



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 27.

OPERATIONS, SAFETY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JANUARY 21, 2021

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY UPDATE ON METRO'S HOMELESS OUTREACH EFFORTS

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE Update on Metro's Homeless Outreach Efforts.

ISSUE

In spring 2016, Metro created the Metro Homeless Task Force to address displaced persons that have turned to Metro's system and property for alternative shelter. Since then, Metro has made significant progress in addressing the homelessness issue by expanding its resources and partnering with community-based organizations.

BACKGROUND

The homelessness crisis has significantly grown in the last couple of years. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) released the results of the 2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, which showed 66,436 people in Los Angeles County experiencing homelessness. This represents a 12.7% rise from last year's Point-in-Time count of 58,936 homeless persons. The city of Los Angeles saw a 16.1% rise to 41,290 from last year's point-in-time count of 36,300 homeless persons.

DISCUSSION

P.A.T.H.

PATH outreach teams remain agile in their ability to use a crises deployment model to continue providing outreach and support to homeless persons. The outreach teams work hand in hand with law enforcement and work closely with the Departments of Health Services, Public Health and Mental Health to provide services and housing.

PATH's current level of staffing is 32 outreach workers. The optimum outreach number is 40. PATH has modified their daily outreach efforts to early and mid-morning deployment on rail. Lack of outreach staff limits outreach on Metro's system. Metro's rail system does not have a presence of outreach teams between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. P.A.T.H. is currently in the process of hiring two additional outreach workers and continue to actively recruit qualified personnel to fill the vacant positions. PATH recruits through their website, epath.org.

Quarterly Summary of Motel Placements

The demographics and justifications for July through December 2020 motel placements are contained in Attachment C.

PATH/DHS Pilot Program

As part of Metro's Customer Experience Plan the Department of Health Services' MOU is in the process of being extended to June 2023, contingent on Board approval. During the period of March 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021, Metro and the County Department of Health Services plan to pilot an expanded outreach model to assist Metro with Operation Shelter the Unsheltered and services for the unhoused at (6) six Metro stations. Amendment number two to the letter of agreement for multidisciplinary street-based engagement services is being drafted.

Metro Bus/Rail 4-Day Homeless Count

In Fall 2020, Metro SSLE in collaboration with our Law Enforcement partners and Operations conducted a 4-day Homeless Count on all directly operated bus and rail lines. Please see Attachment C for a detailed report of the findings. The following is a summary of the count:

Count Goals

- Establish baseline numbers for future trend analysis
- Inform near-term resource planning and outreach efforts
- Improve coordination with law enforcement and homeless services
- Identify technology requirements to develop automated solution.
- Develop lessons-learned to improve future counts

Count Methodology

- Rail Count (10/05/2020 to 10/09/2020)
 - Law Enforcement and Transit Security Officers counted homeless persons on trains and in stations at 7:00am and 7:00pm.
- Bus Count (11/09/2020 to 11/12/2020)
 - Bus Operators counted homeless persons on buses at 6:00am, 6:00pm, 12:00am, and 2:00am. Number count was recorded on fare box.
- All personnel recording count were provided a copy of LAHSA's Homeless Person Definition/Criteria Guidelines.

Summary of Findings - Rail

- Average Morning Homeless Population Total (AM): 598
- Average Morning Homeless Population On-Train (AM): 404
- Average Morning Homeless Population In-Station (AM): 194
- Average Evening Homeless Population Total (PM): 545
- Average Evening Homeless Population On-Train (PM): 307
- Average Evening Homeless Population In-Station (PM): 238

Summary of Findings - Bus

- Average Morning Homeless Population (6AM): 777
- Average Evening Homeless Population (6PM): 1,048
- Average Midnight Homeless Population (12AM): 338

- Average Late-Night Homeless Population (2AM): 269
- Service Council Region with Highest Homeless Population: Westside/Central

Next Steps

SSLE plans to execute subsequent rail and bus homeless counts to be performed on a quarterly basis. The second rail and bus homeless counts are tentatively scheduled for late January 2021. Additional counts will continue to aid us as we adjust our outreach efforts to focus on locations that are in need. We are working with the Executive Officer for Customer Experience to develop a method to obtain more detailed information on behaviors that are observed on the system to enable Metro to better determine the specific support that should be provided to assist the unhoused.

Metro Transit Ambassador Program

SSLE is working with Metro's WIN-LA Program to pilot a Transit Ambassador Program designed to assist law enforcement with Operation Shelter the Unsheltered that connects individuals to outreach services. Select ex-offenders will be recruited to work with law enforcement in this pilot program.

Operation "Shelter the Unsheltered"

Metro has taken a proactive role in developing innovative solutions to provide resources to homeless persons seeking shelter on Metro's system and infrastructures. Operation "Shelter the Unsheltered" is one of the solutions implemented to provide services to unhoused persons on Metro's system through coordinated efforts with County and City of Los Angeles. The Operation is a collaborative outreach effort between Metro's law enforcement partners and partnerships with PATH, The Dream Center and LA DOOR. The Operation began April 1, 2020 and is ongoing. Since the inception, the total number of individuals housed April 2020 through December 31, 2020 is 649.

Outreach Partnerships

LA DOOR - Los Angeles City Attorney's Office

The program is a recidivism reduction & drug diversion unit within the Los Angeles City Attorney's office. LA DOOR outreach teams participate in Operation "Shelter the Unsheltered". The outreach teams deploy to Union Station, MacArthur Park and 7th Street/Metro locations. The total number of contacts by LA DOOR beginning July 8, 2020 to date is 1,315.

The Dream Center - A community-based organization within Angeles Temple

Los Angeles faith-based organization provides outreach services at Union Station Friday nights, at the close of the station, providing end-of-the-line service to offer assistance to homeless persons. The Dream Center outreach teams participate in Operation "Shelter the Unsheltered." The total number of contacts by the Dream Center beginning July 10, 2020 to date is 1,036.

Interagency Collaboration

On November 19, Metro SSLE Special Projects Manager Joyce Burrell Garcia was a featured panelist in a Metro-sponsored webinar focused on the agency's efforts to engage with unhoused riders through our Homeless Action Plan. *Metro Conversations* is a new quarterly web series where Metro staff and our partners discuss stories about Metro's work that is little-known but enhances the quality of life in LA County. Over 80 attendees joined this inaugural event, which was moderated by Metro Community Relations Manager Julia Brown, and included Steve Fiechter and Karen Barnes from PATH. An article on this event was published in *Progressive Railroading*.

City and County Homeless Outreach Partnerships

- P.A.T.H. (People Assisting the Homeless)
- LAHSA (The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority)
- The Department of Health Services
- The Department of Mental Health
- The Unified Homelessness Response Center
- Mayor's Office of City Homelessness Initiatives (MOCHI)
- Office of the City of Los Angeles City Attorney, Central Division

NEXT STEPS

SSLE in partnership with the Executive Officer for Customer Experience are moving forward together with the Customer Experience Plan that was recently adopted by the Board of Directors to conduct additional homeless counts, expand shelter bed availability, establish a flexible dispatch program, and expand locations and times for our Operation Shelter the Unsheltered on Metro's system.

ATTACHMENTS

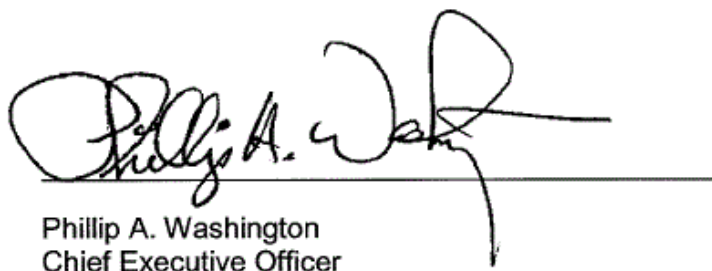
Attachment A - Homeless Outreach Success Stories July - December 2020

Attachment B - Motel Report July - December 2020

Attachment C - Bus_Rail Homeless Count Data

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