



Board Report

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Agenda Number:

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PLAN

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the 2023 Customer Experience Plan.

ISSUE

Metro continues its work to improve the customer experience and reach its moonshot goal of becoming the first choice in transportation for Angelenos and visitors. The 2023 Customer Experience Plan - Metro's third - shares the many ways Metro listens to customers, what we learned from them, and the steps we took - and continue to take - to make improvements to address their concerns and improve their experience with Metro.

Metro's 2023 Customer Experience Plan is attached (Attachment A) as is a progress update on CX Action Items from previous years (Attachment B).

BACKGROUND

An Annual Customer Experience (CX) Plan and update is required by Board Motion 38.1 (2018). In April 2020, Metro established the CX unit within the Office of the CEO, and staff developed the first CX Plan, with Board adoption in December 2020. In 2021, CEO Wiggins announced an organizational realignment that included establishing a Chief Customer Experience Officer (CXO) position that would report directly to the CEO and oversee not only Customer Experience but also Communications and Customer Care to bolster excellence in all these areas.

The second CX Plan was adopted by the Board in April 2022, and the new CXO joined Metro on June 13, 2022.

DISCUSSION

The 2023 Customer Experience Plan speaks directly to Metro customers with a promise: “We want to be your ride, and we know we have to earn it. We promise to listen to you, learn from you, and improve for you.” This promise reflects the CEO’s moonshot goal to become the first choice in transportation for Angelenos and visitors, and clearly signals Metro’s commitment to doing the continual listening, learning, and improving necessary to earn customers’ ridership.

We’re Listening

As with previous plans, the 2023 CX Plan is informed by data collected in the annual Customer Experience Survey, which was fielded from March through May 2022. This survey, in addition to customer feedback submitted through our Customer Care call centers and social media, identifies top customer issues for Metro to improve upon. For more information on this survey and methodology, see receive and file #2022-0515. Staff is launching a quarterly pulse survey to more frequently capture this data as well.

Although the CX Survey is administered annually, staff listens continually throughout the year through customer comments, social media, and additional customer research. The findings from these sources demonstrate that priorities remain the same as what was found in the 2022 CX Survey.

Findings from these supplemental sources include:

- Metro’s monthly Brand Tracker survey, which measures perceptions of Metro, continues to reinforce the importance travel time/reliability, comfort, cleanliness, and safety in choosing whether or not to ride Metro.
- Customer Comments received between January 2022 to August 2023:
 - Safety - For rail, general rail security, passenger conduct, and homeless concerns were the top 1, 3 and 8 complaint categories respectively.
 - Cleanliness - For rail, dirty rail car was the top 7 complaint category. Like the CX Survey results, bus complaints for cleanliness were not as high as those related to reliability.
 - Reliability - For bus, passed up, no show, and late schedule were the top 1, 2, and 5 complaint categories respectively.
- Social media analysis between January to August 2023
 - Timeliness/reliability, security/safety, cleanliness, drug use, and homelessness were the five (5) most common social media topics with negative sentiment.

We’re Learning

Based on customer feedback, the 2023 CX Plan gives voice to our customers’ top needs, and commits to prioritizing five focus areas for improvement:

1. Make It Safe: provide customers with secure, safe, and uneventful trips.
2. Make It Clean: maintain a clean environment for customers.
3. Make It Comfortable: enhance customer enjoyment of riding the system.
4. Make It Reliable: get customers where they want to go quickly and reliably.
5. Make It Easy: provide customers with simple, accurate, and timely information.

The Plan highlights *CX Action Items*, which are priority projects selected to address and improve areas of customer frustration. There are a total of 56 Action Items in the 2023 CX Plan. Of those 56, 35 are new programs or projects being implemented by staff and 21 are larger efforts that require multiple years to implement and are carried over from previous CX Plans. The CXO will collaborate with the other Chiefs in the CEO's Cabinet to balance the strategic action items that need multiple years to implement while also improving Metro's ability to more flexibly and quickly address immediate customer issues and opportunities that arise unexpectedly. To that end, the CX Action Items contained in the plan will be reviewed monthly at the Cabinet level to ensure they remain on track, as well as enable discussion about any challenges with their completion and/or modifications that might be recommended to help us accomplish our priority area goals.

We're Improving

The plan also transparently outlines the significant progress that has been made in implementing CX Action Items over the last three years. The 2023 CX Plan's Appendices include a status update on the 69 Action Items from the previous 2022 CX Plan (Attachment B).

Overall, 29 CX Action Items have been completed from the 2022 CX Plan, with 23 on schedule to be completed, meaning the project is on track to meet its milestone schedule. This is a total of 52 (75%) of CX Action Items that were either completed or made significant progress to implement between April 2022 to August 2023.

There are 17 CX Action Items with an Other status, this includes:

- Currently Behind Schedule or Postponed/Revised to FY24: 11
 - Schedule delays were caused by limited staff availability, some difficulty in procuring goods or services in FY23, or the need to change project scope and align stakeholders on the best next steps. All of these projects are included, some with adjustments, in the 2023 CX Plan.
- Remove: 6
 - Removed due to shifting priorities, evolving industry practice, or union challenges that prohibited the action item from being feasible.

The table below summarizes the status of the 2022 CX Action Items and details on the status can be found in Attachment B and several highlights can be found below.

Target Issue	Completed	On Schedule	Other Status	All Action Items	% Completed/ On Schedule
Bus Stop Shade and Seating	1	1	-	2	100%
Cleanliness	4	6	5	15	67%
Customer Information	5	1	1	7	86%
Diverse Riders, Diverse Needs	3	2	3	8	62%
Institutionalizing Customer Experience	4	7	5	16	69%
Public Safety	8	2	3	13	77%
Time Competitiveness and Connectivity	4	4	-	8	100%
Grand Total	29	23	17	69	75%

Next Steps

Staff will provide the Board with two Customer Experience updates per year to share progress on CX Action Items and any updates to the CX Plan Action Items. A Customer Experience Hub website is being developed to provide more direct and frequent updates to customers as well as make available previous CX Plans and Rider Surveys. Staff will also share with the Board the results of the 2023 Customer Experience survey, as well as research against potential customers (lapsed or never riders) to help inform how Metro can continue to grow ridership. Because the CX Plan addresses foundational, customer priorities that have remained the same for many years and often take time to implement, the CX Plan will be refreshed in 2024 with a full new plan expected to occur upon completion of the CX Action Item list by 2026.

2022 CX Action Item Highlights:

Public Safety:

- Deployment of Multi-Layered Approach to Safety: developed and implemented the multi-layered approach to safety which includes the deployment of public safety and law enforcement personal, station design evaluation, cleaning staff and increased homeless outreach staff.
- Transit Ambassador Pilot Launch: hired, trained, and put into the field over 300 Transit Ambassadors, focused on supporting riders in need, connecting riders to resources, and reporting safety and maintenance issues.
- Safety for Operators: hiring of additional Transit Security Officers, focused on bus ride-alongs; prototyped new bus operator barrier for improved safety.
- Transit Watch App Marketing: paid media campaign generated 16M impressions and generated 4,795 application installations; beyond the marketing campaign, Metro Ambassadors also use this as a reporting tool and we expanded staffing to more quickly address issues, this will continue into FY24 along with user experience and interface testing

and upgrades.

Cleanliness

- Cleaning Surge Activities: enhanced escalator step-cleaning, mid-day layover bus cleaning, trackway trash removal, and end-of-line rail car cleaning.
- Vinyl Seat Swap: completed the transition of fabric seat covers to easier to clean vinyl seats.

Time Competitiveness and Connectivity

- NextGen Service Restoration: restored bus service to pre-COVID levels.
- Headway Management Pilot: following research, launched a headway management pilot on Line 16 to understand potential rider benefits.

Bus Stop Shade and Seating

- Bus Stops Improvements Plan: presented to the Board in summer of 2023 to bring resources, information, and opportunities related to bus stops and bus stop improvements in one place.

Customer Information

- E-Paper Pilot: launched the e-paper pilot along the Vermont bus corridor to improve access to real-time bus arrival information.

Diverse Riders, Diverse Needs

- People with Disabilities Employee Education: implemented Disability Awareness and Sensitivity training to bus and rail operators through video vignettes that captured the perceptions of customers with disabilities who use the system.

While we do our best to be inclusive to identify actions we can take to address customer needs, often new issues and/or new ideas come along throughout the year that we choose to implement in addition to the documented CX Action Items. That was particularly true in 2022/2023 in regards to enhanced safety efforts. In addition to the CX Action Items that were completed, many other customer-focused initiatives were implemented as we adapt and respond to on-going customer feedback and data.

This includes:

- Westlake/MacArthur Park Station Safety and Customer Experience Enhancements
- Drug-Free Metro Campaign
- Study into in-house transit public safety department
- Enhanced strategic deployment of security and law enforcement resources
- Use of community intervention specialists alongside street teams to support the Transit Ambassador program.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The 2023 CX Plan address both the “Listen and Learn” and “Focus and Deliver” pillars of the Equity Platform by recommending a range of initiatives that would benefit marginalized communities, low-income households, people with disabilities, languages spoken, and Equity Focus Communities (EFCs).

The action items developed are a response to public input from the 2022 CX Survey, a representative survey weighted to Metro's ridership, as well as Customer Care and social media feedback. The survey results are analyzed to prioritize service aspects with low customer satisfaction and high relative importance according to respondents. Consideration is taken for equity when selecting customer experience initiatives by disaggregating the survey data by income, gender, disability, and race to identify and prioritize issues so those with the greatest needs can benefit. The results inform the focus of CX Action Items - systemwide initiatives and special projects designed to ensure the well-being of bus and rail passengers alike.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Metro is working to cultivate a customer-first culture among all employees and improve customer experiences for its riders and employees, therefore the Customer Experience Plan and its Action Items support the strategic plan goals:

- **Goal #1:** "Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips."
- **Goal #2:** "Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system."

NEXT STEPS

Staff will:

- Bring the Board the results of a new CX Rider Survey in Fall 2023, and a potential customer survey by summer, 2024.
- Launch the Customer Experience Hub Website in the Fall of 2023.
- Provide the Board with a Customer Experience Action Items update in early 2024.

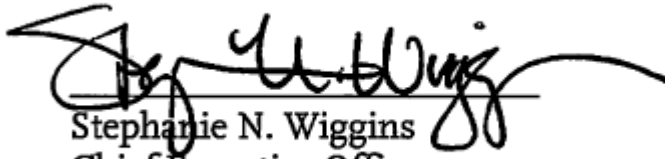
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Metro's 2023 Customer Experience Plan
Attachment B - Metro's 2022 Customer Experience Action Items Update

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