

**Board Report**

File #: 2015-1405, **File Type:** Informational Report**Agenda Number:** 68.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2015****SUBJECT: SAFE SPACE AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on providing customer safe space environments while riding Metro buses and trains.

ISSUE

In response to Board Motion 55 by Directors Garcetti, Antonovich, and Kuehl, this report presents the results of Metro's semi-annual Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted May-June, 2015 and progress making Metro a safe space without unwanted intrusion into passengers' private physical and emotional space. (Attachment A) In the past two years, Metro has conducted three surveys that included a question about sexual harassment on the bus and rail system. Metro is one of only a handful of transit agencies worldwide that regularly asks passengers about experience of sexual harassment. Independent studies of large, international transit agencies indicate that New York City is considered to have one of the safest systems for women with a sexual harassment reporting rate of 63 percent.

Findings

During the latest Customer Satisfaction Survey May-June, 2015, the on-board questionnaire asked "In the past six months, while riding on Metro, have you personally experienced any of the following types of sexual harassment? Non-Physical (comments, gestures, etc.)? Physical (unwanted touching, groping, fondling, etc.)? Indecent Exposure (exposure of private parts)? The percent of respondents who experienced any of the three types of sexual harassment was 19 percent. This response rate indicated a three percent decline from the previous survey period. For the specific subsets of harassment, the percent of respondents who answered "Yes" were as follows: Non-Physical, 19 percent; Physical, 7 percent and Indecent Exposure, 8 percent.

The survey was conducted following the launch of Metro's It's Off Limits campaign to combat sexual harassment on the bus and rail system. The campaign, a partnership with the community advocacy organization Peace Over Violence, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Transit Policing Division and Metro, defined sexual harassment as unwanted touching comments and gestures and included a call to action "If you experience it or see it - report it. Call 1.888.950.SAFE."

While there was not a significant increase in reports to the Transit Policing Division hotline, there was a notable drop in reported incidents of sexual harassment reported in the survey.

Analysis

The Customer Satisfaction Survey queried 19,793 bus and rail riders in the latest form giving it an error rate $\pm 1\%$. It is the largest survey including a question about sexual harassment by any transit agency in the world. It is believed that by shining a light on the furtive activity of sexual harassment potential perpetrators eschewed harassment due to risk of possible identification and/or arrest thereby reducing the number of victims.

Actions Compliant with Item 55

Task Force - Reconvened in September to advance progress made and plan for a new outreach and media event.

Community Input

- Community Roundtable: Peace Over Violence has been signed to a one year contract to provide ongoing consultation and future developments will include the formulations of a community roundtable on issues of safe space and sexual harassment.
- Review APTA best practices: In a review of best practices it was learned the Metro is at the leading edge of efforts to stem sexual harassment. At this report, we have no peers approaching the issue in the same manner as LACMTA or with the same results.

External Policy

- The Metro Customer Code of Conduct has been updated to explicitly prohibit unwanted sexual attention and identity-based harassment.
- Metro has an on-going relationship with Peace Over Violence to provide non-law enforcement support options for victims.

Internal Policy

- In April, Metro circulated to all front-line personnel, including operators, maintenance and custodial employees, a simple yet effective method for summoning assistance in the event a Metro employee is the first point of contact for a rider who suffers sexual harassment or any other crime or complaint. The same instructions were circulated to all employees in July. Metro security is in the process of developing further materials that could include a training video.
- Metro has reviewed all station, bus stop and transit vehicle design guidelines and is in compliance with all appropriate laws.

NEXT STEPS

While reducing incidents of sexual harassment from 22 percent to 19 percent is a positive development, Metro is committed to redoubling efforts to make the system a safe space for all riders.

The Sexual Harassment Awareness Task Force reconvened in September representing the offices of

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Supervisor Michael Antonovich, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Peace Over Violence, the LASD and Metro staff. The Metro Customer Code of Conduct has been updated to explicitly prohibit unwanted sexual attention and identify-based harassment.

Metro is committed to continuing efforts to improve safety on the bus and rail system by launching a second phase of the ground-breaking It's Off Limits campaign on October 1, 2015 to be highlighted by a media event and press conference tentatively scheduled for early October. The second phase continues to use the message of It's Off Limits and augments the call to action by urging the public to "Speak Up about unwanted touching, comments and gestures. If you experience it or see it - report it. Call 1.888.950.SAFE." The campaign literature is being produced in English and Spanish (No Se Tolerara'). In addition, a web URL is under development to link a user to the information translated into eight other languages.

In July, Metro Human Resources Department circulated to all of the agency's nearly 11,000 employees a simple yet effective set of instructions for them to follow in the event they are the first point of contact for a passenger who has been victimized by sexual harassment. All frontline employees, operators, maintenance and custodial personnel, were trained in the procedure in April. Additionally, protocol for responding to social media comments related to sexual harassment is in development based on advice from trauma and subject matter experts.

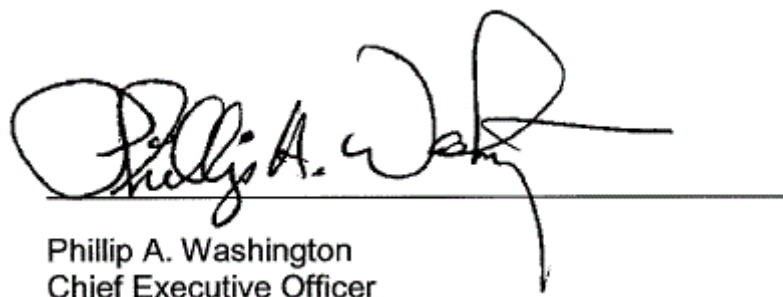
Metro is preparing another Customer Satisfaction Survey in October and November to continue gathering data on this subject of vital interest. The results of that survey will be analyzed and modifications to our outreach will be amended as warranted.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A - Motion 55

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Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer

MOTION BY:

**MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI, SUPERVISOR MICHAEL ANTONOVICH, &
SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL**

Executive Management Committee Meeting

March 19, 2015

Item 55: Safe Space & Sexual Harassment

MTA's customers deserve to travel in a safe environment without unwanted intrusion into their private physical and emotional space.

Last month, this Board received disturbing survey results that found that 22% percent of our customers experienced some form of unwanted sexual attention in the past six months while riding our buses and trains.

A violation of even one customer's safe space creates an unwelcoming and unsafe environment for all of MTA's customers.

Additionally, despite about 1.4 million average weekday boardings, last year the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Transit Division received merely 99 reports of unwanted sexual attention.

This rate of reporting is woefully low, and indicates that customers do not have faith that such behavior can be addressed.

In April 2015, MTA will launch an outreach campaign in partnership with Peace Over Violence, an organization dedicated to ending sexual, domestic and interpersonal violence. The campaign will target inappropriate sexual behavior, making clear that such behavior is unacceptable, that victims do not and should not tolerate it, and encouraging victims to report unwanted attention to MTA and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD).

MTA also updated its Transit Watch app to make it possible to specifically report incidents of unwanted sexual attention.

MTA deserves credit for recognizing the importance of its customers' safe space and taking action, but more can and should be done to ensure the safety of our customers.

Besides ensuring the safety of existing customers, promoting safe space will also help attract new riders into the MTA system.

To effectively support the safety of our current and potential customers, all facets of MTA's structure must consider safe space.

Furthermore, because safe space is a society-wide issue that MTA cannot solve alone, it is important that MTA give safe space continuing attention.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board instruct the CEO to:

Task Force

1. Formalize a multi-departmental Safe Space Task Force, including but not limited to the Communications, Community Relations, Ethics, Human Resources, Information Technology, Operations, Security, and Planning departments.

Community Input

2. Convene a community roundtable on issues of safe space and sexual harassment to better connect MTA with its customers and inform MTA's response to these issues.
3. Work with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to review national and international best practices for safe space in transit.

External Policy

4. Update the MTA Customer Code of Conduct to explicitly prohibit unwanted sexual attention and identity-based harassment.
5. Partner with an appropriate local agency or agencies to provide a non-law enforcement support option for victims.

Internal Policy

6. In partnership with an appropriate local agency or agencies, review training guidelines for all MTA staff and contract public safety personnel to ensure that staff is properly trained to respond in cases of unwanted sexual attention, including those in which a minor is involved.
7. Utilizing no. 2 and no. 3, review station, bus stop, and transit vehicle design guidelines to ensure customer safety is taken into account.

Board Reporting

8. Report to the Board on all the above on a quarterly basis beginning with the April 2015 Board cycle.

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