Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
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Los Angeles, CA

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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OPERATIONS, SAFETY & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
JANUARY 18, 2024

SUBJECT: BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF PILOT INTERVENTIONS AT WESTLAKE/MACARTHUR PARK STATION

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the status report on the next steps for implementing pilot intervention strategies to improve community health and safety at additional Metro stations, building on the recent improvements from Westlake/MacArthur Park Station.

ISSUE

In early 2023, Staff developed and implemented pilot intervention strategies at the Westlake/MacArthur Park Station, which is served by both B & D Lines, with the purpose of restoring safety and improving the experience for our riders, employees, and the surrounding community. A report on these interventions was provided to the Board in July 2023. A focus on safety through environmental design resulted in a decrease in crime, with a reduction in loitering, drug use, and other illicit activity. Consequently, the station is substantially cleaner and safer, resulting in customers also feeling safer than before and providing a safe environment to support placemaking activities. This report is a status update on the next steps to expand the successful elements of this program to additional Metro stations with similar challenges.

BACKGROUND

In response to the worsening public health crisis that resulted in substantially deteriorated conditions at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station (WMP), Metro Operations convened a multi-departmental taskforce in January 2023 to quickly reimagine how the Westlake/MacArthur Park Station could better serve Metro riders and the community. Its focus was on improving public safety and cleanliness through pilot interventions centered around environmental design. This taskforce includes System Safety & Law Enforcement (SSLE), Countywide Planning & Development (CP&D), the Office of the Chief of Staff, Customer Experience (CX), and Program Management.

In February 2023, the Board approved Motion 30 in response to the efforts at the WMP station and directed the CEO to report back on extending successful WMP care-centered strategies to improve community safety and health to other existing and future transit stations and stops (Attachment A).

Throughout Spring 2023, Metro initiated a comprehensive intervention pilot program at WMP to deter

illicit activity and restore appropriate uses of the station. The improvements included:

- New, brighter lights at platform ends, closure of secondary entrance and passageway, increased fresh air circulation and music played through station speakers were implemented to improve visibility, reduce hiding areas for illicit activity, and keep people moving through the station between train arrivals
- 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)
- Human-centered approach that reimagines traditional policing strategies by layering Metro Ambassadors, Homeless Outreach, reduced fare initiatives, TAP Blue Shirt ambassadors, security, and law enforcement partners as part of an overall blended approach to address the larger, complex societal challenges impacting the station

At the July 2023 Board Meeting, staff provided an update on the interventions and their positive impacts, including the significant improvement to public safety and customer experience. This report shares a status update on the next steps for expanding these successful interventions to additional Metro stations.

DISCUSSION

Organizational Change - New Station Experience Unit

Given the successful results seen at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station, staff recognizes the urgency to accelerate these efforts to restore public safety and confidence at other rail stations with similar challenges. Therefore, the CEO created a new “Station Experience” unit, which will spearhead collaboration across Metro departments to expand upon the successful elements from Westlake/MacArthur Park Station to improve public safety, cleanliness, operations, and customer experience to all Metro stations.

The Station Experience unit will play a role in all public safety, cleanliness, and customer-facing aspects related to existing and future stations, with an emphasis on collaboration with System Security & Law Enforcement, Customer Experience, and other key Metro departments. This new unit will report directly to the Chief Operations Officer and will recruit for two new Director-level positions (listed under Staffing Needs) to provide accelerated project management and administrative support capabilities. Further, the Station Evaluation Program team, which is exceptionally knowledgeable of Metro station conditions through their quarterly audits of all 140+ Metro stations and bus transit centers, will be housed under this new unit.

Recently Implemented Interventions to More B & D Line Subway Stations

Staff is expanding effective elements of the WMP strategy to other stations, including 7th Street/Metro Center and Pershing Square, both of which are near the WMP station, Skid Row, and the associated epicenters of the opioid drug crisis.

BRIGHTER LIGHTING ON ALL SUBWAY PLATFORMS

An immediate, effective, and strongly supported intervention was brighter lighting to provide improved

visibility for customers and frontline personnel, and to also reduce dark, hidden areas challenged with loitering and illicit activity. Therefore, across the entire Metro B & D Line stations, Traction Power crews have proactively upgraded platform lighting to brighten passenger waiting areas.

- All 16 B & D Line station platforms have been 100% completed
- Crews are also underway to brighten the other station levels, including mezzanine/concourse and street-level entrances, at 30% completion

SECURING MAINTENANCE ELECTRICAL POWER RECEPTACLES

Further, Facilities Maintenance crews have made substantial progress on securing maintenance electrical power receptacles that have been persistently tampered with and vandalized.

- All 16 B & D Line stations have been 100% completed

UPGRADED LIGHTING FOR THREE ENTRANCES AT 7TH ST/METRO CENTER

In collaboration with the Central City Association and its members representing properties directly connected with station entrances to 7th Street/Metro Center, Metro has begun an initial set of interventions, including:

- Retrofitted nearly 100 existing lighting fixtures with brighter, LED bulbs to brighten entrances to improve safety and wayfinding
- Initial design underway to improving lighting and rightsizing the Flower Street elevator entrance with plans to implement in Spring 2024.

SAFE, SMART PUBLIC RESTROOM PILOT AT FOUR STATIONS

Metro's Office of Strategic Innovation (OSI) received an unsolicited proposal from Throne Labs to implement four, smart public restrooms for a 6-month period at no cost to Metro. Four locations were implemented in October 2023 at Westlake/MacArthur Park B/D Line Station, Willowbrook/Rosa Parks A/C Line Station, Norwalk C Line Station, and a bus operator layover at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station (served by frequent Metro bus service), with stations subject to change during the pilot period which runs through April 2024. These smart restrooms are being tested by both passengers and frontline employees for cleanliness, customer experience, and reliability. The pilot will evaluate uptime availability, durability, maintainability, safety, and customer satisfaction. They are currently in use in Washington DC serving local transit riders and bus operators.

This pilot intends to provide a safe, hygienic, cost effective, and reliable amenity for Metro riders, bus and train operators, and the community, incorporating design elements that encourage user accountability, and deter illicit activity which results in unusable conditions for others. These smart restrooms are data-driven and incorporate real time communications on cleanliness, functionality, and access control, which seeks to avoid design deficiencies from traditional restrooms and increase user accountability by requiring users to create a free account via text message or QR code, in which Metro's latest passenger survey data reveals that 93% of transit riders use cell phones. In future use cases, authorized access with designated care-centered partners could be made possible. Repeat offenders engaged in illicit activity and causing substantial damage or downtime for passengers could receive warnings or have access revoked to preserve restroom access for others. If this pilot is successful, staff intends to issue a competitive solicitation for larger rollout of smart public restrooms.

Within the first two months of the pilot, there are very promising indicators that this amenity is improving safety, cleanliness, and the customer experience.

- Nearly 13,500 total uses have been recorded in the first two months of operation
- Over 3,700 unique users have enrolled in the free program
- Users have reported an average 4.3 out of 5-star cleanliness rating
- Restrooms had an overall uptime of more than 90%, far exceeding Metro's pilot target of 70%
- Although each visit is allotted 10 minutes per session, Throne data shows the vast majority of people are completing their visits significantly faster
    - 1 in 2 people complete their restroom visit in under 2 minutes
    - 3 in 4 people complete their visit within 5 minutes
    - By comparison, BART's public restroom program enforces a 5-minute limit (compared with this pilot's 10-minute limit)
    - Time limits help deter inappropriate uses (i.e. drug or sexual activity) while maximizing availability to more people, improving safety and cleanliness
- Zero incidents of misuse that have taken any of the restrooms out of extended service
- Zero incidents of medical emergencies or calls for first responders (i.e. drug overdoses)
- Zero calls for police response (i.e. criminal activity)
- 50% reduction in public urination and defecation around each station at the pilot locations open to the public, meaning these stations are also substantially cleaner through a reduction in biohazard waste, based on Ambassador reports

New Interventions Under Consideration

In addition to the interventions already implemented, staff is exploring the potential future strategies:

LATCHING FAREGATES UPON EXIT

Metro faregates, which are in place at roughly half of all Metro Rail stations (58 out of 104 stations), are currently only latched upon entry (tap-in). However, Metro faregates also can be latched upon exit (tap-out), although this function was never activated during the original rollout, since the presumption was that customers would have already tapped their card at their station of origin. This results in diminished access control and missed opportunities to validate fares and ensure fare compliance, as customers entering from an ungated station and exiting at a gated station may never encounter a latched faregate.

Latching faregates upon exit is commonly used in transit agencies with distance-based fares, however, is also employed with a flat fare structure similar to LA Metro in the faregates at the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). This technique would also reduce bottlenecks that occur from fare inspection teams manually checking fares for each passenger today. Fare inspection teams can then focus on addressing those without valid fares instead of checking all fares. This technique is technically already in place at the transfer faregates at Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station, where passengers are required to tap to exit the C Line before transferring to the A Line platform, and vice versa. Latching faregates upon exit can also provide improved ridership data on where customers are exiting, which can be used to optimize service for customers.

Staff is working to implement this as a pilot at Union Station and North Hollywood, in conjunction with the ongoing multilayered deployment strategy. Because Metro faregates must also be compatible with a separate Metrolink fare system, there are additional equipment and programming

reconfigurations that must take place to ensure compatibility, particularly at Union Station where a high volume of Metro-to-Metrolink transfers occur. Staff estimates that this pilot will take approximately 90 days to implement, and therefore could begin in March 2024.

Staff will work with Customer Experience on a robust multilingual outreach campaign of customer messaging, signage, and staffing that will inform customers with advance notice of this new feature, similar to when Metro seamlessly latched entry faregates station-by-station previously in 2013. Passengers who have valid fare would NOT be double charged upon exit, but passengers who did not tap at their origin station would be charged when exiting.

STRENGTHENING FAREGATES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

Metro shares with many other transit agencies in the challenges associated with faregate misuse, including individuals who tailgate/piggyback behind fare paying passengers through the accessible faregate, or those who jump over the turnstiles. Recent data provided by Metro's law enforcement partners reveal the following:

- 93% of individuals arrested by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) do NOT have valid fare
- 87% of individuals arrested by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) do NOT have valid fare

Therefore, strengthening the faregates could be an effective additional layer to improve overall system safety.

As such, staff are monitoring the outcomes resulting from other agencies currently upgrading their faregates to deter this behavior, including Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Preliminary reports from Washington DC indicate a 70% to 85% reduction in fare evasion at stations where they have implemented faregate improvements. At the future LAX Airport Metro Connector Station, an improved paddle gate design will be implemented to improve fare compliance while facilitating travelers with luggage, so we will monitor those results also.

RELOCATING FAREGATES AND STATION CLOSURE GATES

As part of improving access control to improve public safety and cleanliness, staff are exploring the feasibility of relocating faregates and station closure roll gates from inside the station and out to the station entrances, which would improve access control by expanding the paid area of the station and reduce loitering and vandalism during overnight periods when stations are closed. This is consistent with the station design of the recently opened Regional Connector stations in Downtown LA.

IMPROVING ELEVATOR SAFETY & RELIABILITY

Metro's Vertical Transportation unit maintains nearly 150 elevators systemwide and typically spends over $1 million each year in broken glass repair attributed to vandalism. Furthermore, loitering and illicit activity inside station elevators can prevent and deter passengers with disabilities and parents with strollers from accessing Metro stations. Previous passenger surveys have indicated that Metro passengers, particularly women riding transit, avoid using station elevators to access trains, even if an alternative bus journey takes longer. As a result, staff is exploring new features to deter misuse of elevators.

In Portland, Oregon, TriMet is piloting the required use of tapping a valid fare card to use the elevator which is a commonplace practice in hotels and office buildings. Their preliminary findings have shown a reduction in misuse and an increase in elevator uptime.

Staff is also looking at keeping elevator doors open when not in use, facilitating fresh air circulation and reducing hidden privacy inside the elevator compartment.

ENHANCING SECURITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

While the blended approach of ambassadors security, and law enforcement provides substantial improvements to public safety, the number of stations and public areas remain a challenge to maximize visibility. Therefore, it is also important to layer a technology component that allows uniformed personnel to better respond to locations where they are most effective, using a data-driven approach. This can include:

- Additional CCTV cameras and intrusion detection systems for all emergency exit doors leading to ancillary areas
- Upgrading existing CCTV cameras to higher resolution and network communications for better response and insights
- Expansion of video analytics software to assist in real-time flagging of security events and to improve investigations

Staff is planning to present a separate funding request for these technology upgrades in the coming months.

Planning Underway to Expand Efforts to Light Rail Stations and Bus Transit Centers with Similar Challenges

Looking beyond the B & D Line subway stations, staff will be considering a range of criteria for future deployment of station interventions throughout the Metro service area, including ridership, public safety data, cleanliness and functionality data, homeless outreach data, frontline employee feedback and rider input, 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. A tiered list of stations is described in more detail in Attachment B.

Menu of Environmental Design Interventions

- Brighter lighting
- Rightsizing entrances, passageways, and other areas where illicit activity was taking place
- Increased fresh air ventilation (for indoor stations)
- Station music or ambient sound
- Strengthening and reorienting faregates and station roll-gates
- Improved wayfinding and other signage
- Safe, clean, and reliable public restrooms
- Elevator access control modifications

Menu of Care-Based Strategies

- LIFE pop-ups
- Department of Health Services Mobile Health Clinic
- Homeless outreach teams
- Ambassador teams
- Crisis interventionists
- Substance abuse counselors
- Homeless Connect days
- Station activation events
- Community resource fairs

As much was learned about successful interventions at WMP, Staff is also looking to test interventions at other rail stations with persistent public safety and cleanliness challenges. While WMP has had a diverse range of challenges from medical emergencies, criminal activity, and people experiencing homelessness, other stations may not experience the same issues in equal proportions. Staff is now turning to a station-by-station approach to improve public safety further, using similar strategies to Westlake/MacArthur Park Station to develop further and implement tactical design interventions and staffing adjustments for other stations.

Potential stations for initial pilot interventions include (subject to change):

- Lake Av in Pasadena (A Line)
  - Persistent loitering and illicit activity around station entrances
  - Tied for second lowest A Line score in appearance (2.83 out of 4.00)
- Hollywood/Highland (B Line)
  - Persistent loitering and willful blocking at the station entrance
  - Inappropriate activity in and around station elevators, presenting continual concerns from customers requiring elevator assistance
- Downtown Santa Monica (E Line)
  - Excessive fare evasion and trespassing from emergency exit, creating safety issues along trackways with frequent train movement
  - Third lowest E Line score in appearance (2.92 out of 4.00)
- Norwalk (C Line)
  - Dim waiting areas at connecting bus bays
  - Loitering on platform, behind I-105 Freeway pillar structures and under stairwells

EQUITY PLATFORM

The goal of this work is to provide public safety and reliability improvements to Metro riders using the B & D Lines, in which 8 in 10 transit riders are BIPOC, 8 in 10 do not own a car and therefore rely on Metro service, and 8 in 10 are below HUD's "Very Low Income" threshold. Further, 75% of Metro B & D Line stations reside within Metro's Equity Focus Communities (EFCs), including Westlake/MacArthur Park, 7th Street/Metro Center and Pershing Square. Staff has conducted hundreds of extensive, multilingual passenger intercept surveys that are controlled for the demographics of B & D Line riders and the surrounding community, receiving overwhelmingly strong support to continue and expand these initiatives to improve their actual and perceived feelings of

public safety. Staff will continue surveying transit riders throughout this process and communicate interventions made to the stations, which includes updates to the Public Safety Advisory Committee and Regional Service Councils. Further, staff has continually coordinated all work with Civil Rights & Inclusion, ensuring that proposed changes, including station redesigns, lighting upgrades, and restroom facilities, are intentionally designed with accessibility in mind.

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

The new Station Experience unit will continue to build on the momentum of this program. 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. The Station Experience unit will develop program level solutions to evaluate individual station conditions with its partners as well as develop resource plans and capital projects to ensure program-wide benefits of these early efforts remain in place for Metro riders and frontline employees moving forward. Staff plans to provide another update in April 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Board Motion 30 WLMP
Attachment B - Tiered List of Stations

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Los Angeles County
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3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

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 – *PRELIMINARY DRAFT* TIERED LIST OF STATIONS

List is subject to change as further analysis is completed.

DRAFT CRITERIA INPUTS	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
Appearance Score from Quarterly Station Evaluations	Low	Medium	High
Reported Crime, Citations, Warnings	High	Medium	Low / No
Customer Care Complaints	High	Medium	Low / No
Observations of People Experiencing Homelessness	High	Medium	Low / No
Equity Focus Community Location	Higher Priority	Priority	-

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
7th Street/Metro Center	103rd Street/Watts Towers	17th St./SMC
Anaheim St.	APU/Citrus College	1st Street
Artesia	Atlantic	26th St./Bergamot
Avalon	Azusa Downtown	*37th St./USC
Aviation/LAX	*Cal State LA	5th Street
*Chatsworth	*Canoga	Allen
Chinatown	*Cesar Chavez Transit Pavilion	Arcadia
Compton	Crenshaw/I-105	*Balboa
Downtown Santa Monica	Culver City	**Burbank Downtown Metrolink
Expo/Crenshaw	**Culver City Transit Center	*Carson Transitway
Expo/La Brea	Del Amo	*Cal State LA
Firestone	Downtown Inglewood	Civic Center/Grand Park
Grand/LATTC	Downtown Long Beach	*De Soto
Harbor Freeway	*El Monte Bus Station	*Del Amo Transit Center
Hawthorne/Lennox	Expo/Western	Del Mar
Highland Park	Fairview Heights	Douglas
Hollywood/Highland	Fillmore	Duarte/City of Hope
Lake	Florence	East LA Civic Center
LATTC/Ortho Institute	Grand Av Arts/Bunker Hill	El Segundo
*Manchester	*Harbor Gateway Transit Center	Expo Park/USC
Martin Luther King Jr	Hollywood/Vine	Expo/Bundy
Memorial Park	Hyde Park	Expo/Vermont
*MLK Compton Transit Terminal	Indiana	Farmdale
North Hollywood	Jefferson/USC	Heritage Square/Arroyo
Norwalk	La Cienega/Jefferson	Historic Broadway
Pacific Coast Hwy	Lakewood Blvd.	Hollywood/Western
Pershing Square	*Laurel Canyon	**Inglewood Transit Center
Pico	Leimart Park	Irwindale
*Pico-Rimpau Transit Center	Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park	*LAX City Bus Center
*Reseda	Long Beach Blvd.	Little Tokyo/Arts District
San Pedro St.	Mariachi Plaza/Boyle Heights	Maravilla

DRAFT

*Sherman Way	*Nordhoff	Mariposa
*Slauson Transitway	*Pacific Coast Hwy Transitway	Monrovia
Soto	Redondo Beach	Pacific Av
**South Bay Galleria	*Roscoe	Palms
**Sylmar Metrolink	*Rosecrans Transitway	Pico/Aliso
Union Station	*Sepulveda	*Pierce College/Winnetka
*USC Medical Ctr.	Sierra Madre Villa	*Redondo Beach Transit Center
*Van Nuys	Slauson	South Pasadena
Vermont/Athens	Southwest Museum	*Valley College
Westlake/MacArthur Park	*Tampa	Vermont/Beverly
Willowbrook/Rosa Parks	Universal City/Studio City	Wardlow
	Vermont/Santa Monica	Washington
	Vermont/Sunset	Westchester-Veterans
	Vernon	Westwood/Rancho Park
	*Warner Center	Wilshire/Normandie
	Willow St.	Wilshire/Western
	Wilshire/Vermont	*Woodley
		*Woodman

*denotes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station or Bus Transit Center

**denotes non-Metro property with Metro service

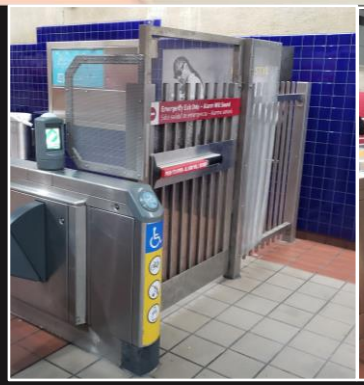
DRAFT

Building on Success of Pilot Interventions at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station

January 2024

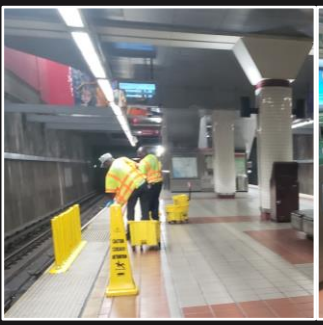
Metro

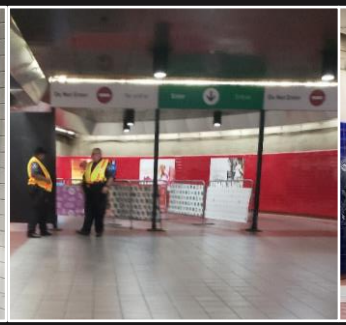
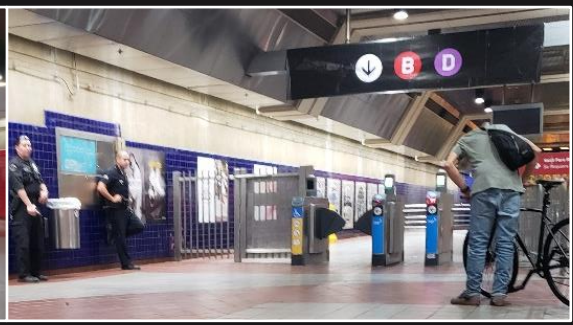
WESTLAKE/MACARTHUR PARK | RECENT PROGRESS



Clean, safe, well-lit station & seating // Over 20% reduction in emergency exit misuse since mesh install // Children playing soccer under brighter lights & CCTV

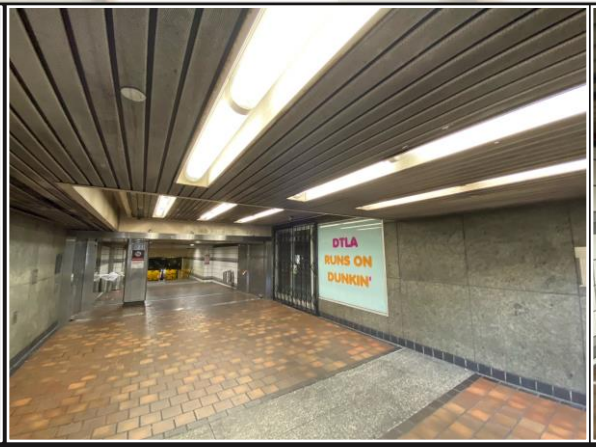
Before & After: *Addressing hiding spots previously used for illicit activity is improving outdoor plaza cleanliness and safety*

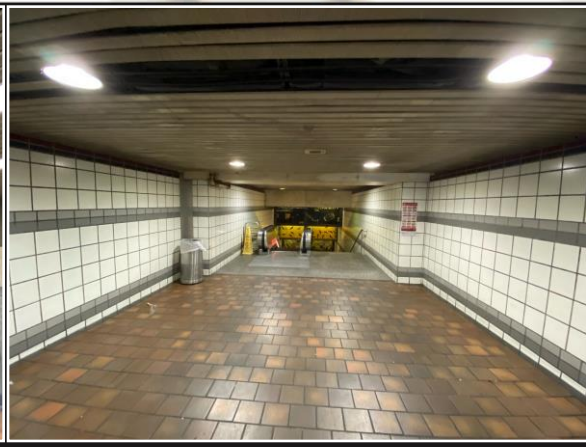


Multilayered human approach of Custodians, Ambassadors, Homeless Outreach, Security and Law Enforcement

7TH ST / METRO CTR | LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS



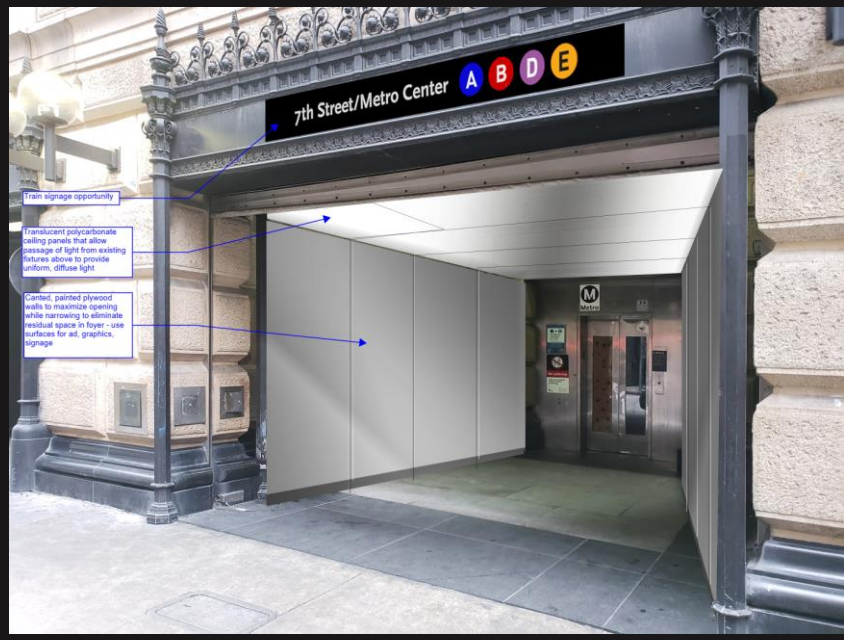


*In July 2023, crews installed nearly **100 brighter, LED bulbs at station entrances and passageways** to restore comfort and safety*

Flower St Elevator Entrance

← Existing

Concept →



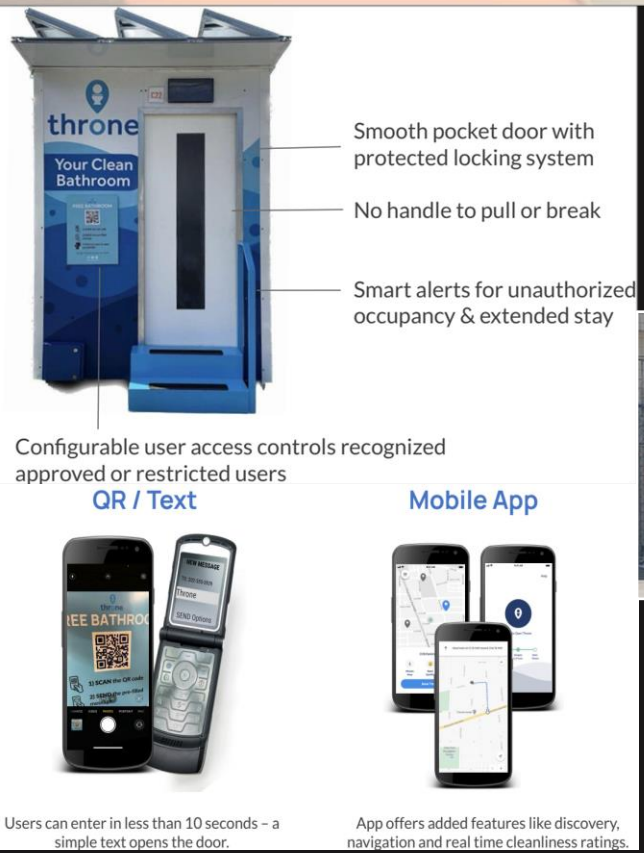
***Existing & Concept:** Tactical lighting, rightsizing, and signage improvements to create a safe, intuitive, welcoming entrance*

NEW "STATION EXPERIENCE" UNIT TO EXPAND STRATEGIES

- Given the successful results at Westlake/MacArthur Park, Operations has created a new "Station Experience" unit to further improve public safety and cleanliness
- Criteria for future deployment includes data on ridership, public safety, cleanliness, homeless outreach, frontline employee and customer input
- Next potential stations for pilot interventions include (*subject to change*):
  - Lake Av in Pasadena (A Line)
  - Hollywood/Highland (B Line)
  - Norwalk (C Line)
  - Downtown Santa Monica (E Line)

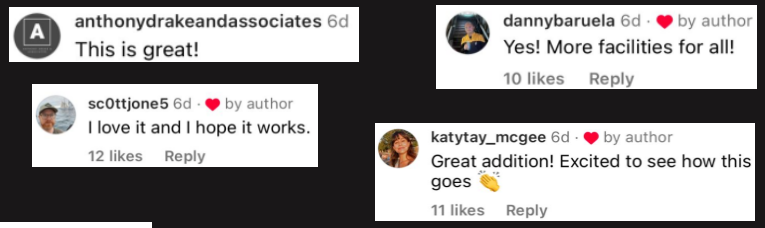
Environmental Design Interventions	*paired with...* **Care-Based Strategies**
• Lighting upgrades • Rightsizing entrances, passageways, and plazas to improve safety in numbers and access control • Increased fresh air ventilation (indoor stations) • Station music or ambient sound • Strengthen and reorienting faregates and rollgates • Safe, clean, and reliable public restrooms • Elevator access control modifications	• LIFE Pop-Ups • Dept. of Health Services Mobile Health Clinic • Homeless Outreach teams • Metro Ambassador teams • Crisis interventionists • Substance abuse counselors

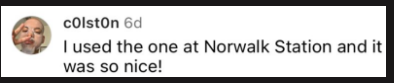
SMART, TOUCHLESS PUBLIC RESTROOMS PILOT | THRONE LABS

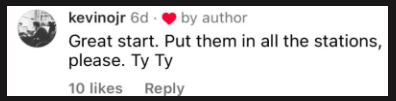


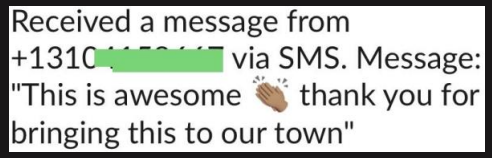
- 6-month, unsolicited proposal pilot with Throne Labs
- **FREE to use** via text message, QR code, or Mobile App, under 10 seconds to enter (93% Metro riders carry cell phones)
- In first two months, over **13,500 total uses**, over **3,700 unique users**, 4.3 out of 5-star user cleanliness rating, and ZERO incidents of major damage
- **50% reduction in public urination**/defecation reports at each pilot location

Pilot locations at Westlake/MacArthur Park, Willowbrook/Rosa Parks, Norwalk and Sylmar Bus Layover









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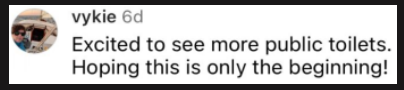

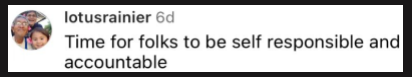

KCRW News Interview from Nov 13, 2023

Gabriel Fury, who is homeless, described the restroom as "Immaculate. I can actually stay in there and breathe." When asked about needing a phone, he said "It's not a big deal, everyone has a cell phone nowadays."

NEW INTERVENTIONS PROPOSED

Photo Credit: TriMet, Portland, OR

- Latching Existing Faregates Upon Exit
  - Increases proportion of riders who will use faregates during their trip
  - Improves ridership data to plan better service
  - Pilot at North Hollywood and Union Station could begin as early as March 2024

- Strengthening Emergency Swing Gates and Relocating Station Closure Gates
  - 9 in 10 arrested do not have valid fare
  - Emergency Swing Gate partitions result in over 20% decrease in misuse
  - Police can focus on “Respect the Ride” campaign
  - Pair with LIFE and other reduced fare programs to protect low-income riders

- Improving Elevator Safety & Reliability
  - Portland TriMet piloting valid farecard to use elevator (i.e. hotel room key concept)
  - Keeping elevator doors open when not in use

Metro

NEXT STEPS

- Station Experience unit will:
  - Develop program level solutions to evaluate individual station conditions with its partners
  - Develop resource plans and capital projects to ensure program-wide benefits of early efforts
  - Provide status update in April 2024
- Must continue to rely on key partners and support so that the agency can focus on operating a safe and reliable transit system

Metro