



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 42.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE JUNE 16, 2022

SUBJECT: METRO STREET SAFETY, DATA SHARING AND COLLABORATION POLICY

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT Metro Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy (Attachment A).

ISSUE

In January 2021, the Board adopted the Metro Street Safety Policy motion, instructing staff to report back on the development of a Street Safety Policy; a countywide street safety data collection program developed in partnership with local, regional, state and federal partners; and an assessment of internal risk and liability to safety of all Metro-provided public transportation services.

The Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy identifies ways Metro can utilize its multiple roles and its unique countywide transportation perspective to positively impact, influence, and partner for street safety - especially for the County's most vulnerable people and for locations with a nexus to transit, including rail crossings and bus stops. The Policy includes a proposed action plan linked to these roles. This report outlines the need for safer streets, the initial goals of the policy, the agency roles that define the action plan, as well as next steps for implementation if the policy is adopted.

BACKGROUND

It is important to note that local jurisdictions and state agencies - not Metro -- plan, design, build and maintain streets and set and enforce speed limits and traffic rules. Local jurisdictions also adopt and implement street safety plans. The City of Los Angeles, for example, adopted a Vision Zero plan in 2015; Los Angeles County adopted a Vision Zero plan in 2019 for unincorporated area roads. Metro's Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy is therefore not intended to replicate local street safety or Vision Zero plans but is intended to synergize with them. With 88 cities and over 130 unincorporated communities within LA County, Metro actions to contribute to safe streets must work cohesively within this local as well as state and federal regulatory framework.

In January 2021 the Board passed a motion (File #2020-0928) by Directors Garcetti, Solis, Mitchell, and Bonin (Attachment B) to develop a Street Safety Policy addressing Metro's role in supporting safer streets. The motion emphasized that this work would build upon Goal 1.2 of Metro's strategic plan and identify street users' safety as a public health issue and a key factor in people's willingness to travel by transit and active transportation. The motion also recommended that

staff should focus on Metro roles that intersect with street safety in developing a policy. In response to this motion, staff initiated an interdepartmental working group to develop a Metro Street Safety Policy and Action Plan, informed by existing agency efforts, research on best practices, and initial outreach to advisory bodies, the public and partner jurisdictions and agencies.

DISCUSSION

Consequences of unsafe streets

Unsafe streets are both a public health crisis and a barrier to people accessing Metro services. According to state data 719 people were killed and 88,068 people were injured by vehicle collisions in LA County in 2019. Vehicle collisions are the fourth leading cause of **premature** death in the County--ahead of homicides, strokes, and lung cancer--and the leading overall cause of death for children aged 5-14, and the second leading cause of death for ages 15-24.

Deaths from collisions do not impact all communities in LA County equally or proportionately. Black, Latino, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander people are disproportionately the victims of collisions. People experiencing homelessness in LA County are 10-15 times more likely to die from crashes than members of the public.

These disparities also extend to active transportation modes of travel. 329 of the 719 people killed across LA County in 2019 were walking or cycling at the time. This figure represents 46 percent of those who lost their lives, a disproportionate number given that the walk and bike share of trips in LA County is approximately 15 percent for non-commute trips and just 5 percent for commute trips. 76 percent of Metro transit riders get to their first bus or train of the day by walking, and another 4 percent by bike or skateboard. Therefore, the reality and perception of safe streets can impact people's willingness to use transit and active transportation. For references for the above data and additional data on street safety and a discussion of vision zero principles, see Attachment D.

Policy goals and structure

The Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy is intended to address the three requests in the Metro Street Safety Motion : development of a Street Safety Policy, a countywide street safety data collection program, and assessment of internal risk and liability to safety of all Metro-provided public transportation services. This policy recognizes Metro's unique role in LA County's transportation ecosystem. Primary responsibility for street safety rests with local jurisdictions and state agencies that own and design streets and set and enforce speed limits and traffic regulations. Metro can partner with these entities as they design and implement safer, complete streets and contribute to street safety through the agency's roles.

The policy includes four interrelated goals:

1. Improve Safety -Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to reduce and eliminate traffic related fatalities and serious injuries with a transit nexus such as at light rail crossings and at or near bus stops.
2. Robust Data Sharing & Analysis- Contribute to a better understanding of death, serious injury, vis a vis demographic factors and risk in the public right of way to inform and improve action by Metro and partner agencies, including a scorecard for Local Return to leverage pursuit of external grant opportunities;
3. Equity Lens - Reduce and eliminate disparities in traffic-related deaths and injuries and elevate the needs of marginalized communities and vulnerable users of the public right of way with a transit nexus such as at light rail crossings and at or near bus stops; and

4. Improve Collaboration - Advance partnership efforts to improve safety with a focus on intergovernmental coordination, including support of LA County's Street Safety Plan and City of LA's Street Safety Plan, and support pursuit of joint external grant opportunities.

Through the adoption of the policy, Metro will help advance safer streets via the agency's multiple roles. The proposed Action Plan contained in the policy, as well as in table form in Attachment C, includes draft objectives and action items for seven Metro roles:

- As Operator: partner on bus priority treatments, including bus lanes and bus stop bulb outs that protect vulnerable road users; continue to emphasize safety for transit vehicles; and provide operations data to identify unsafe locations and conditions.
- As Planner and Builder: elevate and coordinate safety considerations in Metro countywide plans and enhance Metro project delivery practices to result in safer streets.
- As Funder: elevate safety consideration throughout Metro's funding mechanisms, including tracking and encouraging use of Local Returns to advance safety.
- As Data collaborator: increase understanding of existing conditions, vulnerable road user exposure to serious injury and mortality, especially in locations with a transit nexus such as at light rail crossings and at or near bus stops, and the impacts of safety programs and interventions; develop and deploy data resources that are unique to Metro; provide information and insight to inform other aspects of this policy, especially those that target and deploy resources; provide a consistent framework to track equity considerations and improvements; and strengthen partnerships and collaboration by supporting cross-agency data compilation, analysis, and sharing
- As Legislative advocate: influence State and Federal safety policies and resources
- As Educator: proactively educate communities along Metro's light rail system.
- As Innovator: pilot and test technologies and approaches that reduce risk of death and serious injuries

Adoption of the policy will result in initial commitments to create an implementation team, for the team to further refine specific actions; and for annual reports on progress in implementing the action plan and achieving the goals of the policy.

The CEO would appoint an interdepartmental team to start implementing the policy and action plan as a first step. This team would further develop the action items, including recommending necessary targets, workplans, timelines, resource needs, and budget requests. The action plan table in Appendix C notes actions that would require further definition and detailed work planning and those that would be contingent on unidentified or uncommitted resources at the time of the draft policy preparation. For contingent/un-resourced actions, staff would be prompted to identify and seek resources in future years or defer or remove actions that are not adequately resourced.

Safe and Equitable Systems

The Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy comes at a time of increased focus on this issue across all levels of government. This policy will help Metro align with the *Safe Systems Approach* promulgated in the United States by FHWA. The Safe System Approach recognizes that the design and regulation of the physical environment, especially streets and vehicles-rather than individual actions of road users-is the primary factor that can reduce collisions, deaths and injuries.

This policy also recognizes the outsize burden of street collisions, injuries and deaths on vulnerable and marginalized communities and road users. As such, the policy considers equity within each section of the action plan. Policy implementation will draw upon data on disparate impacts and prioritize and center experiences of disproportionately impacted communities and road users.

Reaffirmation and Updates to Complete Streets Policy

This policy builds upon Metro Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2014 and reinforces the goals and policy intent of the existing Complete Streets Policy while also making the following changes to that policy:

- Update planning and project design procedures to incorporate consideration of all roadway users with emphasis on the most vulnerable, and to integrate safety analysis
- Provide training to assist jurisdictions with policy development and to disseminate up to date planning procedures and design guidance
- Encourage and highlight best practices in reducing death and serious injury
- Develop and disseminate a checklist and/or other complete streets and safety tools for project planning.
- Provide technical assistance to jurisdictions in completing Local Road Safety Plans

Input from Advisory Bodies, the Public and Partner Agencies

Over the summer of 2021, Metro staff briefed eleven advisory bodies, including the Policy Advisory Committee, all Service Councils, and the Public Safety Advisory Committee, about the motion's goals and the Metro roles that staff were considering leveraging. In late 2021 and 2022, staff discussed strategies with partners jurisdictions, Councils of Governments and agencies and held a public meeting to share concepts from the draft policy. Comments from advisory groups, peer agencies and the public were supportive of Metro helping improve street safety in a partnering role. Some common themes that were shared with staff included:

- Connect to regional and city efforts
- Help improve safety data so that Metro and partners working towards safety can identify needs and track effectiveness of safety strategies
- Share best practices in complete street design with local jurisdictions
- "Put teeth" into funding so that Metro funded street projects are safe
- Talk to advocates working on street safety
- Pay attention to challenges faced by those with disabilities
- Explore how to advance vehicle safety improvements

Opportunities for Funding

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) establishes the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program that will provide \$5-6 billion in grants over the next 5 years. This funding aims to support regional and local initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg's National Roadway Safety Strategy and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the SS4A program has not yet been posted at the time of this report's development. Staff expects the NOFO to be released in May or June 2022, and the deadline for applications to be in August or September 2022.

Metro would be an eligible applicant for this program, as would be the Southern California Association of Governments as a Metropolitan Planning Organization, LA County and its 88 cities, transit agencies, JPAs comprising these entities, and other special districts that are subdivisions of California.

Eligible activities include the following:

- Develop or update a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.
- Conduct planning, design, and development activities supporting an Action Plan.
- Carry out projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan.

The SS4A program will provide opportunities for Metro to seek funding to implement a street safety policy; and for local jurisdictions to develop and fund vital street and road safety projects throughout LA County. Adoption of this policy authorizes staff to seek external funding to elaborate and implement the policy and action plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Staff estimate that the implementation team's start-up and initial coordination costs to be \$50,000 already included in the FY23 Proposed Budget to be funded with Measure M 2% Active Transportation Program funds.

Costs to research and produce the first annual report are estimated to be \$150,000 and would be funded by the SS4A grant funds if successful in the application described in the Funding Opportunities section above.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Adopting and implementing a new Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy will advance Goal 1.2 of Vision 2028, which calls for Metro to “reduce roadway collisions and injuries.” Safer streets would also advance Goals 1 and 2 by making people feel safer and more comfortable in using transit and active transportation; Goal 3 by contributing to complete streets and safe and equitable communities; and Goals 4 and 5 through Metro partnering externally and internally on street safety strategies and data.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Once finalized, implementation of the policy can contribute to reducing disproportionate harm from unsafe streets to vulnerable demographic groups and road users. Future reporting on the actions contained in the policy will include equity analysis to ensure full understanding of how data, analysis and targeted interventions could disproportionately lead to benefit or harm to vulnerable groups and road users. This equity focused assessment will be included in progress reports prepared for this policy, will identify and recommend corrective action where needed, and commits to utilizing Metro's equity tools including the Rapid Equity Assessment and Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) maps, among others as developed.

NEXT STEPS

If the policy is adopted, staff will begin work in further developing the action plan, gathering information for a progress report, and launching action items as they become ready for implementation. In considering the best pathways for implementation, staff will consult with Councils of Governments and jurisdictions on how the action plan can best synergize with local street safety needs and plans throughout LA County. Staff will also convene community organizations, goods

movement and public safety stakeholders to receive input and recommendations for how the action plan can best address street safety concerns raised by these roadway users.

Staff will also concurrently review potential discretionary grant funding opportunities for priorities established in the Final Metro Street Safety Policy, including the upcoming SS4A grant program referenced above.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Metro Street Safety, Data Sharing and Collaboration Policy

Attachment B: January 2021 Motion (Garcetti, Solis, Mitchell and Bonin)

Attachment C: (Appendix 1: Summary of Actions)

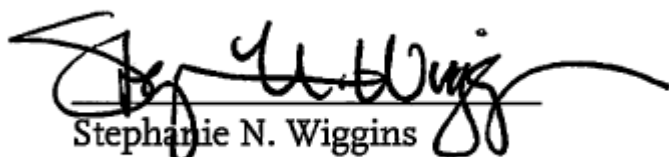
Attachment D: (Appendix 2: Data Trends and Existing Conditions)

Attachment E: (Appendix 3: Summary of Community and Partner Agency Engagement)

Attachment F: (Appendix 4: Complete Streets Discussion)

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