



Commentary Making Progress Toward Enhanced Safety On Metro Transit

by Taulby Roach

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ST. LOUIS - Improving security on the Metro Transit system is a top priority for me, the team at Metro Transit, Bi-State Development, our regional elected officials and our law enforcement partners. I am happy to report that progress is being made toward creating the safer transit environment we and our customers demand.

The steps being taken are outlined in a Comprehensive Metro Security Strategy agreed to by regional leadership, police partners and Metro, and unanimously approved by the Bi-State Development Board of Commissioners. All of the recommended actions fall into six categories, and our progress is tracked every quarter by a third party through a Metro Security Scorecard. The most recent score card from Quarter 2 indicates we have made significant progress in all six categories.

The presence of people in public spaces can be a deterrent to criminal activity, therefore, more people riding Metro Transit can help make the system safer, and any effort to encourage ridership on the Metro system enhances the region's overall security strategy. It is important to keep in mind that we experience very few serious incidents on the system, especially when compared to the number of riders (in the millions) we move safely every day, as well as in comparison to some of the crime statistics in the municipalities we serve. In most situations, de-escalation and active engagement are successful tactics utilized in our approach.

The fact is, Metro is part of the communities we serve. Our team members, police partners and contractors live and raise families in many neighborhoods throughout St. Louis County, St. Louis City, and St. Clair County in Illinois. We are grateful to these individuals because they are your family members, neighbors, and friends who are helping to improve our transit experience.

Our current security strategy focuses on a regional approach that conforms to the federal compact by which Bi-State Development operates Metro Transit. We are strengthened through great relationships with our law enforcement partners who are responding when police are needed to address isolated incidents on the transit system. The security strategy is designed to meet the request of our customers to see more, not fewer local law enforcement uniforms on transit. We now have contracts with the St. Louis County Police Department, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Clair County Sheriff's Department, and City of St. Louis Sheriff's Department to provide qualified, trained officers to Metro Transit. They, too, are part of the community and are our neighbors who are invested in making our region better.

Today, when comparing Metro statistics to other transit systems in North America, we fall in the middle of the pack. We need to do better than that. We remain fully

committed to improving safety and security and will get there by continuing to implement the additional steps in the plan unanimously approved by all partners.

You can follow our progress and journey here: <https://www.ewgateway.org/transportation-planning/corridor-planning-metrolink/metro-security/>

Taulby Roach is President and Chief Executive Officer of Bi-State Development, which oversees Metro Transit as one of its business enterprises.