



## Board Report

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**Agenda Number:** 31.

### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

**JULY 20, 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 Vision 2028 Goal, Metro is implementing a multi-faceted plan to improve safety and the perceptions of safety for both riders and employees. The following summarizes current initiatives aimed at accomplishing this objective and recent public safety 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, strategic, and layered deployment of personnel (comprised of customer-centered ambassadors and community intervention specialists, as well as transit security and law enforcement) and the piloting of safety and security interventions to address specific concerns (e.g., drug use and crime) on the system.

#### **DISCUSSION**

System Security and Law Enforcement (SSLE) 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 advance this objective. Following is a snapshot of May activities and data, which is the most recent month for which systemwide law enforcement data is

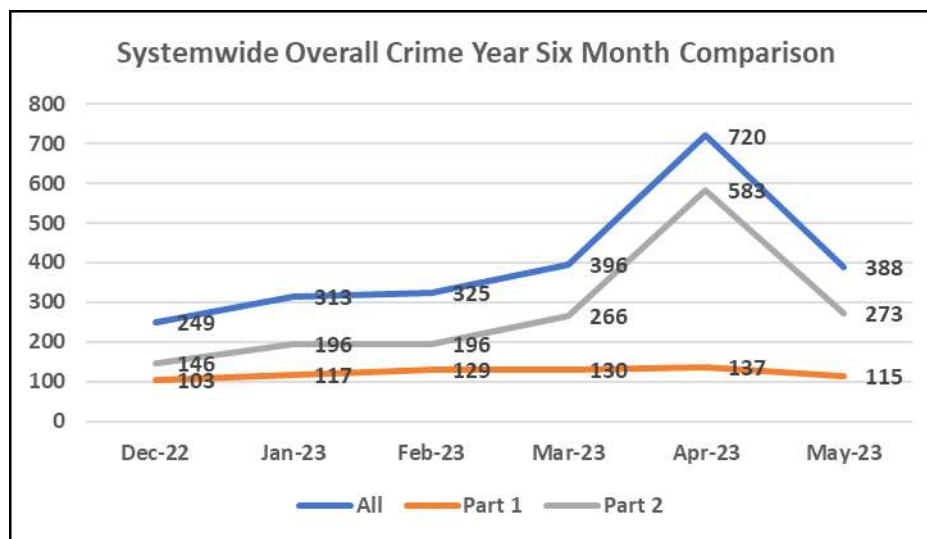
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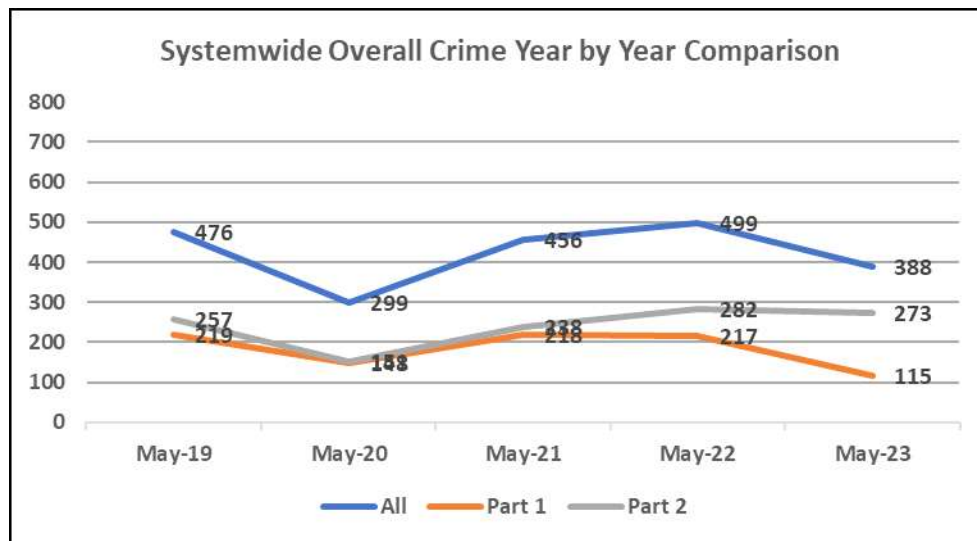
## ARREST AND CRIME TRENDS AND STATISTICS

Throughout May, Metro maintained an increased law enforcement presence system wide, consistent with Metro's goal of maintaining increased visibility and promoting rider compliance with Metro's Code of Conduct.

The following highlights were noted:

Overall, across the system, Crimes Against Persons, Property, and Society all showed decreases when compared to April 2023. In comparison with April 2023, overall crime on the system decreased by 46% (388 vs 720) and by 22% (388 vs 499) when compared to May 2022. Even more significant, crime on the system was below pre-pandemic levels in 2019 by 18% (388 vs 476). Crime on rail decreased by 53% (268 vs 572) and by 13% on bus (87 vs 100) when compared to April 2023.





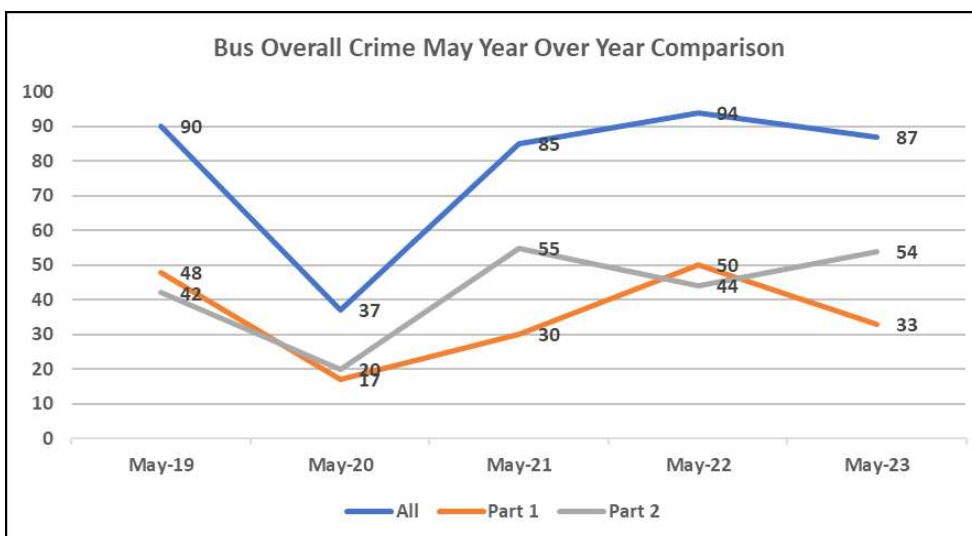
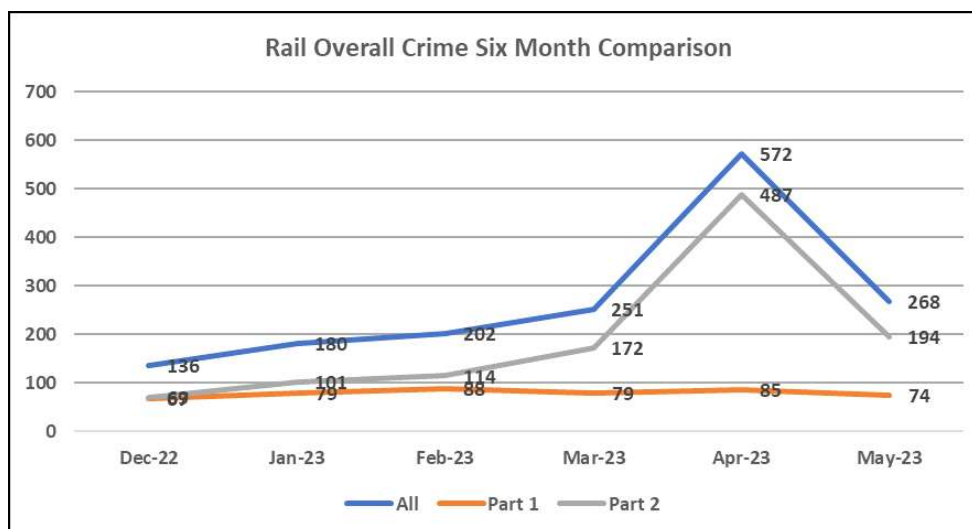
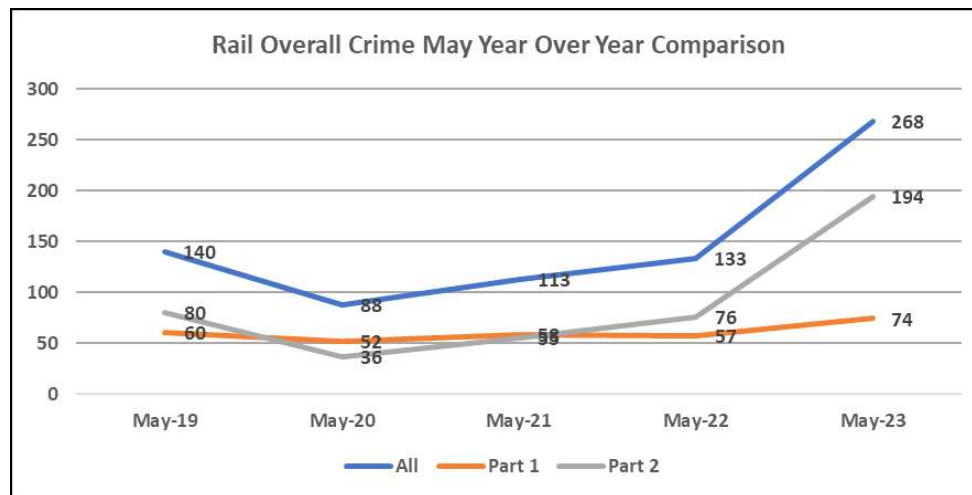
Crimes Against Persons decreased systemwide by 32% when compared to April 2023. The most notable decrease was in aggravated assaults, which fell by 50% systemwide (23 incidents in May) when compared to April and March 2023 (46 and 48 incidents respectively).

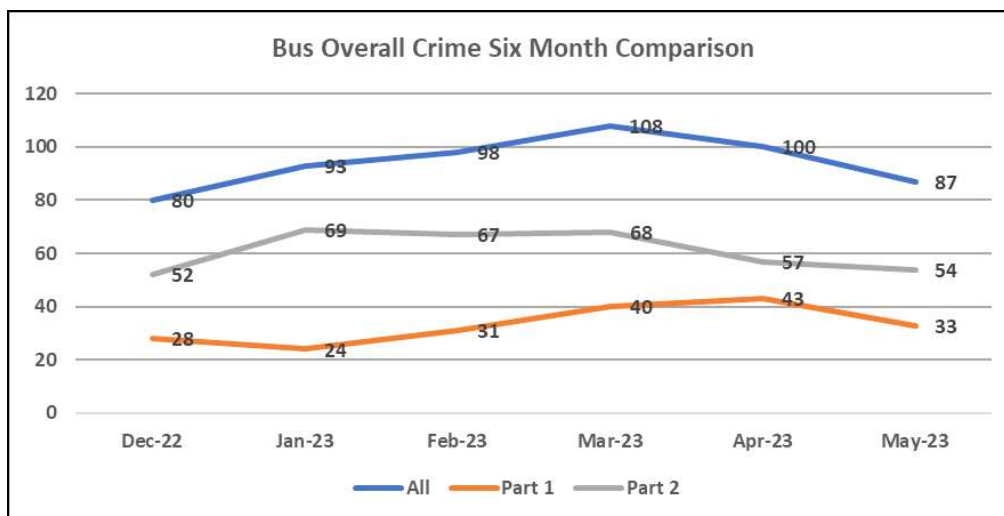
Property crimes dropped 5% (45 vs 47) when compared to April 2023. An analysis of property crimes indicated that cellphone theft remains a prevalent issue systemwide.

The long-term success of the Drug-Free Campaign and Supplemental Deployment efforts were demonstrated by a reduction of narcotics, trespassing, and weapons related arrests systemwide, particularly on the rail system. Systemwide narcotics arrests decreased by 57% (26 vs 61) when compared to April 2023. The 68% decrease in trespassing arrests (123 vs 389) affirmed that Metro's approach has been effective at creating a non-permissive environment for loitering, sheltering, and illicit activity on the system.

There was also a 33% decrease (10 vs 15) in weapons related arrests systemwide between May and April.

The following charts summarize year over year and biannual trends on the rail and bus system.





At the April meeting, the Board asked for a report on arrests, citations, and warnings demographics over the past two years. Attachment F provides a summary of the findings and recent trends, inclusive of the raw data.

## OPERATOR SAFETY

Metro maintains zero tolerance for any assault on any Metro employee. To improve operator safety, SSLE began the rollout of Transit Security Officer Bus Riding teams that will ride the top 10 bus lines, where the highest number of assault incidents have occurred over the last six months. This effort aims to mitigate operator assaults while Metro continues to onboard the additional 48 TSOs who will serve as dedicated bus riding teams.

The decline in operator assaults continued during the month of May (8 assaults) compared to April (15 assaults) and March (23 assaults). While no number of assaults is tolerated, the rate of assaults in May is consistent with historic averages, as shown in Figure A. The type of assaults that occurred in May are summarized in Figure B, which includes an incident in which a bus operator was left in critical condition after being stabbed by a patron with a knife in Woodland Hills. The suspect responsible for the assault was quickly apprehended by law enforcement. The ongoing increased presence of safety officers on buses is designed to prevent operator assaults from occurring in the future.

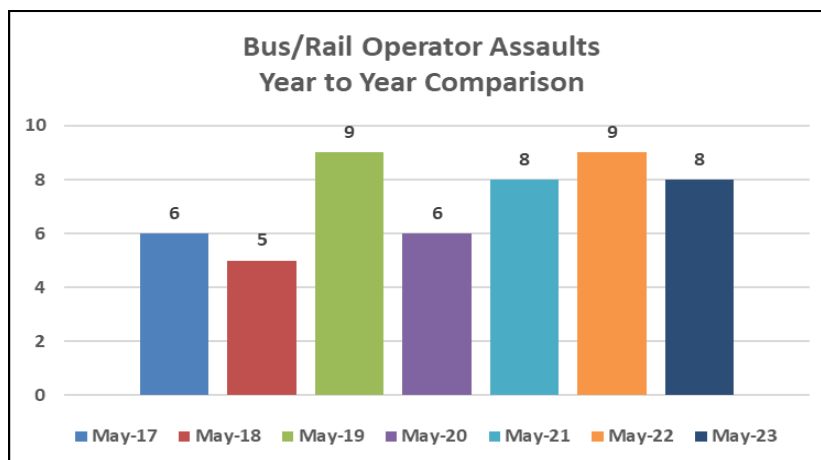


Figure A: Bus/Rail Operator Assaults Year to Year Comparison

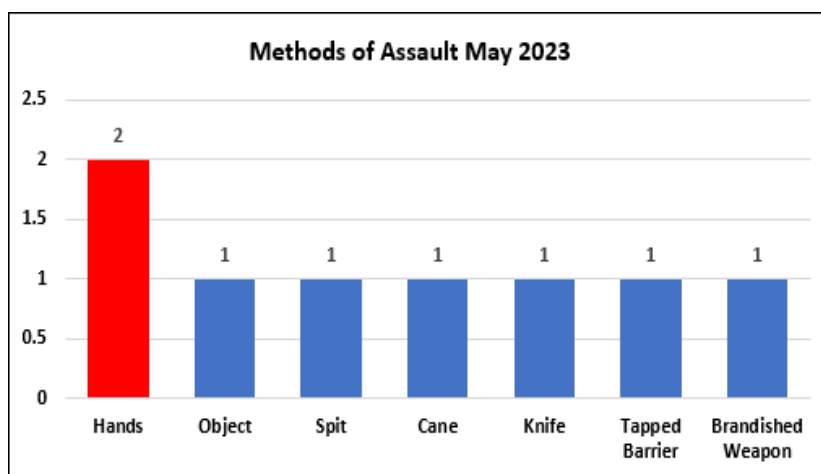


Figure B: Methods of Assault

### ***Bus Engagement Spotlight***

On May 27, 2023, LASD deputies responded to Atlantic Boulevard and Whitter Boulevard in East Los Angeles regarding an bus operator incident in which the bus operator was threatened with assault and subsequently robbed of their sunglasses and watch. The suspect fled the scene on a blue BMX-style bicycle. The operator was not harmed during the incident. Based on the information provided by the operator, LASD recognized that the description matched a suspect for a robbery that had occurred earlier in the day. LASD was able to apprehend and arrest the suspect for criminal threats and robbery.

### **DRUG-FREE CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

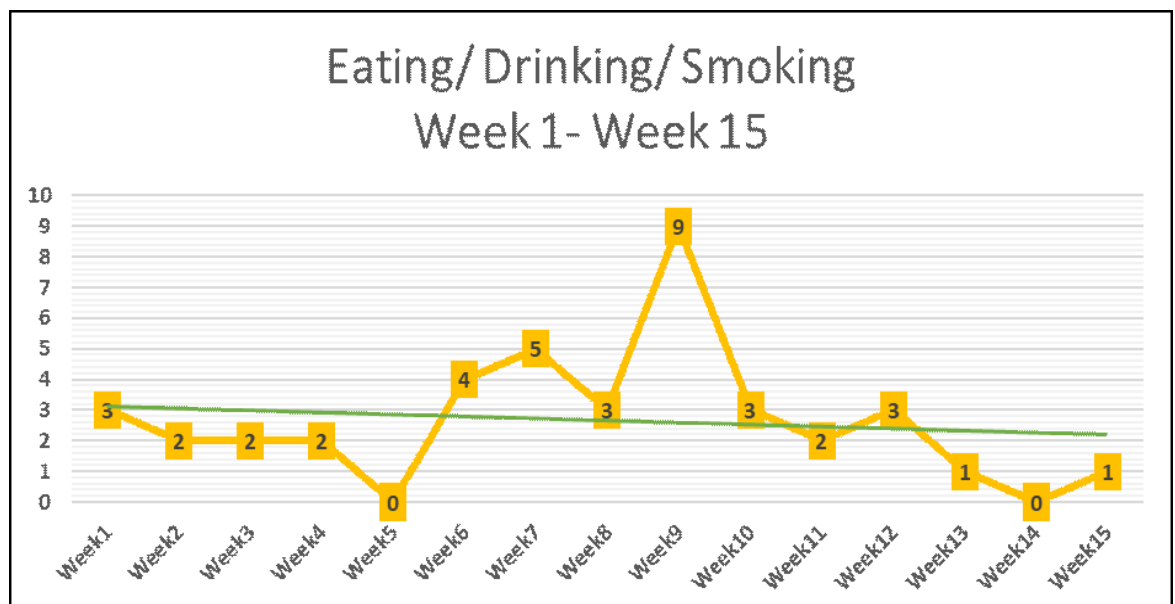
On February 13, staff launched the Drug-Free Metro Campaign to curb open drug use on the system and drug overdoses attributed to the regional fentanyl epidemic. The compliance campaign continued throughout May.

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.

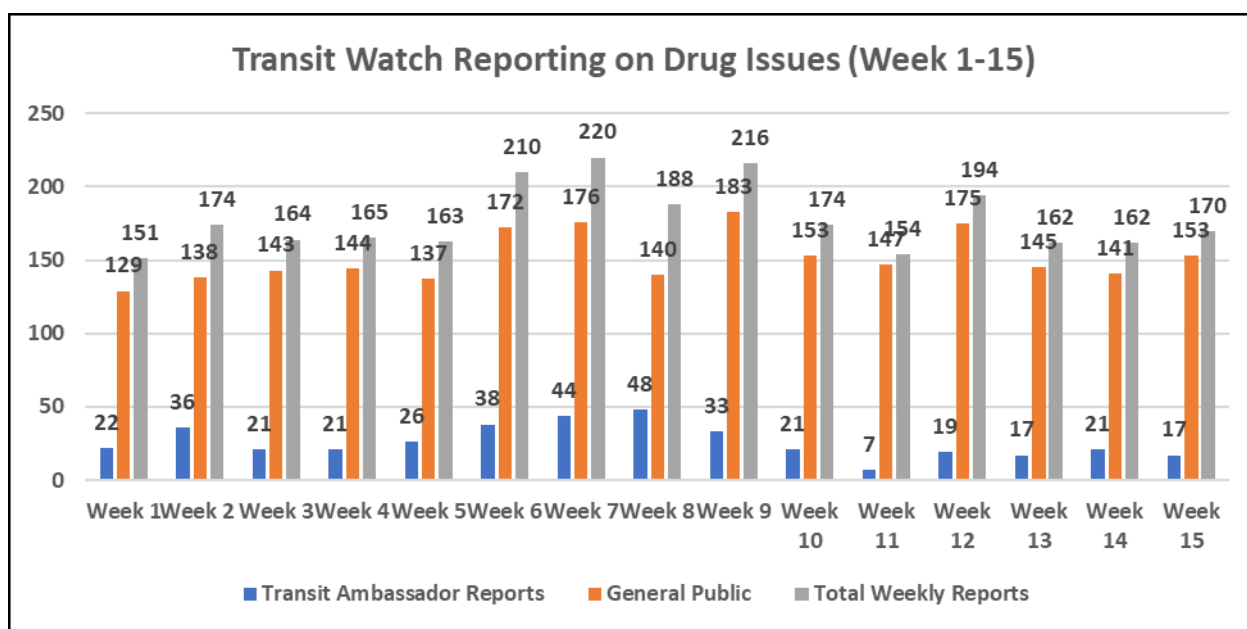
During the reporting period of 2/13/2023-05/31/2023 (May is represented by Weeks 12- 15), the campaign resulted in:

- 514 citations and 386 warnings related to Eating/Drinking/Smoking violations (the category which captures drug/narcotics related activity) issued by Metro Transit Security. In May, there were 5 citations issued - a sharp decline from previous months



- 330 drug related arrests by law enforcement by 05/31/2023. 42 of those arrests occurred during the month of May. The month of May saw a gradual decline of drug related arrests when compared to the first two months of the campaign.

- The Customer Call Center received a total of 82 complaints about drugs on the Red/Purple (B/D) Lines through week 15 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 120 complaints over a 4-month period. Only 12 complaints about drugs on the Red/Purple lines were submitted during the month of May. To date, the efforts of the Drug-Free Campaign have reduced complaints by nearly 32%.
- SSLE reviewed Transit Watch app reporting during the month of May and found that Transit Ambassador and General Public reporting had dropped by 12% from Week 12 to Week 15 of the Drug-Free Campaign.



Metro continues to receive anecdotal and social media feedback from riders and employees that the campaign's efforts are helping to ensure a better experience for transit customers. Staff will continue to monitor local trends and their impact on the Metro system.

### **B/D (RED/PURPLE) LINE SUPPLEMENTAL DEPLOYMENT**

On Monday, April 24, Metro began a supplemental deployment of LASD and LAPD on the Red/Purple (B/D) Lines to improve visible presence, reduce crime, and advance the perception of safety among customers and employees.

LAPD and LASD deployed their homeless outreach services teams to connect those experiencing homelessness with services and providers which resulted in outreach to 580 individuals, of which 348 was accepted in May. In total, the homeless outreach teams have offered services to 979 individuals, with 573 services acceptance.



Below are the results of the efforts as of 05/31/2023, which are tracked separately from the Drug-Free Metro Campaign:

- Citations: 386\*
- Warnings: 661\*
- Arrests: 234
- Ejections: 8,427

\*Note that the citations and warnings are for trespassing and loitering violations.

On May 10, 2023, LASD deputies were assisting with a B-Line operation at the 7th St/Metro station. They detained a male suspect who was attempting to evade fare. The suspect stated he was on active parole for robbery. While conducting a parole compliance search of the suspect's backpack, deputies recovered multiple new items which had price tags affixed to them. Deputies contacted the retail store the items belonged to and spoke to the loss prevention manager who said that earlier in the day a male came into the store and stole some items. Based on the information provided by the loss prevention manager, LASD took the suspect into custody.

## **TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

On May 12, 2023, SSLE hosted a multi-jurisdictional exercise with LASD and LBPD at the C-Line Redondo Beach station. The exercise featured multiple variations of short criminal activity and active shooter/assault scenarios designed to test rapid response and interagency communication and coordination. TSA's Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Team, Customs Border Patrol Special Response Team, LAWA, and El Segundo's SWAT also participated. These exercises continue to strengthen the incident response coordination between multiple jurisdictions on Metro's rail system.

## **METRO AMBASSADOR PROGRAM UPDATE**

Metro Ambassadors' job is to support our riders, connect riders to resources, and report incidents or maintenance needs. Metro Ambassadors were deployed on the A Line, B Line, C Line, D Line, K Line, the former L Line, and J Line (Silver), as well as bus lines 210, 40, 20, and 720.

Since they were certified and equipped to carry and administer Narcan starting on 4/17/23 and up to 5/31/2023, Metro Ambassadors have reported five Narcan incidents to date:

- 4/20/2023 - North Hollywood Station
- 4/21/2023 - Hollywood / Vine Station
- 5/11/2023 - Westlake/MacArthur Park Station
- 5/19/2023 - Westlake/MacArthur Park Station
- 5/27/2023 - Westlake/MacArthur Park Station

New deployment: As of 5/19/2023, there are three Metro Ambassador teams per shift deployed at the Westlake MacArthur Park Station supporting customers as part of the 30-day faregate compliance pilot plan. This is in addition to the 3 riding teams assigned to the B (Red line).

**By the numbers - Reporting Period: 5/1/2023 - 5/31/2023**

Metro Ambassadors conducted 60,972 customer interactions and reported the following:

- 1337 cleanliness issues
- 298 elevator and escalator problems
- 355 graffiti incidents
- 200 safety issues

**Here are a few highlights that reflect the work Metro Ambassadors are performing:**

**Report received via Metro Customer Relations on 5/19/2023.** Customer wrote: "Hello LA Metro. Thank you for adding ambassadors to trains and stations! Terrific. Makes a huge difference. Ambassadors are kind, friendly, and welcoming. Well done. Great employees. I make it a point to stop and thank them all the time. The despair I felt on trains is lifting. Feels, safer, cleaner, and less stressful on trains. Energy is different! Amen! Hope Metro does the same for buses in some form. And please keep ambassadors in place. Thank you again LA Metro "L. Schneider".

**05/19/2023, On A Line Rail Car, 07:15AM.** A fight broke out on the train, and the Metro Ambassadors notified the rail operator via the Emergency Call Button located inside the rail car. Law Enforcement showed up at LATTC Station and asked the riders involved in the incident to leave the train. Ambassadors continued with their assignment.

**05/25/2023, Westlake/MacArthur Park, 8:10 AM.** The Metro Ambassadors came across an elderly customer on crutches, at the street level, who was struggling to get to the platform. So, they went over to help him and asked where he was heading. The customer advised he was headed to North Hollywood. The Ambassadors assisted this customer down to catch the B-Line to North Hollywood. One of the Ambassadors carried the customer's items down to the platform and they ensured that he got on the train safely. The man was thankful for the Ambassadors' help.

## **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. Metro will continue to analyze demographic trends regarding citations and arrests in line with the agency's Bias-Free Policing Policy and Public Safety Analytics Policy.

## **NEXT STEPS**

SSLE continues to monitor our law enforcement partners, private security, and Transit Security

Officer 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 May 2023

Attachment B - Systemwide Law Enforcement Overview May 2023

Attachment C - MTA Supporting Data May 2023

Attachment D - Bus & Rail Operator Assaults May 2023

Attachment E - Sexual Harassment Crimes May 2023

Attachment F - Warnings, Citations, And Arrest Demographic Data

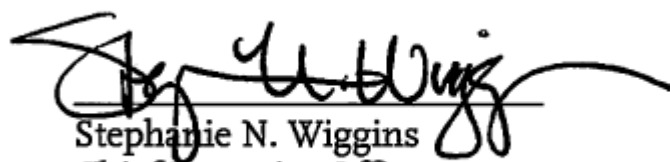
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