



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Mayor Lyda Krewson
City of St. Louis
1200 Market Street, Room 200
Saint Louis, MO 63103

Dear Mayor Krewson,

St. Louis can be a safe community whose leaders collaborate for the good of all. As a City, County, region, and state, we must work together to ensure that everyone—no matter where they live, how much money they make, or the color of their skin—can step outside their front door, attend a Cardinals game, or ride Metrolink without fear of being shot or attacked. We're not there yet, largely due to decisions made over several generations that led to the poverty, racial disparities, and lack of educational opportunities that hold our region back. But it is now up to us to build the safe community we know St. Louis can be. I know you share that vision, and I look forward to working together as your partner to achieve it.

Ensuring public safety must be our region's top priority. Long-term investments will be required in new community policing initiatives, violence prevention programs, and systemic changes. While we invest in those long-term initiatives, we know that our County and City residents also deserve strategic action. And they deserve action right now.

I am writing with a proposal for one such action. In a recent meeting convened by Governor Parson, we discussed the unique and substantial impact crime on the Metrolink system has on regional stability. Because Metrolink passes through both the City and County — and because criminals who board a train at a City stop can easily ride across the County line and vice versa — we share a common interest in making sure Metrolink is safe and secure in both jurisdictions. County residents who ride Metrolink downtown or City residents who take it to the County deserve a safe and enjoyable ride. When businesses recruit talent to St. Louis, they should be able to assure recruits that they and their families will be safe riding Metrolink from the airport, through the County, and into the City. Before we can even dream of expanding Metrolink, we must make it safe for everyone at all times of day.

Safety and security is not what our residents currently experience on Metrolink. Over the last two calendar years, we saw an average of 150 Part 1 crimes on Metrolink in the City and the County. That is not acceptable.

In recent weeks, you shared with me your concerns about the declining number of police officers employed by the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department and the discouraging recruitment trends over time. I understand your concerns over the City's residency requirement, officer pay, and other factors that limit your ability to recruit and retain officers. I also noted that the recent WSP security assessment of Metrolink found that the City's limited police personnel has left the Metrolink with inadequate staffing levels along Metrolink in the City. WSP also cited that jurisdictional boundaries constrain coverage of security needs on Metrolink when one jurisdiction cannot provide adequate coverage. I am hopeful that by working collaboratively, the City and the County can identify potential solutions to these challenges as well as opportunities to coordinate recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure both jurisdictions have the most talented police officers available to serve and to protect St. Louis.

In recognition of these challenges, I am writing today to ask for your consideration and support for a proposal that could improve public safety on Metrolink by more than tripling the total number of uniformed patrol officers and sergeants securing the Metrolink line in the City.

I have worked closely with the County's Police Chief Jon Belmar to define the course and scope of this proposal, as follows:

- The County will assign 16 new uniformed patrol officers and two sergeants to patrol the Metrolink line in the City. Those officers will supplement the City's current staffing level of 6 officers, 1 sergeant, and 1 lieutenant, as well as the County's currently assigned 37 officers, 6 sergeants, and 1 captain. The total combined City and County police force assigned to Metrolink would then consist of 59 police officers and 11 supervisors. The number of officers is adjustable within reason to meet the City's public safety needs on Metrolink.
- The County personnel so assigned will patrol platforms and the Metrolink line traveling within the City. They will also use marked County police cars to patrol adjacent to the Metrolink stations for the purpose of patrolling the Metrolink line.
- The County personnel will work alongside SLMPD's Public Transportation Unit and will report through the chain of command of the Task Force for operational issues and their home agency for administrative issues.
- The County personnel will be added to an integrated City/County schedule across the two current shifts to maximize coverage.
- All personnel will work cooperatively and in support of the City and the County, sharing and supporting the regional goal and mission. Personnel may be shared and assigned as needed for emergencies, special events, and in response to remarkable crimes or special circumstances.

Increasing visibility will help to deter crime, to improve public confidence in Metrolink's safety, and to promote a safe, regional transit system. And, through a collaborative partnership, law enforcement can better leverage resources to suppress crime on Metrolink and surrounding areas.

The total taxpayer costs associated with each police officer are \$62.69 and \$79.89 for each sergeant per hour. The total yearly costs for the personnel who would be assigned under this

new agreement would be about \$2.4 million. We have identified a potential funding mechanism that will reimburse County taxpayers for these increased police services without unduly delaying public safety. Bi-State Development's ("Bi-State") 2020 budget request is currently in front of the County Council. I propose that the County withhold \$2.4 million from the appropriation of funds to Bi-State to reimburse the County for these police services for the first 12 months that the County's personnel is assigned. Thereafter we will work with your staff to identify the best potential funding mechanism available to reimburse the County for the costs in subsequent years.

A contract between the City and the County will further define the respective duties, roles, and responsibilities. County ordinances already authorize the Police Chief to enter into a contract with "the City of St. Louis . . . for the performance by the [County Police] Department of any or all municipal police and law enforcement functions within . . . St. Louis City." St. Louis County Revised Code Section 701.070(4). Chief Belmar and County Counselor Beth Orwick stand ready to work with your staff to finalize the details of this proposal and to put it into final form.

I know we share a sense of urgency about our regional crime challenge. I know we both want to bring down crime on Metrolink as soon as possible. And we also must acknowledge that finalizing a contract and identifying a funding mechanism in the City's budget may take much longer than either of us would like. Accordingly, I propose that immediately after your agreement to this proposal, the County begin assigning officers and sergeants to supplement the City's currently-assigned police force on Metrolink without waiting on the execution of a formal contract. Because of the extraordinary circumstances facing our region, we shouldn't let legal formalities get in the way of public safety. The County would be willing to operate without a contract for a period of up to two weeks. That should give both the City and the County time to finalize and execute a contract.

As a separate, related, and just as important idea, I am proposing that we unify command of Bi-State's private security under the leadership of the St. Louis County Police Department. Unifying command will ensure much better coordination of public safety services resulting in making the trains safer.

In fact, the recent security assessment by WSP recommended that Bi-State:

- Establish and clarify roles and responsibilities among the contracted security services, Bi-State, and law enforcement;
- Establish accountability, transparency, and oversight of the contracted security within Bi-State's contracts with law enforcement agencies;
- Collaborate with contracted security to coordinate how police impact the security strategy;
- Define security and policing performance metrics;
- Improve communication between contracted security and law enforcement;
- Ensure contracted security is aligned with a security and law enforcement strategy;
- Ensure Bi-State's security leaders have good relationships with law enforcement partners;

- Ensure system coverage and strategic deployment of contracted security and law enforcement;
- Clarify that Bi-State will not have an in-house transit police force;
- Improve training for contracted security; and
- Work with law enforcement to ensure clear oversight, performance requirements, deployment coordination, metrics, and data sharing.

We can address many of these recommendations in a straightforward way by simply restructuring the relationship between Bi-State and the County's Police Department. Therefore I propose that Bi-State reassign its security leadership to work out of the County's Police Department headquarters under the leadership of Chief Belmar and under the day-to-day operational control of the Task Force. Moreover, I propose that Bi-State's security contract assign management and control over the contract to the County's Police Department, with Bi-State retaining only the obligation to pay the contractor and otherwise to act in accordance with the directives of the Police Chief.

This proposal would increase the total of police personnel assigned to Metrolink from 52 to 70 and would align the contracted security with law enforcement for the first time ever. I hope you agree that this unprecedented commitment to public safety on Metrolink is necessary and appropriate at this extraordinary time. Only by taking these and other unprecedented, collaborative steps can we hope to overcome the crime challenge that has been holding our region back.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these ideas, and any other ways we can work together to make the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County safer.

Sincerely,



Sam Page