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with applicable engineering standards. These standards permit only one sign at each end of escalators, and any other signage must be approximately 10 feet away from the escalator.³⁴ (See Figures 6–8.) At this time, Metro has no plans to implement stand-right, walk-left signage, but it expects to produce a public service announcement video on this matter in the near future.³⁵



Fig. 6 Metro Red Line Civic Center Station sign at downtown's Hall of Records entrance/exit.

Fig. 7 At right, Metro Red Line Civic Center Station sign at downtown's Hall of Records entrance/exit.

Photos by Civil Grand Jury, taken April 14, 2015



³⁴ American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Standard 6.1.6.9.1.

³⁵ Email from transportation analyst in the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles



Fig. 8 Metro Red Line Civic Center Station across from downtown’s Los Angeles Superior Court Stanley Mosk Courthouse entrance/exit, with no signage.

Photo by Civil Grand Jury, taken April 14, 2015



Fig. 9. A cyclist emerges from the Red Line Metro Station across from Los Angeles Superior Court Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

Photo by Civil Grand Jury, taken April 14, 2015

Bicycles taken on escalators and stairs by commuters are another safety concern. Metro policy regarding bicyclists states, “Use elevators or stairs to enter and exit the station. Bikes are not allowed on escalators.”³⁶ However, with no signs in the rail stations or on platforms to alert bicycle riders to take their bikes to the elevators or stairs, bikes are taken on the escalators every day. (See Figure 9.)

³⁶ www.metro.net.

PLANNING AND LAND USE

The city of Los Angeles (city) makes up 40 percent of the population of Los Angeles County. The city's stated policy is to encourage ride-, car-, and bike-sharing, along with bike hubs. The city's Department of City Planning (planners) and the mayor's office of Transportation Services work with Metro and are responsible for the area surrounding stations/platforms.

The city's and planners' two programs along the Expo Line and the Crenshaw Line are Transit Neighborhood Planning³⁷ and Transit Oriented Districts (TOD). These districts are within easy walking distance from each Metro stop. The areas have a wide mix of uses: moderate to high development, and streets designed for pedestrians and all types of transport. The city has received two grants from Metro. The first grant is a two-year project at \$3.1 million: for the Expo Line, to be completed in 2016, and for the Crenshaw LAX Line, to be completed in 2019. The second grant is part of a third round in the amount of \$4.5 million for the Metro Rail Purple Line, the Metro Rail Red Line, and the Orange Line busway.

There are 35 community plans with a citywide section that focuses on mobility. The city's goal is to create vibrant neighborhoods and leverage public investment so that the value of the property increases. In addition, public benefits accrue, including affordable housing, streetscape plans, and/or meeting rooms built with developers' funds.

The city's strategies to increase riders include:

- Increasing density and diversity of commercial enterprises and housing around stations to a half-mile radius
- Providing affordable housing near stations
- Adjusting parking requirements and regulating Transportation Demand Management strategies³⁸
- Improving nearby streets and public spaces

According to the UCLA source, drivers who take responsibility for climate change are more likely to take public transportation. In the past, developers were encouraged to widen roads; planners now regard road-widening as contributing to congestion and pollution. The planners' goal is to manipulate people out of their cars. Younger generations now believe in living in or near downtown so that they can walk or bike to work.

³⁷ The City of Los Angeles, in partnership with Metro, aims to support vibrant neighborhoods around transit stations, where people can live, work and shop or eat out, all within a safe and pleasant walk to transit stations.

³⁸ The application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand (specifically that of single-occupancy private vehicles).

The city planners said that improving streets and public spaces for the first and last mile on the way to public transport makes it more likely that commuters will continue to use Metro’s system. The city is in control of the land use of the streets and sidewalks and posts directions to nearby Metro stations. The city’s goal is for housing, jobs, shopping, and entertainment to be within walking distance of Metro stations.³⁹

Metro is building a light-rail Downtown and Regional Connector (Connector) that will traverse downtown where the Expo Line, Gold Line, and Blue Line converge. (See Fig. 10, following.) Metro’s stated goal is to encourage the 50,000 residents and other potential riders in downtown Los Angeles to use the Connector to travel around the neighborhood instead of getting into their cars. The Connector will be finished by 2020 at a cost of \$1.427 billion and is partially funded by Measure R.

The new stations will be at:

- 2nd Street and Hope Street
- 2nd Street and Broadway Street
- 1st Street and Central Avenue in Little Tokyo

Fig. 10



³⁹ Complete street policies broadly mandate that all streets need to accommodate people using all modes of travel—including walking, bicycling, public transportation, and driving.

Metro sells land it no longer needs to developers, but those developers offer only the minimum in affordable housing units.⁴⁰ The Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Sustainable Corridor Implementation Plan of June 29, 2012, states the creation of housing within the station area is critical to the success of transit. The plan found that many riders on the Orange Line earn 80 percent less than the city median income of \$48,000—or \$9,600—which qualifies them as low-income earners. According to the plan, “Senior housing and special-needs housing near transit are also important.”

The plan further states, “Constructing this housing in select Orange Line TODs will have the co-benefits of adding potential transit riders (70 percent of transit riders in the city earn less than \$25,000) and providing more housing to this critical demographic. Stations where workforce housing should be pursued include North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Reseda, Canoga, and Warner Center. North Hollywood and Canoga stations should be particularly considered for affordable housing as they offer ready access to a range of job opportunities for the city’s lower-income residents.”

This plan addresses only the Orange Line but supports arguments that for the benefit of the transit system and its riders, more affordable housing needs to be located near Metro stations.

MAINTENANCE

The system includes 2,900 maintenance employees, spread out over 11 districts throughout Los Angeles County. There are 300 outside contractors—including pest control, landscaping, TAP Card, and escalator maintenance. Metro maintains 300 elevators, 6,000 fire extinguishers, and 16,000 bus stops. Employees restricted to “light duty” are assigned to ride Metro rail to spot and fix problems as they arise.

According to Metro, operations cover:

- 80 rail/light rail stations/platforms, over a service area of 1,433 square miles
- 2,228 buses, all fueled by 100 percent compressed natural gas (of which 1,780 are on the streets on any given day, facilitating 27,461,074 monthly boardings)
- 2,200 non-revenue vehicles, including 400 Toyota Camry hybrids
- 87 miles of track serving four light rail and two subway lines

⁴⁰ Los Angeles County Community Development Commission management.

- Buses are expected to operate 18–20 hours per day, and they are scheduled for replacement after 12 years or 500,000 miles but often serve 14 years

Graffiti costs Metro \$1.2 million per year: 41,000 graffiti tags are removed annually by a staff of nine painters. Metro is at the forefront of new and unpublicized technology in combatting this problem. An invisible plastic film now covers all of the stainless steel on the Red Line so that replacement due to vandalism costs \$4 per square foot rather than the original \$1,000. Metro found a solution through Disneyland for deteriorating painted surfaces when Metro adopted a heavier based product known throughout the industry as “theme park paint.”

Helpful to riders with mobility issues, Metro alerts passengers to station elevator outages on the subways and gives bus route information to the next station. This information makes it easier for passengers to go to a station where an elevator is working.

When there is a problem at a subway or light rail station, or any point in between, Metro uses “bus bridges” to move passengers around the problem.⁴¹ In the event of an unplanned outage, the wait time for this service to begin is longer than for a planned one. Instructions given to riders within the rail car are not always informative; usually these instructions state only that all passengers must exit. Communication with riders on a noisy street after they exit the station is difficult because the passengers can’t hear what’s being said and the employee must repeat the same information. One of Metro’s regular bus routes may be able to take riders where they want to go, but unfamiliarity with the system would hinder that, making the bus bridge the only alternative.

TECHNOLOGY

Cell Phone/Wi-Fi

According to Metro staff, Metro has contracted with InSite Wireless Group, LLC, to provide cell phone and Wi-Fi coverage on all rail lines. Cell phone coverage will be available in the stations/platforms and in the trains. Installation will be rolled out in three phases:

- Phase 1: Red-Purple Lines (Union Station to 7th St./Metro Center)
Wi-Fi—May 2015
Cellular—August 2015

⁴¹ Passengers exit the station or platform and board buses that will transport them in the direction they were heading.

- Phase 2: Red-Purple Lines (Westlake to Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/Vermont to Vermont/Sunset)
Wi-Fi—December 2015
Cellular—June 2016
- Phase 3: Red Line (Hollywood/Western to North Hollywood) and the Gold Line (Mariachi Plaza to Soto)
Wi-Fi— November 2016
Cellular—March 2017

The revenue generated by both enhancements is estimated to bring in \$1 million to \$2 million annually to Metro, according to the project leader. A Wi-Fi pilot project to obtain metrics and gauge feasibility and interest is currently being conducted on buses.⁴² Metro has completed the specification phase to allow riders to make TAP card payments by a phone app available to iOS and Android and is now in the process of reviewing procurement strategies.⁴³

Countdown Clocks

The Metro rail lines display screens that alert riders when the next train will arrive at the station/platform. The screen lists the end destination(s) and the length of time, in minutes, until that train's arrival. This may alleviate stresses of waiting. The screen may also post travel advisory information—including schedule changes and outages that riders find helpful. However, because travel advisories alternate with arrival information, waiting for the screen to change can be frustrating. Metro posts arrival time information at a few of its bus stops around Union Station at Cesar Chavez Avenue and Metro's Patsaouras Transit Plaza. The UCLA source encourages screens at bus stops that deliver real-time, minute-by-minute, arrival information. Los Angeles riders can buy the whereslamet app for 0.99 cents to find the real-time arrival of the next bus. Visible, reliable information lowers rider anxiety.

⁴² Metro Executive Management Committee on customer Experience Technology Improvements , Nov. 6, 2014.

⁴³ Ibid.

Traffic Signal Priority

Travel Signal Priority (TSP) is technology that reduces the amount of time Metro buses spend at red lights. It helps maintain scheduled wait times between buses and minimizes adverse impacts on cross-street traffic. Metro has helped construct and implement TSP along its Rapid corridors to better serve the community.

One UCLA source said moving bus stops another 1,000 feet apart would increase the journey from eight miles an hour to 10 miles an hour, reducing the wait time, but will increase the rider walk time in most cases.

PARKING

There are 48 Metro stations with Park & Ride lots:⁴⁴

- 23 locations owned by Metro
- 17 locations owned by Caltrans
- 12 locations public or privately owned
- 1,000 Preferred Parking (paid monthly) spaces

The monthly fee for Preferred Parking spaces (PPS) at Metro stations ranges from \$29 to \$59, depending on the station. Metro estimates it loses 1,500 riders per day at its North Hollywood Red Line Station and the popular Orange Line BRT, because the free parking spaces are taken by 7:30 a.m. and the PPS are sold out. At the Red Line's Universal/Studio City lot, free parking is taken by 7 a.m. At the Sierra Madre Villa station on the Gold Line and the Wardlow station on the Blue Line, monthly paid parking spaces are sold out.⁴⁵ The PPS are reserved until 10:30 a.m. and become available for free public use after 11:00 a.m. Many of Metro's parking lots are completely free. At 11 of the 15 lots where monthly paid parking is offered, spaces are still available to rent. Metro would prefer that riders take a bus rather than a car to their stations, but that creates the need for more buses along the arteries. The Orange Line BRT artery to the downtown-bound Red Line is standing room only during the daily commute and may discourage discretionary riders from taking public transportation.

⁴⁴ Metro Parking Management, Work Program, Jan. 27, 2015.

⁴⁵ www.LA.Times.com, California Commute: Lack of parking drives many away from mass transit by Laura J. Nelson, Oct. 21, 2014

A professor in the Department of Planning in the Luskin School of Public Affairs at the University of California, Los Angeles, offered these ideas:

- Metro could offer deep-discount transit fares to companies who would then offer their employees monthly transit passes and no free parking. The employee would be more likely to use transit, and there would be a gradual shift away from driving. Metro would benefit from the sale of passes. Parking lots can be converted to other uses: Roof-level parking in Century City now has solar panels, or parking spots could be sold on an hourly basis.
- Make the automobile less attractive.
- Change validated parking at shopping malls to fee parking.
- Give all county employees a monthly transit pass and charge them for parking or possibly even a tax for driving.
- A city can purchase transit passes in bulk and give them to residents.
- Give teenagers transit passes to discourage them from driving.
- Increase the number of shuttle buses, like the Dash in downtown Los Angeles, to provide short rides for a minimal fee.

Building and maintaining Metro parking is expensive. It is not completely funded by the parking fees and is in part subsidized by those riders who do not have a car. The July 9–July 24, 2014, Metro RAIL Customer Survey Results asked riders if they had a car available to them; 58 percent answered “no,” which is up 7 percent from 2013. The survey also lists median household total annual earnings for its riders at \$21,980. A substantial majority of Metro use is nondiscretionary, and those riders do not use parking spaces. A Metro study in 2007 researched the development of 1,150 structured public parking spaces that were included in a joint development proposal for the North Hollywood station. These improvements were part of a proposed 1.5-million-square-foot mixed-use project that failed to proceed as a result of the real estate recession. The cost of replacing 750 parking spaces in the North Hollywood station main north lot with a parking structure to free up a portion of the site for development would likely exceed \$20 million.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Metro 28 Multi-Modal Transit Improvement Options for Red Line San Fernando Valley Stations and Parking Utilization Study Update. Planning and Programming committee, July 16, 2014.

Metro's website offers a daily paid parking option. The program is contracted to ParkingHelp.com. It lists 16 lots where riders can purchase daily parking spaces. The user must register online and use a mobile phone to pay for a parking space for the day. However, the program list includes parking lots where paid parking spaces are already sold out. The Colorado-based company does not list a toll-free number on its website; it lists only its Denver number. In addition, the list of stations seems to be organized haphazardly.

In 1989, Metro's parking inventory consisted of 2,000 parking spaces. There are now more than 22,000. This number will reach 30,000 when the EXPO II and the Foothill Extension begin operation and the Caltrans Park & Ride lots are transferred to Metro.⁴⁷ At this time, Metro does not have parking regulations that allow it to properly monitor parking. A parking ordinance will be voted on by Metro's board in April 2015 and if adopted will be in place Aug. 1, 2015. The parking ordinance⁴⁸ will make it possible for Metro to cite parking violators and sets limits on changes Metro can make to parking fees.⁴⁹

Further studies remaining for Metro to complete include the building of parking structures, paving Metro-owned land near stations, and restriping some of the lots.

FINDINGS

1. A bill has been introduced in the California State Senate that would allow Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to seek a new sales tax via the ballot.
2. The Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit is congested during peak times.
3. Metro used the goal of achieving a 33 percent farebox recovery rate as a reason to raise fares in 2014 and increase enforcement of fare collection.
4. Metro uses armed and unarmed personnel to cite fare evaders.
5. Metro safety signage is ineffective.

⁴⁷ Metro 52, Executive Management Committee, March 19, 2015, Subject: Metro Parking Ordinance, Metro Parking Rates and Permit Fee Resolution.

⁴⁸ Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Administrative Code, Title 8.

⁴⁹ Metro Parking management, San Gabriel Valley Service Council Minutes, March 9, 2015.