



Board Report

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 21, 2024**

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY UPDATE ON TRANSIT COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT (TCPSPD) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. RECEIVING AND FILING the Quarterly Update on the Transit Community Public Safety Department (TCPSPD) Implementation Plan; and
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or their designee, to incorporate new job classifications into appropriate existing collective bargaining units, as determined by the CEO.

ISSUE

In alignment with Metro’s mission and comprehensive safety and security framework, staff has commenced implementing the plan to stand up Metro’s TCPSPD. This report serves as a status update to the Board.

BACKGROUND

At its June 2024 meeting, the Board adopted the TCPSPD Implementation Plan and approved the department's phased establishment over five years. The Board directed staff to report quarterly on the implementation progress.

Phase One (transition planning) activities include establishing a transition team, initiating executive recruitment of key personnel, starting with the Chief of Police position, initiating labor negotiations, and establishing a safety retirement plan with CalPERS, while facilitating community engagement to inform these efforts.

DISCUSSION

Following the Board's approval of the Implementation Plan, Metro’s CEO assembled an interdepartmental task force to support the program rollout. This task force is composed of members of Metro’s key departments, including Homeless Outreach Management and Engagement, Customer Experience, System Security and Law Enforcement, Chief People Office, Vendor/Contract

Management, the Office of the Chief of Staff, Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of the Inspector General. Additionally, the CEO brought on a consultant to oversee and coordinate all activities related to standing up the TCPSP. This team meets bi-weekly to achieve the work plan goals and objectives identified in the TCPSP Implementation Plan. A summary of updates from key components of the Phase 1 Work Plan are included below.

Transition Team Advisory Group

The initial steps toward establishing the TCPSP are well underway. The CEO has assembled an advisory board of highly qualified professionals to form the TCPSP Transition Team. This team will play a critical role in providing strategic guidance and supporting the transition to an in-house public safety department.

The advisory board's purpose is to support the TCPSP's transition through strategic advice on program development, training, and operational protocols. This team will support and guide Metro's leadership in developing a care-first public safety approach focused on reducing escalations, promoting trauma-informed responses, and aligning with Metro's public safety goals. The advisory board includes national experts from diverse fields, with extensive experience in law enforcement, mental health, social services, and public safety reform, (in alphabetical order):

- **Rosamaria Alamo:** Clinical social worker and USC professor with expertise in trauma-informed social services.
- **Carmen Best:** Former Seattle Police Chief known for her diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- **Maris Herold:** Award-winning Police Chief of Boulder, recognized for data-driven and reform-oriented approaches.
- **Scott Holder:** Retired Police Chief, led San Ramon's transition from County Sheriff services to its own police department.
- **Cecily Kahn:** Experienced psychologist specializing in mental health evaluations and therapeutic interventions.
- **Rick Ornelas:** Retired Sergeant with the Los Angeles School Police Department and public safety educator with USC's School of Social Work with a background in crisis intervention.
- **Connie L. Rice:** Civil rights activist and lawyer with experience working with Law Enforcement.
- **Jonathan Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.:** Mental health advocate focused on inclusive, community-based public health systems.

The advisory board is in the final stages of formalization. Members bring a wealth of expertise essential for crafting a comprehensive and sustainable transition plan for the TCPSP. Once convened, the team will begin monthly advisory sessions to review strategic planning, training design, and policy development, ensuring a smooth and effective transition to the new Metro TCPSP.

CalPERS Safety Retirement Benefits

Establishing a safety retirement plan is essential to successfully stand up TCPSD. Police and safety personnel serve in specialized roles that require specific pension plans designed for law enforcement. As TCPSD is a new department within the agency, the current pension plans offered are outside of the required safety category. CalPERS offers various pension categories that may be used to provide a safety pension plan for the new department. Staff submitted a new pension category questionnaire to CalPERS in August 2024 to initiate the inclusion of the Metro TCPSD Chief of Police position in the safety pension plan. This questionnaire is required to gain concurrence from CalPERS before safety positions within the TCPSD can qualify under the safety category pension plan.

In September 2024, CalPERS notified the agency that after reviewing the preliminary job duty statements for the Chief of Police position, CalPERS determined that the position does qualify as a safety position under Government Code Section 20424 of the Public Employees Retirement Law. With the CalPERS determination, staff has initiated the process to modify Metro's current CalPERS contract to ensure that employees in this new category will be added to the appropriate pension plan once hired. By Spring 2025, staff will present the final Contract Amendment to the Board of for approval. Once approved, the final amendment will also be submitted to the Public Transportation Services Corporation (PTSC) Board for their approval. The CalPERS contract modification will be finalized before the Chief of Police is hired.

Executive Recruitment

The first TCPSD hire will be the Chief of Police, who will report directly to the CEO. This leadership position will set the stage for subsequent efforts to recruit sworn and non-sworn TCPSD personnel. The ideal candidate for this position must not only hold Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification but also embody visionary leadership and accessibility while fostering a culture of collaboration within a diverse and dynamic transit community. The candidate should demonstrate a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring these principles are not only embraced but actively translated into tangible outcomes through values-based decision-making.

Moreover, the candidate must be well-versed in care-based strategies, recognizing the importance of a holistic approach to public safety. This includes prioritizing de-escalation, mental health awareness, and community-centered policing that fosters trust and mutual respect. A strong understanding of trauma-informed care, behavioral health resources, and the integration of social services into law enforcement practices will be essential in addressing the complex needs of the transit environment. The ability to engage meaningfully with transit riders, community partners, and other key stakeholders, while navigating the intersections of public safety, social services, and law enforcement will be critical to success in this role. These qualities are consistent with Metro's Public Safety Mission and Values Statements, as well as the Bias-Free Policing Policy.

Metro has retained a recruiter who specializes in public safety leadership positions. Metro interviewed three executive recruitment firms before selecting Public Sector Search and Consulting

(PSSC) firm to engage in the recruitment effort for the Chief of Police position. The firm specializes in recruiting police chiefs nationally and has knowledge and expertise in contemporary policing and recruitment methods. The firm is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and maintains a strong placement rate of diverse candidates. PSSC has participated in various listening sessions and will speak individually with Board members; incorporating input from these events to advertise, market, and recruit candidates, which will be completed by the end of FY25 Q2. The candidates will be screened and vetted through a series of panel interviews which will be completed by the end of the FY25 Q3. The Chief of Police is expected to be onboarded at the start of FY25 Q4.

In support of the recruitment of the Chief position, Metro is currently hosting employee and customer listening sessions designed to create an open, inclusive environment where stakeholders can voice their perspectives on the qualities and leadership styles they value in a Chief for the TCPSD. Metro also hosted a listening session with the business community. The goal is to gather valuable insights that will inform decision-making processes, foster collaboration, and ensure that diverse viewpoints are taken into account when shaping policies, strategies, or leadership roles.

Crisis Response Teams

Staff has initiated several key steps in the development of the crisis response program that will be housed in the TCSPD to support the provision of a care-based response to individuals suffering from mental crisis on the Metro system. Staff has conducted ride-alongs with the LAPD Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (HOPE) and LA County Sherriff's Transit Mental Evaluation Team (TMET), which represent one version of a law enforcement crisis response model that pairs clinicians with dressed-down officers. In August and September 2024, staff participated in their respective deployments, learning from the teams' deployment models, engagement tactics, safety protocols and roles/responsibilities.

Staff also completed a peer review in summer 2024 of several national Crisis Response and Intervention models. These evidence-based programs describe the efficacy of combining mental health resources with field-based engagements that are deployed through a dispatch center. They highlight the importance of integrating community stabilization facilities that offer various levels of care to support individuals in crisis. While none of the peer-reviewed models are specific to transit agencies, they offer detailed roadmaps for integration into Metro's TCPSD.

Staff has also reached out to transit agencies nationally, like Austin, TX CapMetro and Oakland, CA BART, which currently deploy crisis response teams, to conduct additional peer agency reviews. Outreach to non-transit crisis response teams such as the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, OR, and our local LA County Department of Mental Health SMART team has also occurred during this period. The goal is to engage and shadow their teams, as well as hold in-depth discussions on their design model, method of implementation, operations, lessons learned, best practices, and exploration of outcomes.

An Inclusive Process

Metro's public safety mission calls for a holistic, equity, holistic and welcoming approach to public

safety. As such, it's important that the process to stand up the TCPD be done by empowering both our employees and our customers to provide their input and feedback. Metro is also pursuing extensive public stakeholder engagement to gather input to determine what qualities, principles, and values Metro employees and customers find important for candidates being considered for this role. Recognizing that marginalized groups within communities that Metro serves are often underrepresented, targeted outreach efforts will be included to ensure all voices are heard, including Listening Sessions and gathering feedback from individuals at community events across the County. (Attachment A)

In addition, communicating with the community at large about Metro's plans to implement the TCPD is a priority. Leading up to and immediately following the Board's vote to approve the TCPD, the public relations team worked with reporters to ensure they had the most accurate information possible about the department - the reasons the decision was good for Metro, and how the implementation process would proceed. The result was a significant amount of neutral to positive media coverage recognizing Metro's bold step to address public safety on the system. Metro has also published articles on The Source and El Pasajero, as well as posts on social media to share the news with riders. Metro staff have also used social media to invite participation in listening sessions about the Chief of Police recruitment.

Emergency Security Operations Center (Metro Center)

Metro's current law enforcement and public safety response system is decentralized, with various personnel operating from different locations. While the surge created a unified command structure, the Metro Center will provide the necessary infrastructure to house it. Law enforcement contractors, security teams, field-based contractors, and Metro staff, including dispatchers, data analysts, and CCTV observers, all play distinct roles without a unified command center to coordinate their efforts. The System Security and Law Enforcement team relies on the Security Operations Center (SOC) as a dispatch hub, coordinating with the Rail Operations Center (ROC), Bus Operations Center (BOC), 911 emergency services, and handling direct calls for in-field support. However, with the use of contracted law enforcement, private security, and Ambassador services, there is no single, centralized dispatch location for these teams.

This lack of centralized command and communication poses challenges to efficient public safety responses across Metro's ecosystem. Establishing a cohesive command structure is critical for the success of the new TCPD and will significantly improve public safety coordination system-wide. The upcoming Metro Center, slated for completion in early 2025, will address this issue by serving as a centralized hub for transportation emergencies and public safety operations. By bringing together key staff and resources in one location, the Metro Center will enhance communication and coordination between Metro's public safety personnel and regional partners, enabling a more efficient response to emergencies, serious incidents, and potential security threats.

The new facility will co-locate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the SOC, providing 24/7 support for public safety operations related to bus and rail incidents, Metro facility protection, and daily connectivity to all transit systems. The Metro Center will centralize key TCPD dispatch and operations personnel. It will also include areas dedicated to Emergency Management, Physical Security, Data Analytics, Cyber Security collaboration, and SOC activity to support bus and rail operations. This consolidation will not only enhance the agency's ability to manage day-to-day public

safety but will also support agency-wide and regional incidents, including major special events and future system expansions.

In addition to improving current operations, the Metro Center will play a pivotal role in supporting Metro's transition to its in-house police department by centralizing command and communications functions. This facility will enable Metro to streamline its public safety and emergency response efforts, enhancing its overall capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies while positioning the agency for future growth and system expansion.

Collective Bargaining

The TCPD implementation will include the establishment of multiple job classifications for hundreds of new positions, including law enforcement officers, management, and administrative staff, among others. To allow for efficient collective bargaining concerning terms and conditions of employment, it may be necessary to quickly determine which existing collective bargaining units are appropriate to absorb the new classifications. Through ongoing labor relations and day-to-day administration, staff is deeply familiar with the specifications, duties, departments, geographical locations, and other distinctions and commonalities associated with existing job classifications for union-represented positions. Staff is in the process of developing new job classifications and specifications for positions associated with the TCPD. As these new classifications are established, the CEO is well-positioned to fairly and efficiently determine the appropriate collective bargaining unit for each. In addition, the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) for AFSCME and TCU were ratified last month, which allows staff to begin negotiations for supervisory positions and crisis intervention positions, respectively. Negotiations with TEAMSTERS will commence once the current CBA negotiations are completed.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The TCPD will improve safety on the Metro system as it will allow for a transit policing style of engaged visibility where officers are more visible across the system, thus increasing the feeling of safety for Metro riders and employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This recommendation has no financial impact.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Metro recognizes that relationships between law enforcement and communities of color and other marginalized individuals have been strained due to unjust actions such as racial profiling and a disproportionate number of issuance of tickets and arrests of people of color. An in-house Transit Community Public Safety Department would empower the agency with the authority to implement safeguards, oversight, and training of officers based on agency priorities and values, promoting the equitable treatment of all riders with dignity and respect in accordance with the Board-approved Bias-Free Policing Policy. Furthermore, an in-house Transit Community Public Safety Department would allow for a transit policing style of engaged visibility where officers are more visible across the system, thus increasing the feeling of safety for Metro riders and employees.

Community Engagement during each phase of the Implementation Plan provides Metro with opportunities to establish and maintain positive relationships with transit riders and the broader community, taking into account their unique perspectives, diverse needs, and direct feedback. Metro will continue to conduct outreach activities, educational programs, and public safety campaigns to raise awareness and build public trust in the leadership and values of the TCPSP. The feedback gathered during each employee and community outreach event informs Metro as the department develops. Metro wants to understand employee and rider concerns and work collaboratively towards solutions.

By integrating employee and public feedback into the hiring process for the new TCPSP Chief of Police and development of the department, Metro will ensure a comprehensive approach to public safety that prioritizes care, compassion, and community collaboration. This holistic strategy not only addresses immediate safety concerns but also fosters equity and collaboration with marginalized communities to improve public safety on the transit system.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommendation supports strategic plan goal 2.1 of committing to improving security. Based on the In-House Public Safety Feasibility Study findings, transitioning to an in-house Transit Community Public Safety Department would enhance safety.

NEXT STEPS

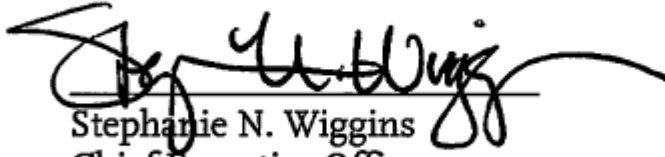
Staff will continue to actively engage employees and the public in the process of the implementation of the TCPSP. Staff will report back to the Board quarterly with progress updates.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Listening Sessions

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