



## Board Report

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**Agenda Number:** 39.

### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE OCTOBER 24, 2024

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE quarterly 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 July to September 2024.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Metro established the first cohort of PSAC on April 7, 2021, to:

- Advise on the development of a community-based approach to public safety.
- Share input on the development of the multi-agency policing contract renewal.
- Review the Customer Code of Conduct.
- Provide feedback on Metro's mission and value statements regarding public safety.
- Guide the establishment of Metro's Transit Ambassadors program.

After its 16-month tenure, the first PSAC cohort concluded on August 17, 2022. At the September 2022 Board meeting, the CEO recommended that the PSAC continue, and the Board approved the recommendation. The second cohort was established on February 25, 2023, and will serve for two years through February 2025.

#### **Executive Committee Members**

PSAC elected an executive committee to serve from February 2024 to February 2025.

- Jeremy Oliver-Roncero, Chair
- Misty Wilks, Vice-Chair
- Darryl Goodus, Secretary

#### **Work Plan Objectives**

Together with Metro CEO Wiggins, the PSAC Executive Committee developed a work plan that

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outlines five objectives framing PSAC's scope of work to enhance the customer experience by addressing safety concerns on the system. The Executive Committee, staff, and CEO together identified key strategies for the committee to review, evaluate, and/or help advance. The PSAC Executive Committee meets with CEO Wiggins monthly to agree upon PSAC meeting agenda items.

During this period agenda items have included, but have not been limited to, Metro Transit Security Bus Safety Teams, the Customer Experience Plan, Metro's Transit Ambassador pilot program evaluation, safety for people living with disabilities, station intervention strategies, crisis response strategies, and PSAC-hosted community listening sessions.

## **DISCUSSION**

NOTE: There was no PSAC meeting during August.

In July and September, staff provided PSAC members presentations on topics in which they expressed strong interest. Specifically, earlier this year, PSAC formed ad-hoc committees (A & B) to explore alternatives to fare enforcement and to identify more equitable ways of ensuring current fare compliance. Each committee met to discuss alternatives, and their draft recommendations were developed. The next steps involved departmental presentations in July for committee A, and in September for Committee B, aimed at filling a knowledge gap to allow committees to reconsider recommendations by potentially revising or eliminating them before presenting them to the entire PSAC committee for consideration in November.

### **July 2024 Meeting**

The July PSAC meeting focused on staff presentations by Customer Experience, TAP, and System Safety and Law Enforcement (SSLE) departments to address fare compliance. The PSAC was interested in learning more about how compliance was currently done in an effort to inform exploring alternatives to fare enforcement. Customer Experience staff discussed updates to the Customer Code of Conduct aimed at enhancing safety and passenger experience across the Metro system. SSLE staff discussed Metro's multi-layered public safety ecosystem, highlighting that transit security officers are the only layer responsible for fare enforcement. and code of conduct compliance and due to the size of the agency, Metro focuses its resources on high impact areas. TAP staff explained various methods for riders to load fares onto their TAP cards, and LIFE program staff explained how customers who qualify can obtain reduced fares with LIFE and other reduced fare programs

Presentations focused on the following topics:

- Fare gate and access control improvements to enhance Customer Code of Conduct compliance.
- Code of Conduct signage across Metro's rail and bus system and fleet.
- Rollout of the updated draft Code of Conduct through a comprehensive marketing communications campaign.
- Metro's multi-layered public safety ecosystem.
- Metro's social media content shift towards safety.
- Comprehensive cleanliness plan for stations.
- Low-Income Fare Is Easy (LIFE) program.

- Metro's GoPass program.

One PSAC committee member expressed concerns related to Metro's ability to track and prevent repeat offenders from violating the Code of Conduct. SSLE staff explained that it is challenging to track violators in real-time for past behaviors, but Metro has a mechanism through transit court to track citations and warnings.

Another member asked if Metro's social media efforts are available in different languages other than English to reach non-English speakers. Metro Social Media staff responded that Metro is actively expanding Spanish language content on social media by using paid ads targeted at Spanish-speaking audiences. Additionally, he mentioned that Metro is building a dedicated team to create more Spanish content.

Customer Experience presented samples of the updated Code of Conduct signs and shared social media videos focused on improving the system's safety.

Metro staff also provided announcements regarding:

- Efforts to begin recruiting for PSAC's third cohort.
- Planning for summer and fall community engagement and outreach activities for the upcoming PSAC-hosted September and October Community Listening Sessions.

### September 2024 Meeting

The September PSAC meeting continued staff presentations on SSLE, HOME/Homeless Initiatives, and the Office of the Inspector General/Transit spoke with members who were interested in exploring whether there may be more equitable ways to gain fare compliance.

Presentations focused on the following topics:

- Fines for citations issued and options for paying fines, transit court, transit school, and community service.
- Statistics on citations issued and community services were presented to provide context for committee members.
- Updates to the approach on fare evasion and those committing other customer code of conduct violations.

Customer Experience presented physical samples of the updated Code of Conduct (PC640) signs. The Committee unanimously liked the 'Let's Ride Better Together' headline. Additionally, the corresponding campaign, which uses humor and wit, was presented. Committee members appreciated the updates and provided feedback. However, they cautioned that the humor or sarcasm in the 'witty signs' may not be understood by some riders, as the context or humor might be lost in translation due to cultural and language differences.

Customer Experience assured the members that any messaging would be vetted by internal resource groups for both content and context. Additional questions and comments focused on whether to include the 'No Weapons' version, clarification on vending policies at Metro stations, and requests for prioritization or changes.

- Metro staff also provided announcements regarding:
  - The closure of the recruiting period (September 6, 2024) for PSAC's third cohort.  
NOTE: More than 400 applications were received.
  - Summer community engagement and outreach activities conducted to date, and event participation planned for fall.
  - PSAC Community Listening Sessions scheduled for the recruitment of the Chief of Police for the Transit Public Safety Department \

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

PSAC plays a crucial role in addressing equity within the transportation system. Equity is a central consideration in the committee's decision-making processes, as it strives to ensure that all members of the community, especially those historically marginalized or underserved, have access to safe and reliable transportation options. Through its commitment to inclusivity, community engagement, and data-driven approaches, the committee strives to create a transit environment that is safe, accessible, and equitable for all residents of Los Angeles County.

This quarterly update highlights PSAC's important role in supporting Metro's Equity Platform. For example, PSAC's community engagement efforts to develop its recommendations for a potential new Transit Community Safety Department started with community listening sessions for all interested stakeholders to provide feedback about public safety in a safe space and allowed different perspectives to flourish.

PSAC has actively discussed and provided comments to Metro on potential strategies for equitable fare enforcement, including Metro considering expanding current community service options as an alternative to fines, especially for those who are unhoused or undocumented.

Further, PSAC's comments on the draft Code of Conduct signs regarding cultural competency helped Customer Experience consider how to tailor messaging to different cultural backgrounds.

## **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 PSAC ad-hoc committees A & B plan to reconvene to consider the new information presented to refine their recommendations. Their recommendations will be shared preliminarily with staff subject

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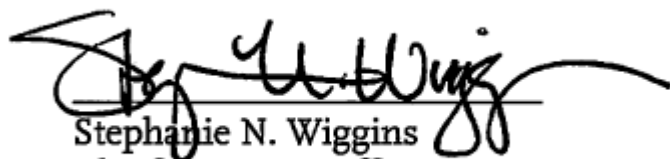
matter experts to ensure their feasibility. This initial refinement and vetting should be completed during the month of November. It is anticipated that the finalized recommendations can be presented at the January 2025 meeting (Note: PSAC is dark in December) and advanced to the Office of the CEO for review and potential adoption.

Additionally, the Public Safety Advisory Committee will host a Community Listening Session to gather public input on the qualities, traits, and characteristics desired in candidates for the new Transit Chief of Police and Emergency Management position. The first meeting took place Thursday, September 26, 2024, and the second meeting occurred October 9. The final meeting is scheduled to take place October 26, 2024.

The CEO will continue to meet with the PSAC Executive Committee monthly to provide feedback on the progress of topics they have raised.

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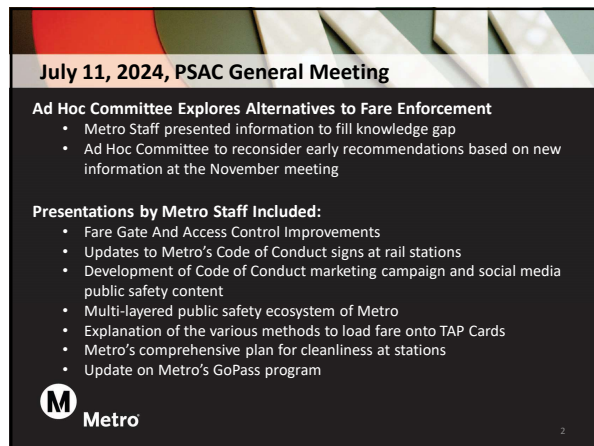
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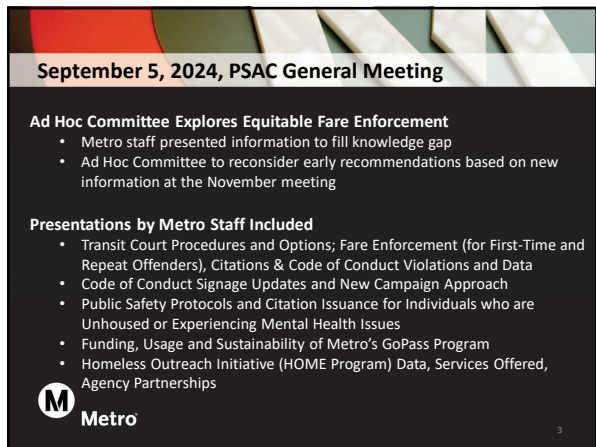
Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer



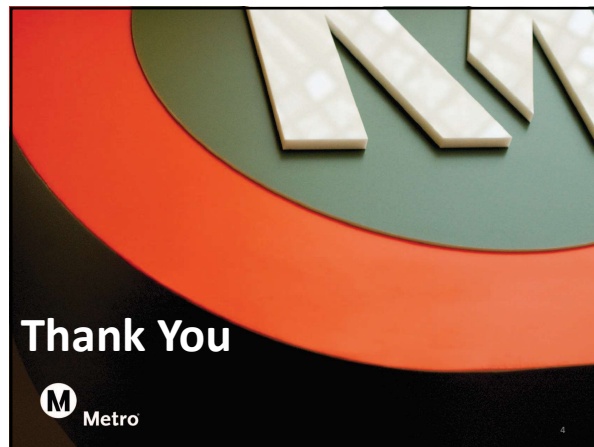
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