

# Metro Transit Police Work Group Update

Committee of the Whole  
January 19, 2022



# Topics for this month's update

- Plan to conclude work group's recommendations by February 28 deadline
- Summary of topics covered since December 15 Committee of the Whole
  1. December 17: Public comment opportunity
  2. January 4: Developing framework for recommendations
  3. January 14: Identifying issues and gaps, begin developing goals

# Plan for concluding work group's work

- Work group will report back recommendations to the Council by 2/28
  - Three remaining work group meetings: January 28, February 11, and February 25
  - One remaining COW update after today on February 16
- Work group will recommend vision, goals, and ideas for strategies and data
- Work group will recommend directing Metro Transit and MTPD to develop an action plan to advance the recommended goals and report back to the Council by date to be determined



# December 17 public comment opportunity

- 10 people provided comments during the meeting
- Three comments submitted in writing
- Mix of people representing organizations and individuals, including MTPD officers

# December 17 public comments summary

- Transit policing is an **environmental justice** and a **racial justice** issue
- Systems across the country are grappling with similar issues, and Metro Transit should draw on **practices from other transit agencies**
- Route **reliability and frequency is key to safety**, and Metro Transit has needed to reduce service due to operator shortage
- Experiences with **poor behavior** and **conditions** on vehicles and platforms; too few officers visibly present
- Concerns about **officer training** (e.g., fewer in-person trainings due to COVID)
- Concerns about **officer retention** and why officers are leaving for other departments
- Concerns about **working conditions for operators, police officers, and CSOs**, including communication between operators and police
- Concerns about **police treatment of riders**, including use of force

# December 17 public comments – continued

- Concerns about **resource allocation** (e.g., growth of MTPD budget, where officers are deployed, etc.)
- Consider other **conditions** when improving safety, including equitably-distributed clean, heated, well-lit shelters and reducing transit fares
- Effective and frequent **public engagement** and **communication** are important; need to bring community-lived experience into policy
- Support for **administrative citations** for fare evasion
- Several comments about the expanded CSO program and need for ambassadors, including:
  - Some voiced support for the general direction of **unarmed personnel** who focus on **customer service, connecting people to services, and deescalating situations**
  - CSO expansion might be a step in the right direction but only available to people on a law enforcement career track
  - Concerns about CSOs carrying weapons (also concerns with MTPD officers being armed)
  - Metro Transit needs to provide more information on CSO program goals and performance



# Values guiding recommendations

**Key words:** dignity, fairness, just, anti-racist, quality, efficiency, positive impact, systems level approach, stakeholders, community of accountability, safety/security

**Working list** of values, principles, criteria (not in any order):

- Value **safety and security** on transit
- **Dignity, fairness, and just for all**
- **Rebuild confidence** in the **quality of transit for all**
- Value the broad **diversity** of the community we serve, including ability, race, ethnicity, gender, and age
- Apply **anti-racist lens** and practice to this work

# Values guiding recommendations – continued

- **Accountability and decision making** – requires mutual accountability or community of accountability. Recognize the roles of Council Members, Metro Transit, and MTPD leadership, and external partners. Includes ensuring open, meaningful dialogue between Chief and Council.
- **Stakeholders** are key to success and to building strong recommendations – both internal and external
- **Responsive to feedback** – not enough to accept feedback, need to follow **best public participation practices** and follow up with people to let them know what was done with their feedback and the actions that will be taken as a result
- **Systems-level approach**, not band-aids
- Assess recommendations to **ensure positive impact/aim to reduce negative impacts** on key communities
- Consider **efficient use of resources**
- Recommendations should be **realistic** and **doable**



# Approach towards recommendations

	Provide a quality transit experience for all through an anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive approach to transit safety, security, and policing	Address systemic issues with community relationships and partnerships	Demonstrate responsive leadership and accountability
<b>Issues and gaps</b> <i>Discussed on January 14</i>			
<b>Goals to address issues/gaps</b> <i>Started on January 14</i>	<b>Example Structure</b>		
<b>Ideas of strategies for Metro Transit to include in an action plan</b> <i>Discuss at next meeting</i>			
<b>Ideas for info/data</b> <i>Discuss at next meeting</i>			

# (1) Provide a quality transit experience for all through an anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive approach to transit safety, security, and policing

## Issues and gaps – draft notes from 1/14 discussion

(1) Problematic conditions and behavior at facilities and on transit vehicles that lead riders and employees to feel unsafe – important to provide quality experience for all.

(2) Ridership is down significantly during the pandemic leading to lower sense of safety; building ridership may lead to an increased feeling of safety.

(3) Unreliable or infrequent transit service can contribute to riders feeling unsafe.

(4) Need to consistently and effectively apply an anti-racist lens to policy/practices/procedures.

(5) Need to use public engagement best practices.

(6) Need to develop and implement plan to engage with youth. Includes need to collect, maintain, review, and act on data about our interactions with youth.

(7) Need to demonstrate commitment to valuing the broad diversity of people we serve, including gender, race, ethnicity, people living with disabilities, and age.

(8) Need official presence with authority and skill on the system.

# (1) Provide a quality transit experience for all through an anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive approach to transit safety, security, and policing

## Goal ideas discussed on 1/14 draft notes

### **Safe, consistent, quality experience for all on buses, trains, and facilities**

- Ensuring transit stops and facilities are brightly lit and clean
- Addressing violations of Code of Conduct and laws
- Building team of police, non-sworn “ambassador” personnel, and maintenance employees; includes increasing official presence with authority and skill
- Improving transit service reliability and frequency
- Employing public engagement best practices and valuing the broad diversity of the communities we serve (gender, race, ethnicity, people living with disabilities, age). Includes specifically supporting and engaging youth in our communities.

Measure customer satisfaction, number of customer and employee complaints (e.g., complaints of feeling insecure, experiencing discrimination), and number of incidents.

Work group recognizes a correlation between increasing ridership and providing a safe, consistent, quality experience for all. Achieving a safe, consistent, and quality experience is important to rebuilding ridership, which in turn, could also improve a sense of safety.



## (2) Address systemic issues with community relationships and partnerships

### Issues and gaps – draft notes from 1/14 discussion

(1) Metro Transit Police Department is responsible for a large system that crosses many boundaries and jurisdictions.

- Need to strengthen relationships with local governments and other stakeholders to improve conditions around transit facilities that are beyond transit's jurisdictions.
- Need to share information and Metro Transit's experience with city/county attorneys about impacts of their decisions.

(2) As policymakers, the Council has opportunity to convene others and leverage their influence to address systemic problems that contribute to issues observed on transit (including untreated severe mental illness, chemical addiction, homelessness, etc.) Ensure solutions employ a systems level approach.

(3) Legislature has not passed administrative citations policy change, which would allow non-sworn personnel to inspect fares and issue citations for fare non-compliance and would allow MTPD to redeploy officers to focus on public safety needs.

## **(2) Address systemic issues with community relationships and partnerships**

### **Goal ideas discussed on 1/14 draft notes**

**Effective communication structure between MTPD and Council, so Council Members are aware of and can act on issues affecting transit security and policing in a timely manner**

- Empower Chief to share information with Council Members.
- With more regular information, Council Members can act before conditions are dire.

**Communicate and engage with other jurisdictions, including law enforcement agencies, to work together towards solutions with immediacy and regularity**

**Pass administrative citations legislation**

- Continue to advocate for administrative citations legislation.
- In the interim, continue current effort to increase official presence on the system.

# (3) Demonstrate responsive leadership and accountability

## Issues and gaps – draft notes from 1/14 discussion

- (1) Ensure all are treated with dignity, fairness, and in a just manner. Establish expectations/definitions of positive and negative outcomes. Evaluate policies/practices/procedures to ensure positive outcomes; aim to reduce negative impacts on communities.
- (2) Council Members need more opportunity to regularly converse with Chief and GM regarding transit safety/security in addition to receiving structured presentations.
- (3) Develop regular reporting of qualitative data, quantitative data, and other information to assess performance and outcomes. Standardize approach to collecting data, transparency, reporting, and utilization (targets).
- (4) Ensure leadership is responsive to employee needs and concerns, using surveys and other forms of direct employee feedback and seeking improved communication on what happens with that feedback.
- (5) Strengthen accountability by ensuring roles and responsibilities for transit policing and safety are clear to Council Members, employees, and the public.
- (6) Ensure resources are efficiently supported and managed.
- (7) Need to address issues relating to officer retention.
- (8) Need mutual accountability or community of accountability; accountability involves external stakeholders.
- (9) Need timely response to constituent feedback regarding safety on transit. Set standards for responding and assess staff capacity to meet those standards.
- (10) Assess training for officers and operators. (placeholder/more information requested by work group on 1/14/22)



# Next steps

- **Next Work Group Meeting: January 28, 2022**
  - Review notes from 1/14 meeting and continue identifying goals
  - Identify ideas for strategies, obstacles, and data/information needs
- **Next Committee of the Whole Meeting: February 16, 2022**
- **Recommendations due: February 28, 2022**



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