



Board Report

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Agenda Number:

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

SUBJECT: MONTHLY UPDATE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE Public Safety Report.

ISSUE

Metro's main priority is to provide a safe experience for riders and a safe work environment for employees. As noted in the 2021 Public Safety Survey, safety is a top concern for riders - about four-in-ten respondents who have reduced their Metro ridership cited their safety (not related to COVID) as a reason. Metro is researching, listening, and reassessing current safety programs, and launching new safety initiatives. This report provides a status update on these public safety initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Metro's mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that enhances the quality of life for all who live, work and play within LA County. Metro has implemented several non-law enforcement initiatives aimed at improving public safety, as well as providing riders with the tools to report crime and foster an environment where they are empowered to look out for themselves and each other. The Chief Safety Office continues to incorporate information from surveys, customer complaints, and physical security assessments, amongst others, to analyze a wide array of safety-related issues. Using this information, Metro will formulate solutions to problems, anticipates future issues, and develops programs and initiatives for areas needing improvement.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Safety Office is responsible for the strategic and cohesive deployment of Transit Security, private security, and law enforcement personnel. Through their collaboration, they focus on increasing their presence in the system, protecting Metro riders, employees, and infrastructure, and conducting fare and code enforcement. Furthermore, the Chief Safety Office oversees safety programs and tools such as the *Respect the Ride* pilot, the Transit Watch app, the Public Safety Advisory Committee, and other efforts that are responsive to the security needs of riders and employees. The following initiatives outline the status of existing programs and the research efforts

for new initiatives.

RESPECT THE RIDE PILOT

Metro launched the Respect the Ride pilot at 7th & Metro Station on April 4, 2022. The mission is to use a multi-layered and comprehensive approach to increase safety and enhance the customer experience on the Metro system. PATH homeless outreach, custodians, Transportation Supervisors, Facilities Maintenance, Street Teams, Blue Shirts, Transit Security Officers, law enforcement, and TAP fare personnel work collaboratively to accomplish this goal.

Prior to the gates opening at our Respect the Ride stations, the PATH homeless outreach teams connect unhoused individuals with services and housing. Blue Shirts stand at the fare machines and assist riders with purchasing TAP cards, explain how to use the Transit app - Metro's official app - to plan transit trips and get real-time arrival estimates for buses and trains and provide information on Metro's Low-Income Fare and Easy (LIFE) Program. In addition, Metro Street Teams hand out masks.

Transit Security Officers have also been taking an "Inside Out" approach by riding the Red Line trains, providing visibility, and conducting fare and code of conduct compliance. Contract security officers were also deployed and have been providing guard presence near the ancillary entrances/doors.

The multi-layered approach between all Metro departments to increase safety has resulted in a dramatic change to include:

- According to Operations Management, custodians feel safer while conducting their duties. A detailed daily cleaning at 7th & Metro has transitioned to general maintenance.
- Staff's observational reports of loitering and unhoused sheltering on the system have decreased significantly.
- PATH Teams have handed out over 1,000 hygiene bags to unhoused individuals and have connected hundreds to housing resources.

The Respect the Ride efforts continue at Union Station and 7th/Metro Station. The program was recently expanded to MacArthur Park Station on August 15, 2022. This deployment is expected to last 30 days, Monday through Friday, from 6:30 am to 8:00 pm.

OPERATOR SAFETY

Bus/Rail Operator Assaults and Bus Boardings

In July, there were a total of seventeen (17) assaults on bus/rail operators, with eleven (11) assaults occurring in LAPD's jurisdiction and six (6) assaults occurring in LASD's jurisdiction. Furthermore, there were 17,154 bus boardings by LAPD officers and 4,001 bus boardings by LASD deputies.

The problem locations for the eleven assaults in LAPD's jurisdiction have been identified through

daily analysis. The assaults on bus operators were committed by different suspects and four of the suspects were arrested. Currently, there are no crime trends or patterns that have been identified by LAPD and LASD.

LAPD's Transit Services Division's (TSD) Special Problems Unit (SPU) Deployment

LAPD Transit Services Division's Special Problems Unit was tasked and deployed to address assaults committed against bus operators on July 11, 2022. The Operations department provided a list of 10 top bus lines having a high number of assaults and ridership recorded from a 16-month extraction period. In addition, a Tactical Operations plan was prepared by LAPD Transit Services Division and the Special Problems Unit was deployed to 9 out of the 10 lines identified. The mission concluded on July 25, 2022. It was discovered that the majority of Operator concerns were mainly focused on issues and disruptive behavior related to Metro's Customer Code of Conduct violations and fare evasion. Some of those disruptive behaviors or Customr Code of Conduct violations, such as having an open container, overlap as penal code violations and were addressed by law enforcement. However, addressing Code of Conduct violations and fare evasion would require the deployment of Transit Security Officers on the bus system.

In support of this effort, the Chief Safety Officer participated in a quarterly operations meeting at divisions to hear from bus operators directly about their safety concerns. As a result of their feedback, SSLE initiated the Respect the Ride Bus Officers Pilot on August 31st and placed Transit Security Officers on two bus lines to conduct fare enforcement.

UPDATES ON SAFETY PROGRAMS

Security Operations Control

The Security Control room at Union Station Gateway is in the process of being reconfigured and upgraded. The operational functionality will improve its usefulness and streamline its current operation. From the manufacturer's perspective, the current technical equipment has reached its end of life. The computers are over ten years old and will be replaced with current Metro standard computers. In addition, the video monitoring system does not lend itself well to swiftly switching and sharing views of notable situations.

The Security Operations Control (SOC) is essential for Transit Security operations. This upgrade will allow access to live video from anywhere Metro has cameras including our mobile platform. All archived videos can be accessed to review situations where video recording is critical for operations. In addition, Transit Security can run dispatch operations on behalf of the USG Emergency Operations Center when needed. The SOC is the coordination center for all task management and workflow for the Transit Security department. As such, it is vital for emergency and special events that the SOC be equipped with technology and equipment that efficiently and effectively drive Metro's coordination efforts. Technological upgrades to the SOC will allow Metro to achieve its top priority, which is the safety of our riders and employees. The System Security and Law Enforcement department is working continuously to ensure our customers and employees can ride and work safely, without fear, 100% of the time. The project's scope will be conducted in three phases and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

CCTV Upgrades

Metro is working on a Genetec prototype software solution to install 100 licenses to integrate with existing B Line station cameras. Genetec is a video management system (VMS) that seamlessly controls all video operations and allows rapid response to emerging situations within a single, modular platform. The Genetec VMS will allow users to efficiently manage and prioritize events such as critical area protection, perimeter protection, unauthorized access, and persons of interest.

Deployment Assessment: Ancillary Door Operations

In response to the security requests received from our frontline staff and to prevent ancillary intrusion/hatch alarms, on Friday, July 29, 2022, and Monday, August 1, 2022, contract security services (RMI) began to post contract security officers at all ancillary doors at the Red Line Westlake/MacArthur Park Station and Wilshire/Vermont Station respectively. The posting of contract security officers at every ancillary door is in response to excessive amounts of “hatch alarm” calls, trespasser calls, ancillary intrusion alarms, and clean-up requests. The contract security officers are posted at the ancillary doors 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Posting contract security officers at each ancillary door is a collaborative effort between Metro Transit Security, Facilities Maintenance, Maintenance and Engineering, Rail Communications, and several other Metro departments to ensure we are being responsive to our frontline workers’ requests.

City/County Prosecutors

Staff recently received notice that a Deputy District Attorney and a Los Angeles City Attorney have been assigned to Metro. As a result, our law enforcement partners can report to these Metro-designated attorneys for all Metro employee assaults. In addition, in coordination with the Metro Office of Inspector General, we are working on getting exclusion orders on repeat criminal and code of conduct offenders. This will also increase safety for our riders and employees.

NARCAN Program

Metro is pursuing a program that will properly train and equip Metro Transit Security Department personnel with NARCAN, so they can safely intervene when responding to a medical emergency of an opioid overdose. In August, staff met with CORE (Connecting to Opportunities for Recovery and Engagement) Center Services (LA County Department of Public Health) to discuss the potential of utilizing their services to implement a Transit Security NARCAN program. Following discussions, CORE requested an email outlining Metro’s needs/requests, which will be forwarded to their medical director for consideration. A response/update is still pending. Once approved, a timeline will be provided, and the next steps.

Furthermore, staff contacted LASD about initiating a NARCAN training program for Transit Security. A request to formalize an MOU was sent. Metro is awaiting a response; if approved, the process will take about 5-6 weeks to start training all Transit Security personnel. We will include a status update on this initiative when more information becomes available.

OFFICER HIGHLIGHTS

On July 28, 2022, LAPD officers assigned to Union Station observed a group of approximately 15 individuals who appeared to look lost as they walked back and forth inside the station. The officers approached the group and asked if they could assist them. While speaking with the group, officers learned that the group was Amish and had traveled to California from Ohio to seek “life-saving” medical treatment for one of their family members. The family had traveled across the country by train and were now attempting to locate transportation to the hospital. Realizing the family’s unfamiliarity with the area and our public transportation system, the officers offered to assist the family by providing them transportation to their destination.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC)

In August, PSAC held one (1) General Committee meeting, one (1) Non-Law Enforcement Alternatives ad-hoc subcommittee meeting, and two (2) working sessions. The following recommendations were developed and discussed in these meetings: Public Safety Analytics & Bias-Free Policing Policies and Onboard Bus Safety Strategies (Attachment A). Furthermore, during both working sessions, committee members had the opportunity to provide feedback on future committee processes, lessons learned, as well as refining goals, and objectives.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Metro has been exploring new safety programs, including those beyond policing, to provide safe and clean transit service to riders. For example, NARCAN for Transit Security will equip officers with NARCAN, a life-saving drug. As a result, officers can intervene as bystanders with this extra layer of protection to assist individuals in need of immediate emergency treatment.

In recognition of leveraging our technology to enhance safety, the CCTV software upgrade initiative is a non-law enforcement alternative from which employees and riders can benefit. The CCTV software will help employees recognize emerging situations and prioritize events that compromise safety in the transit system. In addition, it will improve our customer service and response time.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor our law enforcement partners, private security, and Transit Security performance, monitor crime stats, and adjust deployment as necessary.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Onboard Bus Safety Strategies Recommendations
Attachment B - August 17, 2022, PSAC General Meeting Minutes
Attachment C - Systemwide Law Enforcement Overview July 2022
Attachment D - MTA Supporting Data July 2022
Attachment E - Transit Police Summary July 2022

Attachment F - Monthly, Bi-Annual, Annual Comparison July 2022

Attachment G - Violent, Prop, and Part 1 Crimes July 2022

Attachment H - Demographics Data July 2022


Attachment I - Bus & Rail Operator Assaults July 2022

Attachment J - Sexual Harassment Crimes July 2022

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