

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

April 25, 2023

[Clerk's note: Except where noted, public, staff and board member comments are paraphrased.
The full comment can be heard by reviewing the recording at the [MTS website](#).]

1. Roll Call

Chair Megan Welsh called the Security & Passenger Safety Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. A roll call sheet listing CAG member attendance is attached.

2. Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair John Brady moved to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2022 CAG meeting. Roddrick Colvin seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Bobby Ray Salas, Jennelle Chittock, Karen Howard and Matthew Wechter absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Appoint of CAG Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Chair Welsh opened the floor for nominations to elect the CAG Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for the 2023 calendar year. John Brady was nominated to be Chairperson of the CAG and Megan Welsh was nominated to be Vice Chairperson of the CAG. The official vote is listed below.

Action Taken – Appointment of Chairperson

John Brady was appointed as Chair of the CAG and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Bobby Ray Salas, Jennelle Chittock, Karen Howard and Matthew Wechter absent.

Action Taken – Appointment of Vice Chairperson

Megan Welsh was appointed as Vice Chair of the CAG and the vote was 12 to 0 in favor with Bobby Ray Salas, Jennelle Chittock, Karen Howard and Matthew Wechter absent.

5. Public Safety Focus Groups Report (Mark Olson)

Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer, commented that this was a follow up to the surveying to get customer opinions regarding the services at MTS and to get more in-depth into the concerns that were expressed regarding public safety and transit. She mentioned there was one focus group with individuals who identified as female and one focus group that identified as male.

Mark Olson, MTS Director of Marketing and Communications, and Judith McCourt, with the Redhill Group, presented the findings of the Public Safety Focus Groups that the Redhill Group did for MTS in February 2023. Mr. Olson commented that The Redhill Group did the initial customer satisfaction survey. Mr. Olson stated the main thing MTS

wants to find out is what MTS is doing well, what the riders like about MTS, but also look at opportunities for improvement. He stated that the overall satisfaction, from the customer satisfaction survey, was really good. He also mentioned a few challenges that came up including safety issues, cleanliness, behavior of other passengers, additional services and found areas to improve upon as an agency. Mr. Olson commented that one of the questions asked, at the end of the survey, was what would make the biggest difference in improving the transit experience. He stated that the one thing, overwhelming said by the riders, was more security. Mr. Olson commented that MTS wanted to understand what more security really meant to the riders and with that he turned the presentation over to Judith McCourt. Ms. McCourt presented on the project purpose, participant profiles, demographics, travel characteristics, and the breakdown of the key findings. Mr. Olson ended the presentation with the next steps which included presenting the findings to MTS Board of Directors, launching Respect the Ride Campaign, having a Board discussion on the Social Equity Listening Tour findings, improve access/education for Ride Assured security hotline, and MTS Security identifying ways to enhance the approach to security efforts. Ms. Cooney mentioned that any feedback or concerns the CAG may have will be shared with the Board of Directors.

Michelle Krug stated that she has concerns on how the focus groups were done. She thought there were not enough people in the groups to get a widespread perspective. Ms. Krug commented that the location of where the participants were traveling from was not mentioned and feels the participants were not from all areas (i.e. San Ysidro and East County). Ms. Krug commented that the participants were chosen from a previous online survey and that survey did not offer a call-in opportunity. Ms. Krug also mentioned there was no outreach to the blind community to participate and was not offered in Spanish. Mr. Olson agreed there were limitations to research studies and asked Ms. McCourt to speak regarding the research method and the recruitment efforts. Ms. McCourt stated that some of the persons who had taken the customer satisfaction survey provided an email address and/or phone number. Ms. McCourt stated invitations were sent out to a large number of persons and then they geographically isolated people in order to have participants from all areas, North County, South County, East County, but that does not mean they had participants from all of the areas. She stated focus groups are qualitative research and they do have limitations. Ms. McCourt stated that to get quantitative findings, a different type of methodology would have to be applied. She mentioned the participants were multiracial and free to say what their ethnicities and gender associations were.

Emma Rodriguez asked when the maps were done regarding areas of increased safety concerns, and if the focus groups were asked about how popular certain routes were. Ms. McCourt commented that focus groups are qualitative not quantitative. Ms. McCourt stated the participants were asked about locations, but not specifically about routes and lines. She stated those specific applications are beyond this study and would have to be done on a quantitative level and a different type of venue. Mr. Olson commented that MTS will be doing another customer satisfaction survey next year that will have a much larger population and those specifications may be something that can be controlled for at that time. Ms. Cooney mentioned that SANDAG is doing an onboard survey on behalf of MTS which is a much larger effort, with many different questions. Ms. Cooney stated with this focus group MTS realized the Ride Assured Program was not being used and

that patrons do not understand what it was for. She stated another realization for MTS was in regards to the Ambassador Program, and that they do not actually make patrons feel safe as those employees are not looked at as an added layer of safety.

Emma Rodriguez stated she would like to see a sign that states what the average transit officer response time is regarding calling or texting the Ride Assured number. Mr. Stiehler mentioned that MTS does not have a mechanism to track response times but he stated that he uses Ride Assured frequently and almost immediately gets a response from dispatch. Mr. Stiehler mentioned that you can attach pictures to your message and stated it is important to know where you are and what car you are on.

Michelle Krug stated that the Ride Assured phone number should be verbally announced regularly as an alternative for the blind community.

Todd Temple wanted to give a different perspective than what has been said and stated he felt that the focus group was large and quite extensive in length and time. He stated the results of what people think a safe environment is, is consistent in what he has seen in his thirty years of law enforcement and in what he now does at the convention center. Mr. Temple stated that cleanliness, lighting and visibility of the security team are all important to safety. He personally feels that the survey is spot on and the direction MTS is heading is on the right track.

Rocina Lizarraga inquired about the age of the students that participated. Ms. McCourt stated that students had to be at least eighteen years of age to participate per focus group requirements. Ms. Rocina inquired why there were no mention from participants regarding restroom accessibility. Ms. McCourt mentioned that the questions surrounding restrooms were not asked because the specific focus of this group was concerns about safety issues.

Ariana Federico Mondragon mentioned that Mid-City CAN has a momentum team made up of different community members that get together at least once a month. She stated at one of the meetings there was a conversation regarding public transit and what people were experiencing. She mentioned they were also participating in the Social Equity Listening Tour sessions. Ms. Mondragon stated some of the topics talked about were cleanliness, bus frequency, lighting and shading. Ms. Mondragon inquired what the challenges are for MTS in regards to providing lighting and shading and how can community members help support these efforts. Ms. Cooney stated that the Social Equity Listening Tour is another effort MTS has done to reach out to the customers to learn where MTS could invest more and in which communities. Ms. Cooney mentioned the goal for MTS is to address concerns in the communities that MTS serves. Ms. Cooney emphasized that there are multiple layers in what MTS is learning and of what needs to be done to address what the customers' needs and requests are. Mr. Olson stated that MTS has added a capital improvement program for additional shelters to be included throughout the system and that the Planning Department is mapping out the best spots to put the shelters. He stated that MTS is looking to gradually expand the entire shelter program in the next five years.

Roddrick Colvin inquired about increased ridership and how that correlates with the perception of safety. Mr. Colvin also asked why tapping the PRONTO card is important and wondered if there has been any conversation in regards to adding additional tap machines more conveniently located in the stations or even onboard the trains. Ms.

McCourt stated the perception of people was that if there were more people onboard with the same intentions for riding then they felt safe, but if the intentions of the other people onboard were different or bad, then they did not feel safe. Mr. Olson stated that having the safety element could get more choice riders onboard. Mr. Stiehler added that the patrons mentioned that it is sometimes the area around the stations that feel unsafe to walk through to get to the transit facilities. Regarding the PRONTO tapping, Ms. Cooney stated that tapping pays for the patron's fare and if the patron does not tap, then MTS does not get the fare, which means the patron is essentially fare evading. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS recognizes that there are not enough validators and MTS will be installing more. She also added that the ticket vending machines will soon become usable validators. Ms. Cooney mentioned that the bus system does not have the lack of tapping issue and MTS hopes that adding the validator to the ticket vending machines will significantly reduce the fare evasion on the trolleys.

Victoria Turner asked for the next survey if the CAG could be included to suggest questions that are important to the CAG members. Ms. Turner commented that the survey showed there was increased discomfort with respect to safety in all of the transportation areas onboard and in stations. Ms. Turner inquired what the cost of the survey was. Mr. Olson commented that the focus group cost was around \$25,000 and commented that the CAG could offer some input for future surveys.

Manu Agni inquired if there were guidelines or internal recommendations regarding when a person should utilize the Ride Assured number versus calling the police versus pressing the emergency button onboard the trains. Mr. Stiehler stated that you should call 911 if it is an emergency and/or you are going to be harmed. If someone is feeling a little uncomfortable or sees a disturbance where no one is in any immediate danger, they can send a text message to Ride Assured and the button on the trolley will connect the person to the trolley operator if there is something that needs to be addressed right away. Mr. Agni commented that some of the stations have speakers for announcements and asked if the dispatch control center can make announcements or talk over the speakers located in the trolley stations. Mr. Stiehler stated that security dispatch cannot. Brian Riley, Chief Operating Officer (Rail), confirmed that there are PA (public address) systems in the Operations Control Center (OCC) and announcements can be made inside the stations.

Vice Chair Megan Welsh wanted to confirm/clarify that the question pertaining to restrooms was not addressed in this research topic. Ms. McCourt confirmed that it was not, but only eluded to in the open comment section in the larger customer satisfaction survey which is what the word cloud represents. Vice Chair Welsh stated that she would like to request restroom access be addressed as a topic at a future CAG meeting. Chair Brady stated that access to a restroom is important and recognized that this is an issue across the city, but pointed out that this may not be in the purview of this group. Vice Chair Welsh asked if once the Social Equity Listening Tour has concluded, if there will be an opportunity for any relevant information pertaining to Public Security be shared with the CAG. Ms. Cooney confirmed yes there will be. Vice Chair Welsh commented on the research findings pertaining to security personnel being perceived as courteous and respectful and stated that it did not appear to break down people's perceptions on whether the personnel were CCI, TSO or ambassadors and asked if it was all lumped together. Mr. Olson stated that based on their perceptions they knew the difference

between ambassadors and security. Vice Chair Welsh asked if the findings regarding the blue shirts versus the yellow shirts were notable and Ms. Cooney commented that the yellow shirts were noticed more. Ms. Cooney mentioned that one of MTS's challenges is the blue TSO shirts, although recognized as safety personnel, sometimes the officers wear a jacket that is not blue and look like they could be a security officer heading to work somewhere else. Vice Chair Welsh requested as other research happens at MTS, the CAG would appreciate being a resource.

Ms. Krug asked to clarify what colors are being worn and by which departments. Ms. Cooney broke down that the MTS Code Compliance Inspectors have the ability to cite people for code violations and they wear yellow shirts and dark pants. Ms. Cooney stated that MTS has a contracted security force with Intercon Security and they wear light blue shirts with a patch on the back that says transit security along with dark pants. MTS also has passenger support personnel deployed throughout the system to help the MTS customers and they wear red shirts with some black components.

Chair John Brady stated that a focus group done in Spanish is needed and one done specifically for the disabled community and senior citizens as those groups may have different opinions about security on the transit system. Chair Brady asked, since the PRONTO app tracks location, is there any ability to upgrade that app for customers to push concerns directly to that app. Mr. Stiehler stated MTS is working with IT and the new solutions for Ride Assured to try and tie that in, but they have to confirm whether or not the two programs are compatible.

Action Taken

Informational item only. No action taken.

6. Shared Mobility Devices (Al Stiehler)

Al Stiehler, Director of Transit Security and Passenger Safety, gave a presentation on Shared Mobility Devices (SMD). He stated that MTS was approached by the City of San Diego requesting assistance from the MTS Security Department to help the four main Shared Mobility Device companies in the area: Bird, Link, Lime and Spin and assist them with the well-coordinated and large-scale thefts that they are experiencing throughout the San Diego area. The SMD companies stated the devices are being tampered with and transported throughout San Diego then taken down into Mexico where they are refitted, repurposed and sold. Mr. Stiehler discussed the potential training requirements, enforcement procedures, consequences of enforcement as well as joint enforcement details. Mr. Stiehler ended his presentation asking for comments and concerns from the CAG.

Emma Rodriguez stated she has a lot of concerns with this as many international students at UCSD use these scooters as their last mile device. She is worried that the students may not understand the reasoning behind the change. Ms. Rodriguez requested that if MTS does decide to assist the shared mobility device companies that signage be posted in multiple languages.

Vice Chair Welsh commented that this feels like an unfunded mandate for Mr. Stiehler and the department to do more work. She stated the previous topic discussed how MTS already has limited resources and has very real safety and security concerns on the

MTS system. Vice Chair Welsh understands theft is bad and asked how is this becoming another problem that MTS is asked to solve without funding or support. She stated that it seems like a counter intuitive step to take to pass another ordinance to make this another enforcement activity for MTS. Vice Chair Welsh is concerned this is going to be a counterproductive effort with other goals that MTS is trying to achieve as well as a drain on the MTS security department's time and resources.

Roddrick Colvin commented that he is not convinced that MTS is part of the problem and asked to have the companies provide more data. His feeling is that the devices may be put in the back of pick-up trucks and driven over the border.

Michelle Krug asked for an explanation as to why scooters are being taken on the trolley if they are first mile, last mile for commuters. Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Cooney gave a few examples of who and why the devices are taken on the trains.

Chair Brady agreed that unless there will be compensation for the security force doing work to recover mobility devices then he doesn't understand why MTS would get involved and feels it would impair legitimate usage.

Vice Chair Welsh asked what the next steps will be and if it would help for the CAG to take a vote in opposition to support MTS. Ms. Cooney stated that the Public Security Committee heard this presentation and directed MTS staff to draft some language as they were not fully onboard with the proposal. Ms. Cooney mentioned that this item is informational only but if the CAG wanted to do an advisory vote to show the groups sentiment, then MTS can convey that at the next Public Security Committee meeting. Chair Brady asked for a motion to take a vote for the CAG to advise MTS to not enforce mobility device possession on the MTS system. Vice Chair Welsh made a motion to do an advisory vote and Emma Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Action Taken

Vice Chair Welsh made a motion to advise MTS to not enforce mobility device possession on the MTS system. Emma Rodriguez seconded the motion. The vote was 10 to 2 in favor with Todd Temple and Manu Agni voting no, and Bobby Ray Salas, Jennelle Chittock, Karen Howard and Matthew Wechter absent.

7. Committee Member Communications and Other Business

Ms. Cooney mentioned to the CAG that PRONTO cards were placed at each of their seats and that each card was loaded with 3 day passes for them to use to get to and from the meetings.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next Security & Passenger Safety CAG meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

Chair Brady adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

/S/ Megan Welsh

Chairperson

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/S/ Karen Wisniewski

Committee Clerk

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet

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

MEETING OF (DATE):

April 25, 2023

CALL TO ORDER
(TIME):

11:01 a.m.

ADJOURN:

1:10 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBER		REPRESENTING	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Ariana Federico Mondragon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Bobby Ray Salas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety Professional/Consultant		
Emma Rodriguez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Jennelle Chittock	<input type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider		
John Brady	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community Advocacy Group Member	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Karen Howard	<input type="checkbox"/>	City of San Diego Resident Transit Rider		
Kathryn Durant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Task Force on Homelessness Member	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Manu Agni	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Youth/Young Adult	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Matthew Wechter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Service Agency Professional/Public Defender/Other Court Personnel		
Megan Welsh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Michelle Carlson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	East County Resident Transit Rider	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Michelle Krug	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disabled Community Advocate	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Rocina Lizarraga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	South Bay Resident Transit Rider	11:06 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Roddrick Colvin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Educator with a Primary Study Focus in Public Safety	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
Todd Temple	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Business/Tourism Professional	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.
V Turner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Senior Community Advocate	11:01 a.m.	1:10 p.m.

CLERK OF THE CAG: Karen Wisniewski