



Board Report

File #: 2025-0581, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 43.

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

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

ISSUE

In June 2020, the Board directed the CEO to form an advisory committee to contribute to developing a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system. This Board report provides an update on the work of the Public Safety Advisory Committee from June through August 2025.

BACKGROUND

Metro established the first cohort of PSAC on April 7, 2021. After its 16-month tenure, the first cohort concluded on August 17, 2022. At the September 2022 Board meeting, the CEO recommended that PSAC continue, and the Board approved the recommendation. The second cohort was established on February 25, 2023, and served for two years through February 2025. The third cohort began their term on February 6, 2025.

DISCUSSION

During this reporting period, PSAC held two meetings in June and July, and following the Board schedule, went dark in August. The Committee received updates on homeless outreach, wayfinding, Systems, Safety, and Law Enforcement (SSLE)'s monthly public safety report, the proposed weapons detection bus deployment pilot, and Committee transitioned an alternate member into a voting member position.

PSAC also participated in many high-profile events and increased community fieldwork, including: the LAX/Metro Transit Center (MTC) grand opening, and the State of the Agency. In July and August, members surveyed riders on key pilot programs, such as the Throne restrooms and Weapons Detection at several rail stations. PSAC Cohort 4 recruitment also kicked off in July and will run

through September.

Meetings

June 2025 Meeting *Chair's Update*

Chair Jeremy Oliver-Ronceros shared his experience meeting Metro's new Chief of Police and Emergency Management at the May press conference. This milestone reflects PSAC's ongoing role in shaping and supporting the new Department of Public Safety (DPS, previously referred to as the Transit Community Public Safety Department, or TCPD) through recommendations and outreach during the Chief search process.

Emergency Security Operations Center (ESOC) Tour

Eleven PSAC members toured the Emergency Security Operations Center (ESOC) in May and provided the following feedback on their experience:

- Shared their appreciation for the data center/virtual reality training equipment, and real-time coordination and communication across Metro and partner agencies.
- Recognized that many riders may not realize the level of technology and coordination needed to ensure system safety.
- Expressed increased confidence in Metro's ability to manage extreme situations and events.

Homeless Outreach, Management and Engagement (HOME) Initiative

Homeless Outreach and Engagement provided an overview of Metro's Homeless Outreach, Management, and Engagement (HOME) initiative. Staff shared that since the last PSAC presentation in September 2024, the program has expanded from three teams in 2017 to 24 multidisciplinary teams serving the entire network. Highlights presented included:

- New partnerships with six providers.
- Additional access to 80 interim beds for late-night placements.
- A person-centered, trust-building approach leading to successful housing placements and family reunifications.

Guest speakers from Community Based Organization (CBO) partners, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) and Christ-Centered Ministries, shared on-the-ground stories, and PSAC members provided the following feedback:

- Shared their appreciation for hearing directly from the CBO partners.
- Showed interest in increasing awareness of how to access services for those unhoused riders.
- Asked questions about coordination between Safety, Security, & Law Enforcement (SSLE) and HOME. Staff confirmed that Metro's new approach will likely include care-based teams working independently or alongside officers, depending on the need. He also mentioned training modeled after LAPD's mental health intervention course. SSLE added that the new Department of Public Safety (DPS) will integrate public safety, outreach, and crisis response under a unified command at ESOC to allow real-time coordination and ensure the most appropriate response for each situation.
- Requested to tour a homeless facility that Metro has access to. This came from a PSAC

member with lived experience being formerly homeless and working with incarcerated individuals. Staff will coordinate this tour in early 2026.

July 2025 Meeting

LAX/Metro Transit Center (MTC) Grand Opening

At the July 2025 meeting, PSAC members who attended the grand opening of the LAX/ MTC in June praised Metro for the MTC's efficiency, the grandeur of the event, and the impact the new station will have regionally for many riders. Gratitude was expressed for the well-organized, diverse, and enjoyable event, with appreciation for the special accommodation of PSAC members.

El Monte Station Wayfinding Improvements

In September 2024, Metro staff presented key program updates on wayfinding signage and the updated Code of Conduct. At the meeting, a PSAC member shared his experience helping a monolingual senior who was lost at the El Monte station. The July presentation provided a response to comments highlighting that, since that time, staff have surveyed the station and have implemented several wayfinding improvements:

- Repositioned display cases for better visibility and easier access to bus information at busy bays.
- Enhanced bus bay number visibility on both upper and lower levels.
- Highlighted the multilingual help line on signage.
- Added display cases with bus information on the upper level.

Staff noted that wayfinding is a complex, integrated system that provides both location information and navigation guidance-updates affect the whole system and continue to evolve over time.

Committee members provided feedback, including:

- Concerns that the phrase "no illegal drugs" could cause confusion since cannabis is legal in California. Marketing staff responded that they would look into clarifying the language.
- Support for expanding the use of QR codes to increase rider engagement and strengthen the Transit Watch ecosystem.
- Suggestions to involve transit riders in focus groups to improve signage design and clarity. Marketing and Signage and Design staff responded that Metro has done previous rider field studies at 7th/Metro to test and refine wayfinding signage and that the agency is in a "test-and-learn" phase ahead of the 2028 Games and encouraged use of the Transit Watch app to report issues.
- Reports of unclear signage and bus schedules during temporary service changes (e.g., the D Line closure affecting Route 855). Marketing staff responded that the Signage and Design team works with Surface Planning and Operations for signage during larger closures, while Marketing staff added that signage depends on the closure length, with short-term closures getting paper signs and longer semi-permanent signage. They acknowledged challenges with shuttle signage and noted progress is being made ahead of major events.

Monthly Public Safety Report

Deputy Chief Robert Gummer reported a continued decrease in crimes against persons, with the lowest violent crime numbers since 2021. PSAC members shared feedback in response to the presentation:

- One member observed a shift in rider concerns from safety to service frequency, suggesting progress in security. SSLE affirmed that the data supported this observation.
- Other concerns expressed included frequent escalator outages, unhoused individuals occupying stairways (creating safety risks), and a lack of coordinated communication between Transit Safety Officers (TSOs) and contract police during incidents (example: Willowbrook Station). SSLE acknowledged the concern, explained security staff can unlock improperly shut escalators, and said maintenance coordination is ongoing.

Weapons Detection Pilot Update

Deputy Chief Gummer shared that Metro is exploring onboard bus detection technology using millimeter wave scanners.

Procurement is in progress; initial nighttime testing will occur at Union Station to evaluate alerts, failure rates, and operational challenges before wider deployment. PSAC members shared feedback in response to the presentation:

- Members expressed interest in viewing a demo once the vendor is selected.
- Deputy Chief Gummer committed to inviting PSAC for feedback once testing begins.

Announcements

- Staff shared “Know Your Rights” campaign collateral.
- Cohort 3 member Brandon Cheng resigned to attend Harvard University this Fall; Alternate Angela Gonzales will assume his voting position at the September 4 meeting.

Community Engagement and Events

PSAC is involved in additional community engagement beyond their monthly meetings. The following is a summary of activities during this reporting period.

- Ten PSAC members attended the LAX MTC Grand Opening event in June.
- Staff held the first PSAC Knowledge Building Session in June briefing members on the Public Safety Analytics and Bias Free Policy policies and the TCPD Implementation Plan to support informed decision-making, including on the Weapons Detection pilot right before the General Assembly meeting.
- Active Streets Mission-to-Mission Twilight open streets Event (June 22): Three PSAC members represented the committee at the San Gabriel hub.
- Five members attended the *State of the Agency* event on July 9.

Fieldwork Project - Station Enhancements Program

From July 10-16, PSAC volunteers surveyed 93 riders in English and Spanish at Little Tokyo, Soto, and El Monte stations-with each featuring Throne restrooms and other Station Experience (SX) Program upgrades. Feedback was collected on restrooms, classical music, restroom attendants, and open elevators. Survey data was shared with Operations to support program evaluation, and a summary report will be presented in August to the full PSAC.

Fieldwork Project - Weapons Detection Pilot Surveys

Building on the success of the station improvements survey fieldwork and to help SSLE with its Weapons Detection pilot evaluation, PSAC completed its second fieldwork project surveying riders from August 8-18 at two stations (Vermont/Beverly and Exposition/Crenshaw) in English and Spanish.

A special qualitative survey, developed by Community Relations staff specifically for PSAC, provides deep insights and complementary feedback to the CX quantitative rider survey being conducted during the Weapons Detection pilot period.

Committee volunteers spoke with and surveyed 171 riders, learning that many riders appreciated that the Weapons Detection pilot helped improve safety, but long lines caused missed trains. Others felt that the program should only be deployed intermittently or at high-traffic and/or high crime stations consistently with advanced notice signage to allow riders to plan ahead and arrive earlier to account for lines. Several riders requested Metro take steps to mitigate any potential racial profiling with the program and noted that increased police presence accompanying the weapons detection could both be the reason for increased feelings of safety but also intimidate immigrant riders from using the system. Surveyed riders' demographic data was collected to see if certain groups of riders were impacted or perceived more benefits or harms than others.

The survey data and summary report were shared with CX and SSLE to help inform their program evaluation and will be presented to the Committee in September.

Cohort 4 Recruitment Efforts

- *PSAC has annual cohorts with members serving two-year terms. Staff are recruiting for new members who would begin their terms in February 2026. Cohort 4 recruitment kicked off, with applications opening July 18 and closing September 16. Recruitment efforts included email blasts, PSAC website updates, community events in August and September, and a virtual Disability Pride event presentation (July 26) to attract riders with disabilities. For Cohort 4, efforts are focused on encouraging a diverse set of riders to apply reflective of our ridership demographics. Recruitment tabling occurred at:*
 - National Night Out - August 5, Monterey Park
 - CicLAvia - August 17, Culver City

EQUITY PLATFORM

During this reporting period, PSAC deepened its impact to further equitable outcomes through community-driven input on Board discussions of key initiatives such as the Weapons Detection pilot. Members conducted both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews in English and Spanish at SX improvement sites and weapons detection pilot stations, focusing outreach within Equity Focus Communities. Engagement strategies were tailored to reach individuals hesitant to share feedback on safety technologies due to concerns about immigration status or criminalization. This included not collecting riders' personal information and conducting bilingual surveys.

Through intentional representation, proactive field engagement, and data-driven recommendations, PSAC helps shape a transit system that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all residents of Los Angeles County.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, this item is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT. While this item does not directly encourage taking transit, sharing a ride, or using active transportation, it is a vital part of Metro operations, as it provides awareness, transparency, and support for the work of the PSAC - an advisory body for LA Metro focused on customer experience and safety on our transit system. Because the Metro Board has adopted an agency-wide VMT Reduction Target, and this item supports the overall function of the agency, this item is consistent with the goals of reducing VMT.

**Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.*

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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

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

The CEO will continue to meet monthly with the PSAC Executive Committee to ensure that the Board's priorities are met.

Prepared by: Allison Mannos, Senior Manager, Community Relations, (213) 522-9952
Patricia Soto, Director, Community Relations, (213) 922-1249
Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez, Executive Officer, Community Relations (213) 922-7479
Yvette Rapose, Deputy Chief Customer Experience Officer, (213) 418-3154
Monica Bouldin, Deputy Chief, Customer Experience, (213) 922-4081

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

Digitally approved by *Stephanie Wiggins*, Chief Executive Officer