Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

File #: 2021-0709, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 38.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 18, 2021

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF METRO STREET SAFETY POLICY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE update on development of Metro Street Safety Policy.

ISSUE

Metro's Board of Directors passed a motion instructing staff to develop a street safety policy (See Attachment A). Metro staff formed an internal working group and conducted outreach to advisory bodies. This update references key challenges and opportunities to reduce deaths and injuries from collisions. Vehicle collisions are a leading cause of death and injury in Los Angeles County, with higher rates of harm for Black and Latino residents, for people walking and biking, and for unhoused people. Street safety also impacts Metro's mission of providing world-class transportation because people are less likely to take transit or use active transportation if they feel they cannot safely access and use these modes of travel. The update also 1) summarizes progress in identifying roles for Metro through which the agency can contribute to greater street safety; 2) notes that the main responsibility for street regulation and safety will still rest with local jurisdictions; 3) lists key themes that staff have heard from advisory boards; and 4) shares next steps.

BACKGROUND

In January 2021, the Metro Board of Directors adopted the Street Safety Policy Motion (File 2020-0928) instructing staff to report back on development of a Street Safety Policy, a countywide street safety data collection program, and assessment of internal risk and liability to safety of all Metro-provided public transportation services. The motion emphasized that this would build upon Goal 1.2 of Metro's strategic plan and that the safety of street users is a public health issue and a key factor in people's willingness to travel by transit and active transportation. The Motion also recommended that in developing a policy, staff should focus on Metro roles that intersect with street safety.

DISCUSSION

Consequences of Unsafe Streets

According to state data, 719 people were killed and 88,068 people were injured by vehicle collisions in LA County in 2019. Vehicle collisions are the fourth leading cause of **premature** death in the County, ahead of homicides, strokes, and lung cancer. This is due to the fact that collisions harm people of all ages. Crashes are in fact the leading cause of death for children aged 5-14, the second leading cause of death for ages 15-24 and the fourth leading cause of death for those 25-45.

Deaths from collisions are also not equitably distributed. According to research by UCLA, Black people, who are 8.6 percent of Los Angeles City's population, were 14.1 percent of those killed by collisions between 2013 and 2017. People experiencing homelessness in LA County were 16 times more likely to die from transportation related causes than the general public, with 164 deaths in 2019. 329 of those killed across LA County in 2019 were walking or cycling. This represents 46% of those who lost their lives, a disproportionate number given that the walk and bike share of trips in LA County is approximately 15 percent for non-commute trips and just 5 percent for commute trips.

For references for the above data, additional data on street safety and a discussion of Vision Zero principles, see Attachment B: Street Safety Trends.

Roles for Metro Under Consideration to Advance Street Safety

How can Metro best contribute to street safety? *Metro does not control the design of streets, the speed limits for vehicles on streets, nor enforcement of traffic laws. Therefore, Metro's Street Safety Policy will not look like a local jurisdiction's street safety plan.* It will instead, as suggested in Board Motion 2020-0928 (see Attachment A), focus on Metro roles that allow the agency to contribute to and partner on safer streets. Through staff deliberations to date, we have identified the 2014 Complete Streets Policy as precedent to the intended Street Safety Policy with similar goals around directing various Metro functions to influence the design and safety of public rights-of-way. As such, we intend to approach the development of this policy as, in part, an update and addition to the adopted Compete Streets Policy.

The staff working group has identified the following roles as an initial framework for policy development:

- **Operator**. Metro operates bus service, Metro Micro, street running BRT and light rail and provides bike share. All of these services give the agency insights about street safety from operators' observations and from data on collision incidents involving Metro vehicles. Staff will further discuss and develop the potential to analyze these insights to help jurisdictions identify unsafe conditions and to recommend improvements that could help reduce collisions. *It will also be important to promote complete street designs which can simultaneously reduce dangerous vehicle speeds and speed up buses through bus prioritization measures.*

- **Planner and Builder**. Metro plans and/or builds rail, BRT, highway and active transportation projects. The agency also creates regional scale plans that address different modes of travel on public rights-of-way, including BRT, bus lanes and other prioritization measures, active transportation and goods movement, among others. Within Metro's transit project delivery functions, the first/last mile program provides a focus on street safety surrounding future stations and establishes clear partnership roles between Metro and local agencies. That focus

can be sharpened and enhanced within the street safety policy. Metro also has a Strategic Plan and Long Range and Short Range Transportation Plans, providing an opportunity to develop, refine, and track street safety goals at the countywide scale. Staff will further develop how these projects and plans can continue to help provide safe, multi-modal ways to travel in LA County. *Staff also note that work on and potential adoption of a Street Safety Policy does not change Metro's Board Adopted 2013 Supplementary Modifications to Transit Projects Policy, which addresses requests for Metro to pay for upgrades to third party facilities (betterments).*

- **Funder**. Metro provides large amounts of pass-through funding that is available to local jurisdictions to spend on street improvements and safety enhancements, including Local Return and Measure M's Sub-Regional Programs. Metro also manages smaller discretionary funding programs. As noted above, 2014 Complete Streets Policy was intended to influence the design and function of public right-of-way within Metro discretionary funding programs. The staff working group will further develop ways to publicize and promote use of the non-discretionary funds to advance street safety as well as fine-tune the street safety focus of discretionary/competitive programs.

- **Legislative advocate.** Metro's 2021 State and Federal Legislative Programs include a goal to "[m]onitor and support legislation that would authorize the cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County to develop and implement strategies to reach Vision Zero goals of improving safety and eliminating traffic-related fatalities." At the state level, Metro supported AB 43 (Friedman- greater local authority to set speed limits), AB 550 (Chiu- pilot speed camera programs), and funding for active transportation projects from the budget surplus. Metro also sponsored SB 917 (Bloom- camera enforcement of bus lanes), which is primarily intended to speed up buses but would likely have secondary safety benefits by reducing bus-vehicle conflicts. At the federal level, Metro has supported proposals for additional grant funds for safe streets and provided comments on FHWA's update of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Staff will further discuss and develop how Metro could support additional legislation that would protect pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

- **Data provider.** Metro gathers and shares information on its services and programs and hosts Los Angeles County Regional Integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (RIITS), which provides data sets related to arterial traffic. For information on collisions, deaths and injuries, the statewide Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) is the chief data source. To report back on the second goal of this motion on a countywide street safety data collection program, the staff working group are discussing how Metro and RIITS could help improve the quality of data provided by local agencies to TIMS, and how to help analyze and share LA County data from TIMS in formats that promote greater awareness of street safety and help identify key trends and unsafe segments of the road network as well as potential mitigations.

- **Educator.** Metro's Community Education & Mobility Programs (MCE) Team is responsible for increasing transit safety awareness and providing education to residents of Los Angeles County who interact with Metro's public transportation system through various safety programs. This includes safety for Metro's rail lines, bus system, bicycles and pedestrians. Through its Transit Safety Program, educational site-specific safety training, hands on travel

training and continuous local community engagement is provided to K-12 schools. One on one and peer to peer travel training is provided to senior centers and independent living facilities throughout LA County. Staff will further discuss and develop whether and how additional partnerships and outreach methods could help advance street safety.

- **Innovator.** Metro's mission is to provide world-class transportation and the agency operates pilot projects to test transportation approaches. The staff working group is discussing how to learn lessons from places that have successfully reduced deaths and injuries, and how new technologies can advance street safety.

Input from Advisory Bodies

Over the summer of 2021, Metro staff briefed eleven advisory bodies, including the Policy Advisory Committee, all Service Councils, and the Public Safety Advisory Committee about the goals of the motion and the Metro roles that staff were considering leveraging. Advisory bodies provided feedback on this potential framework. Comments were supportive of Metro helping improve street safety in a partnering role. Some recommendations included:

- Connect to regional and city efforts
- "Put teeth" into funding
- Don't disadvantage cities that have already invested in safety
- Talk to advocates working on traffic safety
- Pay attention to challenges faced by those with disabilities
- Explore how to advance vehicle safety improvements
- Try social media campaigns to promote street safety

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Receiving and filing an update on progress on a Metro street safety policy does not have financial costs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This update provides a status report of progress towards a Metro Street Safety Policy. Completion of the process and adoption and implementation of a new street safety policy will specifically advance Goal 1.2 which calls for Metro to "reduce roadway collisions and injuries." Safer streets would also advance Goals 1 and 2 by making people feel safer and more comfortable in using transit and active transportation, and Goal 4 through Metro partnering to advance public policies and safer street networks.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Completion of the process and adoption and implementation of a new street safety policy that helps reduce collisions, deaths and injuries is expected to disproportionately save the lives of vulnerable residents of Los Angeles County, specifically when implemented with intentional equity considerations and consultations with disproportionately impacted groups." Staff development of a proposed Metro Street Safety Policy includes consideration of how policy implementation will prioritize and address unique needs of marginalized communities who currently experience

disproportionate impacts from traffic violence, often connected to historic and ongoing exclusion and disinvestment. A street safety policy will also be based on a broader analysis of safety in public spaces, which intersects with issues such as public safety, law enforcement, and environmental design.

Additional ways to maximize equity benefits and avoid disproportionate burdens being explored including how to:

- Conduct outreach that prioritizes Equity Focus Communities, historically marginalized communities, and vulnerable road users;
- Have nuanced conversations on enforcement, including connecting this effort to the work of the Public Safety Advisory Committee;
- Use funding as an equity tool;
- Improve regional data collection and sharing in a manner that helps local jurisdictions identify and address disparities in harm from vehicle collisions.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will conduct outreach to the public and stakeholders, then draft a street safety policy based on staff research and discussions as well as input from the Board, advisory bodies and the public. This draft will be shared for additional public feedback, then brought to the Board for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 2020-0928
Attachment B - Street Safety Trends

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File #: 2020-0928, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 55.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2021

Motion by:

DIRECTORS GARCETTI, SOLIS, MITCHELL, AND BONIN

Metro Street Safety Policy

Street safety is a growing concern for communities across the globe. L.A. County vehicle crashes injured more than 91,000 people and killed 860 people in 2017. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 5-14 and the fourth-leading cause of premature death overall. In low-income communities and communities of color, impacts of vehicle crashes are often more severe because of inadequate infrastructure and higher vehicular speeds resulting from decades of inequitable transportation investments. To address street safety, L.A. County and many cities within the county have adopted street safety policies.

Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan includes initiative 1.2.E to improve safety on the transit system and reduce roadway collisions and injuries. This initiative will be of increasing importance as the agency recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety and perception of safety will influence mode choice as people return to more daily travel. Street users need to feel safe accessing the Metro system. The risk of increasing Vehicle Miles Traveled during COVID-19 recovery is a pending threat to meeting the aggressive climate goals dictated by SB 375. Metro will benefit from working with state and local efforts to make streets safer.

Metro does not regulate local streets but can support safer streets within L.A. County through:

- Interfacing with the local public right-of-way, especially through Metro Bus Rapid Transit, Active Transportation Corridors, First/Last Mile projects, and Highway projects
- Funding priorities for local projects
- Transportation operations, Transportation Demand Management, and public outreach and engagement
- State and federal advocacy

SUBJECT: METRO STREET SAFETY POLICY

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Garcetti, Solis, Mitchell, and Bonin that the Board of Directors direct the CEO, in consultation with the Executive Officer for Equity and Race, to report back on:

A. Developing a Street Safety Policy addressing the points discussed above;

B. Creating a countywide data collection program, working in partnership with SCAG, L.A. County Department of Public Health, RIITS, and any other local, state, or federal partners, to design a program to document and analyze serious injuries and fatalities from transportation; and

C. Assessing internal risk and liability to safety of all Metro-provided public transportation services.

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Attachment B

Street Safety Trends
Update on Development of Metro Street Safety Policy

Consequences of unsafe streets

According to state data, 719 people were killed and 88,068 people were injured by vehicle collisions in LA County in 2019.[1] Vehicle collisions are the fourth leading cause of **premature** death in the County, ahead of homicides, strokes, and lung cancer.[2] This is due to the fact that collisions harm people of all ages. Crashes are in fact the leading cause of death for children aged 5-14, the second leading cause of death for ages 15-24 and the fourth leading cause of death for those 25-45.

Deaths from collisions are also not equitably distributed. According to research by UCLA, Black people, who are 8.6 percent of Los Angeles City's population, were 14.1 percent of those killed by collisions between 2013 and 2017.[3] People experiencing homelessness in LA County were 16 times more likely to die from transportation related causes than the general public, with 164 deaths in 2019.[4] 329 of those killed across LA County in 2019 were walking or cycling.[5] This represents 46% of those who lost their lives, a disproportionate number given that the walk and bike share of trips in LA County is approximately 15 percent for non-commute trips and just 5 percent for commute trips.[6]

During 2020, when there was significantly less driving, deaths from collisions in the City of Los Angeles were just three percent lower than in 2019. LADOT officials attribute this to a "pandemic of speeding" during times when fewer cars were on the road.[7]

Pedestrian deaths in particular have increased in Los Angeles County and nationwide in recent years.[8] Some likely causes of this rise are an increase in the size, height and engine power of

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[1] Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), *Safe Transportation Research and Education Center*, *University of California, Berkeley*. 2021. https://tims.berkeley.edu/

[2] County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. *Patterns of Mortality in Los Angeles County, 2008-2017.* Appendixes B3, C1 and C3. December 2019.

[3] Madeline Brozen and Annaleigh Yahata Ekman. *The Need to Prioritize Black Lives in LA's Traffic Safety Efforts.* UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. December 2020. https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/black-lives-la-traffic-safety/

[4] Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Center for Health Impact Evaluation*, Recent Trends In Mortality Rates and Causes of Death Among People Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County*, January 2021. http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chie/reports/HomelessMortality2020_CHIEBrief_Final.pdf

[5] Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS)

[6] US Census 2018 for commute; National Household Travel Survey - California 2017 for other trips.

[7] Ryan Fonseca. "Traffic Was Historically Low In 2020. The Death Toll On LA's Streets Was Not." LAist. April 29, 2021. https://laist.com/news/transportation/2020-traffic-deaths-los-angeles-pandemic

[8] Fonseca. "Traffic Was Historically Low In 2020."

passenger vehicles, which contribute to more deadly vehicle-pedestrian collisions;[9] driver distraction from smart phone use; increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness who are likely to live near roadways;[10] as well as relatively slow progress by jurisdictions in transforming the road grid in LA County into complete streets with infrastructure that is safe for all road users.[11]

76 percent of Metro transit riders get to their first bus or train of the day by walking, and another 4 percent by bike or skateboard.[12] The reality and perception of safe streets therefore can impact people's willingness to use transit in addition to their willingness to use active transportation.

Vision Zero strategies

Vision Zero plans and policies are considered the best practice to reduce deaths and injuries from vehicle collisions. The core goal of Vision Zero is to eliminate roadway deaths, because society has an ethical obligation to ensure that people do not die when traveling. Vision Zero's logic is that humans are not perfect, that mistakes can never be eliminated from transportation, and that *therefore the best way to reduce harm is to design streets and vehicles in a manner that ensures that mistakes do not lead to deaths or serious injury.* For example, making the road network into complete streets with safe space for all users (bus-only lanes, protected lanes for cycling, sidewalks and safe crosswalks, vehicle lanes) reduces conflict between larger, faster vehicles and vulnerable road users. Lower speed limits and streets physically designed to make speeding difficult also save lives by lowering the chance that a mistake and collision results in death or serious injury. Vision Zero strategies have also traditionally included strengthening enforcement of traffic laws. Increased inclusion of diverse and community-based perspectives have led street safety experts and practitioners to pursue a more nuanced approach that recognizes that increased law enforcement has a disproportionate impact on communities of color.[13]

Vision Zero policies originated in Sweden in 1997, when the approach was adopted by that nation's parliament. Its implementation resulted in a 60 percent reduction in roadway fatalities

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[9] Justin Tyndall, Pedestrian deaths and large vehicles, Economics of Transportation, Volumes 26–27, 2021, 100219, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212012221000241

[10] Transportation related causes of deaths for people experiencing homelessness rose 60 percent between 2014 and 2018. LA County Department of Public Health. *Recent Trends In Mortality Rates and Causes of Death Among People Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County.*

[11] Susan Carpenter. "LA is less bike friendly than NYC and San Francisco, new study says." Spectrumnews1. June 7, 2021.
https//:spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/transportation/2021/06/07/la-is-less-bike-friendly-than-nyc-and-san-francisco

[12] Metro On-Board Customer Satisfaction Survey. October-November 2019.
http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/research/images/infographics/system_results_fall_2019.pdf

[13] Vision Zero Network. "Safe Mobility is a Right. Vision Zero Communities Should Commit to Equity From the Start." https://visionzeronetwork.org/resources/equity/

between 2000 and 2019.[14] Vision Zero policies have been successfully used elsewhere. In 2019, there were zero pedestrian or cyclist deaths in
Helsinki, Finland and in Oslo, Norway, and no children younger than 16 died in vehicle crashes in all of Norway.[15] LA County has ten million residents while these two cities each have fewer than 700,000; and neither place centered motor vehicles in their planning as strongly as greater LA did during the 20th century. Still, their success shows what can be accomplished when road design aims at safety for all.

The City of Los Angeles adopted a Vision Zero plan in 2015 aiming for zero deaths by 2025;[16] LA County's 2019 Vision Zero plan seeks zero deaths on unincorporated County roads by 2035.[17] Since deaths and injuries are still high, Metro can play a useful role as partner to local jurisdictions towards the goal of making streets safer.

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[14] Swedish Transport Administration. Vision Zero timeline. https://www.roadsafetysweden.com/contentassets/7ecbcb46d4684a9982b1f85c3bd8cb1e/4950x2500mm_monter-nollvisionen_tidslinje_20100219.pdf
[15] Jessica Murray. "How Helsinki and Oslo cut pedestrian deaths to zero." March 16, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/16/how-helsinki-and-oslo-cut-pedestrian-deaths-to-zero
[16] Vision Zero Los Angeles- 2015/2025. https://view.joomag.com/vision-zero-los-angeles/0915902001459876247?short
[17] Vision Zero Los Angeles County: a Plan for Safer Roadways, 2020-2025. https://pw.lacounty.gov/visionzero/docs/SCAG-LACounty-VZ-Action-Plan-ver-D-hiRes-single-11-25-2019-rev.pdf

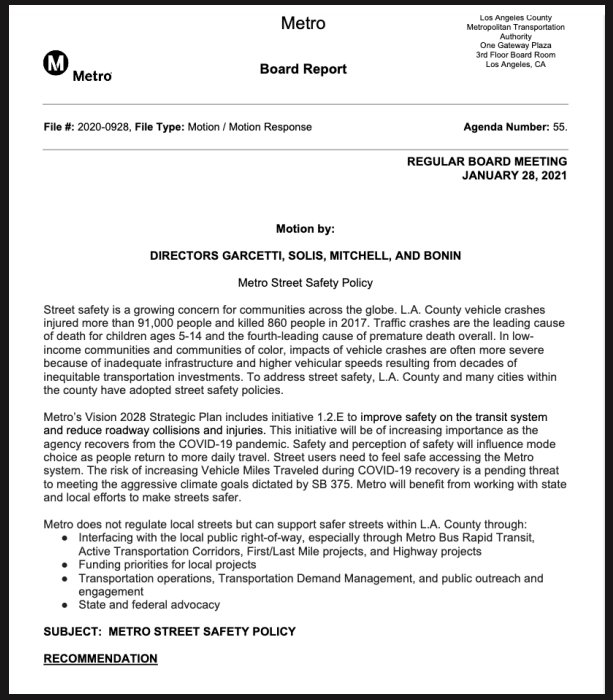
Metro Street Safety Policy

Background / Metro Roles / Discussion

November 2021

Metro

BACKGROUND: Board Motion 2020-0928, adopted January 2021



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Board Report

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SUBJECT: METRO STREET SAFETY POLICY

RECOMMENDATION

THREE GOALS:

1. Develop a Street Safety Policy
2. Create a countywide data collection program
3. Assess internal risk and liability to safety of all Metro-provided public transportation services

Recommends building on METRO ROLES

Metro

Significance of street safety

Public health crisis

719 deaths, 88,068 injuries in 2019.
Disproportionately Black, Latino, pedestrians, cyclists, people experiencing homelessness

Pedestrian deaths have risen

incomplete streets, larger vehicles, homelessness

Impacts Metro's mission

Safety concerns discourage active transportation + transit use

Los Angeles Times

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Op-Ed: People of color are dying from traffic violence at a much higher rate. Here's why

To help reduce fatal traffic crashes, the city of L.A. has added new crosswalks that extend further into the street, such as this one at 43rd and Broadway. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

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Staff working group have focused on relevant Metro roles

Metro does not control street design, speed limits, or enforcement. To help Metro collaborate to advance street safety, staff have considered how to leverage Metro's roles as:

- Operator
- Planner & Builder*
- Funder
- Data Provider
- Legislative Advocate
- Educator
- Innovator

*This policy is not meant to change Metro's 2013 Supplementary Modifications to Transit Projects Policy, which addresses requests for Metro to pay for upgrades to third party facilities (betterments).

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KEY OPPORTUNITIES + EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

- Update Complete Streets Policy
- Help advance safety and increase bus speeds
- Gather/ share data to enhance state information

To maximize equity benefits and avoid disproportionate burdens:

- Outreach to Equity Focus Communities and vulnerable road users
- Nuanced conversations on enforcement
- Use Funding and data as equity tools

Metro

Next Steps

- Broader public outreach, including CBOs + advocacy groups
- Staff develop draft policy
- 2nd round of outreach for comments
- Take to Board

Thank you! Contact for street safety work:

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Metro