



Board Report

File #: 2023-0720, **File Type:** Oral Report / Presentation

Agenda Number: 32.

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JANUARY 18, 2024

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

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

ISSUE

In June 2020, the Board directed the CEO to form an advisory committee that would contribute to developing a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system. This Board report provides a quarterly update on the work of the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC).

BACKGROUND

Metro established the first cohort of PSAC as a pilot on April 7, 2021. During their 16-month term, they provided guidance on the development of a community-based approach to public safety, provided input on the development of the multi-agency policing contract renewal, reviewed the Customer Code of Conduct, provided input on Metro's mission and value statements regarding public safety, and guided the establishment of Metro's Transit Ambassadors program, among other accomplishments. PSAC 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 provided a report with recommendations to continue the PSAC. The second cohort was established on February 25, 2023, and will serve for two years through February 2025.

Executive Committee Members

PSAC elected an executive committee to serve from February 2023 to February 2024.

Jeremy Oliver-Ronceros, Chair

Misty Wilks, Vice-Chair

Catherine Baltazar, Secretary

Work Plan Objectives

The work plan, developed between the PSAC Executive Committee and Metro CEO Wiggins, outlines five objectives that frame PSAC's scope of work to enhance the customer experience by addressing safety concerns on the system. Under each objective, the PSAC Executive Committee, with Metro staff and the CEO, has identified key strategies that the committee can review, evaluate,

and/or help initiate. On July 13, 2023, the PSAC Executive Committee met with CEO Wiggins to outline PSAC meeting agenda items for the months of August 2023 through February 2024. Agenda items include, but are not limited to, Metro Transit Security Bus Riding Teams, Customer Experience Plan, Exploration of a Transit Community Safety Department (TCSD), Metro's Ambassador Program Evaluation, safety for people with disabilities, station intervention strategies, crisis response strategies, and a PSAC community listening session.

DISCUSSION

November 13, 2023 - PSAC General Meeting

On November 13, PSAC held its monthly meeting with three agenda items.

1. Overview of Metro's Crisis Response
2. TCSD Update
3. PSAC Discussion on Ad Hoc Committees

Overview of Metro's Crisis Response

Robert Gummer, Senior Executive Officer, along with Metro's security partners who make up the crisis response teams, were invited to speak to PSAC about how they work to address and support riders experiencing a mental health crisis or other vulnerabilities due to being unhoused on the system.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Mobile Crisis Outreach Transportation teams (MCOT) shared an overview of their crisis intervention processes, including information on service referrals, and how they transport the unhoused for treatment. PSAC also heard from the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) Homelessness Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE). The HOPE unit is comprised of ten officers, one sergeant, and a psychiatric social worker that engages the unhoused rider population in and around the Metro system within the Los Angeles County jurisdiction. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) also presented the Transit Mental Evaluation Team, a crisis response team dedicated to Metro's transit. This unit includes ten deputies, one sergeant, and two Department of Mental Health clinicians.

PSAC members had questions regarding staffing, and the process by which officers are paired up with clinicians to provide support to riders on the Metro system. One PSAC member asked whether officers on these teams are armed or unarmed and asked how they were perceived by riders experiencing a crisis. PSAC members were interested in how community and rider complaints were addressed by the crisis teams and what processes and procedures were in place to ensure the best care-based approach was taken. The PSAC members expressed their gratitude to Metro's SSLE Department and crisis response teams for their comprehensive presentations on the agency's approach to crises on the system. As part of the feedback, PSAC members asked that Metro's safety partners and their crisis response teams share more inspirational stories to the PSAC and to the Metro Board to highlight their positive outcomes. The LASD Transit Mental Evaluation team offered PSAC the opportunity to ride along and have first-hand experience with their team. Metro staff will coordinate the ride-along for PSAC members in 2024.

TCSD Update

Metro's Chief Safety Officer, Gina Osborn, updated PSAC members on the Transit Community Safety

Department implementation plan. The SSLE Department continues to work on the implementation plan and will present an update to the Metro Board in January 2024.

PSAC Discussion on Ad Hoc Committees re: TCSD

Upon consultation with CEO Wiggins and PSAC leadership in October, PSAC discussed and voted to create three Ad Hoc Committees for more in-depth conversations and to allow time to develop thorough recommendations on personnel, job duties, and oversight for the Transit Community Safety Department implementation plan at its November meeting. Throughout December, six PSAC Ad Hoc Committee workshops, each two hours long, facilitated meaningful discussion and brainstorming of recommendations for CEO Wiggins. The committees were structured in two rounds. The first round of meetings created a space to review public input and community priorities from PSAC in-person engagement during the fall. The initial brainstorming session allowed for extensive conversations to express and untangle ideas through a Google Jamboard exercise. The second round of meetings focused the conversation on filtering through the many ideas and synthesizing them into direct recommendations about how officers of an in-house safety department should be evaluated before hiring, be routinely trained before and after deployment on the system, be supervised, and held to the highest standards of excellence in public safety.

Ad Hoc Committee members:

Personnel Committee	Job Duties Committee	Oversight Committee
Voting Members 1. David Sanchez 2. Misty Wilks 3. Brandon Cheng 4. Darryl Goodus 5. Estar Park	Voting Members 1. Mary Rose Fissinger 2. Jeremy Oliver-Ronceros 3. Mariana Estrada 4. Delia Arriaga	Voting Members 1. Florence Anang 2. Catherine Baltazar 3. Candice Welch 4. Troy Pierce 5. John Curly
	Non-Voting Members 1. Jose Briceno Perez 2. Daniel De La Cruz	Non-Voting Members 1. Stephanie Bunker 2. Hector Soliman-Valdez

PSAC Ad Hoc Committee Meetings Round One

1. Oversight Ad Hoc Committee
2. Personnel Ad Hoc Committee
3. Job Duties Ad Hoc Committee

On December 4, 2023, the Oversight Ad Hoc Committee met to discuss whether creating an oversight entity should be considered for recommendation in the event an in-house TCSD is approved by the Metro Board. Members’ comments include the potential need for creating an oversight body such as a committee (internal regulation) or commission (external regulation) that would focus on performance measures, responsiveness, feelings of safety, effective prevention, policy reviews, best practices, training, and community engagement.

On December 7, 2023, the Personnel Ad Hoc Committee met to discuss what qualifications and experience the members thought would be ideal for candidates hired as officers in the event the

Board approves the TCSD. This committee also discussed the types of training they believed officers should undergo before being deployed on the Metro system. Members agreed that ideal candidates for the officer role should have experience in community policing and engaging with unhoused residents. They further agreed that officers should understand symptoms of mental illnesses and behaviors that could be perceived as threatening and dangerous. Members discussed training on how to support safety for people with special needs and people with disabilities. Collectively, all members supported having a more approachable and engaging presence as a core quality of all officers.

On December 8, 2023, the Job Duties Ad Hoc Committee met to discuss ideas tied to the core job functions and abilities of officers in a TCSD, should the Board approve. Members discussed issues like enforcement of Metro's code of conduct and enforcement of fares. Members also discussed whether officers should have the ability to administer first responder medical treatment such as CPR and NARCAN. Members discussed ongoing training on culturally competent community policing, which could help the department establish a care-based approach to safety. All members of this committee agreed that a core function of the officers should be to engage with the riding community to foster trust in the customer experience.

PSAC Meeting Round Two

1. Oversight Ad Hoc Committee
2. Job Duties Ad Hoc Committee
3. Personnel Ad Hoc Committee

PSAC Ad Hoc Committees met in early December to formulate their ideas related to personnel, job duties, and oversight during Round One. Later, during Round Two, the Ad-Hoc Committees met to further clarify any potential recommendations they wanted to make to the CEO within these three areas. The greater PSAC membership will hear the Committee updates at their next general PSAC meeting on January 4, 2024. The members will have an opportunity to provide additional feedback and hear from the public. If needed, the Ad Hoc Committees may meet one final time to solidify their recommendations for PSAC consideration at their February 1, 2024, meeting and then schedule a presentation for their recommendation to the CEO for her consideration.

EQUITY PLATFORM

One of Metro's goals is for the PSAC membership is t to represent community voices from across the county as a part of Metro's safety policy introduction, implementation, and evaluation processes. As riders from throughout LA County, members of this committee have a unique and expert perspective on how the everyday rider experiences safety policies and programs on our system. As an advisory body committed to equitable safety outcomes across the system, as noted in this report, PSAC's feedback and recommendations to presenters elevate community concerns for safety and security and ensure that crisis response teams think critically about how responses to crises should vary depending on whether a rider has mental health challenges, is experiencing homelessness, experiencing substance abuse, or a combination of multiple factors.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The PSAC work supports 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. 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 of this goal as the committee will work to safeguard the transit community by taking a holistic, equitable, and welcoming approach to public safety.

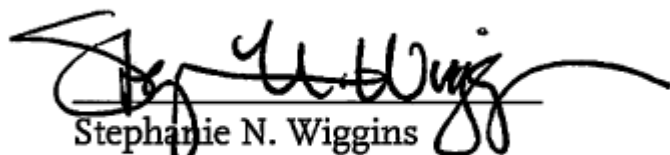
NEXT STEPS

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

ATTACHMENTS

Prepared by: Jefferson Isai Rosa, Manager, Community Relations, (213) 922-7249
Patricia Soto, Director, Community Relations, (213) 922-7273
Yvette Rapose, Deputy Chief, Customer Experience, (213) 418-3154

Reviewed by: Jennifer Vides, Chief Customer Experience Officer, (213) 922-4060



Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer