



August 8, 2018

Ms. Grace Crunican
General Manager
Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Cc: BART Board of Directors, BART Police Chief Carlos Rojas

Dear Ms. Crunican:

Mutual aid agreements among public safety and a wide range of other public agencies are a tried and true method for responding effectively and rapidly to a wide range of emergencies, disasters and serious emerging issues that exceed the resources and capabilities of a single agency to respond. A recent series of tragic and deadly attacks on the BART system have badly shaken public trust in a system that serves more than 420,000 riders daily and is a vital transportation service for the entire Bay Area. These problems have grown even more acute as growing ridership has pushed BART to its operational limits. Against this troubling backdrop, we strongly encourage BART immediately to establish a task force to explore the creation of a mutual aid agreement with other local and regional law enforcement and public safety agencies.

The Bay Area Council was instrumental in the creation of BART more than 60 years ago and we have been an unwavering advocate over many decades for investing in improving and expanding the system. There is no higher priority for BART than ensuring public safety of riders, employees and others who use and interact with the system. BART riders and others deserve to feel safe when they enter a station or board a train, and not providing for their safety will push them into their cars and cripple our already congested highways and bridges. This includes not only violent crimes, but ongoing issues of fare evasion, drug use, vandalism, and other smaller crimes that diminish public trust and confidence in the system.

The Bay Area and its 101 cities and nine counties collectively have considerable sworn public safety resources available to address crime when it increases in particular areas, as has been happening on BART of late. Many of these cities have BART stations within their jurisdictions, the residents of those cities are the BART riders who enter and exit the system from those stations. BART is a regional agency and should be able to acquire and rely on regional resources when needed. There are many examples of this sort of mutual aid response working effectively in many cities and regions and there's no reason it can't work here if we set our mind and will to doing it. Violent crime and crime, in general, doesn't abide jurisdictional or city boundaries and we shouldn't let those boundaries get in the way of using all available resources to make BART safe for all riders.

Of course, mutual aid is an established way of life in firefighting, where departments from adjoining cities routinely respond to calls in each other's jurisdictions, and travel far and wide to provide support in the event of major fires, like the ones gripping numerous parts of our state right now.

We commend you and BART for developing an initial response plan that the Board of Directors will consider on Thursday, August 8. This is the right step. But, it is not enough. A mutual aid response can provide the necessary level of resources to help BART address its immediate safety issues. We recognize that there are many details that need to be worked out in forming a mutual aid agreement. That is why we encourage the BART Board of Directors to begin this process immediately. The Council is ready to help facilitate this in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jim Wunderman'.

Jim Wunderman
President and CEO