
Government of the District of Columbia



Metropolitan Police Department

Testimony of
Cathy L. Lanier
Chief of Police

Congressional Hearing on
WMATA: Is There a Security Gap?

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Health Care,
District of Columbia, Census, & the National Archives
Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chair

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Chairman Gowdy, members of the Committee, staff and guests – thank you for the opportunity to present this statement on the Metropolitan Police Department’s collaborative efforts with our federal, state and local partners to address security in our Metro System.

Mass transportation is an attractive target for anyone wanting to disrupt a major city. The Transportation Security Administration’s Office of Intelligence (TSA-OI) concurs that mass transit and passenger rail systems could be viable targets for a terrorist attack. An attack on a passenger rail system would garner attention not only because of the damage and casualties, but also because it could also disrupt the daily operations of a major metropolitan area. As rail systems are easily accessible to the public and difficult to secure, they are also vulnerable to attacks, as we have seen in attacks overseas. Since 2004, there have been four major attacks on mass transit, in Moscow, Mumbai, London, and Madrid, with almost 500 total fatalities and more than 3,000 people injured. Given the possibility of attack on Metro, and the impact it would have on the District and the entire region, it is important to review how authorities in National Capital Region works together to safeguard the transit system.

Given this backdrop, it is clear that local law enforcement plays a critical role in homeland security efforts. In addition to being first responders, through a robust Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Program, we are also first *preventers*, who are uniquely positioned to detect and prevent terrorist incidents right here at home. Information provided by local police – if discovered early and matched with the right intelligence - can help detect, disrupt and prevent a terrorist plot. As information sharing is critical in both preempting and responding to an attack, the MPD maintains daily contact with both the Metro Transit Police and the Amtrak Police Intelligence Analysts through the Washington Regional Threat Analysis Center (WRTAC). In addition to tracking operational law enforcement activity and identifying emerging threats through the WRTAC, the MPD is also engaged in the Department of Homeland Security’s pilot project of the TrapWire predictive software system, which allows us to use Suspicious Activity Reports to detect patterns of pre-attack surveillance and logistical planning.

In the National Capital Region, the flow of information among federal, state and local partners through our Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) is excellent. Our agencies have worked together for years sharing information and coordinating responses to a variety of situations and the many special events that take place in our Nation’s Capital. In addition to the pre-established relationships of the members of the task force, the area Chiefs of Police meet on a monthly basis to address regional issues, including rail safety, through the Council of Governments. The MPD also facilitates weekly meetings with a number of our key partners, including the Metro Transit Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Capitol Police, United States Park Police, Amtrak Police Department, United States Secret Service, and the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. These meetings provide a forum for our partner agencies to share information about sensitive law enforcement operations as well as classified intelligence.

As real time information is critical in the event of a major incident, the MPD is currently working to establish agreements with Metro Transit Police and law enforcement agencies in bordering jurisdictions to share real-time computer aided dispatch information, which will enhance situational awareness. From an operational perspective, the MPD actively supports the

Metro Transit Police Departments Blue TIDE (Terrorism Identification and Deterrence Effort) initiative through coordinated patrols in and around Metro Stations. As part of these patrols, MPD's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit (EOD) teams conduct regular sweeps to detect explosive materials, including unattended packages which have the potential to store Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). MPD also participates in the multi-agency "Operation Rail Safe Initiative," which provides for enhanced patrols in and around commuter rail hubs.

Immediate and seamless communication between the Metropolitan Police, Metro Transit Police and the many other agencies in the National Capital Region is essential for operational readiness and response. The Metro Transit Police and MPD have had direct radio interoperability for seven years. Officers assigned to both agencies can use their handheld or car radios to communicate with their counterparts without a Dispatcher facilitating the connection. This saves valuable time in critical situations and could ultimately save lives. Overall, the District's radio system is designed with the necessary signal penetration to allow our members to maintain contact with both the District Dispatcher and Metro Transit if and when they enter a Metro Station.

With a myriad of police departments working in the region, coordinated information sharing and response planning is essential. Even beyond the National Capital Region, the MPD has been participating in the Northeast Corridor Coalition since 2005. This consortium of police and transit agencies works together to enhance security planning and programming along the AMTRAK rail line between Washington, DC, New York, Boston and points in between. This planning includes response for active shooter scenarios as well as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive attacks. From a DC specific perspective, the MPD is part of the District of Columbia Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC). Coordinated through the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA), it is the principal body that addresses planning and implementation efforts identified in the District Response Plan (DRP) that establishes the framework for the District's response to, recovery from, and mitigation of all hazards.

The Metropolitan Police Department and Metro Transit Police have a strong relationship grounded in a history of mutual support. From sharing crime information around metro platforms to responding to events occurring on the Transit system, our overlapping jurisdictions require efficacy in our collaborative responsibilities. For major events occurring in the District of Columbia, WMATA has been quick to offer services such as buses for cooling centers, blockades and transportation. During the school year, Metro Police also participate in daily conference calls with MPD to ensure situational awareness regarding safe transport of students after school. MPD members are used to assist in metering crowds at crowded stations, providing traffic control during incidents, and coordinating on criminal investigations with mutual interest to our agencies.

While all of the joint exercises and coordinated efforts have worked well to build relationships and enhance operational effectiveness, the best example of our joint efforts and capabilities came on June 22, 2009, when nine people were killed as a result of a collision on Metro's Red Line. This tragic incident required the coordinated response of numerous agencies. The District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department coordinated Incident Command and effectively established a Unified Command, which delineated the roles of responding

agencies. The quick response and communication between law enforcement and first responders led to a determination that the event was not related to a crime or terrorism. The MPD immediately stood up our Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) to serve as area command for police resources and practiced protocols were implemented.

Security perimeters were established on the scene to identify responders and to restrict unauthorized personnel and a rotation schedule was established to ensure the relief of essential personnel. Radio communications and external communications with the media operated in strict accordance with National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) procedures. While areas were identified for improvement, this incident exemplified the proficient efforts of the responding agencies in dealing with a disaster of this magnitude.

Ultimately, while much collaboration has and continues to take place, it is imperative that relevant partner agencies continue to train, exercise, drill and share information on a regular basis in order to effectively respond to any future scenario. I can assure you that the MPD remains committed to this process. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

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Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of Police
Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia

Chief Lanier, who has served the Metropolitan Police Department and the District of Columbia for more than 20 years, was appointed as the Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) on January 2, 2007. Since being named the Chief of Police, Chief Lanier has advanced the Department on many fronts, including driving down homicides to the lowest numbers in more than four decades; enhancing efficiency through technology; reducing overtime expenditures; increasing accountability; achieving and maintaining a nationally recognized homicide closure rate; increasing overall responsiveness of the department; and bringing an inclusive governmental approach to fighting crime and disorder while addressing social problems and deficiencies.

Prior to her appointment as the Chief of Police she served as the Commanding Officer of the Office of Homeland Security & Counter-Terrorism (OHSCT). During this assignment she was tasked with taking the lead role in developing and implementing coordinated counter-terrorism strategies for all units within the Department. In this position, she was responsible for all counter-terrorism operations, including terrorism investigations in partnership with the FBI Joint Terrorist Task Force, developing and implementing all field training exercises, and conducting risk assessments and critical infrastructure protection of key sites within the Nation's Capital.

Previous to the OHSCT, Chief Lanier served as the Commanding Officer of the Department's Special Operations Division for five years where she managed members of the Emergency Response Team; Explosive Ordnance Unit; Aviation and Harbor Units; Horse Mounted and Canine Units; Domestic Security Unit; Special Events/Dignitary Protection Branch; and the Department's Civil Disturbance Units. During her tenure as the SOD Commander she established the agency's initial Homeland Security/Counter-Terrorism Branch and created an agency-wide chemical, biological, and radiological response unit known as the Special Threat Action Team.

Chief Lanier spent more than 10 years of her career in the Uniform Patrol Division. As the Commander of the Fourth District she created the Latino Advisory Council that later expanded to become the Latino Liaison Unit. She has also served as the Commanding Officer of the Department's Major Narcotics Branch and Vehicular Homicide Units in the Special Services Bureau.

The Chief currently holds a Top Secret Clearance with SCI Access.