



## Board Report

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### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE APRIL 20, 2023

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE quarterly status report on Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC).

**ISSUE**

This Board report provides an update on the recruitment and establishment of the second cohort of the Public Safety Advisory Council (PSAC).

**BACKGROUND**

In June 2020, The Metro Board of Directors approved motions 37 and 37.1, directing Metro staff to form an advisory committee that would contribute to developing a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system.

In response to the 2020 motions, Metro formed the Public Safety Advisory Committee and sat its first cohort on April 7, 2021; their work concluded on August 17, 2022. The first cohort brought several recommendations to Metro staff and the Board for consideration, including feedback on the Metro Ambassador Pilot Program, Metro's Code of Conduct, and the development of Metro's Public Safety Mission and Vision Statements.

At the September 2022 Board meeting, the CEO provided a report with recommendations to continue the PSAC's work with some refinements. These included establishing a clear scope of authority and work plan, a better-defined structure to support impactful meetings, and a refined selection process to ensure that the committee reflects the diversity of Metro riders and stakeholders.

Recognizing the importance of public safety to delivering a great customer experience, the CEO moved the PSAC Administration out of the System Security and Law Enforcement Department and into the Customer Experience Department. The second cohort membership term has been extended from one year to two years, with staggered terms, and models a committee structure similar to many of its counterparts nationwide. These changes allow for more effective customer experience tracking and an extended public engagement process, setting the committee up for successful long-term

outcomes.

## **DISCUSSION**

On November 8, 2022, Metro launched its external application process seeking to establish its second PSAC cohort.

The committee is comprised of 15 voting community members and three non-voting community alternates; up to five members could be selected from the first PSAC cohort (should they apply) to carry forward the experience and perspective of the original committee. During the three-week application period, staff received 200 applications, including two from the first PSAC cohort.

Parallel to the external recruitment, staff initiated an internal application process to seek three ex-officio employee members and two employee alternates. The three ex-officio seats are designated for front-line Metro employees. During the application period, 13 employee applications were received.

Metro developed a robust process and prioritized an equitable recruitment and evaluation process for all PSAC applicants. Metro staff widely advertised the PSAC membership application, sent virtually through Metro's Customer Experience Department emailing system to over 28,000 recipients, and published on Metro's Source and El Pasajero. Staff presented the PSAC application at all Metro Service Councils and coordinated in-person outreach with Metro's Street Teams, who distributed paper notices on Metro's rail lines and at major transit hubs. The final membership established as the second PSAC cohort is a diverse group that represents the diversity of LA County's demographics and Metro's core ridership.

### **Cohort Selection**

To ensure a fair process, Staff developed an evaluation process that removed all bias and ensured that a diverse evaluation panel reviewed all 200 candidates. Staff convened an evaluation committee of 26 Metro staff who were diverse in gender, ethnicity, and role at Metro to review and select the candidates. The selection process included a blind evaluation in which all applicants' identifying demographics were removed, and staff evaluated candidates based solely on their written responses to four open-ended questions. Two different staff members reviewed and scored each application, and the combined average was the applicant's final score. The top 30 candidates were selected for virtual interviews. Only then did Metro staff reintegrate demographic data to assess representation and determine that the top candidate's demographic make-up represented Metro's ridership.

The top 30 candidates were interviewed by staff from the Customer Experience and Operations departments and the Office of Equity and Race. The top 15 candidates were interviewed by our Chief Customer Experience Officer, Jennifer Vides, Chief Safety Officer, Gina Osborn, Chief Operations Officer, Conan Cheung, and Chief Executive Officer, Stephanie Wiggins.

Staff was committed to ensuring that the final PSAC membership reflected the diversity of people's lived experiences and perspectives and mirrored the diversity of Metro's ridership. The following tables reflect the demographic makeup of Metro's second PSAC cohort for 2023-2025.

<b>2023 PSAC Membership Demographics</b>		
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Count N = 15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Black/African American	4	27%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	13%
Hispanic/Latinx	5	33%
Caucasian	4	27%
<b>Gender</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Female	9	60%
Male	6	40%
<b>Age Range</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Under 18	1	7%
25-34	4	27%
35-44	4	27%
45-54	5	33%
55-64	1	7%
<b>Housing Status</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Homeowner	3	20%
Renter	11	73%
Other	1	7%
<b>Transit use</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Every day or most days	8	53%
At least once a week	4	27%
At least once a month	1	7%
A few times per year	1	7%
Once a year or less	1	7%
<b>Disability</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No	12	80%
Yes	3	20%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
	<i>Count N=15</i>	<i>Percent</i>

Heterosexual or straight	8	53%
Bisexual	3	20%
Gay	2	13%
Decline to state	2	13%
<b>Annual Income</b>		
	<b>Count N=15</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under \$5,000	1	7%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	1	7%
\$20,000 - \$24,999	2	13%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	5	33%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1	7%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	4	27%
\$150,000 or more	1	7%

Additionally, in keeping with the recommendations following the evaluation of the first cohort, the new PSAC cohort includes a minimum of one individual representing each of the following categories:

- Youth
- Seniors
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Racial Justice
- Equitable Transit
- Mental Health
- Social Services/Victims’ Rights
- Homeless Advocacy
- Law Enforcement

**New Cohort Kick-Off**

To ensure that the work of the second PSAC cohort is successful, staff secured the professional facilitation services of Communication and Public Affairs firm the Del Sol Group, a certified woman and minority owned firm. The firm provides community-focused communications services, including community outreach and engagement, facilitation, program development, and coalition building. Del Sol Group facilitated the PSAC membership onboarding and will facilitate PSAC general monthly meetings moving forward.

The new PSAC cohort officially began its work on February 25, 2023. Responding to the insight that the first PSAC cohort did not have time to get to know each other before they began their work, PSAC members were first on-boarded at a special retreat, where they spent time getting to know one another and engaging in trust and team building exercises to set them up for a professional and successful working relationship. Committee members wrote and presented the personal goals and experiences that have shaped who they are today and guided their purpose for seeking membership in Metro’s PSAC. While committee members come from various walks of life throughout LA County

and brought different perspectives about public safety to the table, the exercise helped them find unity in their shared commitment to improve public safety on our system.

The retreat was followed by the first official PSAC meeting, where members received a Brown Act presentation from County Counsel to ensure understanding and compliance. Next, Metro Operations Senior Director Stephen Tu presented the details of the Reimagining Westlake/MacArthur Park Station Pilot Interventions. Committee members reviewed and provided feedback on Metro's efforts during the meeting, as well as submitted written comments to the operations team leading these efforts. Comments centered mostly on ensuring an equitable approach to mitigations for all riders and included the desire for station activations as a safety measure, partnerships with local businesses, keeping mindful of riders with bikes and strollers, improved plaza lighting, and the need for the presence of both homeless services teams as well as drug interventionists to address these two issues.

On March 1, 2023, members of both PSAC cohorts participated in a virtual focus group and interactive discussion with the Deputy Executive Officer of System Security and Law Enforcement (SSLE), Robert Gummer, to provide feedback on two draft policies: the Bias Free Policing Policy and the Public Safety Analytics Policy. PSAC member feedback helped SSLE finalize both policies in preparation for Board review and approval.

During the two-hour session, committee members read through every component of each policy and made recommendations on what they would like to see as part of these policies, such as de-escalation and anti-bias training for officers, publicly accessible safety data, and regular compliance reviews of security partners. The focus group utilized a Google Jamboard, a digital interactive whiteboard in which members could comment and agree or disagree with other member's comments and proposals on how SSLE could better implement and measure the success of the two policies.

At the March 16, 2023, general PSAC meeting, members were briefed by Chief Safety Officer Gina Osborn, and Chief Customer Experience Officer, Jennifer Vides about Metro's reimagined public safety framework and plan, as well as the safety policies brought to the March Board meeting. PSAC members had the opportunity to ask questions and provide input to those policies and programs.

At this meeting, the PSAC confirmed its Executive Committee, electing Jeremy Oliver-Ronceros as the committee's Chair and Misty Wilks as its Vice-Chair.

The Executive Committee will meet with administrative staff and the facilitation team once a month to codevelop the agenda for each PSAC general meeting and once a month with Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins to share committee updates and learn about the CEO's public safety priorities and strategies.

On April 3, 2023, the PSAC Executive Committee met with CEO Wiggins to co-develop the committee's work plan for the year. The work plan outlines five objectives that will frame the scope of work of the PSAC. Under each objective, CEO, Metro staff, and PSAC executive committee will identify key strategies and milestones that the committee can review, evaluate, and/or help initiate. The five objectives are:

1. Enhance the Customer Experience by addressing perceptions of safety for riders and

- employees through infrastructure.
2. Enhance the Customer Experience by addressing perceptions of safety for riders and employees through transparency and the use of data and technology.
  3. Enhance the Customer Experience tied to safety for people with disabilities and aging.
  4. Monitor strategies to address unhoused people sheltering on the system.
  5. Monitor strategies that provide alternatives to law enforcement on the system.

At its April 6, 2023 general meeting, the PSAC was presented with information that will be foundational to their work. First, they received an overview of the 2022 CX survey with a focus on who they are (demographics), and what they most want Metro to improve - with a focus on key safety strategies riders prefer. This information was shared to help the PSAC remain focused on the needs of riders. The group asked questions and requested deeper dives into a few areas, including the safety needs of persons living with disabilities, as well as whether safety concerns are more prevalent on specific lines or during specific times of day. Then, the PSAC was presented with an overview of the Metro Ambassador program and expressed their desire for an expansion of that program in terms of staffing as well as hours of operation.

At this meeting, the PSAC also approved the draft work plan and its charter and bylaws, and elected Catherine Baltazar as its secretary.

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

A core goal of the second PSAC cohort will be to represent county-wide community voices and concerns in agency safety policy introductions, implementation, and evaluations. As riders from throughout LA County, members of this committee have a unique and expert perspective on how the everyday rider experiences Metro safety policies and programs. This second PSAC cohort will continue the work initiated by the first cohort and help inform Metro's work to advance equitable safety policies that serve all system riders.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

PSAC efforts support Goal 2:

Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.

Metro's Vision 2028 second 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. To achieve a safe system, Metro will rely on a multi-layered, integrated security program that includes technology, people, and partnerships. The PSAC is a key component of 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**

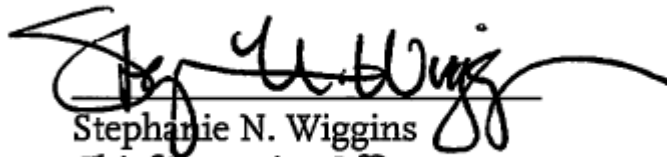
To ensure that the priorities of the Board are met, the CEO will meet with the PSAC Executive Committee monthly.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - List of PSAC Members & Alternates

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