel, including operators, maintenance and custodial employees, a simple yet effective method for summoning assistance in the event a Metro employee is the first point of contact for a rider who suffers sexual harassment or any other crime or complaint. The same instructions were circulated to all employees in July. Metro security is in the process of developing further materials that could include a training video.
- Metro has reviewed all station, bus stop and transit vehicle design guidelines and is in compliance with all appropriate laws.

## NEXT STEPS

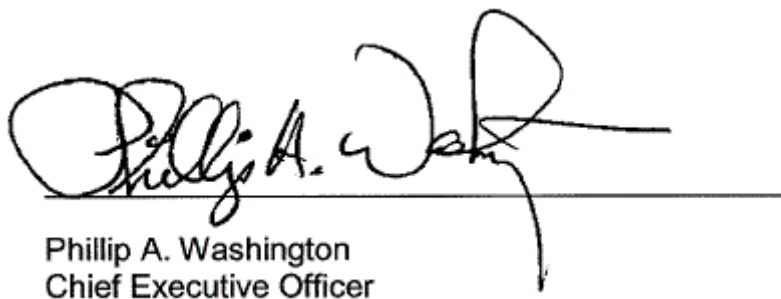
The latest Customer Satisfaction Survey is expected to be completed in February with completed data sets available by March. The results will be analyzed and modifications to our outreach will be amended as warranted. A press conference to announce an updated "It's Off Limits" campaign is tentatively scheduled for April 2016.

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 55

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