

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

June 15, 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 11:35 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 April 12, 2022 CAG meeting. Michelle Krug seconded the motion, and the vote was 11 to 0 in favor, with Emma Rodriguez, Karen Howard, Roddrick Colvin and Todd Temple absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

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

Chair Megan Welsh made a statement to remind everyone that the purpose and role of the CAG is to provide feedback to MTS and the Public Security Committee on items relating to security and passenger safety practices. The CAG may also be asked to make recommendations on policies and procedures and act as a resource to MTS and the Public Security Committee for other various security and safety related matters.

Al Stiehler, Director of Transit Security & Passenger Safety, presented an update on the APTA Peer Review. He stated the review was conducted in October 2020 at the request of Chief Executive Officer, Sharon Cooney. Mr. Stiehler continued his presentation on the effectiveness of Code Compliance Inspectors and security contract structure, fare inspection practices, diversion program, technology enhancements, training, organizational climate, standard operating procedures, video retention policy, homeless outreach efforts and concluded his presentation mentioning some of the challenges going forward.

Michelle Krug commented on the percent of assaults on employees and asked for the actual numbers while taking into account that the compared data was during the earlier days of the pandemic. Ms. Krug inquired about the ambassador program, the number of ambassadors, how they are being recruited, where they are assigned throughout the system and the officer training hours and topics. Mr. Stiehler mentioned the ambassadors have been used for special events in and around the downtown area. He was not aware of future program expansion plans but would communicate that information with the committee when it was available. He mentioned they assisted with the PRONTO training program, along with customer service training. Ms. Cooney stated the ambassador program has transformed into a true ambassador program doing specific outreaches and now supports MTS customers, help them navigate the system

with ease and listed several locations throughout the system that they are assigned. Ms. Cooney mentioned there has been a rise in assaults against the ambassadors. She stated the protocols have changed for their safety and protection; ambassadors have been instructed not to engage in altercations but rather to call for backup from law enforcement or MTS security personnel. Mr. Stiehler stated that in 2020, 49 employees were assaulted and in 2021 there were 86. Mr. Stiehler stated the de-escalation training and anti-biased policing training totaled about 20 hours as well as regular annual training.

Vice Chair Brady is concerned about the rise in assaults against employees. Ms. Cooney mentioned that the Board of Directors shares similar feelings, and they have asked MTS to focus on reducing the number of assaults to provide employees with a safe work environment.

Bobby Ray Salas asked how many employees that were assaulted were security personnel. Mr. Stiehler stated that out of the 49 in 2020, 38 were against security personnel and out of the 86 in 2021, 61 were against security personnel. Mr. Salas asked if the policy changes to allow people to get off and buy a ticket were made to try to avoid assaults. Mr. Stiehler commented that MTS is trying to reduce the need for any force on the system including the use of de-escalation techniques. Mr. Salas acknowledged his experience with the security team as helpful and hands off. Because the security team reported incidents to San Diego Police Department, he asked what the response time was from police. Mr. Stiehler responded that the response time varied based on several variables.

Ariana Federico Mondragon asked if this is a trend across all the states and big cities and if there have been any conversations with other cities regarding the assault issues. Mr. Stiehler stated that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Security Peer Advisory Group (PAG) recently had a roundtable regarding assault issues and noted that there is a rise across the country in violence and assaults on employees. Mr. Stiehler commented that a researcher from the Mineta Transportation Institute gave a report on this issue and found there is a rise in antisocial sentiment and behavior--not just on transportation agencies, but also with local law enforcement agencies. Ms. Mondragon commended the agency for its strides to solutions.

Chair Welsh commented on the expansion of outreach partnerships stating that there are several committee members who have expertise in this area and asked how the members can advise or contribute to MTS efforts. Mr. Stiehler stated MTS's outreach partners work well and he is working on adding a PERT clinician. Mr. Stiehler mentioned that if the committee has other groups they feel could participate and add to MTS efforts to have them contact Mr. Stiehler.

Kathryn Durant mentioned a new department with the city of San Diego called City Net and stated she could connect them with MTS. Ms. Durant feels MTS is doing all the right things pertaining to outreach and stated it is an outreach standard to talk about quality over quantity and following through all the way to the end when assisting an individual. Mr. Stiehler mentioned adding a form of case management to the team would be very helpful.

Vice Chair Brady recommended reaching out to Hafsa Kaka, Director of Homelessness Strategies and Solutions, to get someone assigned to MTS. Vice Chair Brady asked how often MTS comes in contact with Do Not Return individuals. Mr. Stiehler mentioned there has been a few, and the problem is there is no formal process in place to get individuals off the Do Not Return lists.

Matthew Wechter mentioned a meeting taking place with the homeless court providers and would gather announcements and information from that group that might help with MTS efforts. Mr. Wechter also stated to let him or Vice Chair Brady know if there are any questions MTS would like to have taken to that meeting.

Action Taken

No action. Information item only.

5. MTS Video Camera Systems and Body Worn Camera Standard Operating Procedure (Karen Landers and Michael Rini)

Karen Landers, General Counsel, provided a presentation on the various video systems MTS uses and stated the purpose of the video systems are to ensure passenger, public and personnel safety as well as general security for MTS operations and property. Ms. Landers gave a few examples of when video footage is used, including vehicle accidents, passenger or public complaints, use of force investigations, crimes on or near MTS properties, locating missing persons, diversion program appeals, monitoring transit operations, and training. Ms. Landers stated the APTA Peer Review Report recommended MTS put a description of all video systems and procedures in one comprehensive document and that document is posted on the MTS website. Ms. Landers stated the document includes a description of various video systems, recording protocols for each system, how they are used, who can have authorized access, how the storage works, video retention capabilities, and how MTS handles records requests. She explained that of the different camera systems that MTS utilizes, some record over in 7 days and others up to 60 days. Ms. Landers added that effective December 2021, body worn camera capacities were upgraded to be able to retrieve and retain footage for a two-year period. She added that MTS is looking to upgrade all of its video systems to increase the video retention to a minimum of one year for the rest of the video systems.

Ms. Landers discussed how records are requested and processed and the most common situations or types of requests. She explained some potential concerns when videos are requested; i.e., stalking, harassment, or other requests that might not be appropriate to release as well as some that are legally exempt from disclosure. Ms. Landers continued her presentation going through each category in the procedures document (attached to the agenda item) in more detail.

Michael Rini, Code Compliance Training Supervisor, continued the presentation giving a brief overview of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) System. Mr. Rini mentioned all BWCs are required to be in standby mode, which means it is continuously buffering and once the camera is activated, it will automatically capture thirty seconds prior to the camera being activated. Mr. Rini stated BWCs are to be activated for all service calls and should remain on for the entire length of the call.

Mr. Rini stated that reasons for reviewing BWC video and/or audio by a supervisor may include, but are not limited to, quality assurance, commendations, training, investigation of complaints, officer misconduct, and use of force. He mentioned that officers are not authorized to record fellow employees, conversations of fellow employees, where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, or making copies of BWC footage for personal use. Mr. Rini continued stating accessing, copying, or releasing BWC recordings for other than official purposes is prohibited. Mr. Rini concluded the presentation stating that the retention of BWC footage is now on a mandatory two-year hold on a read-only system and cannot be altered. Footage that is preserved in relation to criminal cases can be held for longer periods of time until the case is adjudicated.

Matt Wechter stated that having video accessible for criminal cases is incredibly helpful and suggested MTS have a policy in place to capture and retain a minimum amount of surrounding time before and after critical incidents for longer than the retention policy for both the BWC and the stationary cameras on the system. Ms. Landers suggested having a conversation with Mr. Wechter to understand what the time frame may be for a criminal case as opposed to a civil case.

Bobby Ray Salas asked if the contracted security company uses the same BWC and if it is all on the same network. Ms. Landers stated the contracted security company is on the same kind of system with a slightly different network, but they are retaining it for the same two-year period, and MTS has access to all of it.

Michelle Krug asked for clarification regarding the officer having to press one button to record audio and a separate button to record video. Mr. Rini stated that there are two separate buttons to record just audio or video, but there is also one button that is easily accessible that will record both audio and video at the same time.

Vice Chair Brady asked how MTS can ensure that the officers are using the cameras. Mr. Rini explained that when a person is hired and goes through the training process, they sign a document stating that they understand the MTS Policy 200.5 Body Camera Recorder Procedures. Ms. Landers stated that under the policy, an officer would be subjected to discipline if it were found they intentionally did not record an incident.

Chair Welsh asked if MTS video camera systems and BWC policies and procedures are in line with other transit agencies. Ms. Landers stated MTS does not have comparisons to other transit agencies. She stated that MTS had started adding them earlier than other agencies and commented that as other agencies see the benefits, they are catching up to MTS. Ms. Landers commented that MTS policies and procedures on how the camera systems are being used are consistent with law enforcement agencies.

Michelle Krug asked if there is preventative maintenance for the cameras. Mr. Rini commented that officers are required to do a daily check of operational functions including a battery check for the BWC. He stated that if any problems are noted, the camera is taken out of service and sent to the security supervisor for either repair or replacement. Ms. Landers stated that MTS is able to run periodic diagnostics for some of the camera systems and Mr. Stiehler mentioned the Security System Administrator does a daily check on the cameras at primary stations and a weekly check on the lesser

used cameras. Mr. Stiehler stated, if any issues are found, the IT Department is contacted and then contacts the vendor for repairs.

Bobby Ray Salas inquired about a walkthrough of the facilities and possibly doing a ride along with the MTS team. Chair Welsh appreciated the request and put the question to Mr. Stiehler. Mr. Stiehler stated ride-a-longs are welcomed. Chair Welsh will reach out to the CAG then to Mr. Stiehler to organize the ride-a-longs.

Mike Wygant, Chief Operating Officer (Transit Service), commented that the bus camera systems have regular preventative maintenance inspection schedules. He stated the bus operators also check the cameras as well as the cameras having a self-diagnostic process that will give a light on the vehicle if there is a problem. Mr. Wygant stated MTS has a contract to do scheduled preventative maintenance as well as in-house preventive maintenance and that the cameras have an internal diagnostic system that reports if there is a failure and that report is received every morning.

Action Taken

No action. Information item only.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

There were no committee member communications.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is scheduled for Wednesday, September 7, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Welsh adjourned the meeting at 12:58 p.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