

**Board Report**

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Agenda Number: 42.

REVISED
SYSTEM SAFETY, SECURITY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2015

SUBJECT: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF APTA PEER REVIEW REGARDING STOP SIGNAL VIOLATIONS

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on the **summary and recommendations of the APTA Peer Review of Metro's Rail Operating Practices and Programs**, held in June 2015.

ISSUE

The APTA Peer Review was precipitated by a board-approved motion by Director Antonovich (Attachment C) that highlighted the 38 red light violations recorded for the Metro Rail system over the past 24 months. This motion called for independent review of Metro Rail operations and its safety culture. Additionally, the motion sought input from the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration to develop partnerships with the federal government to reduce Red Light violations systemwide and review policies and procedures to ensure industry best practices. Metro Operations requested that The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) conducted an independent peer review of Metro's Rail Operating Practices and Programs. The scope of APTA's peer review also included reviewing stop signal and red traffic signal incidents and recommending interventions to mitigate such incidents.

DISCUSSION

APTA assembled a panel of four experts from peer transit agencies to review Metro's bus and rail operating practices, with an emphasis on stop signal violations. The peer review panel reviewed the following seven areas:

1. Stop Signal/Red Traffic Signal Violations
2. Rules and Procedures
3. Program of Rules Compliance
4. Disciplinary Policies and Practices
5. Signal and Traffic Control System and New Technologies
6. Bus Control Center and New Technologies

7. Confidential Close Call Programs

As part of the peer review, the panel conducted the following activities:

- Review of policies and procedures for vehicle operations, training, and discipline
- Rides on Metro revenue vehicles, including cab rides on at-grade portions of rail alignments
- Visits to rail locations where stop signal violations have been reported
- Visits to rail and bus divisions
- Interviews with Rail and Bus Operators, and division managers
- Observations at Rail Operations Control Center and Bus Operations Control Center

The peer review was held over the course of four days, and led by Metro Operations staff. It concluded with a presentation of observations and findings by the APTA panel (Attachment A), and a report of findings (Attachment B).

Findings

The panel found that the Metro team works well together, with open dialogue between management and staff on safety issues. The panel also found that in some areas, Metro's policies, procedures, and actions are considered to be "best practices" for the industry.

Stop Signal/Red Traffic Signal Violations, with focus on street running segments with rail interlocking signals

The panel observed that on-time performance is a motivation for some Bus and Rail Operators' actions, ultimately resulting in stop signal/red traffic signal violations. The timetables and recovery times can be tight, especially on bus lines. However, the panel noted that there is little evidence to suggest that management is prioritizing on-time performance over safety.

Rules and Procedures, with Emphasis on Defensive Driving

The panel took no exception to the existing rail rules and procedures, but noted that bus has a more robust defensive driving module than rail. For both bus and rail, the panel noted inconsistencies between classroom training and field application on the rules and defensive driving modules. For example, while the classroom training teaches defensive driving practices, the panel observed Operators anticipating signal changes, which can result in Operators making abrupt stops or violating stop signals.

Program of Rules Compliance and Efficiency Testing

The panel identified several opportunities to improve this program, including additional Supervisory oversight activities, further developing the Efficiency Testing program, and repurposing the Mystery Rider program to transcend its current ADA focus. This could include having Mystery Riders on board to gauge whether there are abrupt stops due to anticipation, or other near-miss violations.

Disciplinary Policies and Practices

The panel considered the disciplinary policies of Metro, with regard to stop signal violations, to be a best industry practice for rail. Although the panel approved of the reclassification of red light violation incidents from "minor" rule infraction to "major" rule infraction, in the recent labor contract for both bus

and rail, they considered the six month rollback provision on bus to be a major risk for the agency. The panel also recommended developing a database to document violations for both bus and rail.

Signal and Traffic Control System and New Technology

The panel identified issues pertaining to design and placement of signals and signage for both rail vehicles and automobiles along the at-grade alignment. The panel recommended improvements to the signal design and signage to improve clarity. Suggested improvements include consistency in signal spacing, and additional Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices-approved signage to inform motorists.

Review Metro's Bus Control Center including new technology that could be implemented to mitigate violations

The panel found the Bus Control Center and Emergency Operations Center to be very impressive.

Explore Confidential Close Call Programs

The panel found this issue to be secondary to other issues previously identified. The panel suggested considering a pilot at select bus divisions.

NEXT STEPS

Staff has formed a Working Group comprised of labor and management to evaluate the recommendations and develop a plan for implementing them. This cross functional team will evaluate stop signal violation locations, assess existing conditions and make recommendations (e.g., education, engineering and enforcement) to further reduce stop signal violations.

Staff will conduct an outreach campaign at rail lines to educate employees about stop signal violations. Stop signal information will be posted at rail lines and updated monthly.

Staff will evaluate the current training program for Rail Operators. This evaluation will help identify opportunities to provide additional training and support for Rail Operators during their first two (2) years of rail service. Additionally, all front line Bus and Rail Employees, as well as Bus and Rail Supervisory staff, will participate in Metro Annual Safety Sustainment Training.

Staff will assess the feasibility of adding simulation-based training for Rail Operators and Rail Controllers to the existing training programs.

Staff will enhance the current efficiency test program. For example, structured efficiency tests will be developed to evaluate Rail Operator and Rail Controller compliance with signal rules in the field.

Staff will continue to maximize the effect of using Smart Drive video as a tool to change operators' behaviors and ultimately reduce red traffic light violations.

As of August 2, 2015, all Bus Operations Divisions began participating in the National Coalition for Safer Roads campaign, "Stop on Red." The campaign lasts for one week, and each day is dedicated to different safety aspects, useful statistics and information, and heartfelt messages from supporters.

In addition, Staff has created campaign banners featuring employees from each division.

Staff has certified Transit Operations Supervisors-Instruction to teach the National Safety Council's "Attitudinal Dynamics of Driving" course to Bus Operators. Operators identified as "high risk," based on Smart Drive events, and/or accident history, were the first to receive ongoing training.

Staff believes these actions will help reduce stop signal and red traffic violations even further.

The Inspector General is currently procuring for the independent consultant as directed by the motion (Attachment C).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - APTA Review Closing Presentation

Attachment B - APTA Review Final Report

Attachment C - Motion on Rail Red Light Violations

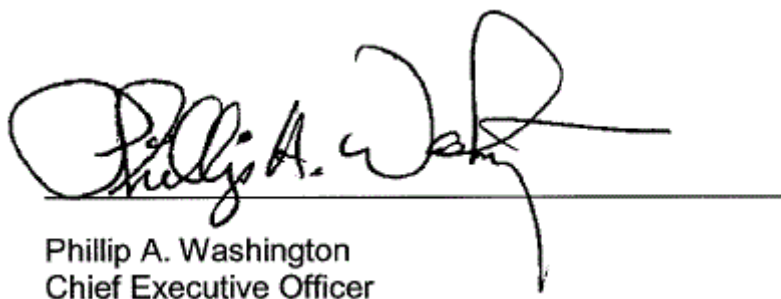
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