



**LACMTA
In-House Public
Safety Department
Feasibility Study**

Final Report

June 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1989 and 1997, the LACMTA (i.e., Metro) and its predecessor agencies conducted numerous studies to establish an effective and efficient policing model. In 1996, the Metro Board opted to assimilate the existing MTA Transit Police Department (MTA PD) into the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and then contract with these agencies for transit policing services. In June 1997, the merger of 300 MTA PD officers was completed and the MTA PD was disbanded.

Currently, policing services are provided to Metro riders and employees through contracts with LAPD, LASD, and Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). In FY22, the actual Metro expenditures on policing contracts was \$154 million. The approved FY23 Metro budget for the policing contracts is \$172.9 million; a 12.3% increase from FY22 expenditures. These contracts were approved for five years with an optional one-year extension and are currently in their sixth and final year. In March 2023, the Metro Board authorized the negotiation and execution of contract modifications to extend the current contracts annually through June 30, 2026. In addition, the Board approved an assessment of the feasibility of establishing an in-house public safety department to support Metro's public safety mission and values statements.

Metro engaged Justice Research Consultants, LLC to prepare this feasibility study for developing a public safety department within Metro as a potential alternative to the existing multi-agency law enforcement services rendered by LAPD, LASD, and LBPD. The feasibility study identifies the law enforcement models of other large U.S. transit agencies and addresses the question of whether Metro can establish an in-house public safety department which will result in enhanced safety and security to Metro riders and employees at a reduced cost.

Metro's Layered Public Safety Ecosystem Components

As part of its reimagining public safety initiative, the safety of Metro riders and employees is viewed as part of an ecosystem of varied services that provide a comprehensive care-based approach to safety and security. In 2022, Metro established a comprehensive approach to ensuring public safety on the system by implementing a multi-layered safety program to address the different aspects of safety. Each layer in the public safety ecosystem adds value and enhances the overall security and safety of the Metro system. Instead of relying solely on a single strategy, a layered approach provides a more effective response to the safety issue by having the right response deployed to the safety concern. The six components of the ecosystem and their core responsibilities are noted below.

1) Contract Police - The core responsibilities of contract police are visibility, deterrence, and crime response.

2) Metro Transit Security– The core responsibilities of Metro transit security are fare and code of conduct enforcement, revenue protection, bus and rail security, employee escorts, and facility patrol (including opening and closing rail stations).

3) Contract Security – The core responsibilities of contract security are providing safety and security services at Metro rail stations, bus divisions, maintenance facilities, terminals, and parking lots.

4) Transit Ambassador Program– The core responsibilities of the transit ambassador program are customer information, security awareness, and visibility.

5) Homeless Outreach – The core responsibilities of homeless outreach are engagement with unhoused riders on the Metro system and connection to social and behavioral services.

6) Mental Health Crisis Outreach – The core responsibility of mental health crisis outreach is response to mental health crisis incidents.

TRANSIT POLICING MODELS

In this section, the FY23 staffing levels and costs for each of the Metro public safety ecosystem components is discussed as well as the police service models within large U.S. transit agencies.

FY23 Safety and Security Staffing Levels and Budgets

Table 1 illustrates the current number of budgeted personnel for each of the six public safety ecosystem components as well as their respective FY23 budget. This includes field personnel as well as supervisory, administrative, and support personnel. In addition, the number of personnel available for field and specialized unit deployment and the average number of personnel deployed in the field each day are provided.

The personnel and budget numbers were provided and validated by Metro personnel. They serve as the baseline in this report, since it is the current level of safety and security personnel provided for the Metro system.

The three contract agencies provide a total of 645 budgeted personnel to Metro. This includes 344 patrol officers/deputies, 82 officers/deputies assigned to specialized units, 70 patrol and specialized unit sergeants, and 149 administrative and support personnel, including detectives. Of the 344 patrol officers, an average of 263 officers are patrolling the Metro system daily. The 82 officers assigned to specialized units include K-9, homeless and mental health crisis outreach, community policing, and problem response.

Table 1: FY23 Safety and Security Staffing Levels and Budgets

Public Safety Ecosystem Component	FY23 Authorized Staffing Levels and Budgets			
	Number of Budgeted Personnel	Personnel Pool for Field/Patrol Deployment	Avg. Deployed Daily on System	Annual Budget (millions)
Contract Police	645	344	263	\$172.9
<i>Patrol Officers</i>	<i>344</i>			
<i>Specialized Unit Officers</i>	<i>82</i>			
<i>Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants</i>	<i>70</i>			
<i>Administrative/Support Staff</i>	<i>149</i>			
Metro Transit Security*	290	138	133	\$40.2
Contract Security	322	251	241	\$24.5
Transit Ambassador Program**	437	424	265	\$33.0
Homeless Outreach***	85	85	85	\$15.3
Mental Health Crisis Outreach****	30	30	-	\$10.0
Total	1,809	1,272	987	\$295.9

*Includes 30 SSLE non-contract staff

**Includes 2 Metro FTEs, 15 vendor program administrators, 359 transit ambassadors, 28 community intervention specialists, and 33 street team personnel

***The 85 total budgeted personnel, including supervisors, are all deployed in the field

****Metro staff has been unable to get responses to the RFP to fill the mental health crisis outreach teams.

Table 2 provides the number of personnel provided by each contract police agency. Metro contracts with LAPD for 290 total personnel. Of these personnel, 138 are patrol officers, 39 are police officers assigned to specialized units (e.g., K-9 Unit and Special Problems Unit), 32 are patrol and specialized unit sergeants, and 81 are administrative and support personnel, including detectives. An average of 138 LAPD patrol officers are deployed daily on the Metro system. Since LAPD patrol officers work for Metro on an overtime basis, the average number of daily deployable patrol personnel is the same as the available patrol personnel pool in Table 2.

Metro contracts with LASD for 326 total personnel. Of these personnel, 188 are patrol deputies, 41 are deputies assigned to specialized units (e.g., K-9 Unit and Mental Evaluation Team Unit), 34 are patrol and specialized unit sergeants, and 63 are administrative and support personnel, including detectives. An average of 115 LASD patrol deputies are deployed daily on the Metro system. Since LASD provides full-time patrol deputies, a total of 188 personnel is available for patrol deployment to provide 7 day a week deployment and cover personnel leave.

Metro contracts with LBPD for 29 total personnel. Of these personnel, 18 are patrol officers, 2 are police officers assigned to a specialized unit (i.e., Quality of Life Unit), 4 are patrol sergeants, and 5 are administrative and support personnel, including a detective. An average of 10 LBPD patrol officers are deployed daily on the Metro system.

Overall, on average, there are 263 police officers patrolling the Metro system daily.

Table 2: FY23 Contract Police Agency Personnel by Category

Contract Police Agency	FY23 Authorized Staffing Levels and Budgets		
	Number of Budgeted Personnel	Personnel Pool for Patrol Deployment	Avg. Patrol Deployed Daily on System
LAPD*	290	138	138
<i>Patrol Officers</i>	138		
<i>Specialized Unit Officers</i>	39		
<i>Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants</i>	32		
<i>Administrative/Support Staff</i>	81		
LASD	326	188	115
<i>Patrol Officers</i>	188		
<i>Specialized Unit Officers</i>	41		
<i>Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants</i>	34		
<i>Administrative/Support Staff</i>	63		
LBPD	29	18	10
<i>Patrol Officers</i>	18		
<i>Specialized Unit Officers</i>	2		
<i>Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants</i>	4		
<i>Administrative/Support Staff</i>	5		
Total	645	344	263

*Since LAPD patrol officers/sergeants work for Metro on an overtime basis, the number of daily deployable LAPD patrol personnel is the same as available personnel pool.

Policing Models in Large Transit Agencies

It is common for large transit agencies to have their own police department. These specialized police departments are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of passengers, employees,

and the transit system itself. In-house transit police proactively address the specific challenges and dynamics of transit environments.

Having an in-house police department allows transit agencies to have greater control and accountability over the safety and security of their services. It enables a more direct and immediate response to incidents, as well as a deeper understanding of the specific safety concerns and needs of the transit system. Transit police departments can develop specialized strategies and partnerships to address issues such as fare evasion, disorderly conduct, and other offenses that are unique to public transportation.

As illustrated in Table 3, six of the 10 largest U.S. transit agencies have a transit police department. Of those that do not, the Chicago Transit Authority utilizes contract police services provided by the Chicago Police Department, the San Francisco Municipal Railway receives police services through the San Francisco Police Department, LACMTA contracts with three law enforcement agencies, and King County Metro Transit receives police services through a contract with the Sheriff's Office. The remaining transit agencies have a transit police department.

However, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in New York utilizes a hybrid approach to police services by having a transit police department as well as contracting with a municipal police department. The 1,095 police officers within the MTA Police Department provide law enforcement services for Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station, and all MTA infrastructure (i.e., track, yards, shops, stations, and railroad crossings) of the Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road, and the Staten Island Railway. Complementary, the police officers assigned to the New York City Police Department Transit Bureau provide law enforcement services for the MTA subway lines, trains, and stations within New York City.

Table 3: Police Departments within Ten Largest U.S. Transit Agencies

Transit Agency	Unlinked Passenger Trips* 2019 (Thousands)	Has Transit PD	Number of Personnel
1) Metropolitan Transit Authority – New York City (NYCT)	3,451,139	✓	1,095 sworn & 56 non-sworn
2) Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)	455,743		
3) Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (LACMTA)	379,718		
4) Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	366,716	✓	264 sworn & 50 non-sworn
5) Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)	354,656	✓	468 sworn, 140 security guards & 101 non-sworn
6) Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)	308,266	✓	260 sworn & 10 non-sworn
7) New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT)	267,270	✓	250 sworn & 70 non-sworn
8) San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni)	223,338		
9) King County Metro Transit (KCMT)	128,666		
10) San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)	128,217	✓	206 sworn & 90 non-sworn

*American Public Transportation Association (APTA) defines unlinked passenger trips as “The number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.”

BENEFITS OF IN-HOUSE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Six primary benefits of an in-house transit public safety department are discussed below: cultural alignment; engaged visibility; fiscal sustainability; dedicated staffing; accountability & transparency; and response time.

Cultural Alignment

An agency’s mission and values can serve as the foundation for its practices, such as training, performance, discipline, and hiring. Cultural alignment with an organization’s mission and values is crucial for achieving success. An in-house public safety department can align culturally with Metro’s organizational mission and values. By having an in-house public safety department, Metro would have the authority to set required trainings, performance expectations, and disciplinary processes, and shape the recruitment and selection process to ensure the hiring of employees aligned with Metro’s mission and values. This will enable Metro to establish a solid foundation

for safety practices and ensure that public safety employees are working in alignment with Metro values. The Metro mission and values recognize that policing is not the only way to keep people safe which is reflected in the six components of the Metro public safety ecosystem.

Transit public safety officers work in a unique environment that requires specialized skills and knowledge. In addition to the mandatory basic law enforcement training required by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Metro transit officers would be required to take enhanced transit-specific training to include de-escalation, trauma-informed response, cultural diversity awareness, implicit bias, duty to intervene, crisis intervention, interpersonal communications, customer experience, and community engagement. The recently adopted Bias-Free Policing Policy and Public Safety Analytics Policy would also apply to the in-house public safety department.

Engaged Visibility

The OIG's audit reports over the past several years illustrate the persistent challenges with contract police services, including an inability to provide information on the following deployment metrics: number of train and bus boardings, how much time is spent riding trains and buses, and how much time is spent at train stations. The report also found that deployment practices "provide little visible security presence on the Metro Bus System." Many of the deployment challenges with contract police services are intractable, recurring year after year in the annual OIG audit reports, without remedy. These challenges have included poor police visibility on buses, trains, and at stations as well as inconsistent staffing at key critical infrastructure locations.

These issues are more readily addressed with an in-house public safety department, which can adopt a policing style that emphasizes service and allows the transit agency to manage deployment locations and times directly. Due to a greater degree of oversight, accountability, and control over police resources with an in-house public safety department, Metro can increase service provision to riders and employees. Transit policing is different from local policing, with the former emphasizing "engaged visibility" and the latter emphasizing response to calls for service. Commonly, an emphasis on "engaged visibility" leads to the provision of service, while an emphasis on responding to calls for service leads to law enforcement.

The primary objective of a transit public safety department is engaged visibility. By having a dedicated public safety department, Metro can better manage the officer's role to be visible on the system and proactively engage and build relationships with the riding community, while still being able to respond to calls for service as needed.

The purpose of engaged visibility is to foster trust, promote positive police-community relationships, and enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts. By being present and

involved throughout the Metro system, officers can gain a better understanding of the concerns of riders and employees, build rapport, and establish open lines of communication. This can lead to improved collaboration, increased community support, and more effective crime prevention and problem-solving initiatives.

Fiscal Sustainability

One of the challenges faced by Metro today in providing contract police services is the rising cost of those services. Over the past several years, Metro has experienced significant cost increases for police services. Initially awarded for five years at \$645.6 million, the multi-agency law enforcement services contract awarded to LBPd, LAPD, and LASD in 2017 has been modified seven times, increasing the total contract value to \$916.5 for the six-year contract period ending on June 30, 2023.

The recent procurement yielded significantly higher bids valued at \$1.48 billion for a 5-year period (FY24 – FY29) in contrast to the Independent Cost Estimate of \$829.5 million. The significantly higher bids are partially due to coverage needed for the continued expansion of the Metro service area (i.e. new rail lines) and the cost structure where all LAPD costs are charged at an overtime rate rather than a straight time rate.

However, the cost for contract police services is escalating at an unsustainable rate. In comparison, Metro OMB estimates an average annual increase of about 5% with an in-house public safety department. This includes increases for wages, fringe benefits, insurance, workers' compensation, liability, non-labor costs, administrative and overhead allocation, and wages for on-board training.

One of the advantages of an in-house public safety department is that it provides greater control over costs while still providing high-quality police services that meet the needs of Metro customers and employees. The consolidation of law enforcement contract services into a single, in-house public safety department presents significant opportunities for enhancing efficiency and reducing expenses. Currently, Metro's multi-agency model results in unnecessary duplication of management and administrative efforts. Each of the three law enforcement agencies performs identical support functions. The savings resulting from the elimination of duplicated services can be reinvested into the system.

In addition, such a consolidation effort could improve the overall consistency of service delivery. Multiple agencies can result in conflicting approaches to policing strategies throughout the system. This can lead to confusion, inconsistency, and inefficiency in service delivery. However, by consolidating under a single leadership structure, Metro can ensure more streamlined and unified directives. Through an in-house public safety department, Metro can eliminate redundancy, streamline communication, and provide better resource allocation.

Prior industry studies and assessments reflect that the cost of an in-house transit public safety department in the U.S. is typically 20-40% less than contract police services. To test this expectation of decreased costs with a new in-house Metro public safety department, a budget was developed in a later section of this report. The salaries for the myriad positions, with their fully burdened rates, were identified, along with the costs for training, equipment, and retirement benefits. In addition, costs for liability, insurance, and workers' compensation were estimated by Metro Risk Management and an administrative and overhead allocation was estimated by Metro OMB.

Typically, space, vehicles, and equipment are among the costliest acquisitions for a new public safety department. Currently, Metro provides space, vehicles, and equipment for the contract law enforcement agencies which can be used for the new in-house public safety department, resulting in minimal start-up costs. Even at a time in which the Metro rail system is expanding to include the Regional Connector, Purple Line extension, and Airport Connector, the cost of policing services would not necessarily increase with an in-house public safety department.

Dedicated Staffing

Additionally, an internal department fosters a stronger sense of ownership regarding safety and security on the transit system. Dedicated staff stationed at assigned locations, terminals, and aboard trains and buses can engage with riders and employees consistently and will get to know Metro riders and employees.

In contrast, currently, all 138 LAPD daily patrol officers are selected through a random, blind lottery system to work in an overtime capacity. Consequently, some officers may work overtime shifts only on a monthly or annual basis, depending on their preferences, which means they do not have the opportunity to learn the nuances of policing on a transit system or get to know riders and employees.

An average of 115 LASD patrol deputies assigned to its Transit Services Bureau are deployed daily. Since these deputies are dedicated to the Metro system, personnel leave is covered through relief patrol personnel or overtime which ensures full staffing on each shift. However, the OIG audit report stated: "The visible presence of LASD contracted law enforcement personnel on the Metro System is very limited." This is due to the deployment of LASD patrol deputies in vehicles, as opposed to foot patrol, because of the need to respond to calls for service. According to the OIG audit report, LASD patrol deputies are assigned to ride trains on only 12 of the 178 weekly shifts. The opportunity for LASD patrol deputies to engage with Metro riders and employees is minimal with its current deployment method.

An average of 10 LBPD patrol officers are assigned to Metro daily. LBPD offers a hybrid approach to Metro assignment with some of these officers being permanently assigned to work the Metro

system and the remaining officers supplementing coverage on an overtime basis. In addition, specialized services such as K-9 (as needed) and motorcycle patrol are provided by LBPD on an overtime basis.

A key strength of an in-house public safety department is that it can provide more control and customization over the services provided, Metro can tailor the public safety department to its specific needs and priorities. Having an in-house public safety department may create a stronger sense of community and accountability, as the officers are directly employed and are accountable to Metro and the riders they serve.

Accountability & Transparency

Moreover, an in-house public safety department enhances transparency and accountability allowing for immediate access to real-time crime data that can be consistently reported. Real-time data empowers Metro to identify patterns and trends in criminal activity, enabling the adjustment of strategies and tactics proactively to prevent future incidents.

Metro could also consider establishing a citizen's oversight committee to provide an independent avenue for complaints, consistent with the public safety mission and values. Metro would also be able to hold officers accountable for performing in accordance with Metro policies and have the authority to conduct disciplinary action, such as removing officers from working the system, if necessary. An oversight committee would serve as a valuable mechanism for promoting accountability, transparency and trust between a public safety department and the community it serves. By involving citizens in the oversight process, the committee would contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve policing practices and enhance community engagement.

Response Time

Response time to calls for service is dependent on having police officers geographically disbursed throughout the Metro system so they are able to respond rapidly to emergency calls for service. Emergency calls can involve crimes in-progress and incidents that put riders and employees in imminent danger. These incidents are critical, where minutes, and even seconds, can have a major impact on the outcome of the incident. Rapid response to emergency calls for service can decrease injuries suffered by the victim, increase the probability of arrest of the suspect at the scene of the offense, decrease property loss and destruction, and de-escalate the situation due to officer presence.

The annual OIG audit reports have consistently identified concerns regarding the deployment of police personnel on the Metro system. When police resources are not adequately deployed,

response times increase. With an in-house public safety department, Metro will have control over the deployment of its police resources and may be able to improve response times.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

In this section, the in-house public safety department model is presented as well as an enhanced safety and security model which reinvests costs savings for moving away from contract law enforcement into other Metro public safety ecosystem components.

In-House Public Safety Department Model

This study aimed to assess the feasibility of creating a public safety department within Metro, addressing the pivotal question: *Can Metro establish an in-house public safety department that will result in enhanced police services to Metro riders and employees at a reduced cost?*

By assuming direct management and control over law enforcement service, Metro gains the ability to allocate resources, optimize staffing levels, and significantly reduce unnecessary expenses associated with contracted services. This in-house approach ensures a leaner and more efficient utilization of resources. In short, this study found that through the implementation of an in-house public safety department, Metro could see substantial cost savings compared to reliance on contract services.

To effectively illustrate a consolidated in-house public safety department, a detailed personnel structure was developed to demonstrate an efficient and comprehensive public safety department. As illustrated in Table 4, an in-house public safety department could require 464 personnel dedicated to the provision of police services. This includes 290 patrol officers, 52 specialized unit officers (e.g., K-9, problem response, and community policing), 39 patrol and specialized unit sergeants, and 83 administrative/support staff, including detectives. Of the 83 administrative and support personnel, 17 are command staff personnel, 3 are sergeants, 9 are detectives, 8 are specialized assignment officers, and 46 are non-sworn support personnel.

Under the current contract law enforcement system, 426 officers are assigned to patrol or specialized units. Under the in-house public safety department model, this number has been reduced to 342 as illustrated in Table 4. The reduction is due largely to the expected minimal deployment of two officer units under the in-house model. Currently, the contract police officers are almost exclusively deployed as two officer/deputy units. Two officer units should be strategically deployed based on conditions and initiatives, but overall, they should be minimally utilized. By reducing the use of two officer units, the in-house public safety department model will not only be able to reduce the overall number of police personnel but increase system coverage in comparison to current contract deployment practices.

The in-house public safety department model also significantly reduces the number of administrative/support personnel from 149 under the current contract services model to 83 (see Table 4). Therefore, the administrative overhead to operate an in-house public safety department is less costly. In addition, Metro currently provides the contract law enforcement agencies with facilities, vehicles, and equipment which can be used by the in-house public safety department, significantly reducing start-up costs.

Table 4: Number of In-House Public Safety Department Personnel

Personnel Category	Number of Budgeted Personnel
Patrol Officers	290
Specialized Unit Officers	52
Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants	39
Administrative/Support Staff	83
<i>Police Detective</i>	9
<i>Police Officer – Specialized Assignment (e.g., training, recruitment, & backgrounds)</i>	8
<i>Police Sergeant</i>	3
<i>Police Lieutenant</i>	10
<i>Police Captain</i>	4
<i>Police Assistant Chief</i>	2
<i>Police Chief</i>	1
<i>Crime & Intelligence Analyst</i>	8
<i>Management Analyst</i>	12
<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	9
<i>Administrative Clerk</i>	17
Total	464

To test the expectation of decreased costs with an in-house public safety department, an estimated budget was developed based on the personnel categories depicted in Table 4. Salaries, burdened rates, training and equipment costs, and retirement benefits were budgeted at \$100.8 million. Metro Risk Management estimated the annual costs for insurance (\$20 million), workers' compensation (\$3.1 million), and general liability (\$2.9 million) for operating a public safety department. The general liability costs align with the same for BART PD. Over the past 6 years, BART PD has averaged \$2 million per year for third party liability claims and lawsuits filed against the District for police actions. In addition, Metro OMB estimated costs for administrative overhead allocation (\$6.3 million) and on-board training wages (\$2.3 million).

As illustrated in Table 5, it is estimated the total annual budget for a Metro public safety department will be \$135.4 million if Metro were to implement one today. The estimated budget for an in-house public safety department is 21.7% less than the \$172.9 million that Metro has budgeted for policing contracts in FY23. Therefore, cost savings from a Metro public safety department in comparison to contract police services are expected.

The in-house public safety department model presented in Table 5 maintains the FY23 personnel levels and budgets for the other five components of the Metro public safety ecosystem. It only changes the personnel levels and budget for police services. As indicated, the costs decrease \$37.5 million per year.

Table 5: In-House Public Safety Department Model – Personnel and Budgets

Public Safety Ecosystem Component	FY23 Staffing and Budget Model		In-House Public Safety Department Model	
	Number of Personnel	Annual Budget (millions)	Number of Personnel	Annual Budget (millions)
Police	645	\$172.9	464	\$135.4
<i>Patrol Officers</i>	344		290	
<i>Specialized Unit Officers</i>	82		52	
<i>Patrol/Specialized Unit Sergeants</i>	70		39	
<i>Administrative/Support Staff</i>	149		83	
Metro Transit Security	290	\$40.2	290	\$40.2
Contract Security	322	\$24.5	322	\$24.5
Transit Ambassador Program	437	\$33.0	437	\$33.0
Homeless Outreach	85	\$15.3	85	\$15.3
Mental Health Crisis Outreach	30	\$10.0	30	\$10.0
Total	1,809	\$295.9	1,628	\$258.4

Enhanced Safety and Security Model

Metro riders and employees are concerned about their safety. The need for safety is a fundamental human need, but it is recognized that safety has differential meanings for individuals. In the survey discussed in the Metro Customer Experience Plan 2022, participants expressed concern about their safety at bus stops and train stations as well as on buses and trains, especially at night. Overall, out of the 40 service factors rated by Metro riders, all but one of the bottom ranked issues involve safety. The bottom ranked issues are below.

- Presence of security staff on *buses* and *trains*
- Enforcement of Metro rules on *trains*
- Personal security on Metro *trains* and *buses* at night
- Personal security at Metro *train stations* and *bus stops* at night
- How well Metro addresses homelessness on *buses* and *trains*
- Shade at bus stops

Safety related findings from a survey completed in summer 2021, which included both customers and employees, found that women and nonbinary individuals tend to feel less safe than men on the Metro system. This was further illustrated in Metro's *Understanding How Women Travel* report (2019) which stated:

Women feel unsafe on public transit, and it is impacting how often they ride, when they ride, and if they ride at all. Among women, safety on transit is a top concern voiced across every mode of data collection, and their concerns center around harassment and personal security, as well as physical safety and design of vehicles, stations, and stops. ***These concerns collectively obstruct women's freedom of movement*** [emphasis added].

The results of the customer experience survey illustrated that most riders support both additional armed and unarmed security personnel throughout the Metro system. Over 60% of the riders surveyed want additional armed security officers, and this result is consistent across all racial/ethnic groups. In addition, over 70% of the riders surveyed want additional unarmed security officers. Furthermore, of the Metro employees surveyed, ***39% reported feeling safe rarely or never.***

By adopting an in-house public safety department model, Metro can leverage the potential \$37.5 million in savings to enhance the current public safety ecosystem. This approach will not only create a stronger and more efficient safety framework but also allows Metro to reallocate its resources in a proactive and cost-effective manner that aligns with agency safety priorities. This will ultimately lead to a safer and more secure transit experience for riders and employees.

The availability of these savings opens avenues for enhancing safety and security measures in various ways. For instance, investing a portion of the savings into hiring additional Metro transit security and contract security would enhance Metro's efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment, protect people and property, and deter criminal activities. Furthermore, allocating additional resources towards homeless outreach programs could further help address the complex challenges faced by Metro to provide a care response to social issues specifically related to individuals experiencing homelessness, untreated mental health, and addiction issues within the

transit system. Additionally, the Metro ambassador program provides welcome customer service, helps customers feel safer aboard trains and buses and on platforms, helps de-escalate any potential situations, and serves as eyes and ears on the system that were previously not there. Providing additional resources for each of these components is discussed below.

Transit Security

Since the role of Metro transit security has evolved into a customer-facing role, additional personnel can be utilized which not only reflects the responsibility for fare and code of conduct enforcement but also the need to increase security and visibility throughout the Metro system. Transit security should adopt the primary objective of engaged visibility as discussed regarding transit policing. Transit security should positively interact with Metro riders and employees and provide a deterrent to crime and disorder. Strategic deployment throughout the Metro system including critical infrastructure locations as well as the bus and rail system is needed.

Metro could consider an increase in the number of Metro transit security personnel from the 290 positions that are currently budgeted, to 432. Of these 142 additional personnel, 128 include transit security officers that would be deployed on the Metro system including 38 additional officers for code of conduct compliance initiatives, 32 additional officers for bus riding teams, 30 additional officers for a visible security presence at Union Station, and 28 additional officers for rail riding teams. The remaining 14 additional personnel include 11 transit security sergeants, 2 lieutenants, and 1 captain. The estimated annual budget for enhanced staffing levels for Metro transit security would be \$60.9 million based on the FY23 budget.

Contract Security

Within the enhanced safety and security model, the number of contract security officers could increase from 322 to 394 to support rail system growth. Of the 72 additional contract security officers, 18 officers would be assigned to the Regional Connector, 42 officers would be assigned to the Purple Line extension, and 12 officers would be assigned to the Airport Connector. The estimated annual budget for enhanced contract security would be \$29.9 million based on the FY23 budget.

Transit Ambassador Program

Under the enhanced safety and security model, the number of ambassador program staff could increase from 437 to 501. The increase in staffing allows for broader deployment of staff riding trains and buses across the system. The 64 additional personnel allow for the deployment of 36 additional transit ambassadors on the bus and rail systems. It also provides 28 transit ambassadors for the deployment of “surge teams” to support special operations such as the Drug-Free Metro campaign, as well as support for unexpected service disruptions or planned sporting or

entertainment events, without disrupting coverage across the system. The increase could also help support service expansion. The estimated annual budget for enhanced transit ambassador program personnel would be \$37.8 million based on the FY23 budget.

Homeless Outreach/Crisis Response

Metro’s homeless services program is a key component of the multi-layered public safety model. The expansion of outreach services would be a critical component of standing up an in-house public safety department. With the enhanced safety and security model, Metro could increase the number of homeless outreach personnel from the current 85 personnel to 118. Homeless outreach personnel are deployed in multidisciplinary teams which consist of an outreach worker, a case manager, and several specialized personnel such as an addiction specialist, mental health worker, or medical personnel. The increase in homeless outreach personnel could improve Metro’s ability to compassionately engage with unhoused riders and connect them with social and behavioral services. The estimated annual budget for enhanced homeless outreach personnel would be \$21.2 million based on the FY23 budget.

As illustrated in Table 6, the current FY23 public safety staffing and budget model includes 1,809 personnel and a budget of \$295.9 million. The enhanced safety and security model which includes an in-house public safety department provides 1,939 personnel and a budget of \$295.2 million. By strategically reallocating resources, Metro can not only strengthen its safety priorities but also create a safer and more secure transit experience for all.

Table 6: Public Safety Service Delivery Models – Personnel and Budgets

Public Safety Ecosystem Component	FY23 Staffing and Budget Model		In-House Public Safety Department Model		Enhanced Safety and Security Model	
	Number of Personnel	Annual Budget (millions)	Number of Personnel	Annual Budget (millions)	Number of Personnel	Annual Budget (millions)
Police	645	\$172.9	464	\$135.4	464	\$135.4
Metro Transit Security	290	\$40.2	290	\$40.2	432	\$60.9
Contract Security	322	\$24.5	322	\$24.5	394	\$29.9
Transit Ambassador Program	437	\$33.0	437	\$33.0	501	\$37.8
Homeless Outreach	85	\$15.3	85	\$15.3	118	\$21.2
Mental Health Crisis Outreach	30	\$10.0	30	\$10.0	30	\$10.0
Total	1,809	\$295.9	1,628	\$258.4	1,939	\$295.2

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICE DELIVERY SUMMARY

Table 6 compares the three staffing and budget models developed in this report.

The FY23 staffing and budget model includes the current number of *authorized/budgeted* personnel for each of the six public safety ecosystem components and the FY23 budget for each. Overall, there are 1,809 positions with an annual budget of \$295.9 million.

The in-house public safety department model reduces the number of police personnel by 181, from the FY23 staffing and budget model of 645 to 464 and maintains the current level of staffing and budget for each of the other five public safety ecosystem components. The total number of positions is 1,628 with an annual estimated budget of \$258.4 million. The estimated annual budget has been reduced by \$37.5 million in comparison to the FY23 current budget.

The enhanced safety and security model builds upon the in-house public safety department model by leveraging the potential \$37.5 million in savings to enhance the current public safety ecosystem. The total number of personnel has increased from 1,628 in the in-house public safety department model to 1,939 in the enhanced safety and security model. In sum, 311 personnel are added to the Metro public safety ecosystem including 142 transit security personnel, 72 contract security personnel, 64 transit ambassador program personnel, and 33 homeless outreach personnel. The estimated budget for the 1,939 personnel is \$295.2 million - \$700,000 less than the FY23 current budget of \$295.9.

CONCLUSION

This feasibility study report concludes with a discussion of the challenges with developing an in-house public safety department and Metro's legal authority to have its own police department.

In-House Public Safety Department Challenges

It is important to discuss the challenges Metro will face if it develops an in-house public safety department. The challenges include liability, personnel recruitment and retention, and establishing and maintaining in-house specialized units.

Liability

There are financial risks associated with lawsuits against the police. The most common lawsuits regarding the interaction between a police officer and an individual involve the use of force and the operation of motor vehicles. Since transit policing differs from municipal and county policing, the threat of liability is reduced. This is primarily due to the clearly defined area of responsibility

associated with transit policing, which minimizes exposure to the types of incidents that lead to lawsuits against the police.

The use of force is the most common basis for a lawsuit. Use of force most commonly occurs during arrests. Transit police departments make far fewer arrests than municipal and county agencies, thus limiting liability exposure. Regarding Metro, there were about 2,800 arrests in 2022, in comparison to over 255 million riders for the same year. In addition, transit police officers are commonly assigned to foot patrol instead of vehicles, which reduces potential liability for traffic related claims. Because of these two factors, transit policing carries less liability risk than municipal and county policing.

Of note, over the last six years of the law enforcement contracts, LAPD has had three officer involved shootings and no transit-related lawsuits, LASD has had two officer involved shootings and no transit-related lawsuits, and LBPd has had zero officer involved shootings and one transit-related lawsuit. Over the last decade, Metro's transit security officers have not discharged their weapons and no transit-related lawsuits.

Furthermore, Metro Risk Management estimates the annual costs for general liability for an in-house public safety department at \$2.9 million. For comparison, over the past 6 years, BART PD has averaged \$2 million per year for third party liability claims and lawsuits filed against the District for police actions.

Personnel Recruitment and Retention

It is recognized that each component of the Metro public safety ecosystem faces recruitment challenges including Metro contract providers such as contract security, homeless outreach, and mental health crisis outreach. Regarding police departments specifically, most large police departments throughout the U.S. are having difficulty attracting, hiring, and retaining police officers. To be competitive in the labor market, a Metro public safety department would require a multifaceted approach that considers the unique needs and expectations of the labor market.

Of note, lateral transfers are not expected due to pension compatibility issues. To be competitive in the labor market, Metro would need to develop proactive recruitment strategies that would attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates. This could involve targeted advertising and outreach efforts to reach potential candidates who prioritize social impact and a service-oriented environment. By implementing these strategies and offering favorable compensation, Metro could attract and retain a qualified and motivated workforce that is committed to serving riders and employees.

The development of a large fully staffed police department typically takes 3-5 years. This timeframe is feasible in the context of Metro's current policing contracts, which can be extended

for up to 3 years and can be modified at any time, in whole or in part, as Metro implements new public safety programs. Therefore, as Metro public safety officers are released from field training, a commensurate decrease in contract police services can occur, thus ensuring full police staffing on the Metro system as the transition to an in-house public safety department occurs.

Establishing and Maintaining In-House Specialized Units

In large law enforcement agencies, specialized units serve crucial roles. They bring a level of expertise and dedicated focus that's typically beyond the scope of regular police duties. However, establishing and maintaining these specialized units within Metro could present challenges. Each of these units requires officers with specific training, skills, and competencies as well as experienced leadership and management for each of these units. This means Metro will need to invest in extensive, ongoing training and new hiring to fill these roles adequately. It can take time to fully operationalize these specialized units, during which Metro may have to rely on external support. In addition to personnel training, each of these units requires unique resources and specialized equipment. Procuring, maintaining, and updating such equipment can add budget costs.

Legal Authorization to Establish a Metro Public Safety Department

The enabling legislation for Metro to have its own police department exists in the State of California Public Utilities Code Section 30504. However, the enabling legislation uses the term “district”, referring to the Southern California Rapid Transit District which is a predecessor agency of Metro. The legislation should be changed to reflect the agency’s current name and mirror the enabling legislation for the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Police Department which, unlike the current language that applies to Metro, does not include specific position requirements for the Chief of Police and does not have outdated time requirements related to police officer certifications.

Appendix

Metro Board of Directors Question Responses

This appendix includes the questions raised by Metro Board members about the law enforcement feasibility study during the March 23, 2023 Board meeting. The responses are provided by Wanda Dunham Consulting.

Questions from Board Member Karen Bass

Overall question - How do transit agencies across the nation do in-house law enforcement?

1) When did those in-house law enforcement departments form and how long have they existed?

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), numerous transit police departments were established more than 40 years ago. Below is a list of transit police departments, the year they were established, and the number of years they have been in existence.

• MBTA-Boston, MA	1968	55 years
• Port Authority Allegheny County-Pittsburgh, PA	1968	55 years
• MTA-Baltimore, MD	1971	52 years
• BART-Oakland, CA	1972	51 years
• WMATA-Washington, DC	1976	47 years
• MARTA-Atlanta, GA	1977	46 years
• Greater Cleveland, OH RTA	1977	46 years
• Houston Metro-Houston, TX	1979	44 years
• SEPTA-Philadelphia, PA	1981	42 years
• DART-Dallas, TX	1989	34 years
• UTA-St. Lake City, UT	2002	19 years
• VIA-San Antonio, TX	2003	20 years
• RTD-Denver, CO	2004	19 years
• METRO RTA-Akron, OH	2017	6 years
• CAPMETRO-Austin, TX	2021	2 years

2) How are other transit agencies handling the national increase in homelessness and substance abuse?

In 2022, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) entered into an agreement with Downtown Dallas, Inc. to create a private-public partnership to address an increased homelessness issue in the downtown area.

Houston Metro launched a Homeless Action Team (HAT) in 2018 because they recognized a need to connect community members experiencing homelessness with several services. HAT officers have worked with the Metropolitan Council’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority to place more than 300 people in more permanent housing thanks to the HRA’s federally funded rental assistance program. Metro currently has six officers assigned to the HAT team.

In April 2021, as the vulnerable population increased on their system, SEPTA-Philadelphia launched its SCOPE program, a comprehensive and compassionate response to the challenges of the vulnerable population. SCOPE stands for: Safety, Cleaning, Ownership, and Partnership Engagement.

TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM (TCRP) SYNTHESIS 121

Research Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration in Cooperation with the Transit Development Corporation

Transit Agency Practices in Interacting with Who Are Homeless

Case examples provide additional details on challenges, solutions, partnerships, and lessons learned at six agencies:

- Fort Worth, Texas: Fort Worth Transportation Authority
- Madison, Wisconsin: Metro Transit
- Oakland, California: Bay Area Rapid Transit
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
- Phoenix, Arizona: Valley Metro
- Washington, D.C.: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Findings suggest that people who are homeless are an issue for transit agencies regardless of size, although larger agencies are more likely to characterize homelessness as a major issue. Successful policies target behavior rather than groups or individuals. Codes of conduct and consistent enforcement clarify agency expectations.

Findings also suggest that partnerships are essential, and that enforcement is necessary but not sufficient. People who are homeless are often incorrectly viewed as a homogeneous group. Case workers and others at social service and nonprofit agencies have a much greater understanding of people who are homeless, and they can persuade these individuals, who may initially be service-resistant, to accept services. Among survey respondents, law enforcement personnel from transit police or security departments consistently emphasized the need for partnerships and the options for these partnerships offered to their police officers. Transit agencies reported that partnerships result in enhanced customer security and perceptions, provision of help for those who need it, and increased sensitivity to the people and issues involved.

Transit agencies and their social service and nonprofit partners are experimenting with new approaches to interactions with people who are homeless. One promising practice is to set up drop-in centers staffed by social workers in transit facilities and stations. Initial results suggest that the ability to do client intake onsite at the transit station or center is very effective in persuading people who are homeless to seek and accept help.

Actions taken by transit agencies have resulted in enhanced safety and comfort for all customers. In addition, many respondents and nearly all case examples reported successful outcomes for specific individuals who are homeless, along with improved customer satisfaction. In the absence

of a broader societal fix for homelessness, agencies can (and deserve to) acknowledge their role in these success stories.

3) Do agencies combine law enforcement with social services and if so, how?

While crisis intervention is not a new concept, it is a relatively new concept for transit agencies. As a part of the recent pandemic, law enforcement agencies were in search of creative solutions to address mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse issues which were heightened due to reduced ridership. Agencies went in search of proven programs such as the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program. The CAHOOTS program has been in existence for over 30 years and has a proven record of success. CAHOOTS is a collaboration between local police and a community service group called White Bird Clinic in Eugene, Oregon. Others have also made a name for themselves such as the STAR (Support Team Assisted Response) program in Denver, Colorado. Their goal is to send the right people to help with crisis related calls.

Today, transit agencies are getting onboard with integrating mental health professionals into their agencies, such as the Houston Metro CARES unit which officially launched in 2021 and consists of 2 shifts with a police officer and clinician working together. Regional Transit District (RTD) Denver launched their program in 2019 with the assistance of grant funding and hired four mental health clinicians and 1 homeless outreach coordinator. Every transit agency has adopted a unique approach to the combination of social services and law enforcement officers. For example, at RTD Denver and Houston Metro their mental health clinicians are paired with law enforcement officers.

4) Did they start as pure law enforcement or were they combined with social services to begin with?

In 2021, CAPMETRO-Austin launched its multi-phased public safety approach with the addition of 4 mental health clinicians, 15 ambassadors and established a new in-house Police Department. The clinicians, ambassadors and law enforcement are all separate with their own supervisors who report up to the head of the Public Safety Division.

5) How are these agencies' law enforcement officers trained?

All law enforcement officers are required to comply with accredited training through the state Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The current requirement for the Basic POST certification to become a certified Peace Officer in CA is a minimum of 664 hours which covers 42 separate areas of instruction.

The following colleges and law enforcement academies offer Basic POST Academy Training in the Los Angeles area:

Sheriff's Departments:

- Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County

Colleges:

- Rio Hondo College
- Golden West College

Police academy time frame ranges from 22-24 weeks depending on location. Upon completion of the Basic Peace Officer Course, agencies will provide a field officer training process to familiarize the officers with the Metro system. In addition, they will provide expanded transit specific training with a care-based focus to include mental health crisis intervention, anti-bias, de-escalation, conflict resolution, and exceptional customer service training to align with Metro's core values.

6) Have the in-house forces been effective?

The number one benefit according to transit law enforcement agencies surveyed to having in-house police departments was it resulted in cost savings. The effectiveness of in-house police departments is difficult to answer, however, we could say that transit agencies are finding ways to enhance the existing security forces by introducing a re-imagined public safety model to address the needs of riders. The primary goal of transit systems should be for law enforcement to have engaged visibility. This objective is accomplished when police officers positively interact with riders and employees and provide a deterrent to crime and disorder.

When dealing with contract policing some of the more common complaints have included poor police visibility on buses, trains, and at stations, extended response times, and inconsistent staffing at key critical infrastructure locations. These issues are more readily addressed within an in-house transit police department.

In-house transit police departments are also enhanced through the adoption of a policing style which emphasizes service. Due to the decentralized nature of law enforcement in the U.S., police departments can adopt policing styles which fit the needs of the community. Transit policing is different than local policing with the former emphasizing engaged visibility and the latter emphasizing response to calls for service. Commonly, an emphasis on engaged visibility leads to the provision of service while an emphasis on responding to calls for service leads to law enforcement. A transit police department allows the agency to hire and train police officers who fit the service mission of the department.

Question from Board Member Fernando Dutra

1) Why was the prior Metro PD disbanded?

At the Metro Transit Policing Ad Hoc Committee, held on October 4, 1996, the merger of the MTA Transit Police Department with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) was approved. This would be known as the Transit Policing Partnership. As part of the MTA Transit Law Enforcement Transition Action Plan, MTA would transfer appropriate MTA police and security personnel, assets, and functions to the Transit

Policing Partnership except for the MTA's in-house security guards, with full implementation effective January 5, 1997. After several delays, the actual mergers occurred in November of that year.

According to the Board document, the purpose of the law enforcement merger was an opportunity to enhance the public service of all three agencies. Staff analyses had revealed that the partnership would be a significant enhancement of law enforcement service for the MTA and its passengers. At the same time, this consolidation of law enforcement agencies would be an enhancement of general law enforcement for the people of the City and County of Los Angeles.

Questions from Board Member Holly Mitchell

1) How are multidisciplinary teams incorporated?

For the multidisciplinary teams to be incorporated effectively, there would need to be a clearly defined deployment and operational plan created that would identify each of the areas roles and responsibilities and having adequate oversight and accountability to ensure that everyone is aligned and productive.

Transit agencies are searching for creative ways in which to enhance transit visibility and improve the perception of security. In 2020, MARTA launched its ambassador team with 15 non-sworn individuals to serve as additional eyes and ears for law enforcement and to perform duties that would free up sworn law enforcement officers to handle the more serious activities. MARTA ambassadors are called "Protective Specialist" and they are embedded within each of the police precincts and work within that zone to get to know the regular riders and create a community policing type rapport with the riders and gain the trust and camaraderie with the police officers they will be assisting. MARTA also created this position to serve as a pipeline for potential recruiting opportunities for those non-sworn community members who were looking for a job but did not meet the current law enforcement qualifications. Since the program's inception, several of the Protective Specialists have gone on to become sworn police officers with MARTA.

Also, in 2020, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) launched a new ambassador program deployed on trains to increase the presence of uniformed personnel on trains to address customers' concerns about safety and security. The unarmed ambassadors are recruited from the ranks of the BART Police Department's Community Service Officers, non-sworn personnel who perform a variety of police services. The ambassadors received additional de-escalation and anti-bias training before the program launched. The ambassadors are also trained to respond to customers' questions, complaints, or requests for service. They will observe and report and call upon an officer when enforcement is needed.

SEPTA moved uniformed ambassadors into place to help riders with no destination. According to SEPTA, their ambassadors work with those who need social services. They report that this is a

new effort to improve safety on SEPTA and designed to supplement police and help with unruly passengers and fare evaders.

2) What percentage of the total staff would be unarmed in a new Safety department?

Under the enhanced safety and security model option presented in the feasibility study, there will be 206 Transit Security Officer I positions (unarmed), 127 Transit Security Officer II positions (armed), and 15 Transit Senior Security Officer positions (armed) when Metro Transit Security is fully staffed. Of these 348 positions, 206 are unarmed (59.2%).

3) What training will they receive and how will they work with transit ambassadors?

This question was answered above regarding training. However, Metro transit police and the transit ambassadors can have an excellent working relationship. The supervisory teams for both units can collaborate on deployment needs and share information. Metro staff can participate in the orientation process for all new ambassadors.

4) How are they sourced/where they are recruited from?

For Metro to develop a professional transit police department, the unit must be able to attract and retain high quality personnel. To be competitive in the labor market, Metro will have to offer favorable incentives, salary and benefits comparable to that offered by the LAPD, LASD and other local law enforcement agencies.

Studies have shown that retired military personnel make excellent transit police officers due to the similarities of their duties of standing watch in the military. Therefore, the Metro police department can partner with Metro's existing military recruiter to help identify interested soldiers who may be approaching retirement or have a desire to leave the military but wish to remain in the area.

Existing law enforcement officers from neighboring departments who may have an interest in transit policing are another source. Existing Transit Security Officers II's or above may have a desire to transition to a sworn law enforcement position and meet all POST selection qualifications.

MTS will partner with internal communications and recruiting to develop a recruitment strategy to leverage their expertise and suggestions on innovative methods that could be used to garner qualified candidates.

5) What kinds of workforce development opportunities could flow from bringing more people into the agency, as opposed to contracted through our partners?

Having a Metro PD will allow Metro to provide people interested in a law enforcement career opportunities to pursue this interest. These opportunities could include community service officer,

cadet, and police explorer programs. Metro could also develop a unique workforce development opportunity to hire transit security officers and transition them into police officers.

6) Are there cost savings to this approach, and can those cost savings go toward more rider amenities like clean and secure bathrooms, more ambassadors, or spaces for vendors and entertainers to perform near the system?

Overall, it is estimated the total annual budget for a Metro PD will be \$135.4 million. The FY23 Metro budget for contract police services is \$172.9 million. Therefore, cost savings from a Metro PD in comparison to contract police services are expected. How cost savings are reallocated to other Metro initiatives will be determined by the Metro Board and the CEO.

Question from Board Member Tim Sandoval

1) Financial analysis

The FY23 Metro budget for contract police services is \$172.9 million. The feasibility report estimated the annual costs for a Metro PD at \$135.4 million.