TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: System Security Update

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving report on System Security and new proactive measures by AC Transit Police Services to reduce criminal activity along bus routes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This System Security report focuses on the current state of AC Transit Police Services with an overview of statistical data from January 2014 to December 2015. Additionally, the report will examine new security objectives related to targeted enforcement efforts of the Transit Crimes Unit (TCU). The incorporation of the TCU to supplement deputy sheriff's assigned to the contract has been a valuable asset to the District in the Alameda County service area. TCU continues to help mitigate crime in high crime areas before it becomes problematic onboard buses. TCU conducts proactive assessments of geographic transit locations, using suitable risk criteria and mitigation strategies as part of their objectives. The goal of this specialized policing team is to build lasting relationships with community stakeholders to ensure a safe and reliable transit experience free from criminal activity especially violent crime for everyone.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit contracts with the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ASCO) and Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) to provide dedicated law enforcement services. The District also contracts for security guard services with Cypress Security. The current staffing level for each of these agencies is as follows:

Alameda County Sheriff's Office – 1 Lieutenant, 3 Sergeants, 19 Deputies, and 3 Sheriff Technicians

Contra Costa County – 1 Lieutenant, 7 Deputies

Cypress Security – 30 Security Guards
AC Transit continues to use a Community Oriented Policing approach to deter criminal activity on buses, along bus routes, and on District property. The objective of a Community Oriented Policing strategy is to motivate the community to get involved; give citizens more control over the safety, security and quality of life in their community; and empower the traveling public to be an extension of AC Transit's eyes and ears on the system.

Community based policing strategies have resulted in an overall reduction in crime on buses, along bus routes, and at transit centers over the past few years. A summary of crime statistics and detailed information on policing efforts are shown below for ACSO and CCSO:

**ALAMEDA COUNTY SHERIFF OFFICE**

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<th>ACSO Statistical Data From January 2014 thru December 2015</th>
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**Assaults on bus operators** - Assaults on bus operators are a major concern to the District. Assault defined, is the unlawful attempt coupled with a present ability to commit a violent injury on the person of another. Assault related incidents include aggravated assault (involving weapons); kicking or punching; spitting; verbal threats/harassment; and throwing objects within the bus (including liquids), which can result in trauma or industrial injury claims by operators. Assaults on AC Transit coach operators increased from thirty-five assaults in 2014 to forty-six assaults in 2015. A review of assaults on coach operators in 2015 revealed the following:

While there was an increase in assaults, it should be noted that the majority of the 2015 incidents (40%) involved the suspect either spitting at the operator or spraying liquid on them (as from a soda bottle). Forty percent (40%) of the assaults on coach operators involved an actual battery (actual contact between the hands of the suspect and the operator).

Ten percent (10%) of assaults on coach operators involved contact between the suspect and the operator and involved a significant punch/blow, with injury, while ten (10%) of the assaults on coach operators involved some type of weapon. In 2015, the assaults with weapons involved one incident where a suspect hit a driver with his cane and another incident in which a suspect threw a glass bottle at the coach operator.
Assaults on passengers - Assaults on passengers decreased by 16% from eighty assaults in 2014 to sixty-seven assaults in 2015. It should be noted that there were one-hundred thirty-three assaults on passengers in 2013. The continued decrease in assaults on passengers is due to both the existence of the Transit Crimes Unit and because of the proactive use of the video surveillance systems that exist on most AC Transit Coaches used to identify and apprehend suspects.

Robberies- Robberies increased by 61% from eighteen robberies in 2014 to twenty-nine robberies in 2015. However, the number of robberies has decreased significantly from 2013 when there were sixty robberies. The long term trend shows continued improvement and a sustained effort to address these type of incidents and shows the positive impact of the Transit Crimes Unit in the decrease of robberies.

Vandalism- Vandalism incidents remained relatively minor with a decrease of 18% from sixty-five incidents in 2014 to fifty-three incidents in 2015.

Disturbing the Peace- Disturbing the peace incidents decreased by 68% from sixty-two incidents in 2014 compared to twenty incidents in 2015.

Thefts are down by 10 percent with fifty incidents reported in 2014 and forty-five incidents reported in 2015. On many occasions theft is a crime of opportunity. The majority of theft related incidents involved cell phones or some form of electronic device. Other associated thefts include personal property such as purses and bags being left on the coach taken by someone other than the owner. This crime can be reduced by introducing a crime prevention information campaign to inform riders to be aware of their surroundings at all times.

Fare Evasion citations increased by 50%; however, the number of citations issued for fare evasion is lower than the actual incidents occurring each day. Operator calls for assistance regarding fare evasion are often cancelled when the fare evader leaves the scene prior to the deputy sheriff's arrival. In 2015, AC Transit Police Services cited forty-five people for fare evasion versus thirty citations in 2014.

Deputies rode buses 160 times in 2015 versus 576 in 2014; however, deputies boarded buses 10,678 times in 2015 versus 9,167 times in 2015. The boarding of buses is more effective at increasing the visibility of the deputies. Deputies/Technicians wrote 5,332 bus zone citations in 2015 versus 5,406 in 2014.

The reduction in criminal activity that occurred over the past few years can be attributed to the high profile operations along the different bus routes with an increase in deputy sheriff bus boarding that provided greater visibility of law enforcement on our bus system. Initially high profile visibility started in October 2013, when additional overtime was allocated for two full time deputies to make contact with citizens in and around the bus stops along the 1 line and other problem areas. The operation created a higher level of law enforcement presence while identifying and deterring criminal behavior before it reached the bus. TCU has enhanced the visibility and presence of deputy sheriffs solely supported with Federal COPS grant dollars.
Vandalism- In 2014, eight incidents were reported, while 12 incidents were reported in 2015. In the majority of cases the passenger exited the bus, smashed or broke a window, and then fled the area.

Theft- In 2014, three thefts were reported, while only one theft was reported in 2015 after a passenger’s bike was taken from the bus bike rack.

Fare Evasion- Fare evasion incidents decreased by 81%. In 2014, there were seventeen fare evasion incidents recorded compared to five fare evasion incidents in 2015.

Disturbing the Peace- Incidents involved passengers arguing with coach operators or being loud and boisterous on board the coach. As with fare evasion incidents, the passengers involved in these incidents often leave before a deputy can respond. These incidents decreased 68% from sixty-two incidents in 2014 to twenty incidents in 2015.

Buses Boarded/Rode: In 2014, deputies boarded 2,750 buses, while deputies boarded 8,695 buses in 2015, which was a 238% increase from the previous year. As with ACSO, Contra Costa County staffing levels make it more prudent and effective to do a higher level of bus boardings than actual rides.
Future Projects:

The Protective Services Department along with Marketing will be implementing a new pilot program called TipNow. TipNow is an anonymous reporting system using, text, voice, email and a mobile application to report suspicious activity to the AC Transit Operations Control Center. The custom app for AC Transit will also link riders to AC Transit’s web site for useful information about the agency. The app also includes an info tab with useful links for riders.

The app is in the testing phase and is expected to launch this month. Marketing will then have two weeks to formally introduce and market the service to the public before going live. The go live projection is May 2016.

Protective Services is also working with Maintenance to replace defective entry/exit gates at Division 4 and 6. This will help harden each facility and keep unauthorized persons out of the facility.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

The advantage of using a community based approach to addressing criminal activity is that it gets the citizens living in the community to become involved and provides them the opportunity to get actively engaged and part of the solution. It allows the police unit to solicit their help identifying specific criminal areas that are of the most concern. The emphasis of community based policing is to stop crime before it happens, rather than responding to calls for service after the crime occurs. The Transit Enforcement team is actively working with the communities on the use of the “See Something Say Something” approach to fighting crime.

The disadvantage of not using this type of policing methodology is that it would require more staff to try to accomplish similar results. Additionally, the community/police relationship that has proven to be successful in an effort to keep the bus community safe would no longer exist.

Staff will continue to use TCU in a proactive approach and follow-up investigation roles to accomplish our goal of having a safe and reliable transit system.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

None

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS/POLICIES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

Executive Staff Approval: James D. Pachan, Chief Operating Officer
Reviewed by: Denise C. Standridge, General Counsel
Prepared by: Kerry Jackson, Protective Services Manager