



Board Report

File #: 2024-0106, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 23.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
APRIL 18, 2024**

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) QUARTERLY UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE a quarterly status report on the Community Advisory Council (CAC).

ISSUE

This receive and file report is a Board directed quarterly update on Community Advisory Council (CAC) activities from January 5, 2024, through March 14, 2024.

BACKGROUND

Per state statute, Metro must appoint a citizens' advisory committee whose membership "shall reflect a broad spectrum of interests and all geographic areas of the county." The CAC prefers to be referred to as the Community Advisory Council because it better reflects its constituency.

Per the bylaws adopted by the CAC, the group is to consult, obtain, and collect public input on matters of interest and concern to the community. It will communicate the CAC's recommendations concerning such issues to Metro. Issues may also be assigned to the CAC by Metro for its review, comment, and recommendation.

The CAC is currently comprised of 20 active/voting Members. CAC Members are directly appointed by the Metro Board of Directors and serve at the pleasure of their appointing Director. Each voting Metro Board Director can appoint up to four appointees to serve on the CAC.

DISCUSSION

Since the January 18, 2024 update to the Board, the CAC General Assembly convened two times to discuss matters related to Metro business directly with key agency staff working on critical programs, projects, operations, and agency initiatives. Metro staff shared updates on Customer Experience (Wayfinding Signage), and Metro Micro at the CAC January meeting. At the CAC's February General

Assembly meeting, the CAC received updates on the Metro GoPass and Discounted fares programs.

As a result of the CAC's monthly meetings during this reporting period, staff has coordinated inter-departmentally to secure key Metro updates as requested by the CAC and to ensure the comments expressed by CAC Members in draft meeting notes are considered and incorporated where feasible into the respective Metro team's analysis. See Attachment A for "highlights" of CAC Members' individual inputs on requested Metro topics from this reporting period.

CAC members' feedback on matters related to Metro programs, projects, and initiatives is important and continues to be valued by the Metro Board and staff. One specific example from this reporting period was one CAC Member's input shared with Metro's Discounted fares program staff to consider enhanced cross-promotion and marketing of the Metro discounted fare programs. Metro's Discounted Fare staff were able to confirm with the CAC that such efforts are underway, including recent efforts made towards providing a direct weblink and basic information on the student GoPass program into the application for other discounted fares, such as the LIFE program. This is in addition to Metro staff speaking to the variety of available discount programs at each outreach and tabling opportunity. Discounted fare program staff also indicated that they are exploring additional cross-promotional opportunities as well.

Metro staff have also worked inter-departmentally to provide agency feedback in response to key questions that individual Metro Board Directors raised during the January 2024 Executive Committee Meeting "Receive and File" Update. See Attachment B for a summary of the former questions raised and the latest feedback from agency staff.

Additionally, during this reporting period, the CAC Chair and staff sent reminders to each voting Metro Board Director's office regarding current appointees and vacancies.

EQUITY PLATFORM

CAC Members represent diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, viewpoints, perspectives, and priorities. Over recent years, the CAC has increasingly become more diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and gender and is comprised of several Members that utilize Metro and partially Metro-funded services (such as Access Services, local municipal operators' services, etc.) and regularly ride the Metro system. Additionally, some of the CAC members are differently abled, further increasing the equity of representation.

Of the 20-member advisory council, 75% identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) and 30% are women. One woman indicated her need to resign due to scheduling conflicts with other essential priorities, decreasing the total number of women from seven to six. One Caucasian male resigned during this reporting period, citing his move into a retirement community. The diversity of the CAC is critical and the Metro CAC Chair provides reminder emails to each of the Metro Board of Directors' deputies of their status on appointees and current vacancies while highlighting the need for diversity in their appointments.

NEXT STEPS

The CAC General Assembly is anticipated to meet at the end of March to hear a high-level update from the Metro Office of Management and Budget regarding the Metro FY 2025 budget development process as well as hear a brief update from agency staff regarding the restrooms pilot initiative and related Metro station-area improvements aimed to enhance the customer experience.

Metro staff will continue to support the CAC. The CAC Chair and staff will keep the Metro Board apprised of their activities, as the Metro Board desires.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Summary of CAC Members' Inputs

Attachment B - January 2024 Report - Staff Feedback

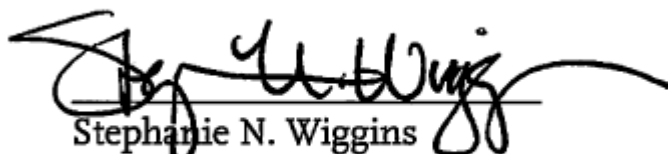
Prepared by: Danielle Valentino, Manager, Community Relations, (213) 922-1249

Patricia Soto, Director, Community Relations, (213) 922-1249

Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez, Executive Officer, Communications, Community Relations,
(213) 922-7479

Yvette Rapose, Deputy Chief Customer Experience Officer, (213) 418-3154

Reviewed by: Jennifer Vides, Chief Customer Experience Office, (213) 922-4060



Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment A

Below is a summary of topics presented to CAC Members and their individual inputs for reporting period, January 5, 2024- March 14, 2024.

JANUARY

Received an update and provided input on Metro Customer Experience – Wayfinding Signage

Highlights of CAC Member Feedback Responses: Wayfinding Signage:

- Enthusiastic personal observations for recent and visible improvements regarding Metro signage.
- Encourage Metro to consider best practices for wayfinding in the U.S. and around the world for mega-events.
- Deploy both traditional wayfinding signage and map cases in concert with online digital wayfinding tools (e.g., particularly for young people who often rely heavily on their smart phones).
- Improvements to the Harbor Gateway Station, including to the Wayfinding signage where there are multiple levels, bus bays, and a lack of clear signage and directories to help customers quickly make their transit connections.
 - **Staff Response:** Metro Customer Experience – Wayfinding Signage presenters clarified that this will be a part of the CX/Signage & Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD) work currently underway.
- Improve signage at the 7th and Metro station where some signs indicate “7th Street,” but it is also important for the rider to know if they are getting off at Figueroa or Flower, especially if the customer wants to transfer.
 - **Staff Response:** This will be addressed as part of a multi-phase signage refurbishment effort currently underway for 7th St/Metro Center and Union Station (CX/SEGD).
- Ensure effective Wayfinding signage at the new Metro Transit Station at LAX and for the future operating plans for the C & K Line, particularly as people from all over the world will increasingly fly into L.A. for mega events, including the Olympics, and will need clear signage in multiple languages to connect with transit options.
 - **Staff response:** Metro Wayfinding signage presenters shared that this is anticipated to be addressed through the construction project process (CX/SEGD).
- Consider integration of Swiftly with Apps.
 - **Staff response:** Metro CX presenting staff shared that the Metro Board and staff are looking into such considerations and more details.
- **Concerns expressed:**
- Real Time Displays are visible only at night but are not useful during the day.

- **Staff response:** This issue is noted and under consideration by Operations and CX/SEGD staff.
- One Member shared there is a lack of adequate signage on how to get to the J Line when he exits the Patsaouras Transit Plaza.
 - **Staff response:** This issue was noted by the Wayfinding Signage presenter and is under consideration through the above-mentioned refurbishment project (CX/SEGD).
- One Member expressed difficulty finding the Dodgers Shuttle upon exiting the B Line due to temporary signage and lack of directional arrows.
 - **Staff response:** Wayfinding Signage presenter noted this concern and it is under consideration with(CX/SEGD).

Received Update on Metro Micro Program

Highlights of Feedback Received re: Metro Micro:

- **CAC Members expressed interest in:**
 - Metro's ability to see live tracking of the Metro Micro Vehicles & excess demand
 - **Staff response:** Metro Micro presenting staff confirmed that live tracking and excess demand tracking is already in use.
 - Metro Micro vehicle-types and the degree of accessibility with the current fleet.
 - **Staff response:** Metro Micro staff explained to CAC that Metro operates a mixed fleet, with Transits as our most common vehicle but 30-40% of the fleet is Caravans and Voyagers modified for wheelchair and other users with accessibility needs. A customer can be picked up by such a vehicle by selecting the Accessible passenger type upon booking.
 - Potential applicability of Autonomous Vehicles (AV's)
 - **Staff response:** Metro Micro staff shared with the CAC that we are still working on finding electric vehicles that meet all of our needs; AVs are still in development and are anticipated to be adopted by the private sector before there are suitable vehicles for public transit needs. It's likely a long way off.
 - Providing more statistics on operating costs versus revenue generated.
 - **Staff response:** Metro Micro presenter to CAC explained that there isn't much more to share at the moment, though there's a positive trend. Presenting staff noted that farebox is a low proportion of revenue for bus, rail, *and* Micro, because it's public transit.
-
- **FEBRUARY:**
Received an update on Metro GoPass and Metro's Discounted Fare Programs

Highlights of Feedback Received:

- **CAC Members expressed interest in:**

- Inquired if Metro is exploring the idea of individual cities potentially contributing to the GoPass and discounted fare programs.
 - **Staff response:** Presenting staff shared that initial conversations are underway to see if more local school districts may wish to participate.
- Factors considered for the increased GoPass participation this year as compared to the previous year.
 - **Staff response:** The Metro presenter explained to the CAC that every year Metro gets more districts participating. Some that had previously determined they did not want to but reproached the conversation recently to join the program. The expansion is in part due to that and due to a number of districts involved. As more students join the program, more learn of the program. Retention rates have also increased greatly and there are newer students coming into the program.
- How Metro is Marketing the program.
 - **Staff response:** Presenting staff explained to CAC that they had placed very specific stories in ethnic newspapers in LA County in their efforts to ensure communities knew about the program and staff provided them in different languages to ensure communities can understand the program.
- Promotions and partnerships aimed at getting more students to use the GoPass and discounted fares during the Summer and Spring breaks to get to key recreational activities and destinations throughout the County via transit.
 - **Staff response:** Presenting staff shared with the CAC that they are discussing ideas for how to get more students to use their pass over breaks. Metro staff are working on a summer ridership campaign with a focus on youth and students and with potential partnerships with key Los Angeles institutions. Staff highlighted a few great recent partnerships and promotions examples with the students and schools. Staff are working on enhanced Marketing methods and reminders to the students about how they can get to key sightseeing and iconic L.A. institutions for free.
- Enhanced cross-promotion and marketing of the discounted fare programs by integrating the student GoPass program into the application for other discounted fares, such as the LIFE program.
 - **Staff response:** Metro staff presenter explained to the CAC that at present, they have parents helping students register for the program and when they get to final screen, there will be a message indicating to “click here” to continue to the “low-income application.” It is not currently the same application, but the applications are connected in this way.
- Encourage students to promote GoPass and discounted fares via their own social media channels (peer-to-peer) to get more youth interested.

- **Staff response:** Metro presenting staff shared with the CAC that they were able to do some paid advertising with social media with the students promoting GoPass. Staff are also considering additional ways that students can advocate for the program and additional methods to get the word out.
- **Concerns expressed:**
 - One Member expressed concerns that small City School District interests and needs may be different than large School District interests and needs regarding these discounted programs.
 - **Staff response:** Metro presenters clarified that GoPass is a voluntary program and that every district is able to choose whether or not it is in their best interest to participate in the program.

(NOTE: The views or concerns reiterated above were those of one or more individuals and not necessarily reflective of the CAC as a whole).

Attachment B

During the January 2024 Metro Board Executive Committee Meeting, individual Metro Board Directors inquired about how agency staff are responding to individual CAC Members' previous inquiries raised during their former CAC General Assembly Meetings, (specifically on the questions listed below from the CAC's former reporting period):

(NOTE: The views or concerns reiterated below were those of one or more individuals and not necessarily reflective of the CAC as a whole).

- A few CAC Members have previously expressed interest in:
 - Consistent customer service skills from all Operators as they interact with customers. Especially for customers who have wheelchairs, mobility challenges, or other special needs. Some concerns were expressed about the variability of customer service skills of the Operators and the desire to see more enhanced and consistently good quality customer service skills from all Operators. Particularly for customers with special needs who require extra support and assistance.

- Metro Staff Feedback:
 - Metro Presenter to the CAC, Daniel Dzyacky, explained to the CAC Members during the October CAC General Assembly Meeting that there is robust training in place which includes hands-on experience and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure the best customer service possible. Mr. Dzyacky also highlighted that the training includes how to communicate with passengers on a regular basis as well as how to make announcements during incidents/events. Metro's Training Team focuses on the standards to follow and how to work in different situations. Operators are trained in how to provide proper assistance or aid to those who need special assistance. Mr. Dzyacky explained that different types of scenarios are discussed during the training and there are steps for the Operator to follow. Mr. Dzyacky also pointed out that the Operators are also customers so the training staff often will ask, "how does it feel to be a customer that is not informed?" and try to put them in the shoes of the customer so they can assess the situation of that customer.
 - With over 4,000 bus and rail operators, we understand there will always be variations in how our operators interact with customers. However, we expect all of our operators to conduct themselves according to the SOPs and training they receive.
 - Additionally, Metro conducts a Mystery Rider Program to monitor operator performance when serving riders living with disabilities or other special needs. Independent observers report on items such as courtesy towards individuals with disabilities, successful boardings, use of the ramp and kneeling features, wheelchair securement and handling of service animal

requests. According to the data, there have been no negative trends reported in the performance of these duties over the past year. In fact, Division 2 surpassed the goal in all four categories for three months in a row.

- One CAC Member formerly expressed interest in:
 - If Metro's current Operator training in this area is also applicable for other municipal agencies or if they have their own, do they follow their own standards? How does it compare to the scope of Metro's?

- Metro Staff Feedback:
 - Mr. Dzyacky explained to the CAC during their October 2024 General Assembly Meeting that there are different categories of Bus Operators and an Operator in charge of training new staff at the division - referred to as a Line Instructor. Metro also has Supervisors on the street called Vehicle Operations Supervisors and others Mr. Dzyacky works with daily. Those staff are certified by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) and other transit agencies send from across the US to Metro for training by our staff for TSI certification.
 - Mr. Dzyacky shared that he is of the opinion that the Metro Operator Training is one of the best in the industry. With the current Metro ADA training, there are 8-10 hours for training on how to use the vehicle ramp and different mobility devices and there are five buses to work on for hands-on training. Hands-on training is used often and is important for understanding and retention.
 - Mr. Dzyacky shared that he is not aware of any other agency spending that much time on training on the intricacies and would regard the Metro training as top quality in the industry.

- A CAC Member formerly expressed interest in:
 - Potential chair lifts in Metro facilities and Metro stairwells (and potentially on buses) to help those in wheelchairs and those who may need to use stairs in an emergency, when / if elevators are not working. (CAC Member Descargar' s related concerns and input).

- Metro Staff Feedback:
 - Metro is always interested in addressing any concerns and recommendations expressed by Metro customers.
 - Metro has previously considered chair lifts at stations. Nevertheless, placing chair lifts on stairs would create Fire / ADA code violations.
 - All stairs must maintain the required minimum clear width to meet code required evacuation egress.

- Handrails must be within 30" reach and be provided on both sides of the stairway. Wide stairways have additional center handrails as required.
 - Handrails must not be obstructed at any time.
 - At underground stations, areas of refuge are located inside the emergency stairwells behind fire-rated doors at the end of the platform. The doors are fitted with push bars and each area of refuge can accommodate at least one wheelchair / mobility scooter. Emergency phone/intercoms with connection to the Rail Operations Center are placed in each area of refuge so the customer can call for assistance.
 - If elevators/escalators are not functional, customers typically travel to the next rail station and connect with Metro bus service to complete the trip. Where/when bus headways are infrequent, Access Services can be contacted to complete the trip, but the wait time for the vehicle can be long.
 - The Metro bus fleet is composed of 100% low floor vehicles fitted with ramps that can be deployed manually if needed. Lifts were previously used on buses in the era before low floor buses. Lifts had a much higher frequency of malfunction / breakdown, requiring much additional maintenance.
- **Per Moniek Pointer's additional feedback from Metro Emergency Management/Preparedness** (specifically, regarding CAC Member's question re: the Metro Gateway Headquarters Building stairwells and stair chairs):
 - Metro Transit Security (MTS) is responsible for evacuating anyone needing assistance with the stair evacuation chairs.
 - A person would be assigned to stay with the person needing assistance and notify MTS who would come and retrieve the evacuation chair and help with the evacuation.
 - Evacuation chairs are stored in the vestibule of the service elevators on each floor.
 - MTS is trained in how to use the chairs.
 - Metro Safety is working on buying new chairs and will hold training courses with MTS once the new chairs have been acquired.
 - Ms. Pointer confirmed that MTS is aware of this responsibility and the chair locations, and Metro Staff, if ever necessary, would notify either the first or third-floor security for assistance or call extension 27600.
 - Ms. Pointer and Mr. Luu from Risk / Safety checked all the stairwells on the 3rd floor and located one evacuation stair chair.
 - That one stair chair is located at the end of the hallway, where the meeting rooms are.

- Ms. Pointer indicated that there would ideally be more / additional evacuation stair chairs for the 3rd floor, including the other stairwells, some connected to the Board Room.
 - Per Ms. Pointer, for stairwells that do not have evacuation chairs, it appears there would be space for them to be mounted.
- CAC members expressed interest regarding how Metro is reaching communities and the public regarding the CAC Meetings and how we can ensure we are reaching our key demographics for Metro and L.A. County:
- Metro Staff Feedback:
 - Metro posts all CAC meeting notices on the online public agency calendar and posts all meeting notices (Final Agendas) on the public bulletin boards at the physical meeting location (Metro Gateway Headquarters Building).
 - Metro also provides and promotes a simultaneous virtual meeting option for each CAC Meeting to increase access and ease of participation in the meetings by the public. The public may also participate in-person at the physical meeting location.
 - The meeting notices and Final Agendas list the physical meeting location as well as the virtual meeting room option.
 - Metro also posts the monthly CAC meetings notices in the public Metro Community Relations Newsletter.
 - Metro anticipates utilizing Next Door for promoting CAC monthly meetings (utilizing all zip codes from across LA County beginning as early as Spring 2024).

Additional avenues may be considered and explored to further enhance the reach and public awareness of the CAC meetings amongst key demographics and across all geographies of L.A. County.