



Board Report

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OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JUNE 20, 2024

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE:

- A. the status report on Metro's Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC); and
- B. a report on PSAC's recommendations on the proposed Transit Community Public Safety Department.

ISSUE

In June 2020, the Board directed the CEO to form an advisory committee to contribute recommendations on ways to use a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system. This Board report provides an update on the work of the Public Safety Advisory Committee from February to May 2024.

BACKGROUND

Metro established the first PSAC cohort as a pilot on April 7, 2021. During its 16-month term, the cohort:

- Provided guidance on the development of a community-based approach to public safety.
- Shared input on the development of the multi-agency policing contract renewal.
- Reviewed the Customer Code of Conduct.
- Provided feedback on Metro's mission and value statements regarding public safety.
- Guided the establishment of Metro's Transit Ambassadors program, among other accomplishments.

The first cohort was established to cover specific objectives over a designated period, and their work concluded on August 17, 2022. At the September 2022 Board meeting, the CEO recommended that

the PSAC continue. The second cohort was established on February 25, 2023, and will serve for two years.

PSAC elected an executive committee to serve from February 2024 to February 2025.

- Jeremy Oliver-Roncero, Chair
- Misty Wilks, Vice-Chair
- Darryl Goodus, Secretary

Work Plan Objectives

Together with Metro CEO Wiggins, the PSAC Executive Committee developed a work plan that outlines five objectives framing PSAC's scope of work to enhance the customer experience by addressing safety concerns on the system. The Executive Committee, staff, and CEO together identified key strategies that the committee can review, evaluate, and/or help advance. The PSAC Executive Committee meets with CEO Wiggins monthly to agree upon PSAC meeting agenda items. Agenda items have included, but have not been limited to, Metro Transit Security Bus Riding Teams, the Customer Experience Plan, Exploration of a Transit Community Public Safety Department (TCPSP), Metro's Ambassador Program Evaluation, safety for people with disabilities, station intervention strategies, crisis response strategies, and a PSAC community listening session.

DISCUSSION

At its November 2 meeting, the PSAC discussed and voted to create three Ad Hoc Committees for more in-depth conversations and to allow time to develop thorough recommendations in the event the Board adopted and advanced an implementation plan to develop an in-house Metro Transit Community Public Safety Department. The three ad-hoc committees included focused discussions on 1) personnel, 2) job duties, and 3) oversight.

Throughout December, the three PSAC Ad Hoc Committees held two two-hour workshops each. Each workshop facilitated meaningful discussion and brainstormed recommendations for CEO Wiggins' consideration. The meetings created a space to review public input and community priorities from the PSAC Listening Session and the eight supplemental in-person engagements held countywide during Fall 2023. The initial workshops allowed for extensive conversations to categorize ideas and ultimately synthesize them into recommendations that address how officers of an in-house community public safety department should be evaluated before being hired, be routinely trained before and after deployment onto the system and be overseen while performing their duties with the highest standards of excellence in public safety.

At its February 1, 2024 meeting, the PSAC agenda focused on each Ad Hoc Committee bringing forth their proposals and engaging the membership in a robust discussion that ultimately led to 22 recommendations. The full list of recommendations and management responses are detailed in Attachment A. The general themes of the recommendations are below.

1. Personnel Ad Hoc Committee Discussion

- Ideal qualifications and experience of candidates

- Desired types of officer training needed before being deployed on the system

2. Job Duties Ad Hoc Committee Discussion

- Enforcement of Metro's code of conduct and fare payment
- Community engagement and fostering trust as a core function
- Ongoing training for culturally competent community policing, in line with Metro's care-based approach

3. Oversight Ad Hoc Committee Discussion

- Recommendation to create an oversight entity
- Oversight as a committee/commission to establish performance measures

During the March 7, 2024 meeting, the PSAC received several updates, as follows:

The Ambassador Program staff provided an update on the evaluation of the Metro Ambassador program. The PSAC members are very pleased with the great work the Ambassadors are doing and find it very uplifting that they have already saved more than 200 lives while working on the system.

An update on the law enforcement "ride-along" was also on the agenda. The update included a recap of the ride-along opportunity and information on how to sign up. The chair wanted to recount his own experience of having been on a six-hour ride-along with one of Metro's law enforcement partners. Chair Oliver-Ronceros shared that he enjoyed getting to experience first-hand what it is like to provide safety and security services on the Metro system. He was very happy to have participated because it raised his awareness of what officers face in the line of duty, and he witnessed how they interact with customers and people in distress. As a result, he is more empathetic. He encouraged everyone on the Committee to make the time to participate in a "ride-along," noting that this experience will help him better carry out his work as the Chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee, and suggesting it could be helpful for others as they continue engaging in PSACs work. He firmly believes that

Lastly, a high-level summary presentation was made to the PSAC by Isai Rosa, Metro Community Relations Manager, about the general themes of the public comments received through the listening session and engagements from last Fall. To ensure that the PSAC members were getting themes representative of diverse voices and experiences, staff also included public comments from PSAC meetings, as well as comments related to public safety that would have derived from the Metro Customer Call Center reports, social listening (data gathered from social media), and messages received via the Metro Transit Watch app. While the bulk of comments received at the Fall Engagement events and the Listening Session were about public safety, some also commented on the need for Metro to improve:

- Cleanliness of the system
- Stations
- Bus and rail frequency

Overwhelmingly, the public asked Metro to enforce its Code of Conduct and fare payment and increase the visibility of law enforcement and transit security officers on the system. Many comments were also made on the Ambassadors, mostly praising the program and expressing a deep

appreciation for their work. A few comments also criticized the Ambassadors' authority as being too limited.

At its April 4, 2024 meeting, staff presented on the newly formed Station Experience Unit. Building on the recent Westlake/MacArthur Park Station improvements, this report identified the next steps for implementing intervention strategies to improve community health and safety at additional Metro stations. Stations for initial pilot interventions include:

- Lake Av in Pasadena (A Line)
- Hollywood/Highland (B Line)
- Downtown Santa Monica (E Line)
- Norwalk (C Line)

Additionally, the Customer Experience (CX) Strategy and Insights team, joined by SSLE, shared an update on the 17 safety-related action items included in the 2023 CX Plan. The CX team reported that all the action items are in progress, with one completed and provided an overview of the latest activities for each action item. Staff also shared that there are several capital projects to improve safety across our system, such as camera and operational enhancements, as well as other action items like increasing the number of homeless outreach staff and addressing safety training among employees. The 2023 CX Plan can be found at [this link <https://www.metro.net/about/customer-experience-hub/>](https://www.metro.net/about/customer-experience-hub/).

At the May 2, 2024, meeting, System Security & Law Enforcement (SSLE) staff shared an update on the recent security incidents that have taken place on the system over the past several weeks. During his preliminary review of recent security incidents, Interim Deputy Chief, System Security and Law Enforcement Robert Gummer engaged the Committee in a discussion on fare enforcement. After a one-hour discussion, the Committee brought forth two motions to form ad hoc committees: one to develop alternatives to fare enforcement and the second to identify recommendation(s) to address equitable fare enforcement. It was determined that the committees would meet during May to finalize and bring forth their recommendation(s) by the June 6, 2024, PSAC meeting.

Additionally, SSLE presented its FY25 proposed Public Safety Budget. The proposed budget reflects the agency's commitment to further its public safety portfolio to increase rider and employee safety. This is implemented through investment in Metro Transit Security Officers, funding operating costs for the Emergency Security Operations Center, and funding for needed systemwide infrastructure enhancement and vulnerability threat assessments.

Finally, Metro's Emergency Management Department (EMD) staff presented on Metro's emergency preparedness and response activities for disabled persons and others. The PSAC is interested in how Metro plans for evacuations from rail stations and throughout the system to provide a safe and effective experience for all customers, including Metro riders who may have different accessibility and functional needs or who otherwise might require assistance to exit safely. The EMD also shared how Metro plans, prepares, and responds to special events, natural disasters, and emergencies,

collaborating with local jurisdictions and partner agencies to decrease impacts on Metro riders and staff.

EQUITY PLATFORM

PSAC plays a crucial role in addressing equity within the transportation system. Equity is a central consideration in the committee's decision-making processes, as it strives to ensure that all members of the community, especially those historically marginalized or underserved, have access to safe and reliable transportation options. Through its commitment to inclusivity, community engagement, and data-driven approaches, the committee strives to create a transit environment that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all residents of Los Angeles County. This update highlights PSAC's important role in supporting Metro's equity platform. For example, PSAC's community engagement efforts to develop its recommendations for a potential new Transit Community Safety Department started with community listening sessions that allowed all interested stakeholders to provide feedback about public safety in a safe space and allow different perspectives on this topic to flourish. These listening sessions ultimately shaped the PSAC recommendations, as described in Attachment A.

The recommendations are grounded in equity, and they ensure that the new Transit Community Safety Department includes personnel requirements and job duties for effective service to diverse communities. The recommended establishment of an Oversight Committee that includes a countywide outreach and recruitment process ensures equitable demographic and geographic representation, including people with disabilities, older adults, and youth. All the PSAC recommendations address equity, diversity, and inclusion. PSAC's framework for developing these recommendations focuses on holistic, equitable, and justice-minded guiding principles that respect the humanity of all people.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The work of PSAC supports Metro's Strategic Vision Goal #2, which is to deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.

This goal outlines that the agency will specifically take action to improve security and ease of use by preventing crime and enforcing Metro's code of conduct. Metro will rely on a multi-layered, integrated security program that includes technology, people, and partnerships to achieve a safe system. The PSAC is a key component to help reach this goal as the committee will work to safeguard the transit community by taking a holistic, equitable, and welcoming approach to public safety.

NEXT STEPS

Metro's System Safety & Law Enforcement Department and its consultant will continue to review and, as appropriate, include the recommendations as part of the Transit Community Public Safety Department Implementation Plan that will be presented to the Board in the coming months. Staff will continue to meet with the PSAC as it continues to explore safety and

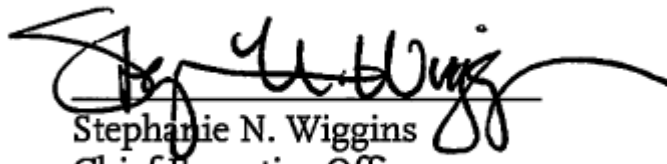
security on the Metro System and advance the objectives detailed in their annual work plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - PSAC Final Recommendations and Responses

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