

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM  
PUBLIC SECURITY COMMITTEE  
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000  
San Diego, CA 92101

September 24, 2020

1. ROLL CALL

Chair Montgomery called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Public Security Committee members' attendance is attached.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sandke moved to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2020, Public Security Committee meeting. Chair Montgomery seconded the motion, and the vote was 5 to 0 in favor, with Mr. Arambula absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

*John Brady* – John Brady stated he is thankful for the changes that have been made regarding how security interacts with the public. Mr. Brady commented that he would like to also see changes made in regards to doctor approved applications for disabled passes.

4. Transit Enforcement Outside Organizational Review (Sharon Cooney)

Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer, provided a presentation on Transit Enforcement Outside Organizational Review. Ms. Cooney mentioned that the contract with the American Public Transportation Association to lead a peer review of MTS's security organizations processes and policies has been finalized and will be onboard this October. Ms. Cooney continued to discuss the creation of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee and stated the committee will be led by the office of Chair Montgomery. Ms. Cooney stated that once the Ad Hoc Steering Committee is appointed, meetings will be scheduled with the committee and the reviewer. The final report will be presented to the Public Security Committee and then forwarded to the full MTS Board. Ms. Cooney ended the presentation and noted that staff recommendation is to approve the creation and appointments to the Ad Hoc Steering Committee.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Vice Chair Aguirre supported the motion and moved to approve the Steering Committee and listed members.

Mr. Sandke stated that he would like to see transparency in the final report with both good and/or bad information. He noted that he would like to see MTS move forward to promote safety, ridership and ensuring people feel comfortable on the MTS system. Mr. Sandke seconded the motion to approve the Steering Committee and listed members.

Chair Montgomery asked for clarification on the peer review process and the onsite visit. Tim Curran, Interim Director of Security and Public Safety stated the onsite visit to examine MTS operations will be conducted over three days. Mr. Curran mentioned within those three days there

will be interviews with managers; meeting with the Steering Committee; participating in ride-a-longs to observe field operations; and finally, an exit briefing will be given to appropriate staff. Chair Montgomery stated she supports the motion to move forward with the Steering Committee and listed members.

#### Action Taken

Vice Chair Aguirre made a motion to approve the creation and appointments to the Ad Hoc Steering Committee. Mr. Sandke second the motion, and the vote was 5 to 0 in favor, with Mr. Arambula absent.

#### 5. Women's Safety and Public Transportation (Angelica Rocha, Circulate SD)

Angelica Rocha, with Circulate San Diego, provided a presentation on Women's Safety and Public Transportation. The presentation detailed the exploration of women's vulnerability accessing public transportation in the evening and evaluating the concept of street night friendliness. A few of the issues mentioned were visibility, lighting, street activity and mobility connections/trip-chain.

#### COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Chair Montgomery asked if the women who participated were choice riders or if their primary mode of transportation was public transportation. Ms. Rocha stated that many of the transit riders were choice riders and did not express that public transportation was their only option. Chair Montgomery inquired to MTS staff about lighting and partnering with other jurisdictions. Ms. Cooney mentioned that on occasion MTS partners with the city and developers for grant funding for transit projects including sidewalk improvements, bike lanes and lighting.

Vice Chair Aguirre would like to figure out ways to partner with other jurisdictions to help improve lighting to help women feel safe as well as add more amenities such as restrooms. Vice Chair Aguirre would like to have this presentation given to the full MTS Board.

Ms. Galvez stated that she would like to see improvements to lighting not just for women but for all riders. She mentioned the importance for restrooms and noted the Imperial Beach Pier as a model design for public restrooms. Ms. Galvez would like to have the full MTS Board consider these issues.

Ms. Weber commented that there should be more frequent trips at night. She would like to recommend, for any future studies done by Circulate San Diego, that they include more diverse locations and groups of people.

Chair Montgomery appreciates all that came out of this study and commented on expanding to have a more diverse pool of women. Chair Montgomery asked if a motion or vote was needed to have this presentation brought to the full MTS Board. Ms. Cooney and Ms. Landers stated a motion would not be needed and that it could be added to the full MTS Board agenda.

#### 6. Fare Evasion Diversion Program – Implementation Update (Karen Landers)

Karen Landers, General Counsel stated that Samantha Leslie, Staff Attorney – Regulatory Compliance, has been the lead on this project and will be providing the presentation. Ms. Leslie started off with a summary of the program; creation of the citation envelope; payment form; appeal form; and the website. She talked about first impressions and noted that since they are

only three weeks into the program, the data is limited. Ms. Leslie mentioned a few concerning trends including passengers receiving multiple citations and passengers ignoring or not complying with the request to buy a fare or receive a citation. MTS is reviewing potential strategies that can assist the individuals that have a frequent fare evasion history. Ms. Leslie stated that if these concerns continue, MTS staff will develop recommendations on how to address the areas of concern to provide to the committee for review at the next Public Security meeting.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

*Noah Harris* – Noah Harris commented that the pilot program is a great first step in providing alternative solutions for transit customers. Mr. Harris is asking MTS to simplify the application process for getting a disabled pass and expand the eligibility requirements.

*Rosa Olascoaga* – Rosa Olascoaga appreciates the efforts going into decriminalizing transit fare evasion.

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Vice Chair Aguirre asked who certifies the disabled passes. Ms. Cooney explained that MTS has a program with a contractor who collects the application and reviews those applications for completion and eligibility. Ms. Cooney stated MTS is in the process of changing the application form to simplify its completion. Vice Chair Aguirre asked if MTS standards are comparable to other transit agencies. Ms. Cooney stated yes, with the exception that MTS asks the signing doctor to explain in what way the disability requires special planning in order to access transit. She explained this is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance as to why they provide for persons with disabilities to have a discounted pass. Ms. Cooney also mentioned that MTS is looking to remove that requirement from the form as it is confusing to the doctors who complete it. Vice Chair Aguirre suggested to Chair Montgomery that a presentation be given at the next committee meeting in regards to the vetting process to understand what qualifies and what does not and how MTS can implement the best practices that make sense to the riders. Chair Montgomery recommended that an overview be given at the next Public Security meeting. Ms. Cooney suggested it go to the full MTS Board as there are other members with interest on this topic.

Ms. Cooney explained that code compliance officers are reporting that individuals are learning that they won't be cited and not respecting officer requests for compliance. As this program progresses, MTS will keep track of the fare impacts from this issue keeping in mind that MTS does not want to lose passengers because they do not feel secure or safe taking transit. Ms. Montgomery stated once there is more data collected showing impacts, positive or negative, then appropriate decisions can be made at that time.

Mr. Sandke stated that in the early stages of the program, the participation seems lower than what might have been expected. He gave his thoughts on riders regularly using the system without paying. Mr. Sandke voiced his concerns related to Ms. Cooney's comments regarding the perception of safety. As a member of the committee, he is upset by some of the passenger behavior. He voiced his frustration as a Board Member with an organization trying to be a resource for the community, while also trying to provide a safe and comfortable environment to get more riders. He would like the committee and the full MTS Board to be mindful of MTS's role in the community and keep the loyal customers happy, but also know there needs to be consequences for those repeat customers that are not paying or are behaving inappropriately. Mr. Sandke stated that MTS needs to stay on top of the concerns that could affect not just the

fare issue but also the credibility of the entire system.

Ms. Weber stated she is looking forward to more data being presented. Ms. Landers commented there should be sufficient data collected for next meeting.

Chair Montgomery stated she is committed to this program and appreciates updates at every committee meeting. Chair Montgomery feels the committee needs to rethink the way they are thinking about fare evasion and know that fare evasion is not comparable to other issues being seen on the security reports. Chair Montgomery stated once we have evidence that shows fare evasion leads to other issues, that modifications can be made.

7. Semi-Annual Security Report (January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020) (Tim Curran)

Tim Curran, Interim Director of Security and Public Safety, provided a presentation for the Semi-Annual Security Report for January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020. The presentation started with the introduction to the Transit Enforcement Department then continued with trolley and bus crime statistics, fare inspection and citation numbers, special enforcement details, SDM inspections, transient camp details, non-compliant arrests, See Something Say Something, officer training, and concluded with information pertaining to the security contract.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Vice Chair Aguirre inquired about the security budget and asked for a breakdown regarding what is being paid on an annual basis for overhead, non-officer, management, supervisor and administration positions. Mr. Curran provided overhead staffing numbers. Vice Chair Aguirre asked why the code compliance officers received more training than the security officers. Mr. Curran stated the code compliance officers are tasked with more duties and the security officer's duties are more limited.

Ms. Galvez asked if MTS Board and Committee members could be invited to observe an officer training session and talk to officers afterwards. Mr. Curran said that can be arranged.

Mr. Sandke commented on the changes in the fare inspections and decrease in citations. He asked why we think the numbers for fare evasion inspections and citations have gone down as much as they have. Mr. Curran stated COVID-19 is the biggest reason with the approximate loss of about 70 percent of the ridership at its peak. Mr. Sandke mentioned the fare evasion rate has been consistent, around three percent, over the years and will figure prominently going forward. Ms. Cooney clarified that the fare evasion rate has fluctuated during COVID-19 and was recently as high as eight percent. Ms. Cooney stated that not all bus riders were paying, SEDs were being conducted in the stations areas only and therefore, staff was not able to accurately figure out the true fare evasion percentages.

Chair Montgomery asked about transient camp details and if we have the City's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) or County services accompanying the details. Ms. Cooney stated that it is a collaborative effort with all owners along the river to figure out the best way to comply with the clean water orders. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS does include the HOT Team on these details. She stated that MTS does not go into the riverbed without some form of support. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS tries to provide information related to services to individuals that are approached. She mentioned that notifications are put up prior to going out to the encampments to encourage individuals to move along, but also understands that some folks just don't have other options. Chair Montgomery asked if the additional training requirements previously discussed are included in this presentation or will the impact be seen in the next semi-annual report. Scott Ybarrondo,

Manager of Operations-Transit Enforcement, stated the impact should be seen within the next six months. Chair Montgomery asked about the timeline for the committee and/or MTS Board to review the Security RFP to make sure it aligns with the new changes being discussed. She asked if it was premature to have an RFP when we are waiting to have the results of the peer review. Ms. Landers stated the RFP scope has been drafted to give MTS the flexibility to adjust enforcement measures as needed. Chair Montgomery inquired about the MTS Board having input before it goes out. Ms. Cooney and Ms. Landers stated the scope has been shared with MTS Board and the MTS Board will be asked to approve the contract after there is a recommendation.

8. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

No committee comments.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is schedule for Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 2:00 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

/S/ Monica Montgomery

Chairperson

Attachment: A. Roll Call Sheet

## ROLL CALL

ADJOURN 10:40 a.m.

*Jack*