

**REPORT  
OF THE  
AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION  
PEER REVIEW PANEL**

**FOR  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
Los Angeles, CA**

**July 2006**



**A Service of the Safety Management (Peer Review) Program of the  
American Public Transportation Association**

**REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION**  
  
**PEER REVIEW PANEL**  
  
**ON**  
  
**SECURITY SERVICES**  
  
**AT**  
  
**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

**PANEL MEMBERS:**

**Jeri Lee**  
**Willie McCuller**  
**Scott Schroeder**  
**Matthew Tucker**  
**Richard Winston**  
**Greg Hull**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Roger Snoble, chief executive officer for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), contacted the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to request a peer review of the agency's security services. Los Angeles MTA indicated the purpose of the review was to assist Metro in their design of a state-of-the-art transit security program that would be both effective and would meet the objectives of the Metro Board adopted security policy. To help understand the scope of the intended review, Metro provided information on organizational designs for security program alternatives and included applicable cost analyses for each alternative proposed.

The letter from Mr. Snoble dated April 25, 2006 proposed the latter part of May 2006 for the review, and through communications between APTA and Metro staff it was agreed the peer review would be conducted May 16-19, 2006.

A panel of industry peers was assembled that provided expertise in transit operations, security, and finance. The review panel consisted of the following transit peers:

Jeri Lee  
Deputy Chief of Police  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit  
Authority  
Washington, DC

Willie McCuller  
Director – Security & Fare Enforcement  
Metro  
St. Louis, MO

Scott Schroeder  
Chief Financial Officer  
Bay Area Rapid Transit District  
Oakland, CA

Matthew Tucker  
Chief Operating Officer  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
Santa Clara, CA

Richard Winston  
Executive Vice President – Operations  
Chicago Transit Authority  
Chicago, IL

Greg Hull (APTA Advisor to the Panel)  
Director – Operations, Safety & Security  
Programs  
American Public Transportation Association  
Washington, DC

The panel convened in Los Angeles on May 15, 2006. Panel coordination and logistical support was provided by APTA staff advisor Greg Hull. Mr. Hull also coordinated panel member input in the drafting of this peer review report. Mr. Dan Cowden, Transit Security Manager, provided agency liaison support.

## **Methodology**

The APTA peer review process is well established as a valuable resource to the industry for assessing all aspects of transit operations and functions. The peer reviews are conducted on-site by highly experienced transit personnel who are selected on the basis of their subject matter expertise. Through the benefits of on-site interviews of agency staff, review of relevant documents, and inspections the panel concludes its review with a summary of observations and recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the transit agency.

## **Scope of Report**

The scope of this review was to utilize the experience of the peer review panel members to assist Metro in its review of the security services being delivered and managed on behalf of the transit agency, and to provide comments on proposed alternative methods of providing that security. The panel reviewed several models under consideration and the costs associated with each model. Each offered “pros and cons” which are summarized in the report that follows.

## II. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. BASELINE SERVICE MODEL

#### Observations

- ◆ Costs exceed MTA budget goal of 5%. There is a lack of control on future costs and value level for budget expended is questionable.
- ◆ No position with clearly defined oversight for the program's day-to-day management has been established at Metro.
- ◆ The operating departments do not see their needs being met by program deliverables (i.e., on-board vehicles and at stations/facilities).
- ◆ Deliverables are managed by vendor, with limited Metro resources available to enable effective contract compliance review.
- ◆ The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) has credibility as a police force and capabilities / resources for larger scale response. LASD also has a graffiti abatement team.
- ◆ There appears to be lack of community oriented community policing.
- ◆ The panel is not aware of a return on investment for fare checkers.
- ◆ There is no LASD presence within MTA operations centers.
- ◆ Baseline model services are not consistent with the established "Scope of Work."
- ◆ The LASD services cost model includes cost loads that are not the norm in transit budgets. Services billed out in minutes do not guarantee consistency of personnel. The vendor controls overtime allocation.
- ◆ The LASD appears to control Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant applications.
- ◆ The continuity aspect of the LASD is impacted by attrition.
- ◆ The level of in-service support to bus operations is not clear.
- ◆ Security support for the blue and green service lines appears to be lacking.
- ◆ There is inconsistent security deployment for garages.
- ◆ Recent budget cuts at Los Angeles MTA have been managed while dealing with an increasing policing budget.
- ◆ Spot observations by the panel noted minimal full patrol activity of stations and areas of congregating patrons.
- ◆ There appears a "conflict of interest" for a vendor to be regarded as MTA Police Chief.

**1. BASELINE SERVICE MODEL (continued)**

Recommendations (if Los Angeles MTA supports this model)

- ◆ Consider opening the next to encourage more competition.
- ◆ Establish a Los Angeles MTA management position with clear oversight for all security services.
- ◆ Review and update the “Scope of Work” to reflect changing conditions and requirements. Establish audit processes to regularly and effectively measure performance against the contract.

**2. RE-ESTABLISH MTA POLICE FORCE**

Observations

- ◆ This model requires additional up-front investment.
- ◆ As seen with LASD and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) recruitment challenges, Los Angeles MTA could face the same recruitment problems .
- ◆ Credibility of the new force would have to be established.
- ◆ There are effective models that exist at other transit agencies (ex: BART, WMATA).
- ◆ Building a new force would require years of development.
- ◆ There is potential for better long-term cost control and control of resources with this model.
- ◆ This model would establish in-house expertise within transit law enforcement.
- ◆ This model would require a long-term commitment by Los Angeles MTA, necessitating approximately a 10-year minimum support timeframe.

Recommendations (if Los Angeles MTA supports this model)

- ◆ This model would require that a comprehensive feasibility study be conducted prior to making a final decision – address full costs / full resources required.
- ◆ A comprehensive transition plan (LASD to Los Angeles MTA) would have to be developed.
- ◆ Los Angeles MTA would have to support a budget in excess of 5% limits in the initial years.
- ◆ A 10-year commitment, as a minimum, would be needed.

### 3. MAXIMUM SERVICE MODEL

#### Observations

- ◆ This model exceeds Los Angeles MTA 5% budget limit.
- ◆ This model assumes this level of personnel and deployment is needed.
- ◆ This model conveys an appearance of expansion during a time of constraint within all other areas of the MTA budget.
- ◆ The need for station agents is presumed in this model.

#### Recommendations (if Los Angeles MTA supports this model)

- ◆ This model would need to be scaled down to fit appropriately within Los Angeles MTA fiscal requirements.
- ◆ Station agents may be needed only if a barrier system is adopted within portion(s) of the system.

### 4. MINIMUM COST MODEL

#### Observations

- ◆ The panel was concerned that 150 contracted, sworn officers may not be adequate to support both bus and rail operational requirements.
- ◆ This model supports the Los Angeles MTA budget goals and provides a heightened level of security personnel visibility.
- ◆ A need for station agents is supposed in this model.

#### Recommendations (if Los Angeles MTA supports this model)

- ◆ Requirements for a dedicated, sworn force are likely higher than outlined in this model, to adequately support bus and rail operations.
- ◆ Station agents may be required only if a barrier system is adopted within portion(s) of the system.



## 5. BALANCED COST & SERVICE MODEL

### Observations

- ◆ A mix of sworn and non-sworn units would provide a higher level of support and visibility.
- ◆ Expanding the number of non-sworn officers will provide a heightened level of attention to “quality of life” issues such as loitering, unacceptable behaviors, etc.
- ◆ This model offers greater control by Los Angeles MTA over its security forces.
- ◆ The panel is unsure of the ROI for the agency’s current format of fare inspection.
- ◆ Again, this model supposes a need for station agents.
- ◆ This model, while preferable, could be further adjusted to accommodate additional cost efficiencies.

### Recommendations (if Los Angeles MTA supports this model)

- ◆ An effective model may require 200 sworn positions, with an adjustment to the 687 baseline positions.
- ◆ Station agents may be required only if barriers are adopted within portion(s) of the system.

### III. SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL

Within the scope of the peer review, the management of Los Angeles MTA also requested the panel provide brief comments on several safety/ security related considerations currently under review by the agency. These issues include the following.

1. Fare collection barriers
2. Establishment of a 5% Passenger Safety and Security Fund
3. Establishment of a Transit Adjudication Bureau

With respect to these issues, the panel offers the following comments.

1. Fare Collection Barriers

The consideration in this proposal is whether to change from the current “honor fare / proof of payment” format to installation of fare collection equipment, such as turnstiles or other that would create barriers.

It is the view of the panel that barriers may be more appropriate for operations on the red line as barrier systems are more conducive to closed environments (subways). Experiences at systems with barriers indicate there is a return on investment (fare evasion). Some individuals may have the perspective that barriers create a problem during emergency evacuations. The fact is that barriers can be placed in an open mode during an emergency. The panel notes that barriers do add a perception of security; however, the installation of barriers typically requires on-site staff support and inherently means additional staffing cost.

2. Establishment of a 5% Passenger Safety and Security Fund

The consideration in this proposal is to implement a 5% fare surcharge on baseline fares as a means to developing an alternate source of funding. This additional funding would be used to offset increased costs associated with providing security related services and resources.

The panel perspectives on this concept were varied. From the supportive viewpoint, some panel members noted the following.

- The events of 9/11 and both the Madrid and London bombings clearly contributed to Los Angeles MTA putting additional resources into security while other areas of the Los Angeles MTA budget were constrained. With security costs continuing to rise, and without alternate sources of operational funding for security, it would be logical to address these additional costs through a nominal increase in the fare structure.

- Los Angeles MTA is currently experiencing a relatively low fare box recovery ratio. Any initiative to increase revenue would be beneficial.
- It is clear that some industries, such as airlines, have passed along added costs of security to their customers via surcharges.

From the cautionary perspective, some panel members noted the following.

- Regardless of the reason, a fare increase will still be viewed as an increase and may result in negative customer response, and possible loss of some marginal ridership.
- If such a fare increase were to be implemented, there would be customer expectation that additional security apparently would be needed.
- A security surcharge may not be required if Los Angeles MTA adopts one of the alternate models for security that can function with a reduced budget format.
- If this concept is supported by Los Angeles MTA, it may be advisable to incorporate this increase into a scheduled general fare increase so the customer does not experience multiple increases.

### 3. Establishment of a Transit Adjudication Bureau

Consideration of this proposal is based on current Los Angeles MTA experience wherein processing of citations issued on behalf of the agency become problematic to the court system, and further adds to “clogging” up the courts. The proposal, if implemented, would create a separate “Transit Adjudication Bureau” established solely for the purpose of processing Los Angeles MTA citations.

On this issue, the panel members were collectively supportive. The panel comments on this proposal included the following.

- In the experience of the panel members the courts, by virtue of other priorities, do not have the capacity to provide adequate support to the more minor offenses that arise through transit-related citations.
- Establishing an Adjudication Board would enable Los Angeles MTA to implement consistent application of reviews and enforcement. This mechanism could also result in an increased flow of revenue for Los Angeles MTA.
- Establishing such a Board would reinforce a strong message that Los Angeles MTA places high importance on the safety, security, and comfort of its customers and that also has a “zero tolerance” for fare evasion, thereby discouraging repeat offenders.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on panel perspective, the LASD and LAPD have a responsibility to provide some form of basic policing service to Los Angeles MTA and the public that uses Metro, as part of the agency's community mandates.

Within all the models presented, staffing levels and resources are not supported by a corresponding needs analysis. Staffing resources identified in the models may be in excess of reasonable and effective operational requirements. While security and police staffing levels of other agencies can provide some measure of guidance, there is a need to recognize that Los Angeles MTA operates within a very large geographical area that presents needs and issues that may differ from other agencies.

Regardless of which model is adopted, Los Angeles MTA should consider establishing a Los Angeles MTA management position to provide clear control and oversight over Metro security services.

Of the models reviewed, model #5 (Balanced Cost & Service Model) most closely reflects the appropriate organization and staffing level for both security services and cost effectiveness. Contract management controls require strengthening and are a key element to security program success.

A mechanism is needed to both measure and monitor the effectiveness of the Los Angeles MTA security program. Improvement in communication among Los Angeles MTA stakeholders is needed with regard to operational security needs and issues.

Security contract terms and conditions should be re-distributed to all relevant departments, and amendments / updates solicited. Updates to the "Scope of Work" should emphasize increased interaction with customers.

The status of fare evasion should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Format the next review of the policing contract to accommodate ongoing reviews and updates as may be required for changing needs and conditions. The panel suggests reviewing contractual provisions of detective services to determine if they are consistent with Los Angeles MTA needs.

Current efforts should be assessed to foster multi-jurisdictional support, attempting to "wean" the agency from *support in return for payment* only.

The response time for LASD support differs from Los Angeles MTA and LASD calculations.

## APPENDIX