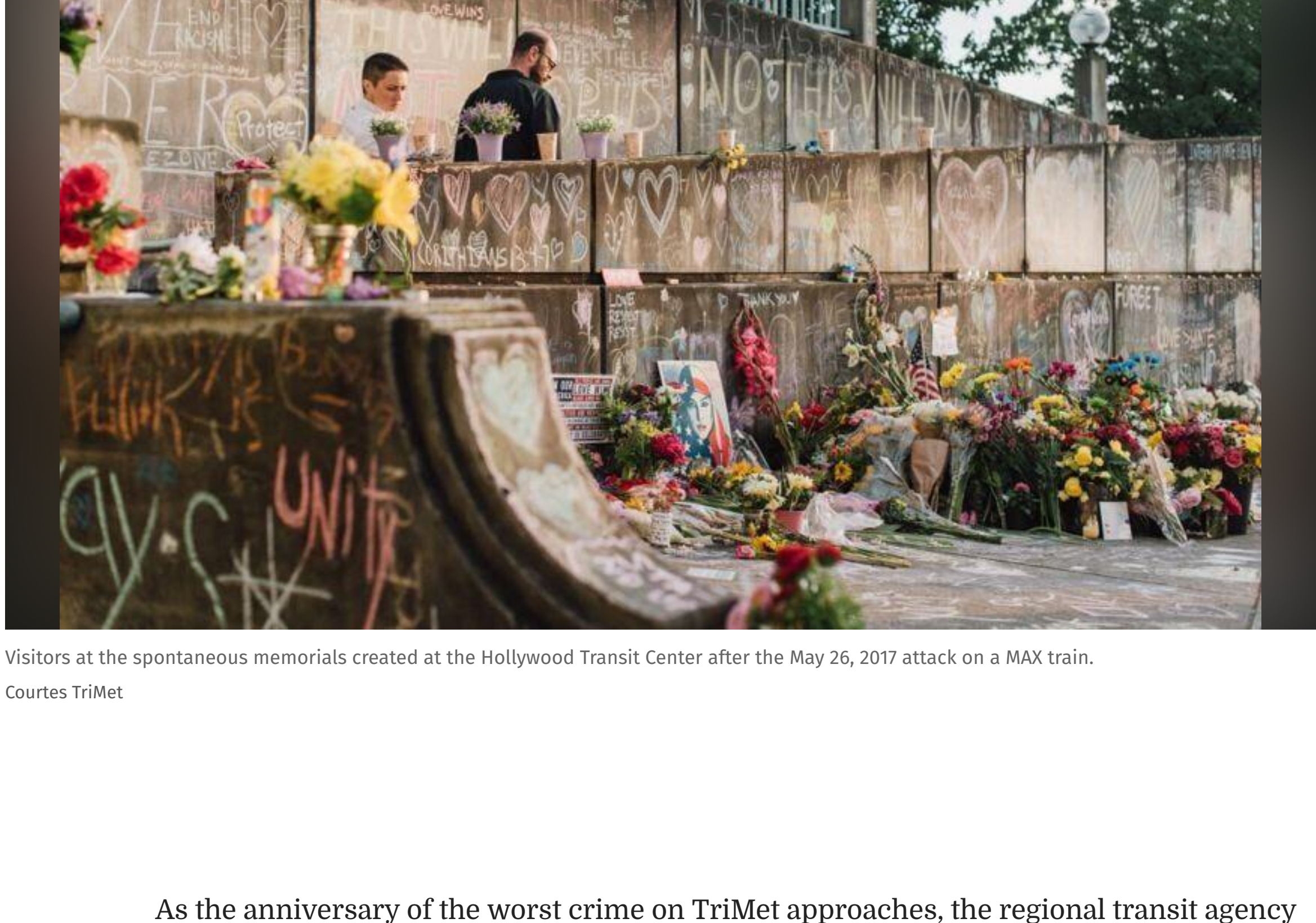


TriMet: Crime, security increasing on transit system

Jim Redden May 23, 2018



Visitors at the spontaneous memorials created at the Hollywood Transit Center after the May 26, 2017 attack on a MAX train.

Courtes TriMet

As the anniversary of the worst crime on TriMet approaches, the regional transit agency released statistics that show crime on or near the transit system reportedly increased from 2016 to 2017.

Some of the increase could be explained by riders and others reorting more incidents following the May 26, 2017 attack on a MAX train that left two men dead and another severely injured.

According to the statistics released Wednesday, the TriMet system recorded 1,424 reported offenses against person, property or society in 2017. That compares to 1,247 such offenses reported in 2016.

"The May 26 attack had a profound impact on the community, on TriMet and on our riders," said TriMet Executive Director of Safety & Security Harry Saporta. "When you have a devastating incident, people tend to pay more attention to their surroundings and are more apt to report concerns. We appreciate that attention and encourage continuing awareness."

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The statistics were presented to TriMet's Board of Directors a its May 22 meeting. They are the second year of a new reporting system that prevents direct comparison to years before 2016. It tracks and counts all offenses within a single reported criminal event, rather than the individual incidents. For example, The attack on a MAX train pulling into yhe Hollywood Transit Center led to 15 of the reported offenses.

Despite the increase, TriMet says the rate of offenses in 2017 was relately lowWhile the number of reported offenses is low when compared to the number of rides provided -- just a single offense for every 68,000-plus trips.

Nevertheless, TriMet has significantly increased security on the transit system and plans more upgrades in the future.

For example, immediately following the May 26 attack, TriMet partnered with Transit Police and other law enforcement agencies to provide overtime for added patrols on the system. Extra patrols were added around the major events such as the Rose Festival and during holiday times, in addition to the routine patrols and presence Transit Police provide on the transit system.

Since then, TriMet increased the presence of contracted unarmed G4S security personnel on the system to 37 by the end of 2017. TriMet also increased the hours for the G4S security presence from 2800 hours a week spent patrolling the system at the beginning of the year to 3200 hours as of May 2, 2018.

The TriMet board has increase spending for the the Safety & Security Division in the annual budget that takes effect on July 1 by \$3.5 million, or more than 13 percent to an overall level of more than \$30.2 million. The additional funds will add more coverage by G4S officers bringing them to a level of about 3,600 hours a week.

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TriMet is also working to increase the number of Transit Police officers, adding seven positions to bring the staffing level to 75.

"Our objective is to decrease fear and increase the level of trust our community and our operators have in the service we provide," said Transit Police Commander Sara Westbrook.

TriMet is also making safety improvements at stations along the MAX lines.

You can learn more

A public ceremony honoring the victims of the May 26 attack will be held at the Hollywood Transit Station beginning at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

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