



Passengers walk to the trains at Union Station Monday, March 23, 2020, in Los Angeles. California residents have been told to keep away from others, not gather in groups and wash their hands frequently due to threat posed by the coronavirus. They can go out to get food, fill prescriptions, seek medical care, care for vulnerable relatives or neighbors and get exercise, such as walking. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

TRANSPORTATION

LA Metro Board to Consider Review of Transit Policing

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE | LOS ANGELES
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LOS ANGELES (CNS) - The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's board of directors Thursday will consider appointing a committee to rethink public safety on the agency's transit system, including alternatives to armed law enforcement response to some incidents.

The motion, co-sponsored by Los Angeles City Councilman Mike Bonin and county Supervisors Janice Hahn and Hilda Solis, urges Metro to develop policies for different responses to nonviolent crimes and other offenses.

- Alternatives being considered could include a transit ambassador program

"Around the country and all over Los Angeles, people are re-imagining how to provide public safety," Bonin said. "Metro needs to be at the forefront of that and make changes that assure that all of its passengers feel safe. That starts by acknowledging that we cannot rely on an armed police presence for every issue and we need smarter, more effective solutions."

Potential alternatives would include a transit ambassador program that provides staffed presence at Metro facilities and on Metro vehicles as well as social workers, mediators or mental health professionals.



Mike Bonin
@mikebonin



Today at [@metrolosangeles](#) we are voting on my proposal, backed by 40 local orgs, to prioritize community safety over policing on transit. We must shift resources from police to [#communitysafety](#) and better service. It's about [#PeoplesTransit](#). [#reimaginepublicsafety](#)

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mental health and substance abuse issues.

The Metro motion calls for the creation of a Transit Public Safety Advisory Committee that would develop the new policies and approaches in consultation with passengers and community members representative of the agency's ridership.

Bonin said it is "crucial" for Metro to make changes, given a history of complaints of racial bias in policy, particularly from younger Black people and Latinos.

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"For years, Metro has heard that its system of policing was making huge segments of its passengers feel less safe and feel threatened," he said. "This is our moment to change that."

The board on Thursday is also expected to consider a separate Bonin/Solis motion asking the agency to develop "clear criteria for when suspending service is necessary and appropriate." The motion was introduced in response to Metro's decision to suspend passenger service on May 30, stranding many passengers in the middle of a curfew.

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