



September 8, 2015

VIA EMAIL (washingtonp@metro.net)

Philip Washington, CEO
Metro
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Washington,

We write to express our concern regarding public safety at the many Metro light-rail stations located throughout downtown Los Angeles. As reported last year, an audit found that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department failed to adequately secure Metro's bus and rail lines.¹ As the Los Angeles Times reported, the audit states that "[w]ithout a coordinated policing plan for the countywide transit system, deputies have not been able to help passengers with questions and do not have a 'felt presence' on trains and buses []. It also found that the department has no way to quickly route emergency calls to other law enforcement agencies when their assistance is needed."² As Mayor Garcetti said, "[i]f there's a feeling that people aren't safe, that affects our ridership."³ We completely agree.

The reality is that with no Metro or law enforcement personnel permanently assigned to light-rail stations, riders are too often subjected to harassment, threats, and intimidation. Riders simply have no recourse, no one to turn to for assistance. Stations are places where people congregate. As such, some see this as an opportunity to victimize riders. Compounding the issue, is the lack of any wireless or cellular network in stations and trains. Riders are left to fend for themselves. This is unacceptable, especially in the nation's third-largest bus and rail system.

And in the Red Line, riders are trapped in individual cars between stations where they are subjected to whatever whims a rider may wish to impose on others. In one incident, a physical altercation broke out in a train car as it was traveling between stations. Riders in the car ran from one end to another to avoid being hit. As soon as the train came to the station, everyone fled for the doors. There was no law enforcement present, no communication from the conductor, absolutely nothing. Riders were again left to fend for themselves.

¹ http://media.metro.net/about_us/oig/images/14aud08_lasd_audit_2014-Jun.pdf

² <http://www.latimes.com/local/cityhall/la-me-transit-audit-20140724-story.html>

³ *Id.*

Metro **must** do better. Provided below is a list of actions that the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council requests be immediately considered and implemented to protect the public, increase safety, reduce liability, and improve ridership:

1. **Station Presence:** Assign full-time Metro personnel to each and every station, particularly underground stations, and make their presence known at all hours of operation.
2. **Safety:** Increase law enforcement presence in stations and trains. In lines where cars are not interconnected to enable riders to move from one car to another, law enforcement should make rounds by visiting each train car by moving between cars at stations.
3. **WiFi or Cellular Service:** Install wireless and/or cellular infrastructure to enable riders to contact law enforcement when waiting in station or riding on trains. In addition, similar to the MyLA 311 mobile app, Metro may consider adding crime reporting functionality to its own Go Metro app. Such functionality may also include the ability to report vandalism, make clean-up requests, and report issues.
4. **Training:** Train conductors on how to identify trouble riders and to interject by intercom where an incident appears to be escalating. If necessary, call for law enforcement.
5. **Lighting:** Pedestrian thoroughfares leading to Metro stations should be well lit.
6. **Surveillance:** Install video surveillance to monitor stations and install signage informing riders of video monitoring.
7. **Designate Safety Zones:** In stations, designate a safety waiting zone that is actively monitored by video surveillance and has intercoms readily available within the spaces to call for help or report any suspicious activity. The waiting zones would act as safe havens for late night riders and deter would-be attackers. Zones similar to these have been installed in the Taipei Metro system.⁴

⁴ <https://openideo.com/challenge/womens-safety/research/zoned-safety-nighttime-safety-zones-in-taipei-transit-system>



These actions, if implemented, would discourage illicit behavior and increase safety, reduce liability, and improve ridership. Thank you for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

Patricia Berman
DLANC President

Sincerely,

Eric R. Garcia
DLANC Community Impact Committee Chair

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