

# Metro Transit Police Work Group Update

Committee of the Whole  
November 17, 2021



# Topics For This Month's Update

- Overview of topics covered since the October 20 Committee of the Whole update
- Reminder of upcoming work plan items

# Topics covered since October update

- Work group met once since the October 20 COW Update
- November 5 meeting focused on employee perspectives
- Topics included:
  - **Overview of recent employee feedback**
    - Frontline employee engagement during Citizens League process
    - Overview of MTPD Employee Survey Results
  - **Employee Panel** comprised of employee representatives from:
    - Metro Transit Safety & Security Committee
    - Metro Transit Equity & Inclusion Team
    - ATU
    - TMSA
    - LELS – Full Time Officers
    - LELS – Supervisors

# Overview of recent employee feedback

- Approximately 100 frontline employees were engaged during the Citizens League process. Themes included:
  - More prominent security presence on vehicles and general availability
  - Demonstrable consequence for behaviors on the system
  - Cameras, barriers, other safety features help
  - Concern about creating unwelcome environment for passengers
  - Employees generally feel unsafe and anxious about safety on transit
- Police Work Group commissioned a survey of MTPD employees
  - Survey conducted in mid-October 2021
  - 118 employees (63%) responded
  - 11 questions were repeated from a January 2020 survey to compare 2020 to 2021
  - Also added new, 2021-only questions per Work Group request
  - Shows a decrease in job satisfaction, increased concern there are not enough MTPD staff, and disagreement that referrals and enforcement actions are adequately resolved by other entities

# Employee Panel Overview

## Employee Panel Participants

- Transit Safety & Security Committee: **Rich Miller**, Bus Operator
- Metro Transit Equity & Inclusion Team: **Andrew Kimbell**, Bus operator
- ATU: **Leatha Falls**, Public Facilities Helper
- TMSA: **David Barnhart**, TCC Supervisor and **Heidi Wrenson**, District Supervisor
- LELS – Full Time Officers: **Officer Tim Birkholz**, FT Police Officer Union President and **Officer Frank Hintz**
- LELS-Supervisors: **Lt. Mario Ruberto**

## Panel and Work Group Member comments included (not exhaustive list)

- Frontline employees shared significant concerns about their safety and security.
- Employees who require police assistance feel response time is slow, and there is too little presence on the system to effectively support them.
- MTPD officers are leaving for other departments, but most are staying within law enforcement. Work Group requested data on staffing levels (MTPD will present this data during this meeting).
- Current situation is not unique or isolated to Metro Transit; broader systemic issues are operating, and some are further compounded by the pandemic.
- Structures for accountability and leveraging partnerships to address systemic issues are important.
- Panelists offered several ideas for improvements.

# Work Plan Overview

**Charge:** Deliver recommended safety outcomes and strategies to the full Council by 2/28/22 and provide monthly COW updates to inform the recommendations

**Work plan is structured in three phases:**

- **Phase 1 (8/27-9/15):** Work Group kick-off and initial issue identification
- **Phase 2 (9/23-12/17):** Review existing policies, practices, and procedures and identify potential recommendations
- **Phase 3 (12/31-2/28):** Develop and submit recommendations

# Work Plan Overview Continued – Topics Discussed in Past Meetings

## Topics discussed to date towards developing recommendations

- Review of Citizens League Final Engagement Report (9/10)
- 21st Century Policing at MTPD – Presentation by Chief Frizell (9/23)
- Other transit agencies' law enforcement and public safety practices (9/23)
- Experiences and perspectives regarding public safety and police interactions (10/8)
- Reviewed plan to survey MTPD employees (10/8)
- Code of Conduct (10/15)
- Community partnerships and MTPD contracts with community-based organizations, with guests from A Mother's Love (10/15)
- Homeless Action Team Update (10/15)
- **Added since last update:** Employee Perspectives (11/5)

# Work Plan Overview Continued – Current Plans for Upcoming Meetings

**Dates reflect current work plan but will be adjusted as needed**

- November 19 – Interactions with youth
- December 3 – Data, governance, and accountability structures
- December 17 – Open forum for individuals and groups to provide comments
- December 31 to February 28 – Developing recommendations

**Future COW Updates are scheduled for**

- December 15, 2021
- January 19, 2022
- February 16, 2022





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