



## Board Report

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### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE APRIL 18, 2024

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

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE:

- A. the quarterly status report on Metro's Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC); and
- B. a report on PSACs recommendations should the proposed Transit Community Public Safety Department move forward.

#### **ISSUE**

In June 2020, the Board directed the CEO to form an advisory committee that contributes 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 for the period February - April 2024.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Metro established the first cohort of PSAC as a pilot on April 7, 2021. During its 16-month term, the cohort:

- Provided guidance on the development of a community-based approach to public safety.
- Shared input on the development of the multi-agency policing contract renewal.
- Reviewed the Customer Code of Conduct.
- Provided feedback on Metro's mission and value statements regarding public safety.
- Guided the establishment of Metro's Transit Ambassadors program, among other accomplishments.

The first cohort 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

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with a recommendation 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 2024 to February 2025.

- Jeremy Oliver-Ronceros, Chair
- Misty Wilks, Vice-Chair
- Darryl Goodus, 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 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 Public Safety Department (TCPD), Metro's Ambassador Program Evaluation, safety for people with disabilities, station intervention strategies, crisis response strategies, and a PSAC community listening session.

## **DISCUSSION**

At its November 2 meeting, the PSAC discussed and voted to create three Ad Hoc Committees for more in-depth conversations and to allow time to develop thorough recommendations on 1) personnel, 2) job duties, and 3) oversight in the event the Board adopts an in-house Metro Transit Community Public Safety Department and advances an implementation plan.

Throughout December, the three (3) PSAC Ad Hoc Committees held two, two-hour workshops each. Each workshop facilitated meaningful discussion and brainstormed recommendations for CEO Wiggins' consideration. The meetings created a space to review public input and community priorities from the PSAC Listening Session and the eight (8) supplemental in-person engagements held countywide during Fall 2023. The initial workshops allowed for extensive conversations to express and categorize ideas. It also focused the conversation on filtering through the many ideas and synthesized them into direct recommendations to how officers of an in-house community public safety department shall be evaluated before being hired, be routinely trained before and after deployment onto the system and be overseen while performing their duties with the highest standards of excellence in public safety.

At its February 1, 2024 meeting, the PSAC agenda focused on each Ad-Hoc Committee bringing forth their proposals and engaging the membership in a very robust discussion that ultimately led to 22 recommendations for consideration in the event the Board moves to create an in-house Metro Transit Community Public Safety Department. The full list of recommendations and management responses are detailed in Attachment A. The general themes of the recommendations are below.

**1. Personnel Ad Hoc Committee Discussion**

- Ideal qualifications and experience for candidates
- Desired types of officer training needed before being deployed on the system

**2. Job Duties Ad Hoc Committee Discussion**

- Enforcement of Metro's code of conduct and enforcement of fares
- Community engagement and fostering trust as a core function
- Ongoing training for culturally competent community policing, in line with Metro's care-based approach

**3. Oversight Ad Hoc Committee Discussion**

- Recommendation to create an oversight entity
- Oversight as a committee/commission to establish performance measures

During the March 07 meeting, the PSAC agenda consisted of several updates, and no new actions were adopted.

Staff provided an update on the evaluation of the Metro Ambassador program. The PSAC members are very pleased with the great work the Ambassadors are doing and find it very uplifting that they have already saved 135 lives through the course of their work.

An update on the law enforcement "ride-along" was also on the agenda. The chair recounted his own experience of having been on a six-hour ride-along with one of Metro's law enforcement partners as a way of getting to see first-hand what it is like to provide safety and security services on the Metro system. He shared that he was very happy to have participated because it raised his awareness of what officers face and how they interact with customers and people in distress. He shared that not only did the experience raise his own awareness, but he is also more empathetic as a result. He encouraged everyone on the Committee to make the time to participate in this activity. He firmly believes that this will help him better carry out his work as the Chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

The Chair also provided an update to the membership relative to their recommendations for a potential in-house public safety department. He shared that PSACs recommendations would be going to the board with management's response and as appropriate would be included in the implementation plan should the in-house Public Community Safety Department move forward.

Lastly, a high-level summary presentation was made to the PSAC by staff about the general themes of the public comments received through the listening session and engagements from last Fall. To ensure that the PSAC members were getting themes representative of diverse voices and experiences, staff included public comments at PSAC meetings, CCATS reports, and social listening data gathered from social media, including Metro's apps and through customer calls and emails. Comments received included the need for Metro to improve:

- Public safety
- Cleanliness on the system
- Stations
- Bus and rail frequency

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Overwhelmingly, there was a call for the need to enforce Metro's Code of Conduct and fares in addition to increasing the visibility of officers on the system. There was also an abundant amount of comments, mostly praising the Ambassadors and expressing a deep appreciation for their work and the new program. Some comments also expressed that the Ambassadors' authority was too limited.

When the PSAC meets again on April 4, staff will introduce the committee to the newly formed Station Experience Unit. Building on the recent improvements from Westlake/MacArthur Park Station since January 2023, this report will identify the next steps for implementing intervention strategies to improve community health and safety at additional Metro stations. Potential stations for initial pilot interventions include:

- Lake Av in Pasadena (A Line)
- Hollywood/Highland (B Line)
- Downtown Santa Monica (E Line)
- Norwalk (C Line)

Finally, the PSAC will be introduced to the Customer Experience (CX) Hub. The CX Hub is Metro's website for sharing how Metro is listening, learning, and improving for our customers. It houses information related to our Customer Experience Plans, surveys, and progress on action items. As one of five focused areas identified in the CX Plan, the CX Hub includes information related to several priority safety projects intended to address customers' safety concerns, as heard in the CX Survey and other supplemental data sources, such as the How Women Travel Study, Transit Watch App data, comments in public meetings, and feedback received in Customer Care. This is the website link: <https://www.metro.net/about/customer-experience-hub/>.

*A report recapping the April PSAC meeting will be presented orally at the Operations, Security and Customer Experience Committee.*

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

PSAC plays a crucial role in addressing equity within the transportation system. Equity is a central consideration in the committee's decision-making processes, as it strives to ensure that all members of the community, especially those historically marginalized or underserved, have access to safe and reliable transportation options. Through its commitment to inclusivity, community engagement, and data-driven approaches, the committee strives to create a transit environment that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all residents of Los Angeles County. This quarterly update highlights PSAC's important role in supporting Metro's equity platform. For example, PSAC's community engagement efforts to develop its recommendations for a potential new Transit Community Safety Department started with community listening sessions that allowed all interested stakeholders to provide feedback about public safety in a safe space and allow different perspectives on this topic to flourish. These listening sessions ultimately shaped the PSAC recommendations, as described in Attachment A.

The recommendations are grounded in equity, and they ensure that the new Transit Community Safety Department includes personnel requirements and job duties for effective service to diverse

communities. The recommended establishment of an Oversight Committee that includes a countywide outreach and recruitment process ensures equitable demographic and geographic representation, including people with disabilities, older adults, and youth. All of the PSAC recommendations address equity, diversity, and inclusion. PSAC's framework for developing these recommendations focuses on holistic, equitable, and justice-minded guiding principles that respect the humanity of all people.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The work of PSAC supports Metro's Strategic Vision Goal #2, which is to deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.

This 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 to help reach 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**

Metro's System Safety & Law Enforcement Department and its consultant will continue to review and, as appropriate, include the recommendations as part of the

Transit Community Public Safety Department Implementation Plan that will be presented to the Board in the coming months. Staff will continue to meet with the PSAC as it continues to explore safety and security on the Metro System and advance the objectives detailed in their annual work plan.

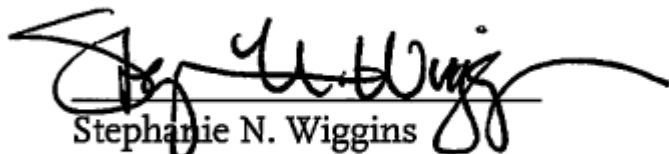
## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - PSAC Final Recommendations and Responses

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