



**October 7, 2024**

**To:** Executive Committee  
**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer  
**Subject:** OC Streetcar Passenger Safety and Security

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is placed over the "From:" line of the header.

**Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the OC Streetcar. A significant component of the operations and maintenance will be the passenger safety and security. Utilizing industry best practices and examples of similar systems, staff has developed a passenger safety and security framework tailored to the specific needs of the OC Streetcar. Board of Director's approval is requested to further develop a transit ambassador program and negotiate an amendment to the current contract with the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

**Recommendations**

- A. Direct staff to return with a request for proposals to implement security trained ambassadors for the OC Streetcar.
- B. Direct staff to return with an amendment to the contract with the Orange County Sheriff's Department to provide Transit Police Services on the OC Streetcar system.

**Background**

The OC Streetcar will be a first of its kind transit system in Orange County providing significant benefit to the communities served and enhancing the ease of use for transportation riders by providing greater and more frequent connectivity to both OC Bus and rail. The OC Streetcar will operate along a 4.1-mile route through the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove, traversing an exclusive right-of-way and public streets. Six trains with a capacity of 210 passengers each will operate seven days a week. The 16 stations on the alignment are in residential, business, and industrial communities, each having unique passenger safety and security considerations.

Pre-revenue service for the OC Streetcar is scheduled to begin in 2025, and certain components of security staffing must be in place by the first testing and energizing of the Overhead Catenary System (OCS), making it necessary to advance the passenger safety and security plan to meet these timelines. Staff has performed extensive outreach and investigation into passenger safety and security models used by similar systems and has developed a passenger safety and security plan that utilizes a hybrid approach utilizing both security trained transit ambassadors and sworn law enforcement.

### ***Discussion***

OCTA is committed, and has an obligation, to provide the safe, secure, and orderly operation of the OC Streetcar. To determine the recommended approach to achieve this commitment, staff evaluated multiple factors including existing crime trends in the area, jurisdictional input, ridership, community acceptance of law enforcement personnel, cost, availability, responsiveness of local/county law enforcement personnel, and the operational footprint spanning two city jurisdictions. A hybrid model that utilizes both security trained transit ambassadors and sworn law enforcement is a balanced approach that most appropriately meets the passenger safety and security needs of the OC Streetcar.

#### **Transit Ambassadors**

The ambassador program would provide a field-deployed professional uniformed, unarmed presence with the primary intent to provide customer service throughout the OC Streetcar system, including re-enforcement of the Customer Code of Conduct, while also serving as a deterrent to criminal activity. Personnel will, among other things, provide customers with wayfinding, fare, and other information about the OC Streetcar and OC Bus systems, observe and report criminal activity, and help prevent trespassing on OC Streetcar properties. Four teams of two Ambassadors are proposed, with two teams working days and two teams working nights. To support and manage these teams, two ambassador supervisors would be present, one for the day shift and one for the night shift. Staff would be present each day of the week.

Ambassador personnel would be pre-screened for experience, professionalism, and strong customer service skills. Selected personnel will already have the basic security officer training which the California Bureau of Security and Investigative Services requires as well as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automatic external defibrillation, and fire extinguisher training. It is desired to hire bilingual individuals to fill these roles. Personnel would receive an additional 40 hours of training specific to rail transportation, including, but not limited to, topics such as rail equipment familiarization, collision reporting, evacuations, passenger train emergency preparedness, OCTA's customer service policies and procedures, and OCTA's mission, vision, and values.

Staff has reviewed the options of directly hiring versus contracting for the security trained ambassadors and is recommending securing these services through a contract. This recommendation is based on ensuring that OCTA has maximum flexibility in the scaling of the program to meet the needs of the passenger safety and security plan. Additionally, it is a more cost-effective option than direct hire and places liability on the contractor for performance of the work. Using known fully burdened rates of an existing security contract, this program is estimated to cost about \$1.6 million for the first year and is anticipated to grow approximately five to seven percent per year thereafter. This estimate includes the required one-time purchase of portable radios and supporting equipment which is estimated to cost approximately \$45,000. The request for proposals would clearly identify all training and performance standards to ensure that OCTA is able to strictly enforce its expectations for administration of the program.

#### Sworn Law Enforcement

OCTA has built a successful passenger safety and security model on OC Bus through its long-standing partnership with the County of Orange, Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD). Since 1993, OCSD has been providing Transit Police Services (TPS) to OCTA's patrons, employees, and properties. To realize efficiencies to be gained by utilizing the same public safety and security provider across OCTA's modes of service, staff is recommending amending the scope of services with OCSD TPS to include the OC Streetcar.

A dedicated team of six Deputy Sheriff's II and one sergeant would have the primary responsibility of patrolling and responding to issues on the OC Streetcar alignment but would have a secondary responsibility to assist with calls for service on the adjacent bus system, should they arise. Conversely, TPS personnel assigned to patrol/respond to the bus system could support the OC Streetcar deputies. Expanding the TPS contract in this manner would also provide other departmental assets, such as the Community Oriented Policing Team, investigations, and K-9 teams to the OC Streetcar operation. TPS would partner with local law enforcement for responses on the alignment to ensure the appropriate level of response. Adding the proposed seven staff to TPS is estimated to cost \$2.3 million for the first year; this includes labor, training, and annual equipment fees. Startup equipment costs include radios, vehicles, and outfitting estimated at \$222,658.

#### Next Steps

Pending Board direction, staff will return to the Board for approval to release a request for proposals for security trained ambassadors and to execute a contract amendment with OCSD TPS.

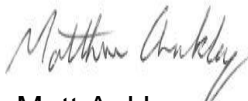
**Summary**

Staff is seeking Board direction on the proposed public safety and security model for the OC Streetcar.

**Attachment**


None.

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