Key Functions

The app fulfills several critical functions, making it a versatile and indispensable tool for Metro operation and security efforts, including:

- **Facilitating direct communication with Metro's Security Operations Center (SOC) for safety and security-related incidents through text messages or phone calls**. The SOC communicates directly with Metro Transit Security (MTS), private security officers and law enforcement partner agencies, People Assisting the Homeless, and other parts of the multi-layer strategy, allowing it to act as a central hub that coordinates the response to security incidents.

- **Informing Metro's security operations.** The desktop application logs every incident report submitted on the app and keeps track of response times to each report. This information is critical in identifying hotspots and determining deployment and other responses.

- **Collecting reports on maintenance issues affecting transit facilities, buses, and trains, helping keep our transit system clean, comfortable, and accessible for our customers.** Maintenance issues regarding graffiti, non-functioning equipment, such as elevators, escalators or lighting fixtures, litter, and general uncleanliness in Metro's buses, trains, and bus and rail stations are directly forwarded to the Maintenance and Engineering (M&E) Help Desk and M3 system, logged and queued to be addressed.

- **Directing resources to populations sheltering on the transit system**. It allows Metro to mobilize teams to locations where encampments or sheltering are reported to share available information and resources about housing assistance and social service programs to the unhoused population.

Continual Improvements to the Transit Watch App

Prior to 2020, Metro employed a third-party, off-the-shelf commercial product for the Transit Watch (TW) program. While functional, this solution posed several challenges regarding customization, flexibility, and cost. Although the system's primary reporting function was enabled, it soon became apparent that the dynamic nature of Metro's security operations required a more versatile tool that could be readily adapted to meet changing needs.

In 2019, Metro staff determined that the agency's Information Technology Services (ITS) department met the technical expertise, skills, and technology services required to deploy, update, and maintain the program as well as to quickly develop, implement, and test new features to meet emerging functional requirements. This shift reduced operating costs, but most importantly, it allowed Metro to tailor the system to address the agency's unique needs and ensure the flexibility to perform continuous development as new programs and operational procedures emerged. Initially, this led to the

integration of user profiles, categorized reporting, location, line and service information, as well as media and messaging communication.

More recently, the Transit Watch program was updated to integrate such initiatives as the Metro Ambassador Pilot Program and Subway Ancillary Safety effort. Contract Security extensively used Transit Watch to report issues in the subway ancillary areas, resulting in significant improvements in cleanliness and maintenance. New software implementations, like the integration with the agency's M3 system used for maintenance requests, will further streamline business process workflows pertaining to any reports of cleanliness and maintenance and significantly reduce manual processes for Metro's Maintenance and Engineering Help Desk staff.

Throughout the years, these improvements in both the user interface and administrative platform have led to a dramatic decrease in response time, defined as the time between when the Metro Security Operations Center receives an incident report and an initial response is transmitted by a Security Control Specialist, from an average of 4:07 minutes to a 31-second response time to confirm reports; all while experiencing an exponential growth in incident reports year over year.