

# **BART Police Chief Selection --Public Input Survey--**

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## BART Police Chief Selection—Public Input Survey

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## **Background**

As one means of soliciting public input on the selection of a new Chief of Police, BART riders and the public were invited to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to rank the qualities and experience important in a new Chief of Police.

The questionnaire was administered through two channels: (1) an email invitation was sent to about 1,500 randomly selected BART riders who had completed an on-board passenger environment survey and agreed to participate in future BART research, and (2) the questionnaire was posted on bart.gov in an open-participation format<sup>1</sup>. To direct riders and the public to the open-participation survey:

- a notice was run on the electronic destination signs in stations
- messages were sent to Twitter followers and Facebook fans of BART
- emails were sent to individuals who had attended previous public meetings on citizen oversight
- city officials and numerous community organizations were notified
- press releases mentioned the opportunity for public input and provided the url
- announcements were made at public meetings where selection of the new police chief was discussed

The survey was open and in the field from 12-2-2009 to 1-7-2010. 548 were completed through the open-participation channel, and 287 were completed through the random sample channel. The response rate for the random sample group was approximately 19%. Results from both groups were similar. The findings presented here are primarily from the randomly selected group (this group has less of a self-selection bias and is therefore more representative of BART riders' opinions). Differences between the two groups are noted in the findings section below. Appendices A and B provide the frequency responses for the open-participation and random sample groups.

Respondents were asked to rate 14 personal characteristics or attributes (which help define a good candidate) from "very important" to "not important." The questionnaire also provided opportunities to weigh in on departmental priorities, such as key tasks and areas of focus. Open-ended comments were solicited to allow respondents to voice their opinion on topics not included in the other questions. A copy of the questionnaire is included as the final section of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> For both channels, controls were in place to make it difficult for someone to respond more than once to the survey.

## **Findings**

### Attribute Ratings

Most characteristics listed in the questionnaire were desirable and were rated fairly high by respondents. Twelve of 14 characteristics had a top two (i.e. "very" plus "somewhat" important) score of 90% or greater (Table 1). At the very top of the list is "leadership". This characteristic is also echoed in the definition of the number two characteristic "ethics and transparency". Strong leadership and the ability to apply it in a way that addresses customer and community needs (the third and fourth ranked characteristics) probably sums up the sentiments of many respondents.

### Departmental Priorities

Respondents spoke definitively here. The single most important task for the new chief is to ensure safety on BART (Table 2). In order to accomplish this, the new chief should focus on a greater police presence on trains, in stations and in parking lots (Table 3).

### Respondent Comments

There were a broad range of comments provided by respondents ranging from very specific advice (e.g. "the chief should be opposed to tasers") to very broad (e.g. "it's an important decision, I wish you luck"). Several common themes emerged from the comments. Representative comments related to each of these themes are presented later in the report.

- Make keeping the system safe for riders a top priority.
- All attributes listed in the survey are important.
- BART needs a strong, skilled leader who is open and honest.
- Change is needed from the basic building blocks of the department (e.g. good hiring and training practices) to the top (e.g. projecting a positive image).
- The reality is that the new chief will have to be able to thrive in the diverse environment in which BART operates.

### Differences between Random and Open-Participation Groups

Ratings of most characteristics were very similar between the two groups of respondents with the "top two" scores being within one or two percentage points. There were, however, four attributes related to community and diversity issues that the random group ranked between five and ten percentage points higher. They were:

- Community Policing
- Community Issues
- Respect for Diversity
- Citizen Oversight Body

Both groups also voiced support for the same top departmental priorities. Almost half of both groups selected "ensure safety on BART" as the single most important task for

the new chief (Table 2) and "more police presence on trains, in stations and BART parking lots" as the top focus for the department (Table 3).

Use of BART among the randomly selected group is higher than use of BART among the open-participation group. About 75% of the randomly selected group uses BART three or more days a week, while only 64% of the open-participation group uses BART three or more days a week.

Table 1 – Personal Attributes<sup>2</sup>

	Characteristic	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion	Very + Somewhat
1	Leadership	81%	17%	0%	2%	98%
2	Ethics and Transparency	83%	13%	2%	2%	96%
3	Customer Issues	75%	21%	3%	1%	96%
4	Community Issues	76%	19%	3%	2%	95%
5	Best Practices in Policing	70%	25%	3%	2%	95%
6	Morale Builder	68%	26%	3%	4%	94%
7	Coordination with Other Agencies	64%	30%	3%	3%	94%
8	Community Policing	71%	22%	5%	2%	93%
9	High Profile Incident Management	68%	25%	6%	1%	93%
10	Positive Change	67%	26%	3%	4%	93%
11	Respect for Diversity	71%	21%	6%	2%	92%
12	Capable Administrator	60%	30%	6%	4%	90%
13	Openness and Accessibility	58%	28%	9%	5%	87%
14	Citizen Oversight Body	45%	32%	14%	9%	78%

Sorted by this column

1. Leadership: A background that demonstrates the vision and experience needed to lead the BART Police Department (especially in establishing, maintaining and enforcing an appropriate procedural framework for a police department of similar size and scope).
2. Ethics and Transparency: Ability to lead and make decisions from a sound ethical perspective in a manner which is transparent to stakeholders.
3. Customer Issues: Ability to address concerns of riders throughout the BART system.
4. Community Issues: Ability to address concerns in the context of a large, culturally diverse urban and suburban service area.
5. Best Practices in Policing: Knowledge of best practices and the effective use of technology for effective policing.
6. Morale Builder: Ability to build and maintain strong, positive Department morale.
7. Coordination with Other Agencies: Experience coordinating with other law enforcement agencies on issues of joint concern.
8. Community Policing: Ability to develop and maintain partnerships with diverse communities in order to deliver effective police services.
9. High Profile Incident Management: Ability to communicate effectively with the community and media regarding high profile as well as everyday incidents.
10. Positive Change: Experience bringing about change in a law enforcement setting and using training as a change agent.
11. Respect for Diversity: Vision to recognize diversity as a community and organizational strength.
12. Capable Administrator: Skilled at budget, recruitment, labor and retention issues.
13. Openness and Accessibility: Ability to relate to all stakeholders and earnestly solicit input.
14. Citizen Oversight Body: Interest and experience in leading with guidance from a police citizen oversight body.

<sup>2</sup> Data in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are from the randomly selected group.

Table 2 -- Single Most Important Task for New Chief

Response	Percent	Count
Ensure safety on BART	44%	125
Establish quality standards and ensure that all officers meet those standards.	18%	50
Build trust with the community and riders.	14%	40
Ensure respectful, consistent policing in all communities.	11%	30
Lead, inspire, motivate, inform and train to build and maintain pride in the Department	8%	22
Other*:	5%	15
Total	100%	282

\* "Other" primarily included: "all of the above" and a few variations on "ensure safety on BART"

Table 3 -- Top Focus for Department under New Chief

Response	Percent	Count
More police presence on trains, in stations and BART parking lots	44%	125
Agency that is professional	19%	54
Accountability for actions	16%	46
Foster awareness and respect for cultural differences	11%	31
Other:	10%	27
Total	100%	282

\* "Other" primarily included: all of the above, training, respect and passenger safety

### **Selected Representative Comments (full list available upon request)**

#### **KEEP THE SYSTEM SAFE FOR RIDERS/MORE POLICE PRESENCE**

"Would love to see the safety of riders made top priority."

"A new BART Police Chief should have first-hand experience as a BART passenger, on all lines, at various hours, to fully appreciate the environment and to get a sense of the issues we as passengers experience daily."

"Someone who will keep riders safety first!"

"The ability to make the BART Police presence known at each station. I have been riding BART for almost 6 months everyday and I do not see the presence of the BART Police at all."

"He should make sure there is MORE police visibility on the trains. I ride every day from Walnut Creek to SF round trip and can count on one hand the number of times I have actually seen a policeman/woman on my train."

"He should have experience, routinely or daily, riding BART. What we all go through as passengers everyday, he/she should know about that."

"Be able to instill confidence to riders that BART is a safe way to commute."

"More police presence in stations and parking lots during the dark season as well as a professional agency. Make sure the riders are safe."

"Safety and more police presence should be the top priority. Everything else (commuter confidence, trust respect) will follow."

ALL CHARACTERISTICS IN SURVEY ARE OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT

"Every single one of the characteristics listed above are critically important."

"A Police Chief needs to be exceptionally strong in all the above categories."

A STRONG LEADER, OPEN AND HONEST

"The single most important characteristic for someone in any leadership position is the capacity to admit mistakes and shortcomings, and the willingness and initiative to make significant adjustments in response."

"Leadership and open, clear, strong communication is key."

"Good character and transmits that to staff in dealing with others."

"Visionary, inspirational, embodies diversity and has exceeded ethical standards in previous roles."

"Not only should this person personify honesty, integrity, and fair-minded characteristics, but the new Chief should require this from EVERY person in his or her department, and should have the strength to remove anyone who is unwilling to live up to those standards."



CHANGE IS NEEDED (THROUGH GOOD HIRING, TRAINING AND PROJECTING A POSITIVE IMAGE

"The new police chief really needs to change the department and make it more effective and responsive."

"Ability to project a positive image of the department."

"A strong belief and understanding that what happened to Oscar Grant was wrong and an unyielding commitment and promise that such a tragedy will never be repeated in the BART system."

"There needs to be a huge cultural shift in the BART police department so that everyone is trained not to treat riders as criminals -- especially youth of color or other stereotypical "criminals" -- or as a nuisance. BART police (and police in general) need to build rapport with the community."

ABILITY TO HANDLE/THRIVE WITH DIVERSITY

"Understand culture of seniors, disabled, and minority."

"Respect and an innovative approach for the diverse bay area community BART serves."

Questionnaire



**BART Chief of Police**

The BART Board of Directors and the General Manager are interested in your thoughts about the experience and personal qualities of an ideal candidate as we begin the search for a new Chief of Police for BART. The results of the survey will be compiled and provided as input in the selection process. Thanks for your time and interest.

Rate each of the following characteristics in terms of importance in the selection of the new BART Police Chief.

1. Positive Change: Experience bringing about change in a law enforcement setting and using training as a change agent.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

2. Community Issues: Ability to address concerns in the context of a large, culturally diverse urban and suburban service area.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

3. Customer Issues: Ability to address concerns of riders throughout the BART system.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

4. Leadership: A background that demonstrates the vision and experience needed to lead the BART Police Department (especially in establishing, maintaining and enforcing an appropriate procedural framework for a police department of similar size and scope).

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

5. Community Policing: Ability to develop and maintain partnerships with diverse communities in order to deliver effective police services.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

6. Citizen Oversight Body: Interest and experience in leading with guidance from a police citizen oversight body.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

7. Capable Administrator: Skilled at budget, recruitment, labor and retention issues.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

8. High Profile Incident Management: Ability to communicate effectively with the community and media regarding high profile as well as everyday incidents.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

9. Best Practices in Policing: Knowledge of best practices and the effective use of technology for effective policing.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

10. Openness and Accessibility: Ability to relate to all stakeholders and earnestly solicit input.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

11. Respect for Diversity: Vision to recognize diversity as a community and organizational strength.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

12. Coordination with Other Agencies: Experience coordinating with other law enforcement agencies on issues of joint concern.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

13. Morale Builder: Ability to build and maintain strong, positive Department morale.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

14. Ethics and Transparency: Ability to lead and make decisions from a sound ethical perspective in a manner which is transparent to stakeholders.

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- No opinion

15. What, if any, additional characteristics do you think a new BART Police Chief should have?

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16. In your opinion, what is the single most important task for the new Chief? (select one)

- Lead, inspire, motivate, inform and train to build and maintain pride in the Department
- Build trust with the community and riders.
- Ensure safety on BART
- Establish quality standards and ensure that all officers meet those standards.
- Ensure respectful, consistent policing in all communities.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. What should the top focus of the BART Police Department be under the new Chief? (select one)

- Agency that is professional
- More police presence on trains, in stations and BART parking lots
- Foster awareness and respect for cultural differences
- Accountability for actions
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

18. How often do you ride BART? (select one)

- 6 – 7 days a week
- 5 days a week
- 3 – 4 days a week
- 1 – 2 days a week
- 1 – 3 days a month
- Less than once a month but at least once a year
- Less than once/year or never

19. Additional comments on the selection of a new Chief of Police at BART

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Thank you for contributing your thoughts and opinions. Please click the "submit" button below when you are finished.

Appendix A: Open-Participation Frequencies

<b>1. Positive Change: Experience bringing about change in a law enforcement setting and using training as a change agent.</b>		
Very important	66%	333
Somewhat important	25%	125
Not important	6%	32
No opinion	3%	13
Total	100%	503

<b>2 Community Issues: Ability to address concerns in the context of a large, culturally diverse urban and suburban service area.</b>		
Very important	64%	319
Somewhat important	25%	126
Not important	9%	45
No opinion	2%	12
Total	100%	502

<b>3. Customer Issues: Ability to address concerns of riders throughout the BART system.</b>		
Very important	75%	373
Somewhat important	20%	102
Not important	4%	22
No opinion	1%	3
Total	100%	500

<b>4. Leadership: A background that demonstrates the vision and experience needed to lead the BART Police Department (especially in establishing, maintaining and enforcing an appropriate procedural framework for a police department of similar size and scope).</b>		
Very important	80%	400
Somewhat important	15%	75
Not important	3%	16
No opinion	1%	6
Total	100%	497

<b>5. Community Policing: Ability to develop and maintain partnerships with diverse communities in order to deliver effective police services.</b>		
Very important	53%	265
Somewhat important	34%	169
Not important	11%	56
No opinion	1%	6
Total	100%	496

<b>6. Citizen Oversight Body: Interest and experience in leading with guidance from a police citizen oversight body.</b>		
Very important	33%	163
Somewhat important	35%	173
Not important	29%	145
No opinion	3%	17
Total	100%	498

<b>7. Capable Administrator: Skilled at budget, recruitment, labor and retention issues.</b>		
Very important	57%	284
Somewhat important	34%	172
Not important	7%	35
No opinion	2%	9
Total	100%	500

<b>8. High Profile Incident Management: Ability to communicate effectively with the community and media regarding high profile as well as everyday incidents.</b>		
Very important	63%	316
Somewhat important	28%	141
Not important	7%	33
No opinion	2%	8
Total	100%	498

<b>9. Best Practices in Policing: Knowledge of best practices and the effective use of technology for effective policing.</b>		
Very important	76%	377
Somewhat important	21%	104
Not important	2%	11
No opinion	1%	5
Total	100%	497

<b>10. Openness and Accessibility: Ability to relate to all stakeholders and earnestly solicit input.</b>		
Very important	55%	274
Somewhat important	35%	176
Not important	7%	37
No opinion	3%	13
Total	100%	500

<b>11. Respect for Diversity: Vision to recognize diversity as a community and organizational strength.</b>		
Very important	54%	271
Somewhat important	29%	142
Not important	15%	74
No opinion	2%	11
Total	100%	498

<b>12. Coordination with Other Agencies: Experience coordinating with other law enforcement agencies on issues of joint concern.</b>		
Very important	63%	318
Somewhat important	32%	159
Not important	3%	16
No opinion	2%	9
Total	100%	502

<b>13. Morale Builder: Ability to build and maintain strong, positive Department morale.</b>		
Very important	70%	351
Somewhat important	23%	117
Not important	3%	16
No opinion	3%	16
Total	100%	500

<b>14. Ethics and Transparency: Ability to lead and make decisions from a sound ethical perspective in a manner which is transparent to stakeholders.</b>		
Very important	78%	389
Somewhat important	18%	91
Not important	2%	12
No opinion	2%	8
Total	100%	500

Note: Question 15 was open-ended

<b>16. In your opinion, what is the single most important task for the new Chief? (select one)</b>		
Lead, inspire, motivate, inform and train to build and maintain pride in the Department	15%	73
Build trust with the community and riders.	10%	48
Ensure safety on BART	45%	220
Establish quality standards and ensure that all officers meet those standards.	15%	74
Ensure respectful, consistent policing in all communities.	8%	37
Other:	8%	40
Total	100%	492

<b>17. What should the top focus of the BART Police Department be under the new Chief? (select one)</b>		
Agency that is professional	28%	140
More police presence on trains, in stations and BART parking lots	46%	227
Foster awareness and respect for cultural differences	5%	25
Accountability for actions	11%	54
Other:	10%	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>493</b>

<b>18. How often do you ride BART? (select one)</b>		
6 – 7 days a week	15%	75
5 days a week	38%	189
3 – 4 days a week	10%	50
1 – 2 days a week	12%	57
1 – 3 days a month	12%	59
Less than once a month but at least once a year	8%	40
Less than once/year or never	5%	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>493</b>



Appendix B: Random Sample Frequencies

<b>1. Positive Change: Experience bringing about change in a law enforcement setting and using training as a change agent.</b>		
Very important	67%	189
Somewhat important	26%	73
Not important	3%	9
No opinion	4%	11
Total	100%	282

<b>2. Community Issues: Ability to address concerns in the context of a large, culturally diverse urban and suburban service area.</b>		
Very important	76%	216
Somewhat important	19%	53
Not important	3%	9
No opinion	2%	5
Total	100%	283

<b>3. Customer Issues: Ability to address concerns of riders throughout the BART system.</b>		
Very important	75%	210
Somewhat important	21%	59
Not important	3%	8
No opinion	1%	3
Total	100%	280

<b>4. Leadership: A background that demonstrates the vision and experience needed to lead the BART Police Department (especially in establishing, maintaining and enforcing an appropriate procedural framework for a police department of similar size and scope).</b>		
Very important	81%	228
Somewhat important	17%	48
Not important	0%	0
No opinion	2%	5
Total	100%	281

<b>5. Community Policing: Ability to develop and maintain partnerships with diverse communities in order to deliver effective police services.</b>		
Very important	71%	199
Somewhat important	22%	63
Not important	5%	14
No opinion	2%	6
Total	100%	282

<b>6. Citizen Oversight Body: Interest and experience in leading with guidance from a police citizen oversight body.</b>		
Very important	45%	127
Somewhat important	32%	90
Not important	14%	38
No opinion	9%	25
Total	100%	280

<b>7. Capable Administrator: Skilled at budget, recruitment, labor and retention issues.</b>		
Very important	60%	169
Somewhat important	30%	86
Not important	6%	17
No opinion	4%	10
Total	100%	282

<b>8. High Profile Incident Management: Ability to communicate effectively with the community and media regarding high profile as well as everyday incidents.</b>		
Very important	68%	190
Somewhat important	25%	71
Not important	6%	18
No opinion	1%	2
Total	100%	281

<b>9. Best Practices in Policing: Knowledge of best practices and the effective use of technology for effective policing.</b>		
Very important	70%	197
Somewhat important	25%	71
Not important	3%	8
No opinion	2%	5
Total	100%	281

<b>10. Openness and Accessibility: Ability to relate to all stakeholders and earnestly solicit input.</b>		
Very important	58%	164
Somewhat important	28%	80
Not important	9%	24
No opinion	5%	13
Total	100%	281

<b>11. Respect for Diversity: Vision to recognize diversity as a community and organizational strength.</b>		
Very important	71%	200
Somewhat important	21%	58
Not important	6%	17
No opinion	2%	5
Total	100%	280

<b>12. Coordination with Other Agencies: Experience coordinating with other law enforcement agencies on issues of joint concern.</b>		
Very important	64%	178
Somewhat important	30%	84
Not important	3%	9
No opinion	3%	7
Total	100%	278

<b>13. Morale Builder: Ability to build and maintain strong, positive Department morale.</b>		
Very important	68%	190
Somewhat important	26%	73
Not important	3%	8
No opinion	4%	10
Total	100%	281

<b>14. Ethics and Transparency: Ability to lead and make decisions from a sound ethical perspective in a manner which is transparent to stakeholders.</b>		
Very important	83%	232
Somewhat important	13%	37
Not important	2%	5
No opinion	2%	7
Total	100%	281

Note: Question 15 was open-ended

<b>16. In your opinion, what is the single most important task for the new Chief? (select one)</b>		
Lead, inspire, motivate, inform and train to build and maintain pride in the Department	8%	22
Build trust with the community and riders.	14%	40
Ensure safety on BART	44%	125
Establish quality standards and ensure that all officers meet those standards.	18%	50
Ensure respectful, consistent policing in all communities.	11%	30
Other:	5%	15
Total	100%	282

<b>17. What should the top focus of the BART Police Department be under the new Chief? (select one)</b>		
Agency that is professional	19%	54
More police presence on trains, in stations and BART parking lots	44%	124
Foster awareness and respect for cultural differences	11%	31
Accountability for actions	16%	46
Other:	10%	27
Total	100%	282

<b>18. How often do you ride BART? (select one)</b>		
6 – 7 days a week	16%	46
5 days a week	42%	119
3 – 4 days a week	17%	49
1 – 2 days a week	12%	34
1 – 3 days a month	11%	31
Less than once a month but at least once a year	2%	6
Less than once/year or never	0%	0
Total	100%	285