



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 38.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

JUNE 22, 2023

SUBJECT: MONTHLY UPDATE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE Public Safety Report.

ISSUE

Metro is committed to providing outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. In furtherance of this Vision 2028 Goal, Metro is implementing a multi-faceted plan to improve safety and the perceptions of safety for riders and employees. The following summarizes current initiatives aimed at this objective and provides a summary of recent trends.

BACKGROUND

At its February 2022 meeting, the Board received and filed a Reimagining Public Safety Framework (Framework), which outlines a human-centered approach to public safety, guided by the principle that everyone is entitled to a safe, dignified, and human experience. This Framework reflects Metro's Public Safety Mission and Values statements which were adopted by the Board in December 2021. In March 2023, the Board adopted a revised Code of Conduct and a Bias-Free Policing Policy and Public Safety Analytics Policy.

These actions align with numerous initiatives to improve safety and the perception of safety on the system, including the increased deployment of strategic, layered personnel (comprised of ambassadors, homeless outreach, community intervention specialists, transit security, private security, and law enforcement) and the piloting of safety and security interventions to address drug use and crime on the system.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Safety Officer is responsible for overseeing safety initiatives on the Metro system and works in coordination with other departments, including Operations and Customer Experience, to implement strategies to promote this objective.

BUS SAFETY

Metro has deployed a variety of strategies to improve safety for both riders and operators on the bus system.

Transit Security Officer Bus Riding Teams

Given the additional 48 Transit Security Officers approved for bus riding teams at the March 2023 Board Meeting, Metro began the effort to create a visible presence on the bus system that enforces the updated Code of Conduct. Metro intends to expand deployment to the ten bus lines with the highest historic number of operator assaults and will engage operators for feedback regarding this deployment model during Division Rap sessions.

Bus Operator Safety and Barrier Prototypes

While there was a decline in operator assaults during the month of April (15) in comparison to the month of March (23) (see Attachment D for additional details), the number of incidents are up compared to previous years. Metro maintains zero tolerance for any assault on a transit operator.

Metro is exploring new barriers to promote operator safety. To pilot this effort, on April 28, ten buses were retrofitted with one of two new barrier prototypes, which are designed to minimize involuntary physical interaction between riders and operators.

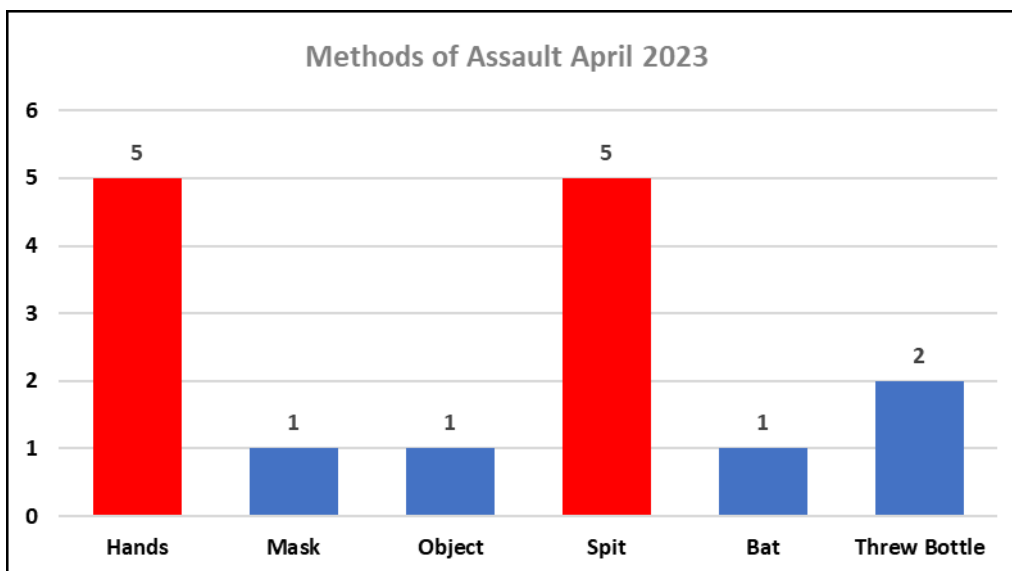
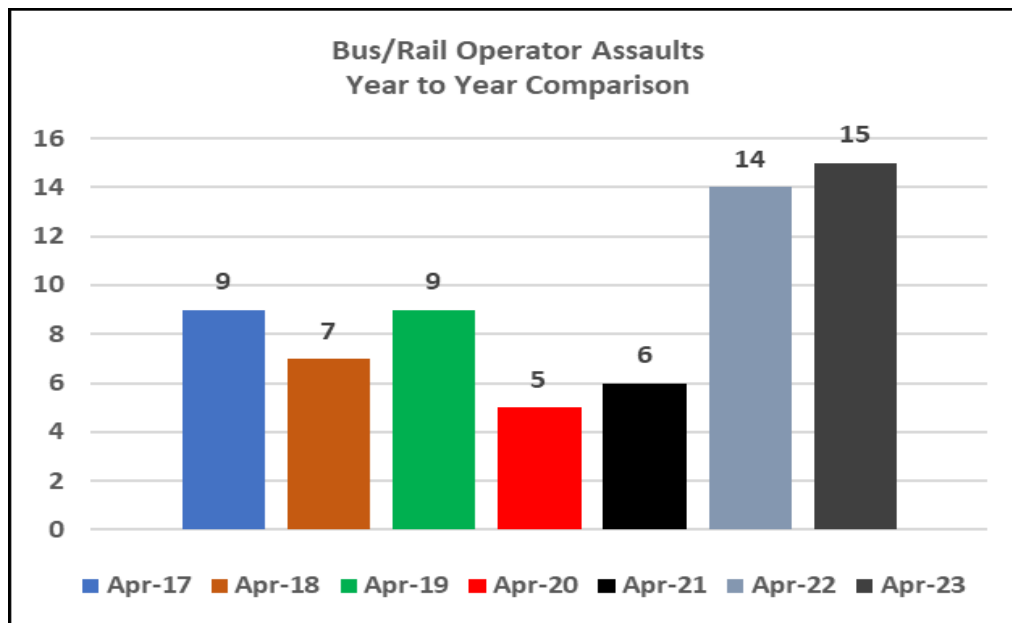


Prototype 1
Extended with no cutout



Prototype 2
Extended to windshield

Metro will continue to engage operators regarding which prototype is best received.



DRUG-FREE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

On February 13, staff launched the Drug-Free Metro Campaign to curb open drug use on the system and drug overdoses attributed to the regional fentanyl epidemic.

The goals of the campaign are as follows:

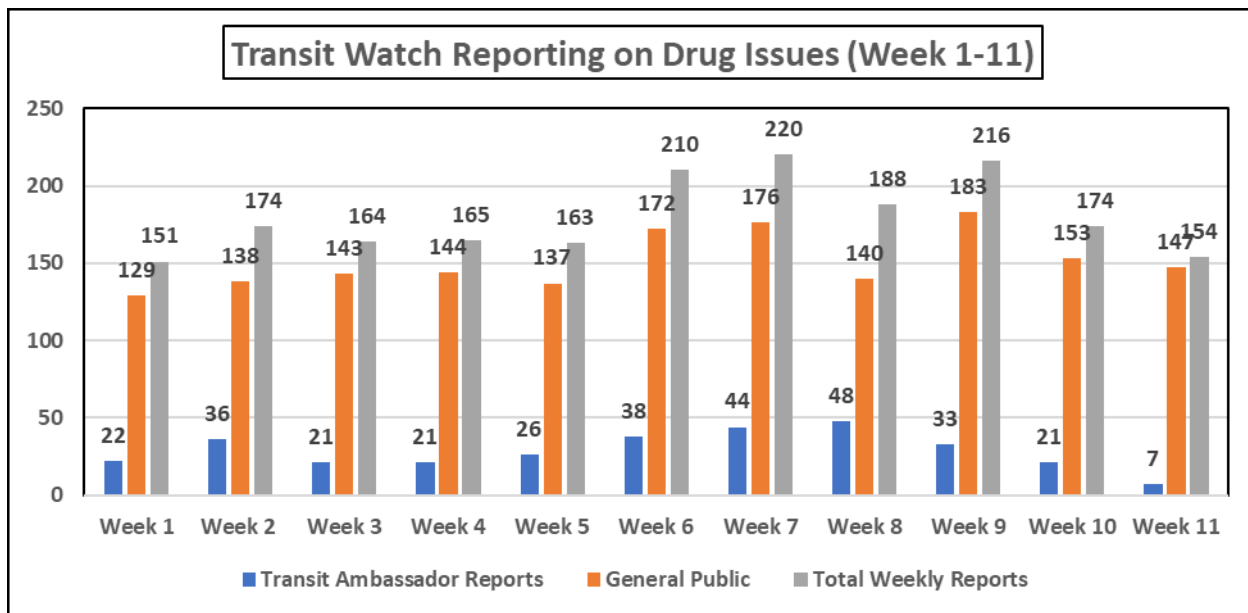
- Remove individuals arrested for committing crimes on our system, with a particular focus on drug crimes.
- Significantly decrease drug sales, usage, and overdoses on trains, platforms, and in stations.

- 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.

The multi-layered combination of Transit Ambassadors, Metro Transit Security, law enforcement officers, and homeless outreach teams was able to provide care and services for those in need and identify individuals who were on the system not for the purposes of transit.

By the end of April, the campaign resulted in:

- 393 citations and 217 warnings issued by Metro Transit Security.
 - MTS citations related to Eating/Drinking/Smoking violations (the category which captures drug/narcotics related activity) have become almost non-existent.
 - 327 drug related arrests by law enforcement.
 - A reduction of Customer Call Center complaints by 17%. The Customer Call Center received a total of 70 complaints about drugs on the Red/Purple Line through Week 11 of the Drug-Free Campaign. In prior reports, it was noted the previous average of drug-related complaints per month was 30 which would equate to 90 complaints over a 3-month period.
 - Transit Ambassador and General Public reporting on the Transit Watch App on drug issues decreased by 30% in Week 11 when compared to Week 9, which reflected the highest number of drug related reporting.
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In addition to the above figures, anecdotal and social media feedback from riders and employees has affirmed that the campaign’s efforts are fulfilling its intended goals. Staff will continue to monitor trends.

B/D (RED/PURPLE) LINE SUPPLEMENTAL DEPLOYMENT

On Monday, April 24, Metro began a supplemental deployment to increase the visible presence of LASD and LAPD on the B/D Line to promote the safety and perception of safety among customers and employees.

LAPD and LASD also deployed their homeless outreach services teams to connect those experiencing homelessness with services and providers, which by the end of April resulted in outreach to 399 individuals and the acceptance of services by 225 individuals.

The first week of the deployment resulted in the following activities, which are tracked separately from the Drug-Free Metro Campaign:

- Citations: 107
- Warnings: 200
- Arrests: 45
- Ejections: 1,786

METRO AMBASSADOR PROGRAM UPDATE

Metro Ambassadors continue to support riders, connect riders to resources, and report incidents or maintenance needs. Metro Ambassadors are currently deployed on the K Line, L Line (Gold), B Line

(Red), D Line (Purple), A Line (Blue), C Line (Green), and J Line (Silver), as well as bus lines 210, 40, 20, and 720. 36 Ambassadors are trained to for deployment on the Regional Connector; 3 teams per shift will be assigned to monitor elevators at the Grand Ave Arts/Bunker Hill Station.

Metro Ambassadors conducted 51,865 customer interactions and reported the following:

- 1171 cleanliness issues
- 264 elevator and escalator problems
- 242 graffiti incidents
- 172 safety issues

Since April 17, 2023, Ambassadors have been certified and equipped to carry and administer Narcan and reported two Narcan incidents to date:

- 4/20/2023 - North Hollywood Station
- 4/21/2023 - Hollywood / Vine Station

ARREST AND CRIME TRENDS AND STATISTICS

The arrest and crime statistics contained in the report data collected from the month of April and reflect the second month of the Drug-Free Campaign and the launch of Metro's Supplemental Deployment on the B/D (Red/Purple) Line.

During April, Metro experienced higher levels of law enforcement presence across the entire system in comparison to previous months, creating more visibility and rider compliance with Metro's Code of Conduct. The following trends should be noted:

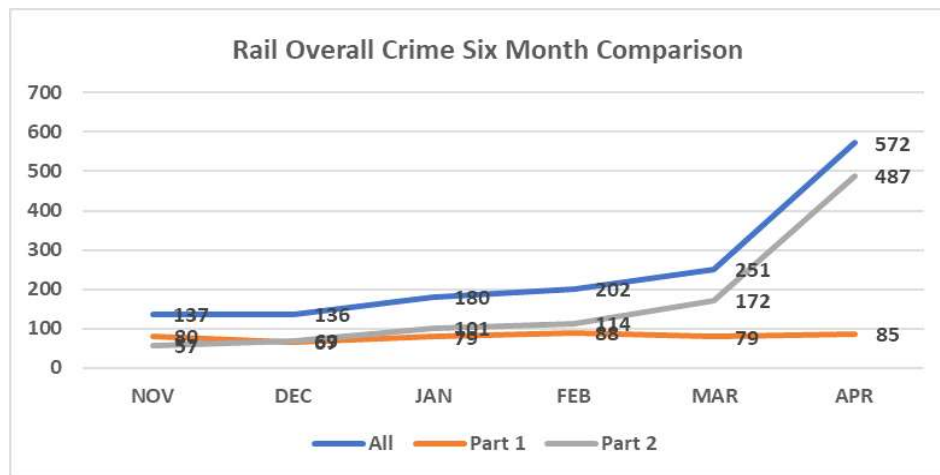
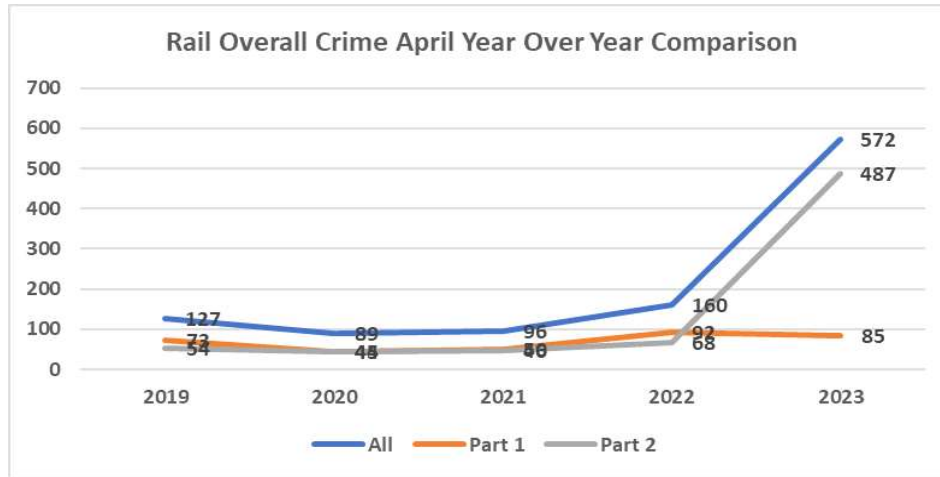
Overall, across the system, arrests for crimes against persons continue to remain high. SSLE conducted an analysis of aggravated assault on the system as they continue to persist at an unacceptable level (46 incidents in April, and 48 incidents in March). Aggravated assault on the rail system showed a 10% reduction when compared to the prior year, however, there was a slight increase on the bus system. A review of incident reports revealed that most incidents involved the escalation of verbal arguments.

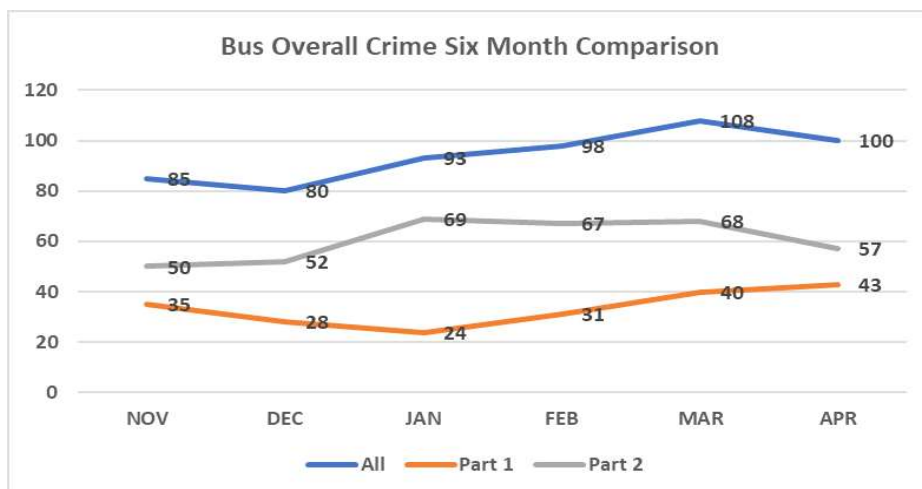
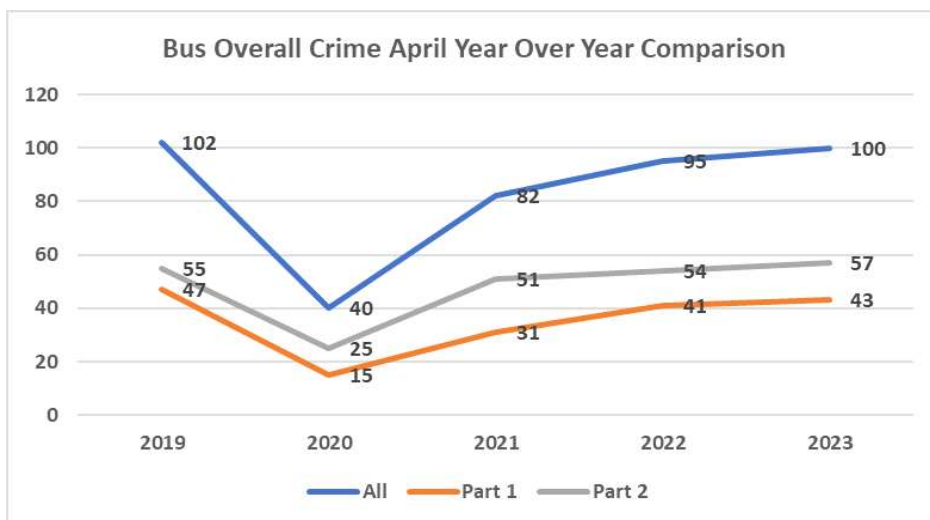
Property crimes remain low across the system, despite a slight increase compared to March 2023 (46 vs 49). The analysis of robbery incidents showed the largest increase occurred on the bus system. A review of reporting indicated nearly half of the incidents involved the theft of cellphones from customers.

Crimes Against Society, such as narcotics, trespassing, and weapons related arrests, increased to 61 versus 7 in April 2022, largely attributed to the increased law enforcement presence associated with the Drug-Free Campaign. Forty-seven of those arrests (77%) occurred on the rail system. There were also 389 trespassing arrests of those not using Metro for the purpose of transit, of which 371 (95%) occurred on the rail system. SSLE found that 65% of both trespassing and narcotics related

arrests (253 and 40 respectively) occurred on the B/D (Red/Purple) Line, further emphasizing the impact of Metro's efforts.

The following charts summarize annual and biannual trends.





SECURITY UPDATE - SIERRA MADRE STATION PARKING STRUCTURE

As part of Metro’s multi-layered security model, private security is responsible for patrolling and securing facilities, such as the ancillary areas, divisions, station parking garages, and platforms. During the week of May 22, SSLE staff conducted a field inspection of the Sierra Madre Station Parking Structure and did not see private security officers on location. This is of significance as it is a four-level parking garage located across a freeway and is of high usage. At this location, two officers are assigned to the AM shift, two officers in the PM shift, and one officer in the overnight shift.

After contacting the private security contractor, we were informed that the assignment was unfulfilled due to insufficient staffing levels from a subcontractor. SSLE management has since met with the contractor to discuss staffing solutions and implemented accountability measures to promptly inform Metro of daily assignment vacancies. Furthermore, the contractor will grant Metro access to TrackTik, a software that provides real-time data and tracks officer activity on-site. Officers will be required to badge every 30 minutes on a Detex system to help monitor and log officer activity. Lastly, SSLE is

partnering with Operations and Parking Management to determine the feasibility of installing additional cameras, which will allow Metro's Security Operations Center to verify officer presence in real time.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Metro continues to implement a multi-layered public safety model which takes a cross-disciplinary approach to addressing the various safety needs of the system with the involvement of transit security, law enforcement, ambassadors, and homeless outreach teams. As safety is not a one size fits all, it is imperative to have care-based approaches to provide impactful and lasting solutions to the social issues facing many riders.

NEXT STEPS

The Chief Safety Office continues to monitor our law enforcement partners, private security, and Transit Security performance, monitor crime stats, and consider information from surveys, customer complaints, and physical security assessments, amongst other sources, to analyze safety-related issues, adjust deployment strategies, and formulate new interventions.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Total Crime Summary April 2023

Attachment B - Systemwide Law Enforcement Overview April 2023

Attachment C - MTA Supporting Data April 2023

Attachment D - Bus & Rail Operator Assaults April 2023

Attachment E - Sexual Harassment Crimes April 2023

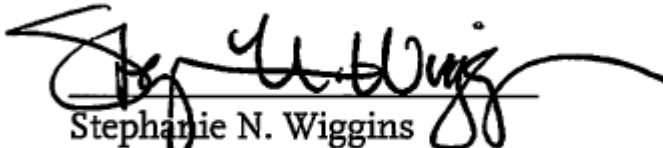
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