Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Office of the Inspector General

Personnel Hiring Process Study

Report No. 20-AUD-09

June 25, 2020

Metro™

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Office of the Inspector General
818 West 7th Street, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90017

213.244.7300 Tel
213 244-7318 Fax

DATE June 25, 2020

TO Joanne Peterson
Chief Human Capital and Development Officer

FROM Karen Gorman
Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General

SUBJECT Final Report on Metro Personnel Hiring Process Study
(Report No. 20-AUD-09)

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) serves as the planner, coordinator, and operator of the public transportation system for the Los Angeles region. Metro is undertaking one of the largest construction programs in the country, and seeks to expedite the study, planning and building of its ambitious programs to address the current needs of the community. Accomplishment of its objective requires the prompt filling of every vacancy with staff prepared to act with a sense of urgency.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, the Metro Board authorized 1,680 non-contract positions. Metro has two tracks for hiring people: one is posting and hiring of new applicants and the other is interviewing and selecting from an existing qualified candidate pool from a former posting. The hiring process is a little faster when there is already a qualified pool. The purpose of this review is to determine if Metro's hiring policies, procedures, and process are efficient and effective to satisfy the needs of the departments to proceed on an expedited basis to carry out the Board's directives.

To fully analyze the process and compare it to industry practices, the OIG engaged a consulting service from a qualified team of human resources specialists. Our review found that Metro's hiring process consists of both industry-leading strengths and opportunities for improvement. The organization's commitment to equity is integrated in its value system through clear communication from Executive Leadership, its policies, and its hiring process. Metro values and promotes diversity and inclusion from the start of the hiring process to the end, and that message is clear throughout the organization. The relationship between stakeholders in the hiring process (e.g., Talent Acquisition staff, candidates, Hiring Managers) is, with few exceptions, symbiotic and positive. At the conclusion of the hiring process, the individual filling the vacancy is qualified and is someone with whom the hiring manager is pleased. Although Metro's hiring process accomplishes its organizational goals, the process was found to be inefficient, consisting of lengthy times-to-hire, manual and paper-based activities, with numerous and redundant steps that are frustrating to hiring managers and sometimes results in the loss of desirable candidates.

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This review was focused on analyzing the hiring processes for the 315 non-contract, full-time employees who were hired, externally or internally, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 (Metro's Fiscal Year 2019). This study did not cover contract employees, which comprise the majority of Metro's 10,219 full time employees (FTEs), nor did it cover employees hired prior to, or after, FY 2019.

On May 15, 2020, you submitted your response to the recommendations on the draft report dated April 28, 2020. Our consultant's reply to your comments is shown on the following pages (please see the paragraphs highlighted in yellow and described as "Project Team Response"). We took your comments into consideration and updated our report in certain respects. We are providing you this final report as an advance and courtesy copy before we distribute and present it to the Board in the future.

This report made a total of 28 recommendations to improve the Metro personnel hiring process. By acting on these recommendations, Metro can expect to obtain the following benefits: (1) decreased time-to-hire, (2) increased effectiveness, (3) improved candidate experience, and (4) decreased risk/liability. We believe these improvements are appropriate to pursue notwithstanding the impacts that the Covid-19 era has had on the hiring activity of the agency.

We appreciate the assistance provided by Metro Talent Acquisition staff during this review. I am available to answer any questions you may have regarding this report.

CC: Phillip Washington, Chief Executive Officer
Jonaura Wisdom, Chief Ethics Officer (Interim)
Nalini Ahuja, Chief Financial Officer

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

Interoffice Memo

Date	May 15, 2020
To	Yvonne Guan Zheng Senior Manager, Audit
From	Joanne Peterson Chief, Human Capital & Development
Subject	Draft Report on LA Metro Hiring Process Study Response

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft audit report. In reviewing the draft audit response, I was pleased to hear that the candidates selected for the positions are qualified and met each manager's needs. This not only accomplishes the agency's organizational mission but confirms the Talent Acquisition (TA) team's hard work and commitment in partnering with our Hiring Managers to get top talent for the organization. That said, the Human Capital and Development Department is always looking for ways to be more efficient as we work with our department partners to find candidates needed to fill vacant positions.

To ensure that the audit provides us with tools that can assist us, the process documented should be consistent with the actual work performed by the Talent Acquisition team. As the team reviewed the draft report, they identified several inconsistencies that we feel should be reevaluated. These inconsistencies are identified in three areas including, Metro current processes documented; completed processes previously changed; and consistent benchmark data evaluation. These inconsistencies are further defined below:

I. Metro Processes Documented- Inconsistencies with information the team provided versus what was documented in the audit.

II. Completed Process Previously Changed- Inconsistencies in documenting process changes that were implemented after the initial audit timeframe but were addressed with the auditors.

III. Consistent Benchmark Data Evaluation- Inconsistencies reliability of the data used to evaluate Metro against the benchmarked agencies.

I. Metro Processes Documented

In the review of the draft audit report, the team found nine areas where the processes described in the audit documentation are inconsistent with the Talent Acquisitions team's current recruitment and selection processes. The specific audit language described in the tasks, findings, and recommendations are identified below:

Task 1: Gather Background Information

1. **<u>Candidate Time to Hire (Page 14)</u>**

Audit Language: The candidate time-to-hire includes any time that the selected candidate may have spent in a QCP.

TA Response: This is not correct. The time to hire is calculated from the time a requisition is submitted to fill a vacant position. A qualified candidate pool is a list of qualified candidates who are immediately eligible to be considered when a vacancy exists. The pool is open for approximately 18 months. This is communicated to candidates when they apply and are placed on the list.

<u>Project Team Response:</u> The two sections on page 14 titled, "Candidate Time-to-hire," and "Hiring Manager Time-to-hire," are intended to describe the way that the Project Team defines these measures in the context of LA Metro's hiring process; it was not the Project Team's intent in these sections to describe how Talent Acquisition calculates time-to-hire. In order to clarify that these two sections are intended to describe how the Project Team defines both candidate and hiring manager time-to-hire, explanatory text will be added at the end of the paragraph preceding these two subsections.

2. **<u>Recommendation 01: Employ OTAC, Metro's new Applicant Tracking System, to obtain and utilize talent analytics (Page 19)</u>**

Audit Language: With the adoption of OTAC, a more reliable tool for collecting data than its predecessor, comes the opportunity to obtain and utilize data analytics to augment talent acquisition. Specifically, data from OTAC, when integrated with Metro's Human Resource Information System (HRIS), can provide TA invaluable insights into workforce planning, recruitment spending, and predicting attrition. Additionally, OTAC can be leveraged to quantify *descriptive* measures, such as talent acquisition activity (e.g., time-to-hire), efficiency (e.g., segmented time-to-hire), and performance (e.g., applicants-per-hire), along with future-oriented measures such as *predictive* measures (which project what will happen in the future) and *prescriptive* measures (which explain what Metro *should* do).

TA Response: This is partially correct. Although OTAC is designed to provide analytics, it is important to document that the department does have established analytics on time-to-hire that we track.

<u>Project Team Response:</u> The beginning portion of Recommendation 01 has been edited to clarify that (1) TA's current recruitment technology does provide analytical capabilities, including tracking time-to-hire, and (2) the implementation of OTAC will increase TA's current data analytics capabilities.

3. **<u>Recommendation 02: Hold hiring process stakeholders accountable for faster decision making (Page 19)</u>**

Audit Language: Throughout Metro's hiring process, different stakeholders are responsible for different actions that move the hiring process forward. Primarily, Hiring Managers, TA Analysts, EEO representatives, and Compensation Analysts own steps in the hiring process, along with the leaders of TA and Compensation. While not intentional, stakeholders can cause delays in the hiring process by not expeditiously completing their step, and delays from just one of these stakeholders can impact the overall time-to-hire.

TA Response: This is not correct. During the initial recruitment and selection meeting, representatives from Compensation, Recruitment and EEO (for high watch positions), are present to discuss the recruitment process, including timelines. We also have “turn-around” agreements with Compensation and EEO.

Project Team Response: The “Audit Language” provided above makes two statements: (1) multiple stakeholders are involved in the hiring process, and (2) delays from any of these stakeholders can delay the hiring process; these two statements remain unaffected by the (a) the existence of the initial recruitment and section meeting, and (b) the presence of “turn-around” agreements. None of these comments negate the others.

Task 2: Review Policies/Procedures and Interview Personnel

4. **Finding J: Recent changes to position descriptions limit Hiring Managers (Page 28)**

Audit Language: A recently completed agency-wide initiative to update and streamline job descriptions, which received an award from Metro’s CEO, reduced the number of job descriptions by consolidating similar positions across departments. In this new model, an analyst role for one department can be used for an analyst role in another.

TA Response: This is not correct. The new model did not consolidate all analyst job descriptions to be generic enough to be used in any department. Although the agency does have widely used analyst positions, we also continue to have specific analyst positions by department.

Project Team Response: Many Hiring Managers reported that prior to the job description audit they had access to job descriptions specific to their department and role, and now, following the audit, they are using generic job descriptions. While they appreciate the often more robust QCPs, the inability to further tailor job descriptions was a point of frustration. The language in “Audit Language” was not meant to exclude the possibility that some positions exist by department, but merely remarks on the increased use of generalized job descriptions. However, to avoid confusion, we will remove the sentence beginning, “In this new model…”

5. **Recommendation 13- Expand Hiring Mangers’ influence by allowing additional Minimum Qualifications to a position (Page 29)**

Audit Language: The revamp of job descriptions offers both benefits and concerns. Of greatest concern to Hiring Managers is that the lack of specificity in job titles and minimum requirements has inadvertently encouraged candidates who are not qualified to apply. While in some cases casting a wide net is prudent, to improve the cost-effectiveness of hires it’s more important to discourage candidates who don’t fit than to “jam more candidates into the recruiting funnel.”

TA Response: This is not correct. The Compensation team recently completed a project where we revised every job specification. The project team consisted of a representative from every department. Each department representative had an opportunity to contribute to the changes on the job specifications. Now that the job specifications are final, we do not allow changes to the job specifications that we worked so hard to standardize. Instead, we allow Hiring Managers to create

Preferred Qualifications that help to focus in on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position and to streamline the candidate pool to that of what is best needed for the agency.

Project Team Response: *Interviews with Hiring Managers uncovered that some perceived using preferred qualifications to be an ineffective method of narrowing the candidate pool. They acknowledged that although the preferred qualifications* do *allow for "tailoring," in practice the varying utilization of preferred qualifications in screening candidates does not guarantee to Hiring Managers that those specific knowledge, skills, and abilities will be considered. (For example, in a search with a large applicant pool, Hiring Managers shared that the preferred qualifications* will *be used as a screening mechanism; in a smaller applicant pool, however, the PQs may not be utilized. To increase the Hiring Manager's influence on candidate screening – and, therefore, reduce the number of applications for them to review – Metro could permit minimum qualifications to be edited.*

Task 4: Evaluate Compensation Determination Process

6. **Finding BB: Out-of-range salary pursuits are beneficial, though they may require multiple signatures (Page 46)**

Audit Language: In many hiring processes, the quartile range initially offered by Compensation is rarely accepted by the Hiring Manager without attempting to increase it.

TA Response: This is not correct. Although a small percentage of departments push back, the majority of departments accept the quartile range provided in the Salary Administration Guidelines.

Project Team Response: *During interviews, many Hiring Managers reported that they attempted to increase the initial quartile range presented by Compensation. Although an exact tally was not kept, the Project Team estimates that well over 25% of Hiring Managers interviewed – and potentially above 50% – reported that they sought to increase the initial offer. The "Audit Language" sentence will be edited to clarify the frequency.*

7. **Recommendation 26: Reduce required memos and forms and expedite their completion (Page 48)**

Audit Language: An additional issue that arises regarding the forms is how susceptible the process is to delays when a required signatory is out of the office, on vacation, or busy with other responsibilities. As such, Metro should allow for required signatories to appoint signing proxies who can sign on the signatory's behalf.

TA Response: This is not correct. The agency currently allows for departments to appoint signing proxies.

Project Team Response: *Over the course of the interviews, the Project Team did not learn about the use of signing proxies. Thus, while certainly an option, it does not appear to be used frequently. Further, conversations with some Hiring Managers underscored that they were not aware that such policy exists. At the end of the "Audit Language" text, additional context will be provided which acknowledges that, if signing proxies are already permitted, their use should be encouraged.*

8. **Finding DD: Benefits and employment opportunities compensate for competitive hiring market (Page 49)**

Audit Language: Annually, Metro conducts a compensation market assessment for one-third of its positions to ensure they remain properly competitive. As a result, when comparing salaries for positions at Metro against those at similar transit authorities, they are competitive. However, when comparing salaries with similar positions around LA, the money available in the private industry can be difficult to surmount.

TA Response: This is not correct. We do not solely benchmark against transit authorities. We use a combination of transit and general industry surveys (e.g., Mercer, Willis Towers Watson). Further, for jobs below the Director level, we scope jobs to the Los Angeles area or apply a geographic differential to account for the Los Angeles labor market.

Project Team Response: *The “Audit Language” text does not state with whom LA Metro benchmarks. The first sentence notes that LA Metro assesses compensation annually. The second sentence notes that Metro’s salaries are comparable to those at similar transit authorities. That said, the distinction between those two sentences is not as clear as it could be. As such, additional text will be added to clarify with whom LA Metro benchmarks.*

9. **Finding EE: Salary ranges on job postings lead to unfulfilled expectations (Page 50)**

Audit Language: Upon receiving a counteroffer, the Compensation Analyst will contact the TA Analyst with the counteroffer and the highest salary within the candidate’s current salary quartile. Typically, the Compensation Analyst will advise the TA Analyst to do a best and final offer, a step which requires concurrence from the Chief of the hiring department.

TA Response: This is not correct. The TA Analyst is not involved in the offer process. The Compensation Analyst, in consultation with the Hiring Manager, coordinates this process until the offer is accepted or rejected.

Project Team Response: *The Project Team’s inclusion of “TA Analyst” is mistaken; this will be corrected in text.*

II. Completed Process Previously Changed

In the review of the draft report the team also found inconsistencies with documenting specific processes changes that where implemented after the audit timeframe. In the TA team’s interviews with the audit consultants, it was specifically noted that there were several key changes that were implemented after the audit date period. Those two key areas were not addressed or noted in the audit findings and should be documented. The specific audit language described in the tasks, findings, and recommendations that omit the process changes are identified below:

Task 1: Gather Background Information

1. **<u>Recommendation 04: Select interview dates and interviewers prior to the Hiring Plan Meeting (Page 20)</u>**

Audit Language: One part of the interview process that can lengthen time-to-hire is scheduling the panel interviewers. Because Hiring Managers are relatively senior employees, finding time on their calendars can be challenging; this is compounded, of course, by the need to find a few dates and times that work for all three panelists. Therefore, the Hiring Manager and the TA Analyst should use the Hiring Plan Meeting to establish and set the hiring process schedule, including interview dates and times.

TA Response: This process was implemented before the audit but after the initial audit period. During the initial Recruitment and Selection meeting, TA analysts do discuss tentative dates for exams and interviews. These dates are dependent on availability of meeting rooms and external panel members.

<u>Project Team Response:</u> From the beginning of the study, the Project Team was made aware that, because Talent Acquisition was continually improving operations, some of the information gathered would, over time, become outdated. As such, the Project Team included the following comment on page 8 of the report: "This report also acknowledges where findings learned from those hired in FY2019 may differ from the current realities of Metro's hiring processes at the time this report was submitted, as TA continues to make improvements to the hiring process." By leaving this recommendation unchanged, TA can report that they have anticipated an area of improvement and have already made immediate progress on the recommendations outlined in this study.

Task 2: Review Policies/Procedures and Interview Personnel

2. **<u>Recommendation 07- Improve communication between TA and Hiring Managers regarding changes in the hiring process (Page 23)</u>**

Audit Language: One of the ways to mitigate the perception of inconsistency is by ensuring that there are forums or channels available to allow TA and Hiring Managers to communicate their concerns about the hiring process more generally, *beyond* the communication that occurs between the two groups when the Hiring Manager is trying to fill a vacant position. This effort at improved communication can take a variety of forms. TA can send Hiring Managers monthly emails outlining the changes that are being implemented, the reasons for the changes, and the impact the changes will have on the Hiring Managers. TA can also schedule quarterly meetings to present upcoming changes and ideas they are considering to improve the process and solicit input prior to implementing a change.

TA Response: This process was implemented before the audit but after the initial audit period. The TA team holds quarterly meetings (Human Capital Forums) and invites all department liaisons to discuss changes in our processes. In addition, we meet bi-weekly with the Operations team and weekly with the OMB team.

<u>Project Team Response:</u> From the beginning of the study, the Project Team was made aware that, because Talent Acquisition was continually improving operations, some of the information gathered would, over time, become outdated. As such, the Project Team included the following comment on page 8 of the report: "This report also acknowledges where findings learned from those hired in FY2019 may differ from the current realities of Metro's hiring processes at the time this report was submitted, as TA continues to make improvements to the hiring process." By leaving this recommendation

unchanged, TA can report that they have anticipated an area of improvement and have already made immediate progress on the recommendations outlined in this study.

III. Benchmark Data Evaluation

The team has identified inconsistencies with the benchmarked data evaluation. As a part of the audit, the Project team conducted benchmarking outreach to four organizations similar to Metro. The organizations included three transit agencies and the City of Los Angeles. Within the draft audit report, it was noted that the surveyed agencies did not have enough reliable data to conduct a benchmark review. Specific benchmarking information that addresses these concerns is provided below.

Task 5: Compare Metro to Peer Organizations

In Task 5, the Project Team compared the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro's hiring process to other government agencies with similar budget or of similar size. (Page 52)

Audit Language: Methodology
Complementing the documents reviews, data analyses, interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, the Project Team conducted benchmarking outreach to gather information directly from organizations similar to Metro. These organizations included governmental agencies within Los Angeles and transit agencies of similar size outside of Los Angeles. By benchmarking with the former, Metro can identify hiring process trends that are endemic to the Los Angeles area; by benchmarking with the latter, Metro can understand how their hiring process compares to peers within the same industry.

The Project Team reached out to the following nine organizations to request their participation in the study via benchmarking. (The organizations were listed by logo and include BART, Sound Transit, The City of LA, MARTA, NJ Transit, Trimet, SPTA, and Metro.)

Benchmarking was completed with four agencies (44.4%): the City of LA, MARTA, NJ Transit, and SEPTA. During initial benchmarking conversations, it became clear to the Project Team that these organizations do not have detailed hiring flowcharts (such as the ones in Appendix 2); high-level process maps that outlined the major steps in the hiring process (see Figure 15) *were* available, however. In addition, none of the four organizations possessed definitive, trustworthy time-to-hire data. Only one of the four had time-to-hire data that it felt was reliable enough to share specific numbers[67], but even this information was provided as an estimate and not data derived from the organization's Applicant Tracking System.

TA Response: As stated in the draft audit, one of the key objectives was to "evaluate whether the personnel hiring process is adequately timely and operating effectively". During the audit, the TA team provided documentation on the agency's recruitment and selection processes. This included a hiring flow chart and data on requisition time-to-hire. These are two key items allow for an effective benchmarking process. However, the audit noted that the four agencies used in the benchmarking process didn't have a document demonstrating their hiring process, and only one had time-to-hire data that the consultant felt was reliable enough to share. In our experience with benchmarking, it is understood that if there aren't enough agencies to provide comparable data, the process is noted as insufficient and wouldn't be used. It was evident in the review that the agencies didn't share proper information and therefore, shouldn't be used.

<u>Project Team Response:</u> Broadly speaking, the "TA Response" above puts forth two specific comments. First, it notes that the Project Team noted that the agencies did not have "a document demonstrating the hiring process." Second, it notes that the insights derived from the data shared with the Project Team should not be utilized because it is unreliable.

<u>To the first comment:</u> Page 50 of the report notes that, "During initial benchmarking conversations, it became clear to the Project Team that these organizations do not have detailed hiring flowcharts (such as the ones in Appendix 2); high-level process maps that outlined the major steps in the hiring process (see Figure 15) were available, however." The "high-level process maps" referenced in this sentence were of a similar level of detail as the ones provided to the Project Team by LA Metro. Neither LA Metro nor the benchmarking agencies shared process maps that the Project Team considered to be "detailed hiring flowcharts," like the one developed in Visio for this study, which can be found in Appendix 2. Therefore, the first "TA Response" comment – that "the four agencies…didn't have a document demonstrating their hiring process" – is mistaken.

<u>To the second comment:</u> Accuracy is not always a binary construct (that is, either accurate or not); in some situations, accuracy can also have gradations. Benchmarking with time-to-hire data is one of the situations that allows for gradations. Accurate information can come from a variety of sources, including but not limited to data from an Applicant Tracking System. (In fact, data from an Applicant Tracking System is not necessarily reliable. The Project Team's experience working with other organizations indicates that data pulled directly from an Applicant Tracking System may be unreliable for a host of reasons, including user error when entering dates into a system or a recruiter updating a candidate's status from memory long after the candidate completed a step in the process.) Estimates provided by a subject matter expert (SME) can be a source of accurate information. In essence, gathering time-to-hire estimates from other organization's recruitment functions serve as subject matter expertise. Understanding that (1) data accuracy can be mapped on a continuum, and (2) data derived from all sources – including Metro's own Applicant Tracking System – may not be perfectly accurate, the Project Team acknowledged the potential limitations of the information provided by the benchmarked agencies – namely, that they were estimate-based – prior to presenting the insights derived from that data. Considering (a) this disclosure, and (b) that the Project Team did not find the benchmarking data provided to be inaccurate (when compared with the Team's past experiences completing similar projects with other transit agencies), the Project Team found the information to be reliable and, thus, worth sharing as a comparison with Metro.

I want to thank you again for giving Human Capital & Development the opportunity to review the draft audit and provide our comments. I am optimistic that the inconsistencies described above will be addressed and am open to meeting with you and the audit team to address our comments. As I previously stated, Human Capital & Development is committed to improving our recruitment and selection process so that we can meet the goals of the agency as well as provide effective communication to our candidates.

Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Personnel Hiring Process Study

Report No. 20-AUD-09

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SCA Strategic

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WORLDWIDE CONSULTING

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) *Office of the Inspector General* (OIG) is responsible for assisting the organization in meeting its mission of continued improvement for an effective and efficient transportation system for Los Angeles County. The OIG, as part of its oversight responsibilities, conducts investigations and audits to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro programs and operations.

Metro, one of the largest transportation agencies in the nation, is transforming Los Angeles with $120 billion of voter-approved, Measure M transportation improvements over 40 years while also providing daily rail, bus, and other services across Los Angeles County. The Metro Board of Directors adopted an *Early Project Delivery Strategy* (EPDS) that will be used to determine how projects could be delivered faster than scheduled, without delaying other projects. These criteria include factors such as funding, process, partnerships, and innovations. To meet the region's growing transportation demands, Metro's Board authorized the hiring of over 1,500 non-contract positions in the coming year. Consequently, to meet the Board's project delivery goals, the OIG commissioned a study of the organization's non-contract hiring process for FY 2019 (July 2018 – June 2019), competitively selecting the Small Business Prime firm of SCA Strategic Partnerships International and North Highland to conduct it. The study commenced in spring 2020 to determine whether Metro's personnel hiring process is efficient and timely, and to evaluate its hiring policies and procedures. This report, which presents the findings and recommendations regarding the hiring process, is the culmination of that study.

This study was commissioned with the following four objectives:

- Determine if there are areas where the hiring process could be streamlined (shortened), such as eliminating duplicative approvals or inefficient sequencing of steps, and making the process more efficient, applicant friendly, and transparent to the hiring department;
- Evaluate whether the personnel hiring process is adequately timely and operating effectively;
- Determine whether the compensation determination and administration processes are reasonable and effective to accomplish a speedy hiring process; and,
- Determine how the applicant experience may be improved.

Findings and Recommendations

LA Metro's hiring process consists of both industry-leading strengths and opportunities for improvement. The organization's commitment to equity is integrated in its value system through clear communication from Executive Leadership, its policies, and its hiring process. Metro values and promotes diversity and inclusion from the start of the hiring process to the end, and that message is clear throughout the organization. The relationship between stakeholders in the hiring process (e.g., Talent Acquisition [TA] staff, candidates, Hiring Managers) is, with few exceptions, symbiotic and positive. At the conclusion of the hiring process, the individual filling the vacancy is qualified and is someone with whom the Hiring Manager is pleased. Although Metro's hiring process accomplishes its organizational goals, the process is also inefficient, consisting of lengthy times-to-hire, manual and paper-based activities, and redundant steps.

The findings from this study were derived using three avenues of information gathering: interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The accompanying recommendations, tailored to Metro's hiring process, were designed using hiring best practices. The findings and recommendations, organized into this assessment's five major tasks are provided in summary form below.[1] Further detail regarding the findings and recommendations may be found after the Executive Summary. In addition, Appendix 1 lists each recommendation and their link to one or more broad benefits that Metro can expect to obtain by implementing the recommendation. These benefits are: (1) decreased time-to-hire, (2) increased effectiveness, (3) improved candidate experience, and (4) decreased risk / liability.

Some findings do not have recommendations because there is not an accompanying action that is required, and some findings have more than one recommendation.

Task 1: Gather Background Information

A. Time-to-hire varies by requisition: Metro's hiring process is lengthy. Time-to-hire may vary by Department and by the Hiring Manager, but it mostly varies by requisition, even within the same Department.
    - Recommendation 01: Employ Oracle Talent Acquisition Cloud (OTAC), Metro's new Applicant Tracking System, to obtain and utilize talent analytics
    - Recommendation 02: Hold hiring process stakeholders accountable for faster decision making
    - Recommendation 03: Decrease post-testing communication time for the candidates
    - Recommendation 04: Select interview dates and interviewers prior to the Hiring Plan Meeting

Task 2: Review Policies / Procedures and Interview Personnel

B. Current process relies heavily on paper: Throughout the hiring process, wet signatures on paper are required at key steps and, with no back-up signatory, the process is slowed.
    - Recommendation 05: Implement a digital workflow to autoroute forms and utilize electronic signatures and assign a back-up signatory
    - Recommendation 06: Implement digital interview note-taking, scoring, and uploading of candidate results

C. Hiring process perceived as inconsistent: Some Hiring Managers shared that the hiring process seems to differ occasionally, allowing them to take certain actions in one hiring process, but prohibiting them from those same actions in another hiring process.
    - Recommendation 07: Improve communication between TA and Hiring Managers regarding changes in the hiring process

D. Metro's hiring process, though inefficient, is effective: Most Hiring Managers communicated that they were pleased with the quality of their selected candidate. One step in the hiring process used to improve its effectiveness, even if it increases time-to-hire, is department interviews. By using department interviews to increase the amount of time getting to know a candidate, Hiring Managers can gain a better sense of the quality and fit of a candidate.
    - Recommendation 08: Encourage greater use of department interviews

E. Qualified Candidate Pools (QCP) are limited to the job title of the original vacancy: Candidates in QCPs are only accessible to Hiring Managers for positions that share the same job title. Regardless of how similar the requirements (e.g., Minimum Qualifications [MQs]) are to other positions, the job titles must be an exact match in order to access the candidates out of an existing QCP, creating a missed opportunity.

[1] The findings and recommendations listed in *Task 1: Gather Background Information* were derived from the activities completed by the Project Team in Task 1; any findings and recommendations that were derived during Task 2 are listed in the Task 2 section of the report. The same is true for Tasks 3, 4, and 5.

- Recommendation 09: Allow QCPs with similar MQs to be shared

F. The hiring process lacks clear ownership: Some Hiring Managers reported that they do not feel empowered throughout the hiring process because some processes and policies prevent them from making the hiring decisions that are best for their operation. For example, some Hiring Managers reported having to interview candidates that they did not think were qualified. In addition, when determining what salary to offer a candidate, the Compensation Analyst and Hiring Manager may disagree on which past work experience is deemed "relevant."
    - Recommendation 10: Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities throughout the entire hiring process
    - Recommendation 11: Grant Hiring Managers greater decision-making authority in screening

G. Change in Applicant Tracking System (ATS) presents opportunities and challenges: The functionality of Metro's future ATS, OTAC, will strengthen TA's ability to collect and analyze critical data points, as well as provide a more automated, less paper-filled process.
    - Recommendation 12: Ensure full adoption of the OTAC system coupled with adoption of an effective change management process

H. Hiring process equity and efficiency are sometimes in conflict: Metro has instilled the value of equity into its organization and hiring process, which has the unintended consequence of making parts of the process inefficient.

I. Multiple approvals impede the path to posting: The decision to only post internally requires approval from Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and the addition of any preferred qualifications to the job description requires approval from EEO and Compensation, both of which result in delays to the hiring process.

J. Recent changes to position descriptions limit Hiring Managers: To reduce the number of job descriptions, Metro recently consolidated existing job descriptions by making them more general. Although beneficial, Hiring Managers have been frustrated by the lack of specificity in the job descriptions, which limits their ability to attract the ideal candidate and slows the hiring process.
    - Recommendation 13: Expand Hiring Managers' influence by allowing additional Minimum Qualifications to a position

K. Hiring Managers are ambivalent about blind screening: Many Hiring Managers have acknowledged the theoretical benefits of blind screening, the process by which a candidate's identifying information is removed from the application, but have voiced frustration with the process. In addition, recent peer-reviewed research questions the effectiveness of blind screening as a mechanism for increasing hiring diversity.
    - Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the use of blind screening in 12 months

L. EEO's current role questioned by other stakeholders: Many Hiring Managers are uncertain regarding how much authority they have in the hiring process and feel disempowered to make decisions because EEO approval is required to (1) post positions only internally, (2) add any preferred qualifications to the job descriptions, and (3) select a candidate. This frustration is compounded by the fact that EEO's current involvement lengthens the time-to-hire while, according to Hiring Managers, providing questionable value as EEO rarely finds a basis to withhold concurrence from a Hiring Manager's selection.
    - Recommendation 15: Transition EEO role from active participant to advisor, auditor, and trainer

M. Information requests made of candidates can extend the time-to-hire: During Employment Certification, candidates might be asked to supply additional reference information and proof of educational experience, which may result in delays in the time-to-hire if the candidate's response, or the third party entity providing confirmation of information, is slow.

- Recommendation 16: Utilize self-service portal for candidates to provide evidence of education and references

N. The Hiring Plan Meeting is a critical step in the hiring process: The Hiring Plan Meeting was cited by Hiring Managers and TA Analysts alike as one of the most important steps in the hiring process, as it serves as a forum where the key stakeholders in the hiring process share their expectations of the recruitment itself and for one another. This is a key component in the process that should remain unchanged and consistently occur.

Task 3: Interview New Hires

O. Lengthy gaps of time between the hiring process steps leave Hiring Managers and candidates "in limbo": Although many candidates communicated that they moved through most of the individual hiring process steps rather quickly, the time in between steps was lengthy, leaving the candidate and the Hiring Manager uncertain as to their status and potentially frustrated.
   - Recommendation 17: Provide stakeholders with the ability to receive live application status updates

P. Promotion process mirrors hiring process: Metro lacks a true promotion process in that the promotion process for internal candidates is nearly identical to the hiring process for external candidates, who are often the internal candidates' competition.
   - Recommendation 18: Communicate to Metro employees why it lacks a promotion process

Q. Various factors contribute to a candidate's decision to accept or decline an offer of employment from Metro: Input from both internally-promoted and externally-hired employees regarding their top reasons to accept a position at Metro revealed that "Salary," "Opportunity for growth," and "Job duties" were most important. Candidates who withdrew from Metro's hiring process or declined a job offer confirmed that the biggest motivator for their decision was being offered a lower salary than they anticipated based on the full salary range for the position for which they were applying.

R. TA Analysts identified as helpful and professional despite challenges in turnover: Candidates describe that, once contacted, the TA Analyst assigned to their recruitment is helpful and professional. In addition, candidates and Hiring Managers cite TA Analysts as being responsive, even if they are unable to provide a specific update or answer the question asked. New hires almost always reported knowing who to contact with questions during their hiring process and shared that they were confident that their TA Analyst would respond to inquiries in a timely manner.

S. Metro's application portal lacks key functionality: Candidates reported frustrations with the current Metro Applicant Tracking System (MATS; soon to be replaced with OTAC) including the system's response word limits, the inability to save and return to the portal later, and the inability to format answers. Hiring Managers expressed frustration with the lack of transparency in MATS because they are unable to access and track the hiring process.
   - Recommendation 19: Ensure OTAC's application portal meets candidates' needs

T. There is a lack of communication after application submission: Although candidates receive an automated message upon submission of their application, candidates reported having to wait up to six months to be contacted by a TA Analyst, even after the posting has been taken down.
   - Recommendation 20: Update auto-generated communications to applicants after application submission to improve hiring process expectations

U. Candidates are given flexibility in scheduling their test: Candidates who were required to take a pre-employment test acknowledged that Metro was often flexible to accommodate their availability. Metro permits out-of-state candidates to test remotely. Metro also allows in-state candidates some choice as to when to take their test. Candidates noted that they appreciated Metro's effort, improving the candidate experience.

V. **Increased interview standardization limits authentic conversation and increases time-to-hire:** Interviewers are required to provide thorough evidence supporting their interview scores. Because of this requirement, interviewers are often more focused on taking detailed notes, an unintended consequence of which is the depersonalization of the interviews. The standardized questions, which do not allow for a deep discussion of the candidate's experience, interests, character, or potential, coupled with the need for interviewers to take detailed notes, limits the rapport between candidate and interviewer.
   - Recommendation 21: Institute a combination of standardized and non-standardized interview questions

W. **Candidates are unclear as to what their placement in the QCP means:** Although most candidates reported receiving an automated email notifying them of their placement in the QCP for 18 months, some candidates reported not being aware of their placement and not understanding the implications of being in a QCP.
   - Recommendation 22: Update initial communication to candidates placed on QCP
   - Recommendation 23: Send periodic automated emails to candidates in QCP to keep them engaged and aware of opportunities for which they may be considered

X. **Time-to-hire benefits are often realized following QCP:** The benefits of a QCP on the overall time-to-hire are often realized once a candidate from the QCP is identified for a vacancy. Employees hired from the QCP explained that, once contacted, the next step in the hiring process – whether department interview or tentative offer – moved expeditiously.

Task 4: Evaluate compensation determination process

Y. **Misalignment between the information gathered in the application and the information needed during compensation process extends time-to-hire:** The employment application at Metro requests a candidate's previous 10 years of professional experience. However, to ascertain the appropriate compensation level, additional experience beyond the 10 years, if applicable, is required. Obtaining this information can lengthen the hiring process.
   - Recommendation 24: Request complete employment history earlier in the process

Z. **Stakeholders lack transparency into compensation determination process:** Throughout the 2-6 weeks needed to determine compensation, candidates and Hiring Managers shared that they experienced frustration with (1) the lack of transparency regarding how the process works, and (2) why the process takes so long. Additionally, internal candidates report being unaware of how their compensation is calculated, including the 15% salary increase cap. This lack of transparency can lead to discontentment and the spread of incorrect information.

AA. **Salary calculations based on relevant years of experience:** The Compensation Analyst and Hiring Manager may differ on whether to deem certain candidate experience as "relevant" to the position. Because the number of years of relevant experience directly impacts the salary being offered, any disagreements between Compensation and the Hiring Manager require resolution, a time-consuming process. In addition, Hiring Managers voiced frustration that the salary calculations do not account for other candidate characteristics, including the *quality* of their years of experience and personal aptitude.
   - Recommendation 25: Consider characteristics other than years of direct work experience when determining salary offers and when screening applications

BB. **Out-of-range salary pursuits are beneficial, though they may require multiple signatures:** Obtaining "Hard-to-Fill" approval or appealing to the CEO, two mechanisms for attracting qualified candidates who may, because of salary, be disinclined to accept a job with Metro, require multiple signatures and increases time-to-hire.

- Recommendation 26: Reduce required memos and forms and expedite their completion

CC. Salary calculations are inequitable between internal and external candidates: External candidates' salary offers are calculated differently than internal candidates' salary offers because Metro already knows the salary of the internal candidates. Internal candidate compensation is capped at 15% greater than their current salary, with a minimum increase of 5%, whereas external candidates' compensation is not limited in the same way.

- Recommendation 27: Consider increasing the 15% cap on raises for internal candidates

DD. Benefits and employment opportunities compensate for competitive hiring market: Metro's non-salary compensation and benefits are attractive to candidates and provide them with quality candidates even though the salaries being offered do not often meet the candidate's wishes.

EE. Salary ranges on job postings lead to unfulfilled expectations: Job postings include the full salary range. Given the quartile salary system utilized at LA Metro, the salary range is often quite wide, with up to an $80,000 difference between the high and low ends for a given position. This provides external candidates with an unrealistic expectation of the salary offer they will receive, because the starting salary is typically at the lower end of the range.

- Recommendation 28: Decrease the job posting salary ranges

Task 5: Compare Metro to Peer Organizations[2]

FF. Metro's most efficient peer outsources recruitment activities to the hiring department: The organization within the benchmarking cohort that had the quickest time-to-hire (2 months, on average) oversees the hiring process from a distance, allowing the hiring departments to manage the day-to-day activities of the process and make decisions as needed.

GG. Immature technology contributes significantly to peer's hiring inefficiencies: Like Metro, peer organizations lacked the robust Applicant Tracking Systems needed to digitize and automate the hiring process. This lack of technology resulted in common inefficiencies such as a paper-heavy process, redundant and manual activities, and little-to-no data collection or analysis.

HH. Peer organizations experience similar non-technological process inefficiencies as Metro: Two common non-technical inefficiencies that peer organizations face are (1) a lack of clearly-defined and commonly-understood roles and responsibilities between the hiring department and recruitment function, and (2) a cumbersome and lengthy compensation determination process.

II. Metro's hiring process steps are similar to the steps in peer organizations: Although they utilized different terms, the hiring processes between Metro and peer organizations are comprised of similar tasks and sequenced similarly.

JJ. Metro's time-to-hire appears to be middle-of-the-pack: None of the benchmarking cohorts possessed reliable hiring process data; however, using the estimates that were provided by these organizations, it appears that Metro's hiring process is neither substantially longer, nor shorter, than its peers.

[2] As part of Task 5, the Project Team completed benchmarking activities with peer organizations. Any findings resulting from these activities are included in Task 5 of this report, but any recommendations that were informed by the benchmarking activities are included with the recommendations found in Tasks 1-4.

BACKGROUND

In an effort to better understand how Metro's hiring processes may be enhanced to improve service to both its internal and external customers – which will, in turn, help meet its need to expediently and efficiently execute projects – Metro's *Office of the Inspector General* (OIG) competitively selected the team of SCA Strategic Partnerships International and North Highland (Project Team), a local, Small Business Prime team, to conduct a hiring process study. The study was commissioned with the following four objectives:

- Determine if there are areas where the hiring process could be streamlined (shortened), such as eliminating duplicative approvals or inefficient sequencing of steps, and making the process more efficient, applicant friendly, and transparent to the hiring department;
- Evaluate whether the personnel hiring process is adequately timely and operating effectively;
- Determine whether the compensation determination and administration processes are reasonable and effective to accomplish a speedy hiring process; and
- Determine how the applicant experience may be improved.

To meet the region's growing transportation demands, Metro's Board authorized the hiring of over 1,500 non-contract positions in the coming year. Consequently, the OIG commissioned a study of the organization's non-contract hiring process, which commenced in spring 2020, to determine whether Metro's personnel hiring process is efficient, and to evaluate its hiring policies and procedures. An efficient hiring process provides candidates with a positive hiring experience, improving the odds that they will remain in the hiring process and accept a job offer at its conclusion, and reduces the costs related to unfilled positions. For each additional day that a single vacancy is open, the average organization loses roughly \$407.[3] Additionally, as a vacancy persists, organizations face the cost of employee burnout as existing employees try to compensate for vacancies.[4] To best prepare LA Metro for a successful season of hiring, this report presents the findings and recommendations from this study.

Metro's Talent Acquisition group (TA) is responsible for managing Metro's hiring process. As Metro's liaison between the candidates and the hiring departments, TA has three key "customers" to support and shepherd through the hiring process: (1) external candidates, (2) internal candidates, and (3) hiring departments. TA, through its charge to attract a qualified and talented workforce to Metro, is on the front lines of Metro's mission to provide "a world-class transportation system that enhances quality of life for all who live, work and play within LA County."

Overview of Study

This report is the culmination of the Metro Personnel Hiring Processes Study, conducted January 2020 through April 2020, and provides findings, based on the Project Team's research, and recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro's current hiring process.

This study was focused on analyzing the hiring processes for the 315 non-contract, full-time employees who were hired, externally or internally, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 (Metro's Fiscal Year 2019). This study does not address *contract* employees, which comprise the majority of Metro's 10,219 FTE member workforce, nor does it address employees hired prior to, or after, FY2019.

[3] *Accelerating Recruiting*, Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2015

[4] Ibid.

This report also acknowledges where findings learned from those hired in FY2019 may differ from the current realities of Metro's hiring processes at the time this report was submitted, as TA continues to make improvements to the hiring process.[5] The evaluation of the hiring processes and experiences was not limited to candidates, but encapsulates all hiring process stakeholders, including Hiring Managers and TA staff. TA was extremely cooperative with, and accommodating to, the Project Team; they helped this study through supplying information, providing data, and making themselves available for numerous information-gathering sessions, whether in person or via phone. Similarly, Hiring Managers and recently hired employees, the latter of whom provided the candidate perspective, were responsive to interview requests and were very agreeable to providing input. Further information about this study, including details about the information-gathering methodologies utilized (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and survey), can be found in the "Methodology" sub-sections of the following five sections (Tasks 1-5).

Overview of Talent Acquisition

The Talent Acquisition (TA) group is one of 10 cost centers housed within the Human Capital & Development (HC&D) Executive Office (see Figure 1). HC&D is led by the Chief Human Capital & Development Officer, and TA is led by the Executive Officer of Talent Management. Within TA, the Director of Human Resources oversees recruitment and the Senior Director of Special Projects oversees compensation. Taken together, TA is charged with swiftly and effectively meeting LA Metro's growing human capital demands.

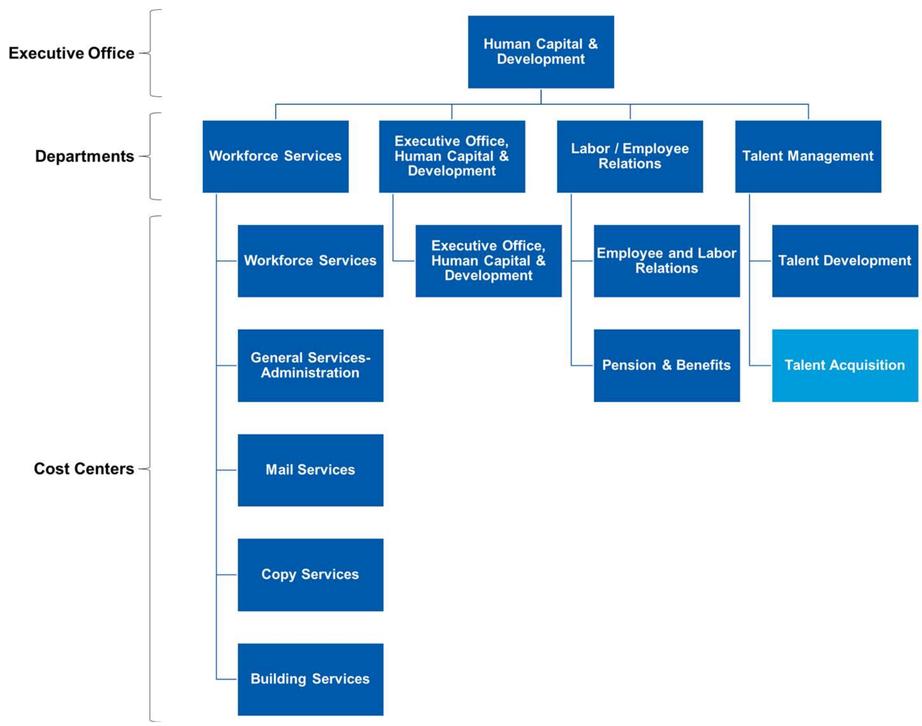

Figure 1: LA Metro Human Capital & Development Org Chart

[5] For example, one change that has been made since many FY2019 hires relates to the requirement for a physical. Some non-contract employees hired in FY2019 were required to take a physical, while those hired into similar positions toward the end of FY2019 were *not* required to take a physical. This difference was the result of a change in policy whereby Metro removed the physical requirement for non-safety sensitive positions. As such, the requirement of a physical has been excluded from the report, as it is now antiquated.

Overview of Metro's Hiring Process

For the purposes of this study, Metro's hiring process is comprised of 10 main steps, beginning with the generation of a requisition by the Hiring Manager or HR Liaison to the department in which there is a vacancy, and ending when the selected candidate accepts their offer of employment, completes pre-employment processing, and begins their first day of work at Metro. (See Figure 2.) These steps were determined to be the 10 main steps of Metro's hiring process based on the Project Team's research.

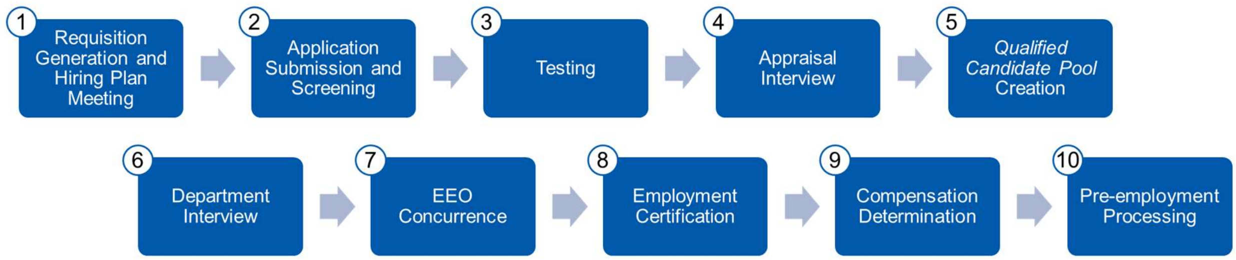

Figure 2: Overview of LA Metro's Hiring Process

Each of these 10 *main* steps are discussed further below.[6] (In addition, a detailed process map of Metro's hiring process can be found in Appendix 2.)

Requisition Generation and Hiring Plan Meeting

Metro's hiring process begins with the electronic creation of a requisition in Metro's Applicant Tracking System (MATS) by a department representative. The requisition then undergoes a position control check by a Systems Analyst. Upon verification, the requisition – along with the position control check – is submitted to the TA Principal Analyst who assigns the requisition to a TA Analyst. The TA Analyst then schedules and conducts the Hiring Plan Meeting with the Hiring Manager and, occasionally, a Compensation Analyst and/or an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) representative.[7] (The EEO representative will attend the Hiring Plan Meeting if the position is for a "high-watch cost center," a cost center within the organization that has diversity levels that Metro is closely monitoring. The Compensation Analyst might skip the meeting if they have worked with the Hiring Manager in the past.) Regardless of attendance, two documents are provided to the Hiring Manager during the Hiring Plan Meeting: the department requisition guidelines from EEO and the Salary Administration Guidelines from Compensation. The meeting concludes with the TA Analyst and the Hiring Manager signing the Hiring Plan Agreement.

Following the Hiring Plan Meeting, the TA Analyst posts the job bulletin. All bulletins are posted in MATS, which feeds directly into the organization's Careers webpage. If a Qualified Candidate Pool (QCP) already

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[6] There *are* smaller steps in Metro's hiring process which may not be illustrated in Figure 2 or in accompanying the explanatory text; an exhaustive map of the hiring process can be found in Appendix 2. In addition, at times, the actual execution of the hiring process may not perfectly match the 10 steps outline here; as such, the process described below should be considered the *typical* hiring process, with deviations from that process considered atypical.

[7] If a position is frequently posted or if the TA Analyst has a close working relationship with the Hiring Manager, then the Hiring Manager and TA Analyst may already be aligned on the needs of the hiring process; in this case, the Hiring Plan Meeting may not be needed and, therefore, its absence may actually improve the time-to-hire. One Hiring Manager shared, however, that although the Hiring Plan Meeting may occur, it might be conducted via phone, be fairly cursory, and does not satisfy its intended goals.

exists for the position, then the candidates on the QCP are considered first. If a QCP candidate is not selected, or there is no QCP for the position, then the position is posted on Metro's Careers webpage. External job postings are auto-scraped to external sites, a method by which external search engines automatically read the job posting and, based on the content of the job posting, extracts to their posting sites. Additionally, jobs for external posting are forwarded to a third-party vendor who provides a list of position-specific external posting locations and their respective cost quotes to post. The TA Analyst can then select posting locations from the list provided, based on the budget provided by the hiring department.

Application Submission and Screening

After TA externally posts positions, candidates apply for positions in which they are interested through Metro's online Career portal. Applications then undergo a dual-screening process whereby they are screened by a TA Analyst for both minimum and preferred qualifications, and then passed – or "released" – to the Hiring Manager for their concurrence. (TA will pass along the candidates who meet the MQs.) Once a decision is made in the screening process, a candidate's status is updated in MATS, which triggers an automated email to each candidate with a status update. Candidates are then invited for a test or interview.

When there is an existing QCP, two approaches can be taken. In the first, each candidate in the QCP is interviewed. In the second (and more common) approach, candidates in the QCP are provided with supplemental questions to answer if they wish to be considered for the search currently underway. These questions are derived from the preferred qualifications identified by the Hiring Manager. Submitted answers are evaluated using a dual-screening process, the same process that would be used if the hire was being conducted with non-QCP candidates.

Testing

Not all positions require testing as part of the hiring process. Some positions, such as those that are part of a series (e.g., Admin I, Admin II), require testing, while others are at the discretion of the Hiring Manager, a decision made during the Hiring Plan Meeting. Currently, all tests are administered in-person at LA Metro unless a candidate is applying from out-of-state, in which case they can complete the test remotely. Upon completion, multiple-choice exams are graded by scantron machine and written exams are graded by two or three subject matter experts under the supervision of a TA representative.

Appraisal Interview

Candidates selected during the screening process for recruitments that do not require tests, or candidates who passed their test, are then invited to an appraisal interview. Appraisal interviews are conducted by a panel with a minimum of three interviewers, all of whom are selected by the Hiring Manager. Panels must meet three criteria:

- The members must be diverse in gender and ethnicity;
- One panelist must be from outside of the hiring department; and,
- All three panelists must have a salary pay grade equal to or higher than the position for which they are interviewing.

Panel members meet with the TA Analyst prior to, and after, the interview to brief and debrief, respectively. Scores from the appraisal interview are then entered into MATS, which auto-sorts candidates into the QCP based on a previously-determined scoring threshold.

Qualified Candidate Pool (QCP) Creation

Interviewed candidates whose scores meet or exceed the minimum threshold are placed in a QCP for that position.[8] The purpose of the QCP is to retain a pool of pre-qualified candidates for 18 months, to reduce the time-to-hire for future vacancies of the same position by removing the need to post the position, screen the applications, and conduct appraisal interviews. All applicable candidates, regardless of how soon they will proceed to the next step in the hiring process, are placed in the QCP. Candidates placed in the QCP are then certified through MATS to the Hiring Manager who adds information about each certified candidate. MATS autogenerates letters to candidates with a status update, either informing them of their place in the QCP or informing them that they are not proceeding in the hiring process.

Department Interview

If the Hiring Manager did not sit on the appraisal interview panel, or if more information is needed to select a candidate, a second, department interview is scheduled. The department interview differs from the appraisal interview in that, currently, the department interview questions are not vetted by TA, and the interview panel members and all documentation are most often prepared by the hiring department, although the TA Support Staff is available to help. Similar to the appraisal interview, however, the department interview must be a panel interview and adhere to the same panel member requirements. Other than those two differences, the department interview functions nearly identically to the appraisal interview.

EEO Concurrence

Once a candidate is selected, he or she is subject to EEO concurrence. To obtain EEO concurrence, the TA Analyst provides EEO with the candidate demographics for each step in the hiring process and submits a concurrence checklist. The EEO representative evaluates the selected candidate based on the current demographics of the cost center in which the position resides, along with the other candidates considered for the position. The EEO representative may have additional questions for the TA Analyst about the selected candidate, the nature of the search, and the demographic make-up of the QCP. Ultimately, EEO will either concur with the Hiring Manager's selection, granting their approval to proceed with the selected candidate, or not, in which case the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager will need to identify another candidate in the QCP. If another viable candidate does not exist in the QCP, the position might require re-posting.

Employment Certification

During Employment Certification, the TA Analyst contacts the selected candidate to confirm that the references supplied on the candidate's original application may be contacted. Once references are confirmed, TA Support Staff conducts reference checks. Simultaneously, the TA Analyst, knowing that compensation will be calculated based on work experience, will reach out to the candidate to request proof of their education, along with any additional work history not included in the application.

Compensation Determination

The compensation determination process begins when the TA Analyst submits a Salary Proposal Request to Compensation. The Compensation Analyst uses Metro's Salary Calculator (an Excel tool), to quantify the relevant years of experience and then applies those years, along with any degrees or certifications, to the Salary Administration Guidelines (SAG; a tool with the salary quartiles for a particular position), to determine the appropriate salary range. Once complete, both the Salary Calculator and SAG are submitted

[8] The majority of candidates interviewed reported joining the QCP upon completion of the appraisal interview, a sequence TA also confirmed, though some candidates reported joining the QCP before the appraisal interview and after successful completion of the test.

to the Hiring Manager, who then selects the specific salary from the quartile's range. (The range is typically $2,000 to $4,000.) With the salary selected, the Compensation Analyst completes the Salary Proposal Form and submits it for department approval, including signatures from the Hiring Manager and, if the salary is above the quartile's median, from the Chief of the hiring department. Once signed, the Salary Proposal Form is returned to the Compensation Analyst who drafts and attaches a cover memo to the Form and circulates for additional approvals; these approvals most often include the Senior Director of Compensation, Executive Officer (EO) of Talent Acquisition, Chief HC&D Officer, and, if greater than $175,000, the CEO. To many Hiring Managers and new hires, the compensation determination process is a significant source of delay in the overall hiring process, with the time to determine compensation running 2-6 weeks. A detailed process map of Metro's compensation determination process is in Appendix 2.

Pre-employment Processing

Pre-employment processing for external candidates includes completing employment paperwork and providing fingerprints for a criminal background check, on site, at Metro. External candidates entering safety-sensitive positions, or internal candidates whose prior role was not safety-sensitive, are also required to attend and pass a physical as part of the pre-employment process. The external candidate's first day on the job is typically for orientation, although some candidates start prior to orientation with the plan to attend later. An internal candidate, unless transitioning from a represented role to a non-represented role, which require attendance for certain parts of the orientation, works with their former and new managers to transition into their new role. The conclusion of this step is the hired individual's first day in the role.

Overview of Report

This report is divided into the five tasks in the Scope of Work (SOW). Each task is presented with an overview, methodology, findings and recommendations:

- Task Overview – the *Task Overview* provides a brief summary of the SOW task
- Methodology – the *Methodology* describes the Project Team's information-gathering activities
- Findings and Recommendations – the *Findings and Recommendations* present key findings learned during the team's four-pronged information-gathering activities:
  - Document and data review of hiring policies, practices, and procedures;
  - 58 in-person interviews;
  - Three focus groups with 24 total participants; and,
  - One online survey responded to by 121 employees (48% response rate)

  This sub-section also presents the recommendations proposed by the team to improve Metro's hiring processes based on our analysis and findings.

TASK 1: GATHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Task Overview

As part of Task 1, the Project Team obtained a list of new hires from FY2019, collected time-to-hire information for those individuals, and analyzed the data.

Methodology

In Task 1, the Project Team gathered Metro's time-to-hire data to analyze the efficiency of the hiring process. Due to Metro's lack of robust data reporting capabilities with its existing Applicant Tracking System (ATS), called MATS (Metro's Applicant Tracking System), and its reliance on the TA Analysts and staff to manually update each candidate's status in a timely manner, the Project Team was unable to report a single statistically reliable and valid time-to-hire. Instead, this study utilized three distinct methods to gather time-to-hire data as outlined in Figure 3. The three sources of data were: (1) Metro's Applicant Tracking System (MATS), (2) new hire surveys, and (3) new hire in-person interviews.

Data Source	Time Frame	Number of Records	Start and End
1. Metro's Applicant Tracking System (MATS)	FY2020 Q1 and Q2[9]	92	Requisition Creation to Offer Acceptance
2. Surveys[10]	FY2019	121	Application Submission to Orientation
3. In-person Interviews[11]	FY2019	24	Application Submission to Orientation

Figure 3: Time-to-Hire Data Sources

While none of these three methods, individually, provide a holistic understanding of time-to-hire, the realities uncovered through these methods do, in the aggregate, provide compelling and reliable insights into the duration of the hiring process. In addition, because each source has a unique start and end point for quantifying time-to-hire, the three methods cannot be directly compared. Thus, the purpose of assessing these three sources of data is to create a comprehensive picture of time-to-hire from multiple perspectives and multiple sources.

The Project Team considered two specific perspectives when quantifying Metro's overall time-to-hire: (1) the candidate's time-to-hire, and (2) the Hiring Manager's time-to-hire. Though similar, these two perspectives offer unique insight into the experience provided to TA's customers through the hiring process. This distinction is critically important when seeking to gain a precise understanding of an organization's time-to-hire. (Please note that the two subsections below explain the *Project Team's* definition of "candidate time-to-hire" and "Hiring Manager time-to-hire"; these subsections are *not*

[9] The data obtained from MATS is from FY2020, while the sample of employees for this study was selected from those hired or promoted in FY2019. FY2020 data was provided as it was the data most readily available and, being more recent, has the benefit of being more reflective of the current state of affairs than the data collected from FY2019.

[10] Additional information about surveys can be found in Task 3's "Methodology" subsection.

[11] Additional information about in-person interviews can be found in Task 3's "Methodology" subsection.

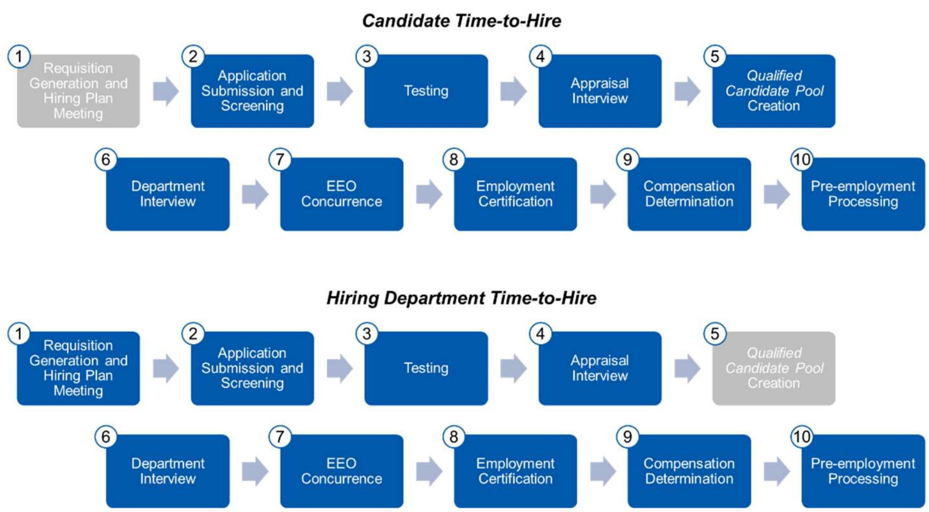
intended to define how Talent Acquisition conceptualizes these measures today. The ways that the Project Team and Talent Acquisition define these concepts differ. For example, the Project Team uses a time-to-hire endpoint of the day the hired candidate starts their job, while Talent Acquisition uses an endpoint of the day that the candidate accepts an offer. In addition, the Project Team includes the time a candidate spent on the QCP in their time-to-hire calculation, whereas Talent Acquisition does not.)

Candidate Time-to-hire

Candidate time-to-hire answers the question, "How long did a hired candidate wait to start their new job?" Therefore, a candidate's time-to-hire should commence when the candidate submits an application and end when he/she begins their job.[12] As illustrated in Figure 3, only two of the three data sources used for this study utilized those start and end points. The candidate time-to-hire includes any time that the selected candidate may have spent in a QCP. (See Figure 4.)

Hiring Manager Time-to-hire

Hiring Manager time-to-hire answers the question, "How long did a department wait to get an employee into the vacancy?" Therefore, a Hiring Manager's time-to-hire should commence when the department submits a requisition and end when the candidate begins their job.[13] As illustrated in Figure 3, none of the three data sources used for this study utilized the start and end points needed to sufficiently capture the Hiring Manager time-to-hire. Thus, the Hiring Manager time-to-hire data provided below is extrapolated from multiple data sources. This process does not include any time that the selected candidate may have spent in the QCP because the Hiring Manager does not experience being in the QCP (up to 18 months) as a candidate would. (See Figure 4.)



[12] Some measurements of time-to-hire utilize the "date that the candidate accepted an offer of employment" as the endpoint, rather than, as outlined above, when the candidate actually began working. The Project Team prefers to utilize the date a candidate began his/her job because it accounts for (1) any post-offer tasks (e.g., paperwork, badging) that must be completed prior to the candidate beginning their job, and (2) any time off that the candidate asks for prior to beginning their new role. While the hiring organization has limited, if any, influence over the latter, other candidate-caused delays from earlier in the hiring process (such as poor candidate responsiveness or a candidate needing to schedule an interview later than the organization preferred because of an upcoming vacation) *are* accounted for in the time-to-hire; rather than trying to deduce which party is at fault for each individual delay, therefore, it is more straight-forward for time-to-hire to end when the candidate actually began working.

[13] Ibid.

Figure 4: Steps in Candidate and Hiring Manager Time-to-hire

Findings and Recommendations

Finding A: Time-to-hire varies by requisition

Across three sources, two themes appear: (1) time-to-hire does vary by department or level, but more substantially by requisition, and (2) from a candidate's perspective, the longest parts of the hiring process (apart from their time on the QCP) are: the time between application submission and first contact from Metro, the time following the completion of a test until next contact, and the time of the compensation determination process.

Source 1: MATS data

Time-to-hire data collected in MATS, which was provided by TA, is based on the number of workdays, beginning with the creation of the requisition and ending with the selected candidate's offer acceptance. (This does not include the time between the candidate accepting the offer and the candidate starting at Metro, which may range from two to six weeks). The MATS data is unreliable as the *sole* source of time-to-hire date because the process is manual, requiring the manual input of the candidate's status. Metro recently purchased a new ATS, the Oracle Talent Acquisition Cloud (OTAC). Use of OTAC can improve time-to-hire tracking capabilities by removing its reliance on user entry.

Data pulled from MATS on time-to-hire for FY2020's Q1 and Q2[14] (n=92) disclosed an average time-to-hire of 65 workdays, though the averages vary by department, cost center, and title.[15] For example, by Department, the highest average time-to-hire at Metro is 85 workdays (for Information Technology), while the lowest average time-to-hire is 36 workdays (for Chief Policy Office; n=1). This range increases when looking at average time-to-hire by Cost Center, which has a high of 148 workdays (for Federal/State Policy and Programming; n=1) and a low of 23 workdays (for Executive Director Maintenance and Engineering; n=1 *and* Office of Management and Budget; n=2). Similarly, the average time-to-hire by position titles ranges from 133 workdays (for a Director of System Projects; n=1) to 3 workdays (for a SR HR Analyst; n=1). Therefore, because this data is pulled from a system that requires manual updates, the results may not possess unquestioned veracity, especially when juxtaposed with time-to-hire data pulled from the other two sources.

Source 2: Survey data

A second source for time-to-hire data was a survey transmitted to 276 individuals hired or promoted in FY2019. Of these 276, 121 (43.8%) responded, of which 36 were external candidates and 86 were internal candidates. Each respondent was prompted to provide the length of each step in the hiring process, along with the time between each step.[16] Averages were calculated based on the step-by-step estimates provided by the respondents. Additionally, to promote accuracy, the overall average calculations included only the time-to-hire estimates within +/-40% of the mean (removing the quickest 10% and lengthiest 10% of

[14] The data acquired from MATS is from FY2020 while the sample of employees for this study was selected from those hired or promoted in FY2019. FY2020 data was provided as it was the data most readily available, and being more recent, has the benefit of being potentially more reflective of the current state of affairs than the data collected from FY2019.

[15] As sample size decreases, so, too, does the sample's representativeness and reliability. When survey data is filtered, therefore, the sample size (n) decreases and thus limits the conclusiveness of the derived findings.

[16] The estimates from employees were requested in total days, including weekends.

estimates provided, thereby reducing the impact of outlier data), omitted the time-to-hire estimates of those respondents who indicated they were "not confident" in the accuracy of their response, and were converted from total days to workdays. To allow for direct comparison with the time-to-hire from MATS, the data provided from survey respondents was converted from total days to workdays.

	Average Candidate Time-to-Hire[17]	Average Hiring Manager Time-to-Hire[18]
External Candidates	146 workdays (n=25)	111 workdays (n=23)
Internal Candidates	103 workdays (n=54)	77 workdays (n=56)

Figure 5: Survey Data Time-to-Hire[19]

The data provided in Figure 5 above illustrates that candidate time-to-hire, *which includes time in the QCP*, is longer than the modified Hiring Department time-to-hire, which does not include time in the QCP.[20] In both scenarios the time-to-hire is longer for external candidates than internal.

Time-to-hire data from the same dataset was also evaluated by department, as seen in Figure 6. Just as above, average time-to-hire was calculated with estimates that fell within +/-40% of the mean, omitted the time-to-hire estimates of those respondents who indicated they were "not confident" in the accuracy of their response, and were converted from total days to workdays. Figure 6 illustrates that time-to-hire varies across department, though with such small sample sizes definitive conclusions should not be drawn.

Department	Average Candidate Time-to-Hire[21]	Average Hiring Manager Time-to-Hire[22]
Board of Directors	151 workdays (n=2)	76 workdays (n=1)
Chief Executive Office	67 workdays (n=7)	67 workdays (n=8)
Communications	71 workdays (n=7)	70 workdays (n=6)
Congestion Reduction	113 workdays (n=1)	124 workdays (n=2)
Finance and Budget	199 workdays (n=8)	93 workdays (n=7)
Information Technology	110 workdays (n=5)	100 workdays (n=5)
Operations	118 workdays (n=15)	94 workdays (n=14)

[17] Average Candidate Time-to-Hire calculates time-to-hire beginning with application submission and ending on their first day in their new role; this time *includes* the average time a candidate spends in the QCP.

[18] Average Hiring Manager Time-to-Hire calculates time-to-hire beginning when candidates submit their applications and ending when a selected candidate comes to LA Metro for the first day of their new role; this calculation does not include a candidate's time on the QCP, nor does it include the first step in the process: Requisition Generation and Hiring Plan Meeting.

[19] Sample sizes may differ from one metric to another because survey responses were omitted from the sample if the respondent (1) indicated that they were "not confident" in the accuracy of their estimates, or (2) provided data that was not in a format that could be interpreted, quantified, or analyzed.

[20] As noted previously, the Hiring Department time-to-hire captured in the survey does not account for the initial step in the hiring process – Requisition Generation and Hiring Plan Meeting – and, therefore, is considered "modified."

[21] Average Candidate Time-to-Hire calculates time-to-hire beginning with application submission and ending on their first day in their new role; this time includes the average time a candidate spends in the QCP.

[22] Average Hiring Manager Time-to-Hire calculates time-to-hire beginning when candidates submit their applications and ending when a selected candidate comes to LA Metro for the first day of their new role; this calculation does not include a candidate's time on the QCP, nor does it include the first step in the hiring process (Requisition Generation and Hiring Plan Meeting).

Planning and Development	119 workdays (n=14)	109 workdays (n=14)
Program Management	105 workdays (n=16)	73 workdays (n=18)
Vendor/Contract Management	136 workdays (n=4)	68 workdays (n=4)

Figure 6: Survey Data Time-to-Hire by Department[23] [24]

The survey data not only provides information on the total time-to-hire, but it provides data segmented by each step in the hiring process. Specifically, as provided in Figure 7, the data shows that the lengthiest parts of the hiring process are: (1) the time between application submission and first contact from LA Metro, (2) the time between the test (for those who are required to take one) and post-test contact from LA Metro, and (3) the compensation determination process.[25]

Hiring Process Step[26]	Average Internal Candidate Time-to-Hire (n=48)	Average External Candidate Time-to-Hire (n=25)
From application submission until first contact from LA Metro (either invitation to test or appraisal interview)	26 workdays	38 workdays
From time of contact from LA Metro to test (for requisitions requiring test)	10 workdays	8 workdays
From test completion to invitation to appraisal interview	19 workdays	35 workdays
From appraisal interview invitation to completion of interview	9 workdays	6 workdays
From completion of appraisal interview to notice of placement in QCP	8 workdays	7 workdays
Time in QCP[27]	39 workdays	46 workdays
From department interview invitation to department interview (if department interview required)	4 workdays	6 workdays
From completion of department interview to request for employment certification information	7 workdays	18 workdays
Employment certification process	9 workdays	7 workdays
Compensation determination process	25 workdays	21 workdays

[23] Sample sizes may differ from one metric to another because survey responses were omitted from the sample if the respondent (1) indicated that they were "not confident" in the accuracy of their estimates, or (2) provided data that was not in a format that could be interpreted, quantified, or analyzed.

[24] As sample size decreases, so, too, does the sample's representativeness and reliability. When survey data is filtered, therefore, the sample size (n) decreases and thus limits the conclusiveness of the derived findings.

[25] The segmented hiring times provided do not include all survey respondents, as some responses were removed during data cleaning because they were not marked clearly.

[26] Respondents were instructed to omit steps for which they did not participate (e.g., test or department interview), therefore the number of respondents for each step varies.

[27] "Time in QCP" is the average length of time candidates reported being in the QCP. This can range from a candidate who, following the appraisal interview, moved seamlessly to the next step in the hiring process, to a candidate who waited in the QCP for up to 18 months before moving ahead in the process for a position.

From final compensation offer to background check	4 workdays	6 workdays
Background check	5 workdays	11 workdays
Orientation/first day	5 workdays	9 workdays
Total	170 workdays	218 workdays

Figure 7: Survey Data Time-to-Hire by Step[28]

Further information about the survey can be found in Appendix 3.

Source 3: Interview testimony

The third source of data utilized in this study was interview testimony. Like the data gathered from MATS, the interview testimony data is not statistically reliable, as it relies on self-reported data.[29] While these numbers should not be relied on for their accuracy, self-reported data can serve as diagnostic data and demonstrate directional correctness. According to internally and externally sourced employees, the time-to-hire estimates range from 1 month to 1.5 years. (See Figure 8.) The data provided below are the average estimates of candidate times-to-hire from internal (n=9) and external (n=15) candidates, beginning with application submission and ending with their first day in their new role. Despite the small sample size, the data below indicates that the hiring process can be lengthier for external candidates than for internal candidates, meaning that on average, the time-to-hire is between 3 and 4 months for external candidates as compared to 1-2 months for internal candidates.

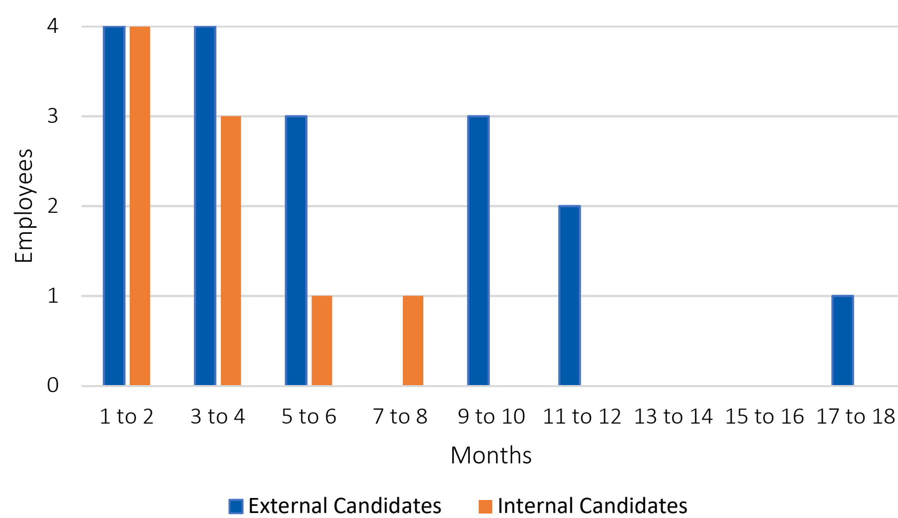


Figure 8: Interview Testimony Time-to-Hire

Further information about the interviews conducted can be found in Appendix 3.

[28] Sample sizes may differ from one metric to another because survey responses were omitted from the sample if the respondent (1) indicated that they were "not confident" in the accuracy of their estimates, or (2) provided data that was not in a format that could be interpreted, quantified, or analyzed.

[29] The employees interviewed for this information seldom brought evidence of their hiring experience with them from which to identify exact dates, and thus were recalling their experience from memory.

Recommendation 01: Employ OTAC, Metro's new Applicant Tracking System, to obtain and utilize talent analytics

TA's current recruitment technology *does* possess some analytical functionality, allowing TAA to track measures such as time-to-hire. With the adoption of OTAC, a more reliable tool for collecting data than its predecessor, comes the opportunity to increase TA's current data analytics capabilities. Specifically, data from OTAC, when integrated with Metro's Human Resource Information System (HRIS), can provide TA invaluable insights into workforce planning, recruitment spending, and predicting attrition. Additionally, OTAC can be leveraged to quantify *descriptive* measures, such as talent acquisition activity (e.g., time-to-hire), efficiency (e.g., segmented time-to-hire), and performance (e.g., applicants-per-hire), along with future-oriented measures that are *predictive* (which project what will happen in the future) and *prescriptive* (which explain what Metro *should* do). With these more future-oriented analytics, Metro can identify if a candidate will be a good fit for the organization, their level of performance, and how likely they are to remain at Metro. (To do this, these models gather data on employees who perform well on the interested measure[s] and determine the degree to which candidates share attributes with those high-performing employees.) Tracking candidates and their trajectory at Metro should result in shorter times-to-hire, decreased expense-to-hire, and decreased turnover. Understanding that the transition from data collection to analysis can be difficult, an accessible starting point with analytics is correlations.[30] For example, measuring the relationship between various factors, such as salary or cost center, and turnover may illuminate trends for further research.[31] [32] With any future data collection and analytics efforts, it is critical that the parameters be clearly defined and consistently kept to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

Recommendation 02: Hold hiring process stakeholders accountable for faster decision making

Throughout Metro's hiring process, different stakeholders are responsible for different actions that move the hiring process forward. Primarily, Hiring Managers, TA Analysts, EEO representatives, and Compensation Analysts own steps in the hiring process, along with the leaders of TA and Compensation. While not intentional, stakeholders can cause delays in the hiring process by not expeditiously completing their step, and delays from just one of these stakeholders can impact the overall time-to-hire. Creating an accountability matrix along with internal "Service-Level Agreements" (SLAs) to clarify timeline expectations among critical stakeholders in the recruiting process holds stakeholders accountable to complete their tasks within the timeframe agreed upon in the SLA.[33] These SLAs – like the ones a technology vendor would have in place with their client – outline the service level that the "client" expects from the service provider. An SLA creates a shared understanding of the time each step in the hiring process should take to ensure all stakeholders are aligned. In practice, the SLA could be completed as either (1) part of the Hiring Plan Meeting where many of the stakeholders for a hiring process are present, or (2) digitally via email.

Recommendation 03: Decrease post-testing communication time for the candidates

Candidates who complete a test as part of their hiring process reported varying gaps of time before hearing from Metro again. Some candidates were contacted with test results and information about the next step in the hiring process within a week of their test date. For others, the time between test and follow-up communication was more than a month. External candidates, for example, reported that, on average, they did not hear back from Metro for 35 workdays (or seven weeks); internal candidates averaged 19 days (or almost four weeks). In the absence of prior communication from Metro as to when a candidate can expect

[30] *These 3 Talent Trends for 2020 Focus on Empathy*, SHRM, 2020
[31] *20 Recruiting Metrics (and how to calculate them),* Hire by Google, 2019
[32] *Targeted Recruiting Metrics Will Improve Hiring,* SHRM, 2016
[33] *Twenty-Seven Ways to Recruit Faster,* Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2015

to hear a status update, many candidates assumed that they did not pass the test and sought employment elsewhere. Two steps can be taken to improve a candidate's hiring experience following the testing step. First, provide candidates with an expected time frame as to when they should hear from a TA Analyst. Second, TA should create a post-test contact goal date, or a date by which candidates who completed a test should be contacted. Creating a feasible goal to adhere to will provide a shared expectation across TA for when candidates should receive an update on their candidate status and ease candidate anxieties.[34]

Recommendation 04: Select interview dates and interviewers prior to the Hiring Plan Meeting

One part of the interview process that can lengthen time-to-hire is scheduling the panel interviewers. Because Hiring Managers are relatively senior employees, finding time on their calendars can be challenging; this is compounded, of course, by the need to find a few dates and times that work for all three panelists. Therefore, the Hiring Manager and the TA Analyst should use the Hiring Plan Meeting to establish and set the hiring process schedule, including interview dates and times. This would require the Hiring Manager to complete some pre-work for the meeting, as they would need to identify the interviewers on their panel *and* coordinate with those interviewers' schedules, but the benefits of getting this information scheduled in advance will help improve the hiring process's efficiency. By setting the hiring process schedule and the interview dates and times at the *beginning* of the hiring process, Metro can expect to see a decrease in time-to-hire. Additionally, use of OTAC for online scheduling at the beginning will improve timeliness. In addition to these time-to-hire benefits, selecting these dates at the Hiring Plan Meeting provides accountability to both the TA Analyst and the Hiring Manager to complete the preceding hiring process steps (e.g., application screening) in an expedient manner.

[34] Prior to establishing a goal, it is important to understand all of the stakeholders who may impact the ability of TA to meet that goal. For example, if a Hiring Manager is responsible for grading the tests and takes a long time to send the grades to the TA Analyst, then the Analyst should not be penalized for the delay because they were not responsible.

TASK 2: REVIEW POLICIES / PROCEDURES AND INTERVIEW PERSONNEL

Task Overview

In Task 2, the Project Team had two main activities: (1) collect and review Metro's policies and procedures related to the hiring process, and (2) interview various personnel to understand the Talent Acquisition's processes for hiring new employees.

Methodology

The initial phase of Task 2 consisted of gathering relevant information. Some of this was provided through document and data requests. Metro's OIG and the HC&D Executive Office (EO) provided the Project Team with, among other items, the following resources:

- FY2019 organizational charts
- FY2020 organizational charts
- A list and description of all of Metro's policies
- A list and description of Metro's HR policies
- Policy documents for HR 7, HR 10, and HR 31
- Survey results outlining hiring department's perceptions about Talent Acquisition
- Requisition-to-hire data for non-contract positions
- A presentation summarizing Talent Acquisition's activities for Q1/Q2 of FY2020
- Internal tracker of why candidates declined a job offer from Metro
- Guidelines for the salary placements of new hires and promoted employees
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Compensation regarding salary administration
- A sample job application
- A sample Candidate Certification form
- An Appraisal Interview question guide
- An Ideal Candidate Profile
- A sample Salary Proposal form
- Ad-hoc news articles regarding hiring at other governmental or transit entities

In addition to reviewing documents and data, the Project Team gathered information directly from Metro employees involved in the hiring process, including TA staff and Hiring Managers. Representing Talent Acquisition staff – or, in some cases, representing HC&D more broadly – the Project Team spoke with, among others, the Chief Human Capital & Development Officer, Executive Officer of Talent Management, Director of Human Resources, Senior Director of Special Projects, and Deputy Executive Officer of Workforce Services. The Project Team also spoke with 20 different Hiring Managers who volunteered to be interviewed in response to an OIG email to Metro's Senior Leadership Team (SLT); these Hiring Managers spanned the organization's departments and ranged from lower-level Hiring Managers to C-suite executives.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding B: Current process relies heavily on paper

Despite the existence of the Metro Application Tracking System (MATS), a 15-year old tool tailored to each step in Metro's hiring process, the hiring process at Metro is still heavily reliant on paper transactions in addition to some automation. Functions of the hiring process that are transacted on paper include:

- Hiring Plan Meeting: EEO department requisition guidelines, Salary Administration Guidelines, confidentiality statement, Hiring Plan Agreement
- Interviews: Interview schedule, interview guidelines, interview questions, rating sheet, and the job bulletin
- Compensation: Salary Proposal Request, Salary Proposal Form, Salary Proposal Form cover memo
- EEO Concurrence: EEO Concurrence Form
- Pre-employment Process: Pre-employment Process Form
- Reference Check: Reference Check Approval Form

In addition to the monetary costs associated with purchasing paper and ink, paper processing transactions can contribute time "costs" to an organization, as they can easily and unintentionally lengthen the hiring process. In the salary proposal form, for example, a single form per candidate is created and requires a minimum of four wet signatures. At each step in the approval process, the document must be signed by hand and then the document is dropped off at the desk of the next individual, where it awaits the next person's signature. This process continues with subsequent individuals until the form has received all signatures. Given the over 1,500 candidates that Metro is currently in the process of hiring, and intends to hire in the next 12 months, placing each document on a desk inadvertently opens the process to the possibility that other items may be placed on top of the hiring document, burying it, and risking that it may either be misplaced or lost, and not completed in an expedient manner. Moreover, if the form contains confidential information, utilizing paper may also put the organization at risk, albeit a slight one, by affording someone not intended to be part of the process the opportunity to see candidate information that they should not be permitted to see. These clerical errors are avoidable with a digital workflow solution that eliminates paper, improves process speed, increases transparency, inputs security protections into the process, and mitigates risk.

The Talent Acquisition Support Team bears the burden of analog tasks

In preparation for the appraisal interview, TA Analysts are tasked with preparing interview packets for each panel member. These packets include the interview schedule, interview guidelines, interview questions, a rating sheet, and the job bulletin. This paper-based task would be time consuming for the TA Analyst, but a team of TA Support staff are able to assist. The same group also helps with the time-consuming tasks of scheduling panelists and candidates for the appraisal interview. To set the TA Support Team up for success, the TA Analyst provides them with the information – including the number of candidates requiring interviews, a scheduling template, panelist names, and the interview schedule – that panelists need to commit to. While the additional capacity provided by the Support Team enables TA Analysts to focus on other more critical tasks, both (1) assembling interview packets, and (2) scheduling interviews are tasks that can be accomplished with a more advanced Applicant Tracking System, like the Oracle Talent Acquisition Cloud (OTAC) system TA is implementing currently, potentially reducing the need to use the Support Team for that process.

Recommendation 05: Implement a digital workflow to autoroute forms and utilize electronic signatures and assign a back-up signatory

One of the most inefficient aspects of Metro's hiring process is the proliferation of paper. Many forms utilized in the process are paper-based and require wet-ink signatures. Beyond decreased time-to-hire and decreased organizational risk, two of the benefits that a digital workflow provides are increased accountability and transparency. Because the system is digitized, users are able to locate who has the form, any possible bottlenecks, and collect data on the responsiveness of signatories to mitigate future problems and provide greater transparency. In addition, Metro should establish a practice of allowing stakeholders to designate back-up signatories to ensure that a stakeholder's temporary absence will not delay the hiring process.

The Project Team is unaware whether Metro's OTAC system currently being implemented has the ability to digitize, autoroute, and electronically sign forms. If it does, then Metro should quickly prepare for this feature by aggregating, updating, and digitizing key forms; if it does not, then Metro should inquire whether the OTAC system can be made to have that capability, or seek a solution that seamlessly integrates with OTAC that can provide this digital workflow capability.

Recommendation 06: Implement digital interview note-taking, scoring, and uploading of candidate results

Another way to decrease paper in the hiring process is to migrate interview note-taking from a manual process to a digital one. Digital note-taking during interviews not only decreases the amount of paper in the process, but also improves areas like document security and document storage by immediately and securely auto-routing interview documentation to the appropriate repository, which decreases manual tasks completed by TA staff such as scanning. In addition, taking notes via computer or tablet can also improve the interviewer experience for those who are expedient at typing, as they are able to more quickly and thoroughly capture what the interviewee is saying (as compared to paper-based note taking). (Computer-based note-taking, specifically, allows for better eye contact between the interviewer and interviewee because the interviewer does not have to look down at paper but is shifting their eyes between the computer screen and the candidate, both of which are in front of them.) OTAC may have the ability to provide this functionality to Metro, but cost-effective third-party applications are also available.

Finding C: Hiring process perceived as inconsistent

Some Hiring Managers describe the hiring process as inconsistent both *intra*-departmentally, across past hiring processes in the same department, and *inter*-departmentally, between a hiring process in their department as compared to a hiring process from the department of their peers. These perceptions in the process lead to a sense of frustration intra-departmentally, and inequity inter-departmentally. These "process inconsistencies" may be due, in part, to the changes TA is currently making to improve the hiring process in response to a recently completed assessment, or a lack of written documentation provided to TA Analysts and Hiring Managers for these newly-implemented changes. Another potential cause is that, often, process changes are announced to TA Analysts at meetings. Consequently, if not all TA Analysts are in attendance at that meeting, the analyst(s) not present may implement the changes at a different time, and thus follow different processes until caught up to the new policy. Consistency is an important attribute of any hiring process both to ensure equity and because standardization leads to economies of scale and improved efficiency. [35]

TA Analysts also serve as the liaison between each department and TA, and are responsible for informing Hiring Managers of changes to the hiring process, which, depending on the news the TA Analyst bears, can sometimes cause a strain in the relationship between the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager. Furthermore, during the hiring process, some Hiring Managers may ask their TA Analyst to sit on their panel interviews to fill the required "non-department" seat. However, this has been, at times, misidentified by other Hiring Managers as a form of TA oversight for some departments, but not others.

[35] *Transforming the HR Function of HR Operational Efficiency,* Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2014

Recommendation 07: Improve communication between TA and Hiring Managers regarding changes in the hiring process

One of the ways to mitigate the perception of inconsistency, is by ensuring that there are forums or channels available to allow TA and Hiring Managers to communicate their concerns about the hiring process more generally, *beyond* the communication that occurs between the two groups when the Hiring Manager is trying to fill a vacant position. This effort at improved communication can take a variety of forms. TA can send Hiring Managers monthly emails outlining the changes that are being implemented, the reasons for the changes, and the impact the changes will have on the Hiring Managers. TA can also schedule quarterly meetings to present upcoming changes and ideas they are considering to improve the process and solicit input prior to implementing a change. When TA has sought this input in the past, it appears to have been helpful in gaining the cooperation and appreciation of the hiring departments. Regardless of the format, providing a mechanism for general hiring process updates to be provided to Hiring Managers will improve communication between TA and their internal customers, reduce Hiring Manager's perceptions about process inconsistency, and allow TA to own the messaging around hiring process changes.

Finding D: Metro's hiring process, though inefficient, is effective

Although most Hiring Managers noted that Metro's hiring process was *inefficient*, most – if not all – of them communicated that they found the process to be *effective* in the end. In short, regardless of the amount of time it took, the process eventually resulted in the Hiring Manager obtaining a quality candidate to place into the vacancy. Although it is difficult to deduce the "opportunity cost" of a lengthy process – that is, the loss in quality that may have occurred by losing a higher-caliber candidate than the one that was selected – the near-universal contentment shared by Hiring Managers at the process' outcome is a strength of the process.

Recommendation 08: Encourage greater use of department interviews

Department interviews are not a consistent step for all hiring processes. Indeed, they are only employed if (1) the Hiring Manager did not participate in the appraisal interview, or (2) the Hiring Manager requests another opportunity to evaluate candidates, as he/she feels unable to make a hiring decision with the information they currently have. This step is commonly used when hiring a candidate from a QCP, as the candidate may have submitted their initial application for that position within the past 18 months and/or to a different department (though candidates in a QCP for the same position/department for which they applied can be hired off of the QCP without an additional interview). Planning and scheduling a department interview with the requisite three-member panel is time consuming; therefore, a hiring process that includes a department interview is longer than a hiring process that does not include one. Regardless, the costs of a poor hire (e.g., a candidate who turns over quickly, a candidate who does not possess the adequate skillset), is much greater than the increases in time-to-hire that are associated with a department interview. In short, although using department interviews reduces the hiring process's efficiency, it likely increases the process's effectiveness. In this trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness, Metro stands to gain more from utilizing department interviews. The value of a department interview, however, should not be weighed identically for all positions. The more senior and skilled a position is, the more valuable a second interview; thus, the department interview should remain an optional step, though it should be encouraged for positions for which hiring is more difficult.

Finding E: Qualified Candidate Pools (QCP) are limited to the job title of the original vacancy

One purpose of the QCP is to retain pre-qualified candidates who have cleared the interview hurdle in Metro's hiring process, in hopes of engaging either for the position to which they applied, or for a future position of the same title. Currently, QCPs are only available for openings that share the same position title. Hiring Managers are unable to access the candidates in a QCP with a different position title from their own regardless of how similar the position descriptions or Minimum Qualifications may be. While this approach is sensible when two positions are disparate, this barrier may present a missed opportunity to expedite the recruitment process for positions that have overlapping areas of expertise.

Recommendation 09: Allow QCPs with similar MQs to be shared

Currently, a requisition that shares the exact job title of an existing QCP is required to consider the candidates in that QCP prior to posting externally. Doing so, leverages the talent already in Metro's pipeline. Conversely, a requisition that does not share the exact job title of an existing QCP does not allow TA and Hiring Managers access to those QCP candidates regardless of how similar the position descriptions may be. Relying exclusively on position title alone is a missed opportunity to optimize QCP usage. Instead, the ability to access QCPs should be dependent on similarities in Minimum Qualifications (MQs). With MQs as the comparison tool, searches for positions similar to those for which Metro already has a QCP allows Hiring Managers and TA Analysts the option of screening candidates in the QCP; a step which can help streamline the hiring process. As part of this effort, Metro would need to ensure that all of the individuals in the QCP are made aware that once they enter the QCP, they are eligible for other positions with similar MQs and may be contacted for those positions in the future.

Finding F: The hiring process lacks clear ownership

> "[Talent Acquisition] gives us [Hiring Managers] the broad parameters that we have to stay in because of consistency…But within the broad parameters, we need more discretion in evaluating candidates."

One of the frustrations most-commonly communicated by Hiring Managers is what they perceive to be their lack of authority in the hiring process. Hiring Managers shared feeling restricted by the TA process, which prevents them from making the hiring decisions that are best to meet their department needs, especially given Metro's current and Measure M operational demands. Hiring Managers report that this lack of authority shows up throughout the hiring process. For example, Hiring Managers shared that during the candidate interview selection process, which often follows the dual-screening process, they are sometimes required to interview candidates in which they had no interest based on their job requirements and the candidate's qualifications. The dual-screening process is a process in which submitted applications are evaluated first by the TA Analyst and then by the Hiring Manager. According to TA Analysts, following their evaluation, they create a list that identifies which candidates have met (1) all minimum qualifications (MQs), and (2) the preferred qualifications (PQs). The Hiring Manager reviews the applications to provide concurrence with the TA Analyst. Some Hiring Managers expressed frustration that they were dependent on TA Analysts to provide them with physical applications and did not have access to a digital system in which to indicate their concurrence. In addition, increased oversight, in the form of interview question validation and EEO concurrence, is perceived as restricting their authority as Hiring Managers to ask the questions that would help them delve more deeply into a candidate's qualifications for the position. Furthermore, the Compensation Analyst and Hiring Manager may differ on how to quantify and qualify a candidate's past experience when deciding in which compensation quartile to place them. Simply put, there is a lack of clarity around who possesses final decision-making authority at each step in the process when the hiring process stakeholders – including TA Analysts, Compensation Analysts, Hiring Managers, and EEO, among others – disagree. Some Hiring Managers deem TA's perceived influence on the hiring decision to be unfair because it is the Hiring Manager (and not TA) who must work with and manage the newly-hired candidate.

Recommendation 10: Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities throughout the entire hiring process

At multiple points throughout Metro's current hiring process, two key stakeholders may need to reconcile their disparate opinions, but getting to consensus is not easily resolved, lengthening the time-to-hire. To mitigate this, Metro should create and disseminate clear guidelines outlining which stakeholder has final decision-making authority at each step in the hiring process (and, by extension, which stakeholder assumes the risk for that decision). If simplified, these guidelines can be presented in paragraph or bullet form; for more complicated ownership structures, these guidelines can be presented in a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) chart or similar tool.[36] A RACI chart helps stakeholders in the hiring process understand how they can delegate responsibilities, ultimately enabling participative, collaborative, and quicker decision making.[37] The principal issue related to Metro's hiring process decision-making is not that it is fragmented (meaning, that the stakeholder who has final authority differs from step-to-step), but the decision-making is not explicitly defined. By clarifying each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities, Metro can expect to see a decreased time-to-hire and more accountability from each stakeholder.

Recommendation 11: Grant Hiring Managers greater decision-making authority in screening

Currently, submitted applications are reviewed first by a TA Analyst, who prepares a list of candidates to provide to the Hiring Manager. This list includes all the potential candidates and indicates which candidates have: (1) met all minimum qualifications (MQs), (2) which preferred qualifications (PQs), if any, the candidates have met, and (3) which candidates the TA analyst believes should move forward in the hiring process. The Hiring Manager then reviews the supplied applications to provide concurrence with the TA Analyst. If the Hiring Manager does not concur, however, then both parties meet to reconcile their lists. The subsequent discussions around which candidates should proceed in the hiring process can be lengthy and raise the question of who ultimately has decision-making authority for this task. To expedite the current process and provide a singular point of decision-making, TA Analysts should screen applications and provide to the Hiring Manager the applications of all candidates who have met the MQs. (Accompanying these applications should be some high-level information about the candidates eliminated from consideration due to not meeting the MQs.) The Hiring Manager should then review the supplied applications, identify the applications that meet their PQs, and determine who should proceed to interviews. Those identified by the Hiring Manager should proceed to the next step in the hiring process without requiring additional concurrence from the TA Analyst because the Hiring Manager is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the duties of their department and must work with the selected candidate to do so.

Finding G: Change in Applicant Tracking System (ATS) presents opportunities and challenges

For 15 years, Metro's TA has employed a home-grown Applicant Tracking System (ATS), aptly named, Metro Applicant Tracking System (MATS). In hopes of modernizing the capabilities MATS offers, Metro recently procured Oracle's Talent Acquisition Cloud (OTAC), also known as Taleo, as its replacement. OTAC's full implementation promises improved data collection and reporting along with overall digitization and transparency in the hiring processes. OTAC is consistently rated one of the top Applicant Tracking Systems used by *Fortune 500* companies.[38] OTAC's functionality – including intuitive workflows, seamless

[36] "The RACI matrix is a responsibility-assignment chart that maps out every task, milestone or key decision involved in completing a project and assigns which roles are *Responsible* for each action item, which personnel are *Accountable*, and, where appropriate, who needs to be *Consulted* or *Informed*. The acronym RACI stands for the four roles that stakeholders might play in any project"; *The RACI matrix: Your blueprint for project success*, Bob Kantor, 2018

[37] *Twenty-Seven Ways to Recruit Faster,* HR Leadership Council, 2015

[38] *Workday's ATS is the 'Top Choice' of the Fortune 500,* SHRM, 2019

integration with all major vendors, and end-to-end automation – makes it one of the best products on the market[39], as well as one of the most popular. A recent study of 476 of the Fortune 500 identified that Workday and OTAC were the top-two most used ATSs. (See Figure 9.) OTAC's popularity can be explained by its highly customizable, comprehensive and high functioning capabilities. Of specific value to Metro, is OTAC's (1) ability to integrate with its Hiring Resource Information System (HRIS), (2) advanced applicant tracking and (3) reporting dashboard. Taken together, OTAC's capabilities decrease the cost and risk of hiring to Metro and reduce TA's workload.

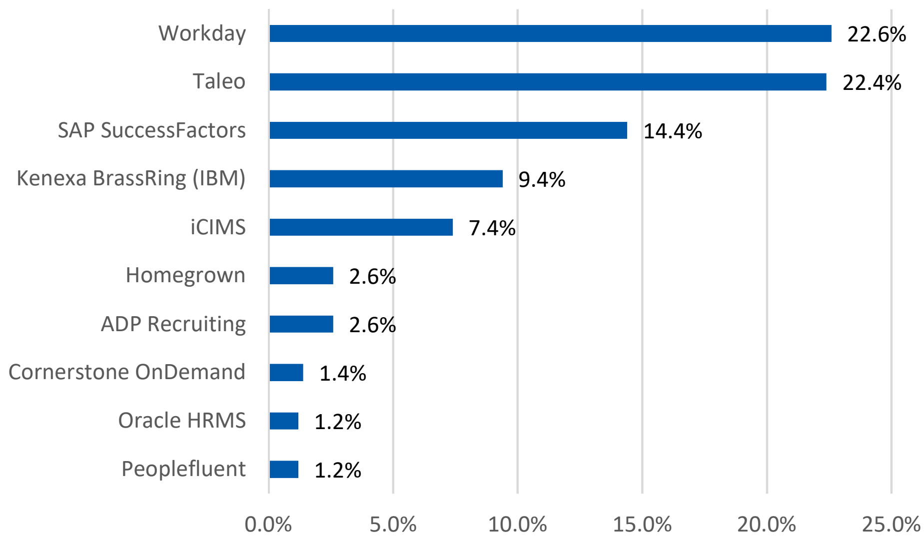


Figure 9: Top 10 Applicant Tracking Systems Used by Fortune 500 Companies

As noted, one such improvement is the ability to collect documentation digitally that will sync directly with Metro's central HRIS database. Currently, new hires must complete multiple hard copy forms at orientation with information that a Metro staff person must manually enter into the HRIS database. With OTAC, those forms will be completed prior to arriving at Metro and integrated into HRIS. Another improvement will be the online scheduling capability offered by OTAC. Currently, TA Support Staff must work with interviewer and interviewee schedules to identify an interview time. OTAC will remove the need for human facilitation, providing increased capacity to TA Support Staff to address the needs of more candidates. Despite MATS's limited capabilities and propensity for losing data, current internal users are familiar with this system and its customization to their recruitment processes, which has made it an accepted software by its users. Certain functions that were facilitated by MATS, such as automatically sorting candidates into Qualified Candidate Pools (QCPs) based on their interview scores, cannot be completed as easily by OTAC. This, perhaps, has contributed to the resistance OTAC's roll out has faced. Users are slow to learn the new interface and have been opting for work arounds as opposed to using the OTAC facilitated process. Despite a slow transition, MATS is outdated and the functionality that OTAC offers will help improve multiple facets of the hiring process.

Recommendation 12: Ensure full adoption of the OTAC system coupled with adoption of an effective change management process

As TA continues the replacement of MATS by OTAC, Metro must ensure that the implementation is not only accomplished technologically, but also realized organizationally. The benefits that contemporary

[39] *Top 10 Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) Software for 2020*, HR Technologist, 2019

technology can provide to an organization are both realistic and attainable, but only when the effort to implement the technology occurs concurrently, coupled with an effective change management process that does not cease once the new system has "gone live." Unless users embrace and begin to feel comfortable with the new technology – that is, unless they understand the need for the change, are incentivized to change, are equipped to make the change, and are actively supported to continue their changed behavior until that behavior is standardized – the full benefits of the implementation will remain unrealized.

Research demonstrates, in fact, that most change projects (60-70%) fail.[40] For example, TA Analysts who may not be well-trained on the new OTAC system – or who may not, for other reasons, be inclined to adopt OTAC – may find manual workarounds to help quickly shepherd candidates through the hiring process. Users will also look for workarounds outside of the OTAC system if it cannot offer the same, or better, functionality as MATS, and thus OTAC must facilitate each step within Metro's hiring process. Effective change management training with all internal hiring process stakeholders, along with the ability for OTAC to fully facilitate the hiring process, therefore, is critical to the success of Metro's adoption of the new technology. Ensuring that full OTAC implementation is comprehensive and compelling to stakeholders is critical so that Metro's investment in the new system will derive the intended benefits.

Finding H: Hiring process equity and efficiency are sometimes in conflict

Instilling any virtue into a process typically requires that the process be amended to include standardized steps and checks and balances, necessarily making the process somewhat inefficient. Understandably, then, Metro's commitment to equity has resulted in hiring process inefficiencies. Not all of the inefficiencies in the hiring process result from embedding equity throughout the process – there are many ways in which the hiring process can be made more efficient *without* sacrificing equity – however it is important to acknowledge that, at times, the values of equity and efficiency are at odds with one another. Because Metro's hiring process *is* equitable, some of the contributors in Metro's time-to-hire are a result of the organization's commitment to equity and fairness.

> "The frustration comes from the length of time and bureaucracy."

Finding I: Multiple approvals impede the path to posting

Two decisions made during the Hiring Plan Meeting may slow the hiring process before it even begins, requiring approval from stakeholders outside of Talent Acquisition and the hiring department. First, the decision to only post internally requires approval from EEO. Similarly, EEO and Compensation must approve the addition of any preferred qualifications to the job description. Preferred qualifications require approval from both EEO and Compensation to ensure they (1) do not unintentionally create adverse effects (e.g., deterring candidates of a certain demographic from applying), and (2) are appropriate for the current role and salary, respectively. While not significantly time-consuming, additional approvals necessarily pause the process until the approvals are received.

[40] *Change Management Needs to Change*, Harvard Business Review, 2013

Finding J: Recent changes to position descriptions limit Hiring Managers

> "[Candidates] don't know that buried in "Manager of Special Projects" is a "Developer" position. Then we don't get anyone remotely qualified for the job applying. "

A recently completed agency-wide initiative to update and streamline job descriptions, which received an award from Metro's CEO, reduced the number of job descriptions by consolidating similar positions across departments. While this initiative has benefits, the new job descriptions have caused Hiring Managers frustration, because their inability to tailor their job descriptions to meet their specific needs coupled with overly generalized minimum qualifications leads unqualified candidates to apply, thereby increasing the time needed by the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager to screen the applications. Hiring Managers can still influence a position's job description through the addition of preferred qualifications, but they are often inundated with applications meeting the minimum qualifications rather than the preferred qualifications.

Recommendation 13: Expand Hiring Managers' influence by allowing additional Minimum Qualifications to a position

The revamp of job descriptions offers both benefits and concerns. Of greatest concern to Hiring Managers is that the lack of specificity in job titles and minimum requirements have inadvertently encouraged candidates who are not qualified to apply. Casting a wide net is prudent in some cases, but it may have the unintentional consequence of increasing the cost of hiring for a position because staff have to screen more candidates; in other cases, therefore, it may be more prudent to discourage candidates who don't fit the position than to "jam more candidates into the recruiting funnel."[41] Creating a smaller but better qualified pool will decrease cost, decrease risk (as each application also exposes Metro to legal risk as it has obligations to candidates), and decrease the burden of weeding out unqualified candidates. Building a more selective candidate pool can be accomplished by having Hiring Managers identify additional Minimum Qualifications for job descriptions. Further, lack of specificity in job descriptions cloud candidates with ambiguity. Indeed, 14% of candidates, on average, discontinue a hiring process because of the mismatch between the job description and the actual position the organization was trying to fill.[42] Equipping candidates with better information on the requirements of a role will allow prospective candidates to self-select out of the candidate pool if they do not possess the requisite skillset, thus decreasing the number of unqualified candidates applying for a job and increasing retention throughout the entire hiring process, as candidates have a better understanding of what their role will require.

Finding K: Hiring process stakeholders are ambivalent about blind screening

Within the past two years, LA Metro instituted blind screening of applications into its hiring process in order to improve the equity of the hiring process by reducing bias. During interviews, Hiring Managers voiced frustration with the process of not being able to view all of a candidate's information. They shared particular frustration about not being able to view the university from which the candidate graduated. All Hiring Managers acknowledged the theoretical benefits of blind screening, but many questioned its effectiveness, especially since the top candidates will still be interviewed in person; instead, some Hiring Managers pointed to the unintended consequences of blind screening, including eliminating a prospective candidate who may meet the department's diversity hiring goals. These Hiring Managers also point to Metro's other hiring process requirements (e.g., panel interviews, interview question approval, EEO concurrence) as sufficient checks-and-balances to ensure equity. In addition, some recent peer-reviewed research

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[41] *Your Approach to Hiring is All Wrong*, Harvard Business Review, 2019

[42] *4 Moments that Fail in the Candidate Experience*, Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2019

questions the effectiveness of blind screening as a mechanism for increasing hiring diversity. Many credible, yet non-peer-reviewed, publications also acknowledge the limitations of blind screening.[43] [44] Lastly, redacting applications is a manual process that is unable to be done by MATS currently and may not be automated by OTAC in the future. It is unclear how much time the application redaction takes, but given the number of applications received by Metro and the organization's hiring goals, blind screening may contribute substantial time to the hiring process.

Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the use of blind screening in 12 months

Because blind screening is a relatively new trend, Metro should reevaluate its use of blind screening in one year. Over the course of this year, Metro should collect data to measure blind screening's effectiveness, as well as monitor the published research on the topic. Should Metro's experience and the broader academic literature affirm the effectiveness of blind screening, then Metro should continue its use. Should Metro find that blind screening is ineffective, or find that other checks and balances are adequate to protect the integrity of the process, then the organization should discontinue the practice and take solace in the fact that there are number of checks-and-balances already in place to promote fairness and equity.

Finding L: EEO's current role questioned by other stakeholders

Currently, Metro's EEO group takes an active role in Metro's hiring process. EEO is required, pursuant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, to be involved in a transit agency's hiring process, but conversations with Hiring Managers and TA Analysts alike have uncovered concerns with EEO's direct involvement, noting that, at times, EEO has unduly influenced and elongated the hiring process. EEO's participation occurs at various points in the hiring process, beginning with the Hiring Plan Meeting and ending with providing concurrence with the selected candidate for hire. For TA Analysts, gaining EEO concurrence is a time-consuming and burdensome activity that can further delay the time-to-hire, which has occasionally resulted in losing the selected candidate. According to an EEO representative, only rarely does EEO *not* concur with the proposed candidate; bringing into question at which point(s) EEO should be involved with the hiring process to bring value and comply with FTA guidelines.

Recommendation 15: Transition EEO role from active participant to advisor, auditor, and trainer

Currently, Metro's EEO group takes an active role in Metro's hiring process. EEO must approve: (1) the Hiring Manager's decision to post a job internally, (2) a recruitment's use of preferred qualifications, and (3) the final candidate selection by the Hiring Manager.

According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)[45], an active EEO role is required, but less clear are the specifics of how that role should be implemented. Conversations with TA and Hiring Managers have uncovered many concerns with EEO's direct involvement because it may directly impact the Hiring Managers' authority and lengthens the time-to-hire, incurring unnecessary costs and delays to Metro.[46]

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[43] *Our Blind Hiring Process is (probably) Still Biased. Here's How to Change That*, Fast Company, 2019

[44] *Can Blind Hiring Improve Workplace Diversity?*, SHRM, 2018

[45] FTA Circular 4704.1A, Section 2.2.3 *Designation of Personnel Responsibility* outlines the EEO Officer's Program responsibilities, which includes "Concurring in the hiring and promotion process." It appears that Metro possesses a strict interpretation of "concurring," such that EEO has decision-making authority in each hiring process; a looser interpretation can remove EEO from being involved in each individual hire, while still satisfying the FTA Circular.

[46] The "costs" of EEO's involvement are additional opportunity costs (where EEO is spending time in the hiring process and could be using that time for other activities).

Metro should transition EEO's role in the hiring process from active participant to advisor, auditor, and trainer, especially as the FTA Circular outlines EEO responsibilities as: (1) In conjunction with human resources, periodically reviewing employment practices policies, (2) "Investigating complaints of EEO discrimination," and (3) "Providing EEO training for employees and managers.", roles that are directly aligned with the FTA requirements rather than as an active participant.[47] In this new role, Metro's Executive Leadership would continue to reinforce its policy of equity in hiring, and EEO would enforce it through periodically auditing the hiring process to ensure that it is being completed equitably. (EEO's ability to audit the process will be enhanced when the new OTAC system is fully implemented, with its capability to enable observation of the process in real time. With this new functionality, EEO could periodically observe and monitor the process for any recruitment and, if necessary, get involved if it identifies a concern.) Should EEO find violations, EEO would implement corrective activities and training, including serving as an active participant in the identified department's recruitments until the issue has been resolved. In this new role, EEO would also be expected to train TA and Hiring Departments stakeholders annually or biannually on EEO best practices. By moving to this new set of responsibilities, Metro can still satisfy FTA guidelines while expediting the hiring process and empowering TA and Hiring Managers.

Finding M: Information requests made of candidates can extend the time-to-hire

As part of Employment Certification, candidates may be asked to supply proof of education (e.g., degrees, certificates, transcripts) and confirm that the references provided their initial application can be contacted (and, if not, TA Analysts request updated references). The information gathered during this step is vital to validating the education and experience that (1) qualified the candidate for the position, and (2) will inform the compensation determination process. Contacting candidates and waiting for their response can be time consuming and has been identified by TA as a potential bottleneck. And while references are important for ensuring candidate qualifications, tardy or unresponsive references will also delay the hiring process.

Recommendation 16: Utilize self-service portal for candidates to provide evidence of education and references

Obtaining the detailed information needed for employment certification and reference checks can be removed as a bottleneck in the hiring process by requesting the required information earlier in the process and empowering candidates to upload the information using a self-service portal. TA will only need to communicate with the candidate if further information is required, or additional questions remain. By utilizing a self-service portal and informing candidates at the beginning of the process to be ready to provide the needed information, TA can begin conducting reference checks and submitting the Salary Request Form to Compensation earlier in the process, *immediately* after a candidate is selected by the panel.

Finding N: The Hiring Plan Meeting is a critical step in the hiring process

[47] FTA Circular 4704.1A, Section 2.2.3 *Designation of Personnel Responsibility*, which, as mentioned previously, outlines the EEO Officer's Program responsibilities, includes (1) "In conjunction with human resources, periodically reviewing employment practices policies (e.g., hiring, promotions, training), complaint policies, reasonable accommodation policies," (2) "Investigating complaints of EEO discrimination," and (3) "Providing EEO training for employees and managers."

The Hiring Plan Meeting was cited by Hiring Managers and TA Analysts alike as one of the most important steps in the hiring process and, therefore, should be continued. The Hiring Plan Meeting serves as a place where the key parties in the hiring process share their expectations of the recruitment itself and for one another. Specifically, the following topics are discussed at this meeting: the job description, preferred qualifications, the posting period, advertising plan, outreach responsibilities, and when to schedule time with EEO or Compensation (if either representative did not attend the meeting but needed to be present). The Hiring Plan Meeting leads to greater effectiveness and efficiency in the hiring process and serves the important purpose of relationship building between Hiring Manager and TA Analyst who may face disagreements as the hiring process progresses. One Hiring Manager reported that this meeting did not take place for most of their requisitions; while this should change so that all requisitions have a Hiring Plan Meeting, it does not appear that this lack of a meeting was a common experience across other departments.

> "The TA Analyst will sit down themselves and walk through the entire process beginning to the end, so there are no surprises."

TASK 3: INTERVIEW NEW HIRES

Task Overview

In Task 3, the Project Team conducted three information-gathering activities – interviews, focus groups, and surveys – in order to get new hires' perspectives on the hiring process, thereby providing the candidate experience.

Methodology

To determine which individuals would be selected to represent the candidate's perspective in Task 3, the Project Team obtained a list of all non-contract, full-time employees who were either external hires into Metro, or internal promotions, in FY2019. These 315 employees – who accounted for 10.8% of the ~2,900 total employees hired during that same time period – consisted of 18 individuals who were hired into Metro's Talent Acquisition group and 22 individuals who, at the time of analysis, were no longer employed at Metro. Both of these sets of employees were removed from the analysis so that they would not be randomly-selected to participate in the information-gathering activities conducted by the Project Team.[48] The remaining 276[49] employees served as the sample from which the Project Team's three avenues of primary research about *candidates* – not TA staff or Hiring Managers – came.

INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUPS	SURVEY
❖ 58 interviews conducted ❖ Interviewees included Hiring Managers, candidates, and TA ❖ One-on-one ❖ 30-60 minutes in length	❖ Three focus groups with externally hired employees ❖ 24 total employee perspectives captured ❖ 90 minutes in length	❖ 121 respondents, consisting of internal *and* external hires ❖ Quantitative and qualitative questions included ❖ Distributed online

Interviews

The one-on-one interviews, which served as the initial tool for information-gathering, were intended to obtain a deep and broad understanding of Metro's hiring process in a fairly short amount of time. These were context-setting converstions which provided a lens through which the subsequent information-gathering activities (e.g., focus groups, survey, follow-up interivews, data requests) were viewed.

Over the course of two months, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 33 employees who were candidates for hire in FY2019. Nineteen (21.3%) of the 89 individuals who were externally hired in FY2019 were invited to attend a one-on-one interview with the Project team[50]; of these 19, 15 (78.9%) participated in an interview. Three additional interviews were conducted with employees who were externally hired in FY2020, bringing the number of externally hired employees interviewed to 18.[51] (See Figure 10.) Twenty-

[48] Employees hired into the Talent Acquisition group were *excluded* from potentially being selected to provide information about their experience as a candidate to remove any potential conflict of interest, considering they were also Talent Acquisition staff during the study's time frame.

[49] The number of employees remaining in the dataset – after removing TA staff (18) and employees no longer at Metro (22) – is 276 instead of 275 because one of the employees who left Metro worked in TA.

[50] These 19 individuals were not chosen via true random selection because the Project Team sought to parallel the interviewees with the number of hires made by each department in FY2019. The 19 individuals, therefore, were selected based on which departments they represented. For example, if Department A accounted for 25% of the external hires in FY2019, then ~25% of the individuals invited to interview were from Department A.

[51] These three individuals were not invited to participate in an interview but heard about the study and proactively volunteered to be interviewed.

six (13.9%) of the 187 individuals who were internally promoted in FY2019 were invited to attend a one-on-one interview with the Project team; of these 26, 15 (57.7%) participated in an interview.

	Number of Interviewees
Externally-hired employees	18
Internally-promoted employees	15
Total	33

Figure 10: Survey Data Time-to-Hire by Department

These interviews included converastions with employees who were candidates for lower-level roles, as well as candidates for senior leadership roles. These interviews also gathered perspectives from all departments who made non-contract hires in FY2019.

Although a broad and standardized interview guide was prepared for the one-on-one interviews (see Appendix 3)[52], the questions found therein are not an exhaustive list of the questions asked in the interviews. Much of the information gathered was not in direct response to questions prescribed by the interview guide, but were responses to follow-up questions asked based on the employee's specific experience.

Focus Groups

Like the interviews, the intent of the focus groups was to obtain the perspective of Metro's candidates. Focus groups not only provided an avenue for digging deeper into the positive and negative items outlined in the one-on-one interviews, but also provided an opportunity for identifying yet-uncovered strengths and weaknesses of the hiring process.

Over the course of two days, three focus groups were conducted with 24 employees who were external candidates for hire in FY2019. Thirty-two (36.0%) of the 89 individuals who were externally hired in FY2019 were invited to participate in a focus group with the Project Team; of these 32, 24 (75.0%) participated in a focus group.[53]

Like the interview guides for the one-on-one conversations, a question guide (see Appendix 3) was prepared and used to ensure consistency between each of the three focus groups. Similarly, the questions found in this question guide are not an exhaustive list of the questions asked in the focus groups, as much of the information gathered was based on follow-up questions and requests for clarificiation.

Survey

Like the interviews and focus groups, the survey was intended to gain the candidate's perspective; unlike the focus group, however, the survey was designed to capture *quantitative* insights. All 276 employees in the sample were requested to complete a survey. Over the course of 11 days, 121 surveys (43.8%) were submitted via the online survey tool. Of these 121, 86 (71.1%) were submitted by employees who were internally-promoted employees and 35 (28.9%) were submitted by externally-hired employees. (See Figure 11.)

[52] This interview guide was utilized in interviews with externally hired employees; a similar, though not identical, interview guide was utilized for internally promoted employees.

[53] The interview invitees were removed from the sample from which the focus group invitees were selected, thereby preventing any individuals from being selected for both an interview *and* focus group.

Department	Internally-promoted Employees	Externally-hired Employees	Total
Board of Directors	1	2	3
Chief Executive Office	8	5	13
Communications	8	5	13
Congestion Reduction	3	1	4
Finance and Budget	7	5	12
Information Technology	4	2	6
Operations	17	2	19
Planning and Development	11	7	18
Program Management	22	4	26
Vendor/Contract Management	5	2	7
Total	86	35	121

Figure 11: Survey Respondents by Department

The questions asked of the survey respondents are presented in Appendix 3.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding O: Lengthy gaps of time between the hiring process steps leave Hiring Managers and candidates "in limbo"

Many candidates communicated that they moved through each individual step of the hiring process rather quickly, attributing much of their overall time-to-hire to the gaps between the individual steps. These lengthy gaps, compounded by an absence of communication regarding next steps, left most candidates reporting feeling "in limbo" during their recruitment. According to both qualitative testimonies and quantitative data collected, such gaps could be many months long, not including the time a candidate is in a QCP. For example, employees who were hired externally reported via survey that the time between submitting an application and being invited by Metro for the next step in the process was 38 workdays (or about seven and a half weeks); internal candidates fared better, but not by much (26 workdays). This may be because applicants would not be contacted about the next step in the process until the recruitment period is closed and all applicants are screened. For candidates of positions that require a test, a similar gap occurs between completing that test and being invited for an appraisal interview; external candidates estimated that 35 days (or seven weeks) elapsed during this time, while internal candidates reported a gap of 19 days (almost four weeks). In addition, because many candidates were not aware that these lengthy gaps are common in Metro's hiring process, they often resigned themselves to the reality that they had not been selected for the position, only to be caught off guard when they were eventually contacted and invited to continue to the next step in the hiring process. Consequently, candidates who are unaware of their next step in the hiring process, or after learning about that step, often became disillusioned with the hiring process and decided to seek employment elsewhere. Moreover, candidates reported feeling undervalued by the lack of proactive communication throughout the hiring process.

> "There are these periods of times when you just don't know what is going on."

"I had accepted a position with another agency during [Metro's] hiring process thinking that I would not be getting a position at Metro because it had been months since I had heard back from anyone. I ended up accepting a position at the other agency for 2 months because I thought Metro was not interested in me as a candidate. I would not have accepted the other position if the process at Metro went faster. This caused undue hardship for me as I had relocated closer to the other employer which was not close to Metro's offices."

Recommendation 17: Provide stakeholders with the ability to receive live application status updates

Many organizations struggle to keep candidates abreast of their status in the hiring process, which, consequently, makes candidates feel that the organization does not prioritize them. Indeed, 69% of new hires report dissatisfaction with the way their organization keeps them apprised on their hiring status throughout the process. [54] The importance of process transparency is emphasized by the importance of the candidate experience. Of talent professionals surveyed by LinkedIn, 94% agreed that employee experience will be very important to the future of recruiting and HR.[55] Employee experience can be improved by enabling process transparency. To do so, Metro must set realistic expectations about process timelines from the time of application submission to be able to manage candidates' expectations. TA Analysts should provide clear and feasible timelines that keep Metro accountable. In addition to expectation-setting, Metro must also proactively communicate with candidates when their experience is likely to deviate from the previously communicated plan. Candidates crave updates, even if that update does not contain the news they were hoping to hear. Status updates ensure candidates that their applications are still in consideration and have not been lost in the shuffle.

Metro should also consider empowering candidates with self-service tools to track their application status. Much like tracking package delivery, candidates want to know where they are at every stage in the process. Providing them with a digital platform to check their progress empowers candidates, reduces their anxiety with the process and the frequency with which they personally contact or email TA Analyst, decreasing the likelihood they will become frustrated and disillusioned with the organization.[56] (This functionality is likely a part of OTAC; assuming so, it should be set up quickly.)

Finding P: Promotion process mirrors hiring process

Currently, employees at LA Metro obtain "promotions," or positions at a higher level than their current position, by applying to an open job posting just as an external candidate would. Positions posted on Metro's job site are indicated as "internal" (a position exclusively for applications from Metro employees) or "external" (a position accepting application from candidates both internal and external to Metro). The similarities between the new hire and promotion processes lead many to remark that there "is no promotion process at

"When you have people and you want to retain talent, you want to do things quickly – to say, 'We want you, we validate you and this [promotion] is how we are showing you' – but often that is not what transpires."

[54] *4 Moments that Fail in the Candidate Experience*, Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2019
[55] *These 3 Talent Trends for 2020 Focus on Empathy,* SHRM, 2020
[56] *4 Moments that Fail in the Candidate Experience*, Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2019

Metro." Employees commented that, even when "promoted," it does not feel like a reward because you have to apply for it like an external candidate. Employees also noted that, at times, the steps in the promotion process seem ceremonial, as they are required to interview with individuals who they have worked with for many years. Additionally, Hiring Managers have found that the current "promotion" process incentivizes employees to go through the hiring process for a role in other departments until they receive a better compensation offer that they can leverage in their current role, potentially resulting in bidding wars between departments to receive or keep an employee. Overall, the current process for obtaining a promotion at Metro leaves employees feeling undervalued and frustrated.

Recommendation 18: Communicate to Metro employees why it lacks a promotion process

Pursuant to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, Metro managers are unable to place an employee in a more senior position with additional pay without having the employee demonstrate themselves to be the best candidate for the position by undergoing a fair, comprehensive, and competitive hiring process. Therefore, the "promotion" process is, in actuality, the same process as the one utilized to bring any external candidates into the organization. (While the front-end of the process – namely, applying, testing, and interviewing – may be similar, the back-end of the process – that is, the parts of the process that take place after candidate selection – does indeed differ, as internal candidates do not need to complete the same paperwork as new hires, for example.) Though employees are frustrated by this reality, many are unaware that it stems from a non-negotiable rule that accompanies the funding Metro receives from the FTA. To mitigate the discontentment, Metro should clearly communicate why, pursuant to this Federal mandate, it is unable to provide private-sector style promotions to their internal staff. This task may be completed in a variety of ways, including placing this information on every job posting and by sharing this information at Metro's twice-per-month onboarding class for new hires.

Finding Q: Various factors contribute to a candidate's decision to accept or decline an offer of employment from Metro

The interviews conducted with employees who were hired in FY2019 underscored a few key factors as being most important when deciding whether to accept a job at Metro. Because this data was qualitatively collected, however, a question was included in the survey to provide quantitative support for these findings; 121 internally-promoted and externally-hired employees were given a list of nine answer choices and asked "Please rate the following factors in terms of how heavily they weighed in your decision to accept a role at LA Metro (with 1 being your most important factor)." (See Appendix 3 for more information.) As illustrated in Figure 12, among the respondents, 32% selected "Salary" as the factor weighted first; the second and third most frequently cited "first factor" was "Opportunity for growth" and "Job duties" at 21% and 12%, respectively. Of the factors identified as the second-most heavily weighted factor in their decision, 25% of respondents cited "Job duties," followed by 21% who cited "Benefits," and 16% who cited "Opportunity for growth." Of the third factor considered when accepting a role at Metro, 20% of respondents cited "Salary," 16% cited "Work/life balance," 15% cited "Benefits," 14% cited "Job duties," and 13% cited "Opportunity for growth." In short, "Salary," "Job duties," "Opportunity for growth," and "Benefits" were candidates' foremost decision-making criteria. Other factors, such as "Stability of employment," "Interest in transportation industry," and "Positive reputation of LA Metro work" were also cited as contributing factors, but at a lower level of importance. Although these results indicate that salary *is* important to candidates, it is by no means the only significant factor at play in a candidate's decision to work at Metro.

Factor	Which factor was weighed… …first?	…second?	…third?
Salary	**31.82%**	10.91%	**20.00%**
Benefits	7.21%	**20.72%**	**15.32%**
Job duties	**11.50%**	**24.78%**	14.16%
Opportunity for growth	**20.54%**	**16.07%**	13.39%
Work/life balance	5.36%	7.14%	**16.07%**
Stability of employment	10.62%	9.73%	8.85%
Interest in the transportation industry	8.85%	7.08%	10.62%
Positive reputation of LA Metro work	4.39%	3.51%	3.51%
Other	8.33%	2.38%	1.19%

Figure 12: Survey Data Criteria for Accepting a Job with Metro

The Project Team also conducted email outreach to candidates who withdrew from Metro's hiring process or declined a job offer from Metro to better understand why they made their decision. Ten individuals shared insight into why they withdrew or declined offers; of these 10, seven articulated that salary was the main reason. The second-most common reply was that the process took long enough that the candidate was offered and accepted a job elsewhere.

Finding R: TA Analysts identified as helpful and professional despite challenges in turnover

"The [TA Analyst] was wonderful; very engaged, very communicative, I appreciate that."

Candidates describe that, once contacted, the TA Analyst assigned to their recruitment is typically helpful and professional. In addition, both candidates and Hiring Managers cited TA Analysts as being responsive, even if they are unable to provide a specific update or answer the question the candidate asked. New hires almost always reported knowing who to contact with questions during their hiring process and shared that they were confident that their contact would respond to inquiries in a timely manner. Although candidates and Hiring Managers alike provided positive feedback for the professionalism and helpfulness of TA Analysts, Hiring Managers also acknowledged that high turnover among analysts, sometimes while mid-search, was frustrating because of the disjointed transition (and loss of institutional knowledge) between the old and new analysts.

Finding S: Metro's application portal lacks key functionality

Candidates find the MATS system intuitive, citing their ease in uploading a resume and completing the application questions.[57] Despite the intuitive nature, candidates reported frustrations with the system's capabilities. One commonly reported frustration was the word limits for the short-answer application questions, as candidates do not feel like they are adequately able to respond to the prompt. Compounding this frustration is the fact that the instructions within the application portal state that resumes will *not* be reviewed as part of the application screening, increasing a candidate's need to more-robustly complete the short-answer application questions. Further, a recently enacted blind screening policy limits the information provided to Hiring Managers, giving application questions even greater weight. For both of these reasons, a word limit on application questions seems misaligned with the importance placed on the application questions in the hiring process. Additionally, candidates cite frustration with the application's inability to a "save" function, thereby requiring candidates to complete their application in one sitting, lest

[57] MATS, like any other Applicant Tracking System, provides front-end access to the candidates (via the Metro Careers webpage) and back-end access to the recruiters.

they lose all previously entered information. The intuitive nature of the MATS Careers webpage interface, it appears, is undermined by its antiquated functionality, an issue that will be addressed with the roll out of OTAC. Although the current system does not contribute to time-to-hire length, it does contribute to a less desirable candidate experience, which may deter some candidates from completing the application process.

Recommendation 19: Ensure OTAC's application portal meets candidates' needs

The implementation of OTAC presents an opportunity to make updates to the applicant portal that better meet candidate's needs. Specific complaints – such as word limits, the inability to save the application and return to it at a later time, and the inability to format the text in answer boxes – were regularly heard in interviews with the candidates and can be solved with the new OTAC system. OTAC's enhanced capabilities should allow candidates to save their application mid-way through and return at a later time, format the text in answer boxes, have more space to respond to short answer questions, and have full functionality from a mobile device. The ability to apply on a mobile device is of particular importance as a recent study indicated that 31% of candidates completed at least some of their most recent job applications on a mobile device, with most of these candidates belonging to the younger job seekers.[58] Given the propensity of candidates to abandon online applications,[59] making the experience as user friendly as possible is important for maintaining a healthy applicant pipeline.

Finding T: There is a lack of communication after application submission

For most candidates, the longest communication gap in the hiring process was between application submission and the first time they were contacted by a TA Analyst inviting them to the next step in the process.[60] According to self-reported time-to-hire data from employees at Metro, the average time between application submission and contact from a TA Analyst was 38 workdays for external candidates and 26 workdays for internal candidates, although the range varied with some candidates contacted within the same week and others who waited five months. While some causes for this delay have been identified, none seem adequate to fully account for the gaps, some of which are as long as nine months.

> "Half the time there is disagreement with who [the TA Analyst] has qualified and not qualified. Probably does not go our way the majority of the time.

Two factors that potentially contribute to delays in candidate contact include: extending the requisition posting period in hopes of attracting more or different candidates, and delays in the dual-screening process. For the former, while applications are considered on a rolling basis, candidates may not be contacted until the posting closes or until a certain threshold of applicants have come in. As a result, an application submitted at the beginning of a posting period may be contacted for an interview at the same time as an application submitted at the end of the process. Delays can also result from disagreements between the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager in the screening process. During this process, the TA Analyst provides the Hiring Manager with a list of all the potential candidates. This list indicates, according to the TA Analyst, which candidates have: (1) met all minimum qualifications (MQs), (2) the preferred qualifications (PQs), and (3) the qualifications to move forward in

[58] *The Benefits of Mobile Recruiting*, Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2020

[59] A study by CareerBuilder found that 60% of job seekers quit in the middle of filling out online job applications because of their length or complexity. (*Study: Most Job Seekers Abandon Online Job Applications*, SHRM, 2016)

[60] A candidate's first communication from Metro after submitting their application is an automated email acknowledging Metro's receipt of the application, however candidates reported a substantial gap of time prior to being contacted by a TA Analyst to invite them to the next step in the process.

the hiring process. The Hiring Manager reviews the applications to provide concurrence with the TA Analyst. If the Hiring Manager does not concur, however, then both parties meet to reconcile their lists. This reconciliation process can be quite lengthy, time-consuming, and is a significant contributor to frustration between the two parties. This is because the threshold of PQs required to move forward in the hiring process is dependent on the candidate pool for that search. A Hiring Manager, given a candidate pool with many strong applicants, may decide to only interview candidates who have met all PQs, while a Hiring Manager, given a weaker candidate pool, may decide to interview candidates who only meet one PQ. Further, delays can occur when neither party is timely in completing their screening. Consequently, candidates reported that, due to the delay with no communication between application submission and first contact, they actively looked for other jobs, as oftentimes they assumed they were not selected to participate in the next step of Metro's hiring process. This insight was confirmed by a recent nationwide study on hiring "decision making time", defined as the time from the first day of interviewing to the day an offer was extended. The study found that, on average, from 2010 to 2018 decision making time increased from 18 to 33 days, while the offer acceptance rate decreased by 16%.[61]

Recommendation 20: Update auto-generated communications to applicants after application submission to improve hiring process expectations

The lack of clarity following an application submission can be mitigated by including additional information in the auto-generated application confirmation email. Examples of this additional information might include: the steps in the upcoming hiring process, an estimated timeline for each step, what information will be asked of the candidate at each step of the hiring process, an encouragement to begin collecting information needed in future steps, and a link to Metro's hiring portal to which a candidate can refer. Adding additional information to this first communication can provide candidates with peace-of-mind, timeline expectations, and time to start preparing the materials that will be asked of them later in the process, which will decrease overall time-to-hire and improve the candidate experience. For candidates who are not selected to proceed in the hiring process, the additional information will illustrate Metro's preparedness. (The hiring process steps and relevant information could also be listed on the recruitment website.) For candidates who are selected to proceed in the hiring process, the information provided in this initial email will provide them with a hiring blueprint that can be used throughout their recruitment. Additionally, sharing more information will (1) help decrease individual candidate outreach to TA; and (2) hold TA stakeholders accountable to the timeline originally communicated to candidates.

Finding U: Candidates are given flexibility in scheduling their test

Candidates who were required to take a pre-employment test acknowledged that Metro was often flexible to accommodate their availability. As mentioned previously, Metro permitted out-of-state candidates flexibility as to *where* to take their tests (by allowing them to test remotely), but Metro was also willing to allow in-state candidates some choice as to *when* to take their tests. Candidates noted that they appreciated Metro's effort, improving the candidate experience.

Finding V: Increased interview standardization limits authentic conversation and increases time-to-hire

> "The process did not facilitate any real conversation about me as a candidate."

Over the past few years, Metro has taken steps to standardize the hiring process, which includes the requirement for pre-approved interview questions. Hiring Managers must draft and submit their interview questions to their TA Analyst for approval prior to the appraisal interview. Interview panelists

[61] *Redefining the Role of the Hiring Manager in the Digital Era,* Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2019

must also provide more thorough evidence supporting the interview scores that they give to each candidate. Because of this requirement, interviewers now take more detailed interview notes. An unintended consequence of this change is the depersonalization of the interviews. Standardized questions, coupled with the need for interviewers to take thorough notes, limit the ability to establish authentic connections between candidate and interviewer. In turn, both candidates and Hiring Managers reported feeling disappointed by the impersonal nature of the interview. Although Hiring Managers understand that the panel interview structure is an effective tactic for limiting bias in the hiring process, they also voiced frustration at the time it takes to assemble a panel of interested interviewers who meet the panel requirements. Furthermore, some Hiring Managers shared that they are in high demand for other people's panels because they are one of the few people in the department who can help satisfy the gender/ethnic diversity criterion.

> "When I was invited to interview…in 2019, I was really excited as I [heard] great things about [Metro]. Unfortunately, the interview process was somewhat robotic…There is nothing more disappointing than having someone ask you a long list of questions without having your answers explored – I might as well [have] bypassed the interview and took a test – that's how impersonal my interview was with your panel. As a candidate, I want to work for an organization who shows interest in their employee or future employee in my case."

Recommendation 21: Institute a combination of standardized and non-standardized interview questions

Combining standardized processes and tools with local customization is identified by companies across the country as a needed approach for effective hiring.[62] Currently, Metro's interview questions are standardized to promote fairness. This is important and should be continued, but not to the point of having neither the interviewer nor the interviewee feel that they were able to be sufficiently acquainted with the other. As such, Metro should adjust their interview process to utilize a combination of standardized and non-standardized interview questions to allow the experience to be more fruitful to Metro and the candidate. By doing this, Metro Hiring Managers will gather better information about the candidates, which will enhance their decision-making and increase the effectiveness of the hiring process. Should Metro begin using non-standardized questions in interviews, Metro should establish a training for Hiring Managers to ensure that the interviews continue to be fair, equitable, and do not violate any employment law.

Finding W: Candidates are unclear as to what their placement in the QCP means

While the QCP *does* keep candidates in the hiring pipeline, some candidates reported being unaware that they were even in the QCP, with many others sharing that they did not understand the implications of being placed in a QCP, even though they received an automated email notifying them that they were placed in a QCP. This, in part, is due to the information included in the automated QCP notification, which informs a candidate of their placement in the QCP but does not explain what a QCP is or the implications of being in one. In some instances, a candidate hired from the QCP was unaware that they had not been selected for the initial vacancy to which they applied; they merely assumed that the hiring process took a long time. Like the gap between application submission and invitation to a test or interview, this is one of the lengthiest steps in Metro's hiring process and, as a result, is when many candidates look to apply for other jobs, assuming their current pursuit ended unsuccessfully. To a lesser extent, Hiring Managers also reported

[62] *Transforming the HR Function of HR Operational Efficiency,* Gartner HR Leadership Council, 2014

confusion around the QCP. Specifically, some did not understand the level of access they had to candidates in the QCP, the required steps in accessing QCP candidates, or the current state of a QCP (e.g., number of candidates, how long those candidates had been in the QCP).

Recommendation 22: Update initial communication to candidates placed on QCP

All candidates who meet or exceed the interview threshold score are placed in the QCP for the job for which they applied, where they can remain for up to 18 months. Utilizing a candidate pool is a smart, proactive approach to recruitment that keeps strong candidates in Metro's pipeline for future openings. Ensuring that candidates understand their placement in the QCP, therefore, is vital to its underlying success. Providing a more explicit initial communication to candidates placed in a QCP can reduce confusion and provide candidates with an increased understanding of the potential implications of a QCP and a better candidate experience. Clearer communications will also reduce one-off candidate calls to TA in search of answers. A self-service online portal, powered by OTAC, could also be employed to provide candidates with additional information about their place in the QCP.

Recommendation 23: Send periodic automated emails to candidates in QCP to keep them engaged and aware of opportunities for which they may be considered

Candidates in a QCP will only hear from Metro if they are: (1) progressing in the hiring process for the position to which they applied, (2) being considered for another requisition within to the 18 months since entering the QCP, or (3) being removed due to the expiration of their QCP. To keep candidates engaged, Metro should send periodic emails to candidates on the QCP utilizing the functionality of the new OTAC system. Maintaining contact with members in a candidate pool fosters relationships, builds trust and keeps them "warm" for potential future opportunities by letting them know that Metro has not forgotten about them. Communication could also be leveraged to direct them to other employment opportunities at Metro or to obtain feedback through candidate surveys. One candidate, who declined an offer from Metro in FY2019 because he recently accepted an opportunity elsewhere, asked for this overtly, saying that, "Perhaps a monthly email letting me know I was still in consideration for a job would have helped." Periodic emails to candidates in a QCP are a low-effort, high-impact approach to improve the candidate experience.

Finding X: Time-to-hire benefits are often realized following QCP

The benefits of a QCP on the overall time-to-hire are often realized once a candidate is identified from the QCP for an open vacancy. Employees who were hired from the QCP explained that, once contacted for the next step in the hiring process, the process moves expeditiously regardless of whether their next step was a department interview or a tentative offer. That said, the candidates can remain in the QCP for as little as one week to as long as 18 months; for those on the latter end of this timeframe, candidates admittedly became frustrated with the uncertainty and elected to take a position elsewhere.

> "Because they are so generic and established, the QCP lists are always being replenished with people on those titles."

Candidate spotlight: Jane Doe, External New Hire

Jane first applied to LA Metro in December. Six weeks later, she was emailed by a TA Analyst to schedule a test. Following the completion of the test, Jane did not hear from Metro until four weeks had passed. When she was contacted, she was informed that she would need to take another test, which she did. After the second test, Jane did not hear from Metro for two months. At the beginning of May, a TA Analyst scheduled Jane for an interview. Following her interview, Jane heard back from Metro almost two months later, at the end of July, when she received a conditional offer and was scheduled to come to Metro to complete pre-employment processing. Her original offer was less than she expected. To counter, she provided more information about her years of relevant experience; Metro then increased her offer. Metro's final offer came in the second week of August. She started at LA Metro two weeks later, nine months after applying.

Candidate spotlight: John Doe, External New Hire:

John applied for a position with LA Metro in the second week of April. Five months later, he received a call from a TA Analyst inviting him to take a written test the following week. Two weeks after completing the test, the TA Analyst called again. This time the Analyst informed John that he had passed the test and invited him to an appraisal interview, which was scheduled for the following week. A week after the interview, he was invited for a second interview, to be held the following week. Two weeks after the second interview, the TA Analyst called to congratulate John on receiving the job, and requested work references and copies of any certificates, licenses, or degrees. At that time, the TA Analyst informed John he would be out of the office for two weeks and provided the information of another Analyst who would step in while he was out. John did not hear anything from LA Metro for a month after that call. Unsure as to why he had not heard anything, John reached out to both the original TA Analyst and his surrogate during the now-complete vacation. On that call, John was told he was in fact moving forward in the process, but that Metro needed to check if the department was racially diverse. Two weeks later, he received an official offer. The initial offer seemed low to John, so he reiterated his experience and certifications in his field. The original offer was increased by $1,700. John had been unaware of the weight his past experience would have on his salary offer. Following some back-and-forth regarding compensation, John was scheduled to start the third week of February, nine months after his original application submission.

TASK 4: EVALUATE COMPENSATION DETERMINATION PROCESS

Task Overview

In Task 4, the Project Team evaluated Metro's process for determining compensation, the timeliness of that process, and how approvals are made.

Methodology

The Project Team evaluated Metro's compensation determination process using the same methodologies used to evaluate the other steps in the hiring process, namely interviews, focus groups, and surveys. These three methods were utilized with Compensation staff, Hiring Managers, and new hires. More information on these information-gathering efforts can be found in the "Methodology" sub-sections of Task 2 and Task 3 above.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding Y: Misalignment between the information gathered in the application and the information needed during compensation process extends time-to-hire

Survey responses from selected candidates indicated that the compensation determination process takes 21 workdays (or four weeks) for external candidates and 25 workdays (or five weeks) for internal candidates. One contributor to this is the additional information gathering that takes place throughout this process. Currently, the application for employment at Metro requests a candidate's previous 10 years of professional experience. These most recent 10 years are reviewed by the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager to conduct the initial screening of a candidate and determine whether the candidate will be invited to the next step in the process (i.e., test or appraisal interview); the compensation determination process, however, requires review of *all* of a candidate's professional experience. For candidates who have worked for more than 10 years, the TA Analyst – and, at times, the Compensation Analyst – must reach out to the candidate to request any information about professional experiences *more* than 10 years ago. Requesting this additional information adds time to an already-laborious hiring process.

Recommendation 24: Request complete employment history earlier in the process

The mismatch between (1) the information that Compensation receives about a candidate's professional experience (from the candidate's initial application), and (2) the professional experience information that Compensation needs to calculate salary, creates the need to acquire any unaccounted-for work history from the candidate prior to identifying an initial salary offer. The need to request additional work history from a candidate and wait for their response, especially if the candidate does not have the information readily available, can create a bottleneck in the hiring process. Programming OTAC to auto-request *all* relevant professional experience (beyond the previously requested 10 years) will remove the time-consuming information requests that can hold up the compensation determination process and empower candidates to proactively provide the necessary information.

Finding Z: Stakeholders lack transparency into compensation determination process

Candidates, TA Analysts, and Hiring Managers often described the compensation determination process as a "black hole," due to the length of time it takes to complete and the lack of transparency into the process. With a 2-6-week timeline for determining compensation, those not involved in the process become frustrated at the lack of transparency into *which* steps Compensation is taking and *why* those steps take as long as they do. Additionally, internal candidates reported being unaware of how their compensation is calculated, including the 15% salary cap (discussed in further depth below). This lack of transparency can lead to soured relationships and the spread of incorrect information.

Finding AA: Salary calculations based on relevant years of experience

Currently, a candidate's salary is selected from a previously-determined salary range based on the number of *relevant* years of experience and degrees/certifications. This approach breeds two potential problems. First, while this process strives to add objectivity and equity to one traditionally lacking those qualities, subjectivity remains in determining which experience is "relevant." Often, the Compensation Analyst and Hiring Manager differ on whether to deem certain parts of a candidate's work experience "relevant" to the position. Because the number of years of relevant experience directly impacts the salary being offered, the disagreement between Compensation and the Hiring Manager can be lengthy. (To gain clarity, the candidate may be contacted to provide additional information about their experiences.) Second, because Metro's method of salary calculation is solely dependent on years of relevant experience, the salary offer is unable to account for candidate qualities that may not show up in a years-based evaluation of their work history (e.g., the *quality* of their years of experience, personal aptitude, potential). Candidates are offered a salary based on what they've done in the past, rather than what they will be doing in the future; salary ends up, therefore, being a reward for past successes rather than an expectation of future performance. This issue is particularly salient for positions in departments where a lengthier career is not necessarily correlated with future success, such as IT. When looking to fill a position focused on managing new Cloud-based technology, a candidate who has 20+ years of experience managing a home-grown, mainframe-based system may not be as qualified for the position as a candidate with <10 years of experience working with newer more contemporary systems. As a result, candidates for these positions, particularly in high-tech fields, will likely be offered less than the current market value for their capabilities.

> "Sometimes those strict, rigid requirements get in the way of hiring someone that is good and competent because they don't have the years of experience; they don't account for those who are super bright and who learn fast."

Recommendation 25: Consider characteristics other than years of direct work experience when determining salary offers and when screening applications

One strength of Metro's current, years-based approach to compensation determination is that it prioritizes objectivity and equity. In this pursuit of objectivity and equity, however, other value-add characteristics that candidates bring to Metro are omitted from the calculation, including the *quality* – not just quantity – of a candidate's past work experience, the candidate's aptitudes (e.g., ability to learn), and their future potential. A similar approach should be taken when screening applications. Currently, candidates who meet a certain threshold of MQs and/or PQs move forward in the hiring process. Other factors such as character, drive, savvy, or potential that may not fall squarely within the articulated PQ should be considered, especially for entry level positions. Research has shown that strong candidate ability, social skills, and drive are common among high potential employees.[63] Factoring in these additional characteristics to the compensation determination process and candidate selection process can be a complicated task, but one that Metro should pursue in order to develop a process that seeks to hire more-qualified candidates.

[63] Ibid.

Finding BB: Out-of-range salary pursuits are beneficial, though they may require multiple signatures

Some of the Hiring Managers interviewed reported that they do *not* accept the quartile range initially offered by Compensation without attempting to increase it. As such, TA has helpfully established two avenues Hiring Managers can utilize to obtain salary increases. One approach is to qualify the role as "Hard-to-fill," which, if approved, adds 5% to the salary quartile. To become "Hard-to-fill," a Hiring Manager must write a memo, using a template provided by the Compensation Analyst protesting that the hiring search satisfies three of the five "Hard-to-fill" criteria.[64] A "Hard-to-fill" memo must then be signed by the Hiring Department's Chief, TA Analyst, Chief of HC&D, and CEO. The second avenue open to Hiring Managers is to make a direct appeal to the CEO. The appeal requires an Appeal Memo drafted by the Hiring Department, which is first vetted for accuracy by Compensation prior to being circulated for signatures. An Appeal memo requires the following signatures for approval: the Hiring Department's Chief, Chief of HC&D, and CEO. Unlike the "Hard-to-fill" exception which caps the increase at 5%, there is no salary cap for Appeal Memo. Chiefs are often hesitant to sign an Appeal Memo, reserving appeals for their highest priority positions. Both "Hard-to-fill" and Appeal Memos are completed in hard copy and require wet signatures. Both the hard copy and in-person requirements can cause significant delays in the compensation determination process.

Figure 13 tracks the compensation determination process for three recent hires. These three case studies, which span two Departments and two position levels, illustrate how different variations in the compensation determination process – specifically, a Hiring Manager pursuing a Hard-to-fill designation and/or a candidate countering their initial offer from Metro – can impact the time required to determinate compensation. Case Study #2 (28 days), in which the Hiring Manager does *not* pursue a hard-to-fill designation but the candidate *does* counter the initial salary offer, was significantly faster than Case Studies #1 (45 days) and #3 (64 days), both of which are situations where the Hiring Manager *did* pursue a Hard-to-Fill designation. Case Study #3, which had the longest compensation determination timeline, illustrates that these additional steps compound one another, as this offer was both Hard-to-fill *and* countered by the candidate. While these case studies are not intended to be representative of all compensation determination processes, they are helpful in understanding the impact that variations to the compensation determination process can have to the length of the process.

	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3
Name of position:	Manager *Program Control*	Manager *Communications*	Director *Engineering*
Department:	Program Management	Communications	Program Management
Was position deemed hard-to-fill?	Yes	No	Yes
Did candidate counter initial offer?	No	Yes	Yes
Compensation Analyst receives Salary Proposal Request	Day 1	Day 1	Day 1

[64] These five criteria include that a job was: (1) posted externally, (2) posted for more than 30 days, (3) posted above and beyond regular channels, (4) posted for a niche/technical position, and/or has (5) received two or more declines for that requisition.

Compensation Analyst completes Salary Calculator & SAG and forwards to Hiring Manager	Day 16	Day 16	Day 8
Hiring Manager provides feedback that results in an update to the experience on the SAG	-	-	-
Compensation Analyst revises Salary Calculator and SAG and forwards to Hiring Manager	-	-	-
Hiring Manager identifies amount to offer	Day 17	Day 16	Day 10
Hiring Manager requests Hard-to-Fill, Compensation Analyst drafts Hard-to-Fill Memo and forwards to department	Day 36	-	Day 23
Compensation Analyst receives Hard-to-Fill Memo with departmental signatures	Day 37	-	Day 28
Hiring Manager requests Appeal, Compensation Analyst drafts Appeal Memo and forwards to department	-	-	-
Compensation Analyst receives Appeal Memo with departmental signatures	-	-	-
Compensation Analyst drafts Salary Proposal Form and forwards to Hiring Manager	Day 38	Day 17	Day 40
Hiring Manager and Department Chief approve the Salary Proposal Form	Day 38	Day 17	Day 44
Compensation Analyst drafts Salary Proposal Cover Memo and attaches to Salary Proposal Form	Day 38	Day 17	Day 44
Talent Management approves the Salary Proposal Form and Cover Memo	Day 43	Day 21	Day 44
CEO approves the Salary Proposal Form and Cover Memo (over $175K)	-	-	-
CEO approves Hard-to-Fill Memo	Day 44	-	Day 46
CEO approves Appeal Memo	-	-	-
Compensation Analyst extends contingent offer candidate and Total Compensation Statement is emailed	Day 44	Day 24	Day 46
Compensation Analyst receives counteroffer from candidate	-	Day 24	Day 46
Compensation Analyst informs Hiring Manager of candidate's counteroffer	-	Day 24	Day 46

Hiring Department e-mails final approved offer to Compensation Analyst	-	Day 25	Day 53
Compensation Analyst provides a response to candidate's counteroffer	-	Day 25	Day 64
Candidate accepts or declines offer	Day 45	Day 28	Day 64

Figure 13: Compensation Case Studies

Recommendation 26: Reduce required memos and forms and expedite their completion

Currently, each compensation determination process includes two to four documents that require wet signatures. Specifically, these documents include: Hard-to-Fill Memo, Appeal Memo, Salary Proposal Form, and Salary Cover Memo. The first two are required only if a Hiring Manager is attempting to obtain a salary outside of the quartile in the Salary Administrative Guidelines, and the latter two are required for all compensation determination processes. All four of these documents necessitate signatures that, as previously discussed, occur in hard copy and require a wet signature.

One approach to streamlining the compensation determination process, beyond digitization, is removing the need for the Salary Cover Memo. At present, the Salary Cover Memo is a document added to the Salary Proposal Form once the latter has been signed by the Hiring Manager and the Hiring Department Chief (and only if the salary is over the salary range midpoint, or if requested by the Hiring Department Chief). The Salary Cover Memo does not appear to include any additional or new information to the information already present on the Salary Proposal Form. Removing the need to route the Proposal Form back to the Compensation Analyst (who then drafts and attaches the Cover Memo for additional signatures) would remove an unnecessary step from the already-cumbersome process. An additional issue that arises regarding the forms is how susceptible the process is to delays when a required signatory is out of the office, on vacation, or busy with other responsibilities. As such, Metro should allow for required signatories to appoint signing proxies who can sign on the signatory's behalf. Implementing this change would mitigate the increase in the time-to-hire that is caused by an absent or unavailable signatory. Even with a digital process in place, signing proxies will be necessary to facilitate the approval process. If signing proxies are already permissible for Metro's hiring process, then their usage should be encouraged. (In none of the Project Team's interviews did signing proxies arise, indicating that – if proxies are allowed today – they are not being utilized to their fullest extent.) Lastly, when a Hiring Manager selects a salary from within the range offered on the SAG, as discussed, multiple signatures are still required. The approval process for such salaries warrants further scrutiny as salaries from the SAG are already vetted by Compensation. While approval from leadership may be necessary, decreasing the number of required signatures also seems plausible.

Finding CC: Salary calculations are inequitable between internal and external candidates

Recent California law prohibits potential employers from inquiring about a candidate's salary history; as a result, external candidates' salary offers are calculated differently than internal candidates' salary offers. Both the internal and external candidate salaries are determined using Metro's Salary Calculator and Salary Administration Guidelines; however, internal candidates' salaries are capped at 15% higher than their current salary, with a minimum increase of 5%, a cap that external candidates do not have. For external candidates, based on their experience, the full salary range for that position may be considered. Internal candidates, on the other

> "You are artificially penalized for being an internal [candidate]."

hand, are limited because Metro bases the promotional salary on the candidate's currently known salary. The discrepancy between internal and external candidate compensation calculations incentivizes internal candidates to consider leaving Metro with a plan to return to increase the compensation base. Moreover, the 15% salary cap anchors an employee salary in their initial salary base, creating a scenario in which employees are unable to "catch up" from their initial salary and compounding the financial loss suffered as a result of this policy. The disparity in salary calculation between internal and external candidates' is perceived as inequitable and unjust by Metro employees across all departments and positions. Lastly, the 15% cap creates an incentive for Hiring Managers to hire a candidate into a role at a higher salary because Hiring Managers, understanding the cap employees face, will seek to have their job classified at a higher level to ensure a higher starting salary; thereby creating top-heavy departments with individuals with senior titles performing more junior tasks.

> "It looks like we are top heavy but that's just what it takes to get things done."

Recommendation 27: Consider increasing the 15% cap on raises for internal candidates

The disparity between how salaries are calculated between internal and external candidates not only provides internal candidates with a sense of frustration and inequity, but also an incentive to consider leaving Metro, work elsewhere for a short time, and then possibly return to Metro to go through the hiring process as an external candidate. Consequently, some employees that intend to return to Metro may not. Because the ability to retain and develop talent is of particular importance especially during a strong economy, where recruiting candidates can be both challenging and expensive, it is important that Metro strive for opportunities to retain quality employees. With an unemployment rate of 3.5%, retaining talent is just as important as hiring talent. Moreover, external hires take three years to perform as well as internal hires in the same job.[65] As a result, Metro should consider increasing the 15% cap for internal candidates to facilitate the organization retaining its most valuable resource: its people.

Finding DD: Benefits and employment opportunities compensate for competitive hiring market

Annually, Metro conducts a compensation market assessment for one-third of its positions to ensure they remain properly competitive. This assessment is completed using a combination of industry-specific and industry-agnostic resources. When comparing salaries for positions at Metro against those at similar transit authorities, they are competitive; however, when comparing salaries with similar positions around LA, the money available in the private industry can be difficult to surmount. Private sector technical positions in engineering and technology, in particular, are very competitive and in close physical proximity to Metro. As one Hiring Manager bluntly stated, "This is not Google." Metro touts their generous benefits package, stability, and opportunities for growth as valuable assets that, when combined with salary, can help them compete in a competitive job market. Still, employees hold mixed feelings about salary offers. For example, external (46%) and internal (52%) candidates reported that the salary offer they received initially was below what they anticipated, partly due to the salary range on the job posting. (See Figure 14.)

[65] *Your Approach to Hiring is All Wrong*, Harvard Business Review, 2019

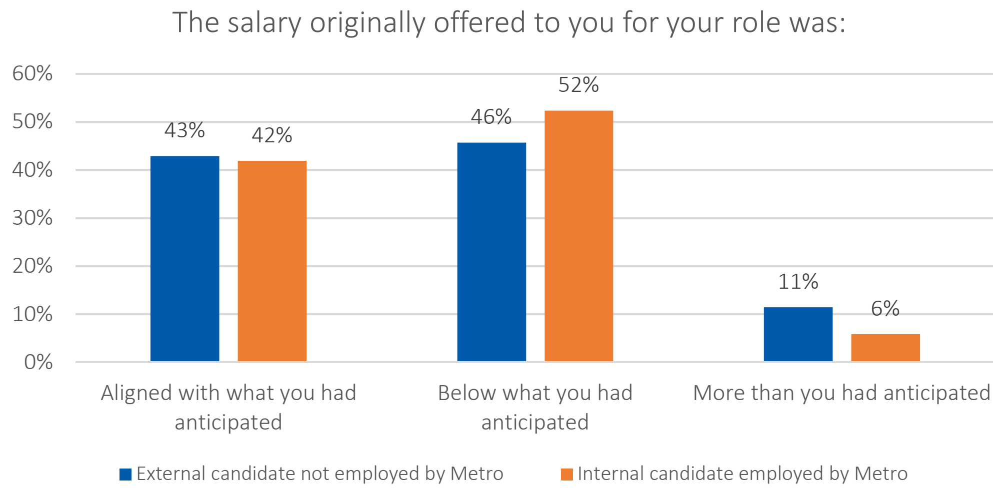

Figure 14: Candidate Salary Expectations

Finding EE: Salary ranges on job postings lead to unfulfilled expectations

All of Metro's job postings contain the position's salary ranges. Given the quartile system utilized at Metro, the salary range is often very wide, providing candidates with an unrealistic expectation of the salary offer they will receive because receiving an offer at the top of a salary range is very unlikely. Metro's quartile system is structured with the expectation that most employees fall into the first or second quartiles, with only the most qualified employees eligible for the third or fourth quartiles. One Metro job posting lists a range of $128,131 to $209,706, a difference of $81,575. Another posting displayed a range of $71,115 to $106,621, a $35,506 difference. Providing wide salary ranges creates an unrealistic salary expectation in the minds of external candidates, leaving them feeling unnecessarily frustrated during the compensation determination process. Another negative consequence of presenting wide salary ranges is that candidates, perceiving that they can obtain a higher offer from the salary range, will counter their initial salary offer. Compensation has seen the rate of counteroffers increase and estimate that currently 75-80% of candidates counter their offer. Counteroffers increase the time-to-hire by necessitating an additional set of conversations. Upon receiving a counteroffer, the Compensation Analyst will contact the Hiring Manager with the counteroffer and the highest salary within the candidate's current salary quartile. Typically, the Hiring Manger will advise the Compensation Analyst to do a best and final offer, a step which requires concurrence from the Chief of the hiring department. In addition to increased time-to-hire, counteroffers wear on Compensation Analysts and contribute to burn out.

> "The salary bands [say that] you can earn between $70,000 - $110,000. It's a little deceptive because no one gets offered that high amount. If they apply from the outside, they are going to apply and think that's a good salary, but they come in and apply and are [at] the bottom of the range."

Recommendation 28: Decrease the job posting salary ranges

Decreasing the salary range listed on a job posting is a way to temper the salary expectations of applicants. (One approach is to only include the first and second quartile for a specific role, while another is to just list the average starting salary.) Not only will this improve the candidate experience, but also will likely decrease the time-to-hire for two reasons: (1) fewer over-qualified candidates will apply to the position, decreasing the time it takes for the TA Analyst and Hiring Manager to screen applications, and (2) candidates, because they will have a realistic expectation of the salary they will be offered, and will seek to negotiate salary less frequently after the initial offer. If decreasing the range on the posting is not feasible, then Metro should consider adding a note alongside the full range which communicates that the expected salary offer for new employees to this position is within the ranges of the first and second quartiles, providing the specific salaries for those quartiles.

TASK 5: COMPARE METRO TO PEER ORGANIZATIONS

Task Overview

In Task 5, the Project Team compared the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro's hiring process to other government agencies with similar budget or of similar size.

Methodology

Complementing the documents reviews, data analyses, interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, the Project Team conducted benchmarking outreach to gather information directly from organizations similar to Metro. These organizations included governmental agencies within Los Angeles and transit agencies of similar size outside of Los Angeles. By benchmarking with the former, Metro can identify hiring process trends that are endemic to the Los Angeles area; by benchmarking with the latter, Metro can understand how their hiring process compares to peers within the same industry. The Project Team reached out to the following nine organizations to request their participation in the study via benchmarking.[66]

Benchmarking was completed with four agencies (44.4%): the City of Los Angeles, MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority), New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit), and SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority). During initial benchmarking conversations, it became clear to the Project Team that these organizations do not have detailed hiring flowcharts (such as the ones in Appendix 2); high-level process maps that outlined the major steps in the hiring process (see Figure 15) *were* available, however. In addition, none of the four organizations possessed definitive, trustworthy time-to-hire data. Only one of the four had time-to-hire data that it felt was reliable enough to share specific numbers[67], but even this information was provided as an estimate and not data derived from the organization's Applicant Tracking System. In return for the organization's participation, the Project Team committed that their organization's specific information would not be identified when presented to Metro, unless where otherwise noted.

[66] These organizations include: Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART; San Francisco), Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit; Seattle), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA; Chicago), City of Los Angeles, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA; Atlanta), New Jersey Transit (NJT; New Jersey), Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA; Philadelphia), Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet; Portland), and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA; Washington, D.C.). One organization with whom the Project Team sought to benchmark, but did not, is the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA; New York City). Although the MTA is, like Metro, a large, multi-modal transit organization with substantial ridership, they are difficult to benchmark with because of their organizational structure. Specifically, the MTA consists of six agencies that operate fairly independently of one another: City Transit, Bus Company, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, Bridges and Tunnels, and Construction & Development. Each of these six agencies operates their own back-office functions (e.g., HR, Training), so the recruitment process differs widely from one agency within the Authority to another.

[67] Although one organization shared specific time-to-hire estimates, the others shared broad ranges.

The question guide use for benchmarking can be found in Appendix 3.

Findings and Recommendations[68]

The issues facing Metro are similar to the ones facing other organizations; in this way, the efficiency and effectiveness of Metro's hiring process is on-par with peers, though its goal should be to exceed other organizations, not parallel them.[69] Within their hiring processes, the four organizations had disparate levels the efficiency, with one organization described as "Efficient," two organizations described as "Somewhat efficient," and the fourth organization described as "Not efficient." The four organizations had more similar levels of process effectiveness, with two organizations described as "Effective," and two organizations described as "Somewhat effective."

Finding FF: Metro's most efficient peer outsources key recruitment activities to the hiring department

The most efficient of the four organizations had a few factors that contributed to its relatively low time-to-hire of 2-3 months. One unique aspect of this organization's hiring process is that its recruitment function was decentralized; their recruitment group oversaw the process at a high level, but gave the hiring department wide autonomy to make decisions about, and complete, hiring process activities (e.g., screening). The hiring department, therefore, managed the day-to-day aspects of the hiring process and possessed wide latitude when deciding how to operate, often resulting in the hiring of a qualified candidate in a short timeframe. One consequence of this latitude is a less bureaucratic process where additional approvals are minimized, forms are few, and decision-making authority is centralized with one group (i.e., the hiring department); as a result, the hiring process is able to proceed faster. Of course, this latitude – and the lack of standardization that accompanies it –may result in different hiring processes for similar positions, opening the organization to risk of lawsuit. Also contributing to their efficiency is their relatively fixed compensation model, where the posted salary bands span, at most, $40,000, and there is limited room for negotiation; as such, candidates move through the compensation determination process expediently.

Finding GG: Immature technology contributes significantly to peer's hiring inefficiencies

One major contributor to the lack of efficiency for three of the four organizations is the lack of a robust ATS. None of these three have an up-to-date, Cloud-based Applicant Tracking System, although one is in the midst of procuring a new ATS. In fact, two of these organizations are currently using systems that are 15+ years old, are highly customized to the organization's hiring process, and, in one case, is no longer being supported by the vendor. Although lacking a strong ATS, one of these two *has* sought to implement a technological solution to mitigate their inefficiencies; they have done this by creating a SharePoint-based digital workflow to autoroute forms needing (electronic) signatures for internal approvals. Because these organizations are utilizing unsophisticated ATSs, their hiring processes, as a whole, are paper-heavy and highly manual.

[68] Any findings resulting from benchmarking activities are included below, but any recommendations that were informed by the benchmarking activities are included with the recommendations found in Tasks 1-4.

[69] One area in which Metro *is* exceeding other organizations is on issues related to diversity and fairness; compared to the three other transit agencies in the benchmarking sample, Metro commitment to equity is well ahead of the others.

Finding HH: Peer organizations experience similar non-technological process inefficiencies as Metro

A lack of *technology* is not the only contributor to time-to-hire for these organizations; each organization also has *process*-related inefficiencies that cause the hiring process to extend. Two of the transit agencies have unclear roles and responsibilities between recruiter and Hiring Manager, specifically relating to screening. At these two organizations, screening is intended to be a responsibility of the recruiter, but the Hiring Manager's lack of confidence in the quality of the recruiter's screening – that is, their fear that a good candidate would get rejected by the recruiter during screening – has resulted in the Hiring Managers taking over the screening or doing a separate screening *after* the recruiter has completed theirs. Another organization's biggest contributor to time-to-hire is scheduling of panel interviews; as expected, this step in the process takes a long time for this organization because coordinating the schedules for three panelists can be difficult. This same organization, however, also struggles with their compensation determination process, noting that they lose really good people because of the strict rules that the organization has in place regarding compensation negotiations. A representative from this organization commented, "We are penny-wise and pound-foolish…we're losing people over $1,500." Another organization's compensation determination process is similar to Metro's in many ways. At this organization, compensation for all non-contract positions is managed by a small Compensation team. This team, for *external* candidates, identifies a salary to offer a candidate coming from the range set aside for that particular position's title and pay grade. For example, a candidate who applied for a Manager position – which is a Grade 41 and, therefore, is eligible for a salary between $79,000 and $100,000[70] – may be given an offer of $85,000 by Compensation based on their experience. For *internal* candidates, the organization provides a raise of a certain percentage that is set based on where that employee's current salary falls compared to the mid-point of their current position.

Finding II: Metro's hiring process steps are similar to the steps in peer organizations

As outlined in Figure 15 below, the steps in Metro's hiring process may use different names, but their process is similar to the processes outlined by each of the three transit agencies in the benchmarking sample.

	Transit Agency 1	Transit Agency 2	Transit Agency 3
1	Identify Vacancy, Generate Requisition, Host Leadership Meeting	Approve Requisition and conduct Recruitment Action Plan Meeting	Engage in Workforce Planning
2	Confirm Hiring Strategy	Post Position and Review Resumes	Generate Requisition
3	Post Position	Conduct Assessment and Select Interviewees	Post Job and Source Candidates
4	Screen Responses	Prepare for and Conduct Interview	Screen Applications
5	Conduct Testing	Select Candidate and Conduct Background Check	Conduct Testing
6	Scheduled and Prepare for Interviews	Conduct Medical Exam	Conduct Interviews

[70] Please note that this example is fictional

7	Conduct Interviews	Confirm Candidate Offer and Schedule Orientation	Select Candidate
8	Select Candidate		Conduct Medical and Background Check
9	Conduct Background Checks		Schedule and Deliver Onboarding
10	Process Employment Offer		
11	Schedule Medical Exam		
12	Arrange Release and/or Start Date		
13	Schedule Employee Orientation		

Figure 15: Steps in Hiring Process for Benchmarked Organizations

Findings JJ: Metro's time-to-hire appears to be middle-of-the-pack

One organization, as mentioned above, *was* able to share reliable, quantitative estimates about time-to-hire based on ad-hoc internal analyses. A 2018[71] analysis of 213 new hires uncovered that the average number of total days (i.e., *not* workdays) between when a candidate applied and when they started working at the organization was 420.7 (or 13.8 months).[72] For this organization, the largest contributor to the 420.7 days was the time between when (1) a candidate applied, and (2) when they were invited to the next step in the hiring process. Specifically, this organization had a significant backlog in screening applications, such that they were screening "stale" Bus Operator applications, some of which were submitted over one year prior. This had a significant impact on their time-to-hire. Once the candidates were screened, the process moved much quicker; the remainder of the process took 112 days (or 3.7 months). Though not ideal, this 112 days demonstrated that if the organization was able to expedite screening, then they would be able to bring candidates on board in less than four months. Another noteworthy aspect about this organization's time-to-hire is that the individual steps of the process did not necessarily take too long to complete; for example, scheduling and completing testing took two weeks, as did scheduling and completing interviews. The main contributors to the 112 days were not the steps themselves, but an unexplainable amount of idle time *between* steps. Although this organization had reliable time-to-hire data, this information was presented as an average; at the individual level, time-to-hire varied widely from one requisition to another. This was true with another organization, who shared that their time-to-hire could be as short as five weeks and as long as nine months. As mentioned above, the most efficient organization in the benchmarking cohort reported that its time-to-hire was, on average, two months, with a maximum of three.

[71] This analysis was conducted on all hires, including both contract and non-contract employees.
[72] When the quickest 10% and lengthiest 10% of hires were removed from the analysis to remove the influence of outliers, the average number of days dropped to 356.26 (or 11.7 months).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recommendations Benefits

The table below demonstrates which of the four main benefits Metro can expect to receive as a result of implementing the recommendations outlined in this report.

Recommendations	Decreased time-to-hire	Increased effectiveness	Improved candidate experience	Decreased risk / liability
Task 1: Gather Background Information				
Recommendation 01: Employ OTAC, Metro's new Applicant Tracking System, to obtain and utilize talent analytics	●	●	●	●
Recommendation 02: Hold hiring process stakeholders accountable for faster decision making	●		●	
Recommendation 03: Decrease post-testing communication time for the candidates	●		●	
Recommendation 04: Select interview dates and interviewers prior to the Hiring Plan Meeting	●			
Task 2: Review Policies / Procedures and Interview Personnel				
Recommendation 05: Implement a digital workflow to autoroute forms and utilize electronic signatures and assign a back-up signatory	●			●
Recommendation 06: Implement digital interview note-taking, scoring, and uploading of candidate results	●			●
Recommendation 07: Improve communication between TA and Hiring Managers regarding changes in the hiring process				●
Recommendation 08: Encourage greater use of department interviews		●	●	
Recommendation 09: Allow QCPs with similar MQs to be shared	●	●		
Recommendation 10: Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities throughout the entire hiring process	●			
Recommendation 11: Grant Hiring Managers greater decision-making authority in screening	●	●	●	
Recommendation 12: Ensure full adoption of the OTAC system coupled with adoption of an effective change management process	●		●	
Recommendation 13: Expand Hiring Managers' influence by allowing additional Minimum Qualifications to a position	●		●	

Recommendations	Decreased time-to-hire	Increased effectiveness	Improved candidate experience	Decreased risk / liability
Recommendation 14: Reevaluate the use of blind screening in 12 months				●
Recommendation 15: Transition EEO role from active participant to advisor, auditor, and trainer	●	●		
Recommendation 16: Utilize self-service portal for candidates to provide evidence of education and references	●		●	
Task 3: Interview New Hires				
Recommendation 17: Provide stakeholders with the ability to receive live application status updates		●	●	
Recommendation 18: Communicate to Metro employees why it lacks a promotion process			●	
Recommendation 19: Ensure OTAC's application portal meets candidates' needs			●	
Recommendation 20: Update auto-generated communications to applicants after application submission to improve hiring process expectations			●	
Recommendation 21: Institute a combination of standardized and non-standardized interview questions		●	●	
Recommendation 22: Update initial communication to candidates placed on QCP			●	
Recommendation 23: Send periodic automated emails to candidates in QCP to keep them engaged and aware of opportunities for which they may be considered			●	
Task 4: Evaluate Compensation Determination Process				
Recommendation 24: Request complete employment history earlier in the process	●		●	
Recommendation 25: Consider characteristics other than years of direct work experience when determining salary offers and when screening applications		●	●	
Recommendation 26: Reduce required memos and forms and expedite their completion	●			
Recommendation 27: Consider increasing the 15% cap on raises for internal candidates	●	●		
Recommendation 28: Decrease the job posting salary ranges	●		●	

Appendix 2: Process Maps

As part of this study, the Project Team created two process maps that provide a detailed view of the hiring and compensation processes. The two process maps created for this assessment – one that maps the entire recruitment process, and one that maps the compensation determination process – can be found in a partner file titled *LA Metro Hiring Process Study - Process Maps – vF.pdf*.

Appendix 3: Question Guides

LA Metro Hiring Process Study – New Hire Interview	
Interviewee:	
Interview Date:	
Location:	
Attendees:	
Key Themes	
•	
Lingering Questions	
•	
Key Quotes	
•	
Key Discussion Summary	

Introduction

- Introduce interviewers
- Review project
- Summarize goal of interview
- Remind about confidentiality

**note to interviewer: the questions below serve as a jumping off point for each interview. Please ask follow-up questions to explore and pursue details, clarity, and new ideas, as you see fit.*

Questions

1. Tell us about your tenure here at Metro. What is your current role and how long have been with the organization?

2. As a new hire, you recently completed the hiring process. What did you like / dislike about your experience in the hiring process? What are the process' strengths / weaknesses? [Note to interviewer: walk through the hiring process if needed as a prompt.]

3. Describe the speediness of your hiring process.

    a. Which steps took the longest?

    b. When did things move smoothly?

    c. Specifically, how much time passed between when you accepted the offer and your first day on the job? Why?

    d. How much time passed between receiving an offer and orientation?

4. How would you describe your experience with the online application system?

5. How would you describe your interactions with your point-of-contact (POC) with Metro throughout the process? (Did you know who your POC was? When were you introduced to that person? How easy was it to get in touch with them? Were they able to answer your questions accurately and quickly?)

6. How would you describe your experience with the compensation determination and negotiation processes? [Note to interviewer: follow up with the interviewee to ask them {1} whether Metro explained how this process works, and {2} what was explained to the interviewee about compensation expectations at Metro over the next few years.]

7. If you could change three things about the hiring process, what would you change? [Note to interviewer: if none of the replies would change speediness of the hiring process, ask a specific follow-up question about what changes, if made, would make the process faster.]

8. Which factors were most important to you when considering accepting the job at Metro?

9. Is there anything you would like to share with us that may influence our findings that we have not already covered today?

LA Metro Hiring Process Study – Focus Groups

Purpose:
To capture feedback from participants as it relates to their hiring process experience.

Agenda:
- Thank you / Welcome / Introduction
- Broad questions / exercises
- Core questions and deeper dive on broad questions
- Wrap-up

(5 Minutes) - Introduction: Thank you / Welcome / Introduction - *(our names, overview of the project, why we're doing focus groups, will end this focus group promptly, confidentiality reminder and aggregated answers, people will be taking notes)*

(5-10 minutes) - Ice Breaker Question: Each person will take a minute or less to share his or her name, how long they've worked at Metro and 1 fun fact about themselves. *(The facilitators will also participate but not the working at Metro part, just say name again and fun fact.)*

(10 minutes) - Establish baseline candidate-facing Hiring Process Stages
Ask: If there are any questions or clarifications about the 10 Hiring Process Stages described

(40-50 minutes) - Broad Questions: *Explain the first 2 questions and the meaning of the sticker colors and the instructions for the exercise, we'll also set a timer for 45 minutes.*

Part 1:

- What areas of the hiring process could be streamlined? (shortened) - *Each participant will be given several red, yellow and green sticker dots and asked to place one dot under each stage section (red = very long/slow, yellow = medium, green = fast) They are to put one color dot under each stage. They will do this at the same time and of course, can step back to think if necessary. We should remind them to not overthink this and to just give their best guess based on their memory.*
- What was the longest part of the process for you? *Each participant will be given one black dot to place under the part of the process that took the longest for them. Once all of their dots have been placed they can be seated.*
- Based on where the dots have been placed, we will have a deeper discussion around the areas that have the most yellow, red and black dots soliciting more feedback. We will use post-it notes to get people to elaborate and use those post-it suggestions for a larger discussion. *(Each person will be given a post-it pad and pen and will be asked -* ***"Please write down any insights you have as it relates to the reasons you placed a red, yellow or black dot where you did. Do you recall if the reasons related to the delays for that stage were due to your own personal schedule or situation or if it was due to Metro. If it was due to Metro, were you given a reason as to why?*** *Please jot down anything you can remember so we can further discuss." Explain we will be grouping the post-its to see if there are similarities and discussing ones that have multiple mentions of similar insights. We'll also note that we will try to get to as many as we can but most likely won't have time to discuss every single post-it. Ask if there are any questions or clarifications needed for the post-it exercise)*
- *As they jot down notes on their post-its, they are to place each post-it on the corresponding stage poster under the grouping of sticker dots for that stage. A facilitator will, in real-time, start grouping and reorganizing post-its based on topics to determine if there are similarities. Once everyone has completed the post-its, we will identify key topics that were mentioned more than once. The goal is to have at least 5 identified as a starting point. We'll ask if anyone would like to volunteer to talk about anything they wrote. If no one volunteers, we'll select the first grouping and ask the group to have an open discussion about that topic. We'll remind them that in order to share it doesn't have to be their post-it but if the topic resonates with them or they have something helpful to add, they are more than welcome to speak up and share. Once we've gone through the majority of the groupings OR we've passed 30 minutes for this exercise on the timer, we'll wrap up this portion and move on to the next section.*

- What changes would you make to the process to speed it up? *(Keep this broad and just solicit ideas, ask to clarify if necessary. We won't use post-its just get people to speak and share as they have ideas)*

- How was the communication throughout the process? *(This will just be an open discussion so no stickers or post-its are necessary for this portion) We'll ask this broad question and move to the deeper questions below, if necessary)*
    - Do you feel you knew who you should talk to or ask questions throughout the process?
    - How responsive/timely was the communication throughout the process?
    - Anything else they'd like to mention about communication during the hiring process?

(15 - 20 minutes) - Core Questions:

- Was the compensation of the offer you received what you were expecting? If not, how did it differ? - *Use dots exercise again for this question (red = much lower than expectation, yellow = at expectation, green = above expectation, we'll use one poster paper for this question and ask if anyone would like to share more insights into why they chose red, yellow or green)*
    - Open discussion: How competitive do you feel the salary and benefits are at Metro?

- Were you offered another opportunity outside of Metro prior to accepting Metro's offer? - *Ask a show of hands (have a facilitator take a count)*

- What were the main reasons you decided to accept Metro's offer? *We will use post-it notes again for this question and organize into categories and have an open discussion based on the results. They are to put one reason per post-it.*

Optional Questions (if time permits):

- What stage of the process was the most problematic for you? *(Keep broad and don't necessarily define problematic, we'll have them quickly write the stage on a post-it.)*
- Open discussion about the online application process - how easy was it to navigate, how long did it take? What's one thing you'd improve?

(5 minutes) - Wrap-Up

LA Metro Hiring Process Study – Survey

Introduction

To meet the Region's growing transportation demands, LA Metro may hire hundreds of people to fill open positions this year. In preparation for this influx of hiring, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has hired outside consultants, SCA Strategic (SCA) and North Highland (NH), to study the current hiring process and identify ways to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

This survey – which is designed and managed by SCA and NH – is to hear from employees hired or promoted between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019. Your candid responses are greatly appreciated and strictly confidential; they will not be shared individually.

If you've been both hired into LA Metro and promoted between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019, or promoted twice within that time, please answer the following questions in light of your first hire/promotion within that date range.

Please complete and submit this survey by Friday, February 28th.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and your feedback!

Questions

Role and Department

1. What is your name? (Only the consultants have access to your name so they can ask any follow-up questions as needed. The information you provide in this survey will be anonymized when submitted to Metro.)

2. What was the title of the position you accepted with Metro between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019?

3. In which Department does this role reside?

   (Note that “Board of Directors” includes Inspector General and Ethics. “Chief Executive Office” includes: Asset Management, Building Services, Emergency Preparedness, Employee & Labor Relations, General Services, Management Audit, Civil Rights, Extraordinary Innovation, Risk Management, Safety, System Security & Law Enforcement, Talent Development, and Workforce Services.)

   a. Board of Directors
   b. Chief Executive Office
   c. Communications
   d. Congestion Reduction
   e. Finance and Budget
   f. Information Technology
   g. Operations
   h. Planning and Development
   i. Program Management
   j. Vendor / Contract Management

4. What type of candidate were you at the time of application?
   a. External candidate not employed by Metro (this includes contractors or consultants)
   b. Internal candidate employed by Metro

Hiring Process

Step	Beginning of Step	End of Step	Estimated duration *(in days)*
Application Submission	Started completing the application	Submitted the application	A
Gap			B
Assessment / Test	Received invitation to take assessment	Submitted assessment	C
Gap			D
Initial Panel Interview	Received invitation to interview	Completed interview	E
Gap			F
Qualified Candidate Pool (QCP) Placement	Received notification that you were placed in the QCP	Received invitation to next step in the process (e.g., Interview #2, employment certification)	G
Gap			H
Second Panel Interview	Received invitation to second interview	Completed second interview	I
Gap			J
Employment Certification	Received request for additional resume information (first outreach)	Received request for additional resume information (last outreach)	K
Gap			L
Compensation Process	Received initial salary offer	Received final salary offer	M
Gap			N
Background Checks / Physical	Received request to complete fingerprints, complete physical, etc.	Scheduled for orientation	O
Orientation	Scheduled for orientation	Completed Day 1 of Orientation	P

5. Referencing the chart above, please estimate the length of time (in days, including weekends) for each step of your hiring process and the length of time for the gaps between each step of your hiring process. Referring to past emails for exact dates may be helpful. The letters below correspond to the letters in the chart above.

If one of these steps was not part of your hiring process, simply write “N/A”. If you participated in a step not mentioned, please provide a description of the step with its estimated duration using the open-ended question #6 below. (If a step took less than one day, please round up to one day.)

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.
F.
G.
H.
I.
J.
K.
L.
M.
N.
O.
P.

6. What additional information, if any, would you like to provide to your estimates above?

7. How confident are you in the accuracy of the estimates you provided previously?
   a. Very confident
   b. Somewhat confident
   c. Not confident

8. The salary ***originally*** offered to you for your role was:
   a. More than you had anticipated
   b. Aligned with what you had anticipated
   c. Below what you had anticipated

9. Please rate the following factors in terms of how heavily they weighed in your decision to accept a role at LA Metro (with 1 being your most important factor):
   a. ________Salary
   b. ________Benefits
   c. ________Job duties
   d. ________Opportunity for growth
   e. ________Work/life balance
   f. ________Stability of employment
   g. ________Interest in the transportation industry
   h. ________Positive reputation of LA Metro work
   i. ________Other:

10. If marked “other” above, please elaborate here:

11. Which of the following best describes your experience at Metro?
    a. My role is what I expected it would be based on what I learned in the hiring process
    b. My role is notably different than what I expected, but I am content with it
    c. My role is notably different than what I expected, and I would not have accepted this role had I known this beforehand

12. What other information about your hiring process, if any, would you like to share with us?

LA Metro Hiring Process Study – Benchmarking Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions for your organization's management hiring (that is, non-contract).

1. How would you describe the efficiency – i.e., speed – of your organization's hiring process? (bold one)
    a. Not efficient
    b. Somewhat efficient
    c. Efficient
    d. Very efficient

2. How would you describe the effectiveness – i.e., the ability to get a quality candidate in the vacancy – of your organization's hiring process? (bold one)
    a. Not effective
    b. Somewhat effective
    c. Effective
    d. Very effective

3. LA Metro has 10 main steps in their hiring process.

    What are the major steps in your organization's hiring process? (Feel free to attach documentation if you prefer.)

4. Does your organization track time-to-hire? If so, what marks the starting and ending points of this metric?

5. What is your organization's average time-to-hire? (Providing an estimate is sufficient if you do not have the data.)

6. Which steps – or, gaps *between* hiring process steps – contribute most to your organization's time-to-hire? Why?

7. What changes, if any, have been made to your organization's hiring process in the past few years to improve its efficiency or effectiveness?

8. LA Metro's process for determining what salary to offer a candidate is complex and time-consuming. Please describe the process your organization uses to determine the salary offered to a candidate. (Feel free to attach a policy / SOP if easier, but please be sure to note where the reality of the process departs from policy, if at all.)

Appendix 4: Schedule of Report Findings and Recommendations

The table below is intended to be used by Metro to assign the recommendations proposed in this report to relevant stakeholders, who are then to develop next steps and propose completion dates for their recommendation's implementation.

#	Recommendation Description	Related Findings #	Assigned Staff in Charge	Agree/ Disagree	Proposed Action	Est. Date Completed
1	Employ OTAC, Metro's new Applicant Tracking System, to obtain and utilize talent analytics	A				
2	Hold hiring process stakeholders accountable for faster decision making	A				
3	Decrease post-testing communication time for the candidates	A				
4	Select interview dates and interviewers prior to the Hiring Plan Meeting	A				
5	Implement a digital workflow to autoroute forms and utilize electronic signatures and assign a back-up signatory	B				
6	Implement digital interview note-taking, scoring, and uploading of candidate results	B				
7	Improve communication between TA and Hiring Managers regarding changes in the hiring process	C				
8	Encourage greater use of department interviews	D				
9	Allow QCPs with similar MQs to be shared	E				
10	Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities throughout the entire hiring process	F				
11	Grant Hiring Managers greater decision-making authority in screening	F				
12	Ensure full adoption of the OTAC system coupled with adoption of an effective change management process	G				
13	Expand Hiring Managers' influence by allowing additional Minimum Qualifications to a position	J				

14	Reevaluate the use of blind screening in 12 months	K	
15	Transition EEO role from active participant to advisor, auditor, and trainer	L	
16	Utilize self-service portal for candidates to provide evidence of education and references	M	
17	Provide stakeholders with the ability to receive live application status updates	O	
18	Communicate to Metro employees why it lacks a promotion process	P	
19	Ensure OTAC's application portal meets candidates' needs	S	
20	Update auto-generated communications to applicants after application submission to improve hiring process expectations	T	
21	Institute a combination of standardized and non-standardized interview questions	V	
22	Update initial communication to candidates placed on QCP	W	
23	Send periodic automated emails to candidates in QCP to keep them engaged and aware of opportunities for which they may be considered	W	
24	Request complete employment history earlier in the process	Y	
25	Consider characteristics other than years of direct work experience when determining salary offers and when screening applications	AA	
26	Reduce required memos and forms and expedite their completion	BB	
27	Consider increasing the 15% cap on raises for internal candidates	CC	
28	Decrease the job posting salary ranges	EE	


Metro
usbank
Bank of America
citi
Paul Hastings
LEWIS BRISBOIS