

Neurodiverse Rider Experience Survey & Engagement Initiative

April 2026



Background

Neurodiversity Considerations



California contains approximately 200,000 individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), approximately one-third of whom live in LA County.



Neurodiverse individuals experience the world differently.



There is a critical need to develop independence and skills to support pathways to career and workforce development.

Metro Board Motion April 2025



Understand the system from neurodiverse perspectives.



Develop a survey to identify unique needs and perspectives from non-riders.



Pinpoint gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for short-, medium-, and long-term changes to policy, programming, and infrastructure.

External Factors



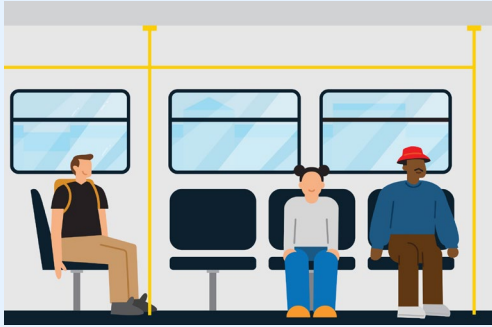
Metro seeks to remove barriers and create lasting legacy infrastructure projects and programs.



Los Angeles to host the Olympic Games in **2028**.

Methods – Mixed Methods Research Design

Mystery Riders



QUALITATIVE MEASURE 1

- **29** mystery riders
- **Over 200 rides** journaled: identified key topics for consideration
- Occurred across the Metro system on both bus and rail

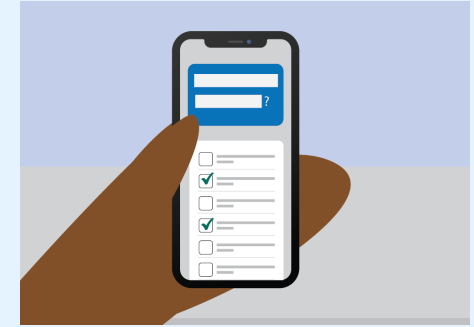
Listening Sessions



QUALITATIVE MEASURE 2

- **4 listening sessions** across LA County
- Small group guided discussion
- Feedback provided through pictures and words
- Comfortable community setting where services are delivered

Countywide Survey



QUANTITATIVE MEASURE 1

- Digitally powered social media based campaign
- Survey developed for and informed by ND individuals and caregivers throughout development process
- Open over a 5 week period
- **1,630** validated responses

Myster Riders: Positives and Challenges

Mystery riders described their transit journeys using words like:



A word cloud of positive transit experiences. The most prominent words are 'Clean', 'Nice Bus Driver', 'On Time', 'Fun', 'Safe', 'Not Crowded', 'Air-Conditioning', 'Comfortable', 'Fast', 'Calm', 'Quiet', 'Nice riders', 'Friends', 'Relaxed', 'Excited', 'Accessible', 'Interesting', 'Easy', 'Cool', 'Smooth', 'Quick', 'No Traffic', 'Short', and 'Close'.

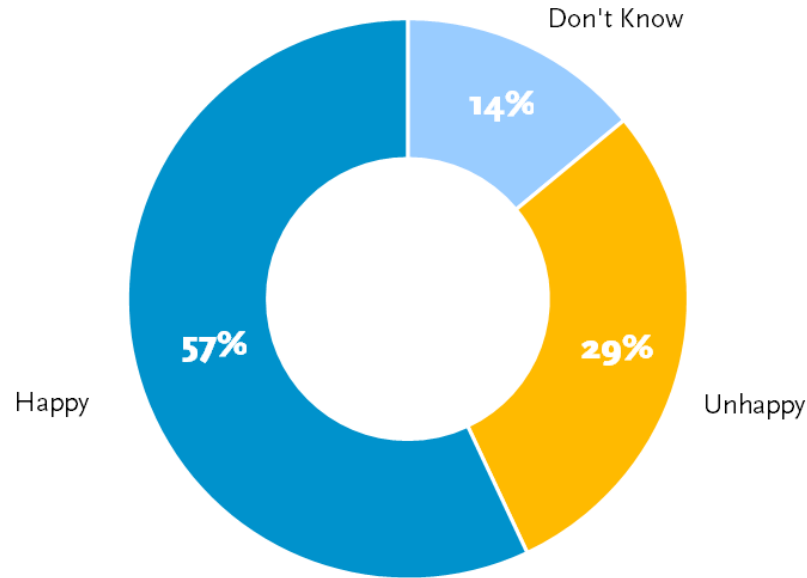
Mystery riders described their transit journeys using words like:



A word cloud of transit challenges. The most prominent words are 'Long', 'Crowded', 'Wait', 'Bus broke down', 'Late', 'Walk', 'Dirty', 'Traffic', 'Not Safe', 'Missed the bus/train', 'Argument', 'Nervous', 'Worried', 'Aware', 'Dark', 'TAP Cards', 'Wrong bus', 'Noise', 'Hot', 'Smell', 'Rushing', 'Tired', 'Couldn't find the right bus', 'Rude', 'Bumpy', 'Lost', 'Loud', 'Not enough shade', and 'Dark'.

Survey Findings: Overall Happiness (Satisfaction)

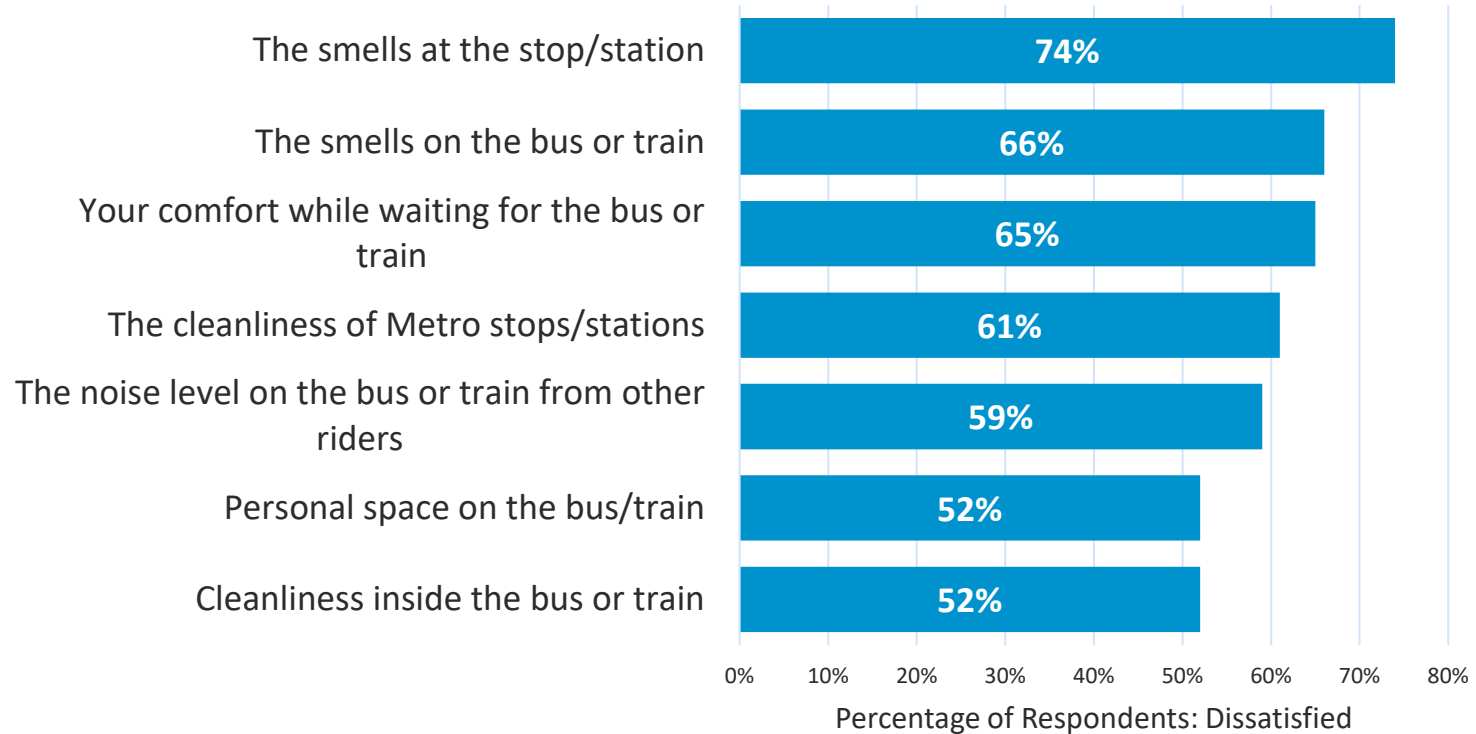
How happy or unhappy are you with your overall Metro experience?



Majority of respondents are overall happy with their Metro experience

Survey Findings: Pain Points

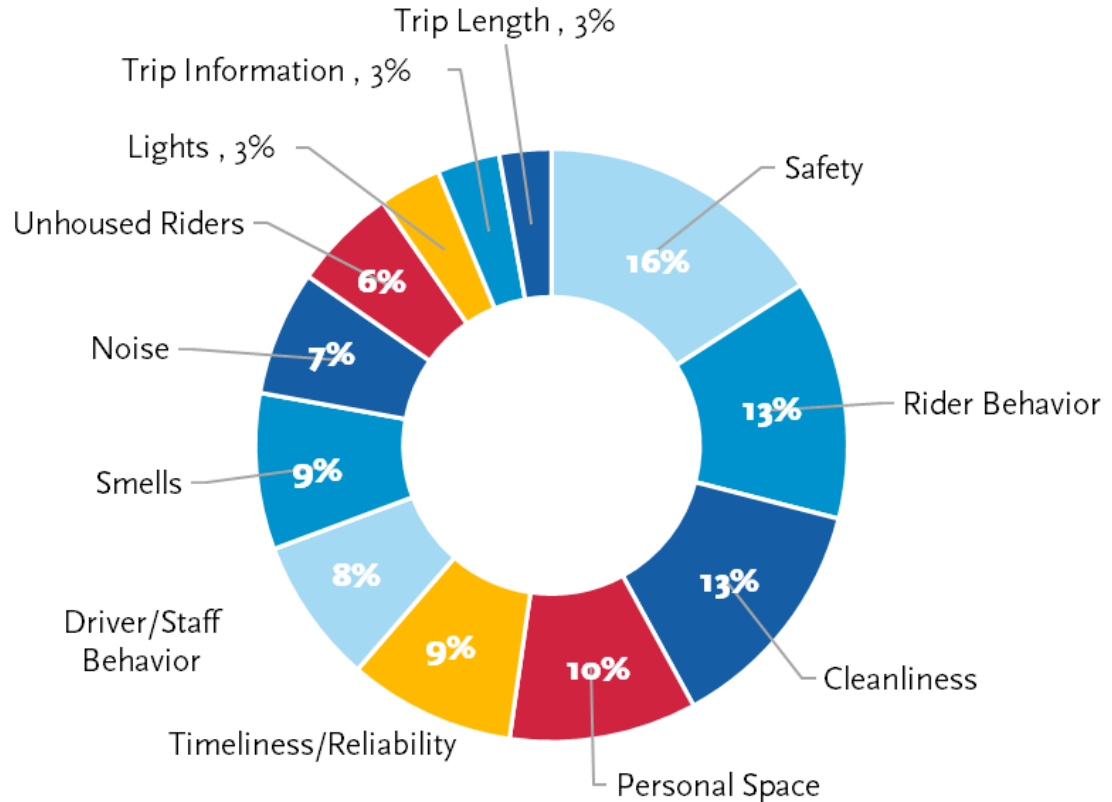
How happy or unhappy are you with...?



Listening Sessions: Pain Points

The most frequently mentioned pain points included:

- **Safety:** Concerns about safety while riding transit or waiting at stops and stations
- **Rider Behavior:** Concerns about riders playing loud music, smoking, or disregarding other rules
- **Cleanliness:** Concerns about the level of cleanliness onboard vehicles and at stops and stations



Recommendations

Continue to Strengthen Core Conditions

Metro will continue to prioritize improvements to the core conditions most frequently identified through the survey, including safety, rider behavior, cleanliness, odors, crowding, and bus stop comfort

- Metro has made substantial investments in safety, security, and cleaning across the system
- Metro investment in cleaning over the past several years has nearly doubled, total funding from approximately \$169 million in FY22 to over \$310 million proposed for FY27
- Expanded uniformed presence by Transit Security Officers, Ambassadors, and Homeless Outreach with Crisis Interventionists set to launch next fiscal year
- Bus stop summit and federal bus stop improvement grants
- Implementing calm spaces on the transit network (pilot World Cup)



Recommendations

Expand Travel Training Programs

Introduce a two-pronged approach to build confidence and independence:

- Simulation-based training to reduce uncertainty
- Real-world guided transit experiences through existing programs

Implement Neurodiversity Training for Staff

- Provide targeted training for frontline staff to better recognize and support neurodiverse riders.
- Improve customer interactions and support
- Create a more welcoming and inclusive environment



Recommendations

Establish a Workforce Development Pipeline

- Create pathways for neurodiverse individuals to join Metro's workforce
- Build life skills and increase representation

Station Activation Plans

- Expand partnerships with neurodiverse-serving organizations for station activation and placemaking efforts.
- Create opportunities for participation as vendors, performers, and community partners, supporting both economic opportunity and a more welcoming, inclusive transit environment.

Initiatives For Further Review

- Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program or the "I Need Help" card
- Evaluate opportunities to enhance digital tools to better support neurodiverse riders





Thank You!