Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

File #: 2023-0387, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 22.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OPERATIONS, SAFETY & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
JULY 20, 2023

SUBJECT: WESTLAKE/MACARTHUR PARK STATION INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the status report on the pilot intervention strategies to improve community health and safety at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station (WMP).

ISSUE

The WMP is one of the highest utilized stations in the Metro system, with more than 20,000 boardings per day. The station has disproportionately experienced the pandemic side effects of increased opioid usage, homelessness, and mental health issues. Consequently, the WMP station has suffered from high crime, high code of conduct violations, and cleanliness issues.

As a result, staff developed pilot intervention strategies with the purpose of restoring safety and improving customer experience for our riders, employees, and the surrounding community. This report provides an update on the status of the strategies and a response to Motion 30 (Attachment A) by Directors Solis, Dupont-Walker, Mitchell, Hahn, and Horvath, approved at the February 2023 Board meeting.

BACKGROUND

WMP is located just west of Downtown LA in the Westlake District on Alvarado St between Wilshire Bl and 7th St. It is located across the street from MacArthur Park. WMP is located in one of the densest neighborhoods in the United States and is served by frequent Metro Rail and Bus service, with nearby buses operating 24 hours per day. There are typically over 22,000 daily boardings and alightings within the station footprint. The vending program on the plaza level, which officially ended in 2020, continues to operate in an informal/unregulated setting. Previous rider surveys indicate that 94% of Metro riders along the Alvarado St corridor do not own or have access to a car, indicating that they rely on Metro service for their access to work, school, medical, and all-purpose trips. This station resides within an Equity Focused Community.

In 2022, Metro released the results of its Customer Experience Survey, revealing that female rail ridership declined to 44%, with nearly 1 in 2 women citing crime, harassment, and safety as top

concerns on Metro. These results were consistent with previous agency findings in the How Women Travel report.

MacArthur Park has a history of drug activity that predates the opening of this Metro station in 1993 and has impacted the station. Within a 2-month period in the summer of 2022 at WMP Station, there were 57 calls for service to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), or nearly one law enforcement call each day. In December 2022, there were 26 reported medical emergencies at WMP, the majority of them alleged drug overdoses. In the entire calendar year 2022, there were six fatalities and one shooting at WMP, nearly all related to suspected drug activity. In December 2022, there were nearly 75,000 emergency swing gate activations reported at the faregates, or nearly once every two minutes.

Metro also experiences significant maintenance and cleanliness challenges due to the misuse of this station. Our maintenance crews would also have to deal with a significant amount of trash and drug paraphernalia in all public areas of the station. Metro maintenance crews who respond to the station for repairs have encountered multiple instances of work trucks burglarized when they return.

There is also persistent trespassing in emergency exit corridors which serve as ancillary areas for Metro frontline personnel who maintain critical station equipment in these non-public corridors. Trespassers in these ancillary areas pose significant safety issues for Metro personnel. During recent inspections of these corridors, a number of individuals have been identified, many of whom have previous warrants. These individuals also leave behind a significant amount of trash, drug paraphernalia, and biohazard waste. Frontline staff is exposed to conditions such as fentanyl and methamphetamine residue, bio-contaminants, airborne particles, and hypodermic needles. As these non-public corridors lack routine airflow, these corridors have odors that are unhealthy without personal protective equipment (PPE), such as of Tyvek full body suits, air-purifying respirators, and medical clearance specialized training. Corridor cleanups required security or law enforcement escorts.

Observations from Metro personnel and CCTV cameras revealed persistent loitering under tampered electrical maintenance receptacles, physical fighting, individuals wielding weapons, harassment and intimidation of transit riders waiting for their next train or bus, sexual activity, and erratic antisocial behavior, which may be from individuals under the influence of drugs. System Security and Law Enforcement (SSLE) has confirmed the majority of drug issues at WMP are related to heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, fentanyl, and other opiates.

In response to the worsening public health crisis surrounding MacArthur Park resulting in substantially deteriorated conditions at the WMP Station, Metro Operations convened a multi-departmental taskforce in January 2023, including System Safety & Law Enforcement (SSLE), Countywide Planning & Development (CP&D), Office of the Chief of Staff, Customer Experience (CX) and Program Management to quickly reimagine how the WMP Station could better serve Metro riders and the community by improving public safety and service reliability through pilot interventions.

In January 2023, Metro initiated a comprehensive intervention pilot program to deter illicit activity and restore appropriate uses of the station. At the February board meeting, the Board approved Motion

30 by Directors Solis, Dupont-Walker, Mitchell, Hahn, and Horvath, directing a report back on a plan for implementing care centered strategies to improve community safety and health and develop recommendations for implementing these strategies at other high priority stations and stops.

DISCUSSION

Since the pilot interventions have been implemented, the data reveals that the interventions, combined with a blended, human centered approach, have resulted in substantial improvements to public safety, cleanliness, transit access, and overall customer experience for Metro customers, front-line employees, and the surrounding community. The improvements include:

- New, brighter lights at platform ends, closure of secondary entrance and passageway, increased fresh air circulation and playing of music through station speakers were implemented to improve visibility, reduce hiding areas for illicit activity and keep people moving through the station between train arrivals. As a result, data has shown:
    - 90%-95% reduction in loitering / non-transportation uses within the station
    - 83% reduction in elevator out of service duration
    - 55% reduction in graffiti / vandalism / special clean-up incidents
    - 42% reduction in medical emergencies, which include alleged overdoses

- Revised station entry/exit plan to consolidate entrances through a single faregate array to improve fare compliance and access control in paid areas of the station (including train platforms), blended with a human centered approach of TAP Blue Shirts, Metro Ambassadors, and LIFE (Low Income Fare Is Easy) signup team. As a result, data has shown:
    - Valid faregate entries have more than doubled to +101% increase
    - 31% decrease in emergency swing gate misuse
    - Transit Watch app submissions have dropped to zero
    - Customer complaints remain low, with only two incidents logged
    - Stairwells and escalators are consistently clearer from willful blocking through improved access control and strategically placed security, providing safer and cleaner access to the train platform from the faregates

- Human-centered approach that reimagines traditional policing strategies by layering Metro Ambassadors, Homeless Outreach, reduced fare initiatives, community based policing, security and law enforcement partners as part of an overall blended approach to address the larger, complex societal challenges impacting the station. As a result, data has shown:
    - Thirty-two (32) people experiencing homelessness have received medical care or harm reduction treatment from the on-site Mobile Health and Harm Reduction Clinic through our partnership with the LA County Department of Health Services
    - Homeless outreach teams have had 132 engagements and 15 enrollments into supportive service through our long-time partner PATH (People Assisting The Homeless)
    - LIFE program achieved a record 1,307 signups, representing several daily enrollment records for pop-up events at a Metro station
    - Metro Ambassadors have administered Narcan six (6) times at WLMP, representing

40% of systemwide Ambassador Narcan deployments since April 2023

A detailed list of improvements is provided in Attachment C - WLMP Intervention Timeline.

A. Summary of social climate insights and feedback themes from a review of past surveys, community meetings/workshops, focus groups, and/or socioeconomic data

Staff has been committed to engaging people with lived experiences, meeting people where they are, conducting bilingual, in-person survey results for hundreds of station users, which has revealed significant support for these interventions from marginalized riders, as well as a desire to see more of these elements implemented at other stations. Each survey result included demographic results, which closely reflected the actual demographics of this EFC. Six in 10 survey respondents resided within the same zip code as WMP, which is identified as an EFC, and 98% of respondents identified as BIPOC. Therefore, this project remains committed to centering marginalized community feedback to ensure marginalized voices are heard and equitable outcomes are reached.

Metro has conducted outreach and community input in different instances over the past several years. In February 2023, outreach staff collected responses from area riders during the Alvarado St Bus Priority Lane project, adjacent to WMP. Out of the 211 surveys collected, 83% of participants used the corridor for work or school purposes, and 94% stated that they use transit on this corridor at least 3-4 times a week. This is also largely consistent with previous results from an onboard survey conducted in 2019, as well as several recent rider intercept surveys asking riders about the recent interventions, which are detailed further in this report.
Additionally, Metro has been working on future Joint Development plans at WMP. This included outreach efforts with site visits and community interviews with organizations that specialized in economic development activities and gang prevention. The input from community organizations and vendors has been vital to the conceptualization of a Restructured Plaza Vending Program that will complement the physical plaza enhancements taking place at the station and provide community and peer surveillance that improves safety and activates the plaza. One key finding in recent vendor surveys has been a desire for additional surveillance to help make both vendors and their customers feel safer, thus increasing business opportunities for the micro-entrepreneurs at WLMP. A summary of the vendor and partner outreach strategies is provided in Attachment B.

B. Conducting language-inclusive station customer experience (CX) research involving transit riders, frontline workers, and community members to identify their priorities and preferences for transit station and stop amenities and uses

In addition to the comprehensive community outreach and survey efforts of vendors outlined above, staff developed in-person passenger intercept and online surveys to ask WMP riders whether Metro's initial pilot improvements have changed their overall experience. These efforts were inclusively developed in both English and Spanish through multilingual survey takers, with 2 in 3 surveys completed by Spanish speaking riders. Overall, respondents shared similar feedback across English and Spanish speaking riders, with the exception of several results noted below. Further, 6 in 10 riders indicated their home address is within the WMP zip code, with the remaining majority in nearby zip codes. Therefore, these survey results strongly reflect Metro riders who live within and reflect the

demographics of the WMP community. Nearly 500 respondents completed the initial survey conducted between late-April and early-May 2023, and results were weighted by race/ethnicity and income to reflect the demographics of this station.

- 95% supported (or did not oppose) the new, brighter lighting throughout the station area
- 93% supported (or did not oppose) the increased fresh air ventilation inside the station
- 87% supported (or did not oppose) the new Metro Transit Ambassadors staffing, which was recently restored to this station following a sustained improvement in public safety
- 81% supported (or did not oppose) the playing of music through station speakers; this intervention has even higher support at 87% for Spanish speaking riders
- 77% supported (or did not oppose) the increased police and security staffing
- 77% supported (or did not oppose) the closure of the secondary station entrance; this figure has even higher support at 89% for Spanish speaking riders.
- Overall, the playing of music through station speakers and restoring Transit Ambassadors at this station had the highest percentage of riders stating this improvement “made the experience at the station much better.”

In mid-May 2023, staff implemented a new faregate pilot intervention to consolidate station entry/exit points at the four faregate arrays to improve fare compliance, improve passenger flow, and maximize effectiveness of uniformed staffing. Because this intervention was not available to station users during the initial survey period, staff conducted a follow-up, multilingual passenger intercept survey in late-May 2023 to ask WMP riders whether the new station entry plan improved safety and cleanliness. Nearly 100 responses were collected in both English and Spanish with the following results, generally consistent across both English and Spanish speaking riders:

- 98% identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), including 8 in 10 riders who identified as Hispanic/Latino
- 97% stated their household’s total earnings were less than $50,000
- 95% stated the new station entrance/exit system increased their public safety while waiting for the train on the platform
- 94% stated the new station entrance/exit system makes the station feel cleaner
- 94% stated the new station entrance/exit system makes more people pay their fare
- 93% stated the new station entrance/exit system makes them feel safer; this figure has even higher support at 96% for Spanish speaking riders
- Many station users stated additional police and security, especially during late evenings, would make them feel safer at this station

In addition to passenger surveys, vendor surveys, and community outreach, Metro is also evaluating these interventions with its frontline personnel and has received similarly strong support from these employees that the pilot program are improving worker safety and allowing them to do their jobs more effectively.

This spring, in order to better understand the experiences of micro-entrepreneurs currently operating informally on the station plaza, Metro conducted in-person surveys. There were 13 onsite vendors offering a variety of goods who were interviewed. Below is a highlight of some of the findings from the survey:

- • 62% have operated on the plaza 5 or more years
- • 77% work on the plaza 7 days a week
- • 69% work 7-9 hours per day
- 100% indicated that they feel safer with the station improvements that have occurred
- During these in-person interviews, many vendors commented that the additional surveillance helps vendors and consumers feel safe.

C. Identify and compare different pilot model options to bring care-centered strategies to this station by total cost, timeline, partnerships needed, community benefit

Given the longstanding drug activity and associated impacts around MacArthur Park that has predated the existence of Metro Rail, past history indicates that traditional policing strategies have not effectively resolved the complex challenges in this community. Therefore, Metro has committed to a blended, human-centered approach that layers additional staffing elements to augment security and law enforcement partners to more acutely address these issues while allowing police to focus on criminal activity. While the initial pilot interventions have clearly demonstrated improvements to public safety and customer experience for Metro riders and frontline employees, Metro is also partnering with key stakeholders to bring care-centered strategies to:

- People experiencing homelessness
- People experiencing drug addiction
- People experiencing mental health crises
- Low-income individuals who require mobility for access to opportunities

In April 2023, Metro's Homeless Outreach team partnered with the LA County Department of Health Services (DHS) to regularly host the Mobile Health and Harm Reduction Clinic on-site at WMP, which provides comprehensive medical care at no charge for people experiencing homelessness. Medical care stretches from routine check-ups to specialized outpatient care, including women's health and harm reduction tools. This mobile health clinic is typically scheduled by DHS every other Thursday at WLMP.

The Homeless Outreach team has also PATH to conduct multiple visits each day to WMP in offering services to people experiencing homelessness. These multidisciplinary outreach teams (MDTs) are now in new purple Metro outreach vests in collaboration with DHS. Purple, a color commonly associated with Homelessness Awareness, was chosen to symbolize our commitment to supporting those in need.

Metro's contracted law enforcement partners also support ongoing efforts to assist people in mental health crisis within the Metro system. This includes the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team, which includes officers with specialized Mental Health Intervention Training (MHIT) and a Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU), as well as Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Mental Evaluation Team (MET) which provides crisis assessment, intervention, and targeted case management to diffuse potentially violent situations and link individuals to appropriate resources.

While the revised station entry/exit program to improve access control and appropriate use of fare collection equipment has significantly improved fare compliance, the intended goal was to equitably improve fare compliance, as many riders, including low-income riders, have asked Metro to do a better job at ensuring everyone pays their fair share. As a result, Metro created a LIFE pop-up event to coincide with the revised station entry/exit plan for over one month to meet riders where they are and provide qualified individuals enrollment in this reduced fare program. This effort has provided substantial benefits to the community, with 1,307 onsite enrollments, including two of the busiest enrollment days in LIFE program history.

D. Develop recommendations for implementing identified strategies at existing and future Metro transit stations and stops, including potential funding sources

Based on the compelling data results and strong support from WLMP riders and frontline personnel, staff are developing recommendations for expanding effective improvement elements to other stations, including 7th Street/Metro Center and Pershing Square, with the understanding that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for the entire system, as each station is uniquely designed, and community needs are not always identical. Staff will be considering a range of criteria for future station deployment, including ridership, public safety data, cleanliness and functionality data, homeless outreach data, frontline employee feedback and stakeholder input.
Staff will be returning to the Metro Board with a proposed project cost, scope and funding sources in Fall 2023.

In addition to considering deployment of WMP Station pilot interventions at other locations as needed, Metro continues to explore site-specific station activation programs with communities, including the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station Small Scale Retail Pilot Program. After two roundtable community meetings, 5 focus groups, and over 200 intercept surveys, Metro will enter into a rent agreement with a local nonprofit organization to operate the Bike Hub, implement mobility program models and provide healthier food options by hosting local small businesses using ancillary spaces and the plaza with a farmer's market and monthly community events.

The improvements at WMP highlight our commitment to actively listening to our customers and implementing meaningful changes to enhance their experience within our transit system based upon the multilayered public safety ecosystem approach. We remain dedicated to continuously improving our services and addressing the evolving needs of our valued ridership.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The goal this work is to provide public safety and reliability improvements to Metro riders in and around WMP, in which 9 in 10 transit riders are BIPOC, 94% do not own a car and therefore rely on Metro service, and nearly 6 in 10 are below the poverty line. Further, WLMP is serviced by Metro lines that travel to and through Metro's Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Staff is building upon community input received during previous projects involving the community and key stakeholders, such as the Joint Development project outreach and street vendor market pilot in 2017 and the adjacent Alvarado St Bus Priority Lanes completed in 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The above recommendations support the following strategic plan goals:

Goal #2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. These initiatives help to move more people within the same street capacity, where currently transit users suffer service delays and reliability issues because of single occupant drivers.

Goal #3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. With faster transit service and improved reliability, residents have increased access to education and employment, with greater confidence that they will reach their destination on time.

Goal #4: Transform Los Angeles County through regional collaboration and national leadership to address the larger societal challenges that are acutely impacting the Metro system.

NEXT STEPS

In addition to these current resources, Metro is also working with Los Angeles County Supervisorial District 1 and Los Angeles City Council District 1 to bring new, uplifting programming activations to the WMP station plaza. Under development is a community pop-up event that would potentially include food, art, music, information on hiring and vocational opportunities, legal and documentation assistance, and other elements supportive of the needs of the community, tentatively planned for this summer.

The results of the proposed community pop-up event will help inform details on longer-term costs, timeline, partnerships and community benefit to report in the future, with the understanding that Metro alone does not have these capabilities or responsibilities internally and relies on key partners to support solutions that address larger societal challenges.

In Fall 2023, Metro is planning to implement an innovative public restroom pilot which seeks to address concerns from traditional public restrooms that are commonly misused with illicit activity, vandal damage, and are often unsafe for public use. This restroom pilot would supplement the existing network of transit adjacent public restrooms overseen by the City of Los Angeles and currently available at MacArthur Park, Pershing Square, Vermont/Santa Monica, North Hollywood

and Van Nuys stations. This pilot intends to provide a safe, hygienic, cost effective, and reliable amenity for Metro riders and the community, incorporating design elements that encourage user accountability, and deter illicit activity which results in unusable conditions for others.

The WMP Agency Taskforce will continue to build on the momentum of this program by developing longer-term recommendations for this station and identifying elements that could be implemented at other stations should the need arise. As much of the illicit activity within the Metro system is reflective of larger societal challenges, Metro must continue to rely on key partners and support so that the agency can focus on operating a safe and reliable transit system. Staff plans to provide another update in Fall 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Board Motion 30 WLMP
Attachment B - Vendor and Partner Outreach Strategies
Attachment C - WLMP Intervention Timeline

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ATTACHMENT A

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
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3rd Floor Board Room
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File #: 2023-0127, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 30.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Motion by:

DIRECTORS SOLIS, DUPONT-WALKER, MITCHELL, HAHN, AND HORVATH

Improving Community Health and Safety at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station

Metro's Westlake/MacArthur Park Station sits in the densest neighborhood in Los Angeles County. Since first opening in 1993, the Westlake/MacArthur Park Station has remained one of the most activated and highly used stations in Metro's system and as a gathering place at the center of a culturally diverse and entrepreneurial community. Each day, tens of thousands of people move in and out of this regionally significant station served by all-day, frequent Metro Rail and Bus service to reach their bus or train, nearby businesses, and the surrounding public commons.

Despite these transit-supportive neighborhood characteristics, increasing instances of interpersonal harm and property damage at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station are impacting Metro's ability to provide an attractive customer experience for transit riders and supportive working conditions for frontline employees who maintain this station. Recognizing that these challenges are manifestations of structural inequities, Metro must engage additional partners to go beyond the pilot design interventions identified in staff's February 2022 report (File #: 2023-0079). Metro should take a holistic, equity-focused, and human-centered approach to improve customer experience and community health and safety at this station.

As such, Westlake/MacArthur Park Station is the most suitable location for Metro to pilot design and programming strategies that allow Metro to maintain well-designed, human-centered environments that meet transit rider needs. Metro should build on its initial planning to pilot care-centered strategies for Westlake/MacArthur Park Station and bus stops that improve the community's sense of safety, well-being, and belonging, including but not limited to bathrooms, shade structures, on-site health and crisis support services, cultural programming, greening, public art, and local entrepreneurial activity. Metro can draw from lessons learned from previous activation efforts at this station and other station pop-up events, like the September 2022 Compton A (Blue) Line Station in partnership with the Alliance for Community Transit for Los Angeles (ACT-LA).

In line with the Board approved Metro Equity Platform and Strategic Plan, Metro should build on its ongoing Westlake/MacArthur Park station community outreach and engagement efforts, like Metro's Joint Development Centro Westlake Project Advisory Task Force, to develop an implementation plan that enhances customer experience and improves community health and safety.

SUBJECT: IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WESTLAKE/MACARTHUR PARK STATION MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Solis, Dupont-Walker, Mitchell, Hahn, and Horvath that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer or her designee to provide a report back in June 2023 that includes a plan for implementing care-centered strategies to improve community safety and health at the Westlake/MacArthur Plaza Station and nearby transit stops. The report should consider the following:

A. Summarizing social climate insights and feedback themes from a review of past surveys, community meetings/workshops, focus groups, and/or socioeconomic data;

B. Conducting language-inclusive station customer experience (CX) research involving transit riders, frontline workers, and community members to identify their priorities and preferences for transit station and stop amenities and uses;

C. Identifying and comparing different pilot model options to bring care-centered strategies to this station by total cost, timeline, partnerships needed, and community benefit; and

D. Developing recommendations for implementing identified strategies at existing and future Metro transit stations and stops, including potential funding sources.

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ATTACHMENT B – VENDOR AND PARTNER OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Since February 2021, Metro has been working with the Walter J Company to develop a mixed-use project at WLMP Station through its Joint Development program. Project outreach is focused on creating an open line of communication with community stakeholders. Since the project's inception, the communities' sentiment regarding micro-entrepreneurism has remained consistent and is being addressed by the provision of space dedicated to vendors as part of the proposed development.

To reimagine the plaza vending program with a care first approach and the community economic development opportunities that the WLMP station plaza can provide, Metro initiated outreach efforts with site visits and community interviews with organizations that specialized in economic development activities and gang prevention, including the California Reinvestment Coalition, Central City Neighborhood Partners, Community Power Collective, Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Program, Healing Urban Barrios, Homies Unidos, Inclusive Action for the City, Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE), Public Counsel, and Union Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes (Union or UPVA).

This spring, in order to better understand the experiences of microentrepreneurs currently operating informally on the station plaza, Metro conducted in-person surveys. There were 13 onsite vendors offering a variety of goods who were interviewed. Below is a highlight of some of the findings from the survey:

- 62% have operated on the plaza 5 or more years
- 77% work on the plaza 7 days a week
- 69% work 7-9 hours per day
- 69% set up between 9 and 11 AM
- 76% breakdown operations at 6 PM or later
- 45% indicated that they serve more than 10 customers per day Monday–Friday
- 62% indicated that they serve more than 10 customers per day Saturday–Sunday
- 84% work alone
- 100% indicated that they feel safer with the station improvements that have occurred

During these in-person interviews, many vendors commented that the additional surveillance helps vendors and consumers feel safe. Additionally, staff observed the following:

- Days of operation, set-up, and tear down times varied
- Most vendors are paying storage fees.
- Vendors with visible physical challenges and those who are seniors are paying fees for set-up, tear down, delivery, and hauling away of equipment.
- A grassroots effort to create a "merchant BID" is informally taking place.

The input from community organizations and vendors has been vital to the conceptualization of a Restructured Plaza Vending Program that will complement the

physical plaza enhancements taking place at the station and provide community and peer surveillance that improves safety and activates the plaza. In alignment with Metro's CBO Partnering Strategy, Metro intends to contract with a community-based organization (CBO) to further develop and administer the proposed vending program with small business technical assistance and the opportunity to accommodate community activities and events on the plaza. Staff continues to coordinate with the First Supervisorial District and First Council District on opportunities to partner with the City and County to deliver a successful vendor program that activates the plaza.

Attachment C – WLMP Intervention Timeline

Between January and March 2023, Metro completed the following pilot interventions:

- STREET/PLAZA LEVEL
  - Rightsized the footprint of the station plaza by reducing the publicly accessible areas through securing non-functional sections of the plaza, including terraced landscape and inconspicuous corners, while also preserving functional space for a vendor marketplace
- MEZZANINE/CONCOURSE LEVEL
  - Closed secondary (north) entrance and passageway, which directs all customers to the nearby, fully accessible main entrance, naturally facilitating safety in numbers through more foot traffic.
  - Provided additional Metro ambassadors to WLMP following these safety interventions
  - Increased the security presence, including adding additional law enforcement inside the station
- PLATFORM LEVEL
  - Began playing ambient background music, a best practice intended to keep people moving through the station, used in many other public environments such as shopping malls, convenience stores and airport terminals.
  - Increased airflow in the station's public areas to remove and deter odors and fumes caused by smoking and other non-transit uses that permeate through the station

In April and May 2023, further improvements were implemented including:

- STREET/PLAZA LEVEL
  - Added new CCTV cameras on plaza/street level
  - Partnered with Mobile Health and Harm Reduction Clinic from LA County Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide no cost medical care and harm reduction treatment for people experiencing homelessness
- MEZZANINE/CONCOURSE LEVEL
  - Hosted Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program enrollment pop-ups onsite
  - Deployed TAP Blue Shirt staff to assist customers purchasing/reloading fare
  - Revised station entry/exit plan to consolidate station entries through a single faregate array to improve fare compliance and access control in paid areas of the station (including train platform)
  - Added daily Metro Transit Security Officers (TSOs) enforcing code of conduct, including fare compliance at the faregates.
- PLATFORM LEVEL
  - Installed new, brighter lights at end-of-platforms and elevator doors to reduce hiding areas and restore safety

Reimagining Westlake/MacArthur Park Station Thru Pilot Interventions

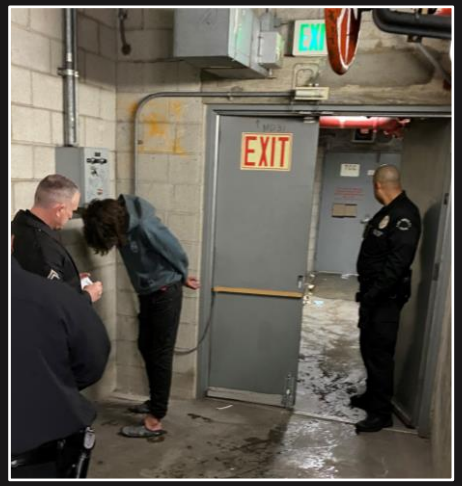
July 2023

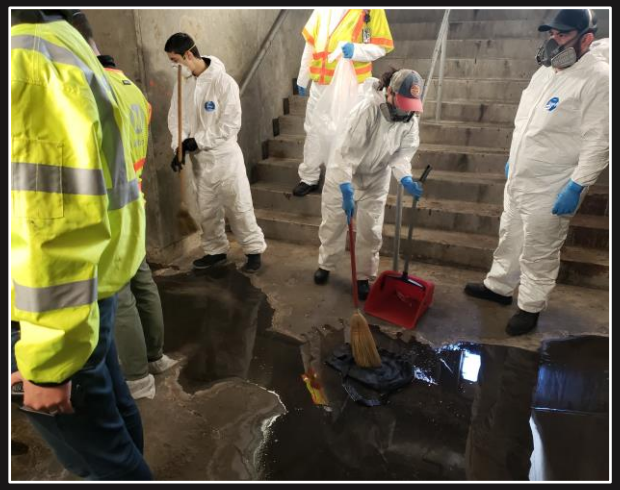
Metro

MACARTHUR PARK | BACKGROUND & ISSUE

Physical altercation on platform as train approaches

- Typically over 22,000 daily boardings and alightings
- Equity Focused Community where 94% do not own a car
- Six fatalities and one shooting in 2022
- CX Survey: Female rail ridership has declined to 44% with nearly 1 in 2 women citing crime, harassment and safety as concerns on Metro
- Nearly 60 calls for police response in Summer 2022
- Nearly 30 medical emergencies from Nov 2022-Jan 2023
- Most issues related to alleged drug activity
- Board Motion 30 approved Feb 2023





Trespassers, encampments, human waste, bodily fluids found in non-public ancillary areas; frontline personnel require hazmat PPE

MACARTHUR PARK | SIGNFICANT PROGRESS TO DATE

PHASE ONE: JAN-MAR 2023

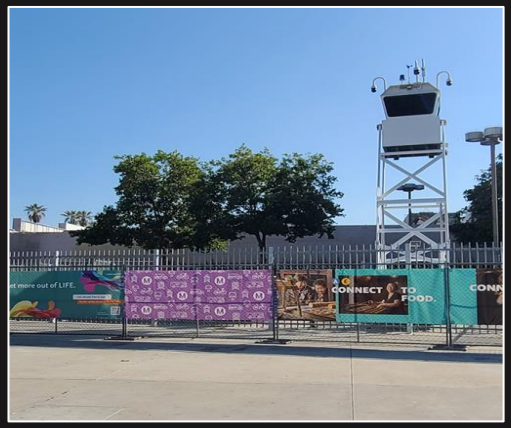
- Rightsized footprint of station area to increase safety in numbers, reduce inappropriate activity and associated cleanups and increase visibility of layered staffing
  - Outdoor plaza
  - Secondary entrance and passageway
- Playing of background music through station speakers
- Increased layered staffing presence (Ambassadors, Security, Law Enforcement)
- Increased station fresh air circulation

PHASE TWO: APR-MAY 2023

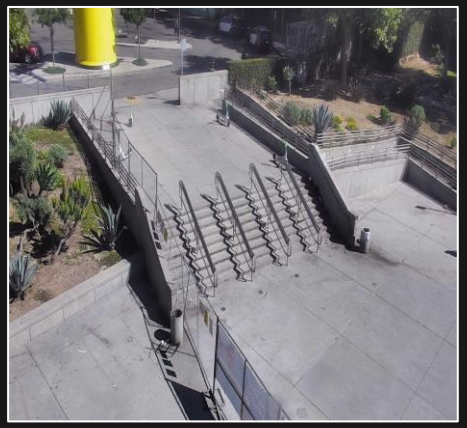
- Installed new, brighter lights at end-of-platforms and elevator doors to improve safety and reduce hiding areas
- Added new CCTV cameras and lighting on outdoor plaza
- Deployed Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program pop-up signups
- Deployed TAP Blue Shirt ambassadors
- Partnered with Mobile Health and Harm Reduction Clinic from LA County Dept of Health Services for on-site treatment
- Revised station entry/exit plan to improve fare compliance and access control in paid areas of the station (including train platform)

Metro

MACARTHUR PARK | PLAZA / STREET LEVEL



Added new CCTV cameras on plaza/street level for 24-hour coverage



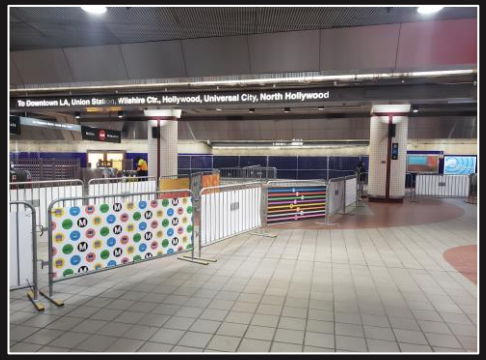
Brighter lighting to illuminate hiding spots used for drug activity

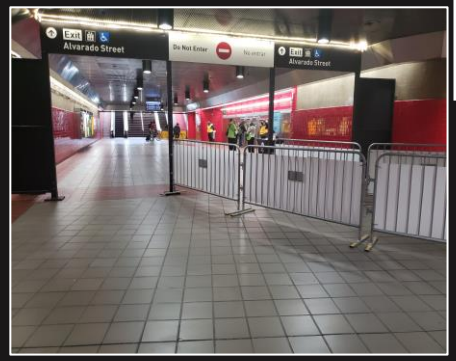
Provide no cost medical treatment and harm reduction treatment to 32 people experiencing homelessness, through LA County Department of Health Services.

Homeless outreach teams have had 132 engagements and 15 enrollments into services

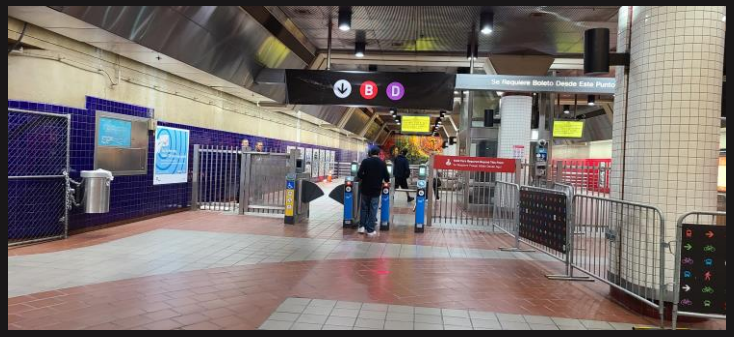
MACARTHUR PARK | CONCOURSE / MEZZANINE LEVEL

Deployed TAP Blue Shirt staff to assist customers



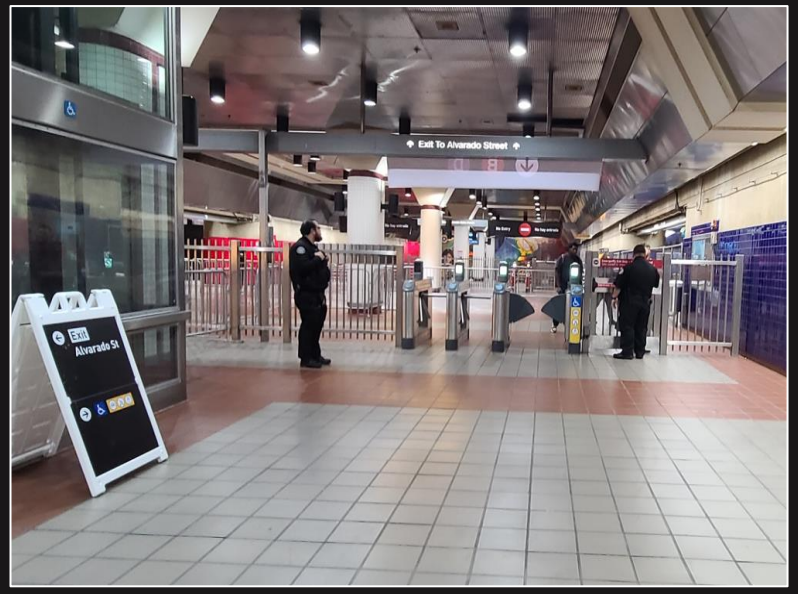


Revised exit/entry improves passenger flow and access control



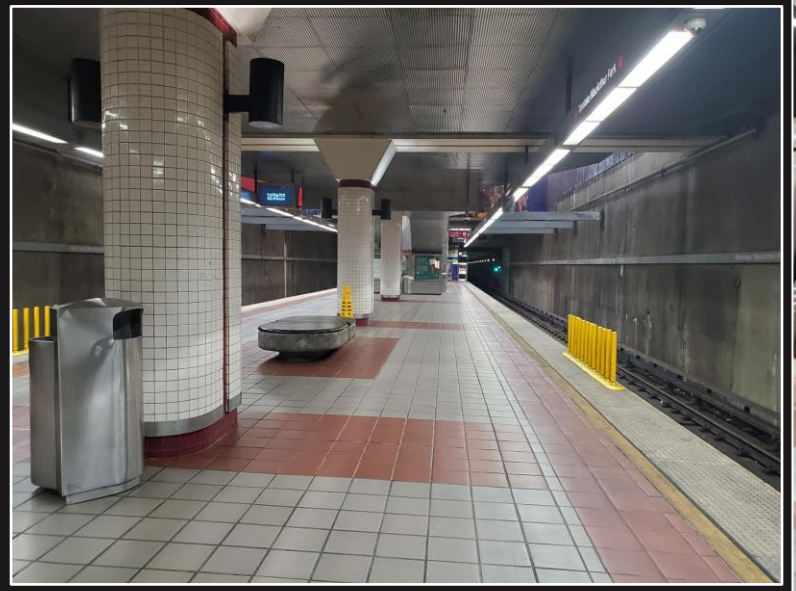
Revised station exit/entry plan to improve fare compliance

Record enrollment (1,300+ new signups) in LIFE equity fare program



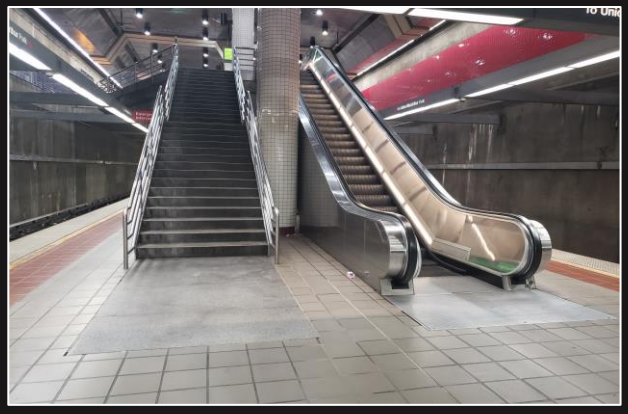
Transit Security Officers for Code of Conduct compliance

MACARTHUR PARK | PLATFORM / TRACK LEVEL



Overnight pressure washing, detailing, and LED lighting upgrade

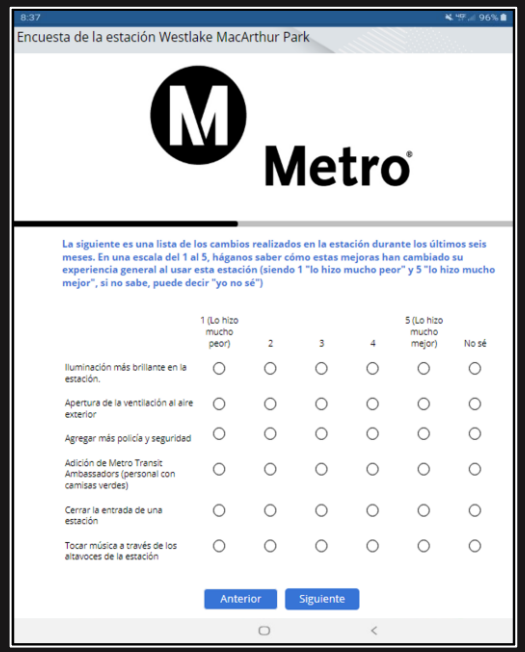
***Layered staffing approach** includes Transit Ambassadors, TAP Blue Shirts, Homeless Outreach, Security and Law Enforcement; Ambassadors have deployed Narcan six times at WLMP, representing 40% of systemwide usage*



Installed new, brighter lighting at the end-of platforms and added fresh air ventilation to reduce hiding areas and restore comfort and safety

MACARTHUR PARK | RIDERS SUPPORT, SOCIAL CLIMATE INPUT AND THEMES

- Conducted nearly 500 in-person, bilingual passenger intercept and online surveys on pilot interventions
  - 95% supported (or did not oppose) the new brighter lighting
  - 93% supported (or did not oppose) the increased fresh air ventilation
  - 87% supported (or did not oppose) the recently restored Metro Ambassadors
  - **81% supported (or did not oppose) the playing of music through station speakers
  - 77% supported (or did not oppose) the increased police and security staffing
  - **77% supported (or did not oppose) the closure of the secondary station entrance
  - *** denotes even more support from Spanish speaking riders*
- Station music and Metro Ambassadors had the highest percentage of riders stating this improvement "made the experience at the station much better."



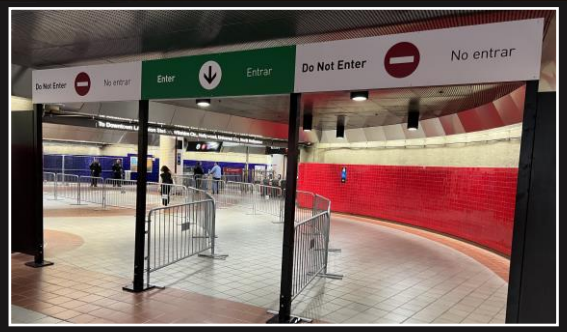
In February 2023, outreach staff collected 211 responses from area riders during the nearby Alvarado St Bus Priority Lane project

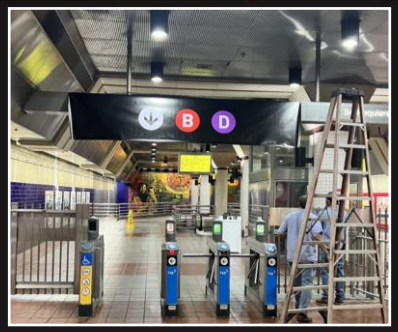
- 87% were survey participants identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)
- 83% of participants used the corridor for work or school purposes
- 94% stated that they use transit on this corridor at least 3-4 times a week.
- Largely consistent with previous results from an onboard survey conducted in 2019, as well as several recent rider intercept surveys

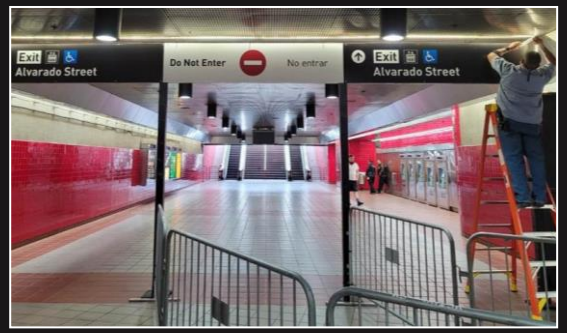
Over a dozen onsite vendors were interviewed

- 100% indicated they feel safer with the station improvements that have occurred
- Many vendors commented that more surveillance helps vendors and consumers feel safe

MACARTHUR PARK | FAREGATE IMPROVEMENTS & SURVEY







- Follow-up passenger intercept survey to nearly 100 station riders
  - 98% identified as BIPOC, including 8 in 10 as Hispanic/Latino
  - 97% household total earnings under $50,000
  - 2 in 3 surveys completed in Spanish
  - 6 in 10 riders reside within station zip code
  - 95% stated the new station entrance/exit system increased their public safety while waiting for the train on the platform
  - 94% stated the new system makes the station feel cleaner
  - 94% stated the new system makes more people pay their fare
- Many station users stated desire for additional police and security especially during late evenings, would make them feel safer at this station
- Fare collection data is consistent with customer feedback
  - Valid faregate entries +101% increase
  - Emergency swing gate misuse -31% reduction

MACARTHUR PARK | BLENDED, HUMAN-CENTERED STRATEGIES

- Partnering with key stakeholders to address:
  - People experiencing homelessness
  - People experiencing drug addiction
  - People experiencing mental health crises
- Partnered with LA County Dept. of Health Services (DHS) to regularly host Mobile Health and Harm Reduction Clinic on-site for no-cost medical and substance abuse treatment to people experiencing homelessness
- Engaged with longtime partner People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) to deploy Multidisciplinary Outreach Teams (MDTs) to conduct multiple visits each day
- Contracted law enforcement partners augment efforts to assist people in mental health crisis through the LAPD Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team and Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) and LA County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Mental Evaluation Team (MET)
- Partnering with LA County Supervisorial District 1 and LA City Council District 1 to bring community pop-up event incorporating new, uplifting programming activations

Metro

MACARTHUR PARK | NEXT STEPS

- Staff developing recommendations for potential expansion of effective elements to other stations
- Developing criteria which would include ridership, public safety data, cleanliness and functionality data, homeless outreach data, frontline employee feedback and stakeholder input
  - 7th St/Metro Center
  - Pershing Square
- Continue to explore site-specific station activation programs with communities
  - Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Small Scale Retail Pilot Program
  - Metro Bike Hub
  - Farmer's Market and monthly community events
- Staff will return to the Metro Board with a proposed project cost, scope and funding sources in Fall 2023

Metro