



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro News

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Supplemental Content:

Video of today's announcement can be viewed here: <http://apta.vzaar.me/21965062>

LA Metro Commits to National Effort to Ensure the Health and Safety of Returning Public Transit Riders

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has joined the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and transit agencies across the nation in committing to specific measures to help ensure the safe return of transit riders as the U.S. recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

APTA's national "Health and Safety Commitments Program" seeks to ensure a safe and healthy rider experience. Under the partnership, which Metro is expected to commit to:

- Following official guidance on safe riding practices from health experts and agencies
- Protecting riders through cleaning, disinfecting, good ventilation, providing room for social distancing when practical, the use of face coverings and other methods
- Sharing information that will empower riders to make informed choices
- Ensuring transit workers and passengers are healthy



The commitment comes as part of APTA's Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force, which is chaired by Metro CEO Phillip A. Washington. The task force is charged with providing senior public transit operations leaders with strategies and tactical solutions that can help protect riders and agency employees from COVID-19, as well as help with future pandemic preparedness.

"This commitment is much more than just words. We intend to put intent into practice as we work to come out from under this pandemic stronger than ever in our efforts to move people safely around Los Angeles County," said Washington. "But we can't do it alone. It requires a partnership with our riders and a similar commitment to helping keep everyone safe and healthy as we work to get through this situation."

As part of this campaign, Metro will also ask riders to do their part by wearing face coverings, doing their best to social distanced and following best health practices and avoiding transit when not feeling well.

Transit agencies and their customers across the nation are facing unprecedented challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite those challenges, riders have begun to return to transit, with Metro currently up to 55 percent of its normal ridership, when compared to about 31 percent in April.

Metro recognizes that transit remains a critical lifeline to healthcare professionals, first responders, grocery and pharmacy employees and to people who need us to get them to medical appointments, grocery stores and other critical services. Keeping everyone as safe as possible on Metro is critical to Los Angeles County's recovery from COVID-19.

Improved Cleaning

Metro has strengthened sanitation operations at Union Station facilities and strengthened cleaning regimens at major transit hubs, including Los Angeles Union Station, El Monte Bus Station, 7th Street Metro Center Station and the North Hollywood Red/Orange Line stations. This includes an elevated focus on cleaning high touch point areas such as handrails, railings, elevator call buttons, door handles and TAP vending machines. Our rail custodial staff is performing disinfecting services on high touch point areas three times per day at all Metro Rail stations and Orange Line and Harbor Transitway stations.

Our buses and trains are cleaned on a daily basis, which includes vacuuming, trash removal, sweeping and mopping, cleaning the panels and using EPA-approved disinfectants that can kill germs beyond their immediate application.

Passenger Health

Metro is coordinating closely with the L.A. County Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on riding guidelines. Our messaging remains that Metro urges riders to travel only to perform essential activities, which includes commuting to an essential job; visiting a doctor or veterinarian; obtaining medical supplies or medication; grocery shopping for yourself or others; providing care for minors, seniors, dependents and persons with disabilities or other vulnerabilities; legally mandated government purposes and to comply with law enforcement or court orders.

Metro continues to require riders to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing whenever possible while using the system. In addition, Metro reminds riders to follow best hygiene practices such as sneezing or coughing into a tissue or your arm, and performing best practices for frequent hand washing with soap and warm water.

Metro has installed hand sanitizer dispensers at major transit hubs and is exploring equipping buses and trains with these dispensers.

Air Filtration and Ventilation Safety

LA Metro's Operations team has been working tirelessly to ensure that the air riders breathe is safe. Metro trains and buses use high-quality air filters that clean and recirculate air at a high rate.

LA Metro's heavy and light rail cars use high-efficiency air filters rated at MERV-8 or higher that recirculate air in between every two to four minutes. Metro's buses use air filters rated at MERV-7 and circulate air every 1.2 minutes.

Metro is exploring additional air filtration and ventilation options to increase safety — including UV-C light disinfection and higher MERV-rated filters — to further help clean air on transit vehicles.

Crowding

With social distancing of paramount importance during the COVID-19 crisis, Metro is doing everything it can to avoid crowding on its buses and trains to avoid spread of the coronavirus.

Metro is currently running 81 percent of the service that it ran in February for about 55 percent of the ridership to help accommodate social distancing where practical. In late July, Metro added additional trips on busier bus lines to provide more room for riders.

Metro's official smartphone app, [Transit, can now help riders stay safe by predicting the crowding levels on Metro buses](#). Just tap on the bus icon and crowding levels will show up. The predictions are based on regularly updated data collected in the prior two weeks from automated passenger counters on Metro buses. That allows the Transit app to predict the number of riders on any Metro bus at a particular time, location and direction of travel, following the most recent ridership trends.

These predictions will help riders decide whether they want to ride Metro, wait for another bus or seek another way to reach their destination.

Metro has also added [contactless fares for Apple users on their iPhones or Apple Watches](#), allowing riders to pay their fares by simply having their device near a Metro TAP fare dial.

Recovery Task Force

Metro has [formed a Recovery Task Force](#) that is exploring ways for Metro to not only recover from the COVID-19 pandemic as an agency, but come back stronger.

This task force is charged with providing specific advice and recommendations for senior leadership and the Metro Board of Directors to decide on how best to recover from the pandemic. Examples include encouraging more telecommuting, exploring temporary closure of some streets to encourage walking, rolling and biking, and exploring new cleaning technology to make transit even healthier. In addition to recovering from the difficult conditions created by the pandemic, the task force is identifying opportunities for Metro to advance its mission and help create a new normal of mobility without congestion.

The task force has held internal and public meetings to solicit input on how best to recover from COVID-19 and has already begun implementing some early action items. The task force intends to hold additional meetings to get feedback on additional action items.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is currently providing lifeline service for essential trips and frontline workers. Metro continues building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its [Vision 2028 Plan](#).

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