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We Get Mail

Letters Posted [September 28](#) and [September 14](#)

I love the Metro Red Line subway and enjoy using it to get to my office quickly. I have only one critical comment: The ticket machines need to be looked at. They are extremely sensitive and don't accept all bills, specifically old or very new dollar bills. They often will not accept new dollars and old worn ones. This creates a problem when someone is trying to make the train or is stuck down there with no options. The change machines are good but often of out change. The machines should be adjusted or updated to take all dollars bill and the new fives.

Brian Palaski, Los Angeles

EDITOR'S NOTE: *There have been problems with the bill acceptors on our TVMs. The equipment is old and the original manufacturer no longer supports or provides upgrades for this model. We have been experimenting and making modifications. We are also talking to several vendors to see if they can build something for us. This last option looks promising. We are also in a procurement to replace and install all new TVMs on our stations. Regarding the change machines, our service staff will increase the monitoring and servicing of the machines.*

Why don't MTA bus operators call out the stops? I know it is the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that drivers call out the stops.

In my estimation, over 75% of MTA drivers make no attempt to call the stops. The rest: 25% do not know how to use the microphone. What a joke it is to see them whispering the stops.

Is MTA going to do something about this?

Western Center for Disability Law and the American Civil Liberties Union both want to see the MTA get its employees to follow the law or they might have to follow legal remedies, if MTA can't show some progress.

What is being done to train the operators to get them to follow the law?

Frank Boothe, Sylmar

I work at Universal Studios and live in North Hollywood, so I usually take the Metro Red Line to and from those two stations - which works great from me. However, the issue I find most irksome is that hardly a week goes by when one or more of the escalators do not work at either one or both stations. Usually it takes anywhere from a couple of days to a week or more before they are running again. I think it is inexcusable for an escalator at a

public transit station to be out of service for more than an hour.

Would someone in authority at the MTA please get on the ball and find out why this keeps happening and find out what can be done to keep all the escalators at all the stations working?

Thanks for letting me vent.

CAE, North Hollywood

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We have checked the following sources to respond to your e-mail. Our contractor, Mitsubishi Electric, informed us that they were not aware of any scheduled lengthy equipment shutdown for preventative maintenance at Universal City and North Hollywood stations. In addition, they stated that they have a mechanic "sweeping" the stations every morning to restart any down equipment. MTA also tries to restart as many units as possible.*

According to our trouble ticket report, we did restart one escalator at the North Hollywood station and two escalators at Universal City station during the week of 9/3/01.

Equipment can be shut down for various reasons. If the stop switch or any safety sensor is triggered, the equipment will be shut down immediately. Almost all personnel work in the Metro Red Line system (such as LAPD, custodian service, Facilities Maintenance, and traction and power personnel) all have been issued a key to restart the down unit.

The public can call (213) 922-5041 to report any non-running elevators or escalators.

(Re: Mariposa/Nash Green Line station) The taggers are tagging the station daily again! I notice that two more of the glass panels on the escalator have been etched. They are also etching the glass on the elevators. I suggest you view the videotape and try to catch them or the station will soon look like the Harbor Freeway Green Line station. I believe the tagging is being done by just one or two employees of El Segundo businesses on their way home from work (probably early in the morning, maybe before 6 a.m.) They are destroying the station!

John Saldin, El Segundo

We Get Mail

Letters Posted September 14

In all the discussion about the consent decree "pilot program" lines, what has been ignored is that three of those lines - two of which serve the San Fernando Valley - have never been implemented.

Those two, Lines 426 and 530, would connect one of the Valley's major east-west arterials - Sherman Way - to the North Hollywood Red Line Station with fast, limited-stop service, all day, seven days a week. Yet the changes for Line 426 were halted just before they were to take effect in December, 1997, and have never been resurrected; Line 530 was supposed to start last summer, but was similarly delayed. Neither of those restructurings have been given new implementation dates.

The Metro Red Line has been serving the North Hollywood Station for more than a year now; it is particularly disgraceful that these two lines, which could carry many passengers quickly to that station, sit neglected on the drawing board. The purpose of the pilot program is "to improve mobility for the transit dependent community". Is denying Metro Bus passengers a fast connection to Metro Rail an improvement? I think not.

On weekends, there is a lack of frequent service on the north-south arterials in the West Valley, so there are few opportunities to connect with Metro Rapid service on Ventura Boulevard to Universal City Station, but these two lines could provide a needed community connection through the middle of the Valley. Any savings that come from restructuring existing pilot program lines need to be reinvested by implementing Lines 426 and 530.

The pilot program is one of the few good things that came out of the consent decree. Why hasn't it been fully implemented?

Kymberleigh Richards, Public Affairs Director, Southern California Transit Advocates

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The 426 reverse commute operation is not likely to be successful given the success of the Metro Red Line. The 426 runs in the same corridor as the Metro Red Line and adds little if any benefit. There are discussions between the City and the MTA concerning reconfiguring services which are operated by both carriers. The idea would be to provide more frequent service along Sherman Way and into the North Hollywood station. The proposed service changes will impact a number of lines and resources that otherwise would have been used for the reverse commute option.*

As far as the 530 and 577 goes, they are the subject of a bid package that will close soon. While the United Transportation Union did raise concerns over the duplication of segments, it was not the only impediment. These routes did not move forward prior to the Air Quality Management District ruling on compressed natural gas and any new coaches would have to comply with MTA policy. Contractors were not willing to develop fueling facilities if they couldn't recover their costs.

The 218 which operates from the basin across Laurel Canyon is doing fairly well.

I would like to draw your attention to what I believe is a blatant example of Metro System fare discrimination. Metrolink riders who come to Los Angeles and continue their trip on the Metro Red Line and then MTA Metro Buses pay higher fares than Metrolink riders who come to Norwalk and continue their trip on the MTA's Metro Green Line and then MTA Metro Bus.

Specifically, if someone exits a Metrolink train in Norwalk and catches the N4 shuttle bus to the Metro Green Line and then rides the Metro Green Line and then transfers to any MTA Bus, they ride for free. However, if someone exits a Metrolink train in Los Angeles and catches the Metro Red Line and then transfers to any MTA Bus they pay \$1.35.

Please tell me why the MTA will take Metrolink customers home to the South Bay for free, but they won't take me home to the

Hollywood/Griffith Park area for free? Why does MTA charge me for the same service?

Bryan J. Blumberg, Franklin Hills, Los Angeles

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The initial transfer to Metro Rail or the Metro Bus System is free, however, the patron is required to pay \$1.35 for the second transfer, bus or rail. The only exception to this is a free transfer to Metro Green Line shuttle routes 625 and 626 in the El Segundo area. These shuttles are seen as extensions of the Metro Green Line and allow the free transfer to persons accessing the El Segundo employment area. Metrolink fare media is honored (and reimbursed by Metrolink) on any MTA bus/rail service which serves a Metrolink station. This includes the Metro Green and Red lines, but not the Metro Blue line (except between Metro Center and Grand Station by special agreement with Metrolink). MTA Bus lines serving a Metrolink station will honor Metrolink fare media, and because several South Bay bus lines serve Union Station/Gateway Center in downtown Los Angeles it happens that they will accept Metrolink fare media from patrons transferring from the Metro Green Line (presumably at the Harbor Transitway, for example).*

You can transfer free to the Metro Blue Line for travel only as far as San Pedro Station. The reason for this was that several years ago many Metrolink patrons used the Metro Red and Blue lines to access L.A. Trade Tech, so an exception was made to access the college. Also at that time, the Metro Red Line only operated downtown, so the downtown portion of the Metro Blue Line was added to the free transfer list. Metrolink patrons traveling on the Metro Blue Line beyond San Pedro station must pay full fare.

Why is it that all the Metro Rapid Buses running on Wilshire are always freezing cold? Why do the drivers have to keep the air from 6am-11pm (which are the different range of times I've been on this bus) blowing cold at full blast?

This is more of a complaint than a question. Every time I ride this bus (which is a long ride), I end up with bone aches and headaches. I understand that there are far too many people on the bus at the same time. However, everybody around me shivers cold wishing the bus driver would realize that we are all freezing. The air conditioning doesn't have to be at full blast, it only needs to be a continuous flow.

For this reason, I hate boarding the 720. I am only 19 years old, but already my knees, and my bones. It is unhealthy for everybody to come out of the 720 to a temperature 20 degrees hotter.

ML, Los Angeles

I love the Metro Red Line system and enjoy using it to get to my office quickly. I only have one important comment. The ticket machines need to be looked at. They are extremely sensitive and don't take all bills. Specifically, old or very new dollar bills. They often will not accept new dollars and old worn ones. This creates a problem when someone is trying to make the train or is stuck down there with no options. The change machines are good but often of out change. The machines should be adjusted or updated to take all dollars bill and the new fives.

Brian Palaski, Los Angeles

When the trains run on schedule the Metro Red Line North Hollywood train arrives one or two minutes before the Wilshire/Western train.

Since this is the only real Metro Red Line transfer point, and sometimes the trains don't pass each other as scheduled, why don't you have the one train conductor tell the other train conductor, "dude, wait one minute at Wilshire/Vermont, I'm running a tad late," instead of making people wait five to seven minutes?

Do you really want people to constantly feel like they have to run downstairs to catch their train?

And what's the big hurry to make it to Wilshire/Normandie and then Wilshire/Western since the train conductor is just going to take a 10 minute break anyhow, since that is the end of the line? I don't get it.

TP, Hollywood

The Artesia Metro Blue Line station is frequently blocked by freight trains causing problems for Sheriff's and passengers wanting to get to work. I was told by a Sheriff that the train company is fined \$10,000 each and every day for blocking the station. Why can't that money be used to resolve the problem and build a bridge or tunnel allowing passengers to get to work and sheriff's to deal with more important problems? Common sense and risks of injury or death makes this station unsafe. Passengers are left with the decision of getting to work late or chancing a crossing over the freight train while it's stopped (and getting to work on time) or walking around by the casino and over the street bridge (10-15 minute walk). The fine should be used for a solution.

D.O., Hermosa Beach

Has anyone at the MTA looked at the feasibility of running all Metro Red Line trains to North Hollywood and then running just a shuttle between Vermont/Wilshire and Wilshire/Western?

With this arrangement, frequency of service would be improved for all the riders on the northern leg with only a minor impact on service (a quick change of trains) for those going on the Wilshire/Western leg.

Richard Core, Hollywood

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