

## **Station Experience Updates (July 2025)**

### ***Tactical Interventions to Protect A Line Service During ICE Unrest***

As has been widely reported in the news, nightly civil unrest and the recent curfew surrounding the Civic Center/Union Station area repeatedly disrupted Metro rail and bus service throughout the Downtown LA region, affecting thousands of Metro trips connecting people to work, back home, and to major connections like LAX FlyAway, Metrolink and Amtrak.

Specifically, the A Line had been adversely affected by consecutive days of suspended rail service that had stranded customers on the longest light rail line in North America, in some instances without viable bus shuttle service due to street closures that exacerbated the ability to provide riders with alternate options, and resulted in substantial cascading delays in communities as far as Long Beach, Pasadena and Azusa.

The Alameda/US-101 Flyover for the A Line tracks, just above where the National Guard had been initially stationed, experienced repeated breaches resulting in trespassing onto the tracks, vandalism, and missile projectiles because of the easy access to climb over the low railings from the Alameda St sidewalk. This then requires trains to turn around at other stations that may be unfamiliar to riders, causing disruption and confusion.

To quickly address a vulnerable point of access to Metro's A Line tracks, the Facilities Contracted Maintenance team worked quickly with their contractor, Deco Fencing, to assess and install a mesh partition to deter bad actors from gaining a foothold on Metro's structure, and also with Parkwood Maintenance, to clean graffiti scrawled across the Metro structure. In the long term, staff will re-evaluate the low railing and retrofit to an improved design that better protects the A Line flyover from trespassing and vandalism.

### ***Throne Bathrooms Show Resiliency During ICE Unrest***

Much of the Little Tokyo community suffered significant vandalism, and staff were initially concerned that amenities like the Throne Bathrooms could be targeted. However, similar to how stations can be shut down with onsite personnel activating the rolldown gates, Throne Bathrooms can also be instantly and remotely secured in situations like this.

When LAPD requested Little Tokyo and Chinatown (A Line) stations be closed during the civil unrest, staff coordinated with Throne in real time to secure these units within minutes. This real-time technology allowed the Thrones to be largely protected from vandals, allowing Metro to reopen these units for riders each morning thereafter without any interruption to service. The vandalism outside the Throne Bathrooms was visibly consistent with damage across the neighborhood. Fortunately, the anti-graffiti coating allowed Throne to address the cosmetic vandalism each morning for quick clean-up once the area was reopened to the community and the cleaning crew.

Throughout the protest period, staff have also received positive comments from Throne users within the impacted areas.

***LAX/Metro Transit Center Soars to Highest Paid Ridership Station on C & K Line***

Following the celebration marked by free Metro rides throughout grand opening weekend (June 6 to June 8), TAP's preliminary data of the first day of regular fares (Monday, June 9) has already shown that the usefulness of the new station and the effectiveness of the taller faregates which are now installed across three Metro stations.

When comparing the previous Monday (June 2) to Monday (June 9), staff saw the following:

- Previously, the C & K Line station with the most paid entries was Aviation/Century at 675 taps in a single day
- Now, the C & K Line station with the most paid entries is LAX/Metro Transit Center at 2,647 taps in a single day (+292% increase)
- LAX/Metro Transit Center faregates have validated more entries at this single station than all other K Line stations combined (2,647 vs. 2,451)
- This also becomes the #1 C Line station with the most paid entries, which is now +71% higher than #2 Willowbrook/Rosa Parks (2,647 vs. 1,549)

While staff expected a significant increase due to the new station opening and additional connections, the new faregates are likely contributing to the significantly higher paid entries compared with existing Metro stations with original faregates. As approved by the Metro Board, these new and more effective faregates will be coming to more stations later this summer.

***The City of LA Extends Lighting Upgrades Surrounding Vermont/Athens Station***

Staff previously reported that Metro had completed brighter lighting and repainting improvements to Vermont/Athens (C Line) Station, but the improvements immediately ended where Metro's property line met the public right-of-way. Staff received repair requests for broken streetlights along the entire I-105 Freeway overpass from community members, including those on the Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council; however, the Station Experience team had determined that these were not Metro streetlights and could not be repaired by their crews. Despite encouraging constituents to contact 3-1-1 to receive support, it became unclear which jurisdiction was responsible for these streetlights.

With the support of Metro Board Director and LA County Second District Supervisor Mitchell's Office, staff across LA County Public Works, Caltrans, and the City of LA Bureau of Street Lighting were brought together to investigate this issue. This is because this segment of Vermont Avenue is uniquely divided in responsibility between LA County, LA City, and Caltrans. With Supervisor Mitchell's team, staff navigated these jurisdictional complexities. They eventually determined that these streetlights were under the purview of the City of LA Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL). In the first week of June, BSL successfully completed repairs to the streetlights, extending Metro's brighter

lighting along the freeway overpass and into the communities to restore safer walking paths and bus connections.

***Wayfinding & First/Last Mile Upgrades Installed for Dodger Stadium Game Days***

Staff have been partnering with the Customer Experience department, LADOT, StreetsLA, and Caltrans to improve the signage and overall experience for Metro riders using the Dodger Stadium Express service from Union Station, and for those walking back to the Metro A Line at Chinatown Station, where staff have seen postgame ridership triple compared to non-game days. Historically, staff see greater postgame demand compared to pregame ridership as Uber/Lyft surge pricing sends returning fans scrambling for better options, so staff are prepared to put their best foot forward to serve these opportunities.

In addition to the signage upgrades, staff have been working with the City of LA and Caltrans on repairing and upgrading sidewalk lighting, removing graffiti, and trimming overgrown brush. Caltrans recently replaced the traditional footbridge lighting that was persistently damaged from copper theft and upgraded to solar-powered lights, where Metro has had similar success in a more resilient design for riders.

***Positive Reviews of Customer-Facing Improvements at Sierra Madre Villa Station***

As staff recently upgraded station amenities at Sierra Madre Villa (A Line) Station, including a Throne Bathroom and CCTV cameras, they revisited the station to speak with riders and employees about whether these upgrades were making a difference.

A key feedback staff heard was that many people have difficulty finding their way between the rail station entrance, local bus connections, and even the Throne Bathroom. Part of this is due to the station configuration, where the rail station entrance is on the 4th floor of a five-story parking structure, with no signage inside the elevator buttons indicating which floors serve the entrance, exit, or local bus connections. This customer confusion can frustrate riders who may only have a minute to spare between making their next transfer or seeing their trip leave them behind.

Given this, staff began supplementing existing signage with helpful wayfinding to intuitively guide riders between the entrance, exit, local bus connections, and the Throne Bathroom.

***Reported Issues Rise & Fare Revenues Drop During TAP-to-Exit Pause***

Since pausing the TAP-to-Exit (T2E) program on April 10, 2025, at the request of the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) for North Hollywood and Union Station, staff have had the opportunity to evaluate the temporary loss of the program's impact on Metro B Line safety and access control. Previously, staff reported that T2E brought significant drops in reported incidents amidst an increase in access control through fare compliance, which was validated with strong customer support. However, when comparing the monthly period *before* the T2E suspension to the monthly period *after* (3/10-4/6 vs. 4/14-5/11), staff observed the following:

- Transit Watch reported incidents have increased since T2E was paused
  - +116% increase in reported incidents at Union Station (from 37 to 80 incidents)
  - +67% increase in reported incidents at NoHo (from 9 to 15 incidents)
  - The primary issues reported are an increase in people experiencing homelessness, unsanitary conditions, and destination-less riders
- LAPD has stated they are seeing a recent uptick in crime on the B Line, including increased narcotics activity
- Total exit revenue has dropped by \$19,179
- Total TVM revenue has dropped by \$15,708
- Total loss **-\$34,887** in the first month of T2E suspension for these two stations

Operations and Safety are continuing to work closely to submit a “Request for Modification” for LAFD to review and authorize the restoration of the program to stations within their jurisdiction, emphasizing that T2E is very similar to exiting other major transit systems across the US, like San Francisco, Washington, DC, or Atlanta. Staff expects to submit this latest correspondence to LAFD for review in the coming days and is also working with Marketing to prepare a “restart T2E campaign” within the City of LA.

***Partnering with the City of Santa Monica to Address Misuse of Emergency Exit***

In recent months, staff have made substantial improvements to the Downtown Santa Monica (E Line) end-of-line station, which has included:

- TAP-to-Exit
- Throne Bathroom
- Dedicated security
- HOME Outreach
- Transit Ambassadors
- End-of-line cleaning

These measures have helped to improve overall safety and cleanliness. However, one vulnerability continually flagged by frontline personnel and the City of Santa Monica that remains difficult to address is the opposite end of the station, where persistent misuse of the emergency exit leads to trespassing onto active E Line train movement and jaywalking across freeway off-ramp traffic, despite abundantly clear signage.

This is a common issue seen across other Metro light rail stations where entrances are often built on one side, but not the other, which invites emergency exit misuse for those who are evading fare or do not want to walk in the direction of the designated station entrance. These emergency exit stairs often cannot be practically converted to designated entrances because an accessible rampway could not fit into the intersection without impacting traffic operations. Other stations with this vulnerability of emergency exit stair misuse include: Expo/Western, Expo Park/USC, Jefferson/USC, Pico/Aliso, San Pedro St, and Pacific Coast Hwy stations.

Metro staff met with City of Santa Monica transportation staff to review field conditions and finalize a collaborative solution that involves tactical, visible interventions to deter this behavior and improve overall rail safety and access control. Following this latest on-site meeting, the City will send Metro an approved installation plan that crews will install soon thereafter.

### ***Outside Vandalism Returns to Reseda Station***

As an update on efforts to restore safety and cleanliness to Reseda Station late last year, staff have unfortunately seen a resurgence of outside vandalism and illicit activity return to the station. In recent discussions with Throne, data has shown a disproportionate amount of illicit activity occurs after 9 PM, presumably when outside partners close and Metro remains open to the area. This is corroborated by a recent late-night inspection of this station, noting that significant late-night loitering was observed between the Tiny Homes village, the Arco AM/PM Gas Station, and behind the station platform.

Part of the contributing factor could be Cal State Northridge and other nearby schools' students beginning their summer vacation, resulting in a drop in ridership and natural foot traffic through this station.

Earlier this week, staff investigated the conditions after 9 PM and found that many of the safety interventions had taken significant damage. This has included the following:

- PA system no longer working properly, with speaker wires cut, similar to the damage seen at another loitering hotspot at Fillmore (A Line) in Pasadena
  - Repairs are underway to restore the PA system, classical music, and improve the resiliency of the station equipment
- Station artwork benches and City bus stop benches have significant vandalism and heavy stains that have made them undesirable to wait for connecting Line 240 buses
- Breached fencing has reopened shortcut access between the Tiny Homes village and the back of the station platform and former coffee shop, with heavy graffiti, litter, and loitering during the late-night period

Throne is reviewing their data, including surveillance videos, to better understand the disproportionate pattern of vandalism, and staff are evaluating several options until the illicit activity can subside, including:

- Increasing the propensity of user warnings and bans for repeat offenders
- Shortening the bathroom hours at this station to preserve access to Metro riders the following morning, as there is low demand after 9 PM, but disproportionate loitering
- Relocating to a different station along the Metro G Line to better serve Metro riders

Staff are also working to repair and restore the station amenities that had helped to improve safety and cleanliness at this station and to minimize damage from challenging environments nearby.

***Westlake/MacArthur Park Undergoes Outdoor Plaza Facelift***

In May, several leaders from Metro departments accompanied CEO Wiggins on a follow-up, in-person tour of Westlake/MacArthur Park Station. They were pleased to see that many of the tactical interventions, including replacement life-like green construction banners on fences and repainted station gates, continue to inspire safe, clean, and appropriate station activity.

As a next step, there were several opportunities noted to make the station look and feel more welcoming, primarily at the street-level entrance. As has been reported in the media, the City of Los Angeles has erected a significant amount of chain-link fencing across their public sidewalks, including directly in front of the station property, which has resulted in some tradeoffs for Metro riders and the community.

Therefore, staff have been coordinating with the Metro Customer Experience Department and Operations teams to beautify the area in a phased approach as staff eventually await the *Markets at Metro* concept for a restructured plaza vending program from Joint Development.