



NEWS

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MERGER OF MTA TRANSIT POLICE WINS L.A. CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL

The Los Angeles City Council has voted to approve the merger of the MTA Transit Police force with the LAPD.

The merger proposal, which also pairs the Transit Police force with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, now goes to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Should it be approved by the Board of Supervisors, The Transit Policing Partnership, as it is called, would operate out of joint headquarters in the MTA building. An MTA Security Department would have oversight of the police merger contract with the city and the county.

"The merger will provide more service and greater security to our transit customers," said MTA Chairman Larry Zarian. "By combining the resources of our Transit Police with the LAPD and the Sheriff's Department, we can eliminate the overlap of administrative duties. That means we can place more sworn officers in the field, and those additional police officers will be deployed on Metro buses. We owe our police officers and their families a final decision so they can go on with their lives."

Under the proposed merger, the program is designed to capitalize on the combined strength of the MTA Transit Police, which is currently the 10th largest police department in California, as well as the LAPD and the LASD.

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"A unified command will provide greater safety and security both for the public and for the officers," said Los Angeles Police Chief Willie Williams. "It will enhance communications and allow all the agencies involved to share information and to respond to situations in a rapid and efficient manner."

Under the merger plan, 208 Transit Police Officers will go to the LAPD, 151 to the Sheriff's Department. In addition, approximately 164 contracted security guards and fare inspectors will work on the buses and rail lines under the supervision of the Sheriff's Department. Also, administrative support positions will move to the LAPD and Sheriff's Department. The MTA will retain a non-sworn security force to guard MTA facilities and revenue collections.

The merger plan provides for five-year contracts with both the LAPD and the Sheriff's Department, not to exceed approximately \$224 million for the total period.

"Basically, this merger would allow us to turn police work over to institutions that are well equipped for the job," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger, "and allow the MTA to focus on our primary goal of providing effective and efficient transportation for the Los Angeles region."

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