

## Roundtable Overview

**Topic:** Safety Programs – What’s Working & What’s Not

**Event:** Connect & Share: Public Safety Forum

**Format:** Peer-to-peer roundtable discussion

This roundtable focused on the day-to-day realities of district safety programs, with participants openly sharing strategies that have improved conditions and candidly examining approaches that failed to deliver results.

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## Executive Summary: What Attendees Should Know

Participants consistently emphasized that **visibility, consistency, and coordination** are the foundations of effective safety programs. Dedicated ambassador and security presence—particularly in parks, transit areas, and high-traffic corridors—has a measurable impact on perceptions of safety and cleanliness.

Conversely, programs struggle when roles are blurred, messaging is reactive, or temporary fixes replace long-term planning. Ratepayer expectations are high, and districts feel growing pressure to demonstrate clear outcomes while navigating staffing constraints and limited law enforcement availability.

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## Why This Topic Matters

Safety programs are often the most visible and scrutinized investment districts make. Cleanliness, behavior, and perceived safety directly influence business confidence and public trust. Understanding which tactics genuinely change conditions helps districts allocate resources more effectively and avoid strategies that drain capacity without meaningful impact.

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## Scenarios or Challenges Discussed

- Safety concerns related to unhoused populations and restroom access

- Transit platforms, light rail stations, and commuter corridors
  - Parks, entertainment districts, and special event zones
  - Ratepayer pressure related to policing levels, protests, and staffing
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## Key Discussion Themes

### 1. What's Working

Participants highlighted strategies that produced visible or sustained improvement:

- Dedicated Ambassador or security deployment in key areas
- Strong coordination with police, security teams, and transit authorities
- Static and pedestrian-level patrols instead of vehicle-based approaches
- Increased visibility through uniforms, signage, and consistent schedules
- Stakeholder safety meetings that build shared ownership and communication

### 2. What's Not Working

Several approaches were cited as ineffective or unsustainable:

- Reactive messaging during high-visibility incidents
- Temporary infrastructure solutions without long-term planning
- Asking Cleaning Ambassadors to perform enforcement or outreach roles
- Programs reliant on voluntary compliance without accountability

### 3. Building (or Eroding) Trust

Trust grows when Ambassadors build relationships, communicate respectfully, and connect issues to resources. It erodes when engagement is inconsistent, roles are unclear, or leadership fails to model expectations.

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## Lessons Learned & Opportunities

- Clearly separate cleaning, safety, and outreach functions
- Prioritize visibility and consistency over short-term fixes
- Align messaging early to control the public narrative
- Use environmental design to reduce repeat safety challenges

## Key Concerns Looking Ahead

- Restroom access and management of unhoused populations
  - Staffing shortages and law enforcement availability
  - Sustained pressure from ratepayers to show measurable results
  - Safety management during protests and large gatherings
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## Practical Takeaways for Attendees

### What to Borrow:

- Dedicated, visible safety presence supported by strong partner coordination

### What to Avoid:

- Overloading Ambassadors with conflicting or unclear responsibilities

### One Question to Keep Exploring:

- How can districts design safety programs that reduce repeat issues rather than cycling the same challenges?