

# METRO AS A SANCTUARY



## REIMAGINING SAFETY ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

act.LA



# Acknowledgements

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*This report is dedicated to the Black Lives Matter Movement and its collective vision of a world in which all Black lives matter.*



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# Introduction

Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color are dying. People with disabilities, people without access to necessary resources, LGBTQ+ people, and all members of historically and continually oppressed groups are suffering. Many people are describing 2020 as the year that inequities in our society were laid bare, but the reality is that these inequities had always been there. The people most impacted had been talking about them--and dying as a result of them--for decades. Over the last year, with our collective societal gaze on the twin crisis of COVID-19 and structural racism, these inequities could no longer be ignored or dismissed.

Last year was one of reckoning for the way that whiteness, anti-Black racism, and white supremacy have shaped our policies, programs, institutions, and culture. The transportation and transit industries were not exempt from this reckoning. From private consulting firms to public agencies to academic institutions, we saw countless Black Lives Matter statements, equity responses, and diversity hires at the highest levels of organizations. These are all steps towards acknowledging a transportation system built on a foundation of racism, but simple performative acknowledgement will not change the dire outcomes for oppressed groups and racialized people.

Instead, agencies like Metro must commit to the long work of looking deeply at internal and external policies and practices and doing things differently. Anti-racism work must last beyond 2020 and continue as something that is fundamental and deeply embedded in all aspects of our organizations', agencies', and government operations. The way a transit organization approaches and acts on making their work and services more equitable must include a thorough examination of "safety." If not clear in the past, 2020 crystallized the reality that "safety" has a different definition for different people. Many of the practices of enforcement and policing that are supposed to make and keep people safe have been used to police the mobility of Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color (BIPOC) and reinforce inequities through gentrification, displacement and access to housing. Beyond that, policing and enforcement have been used to kill Black people at staggering and alarming rates.

This must change. The writers of this paper believe that Metro can be a leader and create this change. In this paper, we lay out ideas and research about why this change is necessary and how it can be done. Our goal is not to simply point out a problem, but to also put forth an affirmative vision to uproot whiteness, anti-Black racism, and white supremacy with Metro. We come to this work because the communities and groups we represent are composed of the most oppressed populations in LA County. Because of the disparities our communities face on a daily basis, we feel the urgency of this work--our lives depend on it.



We hope that as Metro continues to push forward an agenda of being the most equitable transit agency in the country, it reads this paper with that same urgency and desire to create change. Members of oppressed groups are the backbone of this county. If their lives depend on addressing inequities, dismantling current policing structures, and implementing new models of safety, then the lives of all LA County residents are dependent upon the same things. Last year was only the beginning. Metro must understand this interdependency and move towards change with the same urgency--everyone's lives depend on it.

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**ANTI-RACISM WORK MUST LAST BEYOND 2020 AND CONTINUE AS SOMETHING THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL AND DEEPLY EMBEDDED IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS', AGENCIES', AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.**

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Now is the time for Metro's Board of Directors to take action. Metro's five-year, multi-agency, \$786 million system safety, security, and law enforcement contract with LA Police, LA County Sheriff, Long Beach Police Departments expires in June 2022. With this contract sunset approaching, Metro has an opportunity to reconstitute public safety with and for the benefit of its riders and the people of LA County by prospectively investing the \$786 million in savings to community-led safety alternatives. These alternatives include deploying transit ambassadors, increasing and improving bus service, enacting fare free transit, building affordable housing, and more, which we describe in this report. Amid the backdrop of civil uprisings for racial justice last year, LA Metro Board of Directors created a Public Safety Advisory Council to re-imagine public safety on transit in LA with Metro staff. This Council will advise Metro's Board of Directors on the fate of the existing law enforcement contracts and recommend investments in community-based safety alternatives starting this year.

The writers of this report are residents of LA County who are deeply impacted by and concerned with the policies and practices of Metro. In this report, we outline the existing public safety priorities of Metro and the steps that can be taken to fundamentally protect the dignity of people in historically oppressed groups through community-led safety alternatives.

# Part One

## LA METRO CURRENT SAFETY MODEL AND INITIATIVES



IMAGE CREDIT: ACT-LA



LA Metro’s own reckoning with racism must actively challenge the assumption that police are experts on safety. Police legacies of racism with roots in colonial watch groups and slave patrols to “maintain the economic order of the colonies” were enshrined in the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.<sup>1</sup> Gwendolyn Reese, president of the African American Heritage Association of St. Petersburg, explains, “As it was during slavery, and still is today, the primary role of law enforcement is to watch, catch, beat, enforce curfews, control movement and behavior, prevent organized resistance and terrorize black and brown people.”<sup>2</sup> This section challenges Metro to carefully consider its own approach to public safety by offering critiques of the agency’s flawed safety assumptions, drawing connections to Metro’s role in criminalization, racial profiling and the cycle of mass incarceration, and highlighting Metro’s counterproductive approach to caring for people who are unhoused and people with disabilities.

Since July 2017, Metro has employed a multi-agency policing model that includes the Los Angeles Police Department (“LAPD”), Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (“LASD”), and Long Beach Police Department (“LBPD”), as well as Metro Transit Security Guards and contract security personnel (collectively, “Metro law enforcement”). Each Metro law enforcement agency staffs the system with armed personnel. All of the contracting agencies report to Metro’s System Security and Law Enforcement Department.

Metro’s five-year multi-agency law enforcement contract originally allocated \$369.3 million to LAPD, \$246.3 million to LASD, and \$30.1 million to LBPD, for a total of \$645.7 million.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, Metro expanded LAPD’s contract by over \$35.3 million.<sup>4</sup> Each of these contracting law enforcement agencies billed and was paid millions of dollars exceeding the estimated contract cost in FY 2019.<sup>5</sup> Concurrently, Metro maintains a \$105.4 million contract with a private security firm, RMI Security. In addition, Metro employs its own security. Altogether, Metro has budgeted over \$786 million to “serve and protect the system.” However, this policing by Metro also results in intimidating, racially profiling and harassing Metro passengers, who are overwhelmingly very low-income people of color, youth and seniors.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gwendolyn Reese, “A history of policing in America,” *The Weekly Challenger*, (Jun. 12, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> *Supra* n.1

<sup>3</sup> “Metro Board Approves New Multi-Agency Law Enforcement Contract to Improve Safety and Security on L.A. County’s Metro Bus and Rail System,” (Feb. 23, 2017), [https://www.metro.net/news/simple\\_pr/metro-board-approves-new-multi-agency-law-enforcement/](https://www.metro.net/news/simple_pr/metro-board-approves-new-multi-agency-law-enforcement/)

<sup>4</sup> City of Los Angeles Chief of Police, “Intradepartmental Correspondence: Budgetary Adjustments to the Contract Agreement between the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD),” (May 9, 2018). (“LAPD 2018 Contract Amendment Memo”), [http://www.lapdpolicy.com.lacity.org/051518/BPC\\_18-0166.pdf](http://www.lapdpolicy.com.lacity.org/051518/BPC_18-0166.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Office of the Inspector General, Fiscal Year 2019 Metro Transit Security Services Performance, Report No. 20-AUD-07 (Mar. 27, 2020) (“OIG 2019 Metro Transit Security Report”).

<sup>6</sup> See Laura J. Nelson, “Metro approves a \$797-million security plan that reduces the power of the Sheriff’s Department,” *L.A. Times* (Feb. 23, 2017).

## FLAWED ASSUMPTIONS BY LA METRO



**Safety defined by whom, for whose benefit, and at whose cost.** Metro’s current law enforcement approach is founded on the assumption that increasing the visibility and presence of armed police officers will create a safer experience for riders. Metro promoted its multi-agency model by stating it would “markedly increase the number of police on the Metro system to provide a greater, more visible ‘felt presence’ of police[.]”<sup>7</sup>

**Proactive and Dispatched Policing.** Indeed, Metro prioritizes asserting a police presence over responding to calls for service and reported crime. Metro’s contract law enforcement agencies spend roughly 85-95% of their time conducting “proactive law enforcement activity,” which includes fare checking and is in contrast to responding to calls. The ratio of “proactive” to “dispatched” police activity is a contract performance indicator for Metro law enforcement, and the Metro Office of the Inspector General deemed an increase in the ratio of proactive to dispatched activity in 2019 a “positive trend” in light of Metro prioritizing the visibility of law enforcement over other strategies.<sup>8</sup>

**In the Company of Police.** Metro publications describing the agency’s current law

<sup>7</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>

Supra n.3.  
OIG 2019 Metro Transit Security Report.



enforcement approach have not compared the effectiveness of maintaining high police visibility to programs that increase the physical presence of people other than armed police, such as transit ambassadors, aid station staff, vendors, or other community members.

For example, in a Metro-led focus group of Black and Latinx riders, Black riders reported feeling unsafe in the presence of law enforcement. Metro buried the findings in the appendix of a separate report.<sup>9</sup> In another study conducted for Metro, “[n]umerous participants, in particular people of color, shared that they had been unjustly targeted by law enforcement and that they do not always feel more secure with armed law enforcement on buses, trains, or platforms.”<sup>10</sup> Yet Metro does not address how riders’ sense of safety in relation to increased visible presence of armed and uniformed law enforcement varies depending on riders’ race or ethnicity, in the context of Metro’s current and historical enforcement practices,<sup>11</sup> or in the context of LAPD, LASD, and LBPd’s records of violence against Black, Latinx, and unhoused residents of Los Angeles outside Metro.<sup>12</sup>

**Hostile and austere environmental design.** Transit agencies, including LA Metro and their design consultants, widely utilize design strategies and tactics associated with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED),<sup>13</sup> a now-criticized set of design principles and standards for built environments originally intended to prevent crime and enhance neighbors’ sense of safety. Based on these principles, agencies have removed or omitted seating at transit stations to prevent congregation of “intruders” and omitted rain or sun coverings to further lines of sight and natural surveillance. Some transit authorities have reduced the number of station entrances and exits, thus undercutting their own potential for expansive transportation access, and located surveillance booths to provide officers a perch above both fare entry points and the platform level. These spatial interventions are presumed to deter criminal behaviors on transit.

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9 LA Metro, “Unpacking Customer Satisfaction: Customer Satisfaction Survey Results (Summer 2017),” (“African American participants, and some Latino participants, raised substantial concerns about racial profiling and discrimination by police and fare inspectors”). The Survey was included as Appendix A to Metro’s Vision 2028 Strategic Plan.

10 Pueblo Planning, “Understanding How Women Travel - Innovative Methods Summary & Analysis,” (Mar. 22, 2019), [http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB\\_Attachments/2019-0294/HWT\\_AppendixE\\_FINAL.pdf](http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DB_Attachments/2019-0294/HWT_AppendixE_FINAL.pdf).

11 See Labor/Community Strategy Center, “Re: Civil Rights Complaint Against the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and all employed and contracted police, for Racial Discrimination and a Pattern and Practice of Systemic Criminalization Against Black Transit Riders,” (Nov. 14, 2016), available at <https://fightforthesoulofthecities.com/dotcomplaint/> (describing “stop and frisk” practices and observing that Black riders represented “50% of MTA citations and 58% of Sheriff arrests on the MTA System, while they are only a reported 17% of bus and 19% of rail ridership”); see also Kelly Puente, “Black riders disproportionately stopped for fare evasion on Long Beach public transit, data shows,” Long Beach Post (July 7, 2020), <https://lbpost.com/news/black-riders-metro-bus-racial-profiling-long-beach> (quoting a Los Angeles Civil Rights lawyer representing a couple who allege they were unfairly targeted by LBPd for a fare investigation: “They call it proactive policing when really it’s a dog whistle for racial profiling”).

12 See, e.g., Nicole Santa Cruz and Alene Tchekmedyan, “Deputies killed Dijon Kizzee after a bike stop. We found 15 similar law enforcement shootings, many fatal,” L.A. Times (Oct. 16, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-16/examining-dijon-kizzee-bike-stop-police-shootings>.

13 First conceived in the late 1960s by a criminologist incorporating architectural theories of defensible space, the prescribed built environment modifications to block crime opportunities became widely adopted as “broken windows” policing strategies. Criticized as disciplining and hostile to neighborhood spaces and people, “second-generation” CPTED took cues from the celebrated urbanist Jane Jacobs to promote community building, pro-social behaviors, and cross-sector problem solving at the neighborhood scale as antidotes to criminal activity. More recently, “third-generation” CPTED has proposed crime prevention through improvements in neighborhood livability, including public health, sustainability (environmental, economic, and social), and safety interventions. See Fennelly, Lawrence J., and Marianna A. Perry. “First-, Second-, and Third-Generation CPTED.” In *CPTED and Traditional Security Countermeasures*, pp. 250-253. CRC Press, 2018.

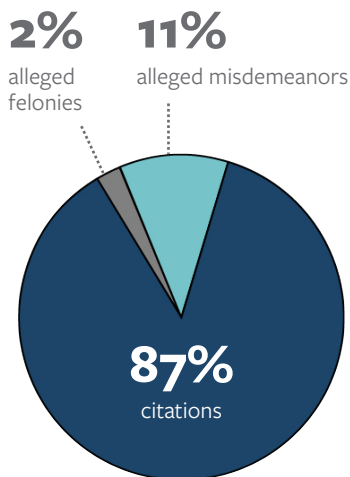
Benedict, Kathryn M. “Exploring the Intersection of Designing for Crime and the Future of the Public Forum.” (2019).

CPTED upholds assumptions of victim vs. perpetrator roles and relations that criminalize Blackness and elicit unwarranted police interaction under the guise of “public safety.”<sup>14</sup> CPTED aims of crime prevention can translate into defensive spatial practices that intensify surveillance and criminalization of BIPOC and people experiencing homelessness. These flawed environmental design practices can further heighten feelings of insecurity and isolation among all transit riders. Amid an isolating pandemic and continued police brutality, transit agencies should fundamentally shift framing away from alleged crime prevention and toward community-based safety solutions.

## METRO’S ROLE IN RACIAL PROFILING, CRIMINALIZATION, AND THE CYCLE OF MASS INCARCERATION

Metro’s flawed assumptions often lead to flawed policing. The policing that happens on transit plays a role in the cycle of mass incarceration that often begins with racial profiling and criminalization. When unhoused people, people with disabilities, and people of color are targeted on transit, actions deemed small infractions can have huge impacts on their lives.

### TRANSIT INTERRUPTED



The vast majority of Metro police labor addresses nuisances or code of conduct violations.  
Source: Metro Transit Policing Performance Report (June 2019).

**Nuisances and Handcuffs.** Most of Metro’s law enforcement activities address alleged public nuisance (“Code of Conduct”) violations, and other low-level charges and misdemeanors. Indeed, Metro identifies enforcement of its Code of Conduct as a security objective in and of itself, rather than a strategy assessed in relationship to objectives like rider wellness or safety.<sup>15</sup> In a six month period ending in May 2018, Metro officers engaged in over 36,000 law enforcement contacts to enforce infractions.<sup>16</sup> In that timeframe, Metro officers arrested 1,390 people for alleged misdemeanors and 260 people for alleged felonies.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in a single fiscal year (2019), Metro officers arrested 2,776 people for alleged misdemeanors and issued nearly 22,000 citations, which together constitutes over nine in 10 arrests and citations.<sup>18</sup>

**Is Poverty a Crime?** The vast majority of Metro-issued citations are for fare evasion or boarding without proof of payment and serve as a gateway to police violence.<sup>19</sup> In a two year period ending in June 2019, Metro law enforcement issued over

<sup>14</sup> As observed by the Design As Protest Collective, including Colloqate Design, a design justice initiatives and organization that is organizing to build knowledge, power, and access in communities as an integral part of designing civic, cultural, and communal spaces for racial and social equity.

<sup>15</sup> Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan, p. 31, [http://media.metro.net/about\\_us/vision-2028/report\\_metro\\_vision\\_2028\\_plan\\_2018-0628.pdf](http://media.metro.net/about_us/vision-2028/report_metro_vision_2028_plan_2018-0628.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Analysis of citation data produced by Metro in response to public records request. Records on file with author.

<sup>17</sup> Based on data reported in Metro’s monthly Updates on Transit Policing Performance. Unfortunately, these reports do not enable more detailed analysis of LAPD, LASD, and LBPD officers’ misdemeanor and felony enforcement under their multi-agency contract with Metro.

<sup>18</sup> Based on numbers reported in June-July 2019 Update on Transit Policing Performance.

<sup>19</sup> See “Caught On Camera: Man Struggling With LBPD Officer Killed By Train,” CBSLA (Aug. 29, 2018), [https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2018/08/29/video\\_long\\_beach\\_officer\\_blue\\_line\\_train\\_death](https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2018/08/29/video_long_beach_officer_blue_line_train_death) (noting that officers initially stopped Cesar Rodriguez for a fare investigation).



92,000 citations for fare evasion.<sup>20</sup> However, Metro officers also confront riders to enforce alleged code violations like occupying more than one seat; eating, drinking or smoking; “loitering”; and making noise.<sup>21</sup> In one 2018 incident, Metro-LAPD officers forcibly dragged a young woman off a train and cited her for putting her feet up on a seat.<sup>22</sup> Commenting on the incident, the LAPD Deputy Chief overseeing transit operations stated that the department had been doing “a lot of code-of-conduct work on the Metro trains.”<sup>23</sup> The Metro Office of the Inspector General observed that “the number of Code of Conduct citations increased substantially” between 2017 and 2018, after Metro adopted its current multi-agency law enforcement approach.<sup>24</sup>

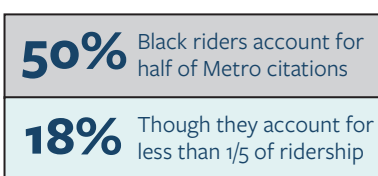


Headline from 2018 forcible dragging incident by Metro-LAPD

## “THE POLICING THAT HAPPENS ON TRANSIT PLAYS A ROLE IN THE CYCLE OF MASS INCARCERATION THAT OFTEN BEGINS WITH RACIAL PROFILING... WHEN UNHOUSED PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE TARGETED ON TRANSIT, ACTIONS DEEMED SMALL INFRACTIONS CAN HAVE HUGE IMPACTS ON THEIR LIVES.

**Black Passengers Disproportionately Impacted.** Metro officers issue a larger share of its total yearly citations to Black passengers than the yearly share of Black passengers system wide. This is an example of the way that Metro officers stigmatize Black passengers and catalyze the vicious cycle of mass incarceration of Black people. About half of all people that Metro cites for infractions and Code of Conduct violations are Black, though only 18% of Metro riders are Black. Black transit riders are disproportionately cited for fare evasion,<sup>25</sup> and Metro’s citation data indicates that this racial disparity is even more stark for other Code of Conduct violations. For example, more than two-thirds of the people cited by Metro law enforcement for making noise are Black.<sup>26</sup>

### ANTI-BLACK RACISM



Racial profiling harms Black riders. Source: Labor/Community Strategy Center (2016) and Kelly Puente, *LB Post* (2020).

<sup>20</sup> See supra, n. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Id.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Winton & Hailey Branson-Potts, “She put her foot on the seat of a Metro train and got detained. Did the LAPD overreact?” *L.A. Times* (Jan. 23, 2018), <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-sergeant-investigation-metro-20180123-story.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Id.

<sup>24</sup> Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Office of the Inspector General, Fiscal Year 2018 Metro Transit Security Services Performance, Report No. 19-AUD-10 (Jun. 24, 2019) (“OIG 2018 Metro Transit Security Report”).

<sup>25</sup> Kelly Puente, “Black riders disproportionately stopped for fare evasion on Long Beach public transit, data shows,” *Long Beach Post* (July 7, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> See supra, n. 16.

## METRO'S COUNTERPRODUCTIVE APPROACH TO CARING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHOUSED

Metro's failure to reckon with institutional racism perpetuates the agency's defensive approach to operating public transit and neglect of people whose needs draw them to Metro for basic aid and accessibility. This neglect undercuts Metro's own efforts to deliver equitable public service.

**Unhoused and Unwelcomed.** Despite Metro publicly adopting a “service” approach to addressing homelessness on the transit system, Metro law enforcement has continued targeting unhoused individuals with criminal measures.<sup>27</sup>

Metro relies primarily on police for its approach to homelessness. As Metro states, each of its contract law enforcement agencies “has their own set of homeless outreach teams that Metro utilizes to . . . address the homeless presence on the system and properties.”<sup>28</sup> A portion of each of Metro's monthly updates on transit policing performance is devoted to summarizing Metro law enforcement activities targeting unhoused people. Additionally, Metro's encampment response protocol relies on law enforcement, and the agency reports on “cleared encampments” in its monthly updates on transit policing performance. Part of Metro's 2018 LAPD contract expansion was to increase the number of LAPD officers deployed to “clear homeless individuals from rail trains, platforms, and stations[.]”<sup>29</sup> Metro also relies on its contract law enforcement officers to remove unhoused people from Metro property and transport them to other locations, such as emergency shelters.<sup>30</sup> But, this contractual obligation should instead be understood as a euphemism for the systemic phenomenon known as “client dumping,” where officers take someone away from transit and to a place that administers care.<sup>31</sup> This is a practice that overlooks the tension between the conflicting roles of law enforcement and social work.

Though Metro's strategic plan for addressing homelessness emphasizes connecting unhoused people to social services and housing through civilian outreach professionals, such as those staffing Metro's C3 teams, Metro's FY19 rollout for C3 teams

<sup>27</sup> Based on information reported in Metro's monthly Updates on Transit Policing Performance. The extent to which Metro law enforcement criminalizes homelessness is difficult to assess based on public information because the data Metro makes available does not regularly distinguish its enforcement of “trespassing” charges against unhoused people from charges against housed people, because Metro data sometimes aggregates trespassing charges with narcotics and weapons charges in the broad category “crimes against society,” and because there are a wide variety of other laws and Code of Conduct rules that Metro law enforcement may cite to criminalize homelessness. For example, one of the February 2018 misdemeanor citations referenced above was for Penal Code 640(d)(1) – Blocking Free Movement, while another was for Trespass on Transit Property – Penal Code 369(i).

<sup>28</sup> Metro System Security & Law Enforcement 2018 Report, [http://media.metro.net/riding/images/System\\_Security\\_and\\_Law\\_Enforcement\\_FY18\\_report.pdf](http://media.metro.net/riding/images/System_Security_and_Law_Enforcement_FY18_report.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> LAPD 2018 Contract Amendment Memo, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Number of transports and anecdotal summaries of transports reported in Metro's monthly updates on transit policing performances.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Wolff, Interactions Between Mental Health and Law Enforcement Systems: Problems and Prospects for Cooperation, 23 J. Health Pol. and L. 133, 143 (1998).



required outreach workers to coordinate with law enforcement. Accordingly, Metro's C3 teams do outreach work alongside officers from LAPD's Homeless Outreach and Protective Engagement (HOPE) Teams, LASD's Mental Evaluation Teams (MET), Long Beach PD, and Metro's Transit Security Officers. Additionally, Metro relies on its contract law enforcement entities to independently conduct homeless outreach "when the C3 Teams are off duty or working another portion of the system."<sup>32</sup> It is important to note the inherent difficulties in combining pro-social services with law enforcement. Deep differences in organizational identities, lack of information sharing, and divergent approaches to problem-solving can all hinder cooperation between law enforcement and social services providers.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the very presence of law enforcement can be threatening and even re-traumatizing to unhoused people, undermining successful outreach, especially in light of the violence that Los Angeles law enforcement agencies often direct towards people who are unsheltered.<sup>34</sup>

In 2019, Metro expanded its law enforcement contract to increase the number of LAPD, LASD, and LBPD officers specifically tasked with responding to homelessness, including by creating a "Quality of Life" unit staffed by LBPD.<sup>35</sup> Metro allocated

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., Update on Metro's Homeless Outreach Efforts (Feb. 8, 2019), [http://boardarchives.metro.net/Board-Box/2019/190208\\_Update\\_on\\_Metro's\\_Homeless\\_Outreach\\_Efforts.pdf](http://boardarchives.metro.net/Board-Box/2019/190208_Update_on_Metro's_Homeless_Outreach_Efforts.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> Wolff, *supra* note 31, at 134.

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., Leila Miller, "Use-of-force incidents against homeless people are up, LAPD reports," *L.A. Times* (Jan. 21, 2020).

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*



IMAGE CREDIT: LA TIMES

\$19.5 million for this expansion.<sup>36</sup> Metro also redirected LAPD officers previously assigned to the “Special Problems Unit” and LASD officers assigned to the “Threat Interdiction Unit” to focus on Metro’s “Operation Shelter the Unsheltered.”<sup>37</sup> Over the first three years of the multi-agency policing contract, Metro spent \$6.27 million in “unanticipated costs” on LAPD HOPE teams and \$6.39 million in “unanticipated costs” on LASD MET teams.<sup>38</sup> Metro spent an additional \$1.56 million in “unanticipated costs” on unspecified “quality of life” enforcement.<sup>39</sup> In February 2021, Metro requested another \$111 million increase to its law enforcement contracts, in part to “cover significant costs incurred . . . to augment” police responses to the unhoused population.<sup>40</sup> With LA County’s short supply of permanently affordable and temporary housing, Metro’s priority on spending should lead with care by social workers with connections to housing, not on rebranded police officers.

In June 2020, the Metro Board requested “recommendations on how to reallocate resources for homelessness outreach and services in preparation for the expiration of [the] existing policing Contract.”<sup>41</sup> Metro replied that \$3.5 million could be reallocated from its current private security contract to homeless outreach and services.<sup>42</sup> Metro did not suggest any potential reallocation of funds from its current or any future policing contract to homeless outreach and services. Metro did not address whether homeless outreach functions currently performed by LAPD, LASD, and LBPD officers and the funds supporting those police positions could be shifted to additional PATH staff, nurses, substance abuse counselors, mental health clinicians, formerly unhoused outreach workers, or resources or services for unhoused people in Metro facilities or via Metro systems and vehicles. Instead, Metro stated that its policing contract needed to be amended to increase the contract price.

Unhoused riders face enormous stigma that shapes other passengers’ perceptions of unhoused people, treating unhoused people as if their mere presence is unsafe.<sup>43</sup> This stigma obscures the fact that unhoused riders specifically seek out public transit spaces for safety reasons. In a study of unhoused riders, over half of the women surveyed said they felt safer riding the bus overnight instead of staying in shelters.<sup>44</sup>

**Short on Care for People with Disabilities.** People with disabilities also face safety concerns from the presence of law enforcement, as police disproportionately use force on people with disabilities. One third to one half of all use of force incidents in the United States involved a citizen with disability.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, 1 in 4 fatal uses of force by police officers involve an individual with a severe mental

<sup>36</sup> Id.

<sup>37</sup> Metro Report Back on Use of Force Policies (Sep. 17, 2020).

<sup>38</sup> Presentation to Metro Operations, Safety, & Customer Experience Committee: Transit Law Enforcement Services (Feb. 18, 2021), <http://metro.legistar.com/metro/attachments/7e570676-3073-4900-8b10-7381dcb17109.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Metro Report Back on Use of Force Policies (Sep. 17, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> Metro Board Report, 2020-0847 - Transit Law Enforcement Services Contract (Mar. 18, 2021).

<sup>41</sup> Motion for Report Back on Use of Force Policy followed by Metro Policing Contractors and Employees (June 18, 2020), <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2020-0419/>.

<sup>42</sup> Metro Report Back on Use of Force Policies (Sep. 17, 2020).

<sup>43</sup> Christine L. Jocoy and Vincent J. Del Casino, Jr. Homelessness, travel behavior, and the politics of transportation mobilities in Long Beach, California. *Environment and Planning, A* 2010, volume 42, pages 1943-963, 1959. (Mar 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Laura Nichols & Fernando Cázares, Homelessness and the Mobile Shelter System: Public Transportation as Shelter, 40 Santa Clara U. J. Soc. Pol’y 333, 343 (2011).

<sup>45</sup> David M. Perry et. Al “The Ruderman White Paper on Media Coverage of Law Enforcement Use of Force and Disability” (Mar. 2016)

illness.<sup>46</sup> For instance, in 2019 an off-duty LAPD officer in Corona, CA shot and killed a man with autism in a physical altercation.<sup>47</sup> Because of the increased likelihood of experiencing police violence for people with disabilities, the presence of police has also been found to decrease feelings of safety and comfort for riders with disabilities.<sup>48</sup> This is especially important to consider as the Metro rail Purple Line expands towards the VA Hospital<sup>49</sup> and veterans are increasingly likely to be diagnosed with physical and mental disabilities.<sup>50</sup>

## **FAILED APPROACH**

Metro's current approach to safety on public transit is based on flawed assumptions and results in profoundly harmful racial profiling and criminalization while failing to address in any real and lasting way the lack of services and housing accessible to unhoused people. We could transform the region by divesting the hundreds of millions of dollars from the multi agency policing contracts and instead investing them in the community- and public health-based safety alternatives outlined in this report.

<sup>46</sup> Doris A. Fuller et. Al "Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters" (Dec. 2015).

<sup>47</sup> See Laura Newberry, "Costco shooting is worst nightmare for families of developmentally disabled children," LA Times, (Jun. 21, 2019).

<sup>48</sup> Michelle L. Kersten et, al, Traversing the community is uncertain, socially complex and exhausting, 18 Journal of Transit & Health, 100922 (2020)

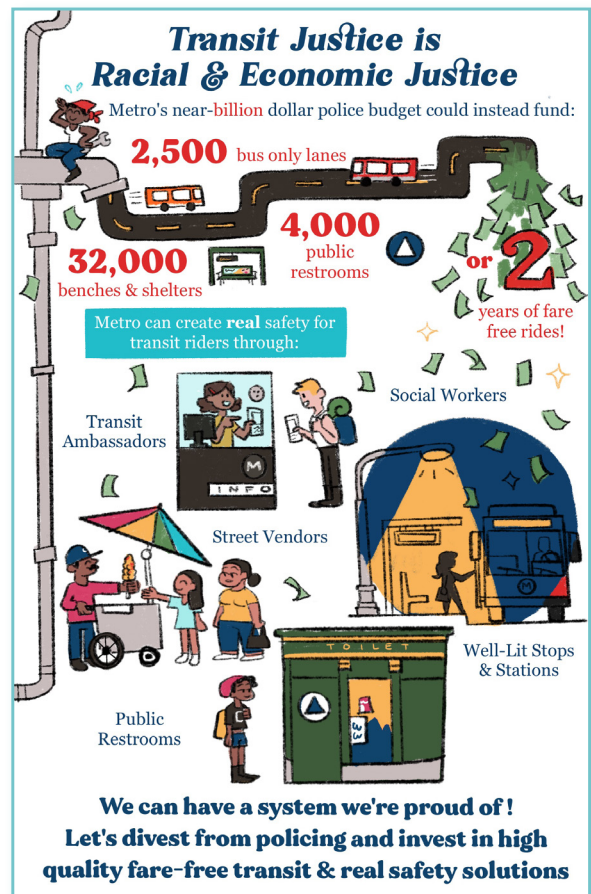
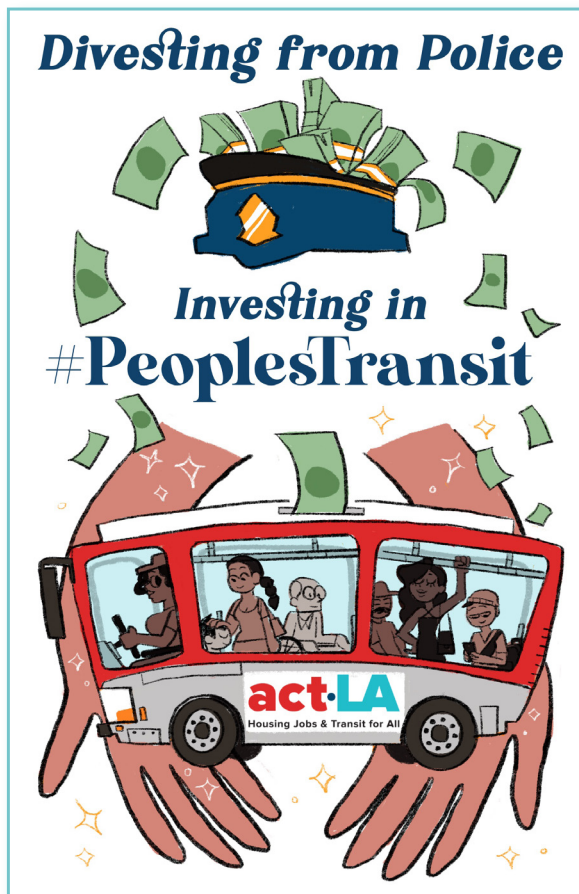
<sup>49</sup> Metro, "The long-awaited Metro Purple Line Subway Extension is now under construction" (Last Accessed Nov 24, 2020)

<sup>50</sup> Stephanie DiPetrillo et. Al. "Exploring Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Location Issues for New Jersey Veterans with Disability" (Nov. 2014)



# Part Two

## OUR PROPOSED FRAMEWORK



## A COMMUNITY-BASED SAFETY AND HEALTH FRAMEWORK

The people of LA County are demanding that their systems and systems' leaders create truly safe systems for all. In 2020, County voters passed the ballot initiatives Measure J and Measure R, which dedicated 10% of the County's unrestricted funds to addressing racial injustice through supportive programs, services, housing and alternatives to incarceration and initiated a plan to reduce the jail population, respectively. In addition, LA Unified School District significantly "cut its police force and diverted funds for Black student achievement."<sup>51</sup> These recent efforts reflect a notable shift away from the beliefs that law enforcement keeps communities safe using surveillance, criminalization, and incarceration of Black and brown communities. LA County is finally moving away from punishment and incarceration toward more care-centered, community-based resources.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, throughout the state, there is momentum to create more integrated systems of support with social and public services.<sup>53</sup>

Metro provides one of the most critical services to the community — public transportation supports peoples' survival and connection, especially for poor and working-class communities of color. The end of Metro's policing contracts in 2022 and the current Board and staff discussions regarding reimagined safety on the system is an exciting opportunity for Metro to align with this countywide shift towards equity. With this shift, Metro can build community-based systems of safety that center the most vulnerable community members, improve accessibility for riders with disabilities and low-income riders, and focus on increasing public health.

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<sup>51</sup> Melissa Gomez, "L.A. school board cuts its police force and diverts funds for Black student achievement," L.A. Times, (Feb. 21, 2021).

<sup>52</sup> Los Angeles County Alternatives to Incarceration Workgroup ("ATI"). "Care First, Jails Last: Health and Racial Justice Strategies for Safer Communities," (2020).

<sup>53</sup> City News Service, "LA community colleges end sheriff's contract, will explore unarmed security model," Los Angeles Daily News, (Nov. 14, 2020); Dee Williams-Ridley, "Reimagining Public Safety - City of Berkeley," (Jan. 19, 2021); Office of the Mayor, "San Francisco's New Street Crisis Response Team Launches Today," (Nov. 30, 2020); TransitCenter, "After Initial Reforms Fall Short, SFBART Takes on Bolder Changes to Transit Policing and Safety," (Aug. 5, 2020); TransitCenter, "Police and Transit," (Feb. 2020).

## MOVING AWAY FROM PUNISHMENT: PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR ALL

The LA County Alternatives to Incarceration Workgroup (ATI) developed a roadmap for the County to redesign its crisis response systems, away from incarceration to systems of community-based care--particularly for people with behavioral health disorders and people experiencing homelessness.<sup>54</sup> ATI found:

*“The profile of incarceration in Los Angeles is consistent with national research showing that a disproportionate number of people admitted to jails are sick, poor, homeless, and struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. In other words, our jails are largely filled with sick, marginalized, and vulnerable populations.”<sup>55</sup>*

People charged with transit offenses, even minor ones, face life-long consequences, such barriers to employment, homelessness, and disenfranchisement.<sup>56</sup> An influx of police officers on transit needlessly increases the frequency of encounters between police officers and people riding transit, who in Los Angeles are overwhelmingly very low income and persons of color.

Arguments that assert police create safe environments ignore that police create unsafe conditions for many. The racial inequities of policing and incarceration in LA are staggering. Black people comprise 9% of the population but 29% of LA County jails. Black and Latinx women make up 54% percent of the population but represent 75% of people in jail.<sup>57</sup> Black and Brown communities also experience the brunt of all levels of violence from law enforcement, including physical, psychological, and sexual.<sup>58</sup>

The American Public Health Association’s policy statement, “Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue,” focuses on the adverse effect of physical police violence. “The impacts of physical violence likewise extend beyond injuries and death, affecting individuals’ and communities’ ability to achieve positive health outcomes in the short and long term and compounding extant health inequities.”<sup>59</sup> When public services agencies frame safety in terms of law enforcement intervention, Black and brown community members, including trans/gender-nonconforming people, undocumented people, and people with mental illness, face even greater health inequities.

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54 See ATI

55 ATI, 17.

56 ATI, 20.

57 ATI, 17.

58 American Public Health Association (“APHA”). [Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue, Policy Statement](https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence) <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence> (Nov. 2018).

59 APHA



A public health approach to safety looks at people’s actions, which are stigmatized as crime when they are in fact manifestations of structural inequity.<sup>60</sup> This approach asserts that it is more effective to improve mental, physical, and economic well-being to address the social conditions underlying behaviors than does the typical law enforcement response. In studies, the approach shows “reduced community trauma and interpersonal harm and improved community health and safety.”<sup>61</sup>



## **WHEN PUBLIC SERVICES AGENCIES FRAME SAFETY IN TERMS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION, BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITY MEMBERS, INCLUDING TRANS/ GENDER-NONCONFORMING PEOPLE, UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, FACE EVEN GREATER HEALTH INEQUITIES.**

Law enforcement profiling and violence is a threat to public health and safety. A community-based health framework should focus on providing support to community members and reducing the harms of law enforcement profiling and violence. There is limited evidence that strategies that try to combine law enforcement participation with reforms to reduce law enforcement violence, such as training or “community policing,” are effective.<sup>62</sup> However, there is clear evidence that community-based health and public safety, many of which we present in the section below, are effective to address both underlying needs of riders and interpersonal violence between riders, and this approach does not come with the harms of law enforcement.<sup>63</sup>

For people with disabilities, a public health approach would increase ridership and comfort on transit. Studies consistently show that people with cognitive disabilities such as traumatic brain injuries and autism are more comfortable traveling, and thus more able to use public transit, where people who are designated to help them navigate transit, such as transit ambassadors, are reliably present.<sup>64</sup>

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60 APHA

61 APHA

62 APHA

63 APHA

64 Bruno Aguiar, et. al, The need for an Elderly Centered Mobility Policy, 25 Transportation Research Procedia, 4355 (2017); Jenny Rosenkvist, Mobility in Public Environments and Use of Public Transport: exploring the situation for people with acquired cognitive functional limitations (2008) (unpublished, on file with Lund University); Andrea Lubin et. al, Role of Public Transportation as Job Access Mode, 2277:1 Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, 90 (2012); Abigail L. Cochran, “Understanding the role of transportation-related social interaction in travel behavior and health: A qualitative study of adults with disabilities” Journal of Transportation and Health 19 (2020)



**THERE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY... ARE EFFECTIVE TO ADDRESS BOTH UNDERLYING NEEDS OF RIDERS AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN RIDERS, AND THIS APPROACH DOES NOT COME WITH THE HARMS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

A public health approach will also have a positive impact on Metro's goal of addressing homelessness. Research shows that people who are unhoused use public transit for largely the same reasons as people who are housed, and that these reasons primarily include accessing medical care, social services, and jobs.<sup>65</sup> Government reports have confirmed that the lack of access to reliable and efficient public transportation is a structural barrier to those individuals trying to exit poverty.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, when feelings of safety on public transit are increased for unhoused people, this increases their ability to access the very services and opportunities that would allow them to access permanent housing and escape homelessness.

## **REIMAGINING SAFETY ON METRO**

Metro must immediately take action to divest from policing and reimagine safety on public transportation. Armed law enforcement patrol should not be the default approach that Metro implements to respond to people experiencing homelessness or mental health episodes, or to enhance rider experience. Police officers are not social workers or mental health professionals, and being first responders to service calls has led to criminalization and violence when care is needed. Metro must expand its idea of who can provide safety and security, implement alternative crime prevention measures through design and infrastructure, and actively seek the input of Black,

<sup>65</sup> Christine L. Jocoy, et. al, Homelessness, travel behavior, and the politics of transportation mobilities in Long Beach, California, 42 Environment and Planning A, 1943, 1944 (March 2010); Vivian Chi-Wun Hui, Role of Urban Transportation Through the Lens of homeless Individuals: A Case Study of the City of Toronto, (2015) (unpublished, on file with University of Toronto); Sara Bralier et. Al., Rolling forward: addressing needs in the homeless community, Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless 28:2 (Junn. 2019)

<sup>66</sup> Sara Bralier, Stephanie Southworth & Brenda Ryan, Rolling Forward: Addressing Needs in the Homeless Community, 28 J. Soc. Distress and the Homeless 186, 190 (2019).

Indigenous, and people of color communities through robust and authentic community engagement. It is the opportune time for Metro to join the growing momentum of other LA public agencies in shifting to care and away from policing.

The following recommendations use the community-based and public health safety framework and, in some cases, align with other initiatives in the County. Alignment would provide the opportunity for integrated systems of communication and resource sharing between agencies and for community-based prevention and intervention work.<sup>67</sup> Through coordinated, decriminalized crisis response that aims to provide care for community members and resources for non-law enforcement prevention and response to interpersonal violence, Metro can build a safer transit environment that emphasizes care and belonging, and enhances connectedness and public health in LA County.

These recommendations should be read as initial proposals. Through further public engagement and engagement with stakeholders organized through Metro's Public Safety Advisory Committee, further non-law enforcement safety models will be surfaced.



**METRO MUST IMMEDIATELY TAKE  
ACTION TO DIVEST FROM POLICING  
AND REIMAGINE SAFETY ON PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION.**

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See ATI



## FROM “BLUE LINE FIRST/LAST MILE” PLAN (2018)

Comments received during the workshops were varied and diverse. Comments related to First/Last Mile issues focused on better lighting, addition of shade, and bike facilities.

“

Thanks for being concerned about the train and our issues because it is really needed. We need more benches, more shade for everyone, but especially those who need it most are disabled people. Thanks.

“

We need more traffic lights and space for bicycles. We need to respect everyone's right of way.

“

Put more shade at bus stops. Pick up the trash. Put more lamps.

“

Toward increased service -- Workshop and pop-up participants pointed directly to a need for increased bus and train service as a measure toward women's safety and comfort.

“

Security on the train could be a lot better. I feel the focus should be more on protecting and securing the patrons instead of just checking ticket and or violations.

“

Toward compassionate solutions -- Many [community participants] spoke about [unhoused people] with concern for their wellbeing, rather than as a nuisance to be removed from view. People experiencing homelessness seek warm, dry, well-lit, safe places to sleep and rest. As a result, Metro buses and trains are public spaces that provide a sanctuary for many who have lost their homes.

“

I think the Blue Line Station needs more benches.

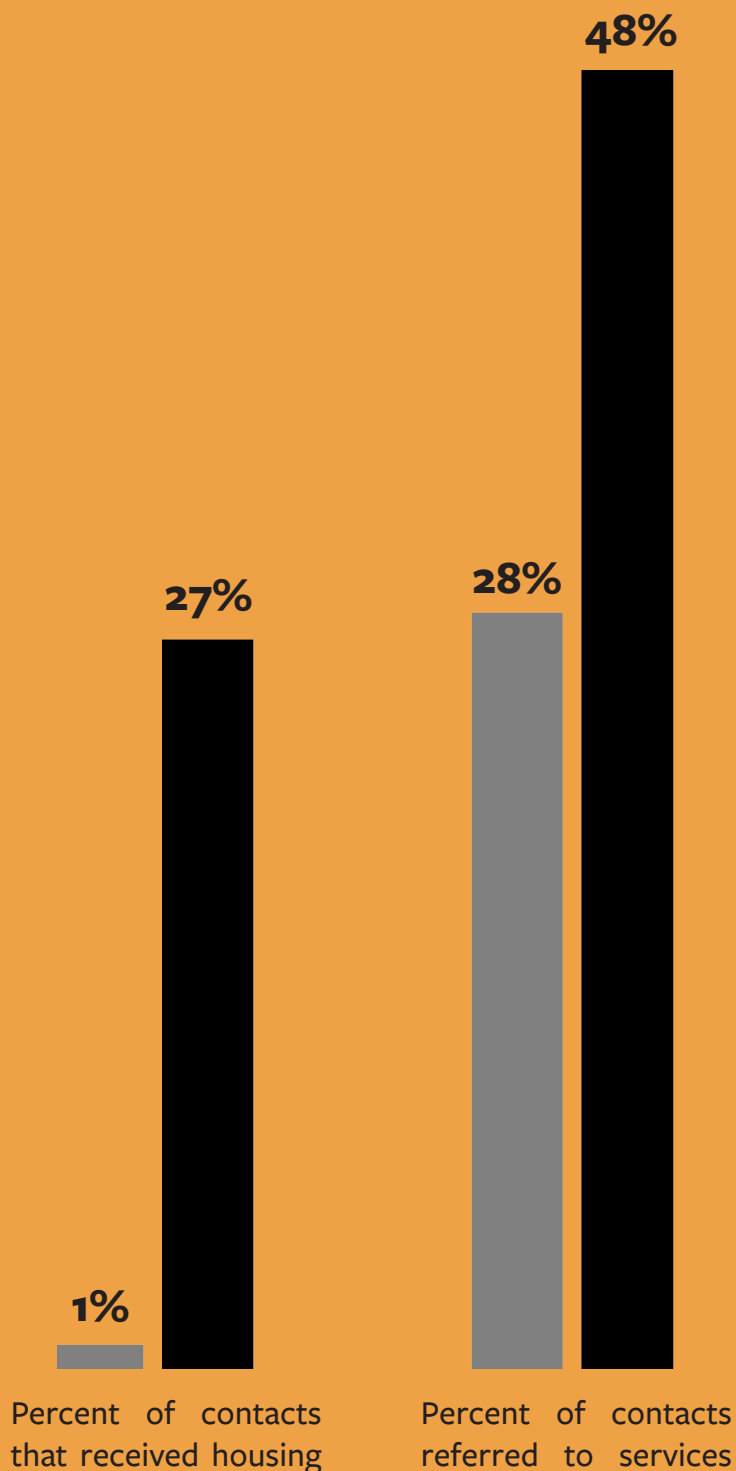
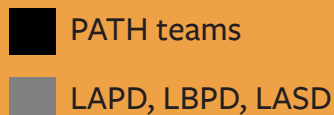
“

Toward safety and rider assistance -- Pueblo recommends that Metro create a certification program for “super-riders” or “transit ambassadors” drawing from the current ridership to build a cohort of knowledgeable, approachable individuals whose primary job is to do what they already know how to do: ride buses and trains, but with the training and support to care for others in transit.

## FROM “UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN TRAVEL” (2019)

# FROM “OFF THE RAILS: ALTERNATIVES TO POLICING” (2020)

## PATH TEAMS VS. POLICE AGENCIES



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I conclude that the challenge to making public transit safe and civil while reducing the harms of armed policing of transit is more a matter of budgeting and leadership, rather than creativity and inspiration.

**MA’AYAN DEMBO**

## PLANNING + DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Overcoming systemic racism requires imagining and creating design and policing alternatives that center the health and safety of transit riders and transit workers. This section moves beyond traditional, often colorblind frameworks for “safe” built environments—such as those espoused by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)—and instead proposes a six-pronged strategy for Community Safety Through Environmental Design (CSTED), focused on care-centered spatial tactics, stewardship, programming, support services, public education, and job creation potential.

This framing shift from crime prevention through defensible spaces to livable neighborhoods aligns with the turn in transportation planning to promote lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy cities.<sup>68</sup> Across transportation and other infrastructure sectors, people are demanding planning and investments in 21st century public, social, and civic infrastructures that improve public health, contribute to economic growth, mitigate climate risks, and foster social exchange—places like public libraries and parks. In doing so, design justice initiatives and organizations are organizing to build knowledge, power, and access in communities as an integral part of designing civic, cultural, and communal spaces for racial and social equity.

Transit riders deserve care-centered, community-based planning and design approaches. Public transportation is indispensable to people’s livelihoods and mobility needs, especially among BIPOC communities. Many organizations and people who oppose a reduction in policing often cite that they simply cannot imagine what would exist in its place. Here’s our vision.

### **Design strategies: Co-creating the Vision of Metro as Sanctuary**

We propose reframing design interventions around co-creation and shared stewardship of our transit stops, stations, buses and trains. People feel safe and secure in well-designed, human-centered environments that meet their needs. This includes transit stations with comfortable and ample seating, well-functioning elevators, and bright, clean bathrooms that are regularly serviced. Natural lighting, plants, and other greenery could promote feelings of wellness and connection with nature. Cleanly maintained transit environments further communicate care and safety.

As transit riders wait to board their bus or train, visible and clear displays of the

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<sup>68</sup> For example, the ten principles of sustainable transport advocated by the architect and urbanist Jan Gehl combine promoting active transport and bus services in cities with building dense, amenity and culture rich, transit-oriented, walkable neighborhoods. See Kain Benfield, “10 principles for livable transportation, by Jan Gehl & Walter Hook,” Smart Cities Dive, accessed 13 Nov 2018, <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/10-principles-livable-transportation-jan-gehl-walter-hook/12683/>.



location (i.e. station name, neighborhood, city), real-time data and other relevant information about transit departures and arrivals, and wayfinding systems (for the station and surrounding areas) strengthen senses of control and self-sufficiency among riders. Transit frequency and regularity also give riders more choice over how they navigate and spend their time at transit stations and stops.

Feelings of safety and security are additionally promoted by the presence and visibility of other people. Fare-free transit is a critical component, as ceasing surveillance and citation of riders for lacking proof of fare or boarding without payment would encourage higher ridership and safety in numbers. Additionally, fare-free transit would eliminate the need for gates and in their stead, conveniently located and welcoming entrances connect to spacious sidewalks near zebra crossings and popular pedestrian thoroughfares and intersections.

Transit stations and systems could be retooled as civic commons and even sanctuary for Angelenos, that not only meets basic physiological and safety needs, through increased presence of people, sources of employment and livelihood, and mobility services, but also belonging, information, resources and cultural connection.

Examples of design interventions include creative installations and public arts campaigns (e.g. murals, mosaics, art galleries with changing exhibitions), which convey a sense of place, represent local communities, and provide casual delight to travelers. Food and beverage stalls and small retail shops located inside and adjacent to transit stations could enhance convenience, delight the senses, and spur cross-cultural connection and empathy.



ACT-LA station activation (2019)



## On design alternatives

The following table provides a summary of recommendations, all rooted in a foundational commitment to reimagining and reorganizing the public safety infrastructure of LA Metro. This multi-layered framework is designed to shift both organizational practices, cultures, and funding streams, as well as community perceptions and civic investment around the role and value of public transit. We pull inspiration from transit hubs around the US and other types of publicly-funded institutions that contribute to the broader civic commons. All of these examples demonstrate feasible methods of creating place- and people-based models for true community and public safety.

### **CARE-CENTERED POSSIBILITIES**

What sorts of design interventions could transform **Metro into a sanctuary**: offering every transit rider and worker equal protections and entitlements to safety, freedom, belonging, and care as they move within and across neighborhoods?

# COMMUNITY SAFETY THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

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## 1 CARE-CENTERED SPATIAL TACTICS

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### Well-designed, human-centered public spaces:

- Continue to build off of recent efforts--e.g., Metro Customer Experience report (2020)--centering customer service efforts around care and dignity.
- Improved seating, elevators, and bathrooms that are regularly serviced and cleaned.
- Visible and clear displays of the location, real-time data and other relevant information about transit departures and arrivals, and wayfinding systems.
- Replace gates with easy entrances connected to pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, thoroughfares, and intersections.

### Spaces for gathering / increasing the presence of people:

- Include creative installations such as public “Living Rooms” and visual arts.
- Natural lighting, plants, and other greenery.



TOP: BART elevator attendants (Source: San Francisco Chronicle). BOTTOM: People gather in Olvera Street (Source: Metrolink).

## 2 STEWARDSHIP

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Replace police with unarmed, official representatives of public space who are Metro staff or work closely with Metro staff to maximize presence along high-traffic corridors and stations. This includes roles such as:

### Transit ambassadors:

- Transit ambassadors are uniformed transit staff who support transit workers and riders, are trained in de-escalation and customer service, and who are or who work closely with transit agency staff. Popular with transit workers in promoting safety (as a peer presence along bus corridors, other public transit stations).
- EX: San Francisco Muni Community Transit Assistants Program--agency partners with local workforce development organizations and hires many justice-involved individuals (program doubles as job training program and alternative to policing). This long standing program is popular with community members, local electeds, and especially with transit operators, as it has reduced transit worker harassment and assault.



### Trust agents:

- As the name suggests, these workers serve as a consistent, soothing presence in public spaces. They help with perceptions of safety, and take on additional roles that are rooted in building community trust and good will.
- EX: Woodruff Park social work partnership in Atlanta, GA, employs permanent case managers as “park trust agents” who connect unhoused individuals to services, and provide basic necessities such as power outlets and care packs. They engage with all park users, including and nearby businesses and employees.
- EX: Public libraries across the US employ permanent social work staff, who alongside library staff, are widely seen as “trust agents”—helping contribute to the overarching perception of libraries as places of sanctuary. Libraries demonstrate how public institutions can provide spaces of dignity, belonging, and pride.

## 3 PROGRAMMING

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Activate transit stations for their civic potential and increase feelings of safety and wellbeing by actively welcoming local commercial activity, cultural installations, and services on the premises.

### Street vendors and locally owned shops:

- Local vendors and shops on Metro’s premises increase community presence on transit and in turn increase feelings of safety and wellbeing.
- Familiar faces of vendors and shopkeepers helps inculcate feelings of connection with the surroundings. They also provide food or service options to make transit more convenient and pleasant, as well as to increase access to food options and services to the surrounding neighborhood thus improving livability.
- Stations and stops can host newsstands, small businesses/kiosks and street vendors.



TOP: Community vendors at MacArthur Park Station (Source: Streetsblog LA). BOTTOM: All-gender bathroom (Source: Google Image Search).

### Bathrooms:

- Public bathrooms are increasingly difficult to find in urban centers, yet are a crucial service.
- For many LA residents, transit rides are long, both in terms of waiting for service and the total travel time.
- Access to clean, well-maintained restrooms is essential for all users of transit stations, and provides an essential public good.

## Wayfinding to local stops:

- Transit stops provide ample opportunity to bolster engagement with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Good wayfinding information that points transit riders to surrounding shops, businesses, and sites, further strengthening the perception of public transit as an integrated part of the civic landscape.

## Art installations:

- Installations by local artists enrich the sensory environment of transit stations, give a sense of place and community to an often generic infrastructure, and are sensorily pleasing and engaging. The Metro Art program has similarly been focused on improving ridership experiences, and provides a solid foundation to expand.
- Other Art-In-Transit programs have been formally studied (e.g., in San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Naples, Vancouver, and New York) and shown that transit stations enhanced by art and design encourage ridership, increase public safety, decrease stress and improve rider experience.

## Musicians:

- Passengers traveling through stops and stations encounter not only the sights but the sounds of the city. Musicians have the power to reflect local culture and entertain passengers and operators. Transit agencies should not diminish, but rather uplift the expression of the human soul through sound.



TOP: Union Station piano (Source: LA Metro blog); BOTTOM: Fleece Jones on LA Metro (Source: VoyageLA)

## 4 SUPPORT SERVICES

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Although Metro currently partners with the Department of Health Services and the local service organization People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) on its Transit Homeless Action Plan, it substantially relies on--and spends its resources on--police-led responses to homelessness. PATH employs eight 3-person outreach teams at much lower costs per employee than the 4-person LAPD team focused on unhoused individuals (\$4.9m/year for 24 PATH workers, and \$1.17m for 3 LAPD officers). For reasons of both budget efficiency as well as effective service delivery, Metro should reinvest policing funds into the following programs and policies:

### Onsite health and crisis support:

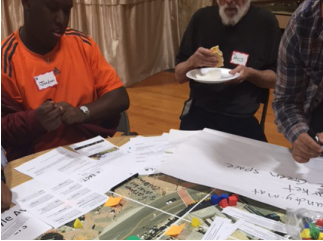
- Conduct a review of Metro police interactions and arrests to identify healthcare and service gap crises. LAPD and Metro both recognize that police officers are often tasked with responsibilities they are not equipped to address: acute mental health events, social service referral, emergency housing placements, to name a few.
- Many of these events occur within public transit stations, and may reflexively turn to criminalization instead of treatment or program referral. To understand the

scope of needs of Metro users, a full review must be conducted to fill this gap in information and better plan future policies and partnerships.

### **Employ workers who truly meet riders' health and service needs:**



TOP: PATH worker at Union Station (Source: Metro blog).  
BOTTOM: ACT-LA workshop (Source: ACT-LA).



- For Metro, like many transit systems around the country, policing takes the place of service delivery.
- Increasingly, however, public institutions are turning away from this misplaced reliance on police towards police-alternative responses to crises and emergent needs.
- By employing social workers, emergency housing experts, and nurses and doctors as frontline workers in transit stations, all Metro riders and operators will benefit.
- EX: Denver's STAR program, staffed by mental health professionals and paramedics
- EX: Portland Street Response, staffed by community health workers
- EX: Eugene, Oregon's CAHOOTS program
- EX: San Francisco's Street Crisis Response Team, staffed by behavioral health clinicians and peer specialists. See also BART Progressive Policing: Stakeholder Engagement Recommendations (Jan. 14, 2021), which recommends interventions by staffed personnel that are not police, such as community stewards, elevator attendants, partnerships with community organizations to assist in leading trauma-informed responses, and civilian-led homelessness outreach.

### **Repurpose underused spaces:**

- Identify underused spaces within Metro that could be repurposed as satellite service hubs. Metro should take stock of unused and/or underused areas along transit corridors, and identify potential sites for satellite service delivery. Public parks, libraries, and transit hubs around the country have readapted unused spaces into satellite service centers. Many employ permanent social workers and/or mental health crisis counselors.
- EX: The Philadelphia public transit system (SEPTA) partners with a local social services organization, and has turned an unused concourse into a full-time satellite office ("Hub of Hope"). The Hub is located at a major transit stop, and provides comprehensive case management including primary care, free laundry and showers, housing placement, job application assistance, hot breakfast and dinner, and recovery services.
- Triage centers could be placed near transit corridors where vulnerable individuals are put into direct contact with mental health or legal services providers. Reactive, re-criminalizing police interactions must be replaced with upstream, pro-social interventions. This could include providing spaces for housing support services, as well as medical and psychiatric care providers near transit hubs.

## 5 PUBLIC EDUCATION

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Metro should refocus safety efforts on bolstering a feeling of security by encouraging riders to care for each other and see fellow riders as part of a larger shared community.

### **Multilingual campaigns and bystander training:**

- As Metro hosts hundreds of thousands of riders per day (even during the pandemic), buses, trains and stops are widely trafficked areas of LA county. Multilingual public education and bystander intervention campaigns are an effective way to foster community wellness on transit and invite riders to care for one another and their shared spaces.
- Public education campaigns that center de-escalation tactics instead of the involvement of law enforcement improve public safety and also increase perceptions of safety among riders.
- EX: The city of Boston launched posters on bus stops and trains detailing a bystander guide on combatting and responding to anti-Islam incidents along transit. The poster emphasizes bystander methods of defusing the situation while showing respect for fellow riders.



*Anti-Islamophobia campaign at a Boston bus stop (Source: NPR).*

## 6 JOB CREATION POTENTIAL

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The scope of safety on Metro most certainly extends to those who operate it. The above recommendations necessitate well-paying jobs, and would generate employment.

### **Maintenance and operations:**

- The prioritization of well-kept stations also requires regular maintenance work in cleaning and general upkeep. Sustaining high quality transit service expands bus and rail operator job opportunities.

### **Design and planning:**

- Architects, contractors, and construction workers are trained to create well-designed transit stations, while artists and graphic designers, musicians, and bakers and other food cooks elevate the sensory experience of Metro and provide a sense of place. New wayfinding signs also require designers and community expertise, as do public education campaigns.

### **Local businesses:**

- Local and micro business owners would see an increase in patronage given their welcomed presence at stops and stations and access to the public both with easier transit and with wayfinding to local establishments. Inviting locations for street vendors provide them with secure and regular spaces to do business.



# Conclusion

## METRO AS A SANCTUARY



IMAGE CREDIT: ACT-LA

“

## **METRO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE CONVERSATIONS AND PRACTICES OF SAFETY ON PUBLIC TRANSIT.**

Transportation is an important thread of any tapestry depicting a more equitable society. Beyond just looking for equity, our communities need justice. Transit justice includes “not merely the right of individuals to move in conventional ways and to benefit from common goods, but, more importantly, the capacity of inhabitants to direct and transform relations of movement and rest and to reclaim the ‘mobility commons’. It involves more radical influence in managing collective life, a non-alienated existence, bodily integrity, and a flourishing of agency and freedom.”<sup>69</sup>

Any work to reclaim the mobility commons must include a conversation of and re-framing of policing on transit. Metro’s current safety model and initiatives focus on their employment of a multi-agency policing model. This approach must end when the current contracts expire in 2022. Rather than simply exploring nominal reallocation of funds, Metro must drastically and foundationally rethink their framework of safety and policing.

Our proposed framework centers community safety and public health--to be defined and led by the community. Our vision requires moving away from punishment and acknowledging that many of the systems historically put in place to address safety have instead created environments that are inherently unsafe for low-income people and people of color. This is especially true for Black people, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness. The people who stand the most to benefit from transit are often the most burdened, harmed, or killed while using transit.

This report has presented some of the interdisciplinary research and data-informed practices that provide valuable insights in planning and design alternatives for public space, including transit. Metro can become an industry leader in equitable and anti-racist safety measures through an innovative combination of design strategies, including care-centered spatial tactics, stewardship, programming, support services, public education and job creation.

Metro has the potential to fundamentally change the conversations and practices of safety on public transit. This work should be completed with an urgency as if the lives of those most burdened, and the lives of all Angelenos depend on it -- because they do.

# Further Resources

Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles, [Public Comment Letter to Metro Board of Directors](#), (Jun. 2020).

LA Metro, “[Customer Experience Plan](#),” (Dec. 3, 2020).

LA Metro Office of the Inspector General, “[Metro Policing and Security Workload and Staffing Analysis](#),” Report 16-AUD-03, (Jan. 4, 2016).

Ma’ayan Dembo, “[Off the Rails: Alternatives to Policing](#),” (Jun. 2020).

Pueblo Planning and Sumi Gant Consulting (Plan’s Primary Authors). LA Metro, “[Blue Line First/Last Mile: A Community-Based Process and Plan](#),” Executive Summary, (Mar. 2018).

Pueblo Planning. LA Metro, “[Understanding How Women Travel](#),” Appendix E: Ethnographic Methods, (2019).

Pueblo Planning, [Public Comment Letter to the Members of Metro Board of Directors](#), (Jun. 2020).

# Appendix: Research by UCLA School of Law Veterans Legal Clinic

## **RESEARCH QUESTION:**

How have other jurisdictions addressed the public safety concerns of riders as it relates to the unhoused, the disabled, and people with mental illness?

## **KEY RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS:**

1. Community focus groups, passenger surveys, anti-harassment Metro media campaigns, rider escort programs, and environmental design measures are all viable public safety options that can be considered as an alternative to law enforcement.
2. Interview-driven studies with LGBTQ riders suggest that “bystander intervention” campaigns could be used as an alternative to law enforcement.
3. Mental health and direct legal services providers could be installed either in, or very close, to transit hubs. This could solve the problem of police picking up and “dumping” vulnerable individuals away from transit corridors.
4. Hiring transit ambassadors may be an effective safety strategy for all riders, particularly those with disabilities. Many studies show that riders with disabilities feel more confident and safe when dedicated workers tasked with their safety are frequently encountered along their commute.



# RIDERS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

## HOMELESSNESS, TRAVEL BEHAVIOR, AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSPORTATION MOBILITIES IN LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2010
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How unhoused people in Long Beach use transit and their experiences on transit
<b>CITATION</b>	Christine L. Jocoy, et. al, Homelessness, travel behavior, and the politics of transportation mobilities in Long Beach, California, 42 Environment and Planning A, 1943, 1944 (March 2010)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning study based in Long Beach</li><li>• Comprised of focus groups and structured interviews with 124 homeless adults (1951)</li></ul>
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unhoused people “compose the most transit-dependent population” across that US, and in Long Beach over 50% of unhoused people interviewed used public transit (1953)</li><li>• Unhoused people use transit to fulfill the same needs as the housed population: “food, access medical and social services, search for employment and housing, work, shop, take kids to school, visit family/friends, and [to] be entertained (1953)</li><li>• “For the homeless, travel to access social services makes up the majority of trips and explains why travel for family and personal business is so much higher for them than for the low-income population.” (1954)</li><li>• unhoused people surveyed considered traveling to access medical care, including mental health counseling, and social services as the most important places they accessed through public transportation (1956)</li><li>• The cost of transit keeps unhoused riders in poverty. One interview with a rider describes how she walks everywhere she can because she needs to take transit to work and can only afford the bus to and from work. She works so that she can afford transit fare. (1958)</li><li>• Unhoused riders experience high levels of stigma when using public transportation. Study participants report such stigma limits the ability of unhoused people to use transit for any purpose. Participants of the survey explained that once drivers recognized them as homeless, they could be denied access to the bus even with “legitimate bus passes or cash.” (1959)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/COMMENTS</b>	<p>This helps counter some of the prevailing narratives around unhoused people using transit only as a place to sleep and shows that unhoused people use transit to access essential services as well as their places of employment.</p> <p>This study includes charts that may also be useful.</p>

# ROLE OF URBAN TRANSPORTATION THROUGH THE LENS OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS: A CASE STUDY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2015
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How unhoused people in Toronto use public transportation.
<b>CITATION</b>	Vivian Chi-Wun Hui, Role of Urban Transportation Through the Lens of homeless Individuals: A Case Study of the City of Toronto, (2015) (unpublished , on file with University of Toronto)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Thesis at the University of Toronto Graduate Department of Civil Engineering.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Toronto “visits for medical purposes were important for the majority of the street population and older low income individuals, while visits for school or job-related purposes were important for the majority of the at-risk youth. Consequently, it was concerning that there were a fair amount of individuals who stated that they had no reason to travel at all, indicating the existence of mobility barriers.” (26)</li><li>• “... travel costs may be mostly affecting homeless individuals who are in the age categories of 40-60 and their willingness to find employment opportunities that are located away from their immediate surroundings.” (73)</li><li>• “... if one were to be given travel costs for a day’s journey, their experience of transport-related social exclusion would be reduced. In particular, homeless individuals would receive more freedom in the selection of their mode choices, as well as in the freedom of going to locations for social activities.” (73)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A fare-pricing structure for all homeless and low-income individuals would be ideal. (73)</li><li>• “For homeless individuals, employment opportunities would definitely be an essential method of helping one to be free from the cycle of poverty. Those who fall under the age categories of 40-50 and 50-60 still have a chance of finding work. However, since they are most unwilling to pay for travel costs, this might also affect their decisions of looking for work away from their immediate surroundings. It would be recommended that social services should recognize that homeless individuals in the age categories of 40-60 may have a willingness to work, but are influenced by travel costs from finding appropriate employment opportunities.” (66)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/COMMENTS</b>	Makes many of the same arguments as Jocoy above.

# ACCESSIBILITY, MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT-RELATED SOCIAL EXCLUSION

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**DATE PUBLISHED**

2007

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**MAIN TOPIC**

The promotion by the UK Department for Transport of accessibility planning is examined and includes helpful language around social exclusion.

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**CITATION**

John Preston et. al, Accessibility, mobility and transport-related social exclusion, 15 Journal of Transport Geography, 151 (2006).

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**CONTEXT**

Transport Studies Unit, Oxford University Centre for the Environment

(geographic location,  
demographic profile, etc.)

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**KEY STATISTICS OR  
TALKING POINTS**

- “The origins of the term [social exclusion] are associated with contributions made by French social scientists such as Lenoir (1974) and Lefebvre (1974) who built on Marxist notions of socio-spatial exclusion as a necessary condition of capitalism and examined how new spaces of representation could promote new forms of empowerment.” (151)
- Another definition relevant to transit is: “Social exclusion is a constraints-based process which causes individuals or groups not to participate in the normal activities of the society in which they are residents and has important spatial manifestations.” (151)
- “Similarly, we postulate that social exclusion is not due to a lack of social opportunities but a lack of access to those opportunities. This conceptualisation is not new.” (153)

# HOMELESSNESS AND THE MOBILE SHELTER SYSTEM: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AS SHELTER

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2011
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This study focuses on the demographics of individuals who use public transit for shelter, the frequency at which they do so, as well as potential policy solutions.
<b>CITATION</b>	Nichols, L., & Cázares, F. (2011). Homelessness and the Mobile Shelter System: Public Transportation as Shelter. <i>Journal of SocialPolicy</i> , 40(2), 333–350.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	This article summarizes findings from a study done in Santa Clara County, one of the most expensive housing markets in the country. The authors analyze data on unhoused individuals who use the public transit system there for shelter. Participants got \$5 gift cards for participating.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue of who has a right to public space and why public/institutional prejudice restricts the rights of unhoused riders: “While riders legitimately pay to ride the bus, transportation authorities and housed riders make complaints similar to those often raised about the use of libraries by the unhoused, specifically pointing out odour and unruly behaviour as problems.” (3)</li> <li>• When asked why they use the bus instead of shelters, “[o]ver half of the women surveyed said that they rode the bus overnight for safety.” (343)</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This article is mainly descriptive. It identifies how and why public transit is used as public shelters, what problems it poses, and agency resistance.</li> <li>• While there is some tension between the findings of this article in comparison to the Long Beach study, it includes anecdotal evidence to support the claim that public transit is not merely used as shelter for unemployed or mentally ill individuals. Instead, transit serves as a lifeline for those who are vulnerable but nevertheless employed, productive members of their communities.</li> <li>• “Mary said that she had been riding the bus for 20 years: ‘I am in my 50s, and I’m an unhoused rider of “Hotel 22” I’ve been riding for twenty years now... I’m permanently disabled and so I get an SSI check and live off of that.’ At the other end of the spectrum, Manuel said that he had just started riding the bus that week: ‘This is the first week that I use this bus for shelter. I have a job in maintenance so I use this bus to go to work too.’” (p. 9)</li> <li>• A little over half of those riding the bus for shelter had some sort of income. Almost a third received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), nine were employed, seven received general assistance, and three people received unemployment (some received income from multiple sources). Said an employed rider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sometimes I stand on the sidewalks with other jornaleros, or day labourers, but with my age it’s hard to find work. When I did get a day job, it was usually related to gardening or landscaping. I used to rent an apartment with other workers in (a nearby town), but little by little they stopped helping me pay for rent and utilities, so it got expensive and I knew I couldn’t pay the rent on my own. So I put my belongings in a storage place, and that’s where my stuff is sitting right now. Unfortunately I don’t have money to go back to Mexico. I’m stuck here.” (p. 10)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Noting public transit as the superior option in terms of safety and mobility when compared to shelters. (p. 15)</li> </ul>



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- Noting public transit as the superior option in terms of safety and mobility when compared to shelters. (p. 15)

# HOMELESS NEGOTIATIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE IN TWO CALIFORNIA CITIES

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	July 2019
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How Unhoused People in Sacramento and Santa Cruz move about the city and how this affects their lives
<b>CITATION</b>	Cory A. Parker, Homeless Negotiations of Public Space in Two California Cities, 2019 (unpublished dissertation on file with UC Davis)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy in Geography. Based out of Davis, looking at Sacramento and Santa Cruz. Comprised on interviews and integrating theory.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Homeless people occupy space in an unformed manner; that is, they inhabit spaces contrary to the original, practical intent or purpose of that space. Often attributed to mental disabilities or rebellious behavior, much of the unformed mannerisms stem from a lack of the private space of a home, for example, reclining in public, pausing to stare blankly at the horizon or brushing one’s teeth.” (p. 144)</li><li>• Unhoused people are more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators (Gaetz, 2006; Lee &amp; Schreck, 2005; Newburn &amp; Rock, 2006). This relates to their vulnerability on the streets, but also the criminalization of homelessness itself (Foscarinis, Cunningham-Bowers, &amp; Brown, 1999; National Coalition for the Homeless, 2006) (163)</li><li>• Unhoused people experience physical and sexual assaults at higher rates than the general population, particularly women and the mentally ill (Gaetz, 2006; Kushel, Evans, Perry, Robertson, &amp; Moss, 2003) (163)</li><li>• At the same time, unhoused people do not perceive the police as helping them. They do not often go to the police when victimized, as they have a generally conflictual relationship with police officers (Newburn &amp; Rock, 2006) (p. 163)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Sacramento, a monthly pass costs \$100, \$50 for seniors and disabled people. If 1,000 of the 1,600 unhoused population received a pass, presumably this would cost the city \$100,000 a month or \$1.2 million a year in lost fare revenue, at most. The free pass would eliminate or greatly reduce the number of citations for fare evasion, thus saving the County Courthouse from processing hundreds of these citations each month, reducing their costs by at least the cost of monthly passes. (p. 185)</li></ul>

# HOMELESSNESS VIS-À-VIS TRANSPORTATION- INDUCED SOCIAL EXCLUSION

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2017
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How Demographics affect the ways unhoused people use transit.
<b>CITATION</b>	Vivian Hui et. al, Homelessness vis-à-vis Transportation- Induced Social Exclusion, 2665 Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, 60 (2017)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Toronto based study, referencing other Toronto research.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Of the surveyed homeless individuals, 67% indicated that transportation services to see apartments would help them find housing” (p. 60)</li><li>• Toronto-based advocacy group, the Fair Fare Coalition, led a study to offer insight into transport-related social exclusion. The study indicated that transit cost is a barrier to accessing transportation, as “many participants stated that social destinations, such as visiting family or friends, as well as . . . going to recreation centres and volunteering, were destinations they could not reach due to cost” (p. 60)</li></ul>

## ROLLING FORWARD: ADDRESSING NEEDS IN THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2019
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This is a pilot study which relied primarily on interviews with unhoused individuals in order to better understand their transportation needs.
<b>CITATION</b>	Sara Brallier, Stephanie Southworth & Brenda Ryan (2019) "Rolling Forward: Addressing Needs in the Homeless Community," <i>Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless</i> , 28:2,186-192.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	The authors collected interviews and data from 102 unhoused individuals and 11 service providers in South Carolina.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "One of the least researched issues of the homeless community is transportation. This issue is understudied and given scant attention by most policy makers. The reports by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2010) and the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation (2003) are among the few studies that recognize transportation as a structural barrier for homeless individuals." (p. 190)</li><li>• "Access to reliable, affordable transportation is a critical component of exiting homelessness and poverty. Without it, it is very difficult to get and keep a job, schedule and keep mental and physical health care appointments, apply for and maintain benefits, and access and utilize other community resources." (p. 190)</li><li>• "Our findings are consistent with those reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2010), we found inadequate public or individual transportation, lack of program funds for transportation, and the amount of time it takes to secure travel or use public transportation make [it] more difficult for homeless people to make use of services. Our homeless participants clearly articulated that lack of adequate, reliable transportation was a structural barrier in terms of obtaining and maintaining work, making and keeping medical and social service appointments, and well as meeting their day-to-day needs and maintaining a social support network." (p. 190)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the end of the study the researchers created a free bike sharing program to alleviate some of the transportation burdens of the unhoused individuals they interviewed. The success of this program, and others like it across the country, is yet to be seen. (p. 191)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/COMMENTS</b>	The information generated by these interviews rebuts the assumption that unhoused individuals mainly use public transit for shelter. Instead, public transit is essential for access to jobs, drug and alcohol treatment facilities, public benefits offices, and other community resources.



# RIDERS WITH DISABILITIES

## MOBILITY MANAGERS: TRANSPORTATION COORDINATORS FOR OLDER ADULTS, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, VETERANS, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RIDING PUBLIC

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**DATE PUBLISHED**

2019

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**MAIN TOPIC**

An overview of a specific type of aid for people with disabilities using transit.

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**CONTEXT**

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

By the AARP Public Policy Institute

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**KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS**

- “Mobility management is an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer. It begins with a community vision in which the entire transportation network—public transit, private operators, cycling and walking, volunteer drivers, and others—works together with customers, planners, and stakeholders to deliver the transportation options that best meet the community’s needs,” as defined by the National Center for Mobility Management.” (2)
- “The mobility management approach offers...flexibility. Mobility management and managers focus on the customer. They are not rooted to one system or one choice of mode. Mobility managers tailor solutions to customer needs, utilizing all available options and seeking to achieve efficiencies. The creators of mobility management systems are embracing new technology. Mobility management is a strategy that welcomes and seeks to implement and support those changes that improve customer service and, in turn, improve lives.” (22)
- Funding: “Stable and reliable funding sources for mobility managers are still evolving; however, the US Department of Transportation (DOT), in an effort to encourage investment in mobility management, offers grant recipients broad flexibility to tap federal funding sources.”(4)

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**SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

Types of Mobility Managers (2)

1. Service mobility managers are often directly involved in governmental planning and regulatory, financial, and governance processes. They develop planning and organizational partnerships to solve transportation service needs, address service gaps, and better coordinate existing services to achieve a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness for the public. For example, they may be involved in creating and staffing the public transit-human service coordination plan required by federal law (49 U.S.C. 5310). The intent is often to improve the workings of the local or regional passenger network to ensure better service delivery.
2. Trip-making mobility managers are involved in helping individuals and special customer groups connect with transportation services. These mobility managers work with customers to help them understand and connect with the transportation options that best meet their needs.
3. Agency mobility managers are employed by a specific program to serve the participants of that program in making travel arrangements. For example, Medicaid brokers work exclusively to get Medicaid clients to medical appointments. Brokers of ADA paratransit service arrange rides for people with disabilities who cannot use conventional fixed-route transit services, regardless of income. The Veterans Transportation Services program has mobility managers to arrange veterans’ transportation to more than 100 VA medical facilities.

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**MISC. NOTES/COMMENTS**

Mobility managers could be included in the service hubs. This proposal should balance the use of technology to avoid added surveillance of elderly, or disabled riders.

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# FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE TRANSPORT

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## DATE PUBLISHED

Nov 2, 2018

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## MAIN TOPIC

This study aims to present trends and empirical research on transport and disability. It defines functional requirements to facilitate social inclusion.

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## CITATION

Bjerkan, Kristin Ystmark, & Ovstedal, Liv Rakel. (2020). Functional requirements for inclusive transport. *Transportation (Dordrecht)*, 47(3), 1177-1198.

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## CONTEXT

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

- Lit review of 34 articles about transport related social exclusion
- Researchers are based out of Norway, research in the article is not focused on Norway

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## KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS

- Safety: "In using paratransit services, some depend on a regular driver who knows their needs and can accommodate transport accordingly." (1187)
- Reliability: "Obviously, delays are tedious to any traveller, but can be particularly constraining for people with disabilities, as having to wait can in itself be tiring" (1188)
- "The literature review shows time to be a central issue. The time-based exclusion described by Church et al. not only includes time spent traveling, but also pertain that time constraints are higher in some groups, reducing the time available to travel. This is highly relevant for people with disabilities, as this group spend significant time planning and organising transport, as well as waiting for (para)transport to arrive and follow its route. Considering that people with disabilities spend more time managing and conducting daily activities, they can be more prone to time-based exclusion." (1191)

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## SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

- Information must be available and understandable at all stops (1185)
- This includes presentation of information in accessible formats
- Information should further be clear on eligibility and level of accessibility.
- "Centralised information points are crucial, i.e. that all relevant information for entire travel chains can be accessed from a single point, regardless of who the transport provider is, where the travel is made, who subsidises travel costs etc." (1185)
- Flexibility: "As people with disabilities often have difficulties using several means of transport ..., a specific transport solution must accommodate the needs of the individual traveller." (1186)
- Safety: "communication and interaction with the (bus) driver is imperative" (1187)
- Reliability: "Thus, it is important that users can trust the transport service to arrive at the right time and be sure that she arrives at her destination at the expected time. This implies that the transport operator has a robust system for handling unforeseen events, such as drivers calling in sick, vehicles breaking down, route changes etc." (1188)
- Prices must be predictable (1189)
- Shorter travel times (1190)

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## MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS

This article supports the general idea that "safety" should include access and facilitating access for certain groups of riders. We would caution against criminal or citation authority in the hands of bus drivers or the transit facilitators.

# UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF TRANSPORTATION-RELATED SOCIAL INTERACTION IN TRAVEL BEHAVIOR AND HEALTH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2020
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	Addressing barriers to transit for people with disabilities related to social and psychological needs as opposed to physical barriers.
<b>CITATION</b>	Cochran, Abigail L. (2020). Understanding the role of transportation-related social interaction in travel behavior and health: A qualitative study of adults with disabilities. <i>Journal of Transport &amp; Health</i> , 19, 100948.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research paper in the <i>Journal of Transit &amp; Health</i> for Department of City and Regional Planning, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley</li> <li>Based on 32 in-depth interviews</li> </ul>
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“People with disabilities with greater access to transportation have a higher sense of well-being (Blais and El-Geneidy, 2014). Older adults who feel that their transportation needs are not adequately met report lower well-being” (2)</li> <li>People with disabilities often need to ask for help while using public forms of transportation. (2)</li> <li>“A woman in her nineties who has low vision also said that she shies away from making trips to destinations that she does not know very well, because ‘to go into a new situation and not know where things are’ is daunting, as is asking people for help... She went on to say that she wouldn’t take trips that she ‘felt she couldn’t complete easily by herself.’” (4)</li> <li>Crowded cars/buses are a safety concern: “Other respondents experienced stress using transportation because they felt unsafe. A woman in her fifties who uses a motorized wheelchair worried about her physical safety in crowded train cars, remembering of a recent trip, ‘The BART train was crowded... and we were packed in. I had backpacks in my face and people kicking and shoving... I try not to ride when it’s gonna be crowded. I’m short and people grab my chair. They hold on and try to balance themselves. Or they bump into me, or kick my feet...’” (5)</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit Ambassadors can be relied upon to answer riders’ questions in unfamiliar environments. (6)</li> <li>More frequent service keeps riders safe, especially riders with disabilities. (6)</li> <li>“Receiving training on how to use transportation with a disability seemed important for developing self-efficacy and resilience in respondents with acquired conditions, particularly if they were acquired relatively recently. This training, as well as exposure to others with the same disability, seemed to help these respondents overcome their hesitations confronting transportation challenges” (6)</li> </ul>

# THE RUDERMAN WHITE PAPER ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT USE OF FORCE AND DISABILITY

DATE PUBLISHED	2016
MAIN TOPIC	How law enforcement criminalizes people with disabilities and how the media covers police use of force against people with disabilities.
CITATION	Perry, David M. and Lawrence Carter-Long. The Ruderman White Paper on Media Coverage of Law Enforcement Use of Force and Disability, The Ruderman Family Foundation (2016)
CONTEXT (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This white paper argues that full inclusion of people with disabilities is a civil rights issue, not an act of charity.</li><li>• Reviews eight incidents of police violence since 2013 against people with disabilities.</li></ul>
KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “... roughly a third to a half of all people killed by police are disabled. Many more disabled civilians experience non-lethal violence and abuse at the hands of law enforcement officers.” (7)</li><li>• “Certainly, police have too frequently interpreted epilepsy as a threat, such as in this Alabama case from July 2015 or Robert Marzullo in 2014.” (18)</li><li>• “... stigma about mental illness continues to inform reporting, suggesting that people with psychiatric disabilities are likely to be violent and that police have reason to fear them. When we’re told that police are the default mental health workers, and that’s why so many people with psychiatric disabilities get killed, the implication is that mental health crises are likely to be violent events.” (21)</li><li>• “We need to escape the pattern of ‘mental illness’ and think instead about disability. In America we try to cure illness, but we are obligated to accommodate disability. Thanks to the transformations of the ADA, more people believe it’s necessary to build an inclusive society.” (9)</li></ul>

# EXPLORING TRANSPORTATION, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, AND LOCATION ISSUES FOR NEW JERSEY VETERANS WITH DISABILITY

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	November 2014
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This report explores the intersection among transportation, housing, and employment to successful veteran reintegration.
<b>CITATION</b>	DiPetrillo, Stephanie and Andrea Lubin. Exploring Transportation, Employment, Housing, and Location Issues for New Jersey Veterans with Disability, Rutgers University (2014)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	<p>The Norman Y. Mineta International Institute for Surface Transportation Policy Studies was established by Congress in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The Institute's Board of Trustees revised the name to Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) in 1996. MTI works on Education, Research, and Information and Technology Transfer.</p> <p>This report focuses on New Jersey Veterans. Based on other research and a focus group with thirteen older veterans.</p>
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why veteran mobility is important: "Limited mobility and physical and emotional isolation can make transportation considerations central to veteran reintegration (Community Transportation 2012). But transportation is a crucial issue even for those who are not dealing with a service-related disability. Reliable personal and/or public transportation is critical to accessing employment, housing, and health care, all necessities needed to make a successful transition from military to civilian life." (27)</li><li>• Link between veterans and disability: "The rate of physical and mental injuries among veterans is on the rise, including the incidence of PTSD and depression. The veteran suicide rate is the highest it has been since 1980 when the US Army began keeping tracking it." (27)</li><li>• Veterans are especially affected by system failures causing them to be late for work or for appointments. One veteran explained that "VA medical appointment could necessitate waiting up to ninety days for a rescheduled appointment and result in a major setback for addressing any medical need." (52)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One important task for veterans "ensuring that transportation information is also easily accessible and understandable." (28)</li><li>• "To address this issue, the group suggested that a comprehensive one-stop support and information program should be developed for the veteran community." (53)</li><li>• This could be incorporated in the service hubs especially around the VA, although the veteran's design included support before discharge.</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	Supports the argument for reimagining public safety, and uplifts the particularized needs of veterans, who suffer high incidents of PTSD and anxiety.



# TRAVERSING THE COMMUNITY IS UNCERTAIN, SOCIALLY COMPLEX AND EXHAUSTING: AUTISTIC YOUTH DESCRIBE EXPERIENCES OF TRAVELLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2020
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How young autistic people experience public transit and what the barriers are for them.
<b>CITATION</b>	Michelle L. Kersten et, al, Traversing the community is uncertain, socially complex and exhausting, 18 Journal of Transit & Health, 100922 (2020)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Based on ethnography of eight youth with autism from rural Australia.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating with authorities, including police, during a crisis is especially stressful: "... youth indicated coping with unpredictable community environments, where anything could derail plans, was difficult. Handling a crisis, particularly communicating with authorities such as transit authorities or police, was stressful" (7)</li> <li>Uncertainty is also difficult: "Youth preferred certainty; and common community navigation uncertainties, such as delayed public transport services, could result in stress." (7)</li> <li>This article explains the stress that police cause youth with autism: "Some youth were concerned in a crisis, authorities could misunderstand autistic differences in communication and behavior, exacerbated by extreme stress, for something more sinister. During his excursion, Drew stopped talking and crossed the road to avoid police, later explaining, "I move wrong for them I'll say something they think is a lie because I'm not meeting their eyes right." (8)</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police on transit pose threat to autistic youth, therefore, replacing police with people there to help would lower stress and increase confidence about safety in riding</li> </ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	Supports the idea that police do not contribute to feelings of safety for people with disabilities on transit.

# THE NEED FOR AN ELDERLY CENTRED MOBILITY POLICY

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**DATE PUBLISHED**

2017

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**MAIN TOPIC**

This article discusses the importance of centering the needs of people who are elderly when designing transportation and public transit policy.

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**CITATION**

Bruno Aguiar, et. al, The need for an Elderly centred mobility policy, 25 Transportation Research Procedia, 4355 (2017)

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**CONTEXT**

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

Researchers are based out of Portugal, however the observations are based on different global studies.

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**KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS**

- The importance of autonomy to life satisfaction: “When dealing with elderly health we are dealing also with physical autonomy and independence. A curious fact is when an elder with chronic illness can have a positive perception about his mental and physical health, this if he can perform their daily tasks independently, satisfying his needs, maintaining interpersonal relations, keeping a positive social support and enjoying the right as a citizen” (p. 4358)
- Autonomy also helps prevent acquired mental illness: “These studies also reveal that when better conditions exist about accessibility and mobility, the individual travels across the territory in an easier way, and will also avoid some psychological conditions caused by stress and its relationship to psychiatric drugs or inhibitors of the nervous system such as alcohol and tobacco.” (p. 4359)
- Barriers to public transit for the elderly include:
  - distance from point of origin to access to transportation,
  - difficulties in entering and exiting the vehicle,
  - transport timetables,
  - fares,
  - map reading and information displays,
  - lack of light at subway stops leads to fear of being robbed,
  - insecurity when traveling alone,
  - insufficient staff service, and
  - the overall price of travel (p. 4363)

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**SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

- The needs of the elderly in this article also support transit ambassador hiring, as well as better designed transit hubs including better lighting. Supports the general idea that access and design are critical to safety.

## MOBILITY IN PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTS AND USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT: EXPLORING THE SITUATION FOR PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED COGNITIVE FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS.

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2020
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	The experience of people with “acquired cognitive limitations,” often people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries or strokes, on public transportation. And why the above subjects don’t use public transport.
<b>CITATION</b>	Jenny Rosenkvist, Mobility in Public Environments and Use of Public Transport: exploring the situation for people with acquired cognitive functional limitations (2008) (unpublished, on file with Lund University)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	A thesis from Lund University in Sweden. The author was part of the Department of Technology and Society.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ergonomic and less overwhelming design in spaces used for transit was a key element for people with cognitive disabilities to be able to make decisions well enough to tackle using public transit. (31)</li><li>• Interchanges, such as switching from one bus line to another, were the most stressful part of trips for this demographic of riders.</li><li>• The presence of community members who were available to help was important for feelings of safety and comfort for people with acquired cognitive functional limitations. (38)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The presence of community members who were available to help was important for feelings of safety and comfort for people with acquired cognitive functional limitations. (38)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	While focused on Sweden, there is nothing culturally specific to suggest that people with cognitive limitations in the US do not have similar experiences using transit. Likewise, while this proposal does not address veterans specifically, the conclusions drawn would also apply to unhoused veterans, who experience high rates of traumatic brain injury and PTSD.

# CITY ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE – IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT USING THE UNIVERSAL DESIGN CONCEPT

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2017
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	How universal design applies to transit
<b>CITATION</b>	Adam Piotr Zając, City accessible for everyone – improving accessibility of public transport using the universal design concept, 14 Transportation Research Procedia, 1270 (2016)
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Focused on European Commission findings, but includes a potentially useful framework and language for the U.S.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal Design includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equitable use</li><li>• Flexibility in use</li><li>• Simple and intuitive</li><li>• Perceptible information</li><li>• Tolerance for error</li><li>• Low physical effort</li><li>• Size and space for approach and use</li></ul></li><li>• Universal Design in Transit:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “...it should be underlined that all passengers benefit from universal design solutions, because they reduce the physical effort needed for certain activities, like boarding and exiting low floor trams or buses instead of high floor ones (shorter time of passenger exchange process). Alternatively, contrasting railings inside vehicles are better visible also to the people without sight impairments. Furthermore, most passengers represent more than just one group. An example of such a situation is a person commuting every weekday to work by bus, who also uses public transport to escort a child in pram to kindergarten two times per week and occasionally travels passengers, who don’t have any problems using by the same bus to the airport with a large suitcase. In other words, existing infrastructure in most cases, need additional adaptation to their needs in just some situation. In this context universally accessible public transport not only should be considered as an important way for social integration of people with reduced mobility, but also an additional feature, which can be used in some specific situations by other people for their benefit.” (1273)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower vehicles for access.</li><li>• Fixing problems with inaccessible platforms including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• too narrow and too short platforms,</li><li>• stairs without ramp on the way to platform,</li><li>• lack of paved connection to platform and/or lack of paved platform,</li><li>• non-standard bus bays, hindering proper stopping of vehicles. (1274)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	Useful framework to support the idea of universal design as part of community safety and creating more welcoming, safe environments.

# ROLE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AS JOB ACCESS MODE

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**DATE PUBLISHED**

2012

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**MAIN TOPIC**

Examines the role of public transportation in providing job access to people with disabilities

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**CITATION**

Andrea Lubin et. al, Role of Public Transportation as Job Access Mode, 2277:1 Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, 90 (2012)

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**CONTEXT**

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

- Research about people with disabilities in New Jersey
- 1,644 survey responses from people with disabilities actively seeking employment

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**KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS**

- “According to a survey conducted by the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability, 34% of people with disabilities but only 16% of people without a disability consider a lack of transportation to be a problem” for meeting their daily needs. (91)
- “A study found that 46% of people with disabilities had difficult reading transit schedules, almost 50% had difficulty understanding the schedules, and 35% had difficulty understanding onboard announcements” (91)
- Barriers to using public transit to access jobs for people with disabilities (91)
  - limited service schedules and related restrictions
  - long and unreliable travel times
  - the need for advance scheduling for paratransit
  - inflexibility of service
  - accessing and interpreting service-related information
- Transportation is important for people with disabilities in finding and keeping jobs: “When they were asked whether they left or refused a job offer because of travel difficulties, 25% mentioned leaving a job and 40% mentioned refusing a job offer because of travel difficulties” (94)
- Varies by disability: “25% of those with cognitive difficulties and 39% of those with physical difficulties mentioned that they found transit to be useful for their job search, whereas 55% with hearing impairment, 52% with vision impairment, 42% with mental impairment, and 41% with speech impairment found transit to be useful” (96)
- Safety: for people with disabilities in this study “more respondents felt safe than unsafe when they were waiting at stations or stops, traveling by transit, and walking to stations or stops.” (95)
- “Environmental barriers between homes and stations or stops appeared to be a significant concern for the respondents. Almost half the respondents were dissatisfied with the sidewalks, street crossings and intersections, and street lighting.” (97)

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**SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

- People with disabilities need help with reading schedules, understanding schedules, and understanding onboard announcements. (91)
- Environmental barriers between homes and stops: “municipalities with large stations and stops should pay attention to this finding and make the environment safer. Such improvements will help both people with and people without disabilities.” Suggestions include fixing sidewalks, having safer street crossings, and increasing street lighting. (97)

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**MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS**

Focus is on New Jersey, but there are useful insights for LA. The findings tend to support the concept of transit ambassadors and the paper provides specific proposals for accessibility.

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# RIDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSES

## OVERLOOKED IN THE UNDERCOUNTED: THE ROLE OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN FATAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENCOUNTERS

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2015
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	An advocacy paper against police violence towards people with disabilities, using data from government and independent databases.
<b>CITATION</b>	Fuller, Doris & Lamb, H. & Biasotti, Michael & Snook, John. (2016). Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	Includes some global analysis, but focused on the U.S. A position paper more than a scientific paper.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The risk of being killed while being approached or stopped by law enforcement in the community is sixteen times higher for individuals with untreated serious mental illness than for other individuals.</li><li>• By the most conservative estimates, at least 1 in 4 fatal law enforcement encounters involves an individual with serious mental illness. (1)</li><li>• When data have been rigorously collected and analyzed, findings indicate as many as half of all law enforcement homicides ends the life of an individual with severe psychiatric disease. (5)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because of the disproportionate volume of contact between individuals with serious mental illness and law enforcement, reducing the likelihood of police interaction with individuals in psychiatric crisis may represent the single most immediate, practical strategy for reducing killings by police in the United States. (1)</li><li>• Advocates for treatment before a mental health crisis occurs.</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	Helpful stats about police violence against people with disabilities. Although this is general information, the close proximity and enclosed space in rail and buses allow some analogy.

# INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND LAW ENFORCEMENT SYSTEMS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	1998
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This article discusses the inherent difficulties in incorporating mental health services into the law enforcement system. The author discusses the ideological and procedural tensions between the two systems and how they might be resolved.
<b>CITATION</b>	Wolff, Nancy. (1998). Interactions between Mental Health and Law Enforcement Systems: Problems and Prospects for Cooperation. <i>Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law</i> , 23(1), 133-174.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	This article is based on a paper presented at the 17th Congress on Law and Mental Health in Vancouver, Canada in 1992.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This article supports the proposition that it is inherently difficult for law enforcement and pro-social agencies to cooperate (p. 134)</li><li>• A lack of information sharing between law enforcement and mental health services leads to “information bottlenecks” where individuals enter into each system “without a history.” (p. 140)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Mental Health Center of Dane County (Wisconsin) is an example where efforts have been made to facilitate the flow of information between police and mental health services: agencies enter into a “contract” of shared responsibility where each agency concentrates on what they are best able to do and they agree to assist each other when mentally ill persons cross into their jurisdictions (p. 141).</li></ul></li><li>• This article discusses agency “client dumping” where, for example, corrections officers complain that they are forced to become de facto providers of mental health services and hospitals complain that the police drop off violent individuals into their emergency rooms to be treated for mental illnesses (p. 143).</li><li>• Recidivism amongst individuals with mental illness generates skepticism among law enforcement about the mental health services system: individual wrongdoing signals “treatment failure.” For example, the fact that individuals have been repeatedly criminalized and have received mental healthcare in the past, signals to police that the mental health services system is broken and ineffectual, thereby discrediting the community care model and mental health agencies. (p. 145)</li><li>• The author raises the problems which follow “deputizing” mental health authorities by granting them with law enforcement powers. (p. 150)</li><li>• The author is an advocate for the “case manager” model (p. 150)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The specific proposal here is to financially incentivize law enforcement and mental health agencies to cooperate with each other through various contract models.</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	The arguments in this article offer a counterpoint to the idea that it would be easy to facilitate cooperation between mental health agencies and police. But, the ultimate solution is problematic and lacks value for efforts to reimagine public safety.

# BEYOND POLICE CRISIS INTERVENTION

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**DATE PUBLISHED**

2014

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**MAIN TOPIC**

The main proposition of this article is to move behavioral health interventions “upstream,” providing vulnerable individuals with access to care earlier on in the justice continuum. The authors focus on the idea of procedural justice, where individual case management, data-driven identification of “micro-places” of crime vulnerability, and treatment pipelines all inform the existing criminal law framework.

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**CITATION**

Wood, Jennifer D, & Beierschmitt, Laura. (2014). Beyond police crisis intervention: Moving “upstream” to manage cases and places of behavioral health vulnerability. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 37(5), 439-447.

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**CONTEXT**

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

The paper reports on an action research report generated out of Philadelphia. Researchers analyzed data of police mental health transportations over an 8 year period (2004-2011). The report also summarized findings from focus groups with police and outreach workers.

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**KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS**

- The author discusses the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model and “mobile crisis teams” (p. 439)
- The article explains the concept of “micro places of vulnerability” or environments that can perpetuate behavioral cycles (p. 443). For example, transportation hubs are where: “They [police] often said that the vulnerable people they come to know (and sometimes over periods of many years) live their days in and through spaces where they feel comfortable; what environmental criminologists would describe as ‘activity nodes.’” (Id.)
- A lack of follow-up care for vulnerable individuals leads to repeat offenses. (p. 443)
- The “Hub of Hope” is a program operating in an underground transportation concourse in the City Center neighborhood in Philadelphia: “The program, supported through a multi-agency collaboration, provides connections to social services and attempts to link individuals with housing as well as basic medical and psychiatric care.” (p. 444)
- Mobile Assessment and Resource Centers (MARC) as triage centers where people can connect to mental health/legal services (p. 446)
- Focused police interventions (see specific proposals below): “What we now know though, from criminology, is that police knowledge and resources can be used more effectively when they are focused. Part of this focus involves thinking strategically about ‘place’ and the factors that may work together to heighten risks at certain locations. In short, reactive and generic responses to calls are less effective than focused interventions tailored to high risk groups and environments.” (p. 445)

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**SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

- Targeted interventions include: “other city agencies and the business sector, could ‘inject’ pro-social activities in panhandling hotspots, or could ratchet-up the regulation of businesses known to sell alcohol to chronic alcoholics. Public education campaigns could also be developed to encourage people to donate food vouchers to panhandlers instead of money.” (p. 445)
- MARC, or triage centers where vulnerable individuals are put into direct contact with mental health/legal services providers near crime hotspots (micro places of vulnerability).

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**MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS**

This article builds upon the prevailing reform model, the Crisis Intervention Team, and emphasizes the importance of preventative behavioral health interventions. While not entirely discarding the idea of a collaborative relationship between police and mental healthcare providers, the article does argue that law enforcement should be deployed with much more focus, and in a narrower set of circumstances, concluding that ultimately, re-criminalizing police interactions must be replaced with upstream, pro-social interventions.

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# OTHER VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

## TRANSFORMING MOBILITY JUSTICE: GENDERED HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE ON TRANSIT

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2020
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This paper seeks to demonstrate how gender minorities experience barriers to mobility on public transit.
<b>CITATION</b>	Lubitow, Amy, Abelson, Miriam J, & Carpenter, Erika. (2020). Transforming mobility justice: Gendered harassment and violence on transit. <i>Journal of Transport Geography</i> , 82, 102601.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	This paper draws upon 25 interviews with transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in Portland, Oregon.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Some interviewees reported feeling especially unsafe in the presence of transit police officers.” (p. 5)</li><li>• LGBTQ riders interviewed reported feeling unsafe around transit operators and transit police. (see p. 5-6)</li><li>• Rider interviewees offered proposed reforms for transit operators: “Trainings could include primers on various aspects of identity, offer guidance on how to avoid misgendering passengers, and alert drivers to the unique challenges gender minorities face when riding transit.” (p. 5)</li></ul>
<b>SPECIFIC PROPOSALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “. . . [B]ystander intervention campaigns that encourage passengers to interrupt problematic behavior of all kinds, but with specific messaging around gender identity. Interviewees suggested that messaging on buses or trains that asks people to pay attention and support other riders would be part of this, while others suggested that free bystander intervention trainings for transit users and staff might also a useful tool to reduce harassment and dis-crimination. (p. 6)</li><li>• “[A] majority of participants also indicated that a lack of visibility on advertising, signs, and other printed or digital materials put out by the transit agency contributed to larger feelings of inequity or invisibility; something as small as including a gender nonconforming rider’s image on a sign might have a large impact. Gender-inclusive advertising acts as a public acknowledgement of the rights of all transit riders and can elicit feelings of compassion and concern for the well-being of fellow riders” (p. 6)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	Consistent with Los Angeles studies on sexual harassment on transit.

# TRANSIT PASSENGER PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSIT-RELATED CRIME REDUCTION MEASURES

DATE PUBLISHED	2000
MAIN TOPIC	The researchers used a survey-based approach to compiling data on passenger and transit operator perceptions of safety.
CITATION	REED, Thomas B, WALLACE, Richard R, & RODRIGUEZ, Daniel A. (2000). Transit passenger perceptions of transit-related crime reduction measures. Transportation Research Record, 1731(1731), 130-141.
CONTEXT (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	This article summarizes findings in a study done on violent crimes against transit bus operators and passengers in Michigan in 1999.
KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Design interventions include: “Lighting should be increased at bus stops that are insufficiently lit, and signage should be improved at stops without signs. Bus stops should be relocated if they expose passengers to an undue crime risk, such as relocation from near dark alleys and abandoned buildings.” (p. 140)</li></ul>
SPECIFIC PROPOSALS	Increased lighting and emergency telephones.
MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS	It’s important to note that when survey respondents were given a list of safety improvements including increased law enforcement and security patrols or safety, respondents still ranked design interventions as the best options for enhancing safety.



# SAFE ON THE MOVE: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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## DATE PUBLISHED

2012

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## MAIN TOPIC

The article focuses largely on design interventions, fear “cues” for Los Angeles metro riders, and the relationship between transit environments and violent crime.

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## CITATION

Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia. (2012). Safe on the Move: The Importance of the Built Environment. In *The Urban Fabric of Crime and Fear* (pp. 85-110). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

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## CONTEXT

(geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)

The author studies the effects built environments have on safety and violent crime in and around transportation hubs in Los Angeles.

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## KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS

- The author covers everything from fear “cues” across different rider demographics, how environment influences rider fears, and proposed solutions to alleviate said fears. This article is particularly useful because it focuses on specific transit corridors in Los Angeles. (beginning on p. 86)
- Section 4.6, “Transit Crime in Los Angeles,” contained a lot of useful data re the interaction between spatial features of transit stops and safety: “Similar to our findings about fear, we found that certain urban form and bus stop characteristics influence transit crime. For example, crime rates were higher at bus stops in areas with alleys and mid-block passages (corroborating the idea that crime is high where there are avenues for escape) and near multi-family housing, liquor stores, check-cashing establishments, vacant buildings and buildings marked by graffiti and litter. For violent (type 1) crimes in particular, we found that the location of check-cashing establishments near bus stops and the presence of alleys had the strongest positive correlation with crime rates. Positive environmental factors included good visibility from surrounding establishments and the presence of bus shelters. Pedestrian presence was negatively correlated with bus stop crime rates, indicating lower levels of crime where there were more eyes on the street (Jacobs 1961).” (p. 99)

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## SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Proposed solutions include: crime audits which allow for “selective” deployment of security personnel instead of just amplifying police presence writ large; incorporation of more commercial businesses near/in transit stops so as to increase pedestrian activity; regular consultations with focus groups (“Women and other vulnerable groups are the best sources of information about their own fears and needs, as well as the barriers which limit their mobility. Their voices should be included in the planning and policy-making of transportation issues, through regular consultation with focus groups, targeted passenger surveys and safety audits”); escort programs; and anti-harassment media campaigns. (see p.104-07)

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## MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS

Ma’ayan Dembo’s “Off the Rails” report cited this author a few times, but not from this book chapter.

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# TRANSIT JUSTICE AS SPATIAL JUSTICE: LEARNING FROM ACTIVISTS

<b>DATE PUBLISHED</b>	2019
<b>MAIN TOPIC</b>	This article explores the limitations of transit justice scholarship.
<b>CITATION</b>	Enright, Theresa. (2019). Transit justice as spatial justice: Learning from activists. <i>Mobilities</i> , 14(5), 665-680.
<b>CONTEXT</b> (geographic location, demographic profile, etc.)	This article focuses on two cases of transit activism—Free Toronto Transit and Black Lives Matter (San Francisco Bay Area)—to theorize upon mobility, space, and justice.
<b>KEY STATISTICS OR TALKING POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spatial justice through the lens of public transportation: “spatial justice refers to the fact that social harms are always bound up with the political organization of space.” (p. 675)</li><li>• Viewed through the lens of spatial justice, transit justice includes not merely the right of individuals to move in conventional ways and to benefit from common goods, but, more importantly, the capacity of inhabitants to direct and transform relations of movement and rest and to reclaim the ‘mobility commons’ (Nikolaeva et al. 2016; Sheller 2017). It involves more radical influence in managing collective life, a non-alienated existence, bodily integrity, and a flourishing of agency and freedom. (p. 676)</li><li>• Free Transit Toronto and Black Lives Matter illuminate transit systems as forms of control but also as essential sites of resistance. They position infrastructure as an important lever of social change and suggest that mobilizing for mobility is essential to effecting justice. While transit is undoubtedly a site of varied and sometimes contradictory desires, the centrality of transit to urbanism and urban life make it a notable platform for organizing.<sup>7</sup> Practically speaking, transit activism may have the potential to unite disparate groups within the city, bringing together coalitions of civil rights, environmental, labour and anti-poverty advocates. In an era where multiple forms of mass transit are coming to the fore as complements and/or replacements to the automobile, transit activism will no doubt be even more crucial to ensure justice in the mobility transition.” (p. 677)</li></ul>
<b>MISC. NOTES/ COMMENTS</b>	This article does not offer concrete policies for enhanced public safety. But the language on theory, and the persuasive rhetoric centering the urgency of transit justice, make it a useful source.



