



Board Report

File #:2015-1667, File Type:Informational Report

Agenda Number:

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE JANUARY 21, 2016

SUBJECT: SAFE SPACE AND SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the quarterly status report on **Metro's sexual harassment campaign and preview of fall 2015 Customer Satisfaction Survey.**

ISSUE

Metro is continuing with a ground breaking campaign against sexual harassment called "It's Off Limits." The campaign was launched on April 1, 2015 and updated on October 1, 2015. Advertisements are in place on buses and rail cars across the system. The fall 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 22 percent of respondents answered "yes" to the question "in the past six months, while riding on Metro, have you personally experienced unwanted sexual contact including, but not limited to, comments, touching and exposure." As a result of the unacceptably high percentage of riders affirming their exposure to sexual harassment, Metro formed a high-level, cross-departmental task force with representatives of Mayor Garcetti and Supervisors Antonovich and Kuehl. The "It's Off Limits" campaign resulted in a decline of reported incidents of sexual harassment from the fall 2014 to the spring 2015 survey from 22 percent to 19 percent. To double down on the successful campaign, Metro's Sexual Harassment Awareness task force updated messaging with a call to action of "Speak Up" and re-launched "It's Off Limits" with a press conference on October 15, 2015. Metro is one of only a handful of transit agencies worldwide that regularly asks passengers about experiences 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.

DISCUSSION

Results

Metro is successful in placing the issue of sexual harassment awareness before riders and the public at large in a method that empowers victims and witnesses of occurrences by encouraging them to make reports to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Metro is preparing the fall survey and

the question related to sexual harassment is included.

Analysis

The Customer Satisfaction Survey queries about 20,000 Metro bus and rail riders and, with an error rate of \pm two percent, is considered the most thorough of its kind in the transit industry on sexual harassment. Nearly all other large transportation agencies rely on studies from academia or news organizations for data on sexual harassment but those surveys are done infrequently. Metro believes any level of sexual harassment is too high and efforts will continue to reduce the number of incidents to make Metro a safe place for all passengers.

Actions Compliant with Item 55

Task Force - Designed updated messaging for "It's Off Limits" and held a press conference on October 15, 2015 to disseminate continue actions to ensure a positive experience for all riders.

Community Input

- Community Roundtable: The Roundtable is in formation with riders and advocates being sought for inclusion.
- Review APTA best practices: There are no universally accepted standards for best practices, however, most advocacy groups and/or university studies include the following.
 1. Provide universal Wi-Fi and cell service underground
 2. Develop an app directly linked to the police and/or transit authority
 3. Have a dedicated phone number for victims of sexual harassment or abuse
 4. Install an alarm system to alert all conductors onboard
 5. Install phones on subway platforms that connect directly to the police
 6. Place cameras in subway cars (along with signs that let people know they are being watched)
 7. Ensure that public transport employees have been properly trained and are authorized to intervene
- Metro complies with all points except number one. Metro has exceeded best practices with its awareness campaign.

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

The fall Customer Satisfaction Survey is schedule to begin by the end of November. Complete data sets are expected in January. The results of that survey will be analyzed and modifications to our outreach will be amended as warranted.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 55

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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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