



Executive Committee

Information Item IV-A

February 11, 2021

Community Policing and Engagement Update

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD Number:
202244

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

TITLE:

Community Policing and Engagement Update

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Present to the Board an update on the Metro Transit Police Department's (MTPD) community policing and engagement efforts.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this presentation is to provide the Board an update on the MTPD's community policing and engagement efforts to include the Investigations Review Panel, Reform Committees created in partnership with the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Internal Oversight and Youth Services Bureau.

DESCRIPTION:

The Board will be presented with an update on the Metro Transit Police Department's (MTPD) continuing work and reforms that incorporate best practices in law enforcement and community outreach.

Key Highlights:

- The Investigations Review Panel held kick-off/familiarization meetings, trainings, and a decision-maker simulator for seven panel members.
- Five Police Reform Committees, in partnership with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), met multiple times, presented recommendations, and implemented significant policy changes.
- The Internal Oversight and Youth Services Bureau (IOYSB) appointed more recruit and engagement officers, improved the external Transit Police website, and continued efforts to update policies and procedures.

Background and History:

The MTPD has a history of proactive police reform and incorporates best practices in law enforcement. Acknowledging the current dialogue on policing and police reforms that is taking place around the country, the MTPD recognizes the need to review and improve upon how it provides public safety in the Metro Transit System and to continue to foster trust between MTPD and the community.

Discussion:

In 2020, Metro's Board of Directors established the MTPD Investigations Review Panel, an independent advisory body that consists of seven members to review and submit recommendations to the MTPD Chief of Police on changes to policing and training – all in an effort to improve the integrity of investigations, transparency, and thoroughness and fairness of the process, consistent with best practices in law enforcement. In October 2020, the kick-off meeting of the panel was held, which included an overview of the MTPD and interaction with a decision-making simulator. Additionally, two preparatory sessions were held to include MTPD Professional Standards Training and reviews on accidents, citizen complaints, and administrative inquiries. The panel's first official meeting was held in late January 2021 to review the first quarter of 2019 cases. The panel is expected to meet quarterly going forward.

Also in 2020, the MTPD collaborated with the FOP to establish five reform committees, chaired by MTPD Deputy Chiefs, to focus on police reform: Officer Performance Evaluation; Fourth Amendment Stop and Frisk Training; Conflict Resolution De-escalation Training; Ethical Training and Peer Support; and Recruitment and Retention of Minorities.

1. The Officer Performance Evaluation Committee has focused on revising the process of evaluating the performance of MTPD sworn members, ceasing the use of quantitative metrics and instead relying on the performance of day-to-day duty assignments, including collateral duties. Additionally, the evaluation cycle was moved from the sworn member's anniversary date to a standard calendar cycle and General Order 240 – Performance Evaluation and Management System was updated and routed for approval.
2. The Fourth Amendment Stop and Frisk Training Committee held multiple meetings focused on the immediate termination of the "stop and frisk" culture and provided clarifications on a number of topics to include definitions, interpretations, case law, and orders/directions. The committee implemented standardized training in roll calls and agreed that a scenario discussion should be held in roll calls monthly. Four scenarios are currently under review.
3. The Conflict Resolution De-escalation Training Committee met several times to discuss the requirement of police recruits to complete a minimum of 20 hours of conflict resolution and de-escalation training while at the MTPD Academy. The committee focused on including peer-mediated practice sessions and soliciting involvement and feedback from local community leaders. The committee agreed to create opportunities for the community to participate in judgement enhanced simulations and open forums. Additionally, recruits will participate in community engagement events with the IOYSB. In support of these efforts, pen and ink changes were made to General Orders: 217 – Ethical Standards and 130 – Use of Force.

4. The Ethical Training and Peer Support Committee has created a Peer Support Team ("Team".) The Team consists of sworn and civilian members that will provide training on ethical policing to all of MTPD. The Team is also receiving training to become certified peer support providers for members as needed.

5. The Recruitment and Retention of Minorities Committee held routine meetings to discuss retaining, promoting, and recruiting minority officers, as well as the concerns of current minority members. The committee reviewed resignation reports for potential trends and developed a retention survey that was distributed to all members in late January 2021. The survey results are expected in March 2021. Additionally, the committee drafted a policy for an MTPD Explorer Program, a hands-on program open to young men and women interested in a career in law enforcement. The committee members also worked with a third-party vendor to develop the MTPD landing page for recruitment – Metro Transit Police. The page is being fine-tuned and includes new advertising with clear messaging that encourages people to apply. Site-hosting efforts are underway with our IT Department.

The IOYSB oversees the MTPD's increased role with youth in the region, improves recruiting and screening of police applicants, and manages the department's strategic planning. Fourteen (14) Police Recruiter and Engagement Officers were appointed to provide more specialization and consistency when engaging with young people in our system and local schools. Additionally, the MTPD created a new Community Engagement Officer position that is expected to be posted/advertised soon.

Multiple virtual and in-person (socially distanced) outreach events were held in the community to include the World Youth Foundation meeting, Halloween parade, Toys For Tots, and Christmas Family Caravan. In late January 2021, the MTPD met with the School Chancellor to discuss the department's community outreach efforts and continued collaboration.

The Office of Strategic Planning continues to lead and manage the effort to update the department's Standard Operating Procedures, General Orders, and Procedures Manual - all in support of the Board's Transit Equity Framework to advance equitable policies and practices that support Metro's mission. A link to General Orders is available on the external Transit Police website – MTPD General Orders.

The MTPD continues to explore efforts to improve community policing and engagement. A Letter from the Chief of Police was added to the external Transit Police website highlighting the department's commitment to community policing and engagement – Chief of Police Letter. Additionally, the website features a newly created Community Engagement page that highlights the MTPD's commitment to building trust in the community and a link to the email (MTPD_BridgingTheGap@wmata.com) that provides a direct connection with the community – MTPD Community Engagement.

Community Policing and Engagement Update



Ronald Pavlik
Chief of Police

February 11, 2021



Investigations Review Panel

Seven Members

- Three Police Members
 - Metropolitan Police Department
 - Prince George's County Police Department
 - City of Alexandria Police Department
- Four Civilian Members

MTPD Liaison Official



Police Reform Committees

Five Committees in partnership with the Fraternal Order of Police

- Officer Performance Evaluation
- Fourth Amendment Stop and Frisk Training
- Conflict Resolution De-escalation Training
- Ethical Training and Peer Support
- Recruitment and Retention of Minorities



Internal Oversight and Investigations Bureau

Community Engagement

- Virtual and socially distanced outreach events
- 14 Police Recruiter and Engagement Officers
- New position created
- School Chancellor collaboration meeting
- Improvements to external Transit Police Website



Oversight/Transit Equity Framework

- Quality Management System Plan
- Policy Management Solution



Next Steps

- Finalize MTPD Landing Page for Recruitment
- Continue with Board updates



Next Steps:

The MTPD will finalize the third-party landing page for recruitment and work with WMATA IT regarding hosting efforts and synchronization with the external Transit Police website.

The MTPD will continue updating the Board on Community Policing and Engagement efforts.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Define current or potential funding impact, including source of reimbursable funds.	
Project Manager:	Ronald A. Pavlik, Jr.
Project Department/Office:	COO/MTPD

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	September/2020 - MEAD 202205 Update to Board on Community Policing and Engagement Efforts June/2020 - MEAD 202184 Update to Board on Community Policing and Engagement Efforts
Anticipated actions after presentation	The MTPD will continue updating the Board on Community Policing and Engagement Efforts

RECOMMENDATION:

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