

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM  
SECURITY & PASSENGER SAFETY COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

February 1, 2022

1. ROLL CALL

Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer, called the Security & Passenger Safety Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. A roll call sheet listing of CAG member attendance is attached.

2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Ms. Cooney discussed how the CAG came about and that she appreciates all who volunteered their time to be part of it. She discussed the work of the CAG and stated they will advise and help inform the decisions being made by the MTS Public Security Committee. Ms. Cooney stated the CAG Chair would need to present to the MTS Public Security Committee any ideas from CAG. Ms. Cooney mentioned that the CAG will meet every couple of months coinciding with the MTS Public Security Committee meetings. Ms. Cooney then read down the list of members giving each of them a chance to introduce themselves and state why they wanted to be on the CAG.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

*Norma Sandoval* – Ms. Sandoval voiced her concerns in regards to the bus stops located near Monte Vista Village Senior Living Center on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue in the City of Lemon Grove. She stated that currently the stops do not have benches for the elderly who access transportation and asked that MTS add covered benches on both the west and east side of Massachusetts Avenue. Ms. Cooney stated this will be referred to staff to look into.

4. Appointment of CAG Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Ms. Cooney discussed the details and responsibilities of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. She mentioned that the Chair and Vice Chair should be able to commit to attending each scheduled CAG meeting in order to run the meeting. Ms. Cooney mentioned that it will be the Chair's responsibility to manage the time and ensure the CAG discusses all items on the agenda at each meeting. She mentioned that there may be instances when the Chair would need to communicate with the MTS Board of Directors to explain the outcomes from the CAG meetings. Ms. Cooney stated a Chair's job is the unsung hero of public work as they need to be both a mediator and diplomatic during the meetings.

Ms. Cooney proceeded to open the agenda and discussed taking nominations from the floor. She stated that each nominee would then have a few minutes to say why they would like to be chosen and why they feel they should be appointed Chair or Vice Chair. The CAG discussed the best way to move forward with the voting. One member of the CAG suggested to poll the CAG members via email, while others suggested to move forward with the voting during the meeting. A member of the public, Norma Sandoval, provided a brief public comment stating she would prefer the voting to occur during the

meeting so the public can be present. The CAG moved forward with voting for the Chair and Vice Chair position during the meeting. Megan Welsh was appointed Chair of the CAG, and John Brady was appointed Vice Chair of the CAG. The official vote is listed below.

Action Taken – Appointment of Chairperson

Megan Welsh was appointed as Chair of the CAG and the vote was 11 in favor, 0 in opposition, and 5 abstentions.

Action Taken – Appointment of Vice Chairperson

John Brady was appointed as Vice Chair of the CAG and the vote was 11 in favor, 0 in opposition, and 5 abstentions.

5. Director's Security Update

Ms. Cooney commented that this item was designed to be more informative for the CAG to familiarize the group on what MTS has been working on and how MTS handles public security. Al Stiehler, Director of Transit Security & Passenger Safety, proceeded to provide his presentation with a brief overview of everything that has been done in 2021 and what is being worked on in 2022. He started by introducing the Transit Security & Passenger Safety staff and the composition of the department. Mr. Stiehler talked about the addition of Inter-Con Security and mentioned three priorities of the department as well as the department's mission. He shared information on policy changes, new uniforms and the fare diversion program. Mr. Stiehler discussed training, mentioned the Naloxone Project status, talked about the bus support team, community engagement and partnership developments. He shared information on the homeless outreach efforts, operation lifesaver and employee engagements. Mr. Stiehler concluded his presentation mentioning a few of the challenges moving forward which included outreach effort enhancements, crime reduction to provide the safest environment for MTS riders and fare collection.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Emma Rodriguez asked about armed guards and what that entails. Mr. Stiehler responded saying none of MTS Code Compliance Officers are armed. He stated that it is the contracted security company that staffs armed officers and mentioned that they go through strict firearms and use of force training. Ms. Rodriguez asked about the type of calls received by the bus enforcement support team. Mr. Stiehler commented that the calls are usually from bus operators asking for assistance with unruly passengers and other issues.

Bobby Salas asked if the outreach team located at 12<sup>th</sup> and Imperial was made up of security and code compliance staff. Mr. Stiehler stated that the team is made up of two code compliance officers, an outreach worker from the Downtown San Diego Outreach Partnership and an employee from the Health and Human Services Agency. Mr. Salas asked if those officers received any specialized training. Mr. Stiehler commented that

those officers have been trained and he is looking into more training opportunities for the team. Mr. Salas asked about the Professional Standards Unit and asked if it will consist of supervisory staff from the enforcement division or will it be outside personnel. Mr. Stiehler stated that the person selected to run the unit would be from outside of the supervisory staff and would report directly to him.

Vinton Omaleki asked about the policy changes regarding de-escalation when feasible and if de-escalation was the first option personnel used before other actions. Mr. Stiehler responded that de-escalation is the first option. Mr. Omaleki inquired about the number of officers who participated in the survey and how many of those officers wanted more self defense options. Mr. Stiehler mentioned that he does not have the number on hand but recalls it being low. Ms. Cooney mentioned that the internal MTS safety staff are represented by a labor union and that union leadership has consistently asked MTS for more protective equipment and training for the staff. Ms. Cooney stated that it is a concern for all of public transportation as there has been an increase in assaults on employees of transit agencies especially during COVID.

John Brady started off by recognizing Mr. Stiehler as a man of honor and intention. Mr. Brady stated that he is concerned about the safety of the public security staff and is happy to hear there may be self defense training provided. He would like to see a report on what type of assaults, including injuries, the officers are experiencing.

Ariana Mondragon questioned whether or not there is a date to make the fare diversion pilot program permanent. Ms. Cooney stated the program is still ongoing, there is no set end date and MTS is still collecting data. Karen Landers, MTS General Counsel, commented that, because of COVID, the pilot program was officially extended through September 2022. Ms. Mondragon asked if the citations were still going through criminal court. Ms. Landers stated that the citations do go to criminal court, but are treated as infractions. Ms. Mondragon asked who the public should contact if they have a diversion program question. Ms. Landers stated that contact information for the diversion program is on the website.

Victoria Turner questioned which trolley lines were the most dangerous. Ms. Turner asked if the audio and video on the trolley light rail vehicles were live. Mr. Stiehler stated the audio and video are recorded which can then be downloaded once the light rail vehicle has returned to trolley yard. Ms. Cooney stated that if a person sees something they could text a message to the number located in all light rail vehicles, stating what line you are on, where you are heading, what the light rail vehicle number is and what the issue or concern is. Ms. Cooney stated by sending the text an officer can be dispatched to that location.

Rocina Lizarraga asked what type of input MTS receives from the disabled community. Ms. Cooney stated MTS has an Accessible Services Advisory Committee that can speak to those specific concerns of people who may have particular needs for training in order to travel safely on MTS vehicles.

Michelle Krug asked about the armed contractors and their history in regards to incidents related to injuries or fatalities. Mr. Stiehler stated that with the management team in

place at this time, there are no incidents that they are aware of but said he could research the history.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

There were no committee member communications.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be determined.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

/S/ Megan Welsh  
Chairperson  
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/S/ Karen Wisniewski  
Clerk of the Security & Passenger  
Safety Community Advisory Group

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM  
SECURITY AND PASSENGER SAFETY  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) MEETING  
ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE):

February 1, 2022

CALL TO ORDER  
(TIME):

9:06 am

ADJOURN:

11:01 am

COMMITTEE MEMBER		REPRESENTING	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Ariana Federico Mondragon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	9:06 am	11:01 am
Bobby Ray Salas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Professional/Consultant	9:06 am	11:01 am
Emma Rodriguez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult	9:06 am	10:57 am
Hoan-Vu Do	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider	9:06 am	11:01 am
John Brady	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	9:06 am	11:01 am
Karen Howard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider	9:06 am	11:01 am
Kathryn Durant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Task Force on Homelessness Member	9:07 am	11:01 am
Manu Agni	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult	9:06 am	9:32 am
Matthew Wechter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social Service Agency Professional/Public Defender/Other Court Personnel	9:06 am	11:01 am
Megan Welsh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	9:06 am	11:01 am
Michelle Krug	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disabled Community Advocate	9:06 am	11:01 am
Rocina Lizarraga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	South Bay Resident Transit Rider	9:06 am	11:01 am
Roddrick Colvin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	9:06 am	10:49 am
Todd Temple	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Business/Tourism Professional	9:06 am	11:01 am
Victoria Turner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Senior Community Advocate	9:06 am	11:01 am
Vinton Omaleki	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	East County Resident Transit Rider	9:06 am	11:01 am

CLERK OF THE CAG:

*Karen Wisniewsky*