



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 25.

**OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
MARCH 20, 2025**

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

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the quarterly update on the Transit Community Public Safety Department (TCPSP) Implementation Plan.

ISSUE

In alignment with Metro’s mission and comprehensive safety and security framework, staff continues to implement the plan to stand up Metro’s TCPSP. This report serves as a status report to the Board. In addition, the hiring and recruitment process for sworn and non-sworn staff necessary to stand up the new TCPSP is a multi-step process that requires agreements with a myriad of vendors and agencies.

BACKGROUND

At its June 2024 meeting, the Board adopted the TCPSP 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 are currently underway and include establishing a transition team, recruiting the Chief of Police position, formulating hiring and recruitment strategies for sworn officers and non-sworn positions, and developing procurement and facility plans.

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, and the Office of Management and Budget. Additionally, the CEO brought on a consultant to oversee and coordinate all activities related to standing up the

TCPD. This team meets bi-weekly to coordinate efforts and ensure that progress is being made implementing all work plan elements. A summary of progress made since the last quarterly report is detailed below.

Transition Team Advisory Group

The CEO assembled an advisory board of highly qualified professionals to form the TCPD Transition Team Advisory Group. The transition team members provide strategic advice on program/policy development, training, and operational protocols. The Advisory Group includes national experts from diverse fields with extensive experience in law enforcement, mental health, social services, and public safety reform.

A kickoff meeting for the Transition Team Advisory Group was held on January 24, 2025. Metro staff provided a system tour and an overview of Metro's current public safety model. Advisory Group members met with key Metro staff and learned more about the implementation plan, roles and responsibilities of the various security units as well as current homeless outreach and crisis intervention efforts.

A recruitment workshop was held with two members of the Transition Team Advisory Group (former police chiefs), Chief Bar (the current police chief of the Whittier Police Department), and Metro staff. This workshop discussed the hiring and recruitment process for sworn officers, what steps might require new contracts with outside vendors, incentives the various law enforcement agencies are offering to recruit officers, as well as strategies and best practices to expeditiously bring the best recruits onboard.

The Transition Team Advisory Members will meet regularly with Metro staff to provide input and feedback into the development of training policies, crisis intervention strategies and policies, hiring and recruitment processes, key performance indicators and other metrics of success to ensure that the TCPD holistically meets the needs of riders, employees, and the community.

Hiring and Recruitment Progress

CalPERS Safety Retirement Benefits

Establishing a safety retirement plan is essential to successfully standing up the new TCPD. Police and safety personnel serve in specialized roles that require a specific pension plan designed for law enforcement. As TCPD will be a new department within the agency, the current pension plans offered by Metro are outside of the required safety category. Metro submitted a request to CalPERS to initiate a new safety pension plan. CalPERS determined that the new TCPD qualifies under the safety plan category and presented Metro with three retirement formulas for consideration. Metro staff worked with the Office of Management and Budget, Labor Relations and County Counsel to align a pension plan formula that would fit within the projected budget for the new TCPD but that would be competitive with pension plans offered by other police departments around the state. At its February 2025 meeting, the Board approved the recommended formula of 2.7% at age 57 for the retirement plan for police members. Following this action by the Metro Board, the Resolution of Intent to adopt the new pension plan and contract amendment with CalPERS was adopted by the Public Transportation Services Corporation (PTSC) Board at its Board meeting also held last month. This is

a multi-step process and requires a second PTSC Board meeting to formally adopt the Plan and Contract Amendment. This meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2025, and the Plan is scheduled to become effective March 30, 2025.

Executive Recruitment

The first TCPD 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 TCPD personnel. Metro retained Public Sector Search and Consulting (PSSC), a firm that specializes in nationwide recruiting for public safety leadership positions. Metro held several employee, public, and business listening sessions to solicit input and feedback on the leadership qualities they would like to see in a Chief of Police. Metro staff also provided updates on the process to the Community Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Aging and Disability Transportation Network, Women & Girls Governing Council, Community Advisory Council, and other stakeholder groups. Meetings were also held with Metro Board members to get additional input and feedback.

The Chief of Police position was posted on December 30, 2024, and will remain open until filled. Candidates will be screened and vetted through interviews. The Chief of Police is expected to be selected and onboard in the Spring of 2025.

Hiring and Recruitment of Sworn Officers

Metro staff has also started formulating job descriptions and researching salary ranges and benefit packages for sworn officers so that hiring may commence once the Chief of Police is selected. Job descriptions will continue to evolve; however, staff has commissioned outside consultants to conduct market research on the salaries and benefits of similar positions across the State so that there is no delay in the hiring process. Performing this market analysis is crucial to ensure that Metro attracts and retains the highest quality candidates.

Recruitment and hiring of sworn officers is increasingly competitive across the state of California. Furthermore, the hiring process is a multi-step process that can take between four-six months for each candidate. In addition to the recruitment workshop discussed above, Metro staff also met with the Chief of Police of the City of Menifee and his leadership team to discuss their experiences with recruitment and hiring, procurement, and lessons learned. The City of Menifee stood up their own police department in the last five years, and they were forthcoming in sharing the challenges, recommendations, procurement approaches, and hiring and recruitment strategies they used to start up a new police department.

Procurement

Staff has developed a comprehensive procurement approach to ensure that Metro can acquire the necessary resources and tools to stand up the new department. This multi-year strategy includes utilizing existing contracts, piggybacking on other competitively bid contracts executed by other agencies, utilizing state contracts, as well as developing scopes of work that will be used for competitive procurements. Staff is developing a full inventory and procurement approach for all equipment and services, including a schedule and cost for each item needed to stand up the new TCPD.

When Metro met with police agencies such as Whittier, Menifee, and BART, all of the agencies conveyed that one of the biggest challenges they face is in the area of recruitment and hiring. These departments shared best practices and industry standards for all steps in the hiring process. These industry standards include issuing contracts for certified and approved vendors who provide pre-hiring services such as background investigations, psychological evaluations, polygraph tests, and medical and written assessments. Many police agencies in California use specific firms to perform these services, and the Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) has certified firms that police departments must use for certain services, such as psychological assessments.

Because the pre-hiring process can take between four to six months before an officer is even given a conditional offer, and because there will be a need to send new recruits to police academies which takes another six months, staff want to ensure that all contracts and services are in place to start the hiring process when a Chief of Police is selected. Further, before a recruit attends the police academy, that recruit must have a firearm, and after graduating, the new hire must have a uniform and utility gear (i.e., baton, ballistic vest, etc.) before being able to start work. Attachment A provides a list of services necessary for the recruitment and hiring process that must be executed by the CEO before hiring can commence.

Staff anticipates returning to the Board in the coming months with recommendations to enter into contracts for other long-lead items.

Emergency Security Operations Center (Metro Center)

The Emergency Security Operations Center (ESOC) is near full completion, with one punch list item tentatively to be completed by mid-March. This timing includes awaiting the delivery of a new part, installation, programming, and testing by Metro Rail Communications. From there, Metro staff and law enforcement will conduct a series of training, tabletops, and exercises to work through daily scenarios (calls for service, fire response, serious incident), communication drills, dispatch protocols, and incident response in a constant unified command security operations environment.

In addition, staff is working to ensure that each console in the ESOC is fitted properly for each public safety role within the Security Operations Center (SOC) to ensure seamless operations for Transit Ambassadors, law enforcement contract services, transit security, contract security, crisis intervention specialists, and homeless outreach. Staff are also identifying additional opportunities to incorporate communications with the Long Beach Police Department, with their contract service concluding at the end of March, to ensure a seamless relationship as Metro assumes control over the eight stations within the Long Beach area.

The opening date for the ESOC is slated between late March and early April. Staff is working on integrating all bus and rail camera network feeds to mirror the capabilities currently available in the USG Gateway SOC today. In addition, staff are working on integrating physical security alerts from facilities, SCADA, and critical infrastructure with the goal of enhancing situation awareness to every Metro facility and asset. These enhancements, in addition to the integration of capabilities such as drones to combat copper theft, will strengthen Metro's holistic approach to safety and the ability to support critical incidents, natural disasters, and special events.

Crisis Interventionist and Crisis Response Teams

As reported last quarter, staff has initiated several key steps in the development of the crisis response program that will be housed in the TCPD to support the provision of a care-based response to individuals suffering from mental crisis on the Metro system. Staff has continued a review of evidence-based practices for community-based crisis intervention. Police-Mental Health Collaboration (PMHC) is a broad framework that promotes a reduction of force, redirects people from the criminal justice system toward mental health care, and enhances overall safety. A variety of communities utilize programs under the PMHC umbrella, and staff engaged several of them, including LAPD's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU), LA Sheriff's Mental Evaluation Team (TMET), LA Department of Mental Health's Emergency Outreach and Triage Division, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and Eugene, Oregon's CAHOOTS program. Staff plans to make site visits to BART and CAHOOTS in the near future to participate in in-depth discussions with their staff as well as joining their teams for ride-alongs to make firsthand observations. LAPD's MEU currently provides POST-certified Mental Health Intervention Training (MHIT) to officers, and they have shared the training manual and POST certification requirements with Metro staff. They have also extended invitations for Metro staff to attend these trainings this month.

Staff has also drafted the job descriptions of four crisis intervention positions for review and consideration. The crisis response teams are in addition to Metro's contracted homeless outreach teams, and will be focused on addressing mental health crises.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The TCPD will improve safety as it will allow for increased visibility, better accountability and enhanced community engagement across the entire Metro transit system.

EQUITY PLATFORM

An in-house TCPD would empower Metro with the authority to implement safeguards, oversight, and training of officers based on agency priorities and values, promoting the equitable treatment of all riders and respect in accordance with the Board-approved Bias-Free Policing Policy. Further, an in-house TCPD 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. The TCPD will ensure a comprehensive approach to public safety that prioritizes care, compassion, and community collaboration. This holistic strategy not only addresses safety concerns but also fosters equity and collaboration with marginalized communities to improve public safety on the transit system.

As part of Phase One of the implementation plan, the recruitment of the Chief of Police has begun, and Metro gathered input and feedback on desired leadership qualities through several employee, public, and business listening sessions, where Spanish translation services were provided to the public. In addition to providing regular updates to Metro's advisory groups, staff developed a communications plan, which includes a newsletter on TCPD progress updates to employees and a

dedicated email to accept any questions. An interest form was also posted on the Metro website for easy access to those interested in becoming a TCPSP officer.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, this item is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT. This item supports Metro's systemwide strategy to reduce VMT through operational activities that will improve and further encourage transit ridership through enhancing safety on our system and providing an improved customer experience. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

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 TCPSP would enhance safety.

NEXT STEPS

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

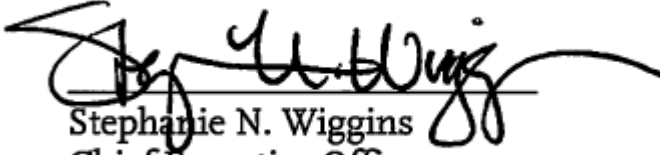
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Anticipated Hiring and Recruitment Contracts: 5-Year Projection

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