

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

April 12, 2022

1. ROLL CALL

Chair Welsh called the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Security & Passenger Safety Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting to order at 10:35 am. A roll call sheet listing of CAG member attendance is attached.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Brady moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 CAG meeting. Rocina Lizarraga seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor, with Bobby Ray Salas, Emma Rodriguez, Hoan-Vu Do and Karen Howard absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

4. Fare Evasion Diversion Program (Karen Landers)

Karen Landers, General Counsel, started her presentation with an overview of fare enforcement and MTS policy goals. She discussed the Diversion Program Pilot and additional accommodations made by MTS and MTS's civil justice goal. Ms. Landers shared information on the financial impacts of fare evasion, ridership recovery, transit funding, and the new Pronto fare system. She reviewed fare evasion and Diversion Pilot data collected from September 1, 2020, the start of the diversion program, through February 2022. Ms. Landers noted the opportunity for outreach with service providers and asked the CAG for other suggestions. She discussed the Diversion Pilot participation versus non-participation. Ms. Landers ended her presentation with a few Diversion Pilot recommendation changes that included whether or not the Diversion Pilot Program should become a permanent program.

Vice Chair Brady asked for the meaning of refuse to cooperate. Ms. Landers explained that it means a person who decides to walk away from officers, refuses to talk to the officers or refuses to take a citation. She noted that sometimes the contacts leave MTS property and sometimes the contacts stay on MTS property.

Rocina Lizarraga asked if MTS knows the age group of the contacts who refuse to cooperate. Ms. Landers stated that this program is for adults ages 19 and older.

Chair Welsh asked if MTS has thought about ways to educate homeless individuals regarding programs available to them. Ms. Landers stated that MTS officers carry outreach information for those experiencing homelessness.

Ariana Federico Mondragon asked about citations being sent to court and what court they were being sent to. Ms. Landers stated the citations are sent to the Kearny Mesa Traffic Division. It was noted that citations also go to East County and South County

courts depending on what jurisdiction the citation was issued in. Ms. Mondragon asked if a failure to appear for a citation turns into a warrant for arrest. Ms. Landers stated that the court no longer issues warrants for fare violations.

Vinton Omaleki asked what the estimated loss of revenue is from those cited. Ms. Landers stated that MTS is seeing about a \$12 million loss of fare revenue, however that it is not all from fare evasion. Ms. Landers commented that with the implementation of the Pronto system, MTS has seen about a \$5 million fare revenue loss, leaving about \$7 million that is unknown and could be from people not purchasing a fare, from people not using stored value on their Pronto card unless they are contacted by an MTS officer, or from people not knowing how Pronto works. Sharon Cooney, Chief Executive Officer, clarified that these losses are what have been identified as Trolley losses and not Bus losses.

Vinton Omaleki asked if MTS has data on the riders who pay. Ms. Cooney mentioned that San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is planning to launch an onboard survey which will provide demographics of who is and is not riding.

Vice Chair Brady asked what percent of people are walking away. Ms. Landers stated that for February 2022, just over 5,000 people were contacted and 64 percent of those contacts walked away. Vice Chair Brady asked if there have been any changes to the policy for a senior/disabled pass. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS has altered the program over time and now MTS contracts with MTM to do the certification process of that program.

Michelle Krug appreciated the Diversion Program proposal to reduce the fine and the number of hours for community service, but felt it might be a bit challenging to keep track of one hour of community service. Ms. Krug wondered if there was a way to incentivize people to not walk away. Ms. Landers stated MTS does not yet have experience with how keeping track of one hour of community service will work and that MTS has been flexible thus far with people choosing to do community service.

Todd Temple asked if the ridership numbers are down due to the sentiment that riding the trolley is not safe. Ms. Cooney mentioned that a customer satisfaction survey will be done in a couple of months that will query customers about riding, why they ride and any concerns they may have on the system. She noted that an online survey can also be completed by people who do not ride and why they choose not to ride.

Matt Wechter mentioned that any of the homeless court providers can submit proof for completion of community service hours regardless of the number of hours and that he supports the continuation and the amendments to the program.

Ariana Federico Mondragon asked for clarification regarding an adult using a youth pass and why they would not be eligible for the fare diversion. Ms. Landers stated that the violation, misuse of a fare card, is a separate violation not included in this program. Ms. Mondragon commented that MTS should transition to be more of a public service since MTS is a public transportation agency. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS is constantly looking for ways to offset the cost of operations, but unfortunately, fare revenue is a very large component of the operating budget.

Victoria Turner asked how many months the Division Pilot has been running. Ms. Landers stated eighteen months, September 2020 through February 2022. Ms. Turner was interested in how many people evaded fare and how the loss of revenue was calculated. Ms. Cooney explained the process in which MTS estimates revenue loss. Ms. Turner asked if MTS provides a list of the nonprofits available for those who choose to do community service. Ms. Landers stated that information is provided on the website and handed out with the citation that explains the Diversion Program.

Kathryn Durant commented that the revisions and recommendations to the Diversion Program seem fair and reasonable. Ms. Durant asked if the individuals not showing up to court for citations are experiencing homelessness. Ms. Landers stated that MTS does not have information on those individuals since they have not wanted to participate in the Diversion Program.

Vinton Omaleki commented that he liked the changes to the program and asked if it is meeting any of the goals. Ms. Landers stated the goal was to provide a non-criminal path to more equitably align the penalties with the violation and in that sense meets the program goals. She noted that the problem is getting people to participate and recognize that it is a much fairer and less onerous path if there is a fare violation.

Rocina Lizarraga asked what are the next steps moving forward to do more proactive campaigns. Ms. Landers stated that the MTS marketing department is putting together an additional educational campaign for Pronto including flagging where the validators are in the station, putting up more signage, and other campaigns are still being developed.

Vice Chair Brady asked if MTS increased the number of locations where riders can tap before getting on the trolley. Ms. Cooney stated there are more validators with Pronto compared to the previous system.

Stacie Bishop, MTS Marketing and Communications Manager, stated that MTS security teams and the ambassador teams have been given business cards to hand out to help educate riders and there is signage on the ticket machines to remind riders to tap and scan. Ms. Bishop stated there are also onboard communications to remind riders to tap or scan every ride, every time to help make everyone aware of the process.

Michelle Krug mentioned that including the audio at the stations and onboard the buses to educate is a good idea since not everyone can read or see.

Action Taken

No action taken. Ms. Cooney clarified the CAG direction is for Chair Welsh to take feedback from this meeting to the Public Security Committee regarding the recommendations to make the Diversion Program permanent.

5. American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Peer Review Report Update (Al Stiehler)

This agenda item was moved to the next meeting due to time constraints.

Action Taken

No action.

6. Security Enforcement Practices – Youth Riders (Sharon Cooney)

Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer, started her agenda item noting that as of May 1, 2022, MTS will be launching a pilot program offering free fares to all youth riders. Ms. Cooney stated MTS would like feedback from the CAG on how the security and enforcement personnel should be interacting with youth as they ride the transit system. Ms. Cooney mentioned that MTS has experience already with youth riding the system, but one of the challenges may be seeing an influx of new youth riders and MTS would like to have the best practices on how to approach youth as they traverse the transit system. Ms. Cooney mentioned that bringing this to the CAG was recommended as a discussion from the MTS Board of Directors and they will be anxious to hear what ideas the CAG might suggest in this regard.

Victoria Turner stated that proactive approaches with youth not breaking the rules received a much higher benefit. She noted if the officers can catch the youth doing something positive, it will be a better experience and response.

Michelle Krug recommended doing an incentive at a school district to increase the percentage of students accessing cards to further promote the pilot.

Ariana Federico Mondragon stated that during some community meetings, parents had questions regarding rider safety and who the students/riders can contact when riding alone. Ms. Mondragon commented that we all have bad days, but approaching youth with a positive attitude can make a difference. Ms. Mondragon asked how the officers are trained regarding how to identify riders who might be feeling uncomfortable. Al Stiehler, Director of Transit Security and Passenger Safety, stated MTS officers go through extensive training on de-escalation and anti-biased policing and to have the spirit of empathy when approaching riders. Mr. Stiehler stated the officers go through all the systematic approaches to dealing with riders consistently in the annual training and in the continuous roll call training every day. Mr. Stiehler stated MTS is working close with the marketing department to push messages out on social media letting people know if they have issues onboard a train and are uncomfortable making a complaint in public, that they can reach out via text. Mr. Stiehler commented that the officers' uniforms have been changed to be less of an enforcement look and more of a customer service look to be more approachable.

Vinton Omaleki suggested no physical contact with youth unless there is actual violence being committed by the youth. Mr. Stiehler stated that unless officers are protecting that person, themselves, or another person, the officers do not make physical contact.

Chair Welsh asked if having a youth ambassador program has been explored. Ms. Cooney stated it would be interesting to look into that idea. Mr. Stiehler commented that there might be an opportunity to do so with the Operation Lifesaver Program and maybe

during those presentations MTS could solicit youth that might be interested in becoming ambassadors.

Rodrick Colvin stated that, fortunately or unfortunately, some of the issues that arise with youth will make their way onto public transportation. Mr. Colvin encouraged MTS to think about specialized training for MTS employees that deal specifically with helping youth and identifying problems they are dealing with. Mr. Colvin stated he supports any additional training that can be identified that might be a best practice that specifically focuses on the issues with youth and how to deal with them. Mr. Stiehler commented that MTS is open to anything Mr. Colvin is aware of or has developed the he would like to share and/or work with MTS to put a training program together that MTS could share with the MTS team.

Michelle Krug commented that there are a number of programs, like in San Diego Unified School District, on restorative justice. She noted also being proactive like the metro program at Lincoln High School and that the teachers there may be more than happy to share what their experiences have been.

Action Taken

No Action taken.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

There were no committee member communications.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 2022 at 11:30 a.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Welsh adjourned the meeting at 12:31 p.m.

/S/ Megan Welsh
Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

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

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

ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): April 12, 2022 CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 10:35 am
ADJOURN: 12:31 pm

COMMITTEE MEMBER		REPRESENTING	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Ariana Federico Mondragon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	10:35	12:31
Bobby Ray Salas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Professional/Consultant		
Emma Rodriguez	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult		
Hoan-Vu Do	<input type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider		
John Brady	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	10:35	12:31
Karen Howard	<input type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider		
Kathryn Durant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Task Force on Homelessness Member	10:35	12:31
Manu Agni	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult	10:35	12:31
Matthew Wechter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social Service Agency Professional/Public Defender/Other Court Personnel	10:35	12:25
Megan Welsh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	10:35	12:31
Michelle Krug	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disabled Community Advocate	10:42	12:31
Rocina Lizarraga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	South Bay Resident Transit Rider	10:35	12:31
Roddrick Colvin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	10:35	12:31
Todd Temple	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Business/Tourism Professional	10:35	12:31
Victoria Turner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Senior Community Advocate	10:39	12:31
Vinton Omaleki	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	East County Resident Transit Rider	10:35	12:31

COMMITTEE CLERK: Karey Wisniewsky