



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-A

Public Safety Initiatives

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD Number:
203450

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

Public Safety Initiatives

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Metro continues to focus on customer and employee safety through new and innovative initiatives. This presentation provides an update on several Public Safety Initiatives with three themes: Compassion, Cameras, and Cops. Additionally, staff will provide an update on the new fare gates.

PURPOSE:

Provide the Board update on public safety initiatives and fare gates pilot.

DESCRIPTION:

There are no parties of interest in this matter.

Key Highlights:

- Cameras – Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) started the rollout of Body Worn Cameras March 28, 2023
- Cops – MTPD and external police agencies increased visibility by 70 percent within the transit system in 2023 and continues to assess and create new strategies based on problem-oriented policing
- Compassion – MTPD enhances its community relations, including expanding the Crisis Intervention Team

Background and History:

In January 2023, staff provided the Board with a briefing on MTPD Public Safety initiatives, including body worn cameras, enhancing visibility of outside police agencies and the expansion of the Crisis Intervention Team. These initiatives include: enhanced visibility details and fare enforcement.

Discussion:

Since August 2022, with the support of the General Manager, the Metro Transit Police Department has implemented specific crime-reduction strategies to address crime and disorder within the Metro system. These strategies include increased police visibility, enforcement activities, enhanced community relations programs and the continued Problem-Oriented Policing approach to address crime and public safety.

Cameras

The issuance of body-worn cameras began on March 28, 2023, and is scheduled for completion by August 1, 2023. In total, 315 officers will be issued these body-worn cameras. The cameras record events with audio and video. The officers will use the cameras to record when they engage with the public. A manager and three coordinators will support the program.

Cops

Our Progress

MTPD has entered into agreements with certain local law enforcement agencies, so that the local police officers may work in seven targeted Metrorail stations to provide law enforcement assistance to MTPD during rush hour.

MTPD is working to staff another 25 stations with two Special Police Officers (SPO) during rush hours. As of April 12, these efforts have resulted in a 20 percent decrease in total crime at stations with partner agencies or Special Police Officers (SPOs).

Efforts to curtail fare evasion have increased from 40 in CY2022) to 250 (CY2023)

Compassion:

MTPD continues to enhance its community relations and increase compassion through the following initiatives:

- Four crisis intervention specialists hired as of December 2022; six additional crisis intervention specialists are being hired to expand capacity. Crisis intervention specialists deploy daily throughout the system based on the need to address mental health crisis and support the unsheltered population. Thus far, there have been over 120 calls for service with follow-up services extended to 60 percent of those encountered.
- Creating a community police academy, which will allow citizens to engage with MTPD members regarding current policing issues, attain a greater awareness of the daily challenges faced by police officers, and provide an opportunity for citizens to learn firsthand about police operations. Over 100 pop-up community outreach events at local rail and bus stations/stops since **April 2022**. MTPD provided safety

information and promoted positive relations between the public and our officers.

- MTPD conducted 6-7 community outreach events per month
- Over 70 youths -- a 100 percent increase attended the Youth Advisory Council meeting to promote positive rapport between officers and high school-aged youth (with learning components provided by different speakers each month focused on safety skills and bus route feedback, for example).
- High visibility details implemented to support school arrival and dismissal; close partnerships fostered with The Mayor's Office Safe Passage program and local school partners to help students transition safely to and from school.
- Youth Services Division deploys daily to support schools by conducting safety presentations, supporting youth Safe Passage programming, as well as facilitating weekly school follow up visits and mentoring programs.
- The Youth Services Division has launched a Restorative Justice Program in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to mentor and support youth with additional needs.
- Over 1000 children and families served at the Cherry Blossom Festival and Petalpalooza in March and April.
- Programmatic update:
 - Expansion of the Youth Council Advisory with support from executive leaders and members of the Board of Directors
 - College and career readiness: a program for high school students that focuses on college preparation and job skills
 - Arts: arts immersion, poetry, study abroad, creative writing, and field study
 - Early childhood education: tutoring, mentoring, field trips, and summer camps
 - Sports and athletics: basketball, football, intramural sports, and excursions

Faregate Retrofit Program

Fare evasion creates a sense of disorder and elevates concerns with safety and security in the system among customers and employees. As part of its mitigation efforts, Metro is retrofitting faregates to deter fare evasion and make it more difficult to enter the system without tapping.

In late March 2023, Metro completed the installation of retrofit faregate barriers

at Fort Totten Station. This updated design uses a single door for regular aisles and a double door for the ADA aisle. Higher fencing and emergency swing gates have also been installed to deter jumping and climbing. Initial results show a ~50 percent reduction in fare evasion at Fort Totten since retrofit installation.

Staff is continuing to engage Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee and will continue to monitor customer feedback. An additional nine stations will be retrofitted across the region to complete the first phase of deployment. The retrofitted barrier will be installed at stations systemwide over an approximately fifteen-month implementation schedule.

FUNDING IMPACT:

- Operating impact related to hiring jurisdictional police is < \$1M

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	September 2022 – Launched Operation “Helping Hands” November 2022 – Launched Fare Enforcement Campaign December 2022 – Introduced Crisis Intervention Specialists January 2023 – Kicked off Security Systems Program March 2023 – Launched Body Worn Camera
Anticipated actions after presentation	February - July 2023 – Contracting jurisdictional police at key stations

Public Safety Initiatives

Safety & Operations Committee

April 27, 2023



Working Differently: Public Safety Initiatives



Compassion: Community engagement and mental health outreach



Cameras: Deploying body-worn cameras



Cops: Patrol initiatives and partnerships with local law enforcement and security have increased police presence in the system 70% per shift in 2023

Compassion through community outreach

- Four Certified Crisis Intervention Specialists (CIT) hired December 2022
- As of March 2023, responded to over 120 calls for assistance
- Follow-up services for 60% of persons encountered
- Deployed daily throughout the system to address mental health crisis and support the unsheltered population
- Six more CITs to be hired by Q2/2023, interviews underway



Building community through compassionate outreach

Youth Programs

- Youth Advisory Council meets monthly to share information on ridership and mentorship; attendance increased by 100%
- High visibility details for safe school passage
- Restorative Justice Program in partnership with DC Office of Attorney General
- College and career readiness, arts, early childhood education, and sports/athletics youth programs

Engagement and Outreach

- 100+ pop-up events; crime, safety tips and awareness; weekly station outreach events increased
- Six to seven additional or partnered community outreach events per month

Community Police Academy

- Opportunity to familiarize the community with MTPD members, programs and teams begin Fall 2023





Cameras: Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Update

- Worn by officers to record audio and video while engaged in law enforcement activity
- Deployment began March 28, 2023; expected completion by August 1, 2023
- Issuing to 315 MTPD members
- Hired BWC Manager and one BWC Coordinator
- Hiring two additional BWC Coordinators within 60 days





Cops: Enhanced Visibility of Partner Agencies and SPOs

Enhanced Police Visibility

- Increased law enforcement coverage at **five** stations in DC, **two** in MD, and **two** in VA during rush hours

Enhanced Special Police Visibility

- Working to staff 25 stations with two Special Police Officers (SPO) during rush hours

Station Deployment Locations

Potomac Ave	Fort Totten	Georgia Ave-Petworth
Stadium Armory	Rhode Island Ave	Congress Heights
Minnesota Ave	Columbia Heights	Union Station
Foggy Bottom	Shaw-Howard U	Mount Vernon Square
U Street-Cardozo	Brookland	Gallery Place
Eastern Market	Benning Road	Metro Center
Cheverly	Greenbelt	National Airport/Dulles Airport

Our Progress

Measured stations

- **20% decrease** in total crime at stations with partner agencies or SPOs

Criminal and Civil Fare Citations

- Increased 420% (CYD2023 March 31)
- Transitioned from overtime details to the District level

Enforcement Action	CY 2022	CY 2023	Percent
Adult Arrest	293	503	72%
Summons & Citations	86	323	276%
Juvenile Arrest	40	81	103%
Grand Total	419	907	116%



Fort Totten Faregate Retrofit Install Complete Initial Impacts – Reduced Fare Evasion

- All barriers replaced with saloon style doors
- Higher fencing and emergency swing gates installed
- Fare evasion at Fort Totten reduced by ~50% since retrofit installation

Next Steps

- Evaluating improvements to barrier height and resilience
- Retrofit installation at next nine stations followed by systemwide



TEXT MYMTPD

- Call takers respond in real time to emergencies and tips provided
- Text tips can remain anonymous which encourages community support
- MTPD responds equivalent to all other calls for service
- 2100 MYMTPD text tips received (last six months)



A graphic consisting of two parts. On the left is a smartphone screen displaying a text message conversation. The status bar at the top shows the time as 9:41 and signal strength. The contact name is 'MyMTPD' with the number '696-873'. The first message is a blue bubble from the contact: 'Someone needs help on the platform at Wiehle-Reston East.' The second message is a grey bubble from 'MTPD': 'An officer will be right there.' On the right is a promotional poster with a teal background. It features the text 'Take our number. Anote nuestro número.' in white and orange. Below this, it says 'To report a crime in progress or another emergency, call Metro Transit Police at 202-962-2121 or text MyMTPD (696-873). Para denunciar un delito en curso u otra emergencia, llame a la Policía de Tránsito de Metro al 202-962-2121 o envíe un mensaje de texto a MyMTPD (696-873).' The Metro logo is in the bottom right corner.