



Board Report

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Agenda Number:

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MARCH 23, 2023**

SUBJECT: MONTHLY UPDATE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the Public Safety Report.

ISSUE

Metro's main priority is providing riders with a safe experience and employees with a safe work environment. Metro is researching, listening, reassessing current safety programs, and launching new safety initiatives. This report provides a report on the state of safety at Metro, including data, current safety initiatives, and other safety related information.

BACKGROUND

Metro's mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that enhances the quality of life for everyone living, working, and playing in LA County. Metro has implemented several non-law enforcement initiatives to reimagine public safety. The Chief Safety Office is responsible for the public safety program's strategic and cohesive deployment. Through agency collaboration, the focus is to increase a safety presence on the system, protecting Metro riders, employees, and infrastructure and conducting fare and code enforcement. Furthermore, the Chief Safety Office oversees safety programs and tools such as Respect the Ride, the Transit Watch app, the Employee Assault Mitigation Task Force, and other efforts that are responsive to the security needs of riders and employees.

DISCUSSION

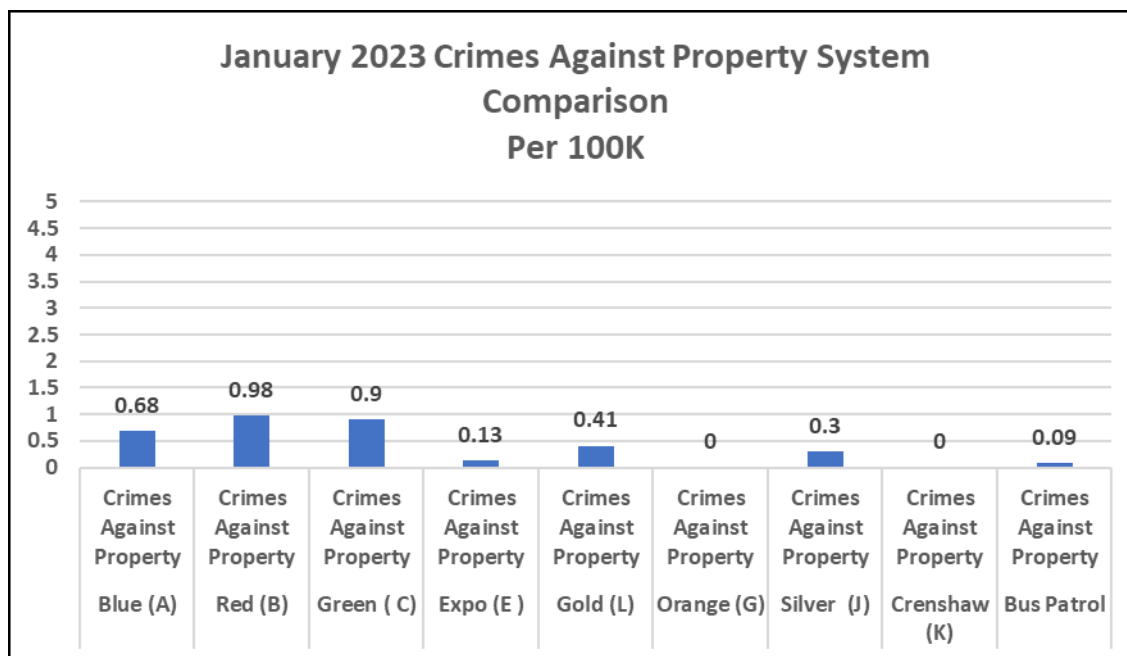
The following outlines the status of existing programs and the research efforts for new initiatives to help reduce crime.

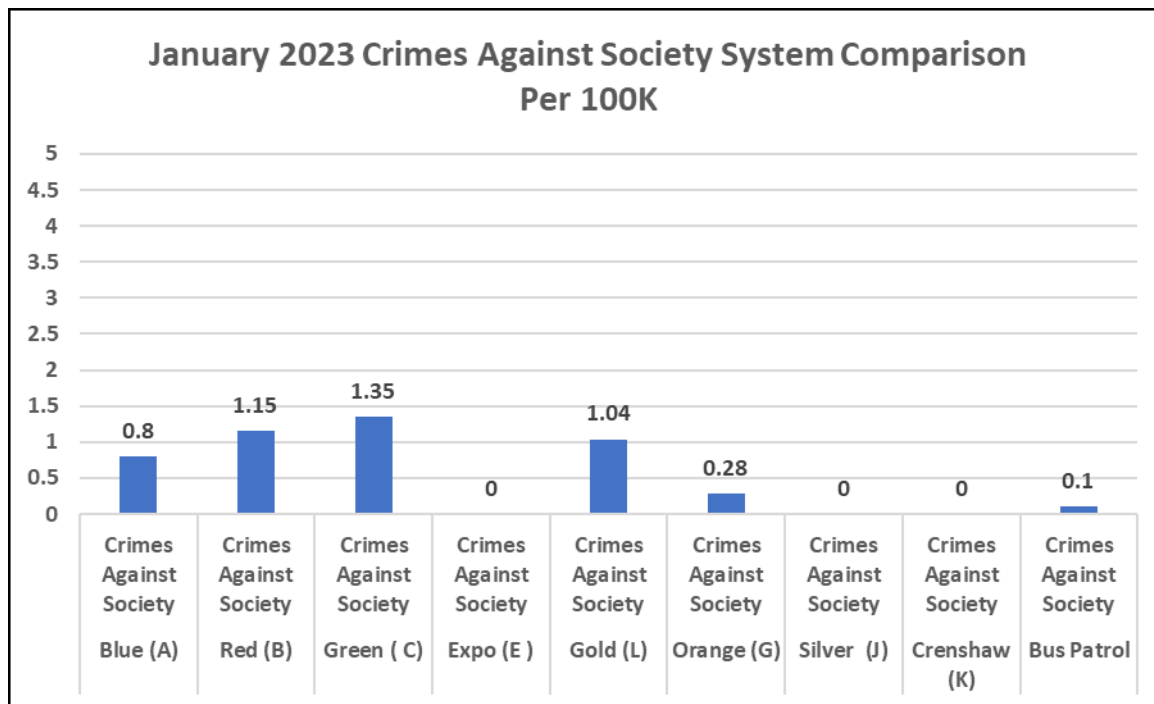
Crime statistics are provided monthly by LAPD, LASD, and LBPD. Attachment A provides the system

-wide Law Enforcement Overview for the month of January 2023. The report covers Crimes Against Persons - violent crimes (i.e., homicide, aggravated assaults) are those in which the victims are always individuals. Crimes Against Property - crimes to obtain money, property, or some other benefit (i.e. theft, vandalism, robbery) and Crimes Against Society- represent society’s prohibition against engaging in certain types of activity (i.e. drug violations).

The overall rate of crime is very low on the bus system. The reported incidents of crime on the bus system have decreased (January over January). However, there is a significant increase in incidents of drug violations, primarily on the Red Line.

An analysis of Part 2 crimes (crimes against society such as narcotics, trespassing, or weapons possession) for January revealed increases in both trespassing and narcotic possession/use incidents on the Blue, Red, Green, and Gold Lines. The rise in trespass incidents is likely linked to the below-average temperatures along with heavier than normal precipitation impacting the LA region throughout the winter. The inclement weather has likely pushed more of the unhoused into the system, reflected in ancillary intrusions and presence on the rail system and platforms.





With 33.8% of all crime occurring on the Red Line, specific strategies and resources are used on this Line to help improve the safety of our riders and front-line employees. Attachment C details the number of crimes that our law enforcement partners reported for January 2023 by each rail line, including by buses system-wide, Union Station, and 7th & Metro Station.

An analysis of Part 1 crimes on the Red Line was conducted by comparing crime statistics from January 2022 to those in January 2023. There was a 66% increase in crime incidents in January 2023 compared to the same month the previous year. Crimes Against Persons increased a total of 45.24%, and the biggest increases were robberies (150%), battery (47.69%), and aggravated assaults (28.57%). Crimes Against Property increased 175% over the previous year, which was impacted by the growing number of larceny incidents (280%). Larceny, though prevalent, is typically a nonviolent criminal offense (pickpocketing, bike thefts). Total incidents of crimes against persons and property for January 2022 is 50, while ridership is 2,052,814. Total incidents of crimes against persons and property for January 2023 is 83, while ridership is 2,221,754.

Red Line Reported Crime 2022 vs 2023			
CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% Change
Homicide	0	1	100%
Rape	0	0	0%
Robbery	4	10	150%
Aggravated Assault	14	18	28.57%
Aggravated Assault on Operator	0	0	0%
Battery	21	31	47.69%
Battery Rail Operator	0	0	0%
Sex Offenses	3	1	-66.67%
Total	42	61	45.24%
CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% Change
Burglary	0	0	0%
Larceny	5	19	280%
Bike Theft	0	0	0%
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	0	0%
Arson	0	0	0%
Vandalism	3	3	0%
Total	8	22	175%
CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% Change
Weapons	0	1	100%
Narcotics	0	6	600%
Trespassing	1	19	1800%
Total	1	26	2500%

An additional analysis was done on the Crimes Against Society on the Red Line, comparing January 2022 and January 2023. Both narcotic related crimes (possession/use) and trespassing had notable increases. Inclement weather likely impacted trespassing increases during January, while the increase in narcotic-related incidents is consistent with County and nationwide trends.

ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN

Narcotic violations impacting the Metro system have evolved into a severe problem, including narcotics sales, chronic drug usage, and overdoses that have reduced the quality of service and endangered our riders and employees.

As shared at last month’s Board meeting, drug related fatalities on the system have been on the rise. In response to the February Board meeting, the following chart provides details of the coroner verified drug-related fatalities on the system in 2022. Coroner confirmation of the cause of death for the remaining 11 cases from January 2023 is still pending.

2022 Coroner Verified Drug Deaths	
Drug Identified in System	Number of Confirmed deaths
Fentanyl	9
Methamphetamine	1
2022 Total	10

In February 2023, there were 12 suspected drug related fatalities which are pending confirmation of cause from the coroner.

Narcan is used to reverse opioid overdose quickly. Our law enforcement partners and PATH outreach workers already carry Narcan. Staff began the rollout of Narcan to Metro Transit Security starting on March 10th. Staff is working on a plan for Metro Ambassadors to be trained and issued Narcan.

On February 13th, staff launched a 30-day Anti-Drug Campaign using a comprehensive, layered approach with the following goals:

- Remove individuals arrested for committing crimes on our system, with a particular focus on drug crimes
- Significantly decrease drug sales, usage, and overdoses on trains, platforms, and in stations
- Remove individuals who are not using the system for the purpose of transportation
- Increase the feeling of safety for our riders and employees
- Increase cleanliness and the overall customer experience on targeted lines
- Decrease crime while taking a holistic approach by offering eligible offenders a drug diversion program and necessary mental health/social services for people experiencing homelessness and suffering from drug addiction

Based on the Transit Watch App reporting, complaints from customers and employees, and crime statistics, problematic stations have been identified as the most challenging for drug usage and crime. The following activities were implemented to address these issues:

- Law Enforcement (LAPD & LASD)
 - Proactively patrolling their respective areas of service, investigating illegal drug activities that have negatively impacted Metro employees and riders.
 - LAPD -focus on the high crime trains and platforms addressing any illegal drug activities.
 - LASD- focus on high crime stations, platforms, and trains within their assigned territory, addressing any illegal drug activities.

- LAPD- provide resources from their HOPE Teams, SPU Units, and clinicians from the Department of Mental Health to address individuals using or selling drugs on the system or experiencing mental illness.
 - Eligible individuals arrested for drug related crimes were offered a drug diversion program in collaboration with the City Attorney's and District Attorney's Offices.
- Metro Transit Security (MTS)
 - Strategically deployed at the high crime stations during the AM and PM hours, focused on proactive patrols of the trains, platforms, and/or mezzanines and turnstiles to address code of conduct, fare compliance, wellness checks, and loitering.
- Contract Security
 - Strategically deployed at all high crime stations during the AM and PM hours, focused on proactive patrols of the ancillary areas to address trespassing.
- Metro Ambassadors
 - Strategically deployed across all problematic stations during the AM and PM hours, focused on customer service on station platforms, mezzanines, and on rail cars.
 - Ambassadors served as extra eyes and ears for any safety, security, or cleaning issues.
- Metro's social services teams continued to conduct outreach and offer services to the unhoused before station openings

The following metrics were used to determine the success of this campaign:

- Before and after photos of the high crime areas
- Reduction in customer complaints and Transit Watch App complaints relating to drug usage and cleanliness in the high crime areas
- Decrease in crime in high crime areas
- Employee surveys after the campaign depicting increased safety on the system

In addition, a media campaign was launched to re-educate and inform the public about Metro's zero-tolerance policy on illegal drugs before and during their rides through a cadence of communications to riders throughout the month of increased enforcement.

By the numbers: During the reporting period of 2/13/2023-3/11/2023, the Anti-Drug Campaign has yielded the following results:

- 1,658 Transit Watch App reports were submitted about drugs, alcohol, and smoking on the system, of which 947 (57.1%) were reported by the public and 711 (42.9%) by Metro Transit Ambassadors.

- 68 citations and 36 warnings were issued by MTS, of which 8 were specific to eating, drinking, or smoking on the system. The following table represents a full breakdown of citations and warnings issued during the review period:

Citations and Warnings 02/13/2023-03/11/2023	
Ticket/Citation	
Reason	Total
6-05-110.A Eating Drinking Smoking	6
6-05-120.A Loitering	4
6-05-230.A Fare Evasion	39
6-05-230. C.1 Boarding Without Proof	18
6-05-230. C.5 Refuse to Show Proof	1
Subtotal	68
Warning	
6-05-110.A Eating Drinking Smoking	2
6-05-120.A Loitering	0
6-05-230.A Fare Evasion	24
6-05-230. C.1 Boarding Without Proof	10
Subtotal	36
Total	104

- Law enforcement conducted 205 drug related arrests.

A review of arrests, CCATS, and Transit Watch App data indicates a nearly equal amount of reporting and arrest activity on both the trains and station platforms. SSLE noted a decline in overall reported drug activity on the Transit Watch App during week four of the Anti-Drug Campaign compared to week 3. Week four yielded 154 reports compared to 1,224 reported during the first week (-87%).

FARE EVASION

Fare enforcement is a key component of Metro’s Code of Conduct. A subset of unarmed Metro Transit Security Officers conduct fare enforcement daily. When conducting fare enforcement, if passengers have no proof of fare, they will be issued a warning and will be documented via a mobile phone validator. For a passenger that has been warned and does not valid fare a second time, they will be cited. In December 2021, the Metro Office of Civil Rights launched a Mystery Rider Fare Observation Program to independently review the fare compliance process.

See Attachment I for the March 2023 Fare Observations Report from the mystery rider fare compliance program.

OPERATOR SAFETY

In January, there were a total of nine (9) assaults on bus/rail operators, with seven (7) assaults occurring in LAPD's jurisdiction and two (2) assaults occurring in LASD's jurisdiction. All of the assaults in January occurred on the bus system. These assaults represent a 31% decrease from December 2022, when thirteen (13) assaults were reported. A review of the incidents indicated that 45% were caused by no discernible reason or as a result of a missed stop. An analysis of the time of day for the assaults determined that 80% of reported incidents occurred between 6am and 6pm. For January, there were 15,664 bus boardings by LAPD officers and 2,322 bus boardings by LASD deputies.

METRO AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

By the numbers - Reporting Period: 1/6/2023 - 3/2/2023 Metro Ambassadors conducted 58,232 customer interactions and reported the following:

- 1,493 cleanliness issues
- 497 graffiti incidents
- 404 elevator and escalator problems
- 322 safety issues

Metro Ambassadors will continue to support our customers and employees as extra eyes and ears on Metro bus and rail systems.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Anti-Drug Campaign is a multi-layered effort to address heightened concerns from our riders and employees regarding illegal drug use on the system. Through this campaign, we aim to remind riders that the use of illegal drugs on the system will not be tolerated, and appropriate action will be taken for those violating this policy. Metro's social services teams will be deployed and explore the feasibility of having eligible individuals arrested for drug-related crimes offered a drug diversion program. The goal of this agency approach aims to look at more long-term and sustainable solutions for individuals willing to accept services and avoid a repeated cycle of incarceration.

Metro's balanced approach to decreasing crime on the system will be focused on drug-related and violent crime as a measure of success. Metrics include drug-related arrests; changes to the baseline of drug use on Metro's system, based on Customer Comment Analysis & Tracking System, Transit Watch reports, and Transit Ambassador reports per month; employee surveys targeted at three stations; Vermont/Wilshire, 7th and Metro, and North Hollywood. The target audience for these surveys is frontline staff, including cleaning crews and service. The surveys will be issued by the Blue Shirts and be made available online via a QR code, an in-person iPad survey, and an in-person paper version.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor our law enforcement partners, private security, and Transit Security performance, monitor crime stats, and adjust deployment as necessary.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Systemwide Law Enforcement Overview January 2023

Attachment B - MTA Supporting Data January 2023

Attachment C - Transit Police Summary January 2023

Attachment D - Monthly, Bi-Annual, Annual Comparison January 2023

Attachment E - Violent, Prop, and Part 1 Crimes January 2023

Attachment F - Demographics Data January 2023

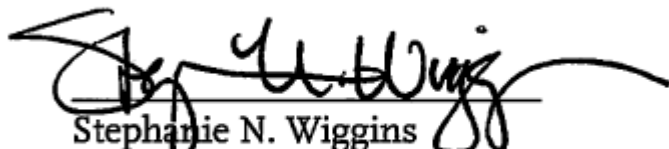
Attachment G - Bus & Rail Operator Assaults January 2023

Attachment H- Sexual Harassment Crimes January 2023

Attachment I - March 2023 Fare Observations Report

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