



**Board Report**

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
FEBRUARY 24, 2022**

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO MOTIONS ON COMMITMENT TO REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the Reimagining Public Safety Framework, which is inclusive of the report back on Motions 26.2 and 25.1 Policing Alternatives, Motion 44 Mental Health Resources, and a peer review of Customer Codes of Conduct.

**ISSUE**

Since 2020, the Metro Board has called on staff, through various directives, to give significant attention to transforming and reimagining Metro’s public safety programs and initiatives. Shaped by considerable feedback from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC), Metro employees, and the general public, Metro is better aligning operations to the needs of the public through intentional and equity-driven public safety initiatives. This report provides a status on these initiatives - Motion 26.2 & 25.1, the alternative approaches to Public Safety (Attachments A & B), Mental Health Resources Motion 44 (Attachment C) and the Customer Code of Conduct review, and a summary of the new intelligence led public safety strategic framework for Metro to serve as the bridge between ideas and action.

**BACKGROUND**

Following the George Floyd protests in 2020, a national dialogue erupted about the state of public safety and policing in America. Community activists and many voices in communities of color argued that over-policing created inequitable treatment and too many situations of unnecessary violence, while law enforcement expressed frustration about being called on to manage scenarios they were not trained for, such as social work and mental health emergencies. But as the conversation evolves, it is clear that while law enforcement is necessary to uphold laws and reduce crime, the approach to public safety should be comprehensively reexamined and reimagined to be more diversified.

In response to growing calls for reforms, the Metro Board of Directors sought open, fresh dialogue to explore the relationship between public safety and the Metro rider and employee experience. In particular, the Board was seeking recommendations to explore and identify opportunities to improve

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the agency's policing practices and expand available public safety tools to offer a diverse range of solutions that address a broader scope of issues.

### Establishing PSAC

At the June 2020 Board meeting, the Board approved Motions 37 and 37.1 (Attachments D and E), directing Metro staff to convene a public safety advisory committee (PSAC) and, in partnership, develop a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system. PSAC has taken up the concept of security as a broad, inter-related ecosystem of services and infrastructure to help all riders and employees feel safe. Metro continues to advance safety strategies to meet the needs and expectations of employees and transit riders.

### Investing in Change

At its meeting on March 25, 2021, the Board approved funding for alternative public safety strategies through Motion 26.2 including at least \$40 million for initiatives consistent with the Equity Platform and the Customer Experience Plan. In addition, at its meeting on December 2, 2021, the Board requested a report back on the status of the initiatives in February 2022. The Board also directed to maintain a minimum commitment of \$40 million for policing alternatives outlined in Motion 26.2 during the development of the FY23 budget and rolling over unspent funding from FY22.

### Voice of the Customer

In the summer of 2021, Metro conducted a Public Safety Survey of customers, including those on the system who were also experiencing homelessness. These surveys were conducted to get a full 360-degree perspective on public safety issues and revealed that all groups agreed that security and law enforcement staff should be more of a priority for Metro regardless of race. This important survey highlighted the demand for comprehensive safety and security measures, with riders supporting a multi-faceted approach that includes:

1. Most riders, including people experiencing homelessness, usually feel safe on Metro except at night.
2. Women and nonbinary individuals tend to feel less safe than men.
3. Top rider priorities include:
  - Lighting and emergency call buttons at stations and bus stops
  - Staff who can assist people with disabilities
  - Social workers and mental health professionals
  - Transit Ambassadors
4. Many respondents support both armed and unarmed staff on the system. Over 60% want law enforcement and armed security staff to be a priority, and this support spans all race/ethnicity categories.
5. Even more, over 70% want unarmed security staff to be a priority.
6. A slim majority wants Metro to allow people experiencing homelessness to ride just like

anyone else, while a third wants Metro to be “tougher” about removing them from buses and trains.

Voice of the Metro Employee

In the fall of 2021, more than 2,440 Metro employees completed a safety and security survey. Not surprisingly, like riders, Metro employees are concerned about safety on the system, voicing concerns about being assaulted while doing their job, especially bus operators and other front-line workers such as custodians. More than 80% of employees said that police and armed security should be more of a priority, with the level of support even higher among front-line employees like bus and rail operators and custodial staff.

Key findings from the survey:

1. When thinking about their recent experience on Metro, only 29% of the employees felt safe all or most of the time, with 39% feeling safe rarely or never.
2. Two-thirds of employees felt having LASD, local police, and/or armed Metro TSO on Metro should be much more of a priority (64%, 66%, and 67%, respectively).
3. Twenty percent of employees agreed with the statement that Metro needs to allow people experiencing homelessness to ride buses and trains, while 70% agreed with the statement that Metro needs to get tougher about removing people experiencing homelessness from buses and trains.

Survey results were made available to the PSAC and Metro staff to help inform recommendations around public safety reforms on Metro.

Customer Code of Conduct

The customer code of conduct sets the foundation for the delivery of public safety services for our riders. At the request of Chair Solis at the December 2022 meeting, the CEO is assessing the code given the disproportionate amount of citations and warnings to African-Americans and Latinos in relation to their level of ridership. A status report was requested for this month.

What is your ethnicity?	
	Percent
Latino	59%
African American	16%
White	11%
Asian/Pac. Isl.	8%
Native American	1%
Other	4%
Total	100%

(2019 Metro On Board Survey)

Critical Mental Healthcare Resources

In recognition of the growing need for homeless outreach and mental health resources to respond to

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individuals experiencing a cognitive crisis on the Metro system, at its January 27, 2022 meeting, the Board directed the CEO, through Motion 44, to partner with the County's multidisciplinary homeless outreach teams, work with the LA County CEO and Department of Mental Health (DMH) to conduct an assessment of the crisis response deployment on the Metro system, and the Board delegated authority to the CEO to expand the Alternative Crisis Response Program with DMH. A report back on the status of Motion 44 is required this month.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Status of Motion 26.2**

Motion 26.2 directs staff to develop and strengthen alternative approaches to public safety and authorizes the investment in various safety and homelessness initiatives as outlined in the motion. These recommended initiatives have been evaluated for feasibility and impact and are in various stages of implementation as summarized in the Program Initiative Fact Sheets (Attachment F) and include the current status of each effort. The fact sheets also highlight where the initiative fits within the Board approved Public Safety Values. In addition, the fact sheets detail considerations related to the specific initiative, including projected launch dates, and program elements. Funding considerations will be addressed as part of the FY23 budget development.

Metro staff has also been working on additional safety initiatives included in Attachment F. Both Motion 26.2 and staff initiatives were cross-referenced with the Customer and Employee Public Safety and Security survey results to ensure the initiatives would address customer and employee concerns.

### **Status of Motion 44, Providing Critical Mental Healthcare & Connections to Housing**

One layer in Metro's overall public safety strategy involves refining Metro's homelessness outreach and engagement efforts. The growth in the unhoused on our system coupled with individuals experiencing a cognitive crisis, serves as the top threat to our ability to retain and grow ridership on the Metro bus and rail system. Staff is engaging a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of Metro's existing programs. Concurrently, Metro can streamline its efforts to invest in equitable outreach, engagement, and potential housing options. Staff is also increasing partnerships to bring additional outreach workers and expanded outreach hours throughout the transit system and exploring the following additional resources:

- 1. Pilot with LA Mission:** In January 2022, the LA Mission signed on for an outreach pilot at several key Metro stations. Additionally, the Department of Health Services (DHS) partners activated Service Planning Area coordinators to provide expanded outreach and additional resources to encampment sites adjacent to Metro's properties, including Union Station and the Cesar Chavez Bus Plaza at Vignes Street.
- 2. Social work/Medical Student Program:** Staff is creating a program for social work and medical students to receive practical hours as outreach workers on the Metro system. Staff has been working closely with the County Department of Health Services and SEPTA, which have implemented student medical programs

3. **Temporary Housing Solutions:** Due to housing constraints, Metro's PATH teams are temporarily placing individuals in motels to quickly house people as a temporary solution while communal emergency and interim housing facilities are under quarantine. PATH is deployed to Union Station, 7<sup>th</sup> and Metro, and other critical stations and has been asked to continue outreach on the exterior of the station areas and throughout platforms and rail cars.
4. **Partnership with DMH:** Metro is coordinating with DMH on multiple fronts to implement the directives of Motion 44. While DMH is faced with hiring challenges for clinicians, they have indicated that they can support Metro with Community Mental Health Ambassadors. Additionally, DMH is facilitating the use of the UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence to provide training support for Metro personnel to build up our employees' capacity to identify mental health concerns on the system and trigger proper responses from clinical providers. Finally, Metro and DMH continue to strategize how to procure and assess the critical crisis response needs on the Metro system.
5. **LASD Coordination:** On February 2, 2022, CEO Wiggins sent a letter to Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva requesting the services of the Countywide Homeless Outreach Services Teams and the Mental Evaluation Teams to assist Metro in enhancing safety and security on the system.
6. **Federal Grant Funding:** Metro recently applied for a federal EDA ARPA Good Jobs Challenge grant for the Room to Work and Equitable Career Pathways in Transit program. This program will prioritize training and employing individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness and use the Metro system as shelter. Metro will create 90 new two-year positions as new entry points into the Operations Department if successful.
7. **LAHSA Coordination:** On February 17, 2022, CEO Wiggins met with Heidi Marsten, Executive Director of Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), to request additional support and coordination in case management efforts, resources for emergency housing opportunities for individuals sheltering on the Metro system, and participation in the upcoming annual homeless count administered by LAHSA.

#### Status of CEO Review of the Customer Code of Conduct

LA Metro's Code of Conduct is a mix of criminal and administrative violations. Approximately 33% of the code of conduct items are tied to the California Penal Code or California Public Utilities Code. A preliminary analysis of the code of conduct for 2018-2020 indicates that 95%-97% of citations and warnings are for fare evasion and the balance of 3%-5% are non-fare evasion related. The majority of citations and warnings were given to African Americans (50%) and Latinos (~25%). This is disproportionate given the ridership of African Americans is 16% and 59% Latino on our system in 2019.

While the current outcomes do not rise to the level of formal discrimination, racial inequities and racial harm are made evident through the initial analysis of the data. The goal is to provide a

welcoming climate for all riders.

The traditional focus of the Customer Code of Conduct has been on the rider instead of the outcomes. Typically, monthly status reports to the Operations Committee do not include disaggregated data by race and gender on the non-fare evasion related citations and warning. As a result, the CEO has initiated an assessment of the code that includes an evaluation of codes of conduct across different industries, including public transportation, for their content, distribution methods, accessibility, and reach in both physical and digital space (Attachment G). Staff will return to the Board once the comprehensive review is complete with recommendations.

It is important to note that during the month of January 2022, Metro participated in a program to remove all prior instances of fare evasion citations given to youth before 2017 from their record. As of 2017, Metro no longer cites youth for fare evasion.

### **Development of a Reimagining Public Safety Strategic Framework**

As individual program initiatives advance, it became evident that an overarching public safety framework that could tie all the initiatives together was required to enable a collaborative and consolidated approach to public safety that genuinely reflects the reimagining effort.

Notwithstanding the performance of our Law Enforcement partners, private security, and Metro transit security, Metro's current model to deliver public safety is:

- Prescriptive and fixed
- Inconsistent rule compliance
- Reactive in response
- Obscure in data and outcomes
- Enforcement-focused through a singular tactical response ("one size fits all")
- Siloed

The new model seeks a change from the current model that is:

- Data-driven and flexible
- Equitable rule compliance
- Proactive in response
- Transparent in outcomes
- Strategic enforcement through intelligence led safety and security using a layered approach to strategically deploy resources
- Collaborative

This strategy is our competitive game plan for transformational change in public safety. Transformational change alters the culture of an agency by changing underlying assumptions and overt institutional behaviors, processes, and structures; is deep and pervasive, affects the whole agency; is intentional; and occurs over time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>American Council on Education. (2001. Riding the Waves of Change: Insights from Transforming Institutions.)

A strategic framework has been developed to ensure public safety is viewed through the lens of employees and riders and their needs, supporting them through appropriate, visible response and customer-centric staffing. The framework is also consistent with Board direction in Motion 25.1 to develop a place-based implementation strategy to pilot the initiatives in a coordinated fashion to support the strategic deployment of resources, including law enforcement.

The framework relies upon an equitable intelligence-driven deployment of resources to better secure the safety of our riders and employees. Consistent with Motion 25.1, the equitable intelligence-led framework will provide the foundation for developing key performance indicators that reflect how the pilot influences the rider and employee experience. NOTE: Intelligence-led does not mean racial profiling. Racial profiling is a discriminatory practice of targeting individuals for suspicion of crime based on their race or ethnicity. Our use of intelligence-led means using advanced technology to collect and analyze data that can be used to more efficiently direct resources to the places where they are likely to be beneficial.

In order to meet the opportunity for transformational change, Metro must develop the organizational capacity to respond. A team of professional intelligence analysts will create a set of safety and security metrics. That information will be analyzed and used to identify high-risk areas within the transit system and evaluate the effectiveness of the various initiatives and deployment resources. The Chief Safety Officer will then have the ability to strategically deploy resources to prevent incidents, address patterns of activity or respond as appropriate to the safety concern, and ensure equitable outcomes.

The new framework is centered around six key focus areas that include:

- **Accountability and Transparency**
  - Builds a cohesive data stream from all sources as a basis for public safety activities. To address racial equity, it is important to make strategic use of data from surveys as well as other data sources that show racial differences in rider and employee opportunities, experiences, and outcomes. A public dashboard, by race and gender, to ensure accountability for the outcomes of the deployment strategy is a key feature of this focus area. Without disaggregating data by race and gender, it becomes difficult to act on the information and change what needs to be changed.
- **Deployment Resources**
  - This approach prioritizes unarmed response, while leveraging law enforcement for crimes through layers of staffing proactively deployed, based on data, to provide a safe environment. Customer-centric staffing includes ambassadors, law enforcement, and security personnel.
- **Training and Procedures**
  - To provide employees and contractors with the information and competency they require to perform their work.
- **Tools and Technology**

- Identifying and implementing the proper tools and technologies for each layer of staffing.
- Security Design
  - Implement a design that supports a safe and secure space for riders and employees. Using customer/ employee/ law enforcement input and data to improve the environment.
- Communications and Public Education
  - Communicating with the riders and community about public safety, ride expectations, and resources to make their experience positive.

Each focus area is supported by one or more of the Board-adopted Public Safety value statements from the December 2021 Board meeting and embraces equity and compassion for riders and employees. This public safety strategic framework utilizes new strategies that rely on a layered approach to ensure Metro has a system designed to enhance security with staff available, trained, and equipped to respond appropriately. This concept includes providing information to riders about rider expectations and how to embrace their own public safety on the system.

In this environment, the layers of staff resources are proactively engaged in establishing a safe and secure environment to avoid a reaction-only environment to incidents or activity. While Metro already has plans for a new Security Operations Center, Metro needs to bring appropriate staffing resources in-house that do not currently exist to ensure that Metro owns the intelligence resources of all of our law enforcement partners. This will allow Metro to make equity-based strategic decisions relating to deploying all of our public safety and security resources.

There are four objectives for the intelligence-led public safety framework:

1. World class, forward-thinking intelligence-based Public Safety Program;
2. Develop Metrics that identify safety, security and risk trends and measures of effectiveness;
3. Establish response and deployment protocols that involve a holistic, equitable and welcoming approach to ridership; and
4. Center public safety in the new state-of-the-art Security Operations Center to enhance coordination and collaboration.

The benefits of the intelligence-led public safety framework:

1. Consolidates public safety and risk management data into valuable intelligence that can be shared internally and externally;
2. Allows strategic decisions for resource allocations and physical security requirements, as well as monitor performance;
3. Focuses on getting ahead of the trend(s) by tracking selected safety- and security-related incidents and requiring follow-up; and
4. Increases customer service by using community-based approach to preventing and resolving safety and security matters.



## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The Reimagine Public Safety Framework has focused on centering the voices of Metro's riders and employees and understanding their different needs and outcomes. Through work with the Public Safety Advisory Committee, surveys of employees and riders, and disaggregated data analysis, Metro has unveiled diverging experiences and perspectives on safety on the Metro system and what is needed to ensure that everyone feels and is safe. Metro has heard directly from unhoused riders and is working with homeless service providers and experts to better address their needs. At the same time, Metro has also identified clear disparities in code of conduct enforcement for Black and Latino riders and is taking early steps to understand the source of those disparities and ensure that the code of conduct supports the Reimagined Public Safety Framework and leads to more equitable outcomes. As this work continues, Metro will ensure that staff track outcomes of all programs in a manner that allows the agency to identify and address different needs or disparities.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommendation supports strategic plan goal # 2,1. Deliver outstanding trip experience for all users of the transportation system; Metro Commitment to Security.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Metro will continue to implement the new Strategic Public Safety Framework that embraces the mission and values of Metro, incorporates the identified and funded initiatives, and provides additional efforts to strengthen a customer-focused approach to public safety. The short-term milestones are as follows:

1. Releasing the Ambassadors RFP March 2022, including a 15-day public review and comment period.
2. Releasing the new law enforcement RFP in March 2022, including a 30-day public review and comment period due to the complexity.
3. Implement place-based public safety pilots in Fall 2022.
4. Deploy DMH community ambassadors on the Metro system.
5. Assess internal structure to align with the new framework and establish an intelligence analysis unit by May 2022.
6. Return to the Board with the comprehensive review of the Customer Code of Conduct with recommended changes and updates.
7. Quarterly reports to the Board on the status of the new framework.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Board Motion 26.2  
Attachment B - Board Motion 25.1  
Attachment C - Board Motion 44  
Attachment D - Board Motion 37  
Attachment E - Board Motion 37.1

Attachment F - Program Initiative Fact Sheets

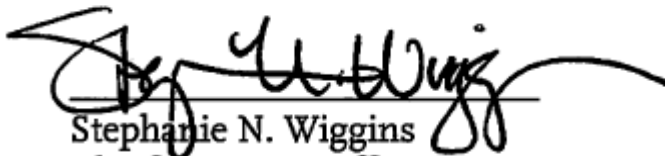
Attachment G - Code of Conduct Review

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