

LACMTA  
Full Board Meeting  
October 27, 2011

**MOTION**  
**Director Antonovich**

The top priority for the MTA Board of Directors has been and must always be exercising vigilant oversight of MTA's bus and rail system to ensure the safety and integrity of our transit system for every one of our 38 million monthly passengers. As a Board we must remain committed to this priority and continually strive to improve the safety culture at MTA in a proactive manner, rather than in a reactive manner after suffering a major accident, such as the one on June 22, 2009, that claimed 9 lives and injured 76 other passengers on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) subway system.

In its report on this tragic accident, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined that this accident was not just the result of operator error or faulty equipment, but rather served as "an example of a 'quintessential organizational accident.'" In short, the NTSB directly called into question WMATA's safety culture and the effectiveness of the WMATA Board's oversight responsibility for system and organizational safety.

## **ANTONOVICH MOTION**

October 27, 2011

**To ensure that we as a Board are fulfilling our oversight duties to the fullest extent possible, it is vital that we have a thorough review of our safety culture.**

Our capabilities will be tested in the coming months and years as we aggressively expand our bus and rail system with the opening of the Expo Line to Culver City, followed by the Crenshaw/LAX Line, the Regional Connector, and extensions on Gold Line, Expo Line, Orange Line and Purple Line to Azusa, Santa Monica, Chatsworth and West Los Angeles, respectively. Should the America Fast Forward plan come to fruition, additional rail and bus projects will be implemented at a faster pace than expected.

Simultaneously, we will be faced with maintaining an aging rail system—with the Blue Line (opened in 1990), Red Line (1993-2000) and Gold Line (2003) reaching significant milestones in maturity—and fleet that will require rehabilitation.

## ANTONOVICH MOTION

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Fostering a vigorous and effective culture of safety at MTA requires the Board to take overt leadership to influence the behavior and expectations of all MTA employees to place safety above other competing priorities. According to Dr. James Reason, a leading scholar in this field, a **safety culture** consists of five elements – an **informed culture**, a **reporting culture**, a **learning culture**, a **flexible culture** and a **just culture**:

- An **informed culture** is one in which the organization collects and analyzes relevant data while also disseminating safety information throughout the organization.
- A **reporting culture** encourages employees to report safety concerns with confidentiality and without blame.
- A **learning culture** allows an organization to learn from mistakes and continually react to feedback and new information.
- A **flexible culture** provides for an organization and employees that can adapt in an effective manner to changing demands on the system.
- A **just culture** allows for maximum avoidance of major errors by differentiating consequences resulting from unintentional and intentional unsafe acts.

## **ANTONOVICH MOTION**

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To accomplish a healthy safety culture, it is incumbent upon the Board to take a very clear leadership role in its actions and its policies, from simple steps of renaming its committees and updating its bylaws to ensconce safety as our primary organizational value, to conducting a thorough review of our safety culture and maintaining frequent and meaningful oversight over safety at our meetings.

We can accomplish this goal by:

- reviewing thoroughly the safety culture of our organization
- clarifying our organizational values to support safety as our primary value
- reorganizing our committee structure to highlight and centralize the Board's fundamental responsibility to oversee safety
- developing frequent and comprehensive reports and agenda items regarding system safety for Board discussion and action

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**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the MTA Board takes the following actions:

- (1) Direct the CEO to provide a literature review to the Board within 60 days on the topic of “safety culture”. In particular, this review should clearly delineate the Board’s role and responsibilities to ensure and support fully a strong safety culture at MTA, as well as provide a review of the WMATA accident and subsequent NTSB report.
  
- (2) Direct the CEO to procure an outside, independent consultant to conduct and complete within 90 days a full review of MTA’s safety culture, including specific evaluations of the five elements (informed culture, reporting culture, learning culture, flexible culture and just culture) that compose a safety culture, and present an evaluation of and recommendations on how to improve MTA’s safety culture to the Board and CEO. The CEO shall follow-up within 30 days with a presentation to the Board on additional recommendations and a plan to implement all recommendations to enhance MTA’s safety culture.
  
- (3) Change the name of the “**Operations Committee**” to the “**System Safety and Operations Committee**” to indicate clearly the Board’s central role of providing oversight of MTA’s safety culture and system safety.

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- (4) Expand the scope of the “**System Safety and Operations Committee**” to include:
  - a. Monthly reports on corporate safety and system safety
  - b. All items related to safety audits, safety upgrades, and overall system safety issues
  - c. All recommendations on how to improve the safety culture at MTA
- (5) Direct the CEO to report to the full Board on a quarterly basis on MTA’s system safety and provide recommendations on how the Board can better support the agency’s safety culture and the safety of our transit system.
- (6) Direct the CEO to provide a review of our agency bylaws and any associated statement of organizational values and Board responsibilities to determine if these documents promote safety as the Board’s top oversight role and the agency’s top priority.
- (7) Direct the CEO to include as part of each board report and agenda item a separate, clearly marked section that provides an assessment of the item’s impact on system safety and safety culture.