

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

September 23, 2021

1. ROLL CALL

Chair Montgomery Steppe called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm. A roll call sheet listing Public Security Committee members' attendance is attached.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Aguirre moved to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2021, Public Security Committee meeting. Mr. Elo-Rivera seconded the motion, and the vote was 5 to 0 in favor, with Mr. Hall absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

4. Director's Security Update (Al Stiehler)

Al Stiehler, Director of Transit Security & Passenger Safety, started his presentation with an update on officer de-escalation training including de-escalation training for dispatch. Mr. Stiehler discussed new training that became available from Texas A&M Engineering Extension Services (TEEX) which is an Enhanced All-Hazard Incident Management/Unified Command training. He mentioned that a couple MTS personnel have attended the TEEX training in Texas and next month a couple more will be attending. Mr. Stiehler's hope is to get federal funding to send a group of MTS personnel, local Law Enforcement and Public Safety Officers to receive training from TEEX specific to the MTS environment. He noted the Narcan project was implemented on July 1, 2021 and that currently all of the active Code Compliance Inspectors have been trained on the use of Narcan. Mr. Stiehler mentioned the Bus Enforcement Support Team (B.E.S.T.) initiative and is happy with its progress. Mr. Stiehler discussed employee well-being noting that when an employee feels well, is treated well, and has the support when needed, they will be able to go out into the field and do their jobs better. He mentioned mental health training for public safety personnel and the employee assistance program. Mr. Stiehler mentioned the start of a Peer Outreach Team lead by a Code Compliance Supervisor and a survey that is currently being developed to get a feel on how the officers are doing.

Mr. Stiehler provided an update on Inter-Con's transition phases. The first phase being preparation, second being implementation and third being execution. Mr. Stiehler discussed MTS's homeless outreach efforts including new partnership developments. He highlighted National Rail Safety Week stating five officers have been trained in Operation Lifesaver and they will be conducting their first presentation on September 24, 2021. Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer, wanted to acknowledge that Mr. Stiehler has been very proactive in reaching out to victims on the transit system trying to make sure they get the help they need not only in interacting with the police but to help them feel safe again coming back to transit. Mr. Stiehler mentioned October being breast cancer awareness month and that the inspectors are encouraged to wear pink patches to show their support. He discussed recent promotions,

employees of the month and service milestones. Mr. Stiehler mentioned a couple of team building 5K exercises that were meant to get employees together outside of the work environment and concluded his presentation discussing the Employee Recognition Day being held on September 29, 2021.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Mr. Elo-Rivera stated he was curious about the work the officers would need to do in respect to access and security to restrooms. Mr. Stiehler stated that restrooms bring another level of challenges including issues with loitering, drug interactions and cleanliness. Mr. Stiehler stated that if MTS chooses to have restrooms along the transit system, that it would take quite a lot of resources to make them safe environments for MTS customers. Mr. Elo-Rivera asked, with the PRONTO roll out, if there were any new trends specifically related to enforcement interactions between officers, youths and homeless individuals. Mr. Stiehler stated that September was a free ride month and the officers were acting as ambassadors to ensure riders had and were using their PRONTO cards, as well as explaining the process on tapping their cards and the benefits of the card. Mr. Stiehler noted that when PRONTO goes live in October, officers will continue with the education process and at that time will be able to pick up on some trends on how the process is going. Mr. Elo-Rivera asked for more understanding regarding the negative impact on security as cost has been removed as a barrier for some riders and the correlation between not charging a fare and increased security. Mr. Stiehler stated there has been an increase with assaults and vandalism, but is not able to directly attribute it to the new PRONTO system. Ms. Cooney commented that some of the challenges are when the weather gets hot, and as more people are outside, there tends to be an increase in crime, which makes it difficult to see if there is a specific trend forming.

Vice Chair Aguirre congratulated the officers on their promotions, milestones and their service. She questioned the training in regards to firearms and if it was going to change or increase with the transition to Inter-Con. Mr. Stiehler stated that Inter-Con is very strict on officers using the same weapon with one type of ammunition so that all training is consistent. Vice Chair Aguirre asked if the training hours were going to change or stay the same. Mr. Stiehler stated they were going to stay the same with incumbents starting off with training to get into the Inter-Con culture. Then, after the new hires come onboard and receive full training, the incumbents will go back and be retrained with the Inter-Con resources. Vice Chair Aguirre asked if there were any plans in regards to community outreach as MTS transitions to Inter-Con. Mr. Stiehler stated that having Inter-Con should not change anything and MTS is constantly looking for opportunities to go out into the community.

Mr. Whitburn asked if the hiring is on track to have the necessary staff in place on time. Mr. Stiehler stated that he felt they were ahead of schedule and is delighted on how it is going so far. Mr. Whitburn commented that he was pleased to hear about the de-escalation training and the employee recognition.

Ms. Galvez was pleased to see employee faces, hear about employee recognition, employee milestones and team building exercises. She hoped that all the hard work going towards retaining employees is paying off. Ms. Galvez asked if there was data showing this year versus previous years regarding employee retention rates. Mr. Stiehler stated he did not have that data, but Allied Universal has been very difficult this year with maintaining the level of personnel that MTS requires. He noted he is optimistic about Inter-Con and their ability to move MTS forward. Mr. Stiehler mentioned that the Code Compliance Department is down eight officers at the moment and that a few have left for law enforcement careers, but he feels there is not a problem

with retention.

Chair Montgomery Steppe appreciated the updates and the way the presentation was put together. She feels it is important to keep up with the changes being made on the MTS system and stated that to see how some of the issues have prompted more collaborations without sacrificing safety is very encouraging. Chair Montgomery Steppe asked about the Bus Enforcement Support Team's contact with the individuals that accepted outreach information and if there is any coordination with housing commission or other programs that are provided in our region to further connect these individuals to resources. Mr. Stiehler stated that he is working diligently with the partnerships in place now and the ones being added to the coalition in hopes to get to a point to be all inclusive with what MTS can offer to those in need. Chair Montgomery Steppe asked about the beat system that has been built out at MTS for each trolley line and how security will be provided going forward. Chair Montgomery Steppe felt the beat system produced more citations. Mr. Stiehler stated a pilot program was started a few months ago that instead of having a Code Compliance Officer and a Security Officer riding trains together, there are now two Code Compliance Officers riding trains together for more visibility and Security Officers are posted at the stations monitoring trains pulling in for security issues. He stated with this method, MTS can increase visibility throughout the system. Mr. Stiehler stated that moving along with the transition to Inter-Con and once MTS is fully staffed, MTS will be able to see what kind of impact this effort is having.

Ms. Cooney stated that MTS is constantly monitoring what is happening on the system. She mentioned the weekly security report and discussed the data received from a survey that was done regarding rail passengers. She commented that the survey was still being reviewed, but noticed security is still a concern for those riding transit. Ms. Cooney mentioned that bringing riders back and with free ride month, there has been a 17 percent increase in ridership and MTS wants to ensure they are doing everything to make all riders feel safe.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

No committee comments.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is scheduled for Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

/S/ Monica Montgomery Steppe
Chairperson

Attachment: A. Roll Call Sheet

ROLL CALL