



Metro

Board Report

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

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Agenda Number: 15.1.

FINANCE, BUDGET, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MAY 15, 2024

Motion by:

DIRECTORS HORVATH, HAHN, DUTRA, BUTTS, AND SOLIS, AS AMENDED BY BARGER

Enhancing Metro's Multi-Layered Public Safety Presence and Response Motion

Related to Item 15: Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Proposed Budget

In 2017, the Metro Board of Directors approved a multi-agency law enforcement contract for a five-year base period with a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$645 million. These contracts were amended seven times, including a one-year extension, for a total contract value of \$916,511,952 through June 30, 2023. Anticipating the expiration of the contracts, in April 2022 Metro initiated a competitive procurement for law enforcement services, which included Metro's new Public Safety Mission, a Statement of Values, and required adherence to the agency's Bias-Free Policing and Public Safety Data Analytics Policies.

A total of five proposals were received from four proposers in response to the procurement - Beverly Hills Police Department (BHPD), Long Beach Police Department (LBPD), Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). However, due to the proposed \$1.482B cost of the 5-year multi-agency contracts, material exceptions that were taken to Metro's Bias-Free Policing and Public Safety Data Analytics Policies, and the need for greater visibility and accountability Metro cancelled the Request for Proposals (RFP), extended modified versions of the current contracts, and initiated a feasibility analysis of creating an in-house Transit Public Safety Department that could serve as an effective approach to implementing Metro's reimagined public safety plan and uphold Metro's Public Safety Mission and Value Statements.

However, a year into the new multi-agency modified contracts, there remains outstanding questions about deployment practices, response times, jurisdictional responsibilities, and the efficacy of law enforcement's limited presence on the system. Contract law enforcement currently makes up a significant share of Metro's Security Services and Law Enforcement (SSLE) personnel, with 645 budgeted personnel positions and an average daily deployment of 263 contract police. And while law enforcement has increased train and bus rides, high visibility patrol checks, and explosive detection sweeps, among other operational functions, Angelenos continue to experience unacceptable levels of violence and criminal conduct on the system.

Over the last month we have seen assaults on bus drivers, including the stabbing of one operator in

Willowbrook; the fatal stabbing of Mirna Soza Arauz at Universal Station on her way home from work; and stabbings on the Florence Station platform, the A Line train en route to Union Station, the A Line's Sierra Madre station, at a bus stop on Line 115 headed eastbound on Firestone/Long Beach Boulevard, Bus Line 4 traveling westbound on Sunset Boulevard at Benton Way, and an aggravated assault on the A Line South Train at the Washington Station, among others. It is also important to note that on a system that serves as many people as LA Metro, these incidents are statistically small. As the LA Times Editorial Board recently wrote, "[the] vast majority of safety concerns cited by riders are about comfort and cleanliness, as well as code of conduct violations. Homeless people sleeping on the trains and buses. People experiencing mental health crises. Fare evasion. Drug use or people passed out from intoxication. Passengers playing loud music. These are prevalent throughout the system but not consistently addressed, which feeds into the sense of disorder." Metro's approach to addressing safety concerns must take all of this information into account in order for our actions to be meaningful.

Metro has made significant investments in a multi-layered, care-first approach to public safety, including an approximately 57 percent (\$69.2M) increase in the last two years to continue building out the ranks of homeless outreach and mental health professionals deployed on the system, as well as community intervention workers, transit ambassadors and transit security officers. Metro staff is expected to be returning to the Board in the near-term with a status update and finalized implementation strategy for the development of an in-house Transit Public Safety Department (2023-0324) that will include analysis of:

- The anticipated performance-level of the "standard" and "enhanced" deployment models presented in the previous feasibility study (2023-0286), in terms of system-wide coverage and the provision of a visible security and/or customer service presence.
- Best practices for system-wide coverage and deployment of law enforcement and non-law enforcement personnel from transit agencies nationally and internationally.
- Resources required to deploy a "best practices" model.
- Additional improvements in security technology, system hardening, interoperable communications, and deployment strategies currently underway or being contemplated for an in-house public safety department that may off-set the number of SSLE personnel required to effectively staff the system.

While this analysis will be critical to enhancing security on the system, and to continuing to build out a multi-layered public safety ecosystem that employs prevention and support, risk intervention, and response and enforcement in the long-term, there is an immediate need to address security concerns and ensure the system is safe and comfortable for riders and operators alike. Unfortunately, the increasing cost of the law enforcement contracts, and law enforcement's relatively limited scope and coverage has left significant gaps in the system. Metro's FY25 Proposed Budget includes \$194.1M for the law enforcement contracts, an \$18.3M (10.4%) increase over FY24, yet the number of personnel and deployments will remain at the current FY24 multi-agency level.

There is an immediate need to undertake an analysis of Metro's SSLE resources to ensure the law enforcement contracts are realizing the expected performance results, achieving the intended level of coverage, and increasing the public's confidence and trust in the system. This analysis should include consideration of whether a more effective model is available.

SUBJECT: ENHANCING METRO'S MULTI-LAYERED PUBLIC SAFETY PRESENCE AND RESPONSE MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Horvath, Hahn, Dutra, Butts, and Solis, as amended by Barger that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Invite the multi-agency law enforcement partners (LASD, LAPD, LBPD) to participate in a discussion about public safety on the Metro system at the June 2024 Board Meeting, to include, but not be limited to discussion of staffing and deployment levels; system-wide coverage and response times; interagency coordination; an analysis of high-profile incidences; and efforts to provide a safe and comfortable riding experience;
- B. Report back at the June 2024 Board Meeting with a per hour cost analysis for law enforcement personnel (LASD, LAPD, LBPD) transit security officers, private security and transit ambassadors, including an assessment of the number of security personnel, coverage levels, and visible staff presence to achieve optimal coverage and to address ongoing safety concerns; and

BARGER AMENDMENT:

- C. As part of the June discussion, the law enforcement partners shall be prepared to discuss an enhanced role, and how they would be able to exercise those roles and responsibilities in a way that ensures code of conduct violators are not criminalized.