



UNDERSTANDING
HOW WOMEN TRAVEL

APPENDIX E

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODOLOGY



Date: Tuesday, January 29, 2019

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Subject: *How Women Travel*- Community-Based Planning Tools

Introduction

Over the course of Metro's How Women Travel study, Pueblo will facilitate three types of community-based participatory research activities:

- Participant observation with women riders on buses and trains;
- Participatory design workshops with community-based organizations; and
- Pop-up data-gathering stations at Metro hubs.

This paper provides a practitioner-oriented overview of the foundation of Pueblo's method for community-based planning, which combines approaches from participatory planning and cultural anthropology. Additionally, Pueblo provides support for their methodological approach by referencing the literature on why the focus on core ridership, participant observation and public transit, participatory planning, and the important role of storytelling and art-making in planning.

Community-Based Planning Tools

Even the most nuanced, thoughtful survey and focus groups have limitations: some populations are very difficult to reach, including those who are linguistically isolated, illiterate, or digitally disenfranchised. Hence, Pueblo executed participant observation, facilitated participatory design workshops, and conducted pop-up engagement that specifically engaged with some of Metro's most vulnerable riders which include undocumented/immigrant women, houseless women, and those with disabilities. Pueblo did this by meeting the women where they are through pop-ups at local transit stations where they can share their stories and through partnerships with community based organizations that provide services to these communities of women.

Core Communities

The Pueblo approach is to intentionally engage those who are most impacted by planning decisions and bring them into the planning process. Hence, Pueblo's activities are designed to uplift the needs of *core transit riders*, "those most likely to regularly use transit" (Pollack et al. 2010:2). Core transit riders are "people of color, low-income households and renters," three groups which "are all more likely to use transit than the average American" (ibid). Planning efforts to expand transit ridership should start by learning from core riders, whose community knowledge about how to make transit work is a huge asset for transit agencies. Transit investment without displacement, that is, improvements benefitting core transit riders, result when community leadership has been in place throughout the planning and development process (Sandoval 2015).

Throughout the United States, core transit riders navigate mobility landscapes constrained by histories of race and class bias. Bullard and Johnson note that “transportation development policies did not emerge in a race- and class-neutral society. Institutional racism influences local land use, allocation of funds, enforcement of environmental regulations, facility siting, and where people of color live, work, and play” (1997:1). As a result of this institutional racism, the trend has been that “transportation amenities (benefits) accrue to the wealthier and more educated segment of society, while transportation disamenities (burdens) fall disproportionately on people of color and individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum” (1997:2).

In Los Angeles, where a cultural preference for private automobile travel has been reinforced by nearly a century of public investment in vehicular infrastructure, Metro is tasked with transforming public transit from a disamenity to an amenity. This can be achieved by embedding a mobility justice approach within transportation planning and development. Sociologist Mimi Sheller is a leading scholar of mobility justice, which she has defined as the project to address how mobility “exists in relation to race, class, sexuality, gender, and ability exclusions from public space, from national citizenship, from access to resources, and from the means of mobility at all scales” (2018:20). This approach supports Pueblo’s focus on core transit riders, who would be groups experiencing mobility injustice. Sheller recommends addressing mobility justice as a process rather than an end, since “justice is not a once-and-for-all state or a series of abstract conditions that must be met, but is a process of emergent relationships in which the interplay of diverse (im)mobilities forms a foundational part” (2018:20).

In order to enact mobility justice through Pueblo’s work, they engage in planning activities designed to elicit community knowledge from core transit riders and empower these county residents to direct planning processes. Community-based organizations in Los Angeles have organized to call attention to the need for safety interventions on Metro beyond conventional approaches, and Pueblo’s project activities look to these groups as a resource. Rather than emphasizing external factors such as rolling stock and system expansion, Pueblo focuses on the internal social spaces created aboard buses and trains and in waiting zones. It is imperative to learn from existing users of transit without considering transit merely as an undesirable mode choice (see Fink 2012 on the “loser cruiser”). Treated as knowledgeable experts, today’s core riders could assist in marketing Metro to future users.

The methods outlined below reflect Pueblo’s position that centering rider experiences and expanding the field of study to include both experts and riders will lead to equitable and sustainable outcomes for any transportation agency.

Project Activities

Participant observation with women riders on buses and trains

In the fall of 2018, a team of observers spent time on buses, trains, and in stations and took notes on predetermined areas related to women’s travel on Metro. Pueblo contributed to the design of this research activity while project lead Fehr & Peers coordinated activity logistics. Pueblo brought

their commitment to mobility justice into the selection of bus and train lines for inclusion in the study, and in Pueblo's review of the data gathered.

Participatory design workshops with community-based organizations

In the winter of 2019, Pueblo facilitated participatory design workshops where women engaged in an art-making and storytelling activities that allowed them to share both physical and emotional experiences while riding metro and identifying elements that have made them feel that way. Through this women were able to share what part of their transit experiences they both enjoy and believe could be improved. In an effort to accommodate the participants and remove common barriers to engagement, child-inclusive workshops, food, translation, and useful gift cards will be provided to the participating women. Additionally, community based organizations were compensated for their time in organizing and hosting the event. Lastly, Pueblo is committed to circling back with participants at the end of the study to share with them results and how the information they shared will be generally used by Metro.

Pop-up data-gathering stations at Metro hubs

Also during the winter of 2019, Pueblo staged beautifully installed "pop-up" engagement activities in or near transit facilities. There they gathered the perspectives of self-identified women travelers. Riders were asked two questions while they are waiting for their train on the platform; "what makes your ride difficult" and "what would make your ride easy". These questions were consistent at all three pop-ups to determine if there are different type of experiences for people using different lines.

People who identify as women, men, gender non-binary, or another gender identity were able to self identify on a notecard and had an opportunity to write a quick response (facilitators wrote on the note for women who prefer not to write) and add it to a growing tapestry of responses; thus, eliciting an artistic spectacle that encouraged more people to participate. Each pop-up was approximately three hours on or near the transit platform (dependent upon the safest location). Through this effort, Pueblo better understood patterns of behaviors, needs, and experiences.

Methods

What is Participant Observation?

The qualitative research method known as participant observation was developed in the field of cultural anthropology, where it is the core research activity of anthropologists' ethnographic method. As formulated by Bronislaw Malinowski, who shaped the field's methodology, participant observers aim "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (Malinowski 1966[1922]:25). Anthropologist Farha Ghannam explained that participant observation provides researchers with a method for studying "the unexpected, fleeting, multiple, and hard-to-pin-down experiences that characterize city life" (2011:792). The agenda of the ethnographer is to get a feel for a people and place, on their own terms and in their own words.

Typical activities for participant observers include spending extended periods of time with individuals and groups who belong to the culture under study, observing both ritual moments and quotidian routines. The purpose of these activities is to identify what role culture plays as an interface shaping individual actions in a world of material choices. Economic, social, and ecological conditions often force people to live in ways that do not fit their own visions of success, yet we operate in a market-driven society largely framed by the concept of consumer choices. Participant observation can be an empathetic way to learn about the lives of individuals with limited choices.

Participant Observation and Public Transit

Anthropologists study networks of people, places, and things, which is a useful approach for understanding urban transportation. Within anthropology, the growing awareness that cultural life is formed in motion has prompted a re-evaluation of what constitutes a field site, with many researchers undertaking studies of professional groups in urban settings. Laura Nader's influential 1972 essay on "studying up" urged anthropologists to spend time studying not only marginalized communities negatively impacted by colonial development, but also powerful groups within our own cultures. Anthropologist George Marcus argued that, "empirically following the thread of cultural process itself impels the move toward multi-sited ethnography" (1995:97). The researcher's own trajectory becomes the field site, which is the approach used in the How Women Travel transit observation activity.

There is not an abundance of studies applying this method to public transit systems. Public transit spaces are used as a training ground for anthropology students, due to the many opportunities for observation of routine behavior (for example, see Howell and Chhay 2017 and <http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/203-07s-3-BusEthnographyAssignment.pdf>). In the following sections, we highlight two major themes within the existing literature.

Centering Rider Experiences. As social spaces, buses and trains host life beyond commuting, as found in an ethnographic analysis of mass transit in Johannesburg, South Africa (Czeglédy 2004). Anthropologist Marc Augé used the Paris mass transit system to reflect on the intertwining of public spaces with memory, noting that, "subway lines, like lifelines on the hand, meet and cross--not only on the map where the interlacing of their multicolor routes unwinds and is set in place, but in everyone's lives and minds" (2002:6). Dixon (2015) found that midwives in Mexico City changed their commute routes based on concerns about violence, and that the city's transit system had created women-only buses and trains.

Moving beyond a view of core riders as a captive population, participant observation offers a window into the often positive community created on transit. In a poem reflecting on fieldwork experiences, anthropologist Sienna Craig captures a moment when two strangers met on a bus in Auckland, found they shared a native tongue, and created a space where they could be at home (Craig 2015). In Bree Gant's 2018 ethnographic film, *Riding with Aunt D. Dot*, the artist narrates the complexity of using buses in Detroit, where she feels safe and on alert at different times.

Ethnographers are interested in agency; that is, how individuals make their way creatively through seemingly fixed infrastructure systems. For example, in a study of a new busway in Cambridgeshire, UK, researchers considered "how [riders] engaged dynamically with the new infrastructure, rather than being passive recipients of it" (Jones et al. 2013:1). Those researchers

argued that a qualitative method like participant observation offers new insight into transportation systems, in part because it can “capture the perspectives of recipients, rather than being constrained by measures pre-defined by the researcher” (2013:2). In the case of Los Angeles, this could allow for insights into why infrastructure expansions do not necessarily meet service needs (Sadana 2018 refers to this as “aspirational planning”). This can reveal the human infrastructure by which current riders make existing systems work, and what changes can make those systems work better for riders today.

The longstanding social stigma associated with riding public transit (see Hutchinson 2000, Williams 2009, Fink 2012) can also be documented and addressed through participant observation. Anthropologist Kim Fortun found that ethnography “can be designed to bring forth a future anterior that is not calculable from what we now know, a future that surprises. Ethnography thus becomes creative, producing something that didn’t exist before” (2012:450). Because they do not carry prescriptive expectations for how individuals should engage with a system such as urban mobility, participant-observers can surface needs and concerns that may not fit within existing planning frameworks. Thus participant-observation offers a unique tool for centering community members’ experiences within investment and design processes. This is useful for agencies that aim to reduce the stigma of riding transit.

Expanding the Field of Study. In ethnographic studies of transit, experts are also fieldwork subjects, and riders, too, are experts, if the planning process values “local knowledge” (Corburn 2005). For example, Rashmi Sadana’s 2018 study of the Delhi metro system included interviews with architects and planners along with regular users of the system. In a study of transit operators, Mark Fleming reported these methods in a fieldwork period of eight months spread over 2010 to 2013: “I rode the transit lines and interviewed drivers, managers, union officials, and city planners. I also analyzed relevant media and publicly available reports and attended public meetings related to transit and city governance” (2016:786). Other figures besides riders are relevant to the ridership experience, which suggests that expanding the field of study beyond system design will yield new information.

This networked approach allows for a broader understanding of how transit systems and agency staff are tied into global trends (see Montero 2017). Participatory methods are also a promising route to avoid “aspirational planning,” what Sadana defined as “planning that privileges the language and ideas of upward mobility rather than social equality” (2018:194). The pressures faced by staff at public agencies, to meet political priorities alongside those of the transit riders, can be part of the narrative when using an ethnographic approach.

Gender and Intersectional Safety

Anthropological approaches to space are useful for understanding the diversity across and within particular groups such as women. As social spaces, buses and trains connect with many scales of opportunity and oppression, which is why urban transportation has been a key focus area of the interdisciplinary field of mobilities research (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2008; Cresswell 2010). For example, Sheller found that “racial geographies of access to and use of public transit were transformed by the rise of automobility and white suburbanization, but still reflect racial orders today” (2015:74). There are multiple social worlds in the same physical spaces, as Jason Patton found in a 2005 study of Oakland streets. People react to different pressures even as they inhabit the same streets.

Studies of public transit have noted that gender affects travel behavior (Loukaitou-Sideris 2016), and a review of research on the safety of women transit users reported that they are “far from a homogenous group” (Ceccato 2017). Not just across national contexts, but “differentiations also exist among women within the same country, due to race/ethnicity, age, income, cultural and educational background, sexual orientation and disability status, as well as more personal characteristics, such as personality traits and lifecycle stages” (2016:555). Loukaitou-Sideris concludes that, “inclusion of gender issues in research about mobility is essential to the development of gender-sensitive and gender-proof policies” (2016:558).

Ceccato defined intersectionality within women’s safety as including “age, gender, economic status, ethnicity but also differences in physical and cognitive abilities” and concludes that the topic deserves further study. How should researchers account for this diversity within a study on women’s travel behavior? In Pueblo’s approach, to study women in transit is to gather multiple perspectives.

Limitations

There are some important limitations to participant observation as utilized within the How Women Travel research project.

Time. Ethnographers’ use of participant observation often spans months or years, as the researcher returns to the same spaces and goes through the same daily routines with their research subjects. In this case, observation data was limited to a few weeks.

Engaging the subject. The research activity was limited to observation, with the observer determining who was a woman and who was not; no one asked the riders to self-identify as women, or checked observations against their own impressions. In a study of transit rider activity in New Zealand, Russell et al. cautioned that “observation is not appropriate if we seek to know what passengers are thinking or feeling, of course; it can be used only to assess manifest behavior” (2011:124).

Observer’s worldview. Because observers did not engage research subjects, their notes reflected only their experiences and background. What observers saw, didn’t see, what they thought was a negative or positive element, or what they decided to document; all of these considerations were structured by the gender, race, class, age, and ability of the observers themselves. This means that observers’ own assumptions could be reinforced by the data, rather than revealing new findings.

Women as observers. Women observers may have not chosen to do observations in the night shift or in routes they were not familiar with, given that they too experienced the gendered insecurities associated with transit use.

To augment the observation data, Pueblo included participatory planning activities in the How Women Travel project design. These activities are detailed in the following section. Bringing participant observation into dialogue with participatory planning is a core Pueblo practice.

What is Participatory Planning?

The history of urban planning shows that planning practices reflect the social power dynamics of their time. Late 19th- and early 20th-century approaches to city design and planning were based on assumptions of progress and modernity developed in the context of the European industrial revolution and Western powers spread their version of the ideal standardized infrastructure networks of places they had colonized throughout the world (López, Lugo, Vargas, and Mattheis 2018). Even though there have been strides to “democratize” planning, much of this framing still informs planning practice today.

It is important to note how democratic participation is not necessarily a substantive component of so-called “human-scale planning” in the tradition of urbanist Jane Jacobs. Though this approach draws attention to the design of public infrastructure and spaces, it may not consider community members and residents as vital sources of expert knowledge whose participation in planning processes is a key element of success.

Contrastingly, a participatory approach seeks to set a new planning paradigm that focuses on community-informed process and outcomes. Building on the understanding that policy and planning decisions reflect dominant worldviews over others, urban planning scholars and practitioners have long sought to build democratic participation into the planning process. Conventional research tends to place interventions and programs into one-size-fits-all, based upon universal best practices; however, participatory methods addresses the disadvantages and flaws of that approach by involving the “end-user” in the research or planning process by incorporating their views and representation into the research, proposed solutions, and implementation of a plan (Lilja and Bellon 2008). Residents, in this case transit users, hold knowledge and expertise about the built, social, and cultural environment that planners may not hold or overlook.

In a participatory planning approach, to accommodate participants we must remove common barriers to engagement. Within How Women Travel project activities, Pueblo addressed the following common barriers to community member engagement in the planning process:

- Language, by having materials interpreted and translators present;
- Trust, by partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) that already have established trust with the communities Pueblo is engaging;
- Time of day and location of workshops, by working with CBOs to identify the appropriate time of day and location for the workshop (which may fold into an existing meeting) and being flexible to their schedule;
- Ability, by making sure workshop activities can accommodate those with varying abilities (i.e., blind, limited mobility, etc.);
- Childcare, by making the workshops child-friendly in allowing children to participate in the activities;
- Lack of time, by meeting people where they are already using transit through pop-up engagement; and

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- Accessible tools and concepts, by not requiring people to learn a new planning vocabulary in order to share their knowledge and vision through the incorporation of art-making and storytelling (we will share more about this in the next section).

Important Role of Storytelling and Art-making in Planning

The role of story has always had an important impact on planning, in both practice and pedagogy (Sandercock 2005). The significance of documenting how narratives are fundamental to public policy and urban planning processes is a small but growing area of research (Honeck 2018). The pop-up engagement at various transit stops is centered around providing a space for people to share their own narrative about their experience on public transit. Even though they may write on notecards or have a facilitator write for them, the richness of what is learned comes when the transit rider verbally shares their experience with the facilitator. Facilitators after every pop-up write up their reflections and key stories they heard during the engagement.

During the participatory design workshops, participants engage in art-making first and then share their story in a group as a way to create a space and take the time necessary for one to truly reflect upon their experience, both physical and emotional. In the Los Angeles context, urban planner James Rojas' "Place It" model has been at the forefront of developing this approach. Considering community members and residents as urban designers, Rojas' method has become a popular tool in community engagement processes. Extending the tool's scope, Pueblo goes a step further by ensuring that insights from the workshop space get translated into relevant language for the planning process. Additionally, Pueblo's art-making kit is not static. Art-making activities and materials are developed and gathered to correspond with the specific needs of the participants (i.e., blind, limited mobility, language, literacy, etc.) and is shaped by what the research question is for the planning study.

Planning practice has either not involved the public in decision making in a genuine way or if community engagement was part of the planning process the average person would find it difficult to engage as they were sometimes required to know planning vernacular and understand complex issues before being able to adequately give input. However, art is a means of communication, participation, and empowerment (Braden and Mayo 1999). Pueblo uses art-making as a way for community members to share their experiences, knowledge, and vision for what kind of city, or in this case transit system, they need and would like. Art-making provides community members the ability to start to visualize and then verbalize, in the form of storytelling (sharing their own personal narratives), their needs and visions.

In addition to community engagement not always being accessible to the public, planning has historically and is currently an extractive process. Planners often go into communities and extract community knowledge and use this knowledge to help draft narratives for plans and provide recommendations at best or use pieces of input to fulfill already premeditated direction at worst. This process can be exhausting and leave people feeling exploited. Pueblo is very mindful of this practice and adheres to "Design Justice" principles that design and planning practice should heal, sustain, and empower communities. Art in community projects can play an important role in personal and social change as well as economic and educational change, develops solidarity and collective identity for the participants, and contributes to the development of cooperation and trust in the community (Kay 2000; Kay and Watt 2000; Newman, Curtis, and Stephens 2003;

Braden and Mayo 1999; Lowe 2000). Pueblo seeks to facilitate planning processes in a manner that heals communities and leads to greater community cohesion which can have lasting impacts once Pueblo leaves the space.

Conclusion

The most impactful way to increase use of tomorrow's transit systems is to design upgrades and changes based on the knowledge of today's core riders. Pueblo undertakes research and engagement activities designed to elicit these individuals' expert knowledge. Given the intersectional and networked nature of urban life, Pueblo expects core riders to make connections that go beyond the conventional approach to transit planning. Following their lead is a step in the right direction.

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SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

Date: March 22, 2019

To: Metro - Claudia Galicia; Meghna Khanna; Elba Higueros

From: Pueblo Lead Author- Monique G. López, AICP, MA, MCRP
Pueblo Contributors- Adonia Lugo, PhD; Hector Benavides; Shirley Ramirez

Subject: *Understanding How Women Travel - Innovative Methods Summary & Analysis*

I. Background

The goal of this project is to understand more about women's experiences and travel needs, so Metro can improve the overall safety, reliability, and convenience for women using transit. Inspired by Metro's Blue Line First/Last Mile: A Community-Based Process and Plan, Metro developed an "Equity Platform Framework" and provided a directive for staff to **"use the Equity Platform as a framework for specific analyses and actions attached to Metro initiatives"** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework). Pueblo's methodology and intentional approach to engagement was deeply informed by an equity perspective and the many issues discussed in this report are issues of equity. Hence, Pueblo applied elements Metro's Equity Framework in the analysis and will reference it throughout the report where appropriate.

Pueblo was part of a larger research team, which included Fehr and Peers, Redhill Group, and UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies. Other team members employed conventional planning research methods, such as: reviewing existing data, collecting surveys, conducting focus groups, and completing a literature review on the subject. Pueblo employed innovative planning methods which include: participatory design workshops with core transit riders and engaging with riders at key transit locations to hear their experiences and thoughts on taking public transit. These innovative planning methods support Metro's goal of including **"multiple forums to engage the community meaningfully and actively" [in pursuit of defining a common basis for talking about and building an agenda around equity, and how to improve it]** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework).

Conversations regarding equity that include those who are part of marginalized communities are sometimes difficult to have. Metro has acknowledged this to be true, yet has made a commitment in their Equity Platform Framework to engage in these conversations. According to Metro, **"Opening conversation with LA's community members would address: a) where they believe achieving equity has been problematic - broadly, and specific to transportation's role; and b) where improved relationships, partnerships and actions aligned with Metro's portfolio of responsibility can be defined to advance more equitable transportation outcomes going forward...This will be a challenging conversation, insofar as it requires Metro as Board and staff to invite the community to articulate where it has experienced, in fact deeply felt, inequity in Metro's past. This isn't a platform for Metro to defend or be defensive; people feel what they feel, and it is going to be impossible to define a new path and build a different position of trust if past experience is not given voice and legitimacy"** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework). This report documents conversations that the Pueblo team had with women who are core transit riders regarding their experiences on public transit in Los Angeles.

II. Methodology

Even the most nuanced and thoughtful surveys and focus groups have limitations: some populations are very difficult to reach, including those who are linguistically isolated, illiterate, or digitally disenfranchised. Hence, Pueblo facilitated participatory design workshops and conducted pop-up engagement that specifically engaged with some of Metro's most vulnerable riders. Pueblo partnered with community-based organizations to facilitate three art-making and storytelling workshops. These organizations served immigrant women with some undocumented, women experiencing homelessness, and women with disabilities. In addition to the workshops, three pop-up engagement activities took place at bustling Metro transit hubs.

The intentional methodological approach to partnership and the population of women we sought to include in the study supports Metro's Equity Platform Framework directive of seeking and inviting a diverse range of voices to participate with Metro to accomplish **"meaningful goals around a shared definition of equity and actions to achieve those goals"** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework). The women's experiences lend great insight as to what types of meaningful shifts in agency policy, budget, and practices can lead to greater equity. Additionally, this supports Metro's Equity Platform Framework which states to **"proactively reach out to those who have remained on the margins of decision-making in the past,"** which includes **"historically underserved communities and organizations that represent them"** (ibid.). Lastly, our pop-up events also support Metro's goal of reaching out to **"hear voices that may not be aligned with established groups"** (ibid.).

During this process, a total of 374 people were listened to and had their experiences documented. Out of 374 people who were engaged, 250 were women, 103 were men, 11 did not identify, and 10 were children. Listed below are the top ten issues that emerged, which will be further discussed in this document through the narratives shared by the women who participated:

- Strong odors on buses and trains;
- Feeling unsafe;
- Infrequent bus or train service and long wait times;
- People not giving up seats to elderly or disabled individuals;
- Bags on seats or the difficulty of traveling with bags;
- Overcrowding on buses and trains;
- Lack of cleanliness at stops and on buses and trains;
- Trains and buses not being on schedule;
- Difficulty loading TAP card with cash or change; and
- Poor customer service from transit operators.

Why Core Communities?

Pueblo's approach is to intentionally engage those who are most impacted by planning decisions and bring them into the planning process. Hence, Pueblo's activities are designed to uplift the needs of *core transit riders*, "those most likely to regularly use transit" (Pollack et al. 2010:2). Core transit riders are "people of color, low-income households and renters," three groups which "are all more likely to use transit than the average American" (ibid). Planning efforts to expand transit

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ridership should start by learning from core riders, whose collective knowledge about how to make transit work is a huge asset for transit agencies. The median earnings of transit commuters in Los Angeles is \$17,421 whereas the median earnings for all workers is \$41,274 (National Transit Database 2014-15, APTA Fact Book 2016, and US Census ACS 2016). According to a recent report by TransitCenter, *“Los Angeles’ transit is used primarily by low-income, often foreign-born, people who lack access to private cars. Transit riders in LA have lower earnings and higher poverty rates than commuters in other big metropolitan areas, and the earnings gap between LA’s transit commuters and its workforce overall is much larger”* (Transit Center, 2019). Focusing on core riders, who according to the data are largely low-income and people of color, supports Metro’s acknowledgement in the Equity Platform Framework that **“historically and currently, race and class have largely defined where these disparities are most concentrated: in poor, minority communities throughout LA County. Age, gender, disability, and residency also can expand or constrain opportunities”** (2017-0912 – Metro, Equity Platform Framework).

Throughout the United States, core transit riders navigate mobility landscapes constrained by histories of race and class bias. Bullard and Johnson note that “transportation development policies did not emerge in a race- and class-neutral society. Institutional racism influences local land use, allocation of funds, enforcement of environmental regulations, facility siting, and where people of color live, work, and play” (1997:1). As a result of this institutional racism, the trend has been that “transportation amenities (benefits) accrue to the wealthier and more educated segment of society, while transportation disamenities (burdens) fall disproportionately on people of color and individuals at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum” (1997:2).

In Los Angeles, where a cultural preference for private automobile travel has been reinforced by nearly a century of public investment in vehicular infrastructure, Metro is tasked with transforming public transit from a disamenity to an amenity. To achieve this, Pueblo recommends embedding a mobility justice approach within transportation planning and development. Sociologist Mimi Sheller, a leading scholar of mobility justice, has defined it as the project to address how mobility “exists in relation to race, class, sexuality, gender, and ability exclusions from public space, from national citizenship, from access to resources, and from the means of mobility at all scales” (2018:20). This mobility justice project underlies Pueblo’s focus on core transit riders, who are groups of people experiencing mobility injustice.

Rather than emphasizing external factors such as existing infrastructure and system expansion, Pueblo focuses on the internal social spaces created aboard buses and trains and in waiting zones. It is imperative to learn from existing users of transit without considering transit merely as an undesirable mode choice (see Fink 2012 on the “loser cruiser”). If treated as knowledgeable experts, today’s core riders could assist in marketing Metro’s transit services to future users.

Participatory Design Workshops with Community-Based Organizations

In the winter of 2019, Pueblo partnered with community-based organizations (CBOs) to facilitate participatory design workshops where women shared their physical and emotional experiences while riding Metro and identified elements of the transit system that contributed to these experiences. We intentionally focused on the most vulnerable core riders that primarily rely upon transit for mobility. Partnering with CBOs is an important component in our methodology because the CBOs already have established a trusting relationship with the women that we sought to engage. Additionally, these women were already in community with each other and will continue

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to be after our workshop because they see each other and work together on a weekly or monthly basis. This allowed for the workshop to be a space where the women were comfortable sharing with each other and with the Pueblo facilitators. By allowing us into their space and connecting us with the women, the CBOs allowed us to access some of the social capital that they have worked hard for many years to establish.

Women who participated in these workshops listed what bus routes and transit lines they frequent. **From these three workshops the women collectively frequent 65 of Metro’s 165 bus routes (representing almost 40% of Metro bus routes) and ride on all four Metro light rail lines and all two Metro subway lines (see map at the end of this report).**

At the workshops the women crafted collages describing their travel experiences, using various images related to transit, emojis, abstract shapes, and other materials. Through this activity, workshop participants were able to share what parts of their transit experiences they enjoy as well as what they believe could be improved. Recognizing common barriers to engagement, Pueblo designed these workshops to be child-inclusive and ensured that food, translation, those with all abilities could engage, and useful gift cards were available to the participating women. Additionally, each community-based organization was compensated for their time in organizing and hosting the event.

Upon learning about the purpose of the workshop and given the prompt “what is your experience taking public transit”, the majority of participants immediately and enthusiastically jumped into the activity. Art-making helped the participants organize their ideas and recall experiences. As visual accompaniments, their collages helped enhance the women’s stories by emphasizing ideas, evoking specific emotions, and generally enabling others to connect their own experiences to what was being shown by their peers. During the part of the workshop when all were invited to share and explain their work, the women smiled, nodded in agreement, frowned in sympathetic disapproval, or laughed at the stories behind each other’s collages. There was a feeling of camaraderie because those present had experienced many of the same challenges and feelings while riding transit. A few reticent participants who were initially hesitant to tell their stories eventually became comfortable enough to share.

Pop-up Data-Gathering Stations at Metro Hubs

During the same period that the workshops were being held, Pueblo staged customized “pop-up” engagement activities in or near transit facilities. Pueblo designed and fabricated a 5-foot by 10-foot wall that caught the eye of passersby. Team members were stationed next to the wall to gather the perspectives of self-identified women travelers. Riders were asked two questions while they waited for their train or bus on the platform; “what makes your ride difficult” and “what would make your ride easy.” These questions were consistent at all three pop-ups to determine if there are different types of experiences for people using different lines.

Riders who approached the pop-up were handed a note card and asked to self-identify as women, men, gender non-binary, or another gender identity. Along with this gender data, they provided responses to the questions on the same note card. Facilitators wrote responses for those who preferred not to write themselves. The note cards were then added to a tapestry of responses taped onto the vinyl “wall,” and the expanding artistic spectacle encouraged more people to participate. Each pop-up lasted for approximately three hours on or near the transit platform

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(dependent upon the safest location). Through this effort, Pueblo was able to better understand patterns of rider behaviors, needs, and experiences.

III. Workshops Summary & Analysis

Three community-based organizations hosted participatory workshops: Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living Center, Downtown Women’s Center, and Padres Lideres en Accion. A total of 70 women, 10 children, and 1 man participated in these workshops. Pueblo provided Spanish interpretation at each workshop. Each of these conversations was incredibly rich with information and provided our team with a deeper understanding of Metro’s most vulnerable riders.

Workshop	Women	Children	Men
<i>Disabled Women</i>	18	0	0
<i>Homeless</i>	27	0	0
<i>Undocumented/Immigrant</i>	25	10	1

Figure 1: Participation at workshops by community.

Workshop 1: Women with Disabilities

In order to better understand the needs, expectations, and experiences of disabled women who use public transit, Pueblo partnered with the Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living Center (SCRS-IL). SCRS-IL is a “a cross-disability, non-residential, disability rights organization empowering people with any disability to live full and independent lives by committing to building an inclusive community that recognizes the dignity, humanity, and worth of all people” (www.scrs-ilc.org). Centers for Independent Living were created to be run by and for people with disabilities, and offer support, advocacy, and information on empowerment in the attainment of independence.

To plan the workshop, Pueblo worked closely with a women’s group coordinated by SCRS-IL that meets monthly to discuss and collaborate on various issues they are facing. The workshop took place at SCRS-IL’s headquarters in Downey from 10am-12pm on Thursday, January 15th. There were 18 women participants with a mix of monolingual Spanish speakers and English speakers. Most of the women used electric wheelchairs for mobility, while others used canes. One participant was visually impaired. The majority of the women who participated use Access Paratransit as their primary mode of transportation, but some also shared that they use the Red Line, Blue Line, Orange Line, 254, 10, and 265 buses.

These women generously shared their experiences as riders, and offered a number of implementable recommendations for improving Metro services for both Access and public bus and train systems. *Primary concerns included the great amount of time it takes to plan an Access trip; lack of efficiency of Access service; and poor customer service by Access drivers. Many of the women expressed some of the same general issues and concerns about riding trains and buses that we heard in other workshops and pop-ups, but these issues were amplified for*

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individuals with varying disabilities. Such issues included a lack of scheduling and reliability, problems with paying fares, spatial challenges, customer service issues, and experiences of feeling unsafe.

Access Paratransit

Many participants reported negative experiences with the process for requesting an Access ride. One rider who has been using Access since the 1990s expressed that the service was much better in the past. She stated, ***“I could call for an Access van the same day and it would arrive in 45 minutes and take me to my destination. Today, I have to call at least 24 hours in advance to schedule a pick up time.”*** The women shared that they must make sure that they can be seen when the Access van arrives because sometimes the van will leave and the driver will say that no one was present for pick up, even though the drivers may not be on time. Some women have experienced drivers either not showing up or drivers showing up at different times than requested.

Many of the women expressed that they do not mind shared rides but believe that route efficiency could be improved on Access – all passengers should be going in the same direction. Many passengers are in the van for hours due to poor routing. Some women expressed that they will get in an Access van and travel to one part of the county, past their final destination, and then circle back toward where they started the ride before they get dropped off. Many expressed a need for route efficiency in order to shorten the duration of their time on Access so that they are able to arrive at their destination on time. Most women budget approximately 2–3 hours for travel, even though their destination may only be 30 minutes away, because they are usually driven around in the van picking up and dropping off people for several hours. One woman expressed, ***“it is better to use regular transit, as opposed to Access, because it gets you there in a generally predictable amount of time.”***

The women also expressed feeling unsafe when Access drivers get impatient with traffic and drive aggressively. The women shared that paratransit drivers are sometimes unfriendly and rarely smile, making the women feel unwelcome, uncomfortable, and as if they are an inconvenience to the driver. Additionally, the women stated that Access should pay attention to the specific needs expressed when reservations are made. For example, one participant spoke about requesting a van without a ramp because she uses a walker. ***“I have fallen several times using the ramp while getting off the van because I have trouble walking going down ramps.”***

Frequency & Reliability

Many stated when they do take the bus, they often have to wait 20–30 minutes at the bus stop. This is made even more difficult if there is not any place for them to sit or if there are no bus shelters, particularly during inclement weather.

Pricing & Payment

Some women also shared about the difficulty with TAP card machines, particularly when using cash to load their cards.

Spatial

Those who rely upon canes or wheelchairs for mobility expressed a unique set of issues when using public transit. For example, when there are many people waiting for the bus, this makes it difficult for those with disabilities to board the bus. People crowd and get in front of them, sometimes pushing them aside.

Those who use electric wheelchairs know from experience that they may not have enough room to turn and park their wheelchair on the bus. Additionally, some use the bus to go grocery shopping and find it difficult to carry and hold 3-4 grocery bags on the bus, which is made even more difficult when you are using a cane or wheelchair.

Many women shared that people on buses and trains do not move out of the seats designated for people with disabilities. This is frustrating and makes their trip much more difficult. Bus drivers do not always have the ability to deal with people who sit in the seats for people with disabilities. Signs indicating special designated areas are not enough.

Customer Service

The women shared that bus drivers can be rude and unfriendly, thus making the experience negative. Other customer service-related issues include drivers who appear to be upset when a disabled person gets on the bus due to the time it takes to accommodate them and bus drivers not securing their wheelchairs, which leaves them feeling unsafe during their ride.

Some women who are not in a wheelchair but use a cane or have difficulty walking have experienced bus drivers who refuse to lower the ramp for them. One woman shared, ***"I tripped trying to get on the bus and no one helped me."*** This also has occurred on the Blue and Green train lines, which makes it difficult for people in wheelchairs and with canes to get on or off the train.

Safety

The general consensus among the women was that riding alone after dark feels dangerous. Poor lighting at bus stops was highlighted as a concern and many women stated that improved lighting would make them feel safer while waiting for the bus or train. One participant who is blind and has been relying on Access as her main source of transportation since the 1990s said, ***"although I took the bus before I was blind, I no longer felt safe in getting to the bus stop or had any way in recognizing which bus is mine as the drivers would not announce which bus they were driving."*** Additionally, at busy stops with multiple buses approaching the stop at once, this particular woman has missed her bus due to the time-saving practice of operators opening the doors so that passengers can board away from the designated stop. This practice is not well suited to serve riders with disabilities.

Even though many women said that they can get around faster on public transit than on Access, they expressed fear about using the system because some did not feel secure boarding (stated above) or could be preyed upon by thieves. One woman mentioned that she feels particularly vulnerable with a cane because she is not able to navigate the space as freely as others and may be a target for theft. Another person who uses a wheelchair recalled a particular encounter on the Blue Line: ***"I got off the train and quickly got back on and returned home, not making it to my***

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final destination, because there were two other women on the train who followed me and were speaking loudly about taking my purse.” That was the last time she rode the train and now relies upon family or Access for rides. She had expressed that she felt alone and had no one to turn to for help.

Social & Cultural Experiences

Despite the challenges faced when using Access, trains, or buses, many women shared that they enjoyed the social and cultural exchanges that take place on transit. Some expressed feelings of happiness while traveling because it provides an opportunity to “see the sights.” Many enjoy their trips when they have a good encounter with their driver who is friendly and smiling. Additionally, they expressed that they liked the social aspect of traveling with others and how they would help each other with directions. A handful of women expressed that they enjoyed the street art or art installations (i.e., murals, mosaics, etc.) at public transit stations and would like to see more.

Workshop 2: Women Experiencing Homelessness

Since many women experiencing homelessness are also core transit riders, Pueblo partnered with the Downtown Women’s Center (DWC) to better understand their needs, expectations, and experiences as transit users. Located in Skid Row, DWC is the only organization in Los Angeles that focuses on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and provides housing, medical and mental health services, social networks, and financial security.

The workshop took place at DWC headquarters from 9:30am–11:30am on January 24th, right after the women enjoyed their breakfast. Twenty-seven women who are currently experiencing homelessness or have recently been housed participated in the workshop. Many of the women who participated work one or two jobs and all of them rely exclusively on public transportation for their mobility needs. The women who participated use the following Metro transit lines: 720, 52, 18, 204, 51, 53, 745, 45, 204, 18, 81, 733, 16, 4, 17, 51, 68, 20, 180, 233, 14, 62, 794, 220, 710, 94, 90, 91, 180, 181, 780, 268, 200, 204, 33, 207, 754, 102, 40, 754, 40, 45, 16, 60, Red Line, Purple Line, Expo Line, Blue Line, and Gold Line.

We learned an incredible amount from these women and their experiences. *Their recommendations for improving Metro services included support for bus drivers dealing with customer service issues; adjusting schedules and frequency to accommodate the working poor; strategies to improve cleanliness and safety; resolving technological and bus mechanical issues; and educating operators about the social and cultural considerations of riding public transit for this community of riders.*

Bus Drivers

Many women expressed much gratitude and appreciation for the bus drivers. As individuals who ride the bus for many hours a day, they see the many difficult interactions between drivers and riders. Additionally, many expressed empathy for the drivers and understood why bus drivers are sometimes on edge, because as one participant put it, ***“bus drivers have 8 different jobs because of all the things they have to handle.”*** Another woman mentioned, ***“If a bus driver is having a bad day their attitude is negative and that impacts the riders.”*** The women understand that

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sometimes the bus drivers have bad moments or days, but should not take out their frustrations on the passengers.

The women believe that the bus drivers have too much to manage and need an assistant to help with onboarding passengers, helping people with directions, securing wheelchairs for individuals who use them, and dealing with disruptive conduct (passengers who may be disturbing others with loud music, taking too much space, making a mess, or causing conflict). Many of the women shared that it would be helpful if the bus driver had a helper to relieve their stress so that they can focus more on driving. The women also suggested that the bus drivers be able to vent and receive emotional support from their peers, supervisors, and counselors so that they are less stressed and more emotionally healthy while driving. The burdens on drivers are unfair to them and to the riders.

Customer Service

Some women shared experiences where bus drivers engaged in discriminatory practices toward the homeless. A few mentioned that in front of the Women's Center, the bus station is surrounded by homeless encampments and some bus drivers skip the stop, despite people waiting and waving.

Since these women often need to travel with their belongings and rely upon transit to run errands, they bring bags, luggage, and carts onto the bus. One woman mentioned, ***"There is often harassment towards people who bring their bags on the bus."*** They shared that there is no safe place to put belongings or bags and they are often told to collapse carts filled with items.

Additionally, since many of the women ride for long periods of time due to seeking shelter and traveling to jobs, having a smooth and comfortable ride is of importance to them. Some of the women shared that bus brakes and suspension seem to be in poor condition, since an abrupt stop or a pothole can cause riders physical pain.

Frequency & Reliability

Many of the women who are homeless or previously homeless have jobs and rely upon public transit to get to and from work. Many of the women have to take multiple jobs at odd hours and have to wait long periods of time for their buses. Their livelihood depends upon them taking the bus.

These women expressed that bus schedules and routes do not accommodate them. One woman stated that ***"the Metro system is not for the working poor,"*** because there aren't many buses available before 5am and buses that run at night pass only once every hour. There was a sentiment among the women that those who work 9-to-5 jobs are given priority as riders, while those without that schedule must make do. Many of their work schedules require them to travel to work at 4am or earlier and they get off work very late at night. The lack of frequent service at those times makes their commutes challenging, and women reported walking long distances to catch a bus or waiting 1-2 hours for a bus. These late night and early morning experiences in particular make them feel unsafe and vulnerable. One woman shared that she has to walk 1.5 miles daily to and from her bus stop to get to her job at UCLA because she travels when there is not much service.

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Just riding the bus takes up most of her day. Another woman shared that her shift ends at 1am but she has to wait until 4am to catch the bus, so she is often forced to sleep at the bus stop.

Cleanliness

Even though they must be creative to make public transit fit their needs, many of these women were grateful to have some type of public transportation available to them. They shared that they try to keep the bus and bus stops clean since they spend so much time in these spaces and they want to keep them looking nice and pleasant for themselves. They shared that sometimes the bus interiors or bus stops are dirty. They also mentioned that sometimes the odors on the bus make for an unpleasant ride.

Safety

The women shared that the bus was both a place of refuge and place where they sometimes feel scared. Sometimes they feel the bus is dangerous because of people who may be intoxicated or need care for mental health issues. The women expressed that there are a lot more people with mental health needs now than there were 10 years ago. Additionally, some of the women shared that they have had “run-ins” with law enforcement in these spaces, such as being told to leave an area or being stopped and ticketed.

Technology

Since many of the women find themselves on public transit for much of the day, either traveling to work or appointments or using it as a respite, they expressed that there is a great need for more access to wifi on every bus. Many of them use their cell phone GPS to navigate around the county and require wifi to be able to use their phones. Additionally, having places to charge their phones on public transit, at bus stops, and platforms would allow them to stay connected and navigate more easily.

Social & Cultural Experiences

Many of the women shared that they use buses and trains as an extension of public space. While many places are unsafe for homeless women, public transit provides a safer place for women to be. Public transit gives them the ability to accomplish a lot of things on the way to their destination. Many ride the bus for long durations during the day and night and see it as a place for safety and a place to sleep. One woman shared that her world revolves around public transportation. Another stated, ***“I sleep, eat, relax, live on the bus and often hop from one bus to another.”*** She emphasized, like many other women, that her ability to use the bus as a place of refuge and respite is sometimes hampered by overcrowding and a lack of available seats. Hence, the Expo Line is an important place of refuge because there is often a place to sit. Another women mentioned that for the past 20 years she has slept at a bus stop shelter, which keeps her safe from the elements and is well lit. She emphasized that she makes sure that she keeps it clean, picks up her trash, and does her part to keep the shelter clean.

These women showed Pueblo that bus and train service is much more than a means for getting from point A to point B. The time and space spent in between, elements often resented by other commuters, are important parts of the trip for women experiencing homelessness. Thinking of

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buses and trains as public space opens the planner's imagination to new possibilities of what can and should be improved.

Workshop 3: Immigrant and Undocumented Women

In order to better understand the needs, expectations, and experiences of immigrant and undocumented women who use public transit, Pueblo partnered with Padres Líderes en Acción (PLA). Located in Southeast Los Angeles, PLA is a community-based organization that organizes local residents to discuss, inform, and advocate for issues that impact them and their families, from transit to the schools.

The workshop took place at a community center in Cudahy from 5pm-7pm on January 29th. The workshop was held in Spanish, with the support of a professional interpreter. Twenty-five women, 10 children, and 1 young man participated in the workshop. All the women primarily used transit for their mobility needs, and none had exclusive access to a car. Some shared that even though transit is the primary way that they travel, they also ask friends and family for rides. The majority of the women had children under the age of 12 and travel with them on public transit. The women who participated use the following Metro transit lines: 60, 760, 252, 111, 611, 260, 258, 611, 108, 355, 115, 260, 108, 266, 720, 115, 110, 55, 612, Blue Line, Expo Line, Red Line, and Green Line.

We learned an incredible amount about the women, their experiences, and their implementable recommendations to improve Metro services, which included improvements to the Metro app; fare price and payment method; cleanliness; scheduling and reliability; safety; customer service; needs of people experiencing homelessness; services for those with disabilities; spatial challenges and needs; and social and cultural experiences. Additionally, we were able to learn from children about their experience riding public transit.

Technology

Many of the women used the Metro app when planning trips and overwhelmingly agreed that the app rarely shows accurate schedule times. All of them expressed frustration that the app does not reflect real-time information. Many buses arrive 15 minutes late, making transfers difficult and extending travel time by up to 30 minutes. The women expressed that they do not know if this is because the app is inaccurate or because the bus is running late. This uncertainty causes a lot of frustration and stress as it often causes them to be late.

Price & Payment

The majority of the women pay their fares with cash or with TAP card stored value and never purchase the monthly pass. They expressed that cost was the main barrier to purchasing the monthly pass, since they do not use transit every day if they are able to get rides from family or friends. They stated that lower rates for mothers would be incredibly helpful because they have a lot of errands to run, and are probably taking public transit more than the average person. When asked, many of them did not know about the Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program provided by Metro to reduce fares. Those who were aware of the program stated that they were not eligible for enrollment. Some of the women expressed that the cost of transit is unaffordable. One woman shared that she sometimes uses coins to pay for a bus ride and the drivers treat her with disrespect or look annoyed.

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Many really liked the use of tokens and asked for their return because, in their experience, when they load their TAP cards with cash it is often rejected by the machines. The bus tokens and transfers used to be available for purchase in many places, but TAP cards are harder to access. For the women who only use the bus, there is no easy access to TAP card reloading locations. The majority of the women shared that they use dollars and change to try to load their TAP cards or pay directly on the bus (none of the women reported using debit or credit cards to load their TAP cards). The machines often do not take their cash or coins which makes it difficult to fill their cards with stored value. It is also likely that they will not have exact change when riding the bus.

Cleanliness

A lack of clean conditions on buses, trains, transit platforms, and bus stops is an issue that the women brought up repeatedly. They reported that some stops do not have adequate trash cans and some have none at all. If there is a trash can, it is sometimes overflowing with trash, attracting pests and vermin. A few of the women mentioned that buses in particular are dirtier due to being overcrowded. With the overcrowding comes unpleasant odors, which the women brought up multiple times.

Frequency & Reliability

Most of the women expressed frustration with late buses and how they could not depend on the transit system to get them to where they needed to go on time. When a bus is late and they miss their transfer(s), long-distance trips become even lengthier. To mitigate this, they often try to leave extra early, sometimes 2-3 hours earlier than needed, so that they get to their destination on time. The women estimated that they usually wait 20-30 minutes for a late bus and consistently run about 15 minutes late to their appointments. Some women shared that this is a particularly difficult situation when traveling with children, as children often grow impatient and start to get bored or misbehave.

Safety

Some of the stops are very dark and the women expressed that they feel unsafe, especially on shorter days when it gets dark early. In contrast, one woman stated, ***“when I take transit to Santa Monica I feel much safer because those areas are well lit.”*** Two young adults in high school expressed that they are sometimes wary when traveling from school with laptops, books, and other belongings because they fear theft. Some of the women shared that they had witnessed violence on the bus such as fights between people. Additionally, one woman shared that she had seen a man exposing himself on a bus. There have also been a handful of cases where the women have seen beer being sold or consumed while on the Blue Line. A number of women mentioned that they sometimes feel nervous when taking the bus alone or with friends in areas that are unfamiliar to them. Additionally, when the bus is empty or a station is empty they sometimes feel scared or nervous. These types of experiences lead some women to feel uncomfortable sitting by men, so they seek out seats near other women.

When asked if they were aware of Metro’s safety app, none of the women knew about it. When asked the follow up question of how they submit their complaints to Metro, they said that they do not do so because ***“it is not worth it”*** due to the time it would take to submit without any

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guarantees that the issue would be addressed. Also, they stated that they do not know how to submit complaints. Women who acknowledged that they do not always feel safe taking transit also shared that they knew someone who had been unfairly targeted by law enforcement on public transit.

Customer Service

The women shared that many of the bus drivers are friendly; however, their ride is made a lot less pleasant when they encounter a driver who is unfriendly. One woman recounted an incident where a bus driver got angry with her and yelled at her for using change to pay the fare. She felt embarrassed as the other riders stated at her. She and others emphasized that drivers should treat people equally regardless of how they look or pay for bus fare. Additionally, the women shared that they notice that not many bus drivers assist those in wheelchairs or people with strollers. They said these small gestures can go a long way in making for an easier and much more pleasant ride. Despite these incidents, many of the participants shared their appreciation for Metro service because they are able to get to places without needing a vehicle.

People Experiencing Homelessness

Some women expressed that they sometimes worried when they see homeless people sleeping on the bus or train because they do not know if they are sleeping or have passed away. Additionally, women expressed frustration when homeless individuals take up multiple seats while sleeping or with their items, particularly when the bus is crowded. Lastly, the women also shared that body odor from individuals who have not had access to a shower sometimes makes the ride unbearable.

Access Paratransit

Some of the women were familiar with and have used Access Paratransit. Overall, they seemed pleased with this service. There was confusion about how to become eligible for Access use. One woman who has a son with autism stated that her son is often overstimulated on transit, thus causing him to act out. ***“This makes it extremely difficult for me to travel with my son because I feel embarrassed when other passengers who do not know my son’s situation stare at us.”*** She would love to be able to use Access to travel with her son. Women who are traveling with neurotypical children or children with disabilities find it incredibly difficult to navigate public transit.

Spatial

Many of the women shared that the buses are often crowded, making rides uncomfortable. Some of the young women expressed that after a long day of school or participating in school sports, they are extremely tired and have nowhere to sit. Others complained that some people take too much space with their belongings or their bodies. They shared their frustration with teenagers and able-bodied individuals who do not show courtesy and give up their seat to elderly or disabled individuals. This is particularly exacerbated when the buses are full and there are not many places for people to sit.

A few women mentioned that there is no space on trains for the bikes and that there needs to be better areas for bikes to be stored. Additionally, the women shared that they sometimes travel

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with a lot of stuff, such as grocery bags, strollers, or carts, and see people doing the same. This is often difficult to do given the space on the bus and can sometimes lead to stress and frustration. Lastly, the women expressed that they often have long waits at stops in the sun, many of which have no shelter or seating.

Social & Cultural Experiences

When women are seeking a little solitude or safety, they sometimes put on headphones in order to prevent themselves from being bothered by others on the bus. A handful of women and their children expressed that they enjoy seeing the street vendors along the way and sometimes indulge in one of their favorite treats as they get off the bus, especially after a long trip.

Additional Perspectives

As stated above, one man and ten children took part in the workshop. Some worked on the collages with their mothers and others decided to make their own. Many of their experiences were similar to their mothers, with a few notable differences.

Children's Experience

The children who participated were so excited and proud of what they produced. Children shared that they often travel with their mothers on public transit because their mothers do not have cars. They mentioned that they often let their mothers or others sit if the bus or train is full. Sometimes when they are standing, the sudden stops or bad shocks on the bus make for a very difficult ride as they struggle to keep their balance. The children shared that they often ride on their mothers' laps when traveling and sometimes fall asleep on the bus when they are tired. They also enjoy looking out the window to see the sights. They also shared many of the same issues that their parents shared, such as not being able to readily access TAP machines and needing exact change for travel, having to wait 30 minutes or more for a bus, feeling scared at times when traveling at night, and that some "strangers" they sit near "are scary."

Male Experience

The young man who attended with his mother was a high school student. He shared many of the same experiences that the women did, such as not being able to find a seat when the bus is full, people taking too much space, and the harshness of waiting a long time out in the sun for the bus in places where there are no shelters. Additionally, he emphasized that he has observed police interrogating young men because they looked suspicious due to their tattoos and not because they had done anything wrong. This deeply upset him.

The participants in this workshop showed remarkable abilities as observers of transit environments. They provided great insight about the challenges when traveling with children. Children were also hyper-aware of the struggles their mother's faced and what would make taking transit a better experience for both them and their mother.

IV. Pop-up Summary & Analysis

Metro selected the three pop-up sites based on their geographical and ridership diversity, great amount of riders, and great amount of transfers from buses to trains and rapid service to bus. Hence, it is assumed that the riders engaged at these stops are using multiple Metro lines and types of public transit. The three sites included Rosa Parks/Willowbrook (Blue Line), El Monte (Silver Line), and North Hollywood (Red Line). In total, 180 women, 102 men, and 11 who chose not to identify their gender participated in the pop-ups activity. Pueblo engaged participants in both English and Spanish.

STATION	WOMEN (ENG)	WOMEN (SPN)	MEN (ENG)	MEN (SPN)	DID NOT IDENTIFY	TOTAL
<i>Rosa Parks/ Willowbrook</i>	47	27	22	1	2	99
<i>North Hollywood</i>	40	8	24	1	2	71
<i>El Monte</i>	42	16	42	12	7	119

Figure 2: Participation at pop-ups by station.

Similarities at Stations

The next section outlines similar experiences reported by riders across the three sites.

Female Participants

Frequency & Reliability

Many of the women we engaged at the pop-up events shared that wait time for buses, trains, and in between transfers is much too long, and in some cases 40-60 minutes or longer on the weekends. In addition to the long wait times, there is a lack of adequate early morning and late night service. Some expressed that the buses start too late -- they need service earlier than 4am. Three women traveling together at the El Monte Station stated, ***“We take the bus to work now and have to wait for the bus from 2am-4am (#76) on the street with a lot of homeless people on benches. We are exposed to cold weather. Would be nice to have more frequent service on buses.”*** Some women also expressed the need for more frequency during the weekend as well because they work on the weekends or do errands on the weekends and rely upon bus service to do so. Another woman at the North Hollywood Station shared, ***“Sometimes the night options are sparse. So, I’d rather take Uber or Lyft because buses are always late at night and there is no one to call.”*** Not all women have the financial means to rely upon rideshare service at night, so they are sometimes left stranded waiting at their stops for a long time or have to walk long distances in the dark.

Another issue women frequently mentioned was how frustrating and disruptive bus and train delays are for them. Many of the women shared that they have to ***“give themselves extra time”***

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just in case there are delays and that they often end up missing transfers because buses or trains run late. One woman at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station stated, ***“when Metro is late it ruins my entire schedule.”*** The women also shared that the transit schedules, as indicated on Metro’s app and Google maps, are often incorrect. They expressed that Metro should have announcements for train delays and need real-time updates on their apps and on the platforms. Others suggested adding a Metro text option to get real-time data about a bus arrival. One woman at the El Monte Station stated, ***“I want to see specific times when the bus will arrive and leave. I’m not sure when the bus will come and I am waiting right now.”***

Spatial

Many of the women expressed annoyance about people taking multiple seats with their bags and other items. They also shared that they encounter many “rude” people who do not give up their seats for women, the elderly, or disabled. Additionally, some expressed that it is difficult to travel when they have a lot of bags themselves.

Another spatial issue is overcrowding on buses and trains. Many individuals engaged at the pop-up sites shared that they do not feel comfortable on transit when it is too crowded; there is too little physical space between riders. Some women brought up that when the bus or train is crowded it is sometimes difficult for those with disabilities to get a seat or those with walkers or wheelchairs to have space for their mobility devices.

Out-of-service elevators and escalators mar rider experiences. One disabled woman at the North Hollywood station shared her frustrations regarding this issue, ***“The elevators are always broken and people who don’t need them jump in front of me.”***

Many women expressed the need for more seating and shelters at bus stops to shield them from inclement weather. In winter, bus interiors are too cold and in the summer too hot, thus making the ride very uncomfortable and unpleasant.

Cleanliness

Women at the pop-ups consistently brought up the issue of lack of cleanliness at bus stops, train platforms, on trains and buses, and in elevators and stairs. One woman at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station shared, ***“the elevators are dirty and they stink. I’m concerned about my health in these spaces as a pregnant woman.”***

One of the most common issues we heard from women is how body odor on trains and buses makes for a very unpleasant transit experience. Additionally, odor from marijuana smoke on trains was another key issue mentioned that they would like to see addressed. A couple of women mentioned that they keep moving from train car to train car to find a space free from these odors.

People Experiencing Homelessness

Women consistently brought up the fact that they encounter many people experiencing homelessness on the trains and buses, particularly in the early morning and late at night. Their smell, belongings taking up space, or apparent mental problems were mentioned by both male and female-identifying transit users. They shared that sometimes seeing people experiencing homelessness makes them feel uncomfortable. Conversely, women experiencing different states of housing security are sometimes made to feel unsafe and discriminated against in these spaces.

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One woman at the El Monte station who sleeps in a shelter shared what had happened to her when she was on a bus, ***“A bus driver threw me off the bus because they thought I was homeless because I had a blanket.”*** Another woman who uses Metro and is in and out of shelters shared that she loves the Metro system, though moving around with her belongings is always hard. She shared that Metro serves as a safe space as she navigates the region to find shelter on cold nights, which for her is an act of survival.

Safety

Feeling unsafe getting to stations and stops, at bus stops and train platforms, and on buses and trains was an issue that was expressed by many women. Some women shared that they have been sexually harassed or know a woman who has been harassed on the train or bus. One woman at the North Hollywood Station shared, ***“I have seen women in window seats get trapped by men in aisle seat. So, now I always sit in the aisle seat. We need a way to text security or the bus driver from our phone.”*** Feeling unsafe and vulnerable in these spaces increases when it gets dark. Another woman at the El Monte Station shared, ***“I don’t usually ride late because I’m scared to and it can be dangerous.”*** A couple of women shared that they have seen women get their bags or phones stolen on the bus and train. Many expressed the need for more lighting. Some shared that they would like to see increased security. However, others expressed a little more caution around that approach; for example, a woman at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station shared, ***“The police presence here is much more aggressive. I go to UCLA and the police presence there is different- less aggressive and more friendly.”***

Pricing & Payment

Women engaged at all three stations shared that they often have difficulty loading their TAP card, especially when using cash or change. Elderly people also shared that they are confused about how to load their senior card. Others expressed that the fare is too high and this makes it difficult for them to get to their destinations.

Customer Service

A theme at the pop-ups was drivers being “rude” or having negative attitudes and interactions with the women. This makes the women feel unwelcome in transit spaces. Others shared that sometimes drivers pull away without waiting for disabled passengers, or before the riders have found a place to settle in, resulting in getting hurt. One disabled woman in North Hollywood explained the various indignities suffered by disabled riders, such as being left behind by impatient drivers; dealing with inconsiderate able-bodied passengers who don’t offer their seat or take up a seat with belongings they refuse to move; passenger not clearing a path that allows them to reach an exit before the bus/train pulls away from their destination. Another issue was a perceived lack of patience on the part of drivers waiting for passengers to board. Many stated that buses pulled off without them despite being seen approaching the bus. The problem seems especially acute for transit users with physical mobility issues, but was also mentioned by others simply weighed down by things they were carrying. On the other hand, we also heard from one bus driver at a pop-up event that aside from facing increasing traffic and consequent delays, they felt pressure to meet a route’s time schedule. Another driver cited the stress managing these challenges as the reason that prompted her to switch from employment at Metro to Foothill Transit.

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Technology

Since many of the women engaged reported riding public transit for hours each day, they shared that they would love access to wifi and electrical outlets on the trains and buses.

Male Participants

During the pop-up events, the Pueblo team engaged 102 self-identified male passengers. Many of the men pointed to similar issues that they would like to see improved on public transit, which include:

- Odors on trains and buses;
- The lack of reliability of Metro due to delays of trains and buses;
- Lack of seating due to crowded buses and trains;
- Cleanliness of buses and trains;
- People experiencing homelessness sleeping on the trains, particularly after 10:30pm;
- Infrequent buses and trains;
- More restrooms available;
- Access to wifi and electrical outlets; and
- Feeling unsafe.

Men, particularly at the El Monte station, shared their frustrations regarding bus delays and infrequent service. One man stated, ***“Reliability can be an issue. Sometimes buses are late that makes me look for other routes or I have to walk.”*** Another male rider at the El Monte station shared his story about leaving work late at night: ***“I’ve had to walk long distances at night because there is no service and I was stuck. I have to walk or wait until 4am to get a bus.”*** These riders are sometimes forced to walk long distances at night in places where there is little to no pedestrian infrastructure or street lighting. A male rider at the El Monte Station described how crowded buses can be, stating that, ***“it feels like we are packed in like animals on the bus.”***

Even though some men acknowledge that stations and trains and buses are sometimes unsafe, men’s response regarding increasing security was mixed and filled with much caution. One man at the El Monte station stated, ***“I dislike police presence. When trying to ride they fuck with us for no reason. I’d rather have a better camera system than more sheriffs.”*** Others mentioned that they find frequent fare checks by transit security and sheriffs intrusive and annoying, especially when they are rushing to reach a destination. One man at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook station reflected on the complex nature of security, stating that, ***“This is a dangerous place. When I see the sheriff I get scared when they all have their guns out. That’s why I don’t come here. I’ve also seen stuff get stolen here.”*** When doing the pop-up engagement at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook station, our team encountered exactly what this rider was describing. All of a sudden, approximately six or seven law enforcement officers with weapons drawn ran down the platform onto a stopped train. The last officer to run down the platform towards the train was an officer holding an assault rifle with his finger on the trigger. We were told by a Metro staff person that someone had their phone stolen on the train and a few minutes later we were told that there was an individual on the train with a knife. Our team then saw the sheriff take a person off the train and walk him off the platform. No one on the Pueblo team knows exactly what happened on the train, but our team was quite shocked by the show of force. Seeing the officer with the assault rifle was particularly

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disturbing and seemed like an unnecessary and dangerous threat, regardless of the situation, because the train and platform were filled with passengers.

Differences at Stations

Even though the majority of the responses at all three stations were very similar, there were a few nuanced differences that should be noted. For the most part, riders at the North Hollywood station seemed to speak more favorably of Metro, stating that it meets their needs in general. This may be due to the fact that we engaged many suburban “9-5 commuters” who don’t exclusively rely upon transit and have access to a vehicle and primarily use the bus and train to get to work because it takes the same amount of time as it would in their car (also known as “choice riders”). In contrast, at the Rosa Parks and El Monte stations, participants seemed to rely upon public transit exclusively and asked for extended service in the early morning or late at night. This may be due to the fact that more riders at the Rosa Parks and El Monte station are working-class people whose hours are outside of the 9-5pm schedule, office worker schedule. Many of the participants at the El Monte station who mentioned the need for extended hours reported working in locations such as Bellflower, City of Industry, Norwalk, Monterey Park, Irwindale, and Downey. The riders at Rosa Parks who shared the need for extended hours worked in the service industry or at the airport. Additionally, at Rosa Parks/Willowbrook station many people had mixed feelings and different perspectives regarding security and some shared that armed transit security or sheriffs actually made them feel less safe.

V. Solutions and Opportunities

The women we engaged at the workshops and pop-ups not only shared stories regarding their experience using public transit, but also identified a variety of tangible solutions that could make their ride with Metro easier, safer, and better. As part of a vulnerable population, but not necessarily a monolithic group, these solutions reflect a diversity of needs. Vulnerability for them can be defined in physical as well as economic terms. One can suffer physical harassment on transit, and/or suffer economically when their employment is endangered due to late or delayed transit. Metro acknowledges that investments must be made in an equitable manner because **“the community’s ability to access the transportation system - where, when, how, and at what cost - impacts their opportunities to jobs, housing, education and health”** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework). **“Thus, measuring equity against that access, and for whom, is central to our planning process”** (ibid.). In this section we seek to make central some of Metro’s most vulnerable core riders by providing a set of solutions and opportunities the women articulated through their own lived experiences and community knowledge of the transit system. Additionally, Pueblo further identified opportunities for Metro to consider in order to address the issues the women shared.

Pueblo has developed a secondary code system in order to organize the solutions and opportunities into three major areas that Metro has the ability to influence; **spatial, policy, and customer service**. These categories should allow Metro personnel to easily navigate the recommendations and determine which departments may need to be involved and what type of actions may need to be taken. “Spatial” refers to elements in the built environment or physical elements on buses and/or trains that could be targeted for change. “Policy” refers to elements that may be included in Metro’s Customer Code of Conduct, changes in human resources policies, or

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requirements for staff conduct or trainings. “Customer Service” refers to staff conduct, interactions with riders, or elements that improve riders’ experience. Not all recommendations fit neatly into one category and there is often overlap.

The table below documents the recommendations provided by women at the workshops and pop-ups, additional Pueblo recommendations, and the type of agency shift that will be required to implement these recommendations. The source of each solution and opportunity (Workshop [WS], Pop-up, and/or Pueblo) is listed as well. The following solutions and opportunities support Metro’s Equity Platform Framework in ensuring that considerations on investment decisions be given to those that actively **“advance outcomes that promote and sustain opportunities in underserved communities; or avoid outcomes that lead to or aggravate disparities in opportunity in those communities”** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework).

	Solutions and Opportunities	Sources	Type of Agency Shift
ACCESS (Paratransit)			
1	Faster turn-around service for pick up (ideally same day or within the hour) - 24 hours between request and pick up is too long	Disabled Women WS	Policy; Customer Service
2	Access should listen and comply with specific van type requests.	Disabled Women WS	Customer Service
3	Drivers should be more welcoming and friendly to passengers.	Disabled Women WS	Customer Service
4	Ensure that drivers are not driving aggressively.	Disabled Women WS	Customer Service
5	Allow parents with children who are on the autistic spectrum to utilize Access service (it is unclear if children that are non-neurotypical would qualify).	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Policy
6	Metro should conduct an audit of average time from pick up to drop off on Access rides and analyze routes taken to improve service.	Pueblo	Customer Service
7	Provide drivers with software that helps with route optimization in order to help reduce travel time and increase efficiency.	Pueblo	Customer Service
8	Use school communication channels to share Access eligibility information with parents who have disabled children.	Pueblo	Customer Service
Frequency & Reliability			
9	Increase frequency of buses and trains so that wait times are reduced.	Disabled Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Customer Service
10	Extend bus and train service hours and frequency at night and the early morning to accommodate working class people.	Homeless Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Customer Service
11	Work with bus drivers to identify the major issues impacting on-time arrival in order to improve schedule consistency.	Pueblo	Employee Feedback
Spatial			

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12	At particularly busy bus stops, there should be priority boarding and a designated area (painted on sidewalk) just for disabled individuals.	Disabled Women WS	Spatial
13	Planting street trees and providing more bus shelters and seating could help make bus stations cooler and more pleasant.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Spatial
14	Install and improve lighting, bus stop benches, and shelters.	Disabled Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
15	More buses on busy lines to avoid overcrowding.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Customer Service
16	Metro should reevaluate its policy of requiring carts to be closed on buses.	Pueblo	Policy
17	Designate an area on the bus where bags and carts can be easily stored.	Pueblo	Spatial
18	Metro should look into adding hooks on the back of seats so that bags could easily be hung instead of taking space on seats and laps.	Pueblo	Spatial
19	Place signs on the bus to let folks with wheelchairs know their clearance space.	Pueblo	Customer Service
20	Install signage and utilize periodic audio public service announcements about yielding seats to elders and those with disabilities and reminding people to share space.	Pueblo	Customer Service
21	Ensure elevators and escalators are fixed within a 24 hour period and ensure that proper signage and announcements are used to notify riders of broken elevators and escalators in advance.	Pueblo	Policy, Spatial, Customer Service
Customer Service			
22	Ensure that bus drivers do not purposely skip stops to avoid picking up homeless people.	Homeless Women WS	Customer Service
23	Improve brakes and suspension on buses to make for a smoother ride.	Homeless Women WS	Customer Service
24	Metro should invest in customer service helpers for drivers (particularly on busy routes). These helpers should be present on buses and trains to assist with fares, provide directions, help mothers with children and the elderly board, address poor passenger conduct, etc.	Homeless Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Policy; Customer Service
25	Provide programs and opportunities for drivers to receive emotional support.	Homeless Women WS	Policy; Customer Service
26	Ensure that bus drivers are welcoming and friendly to all passengers.	Homeless Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Disabled Women WS; Pop-ups	Customer Service
27	Bus drivers (or customer service representative) should assist individuals with strollers and wheelchairs.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Customer Service
28	Bus drivers should always lower the ramp when there is a request made regardless of how one's abilities may be perceived.	Pueblo	Policy; Customer Service

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29	Bus drivers should take the time to properly strap in those who are in wheelchairs.	Pueblo	Policy; Customer Service
30	Metro should provide an opportunity for bus drivers to share what needs to be changed in order to be better supported and reduce the high stress of their job.	Pueblo	Employee Feedback
Safety			
31	There is a need for extra eyes and hands, beyond transit security. There should be extra “helpers” or customer service personnel on buses, trains, and on platforms. More eyes on platforms and on public transit can put women at ease and make them feel as though they have someone to turn to without troubling the bus driver. These individuals can address customers who may be smoking, playing loud music, or not giving their seats to disabled individuals.	Disabled Women WS; Homeless Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Policy, Customer Service
32	Designate a set of seats on the bus next to one another that are exclusively for women.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Spatial
33	Have women-only designated cars for people who identify as women.	Pop-ups	Spatial
34	More lighting at bus and train stops and the pathways to transit stops.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
35	Identify safety zones on transit maps - these can be areas where people are able to get off safely if they need assistance. Many times people are only familiar with the stops where they get on and off. If they are being harassed or are not in a position where they feel comfortable, they may feel stuck until they reach their destination. However, if there were well-marked safety areas on the map, they could exit the bus sooner and seek help.	Pueblo	Spatial
36	Metro should partner with social services to provide mental health case workers on transit.	Pueblo	Customer Service
37	Metro should partner with Community-Based Organizations to develop alternatives to policing to improve safety for all on transit.	Pueblo	Policy, Customer Service
38	Better advertise the safety app on public transit or stops and integrate this feature onto the front page of Metro’s navigation app.	Pueblo	Customer Service
Cleanliness			
39	Provide trash cans at every stop.	Homeless Women WS; Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
40	Empty trash cans and clean up at transit stops more frequently to avoid trash overflow.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
41	Metro should increase odor control mitigation efforts particularly on very busy lines.	Homeless Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
42	Increase periodic cleaning of buses and trains throughout the day, particularly busy buses and trains.	Pueblo	Spatial

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43	Clean and sanitize elevators more frequently, implement odor mitigation measures, and ensure proper ventilation systems are in proper working order.	Pueblo	Spatial
Technology			
44	Provide service-wide wifi access.	Homeless Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
45	Provide electrical plugs or USB connectors on buses, trains, bus stops, and platforms.	Homeless Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
46	Metro should check their app's schedule accuracy and adjust if needed.	Pueblo	Customer Service
47	Add GPS trackers on buses and provide real time data for bus arrival times and locations.	Pueblo	Customer Service
Price & Payment			
48	Implement a special fare reduction program specifically for mothers since they are probably using public transit more than the average commuter.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS	Policy
49	Metro should look into why TAP card machines are having trouble taking cash and coins and resolve this issue.	Pueblo	Spatial
50	Better advertise the LIFE program in multiple languages on buses and transit stops and use pop-ups on the Metro app to advertise how and where one could apply.	Pueblo	Customer Service
Homeless			
51	Provide bathroom and shower access at key transit hubs.	Undocumented/ Immigrant Women WS; Pop-ups	Spatial
52	Evaluate and provide adequate resources to expand the current social services program.	Pueblo	Policy; Customer Service
53	Metro should coordinate with homeless services groups to meet the needs of individuals riding transit.	Pueblo	Policy; Customer Service

Figure 3: Solutions and opportunities with source and type of agency shift indicated.

Best Practices

Toward odor mitigation: Offensive odor is one of the major issues that riders brought up consistently at the workshops and pop-ups. As a best practice, in places like Singapore, pleasant scents are part of the bus riding experience (Poon, 2017). In April 2017, Metro started installing in-train deodorizers in hopes that it will tamper offensive odors. The deodorizers went in four-to-a-car on the Red and Purple lines (Metcalfe, 2017). Metro shared that if they work out well that they Metro might install them on more lines. Metro has also tested the use of MonoFoil, an antimicrobial spray that is used to help eliminate odor and bacteria (MonoFoil USA Website, 2018). It is unclear whether or not these efforts are improving the olfactory experience for transit riders or if these efforts have been implemented system-wide since this is an issue that many riders highlighted. An evaluation of these odor mitigation methods should be conducted and appropriate steps to strategically address this issue should be prioritized and pursued. Additionally, increasing frequency of buses on busy lines could reduce overcrowding and reduce unwanted odors.

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Toward safety and rider assistance: Despite Metro’s multi-million dollar investment in law enforcement over the years, safety is still a prevalent issue that emerged in our conversations with women at the workshops and pop-ups. In 2017, Metro approved a \$797-million “security plan” that shifted law enforcement duties for more than half the public transit system to the Los Angeles and Long Beach police departments with the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department retaining control of the rest of the system. Additionally, Metro allocated an additional \$151 million over five years for security guards to check fares and patrol some system areas, including the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook station and bus hubs in El Monte and Harbor Gateway (Nelson, 2017). Over a five year period starting in 2017, Metro will make \$645.7 million available to contract with these three agencies, which constitutes a significant increase of their previous annual budget by about \$89 million. This “security plan” greatly increased the number of officers patrolling the system from 140–200 to about 314 for each 24 hour period.

The core riders that Pueblo engaged were in agreement that safety on Metro is a pressing issue. However, they had mixed feelings about the sorts of measures funded through Metro’s law enforcement-based security plan. Numerous 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. These concerns are not unfounded, as the Labor/Community Strategy Center filed a complaint against Metro in November 2016 that alleged that Metro had created a discriminatory system of policing that disproportionately impacts black transit riders and their complaint cites that black people are 19 percent of Metro riders but make up nearly 50 percent of Metro citations and nearly 60 percent of LASD arrests each year. Also, they cited that from 2012–2015 black riders received over 50 percent of fare evasion citations while white riders received 9–10 percent of fare evasion citations (Linton, 2017).

Over and over, participants in the workshops and pop-ups pointed to problems that could be solved by a deeper investment in a non-law enforcement staff presence on Metro. In addition to making women riders feel safer, greater numbers of staff available for rider assistance would resolve the issues of lack of cleanliness at stops and on buses and trains, people not giving up seats to elderly or disabled individuals, bags on seats or the difficulty of traveling with bags, and difficulty loading TAP card with cash or change. Riders deserve to have someone to ask for information, for a helping hand to strap a wheelchair to a bus seat, someone to help when the bus bumps and a rider loses their balance. Women participants in the study activities emphasized that transit operators are overburdened by the expectation that they assist riders in addition to navigating streets and train systems. Based on the tremendous expertise demonstrated by the populations engaged, 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. Unarmed, trained mediators and intervention teams could patrol trains and buses to de-escalate potential conflicts. These helpers would go a long way toward creating a welcoming environment for riders with diverse travel needs.

Having “Transit Ambassadors” is not a new concept. In fact more and more transit agencies are coming to the understanding that improving safety and riders’ experience requires a different approach beyond law enforcement. For example, in September 2018, BART directors asked BART staff to explore hiring unarmed “ambassadors” to patrol the system. They turned to a local program in San Francisco, Muni Transit Assistance Program (MTAP), to further explore this option.

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Muni staffers are unarmed and trained in conflict resolution and are hired from the community (Rodriguez, 2018). Daisy Avalos, acting manager of the Muni Transit Assistance Program, shared with BART officials approaches to handling bad behavior on transit and highlighted “Respect and de-escalation are key. Instead of approaching the homeless, mentally ill or rowdy passengers from a position of authority, they approach by offering assistance first” (ibid.). Another place that has successfully developed best practices for training “transit ambassadors” is the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), a member-based association that supports public transit by providing their members with the resources, networking, training, events, data, and research to support their success in the industry. The Transit Ambassador program uses a “training of trainers” model and is composed of a series of training modules that address crucial topics and everyday scenarios in transit customer service, which include:

- Essentials of customer service;
- Effective communication;
- Managing customer feedback;
- Managing stress;
- Handling difficult situations;
- Handling dangerous situations; and
- Diversity in transit (CUTA Website, accessed 2019).

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. Increased service would directly address the issues of infrequent service and long wait times, which many women reported as making them feel vulnerable when using Metro. Overcrowding on buses and trains, a major barrier to comfortable travel, would be reduced by increased service, as would the problem of trains and buses not being on schedule.

Toward compassionate solutions: Due to a lack of social services and adequate affordable housing available to meet residents’ needs, homelessness is on the rise in Los Angeles County. In light of these shortages, it is not a surprise that people at pop-ups and workshops spoke about the presence of homeless individuals on transit. The Pueblo team noted in particular that many participants spoke about these individuals with concern for their wellbeing, rather than as a nuisance to be removed from view. The safety needs of women experiencing homelessness often go farther than those of core riders who currently have access to housing. 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.

In Los Angeles, we are currently employing a best practice for responding to the homelessness and mental health crisis. Current programs should be expanded and adequately funded. Metro is aware of the need for a response to this crisis; in 2018 there was a one year allocation of \$1.2 million in funding for outreach workers to circulate on the Metro Red Line and assist riders experiencing homeless (Nelson, 2018), Metro hired the nonprofit People Assisting the Homeless, or PATH, to converse with homeless individuals and assist them in finding permanent housing, provide aid, provide rides to the doctor, find shelters, help secure photo identification, and secure spots in the Department of Health’s Housing for Health programs, all of which can lead to stable housing in the long run. Funding from Measure H, approved in 2017, will pay for an additional 40 social workers who will be stretched thin by splitting their time between the transit system, parks, libraries, and beaches. Even though this is a positive step, 40 additional social workers spread

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across all these public spaces is not nearly enough. Metro’s \$6.1 billion budget should provide ample resources to address this crisis in a meaningful manner. The small investment in assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness stands in stark contrast to the great amount of money Metro budgets for law enforcement. Pueblo suggests that assistance programs be substantially expanded and adequately funded, perhaps by transitioning funds currently going towards law enforcement contracts.

Toward evaluating trends in mobility with an equity lens: Transit agencies are becoming more and more interested in better understanding “trip-chaining,” defined as a stop on the way to another destination, and engaging with transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft. Since public transit is the primary mode of transportation for the women Pueblo engaged, many of them reported “trip-chaining” (getting on and off the bus) to run errands throughout their day. This was brought up in great detail particularly at the workshop with immigrant and undocumented women. They shared that “trip-chaining” is particularly costly and an economic burden to them as they often pay their fare using cash or coins and do not use TAP cards, so they do not receive the benefit of a free transfer. Additionally, due to the cumulative temporal impacts of delays of bus service and lack of frequency, “trip-chaining” also becomes a time consuming task. Transit agencies are looking more and more to micro-mobility, such as bikeshare and scooters, to improve the “trip-chaining” experience. However, diverting resources towards those type of remedies may not best support the needs of the most vulnerable transit riders because, 1) it requires one to be able-bodied and, 2) since these women primarily use transit as their primary mode of transportation, many of them shared that they are often carrying multiple items or bags on transit. Carrying bags or goods would make micro-mobility options difficult and unsafe.

Lastly, some transit agencies are looking to integrate TNCs (i.e., Lyft and Uber) to make up for gaps in their service by providing these companies with subsidies. However, from an equity lens, rideshare companies are infamous for poor labor practices and inadequately paying their drivers. Also, transportation researchers are finding an increase in traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) due to increased use of TNC’s. Additionally, in terms of safety, steering people away from taking public transit results in less “eyes” on the system, thus making the issue of safety potentially worse. These are just a few equity issues to consider when evaluating new trends in mobility.

Further Engagement

Engage Additional Populations: Pueblo’s focus for the participatory workshops was to engage the most vulnerable transit riders. However, there is one very notable population of most vulnerable transit riders that this project did not address- transgender women. Transgender women, particularly transgender women of color, are at high risk of being victims of hate crimes. Including transgender women in the “Understanding How Women Travel” research would support Metro’s Equity Platform Framework by inviting a diverse range of voices and **“proactively reach[ing] out to those who have remained on the margins of decision-making in the past”** (2017-0912 - Metro, Equity Platform Framework).

Additionally, women transit operators should also be engaged. These workers have difficult jobs that expose them to considerable emotional stress, at the same time that they are tasked with delivering passengers to their destinations in a safe and timely manner. In order to improve reliability and advance the actions suggested above, drivers should be asked what causes delays in

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schedules and what changes they would prioritize. Pueblo strongly recommends meaningful engagement with these two populations in order to better understand their needs and how to best improve transit services across Los Angeles County.

Partner with Community-Based Organizations: The three organizations that hosted participatory workshops provided invaluable help in turning out women to share their knowledge. Pueblo recommends that Metro create an advisory committee of organizations that serve core transit riders to direct further engagement with women riders. An advisory body like this should lead further research and strategize about addressing complex and sensitive issues such as safety alternatives to armed law enforcement. For example, Pueblo is aware of the Freedom Transit Coalition, a circle of community-based organizations that has been meeting with Metro's safety and security leadership. One of these groups is the Youth Justice Coalition, which uses a community peacebuilder model to resolve conflicts in public spaces. This would support Metro's Equity Platform framework goal to **"actively develop and invest in a Community Based Organization (CBO) oriented public engagement program"** (2017-0912 – Metro, Equity Platform Framework). Los Angeles County is rich in deeply rooted organizations that have the community knowledge to contribute robust solutions to safety problems; they should be welcomed into agenda-setting at Metro.

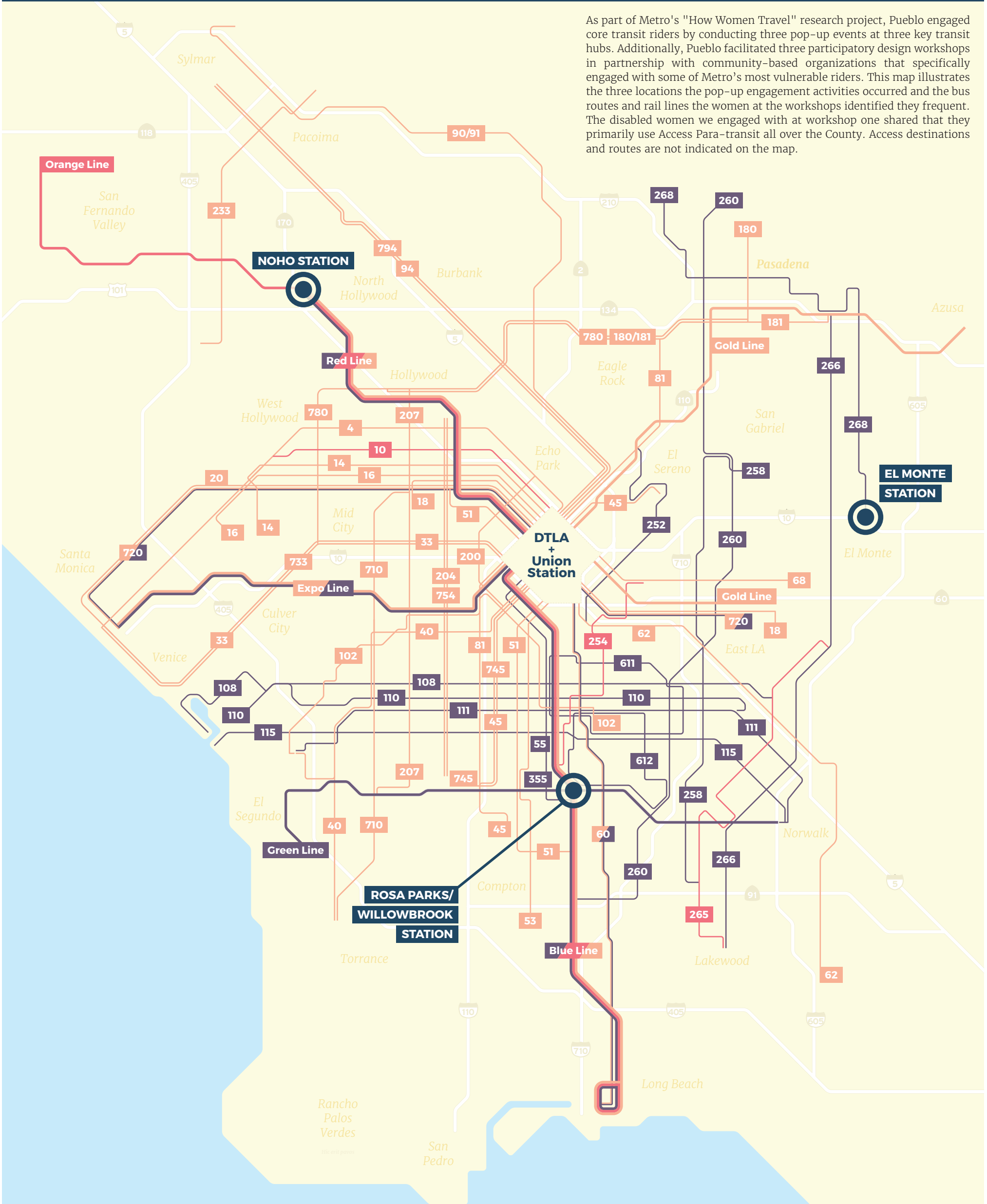
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How Women Travel

TRANSIT LINES WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS USE & POP-UP SITES

As part of Metro's "How Women Travel" research project, Pueblo engaged core transit riders by conducting three pop-up events at three key transit hubs. Additionally, Pueblo facilitated three participatory design workshops in partnership with community-based organizations that specifically engaged with some of Metro's most vulnerable riders. This map illustrates the three locations the pop-up engagement activities occurred and the bus routes and rail lines the women at the workshops identified they frequent. The disabled women we engaged with at workshop one shared that they primarily use Access Para-transit all over the County. Access destinations and routes are not indicated on the map.



Metro Transit Lines & Pop-up Sites

- | Rail/BRT | Bus | |
|----------|-----|--|
| | | Workshop 1: Disabled Women |
| | | Workshop 2: Women Experiencing Homelessness |
| | | Workshop 3: Immigrant and Undocumented Women |
| | | Multiple workshop groups using the same line |
| | | Lines running on the same street |
| | | Pop-up Site |





MEMORANDUM

Date: December 17, 2018

To: Chelsea Richer, Emily Finkel, and Cheryl Croshere | Fehr and Peers

From: Adonia Lugo and Monique G. López

Subject: *How Women Travel- Participant Observation Themes and Additional Observations, Analysis, and Recommendations*

This document presents additional analysis of the observations, sets the framework for a secondary code for recommendations, and organizes themes for further study based on the participant observation dataset with a synthesis of Fehr and Peer's coding analysis.

1. METHODOLOGY

First, Fehr and Peer's "General Patterns, Noteworthy Observations, and Recommendations" memo and the raw data were reviewed in order to determine if there were additional patterns and recommendations that could be added to the overall analysis (section 2). Secondly, a secondary coding system has been developed in order to categorize recommendations in a systematic manner to make them more actionable for Metro (section 3). Lastly, a thematic analysis of the dataset was conducted by browsing the observers' notes to develop themes. In the "themes" section (section 4), there are suggestions for which of the dataset's codes could be grouped under these themes. These themes point to directions for further analysis rather than being findings in themselves.

2. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS, ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Fehr and Peer's memo provides a comprehensive summary and analysis. However, there are a few other key elements worth mentioning in order to have a more comprehensive narrative understanding of the experiences observed. Additionally, below are a few potential recommendations for Metro's consideration.

General Patterns (Observations & Analysis)

As noted in the previous memo, many women are traveling with full hands often carrying bags (regardless of age), with older women pulling carts, and teenage women carrying backpacks. Those with bags and backpacks placed them on their laps or, if there was an empty seat, on the seat next to them. Sometimes women's bags seemed to be used as buffers between themselves and others. This also seemed to allow them to determine who would sit by them by deciding when to remove the bags to make room for fellow passengers.

Codes: Bags, Carts, Seating

In addition to lack of storage capacity, the riders bringing cargo onto buses may have difficulty alighting and boarding. Observers noted operators and transit riders occasionally offering assistance.

Codes: Bags, Carts, and Walkers

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Since women, regardless of age, usually had their hands full, getting up and making their way to the exit while the bus or train is still moving proved difficult because they could not securely hold on to keep their balance. Hence, women tended to make their way towards the exit when there is less movement.

Codes: Bags, Carts, Alighting

When boarding, most of the time, women seek an aisle seat. This may serve as a means to control who may sit by them and provide easy access to move to another part of the bus or off the bus if need be. There are several notable occasions when women would intentionally leave items on seats as folks were passing by or move items to make room for someone else to sit (which usually included other women).

Codes: Boarding, Seating

One notable observation on the Red Line, that may also relate to other bus lines, is that more women seem to be consulting the map; however, they seem uncomfortable doing so as they have to put their bodies near the passenger sitting near the aisle seat in order to look at the map located above the window. They usually curved their bodies trying to create distance but thrusting their head forward to see. A couple of men observed looking at the map and place their bodies right next to the sitting passenger to get a good view of the map (nearby women passengers look visibly disturbed by this).

Codes: Safety, Information, Interaction, Personal Security, Proximity, Seating

While most people riding transit adapt to the shifting landscape of other riders during a trip, they may not welcome further social contact. While participant observers did witness and experience unpleasant interactions, there were also instances of positive interactions on buses and trains. Most riders are polite to each other and show willingness to accommodate the presence of others.

Codes: Interactions

Recommendations

Having hooks behind seats or on the side of seats (in the aisles where it safely permitted) could provide for a better experience for women by providing an opportunity to be hands free and have their laps free of items.

Codes: Bags, Carts, Seating

When possible, having operators approach stations more slowly until making a complete stop (both on busses and trains), can help women be able to prepare to exit more seamlessly.

Codes: Bags, Carts, Standing, Alighting

Move Metro maps on train to back of seats, near doors, or in locations where it can be read without requiring people to place their bodies in an uncomfortable and vulnerable position in order to view the map.

Codes: Safety, Information, Interaction, Personal Security, Proximity, Seating

Minimize police presence in train stations and replace with unarmed Metro customer service agents.

Codes: Police, Information, Metro Staff, Personal Security, Mood, Safety

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Employ a second person to assist with boarding and alighting so that this is not on the operator's shoulders or left to transit riders. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.

Codes: Bags, Carts, and Walkers

Make hand sanitizer widely available in stations and on buses

Codes: Cleanliness

Offer public health information and care such as flu shots at transit hubs

Codes: Cleanliness

Employ a second person to provide system information. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.

Codes: Farebox

Undertake further research on how to foster positive multiracial interactions on transit.

Codes: Interactions

Employ a second person to provide system information. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.

Codes: Interactions

Using a humorous approach, create a soundtrack that Operators can play over loudspeakers when loud music is heard as a way to remind riders to keep their music to themselves. Over time, this soundtrack will become familiar to riders and part of Metro culture.

Codes: Music and Noise

3. SECONDARY CODE: SPATIAL, CUSTOMER SERVICE, POLICY

In addition to the primary code developed by Fehr and Peers (i.e., bags, cars, seniors, etc.), Pueblo has developed a secondary code system in order to organize recommendations into three major areas in which Metro has the ability to influence; spatial, policy, and customer service. This can help Metro easily navigate through the recommendations and be able to quickly determine what departments may need to be involved and what type of actions may need to be taken.

“Spatial” refers to elements in the built environment or physical elements on buses and/or trains that are suggested for alterations. “Policy” refers to elements that may be included in Metro’s Customer Code of Conduct, changes in human resources policies, or requirements for staff conduct or staff trainings. “Customer Service” refers to staff conduct, interactions with riders, or elements that improve riders’ experience. Of course not all recommendations fit neatly into one category and there is often overlap. *See Appendix A for a table of recommendations with the secondary code applied.*

4. THEMES FOR FURTHER STUDY

These themes, along with the observations analysis, will inform the Pueblo literature review and participatory design workshops.

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Operators

An area certainly deserving further study is the experience and knowledge of transit operators. Although a couple hundred hours of observation has been made on public transit by Fehr and Peers and Pueblo staff, bus operators and in the field Metro staff (i.e., janitors on platforms) have countless hours of observation. They often provide assistance and engage in friendly interaction with familiar riders. Conversely, they are also put in the position of enforcer, thus putting them in potential “conflict” situations with passengers, which can make the experience uncomfortable or dangerous for both the drivers and passengers.

Codes: Operators & Metro Staff

Telepresence

Many transit users engage in communication with people who are not physically present in the transit space. What are the implications of this social activity? Does it minimize interaction with those physically present, while maintaining social connection? Does it indicate that these women do not have access to a more private location in which to conduct phone calls?

Codes: Phone

Adaptation

During the same transit trip, there may be multiple configurations of riders within the bus or train. Riders often shift their position when additional riders board or when seats become available, or to avoid perceived dangers such as police or erratically behaving riders. When observing train users, notetakers often pointed to positioning as a tactic to create more privacy. These responses seem to denote both pro-social impulses (creating space for others) and efforts to limit unwanted social interaction. Do women sitting in window seats prefer to have seatmates get up when they need to get off the bus, rather than having to slide past them?

Codes: Standing, Seating, Interaction, Waiting, Police, Sexual Harassment, Platform

Racialized Space

There is a need for a special, separate focus on the topic of racialized space, rather than lumping it together with other social interaction topics. Since the majority of transit users in Los Angeles are people of color, observers often noted the race of users and when an individual rider seemed out of place. This racialized character of transit spaces should be viewed as an asset for Metro, but instead it has been part of L.A.’s culture to denigrate transit spaces, in part because of this diversity. What is a more positive approach that celebrates this racialized character of transit spaces, keeping it intact rather than erasing it?

Codes: Demographics

Special Needs

Many riders travel with a cart, rolling suitcase, wheelchair, stroller, or multiple bags that take up space. These riders often needed assistance, whether other riders or the transit operator were able to offer it or not. Mothers traveling with strollers would seem rushed. What could Metro do to accommodate these needs rather than putting riders in the position of feeling like they are inconveniencing others?

Codes: Bags, Strollers, Children, Wheelchair, Cart, Walker, Seniors

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Solo Activity

This theme refers to rider activity that indicates their awareness of their surroundings despite not being engaged in social interaction with others in the same transit space. Metro has an opportunity to engage these riders, as the past existence of Transit TV indicates, but forcing interaction may not improve the transit experience for some riders. How do we differentiate between riders who would not mind being engaged and riders who prefer to be left alone?

Codes: *Waiting, Music, Standing, Headphones*

Living on Metro

For some riders, the time spent in transit spaces may be of such a long duration that they must engage in regular living activity while onboard. This has become more and more visible as affordability in Los Angeles has decreased. Should these riders be removed from Metro or accommodated as city residents in need?

Codes: *Sleeping, Eating, Houseless, Smells*

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Appendix A

Secondary Code and Themes

PRIMARY CODE	SECONDARY CODE			THEME
	SPATIAL	CUSTOMER SERVICE	POLICY	
Bags, Carts, and Walkers				Special Needs
Develop space for bags, carts, and walkers at the front of the bus. When the bus isn't crowded, reserved bench might offer an opportunity to serve as a rack of some sort (folded up).	X			
<i>Pueblo Addition: Having hooks behind seats or on the side of seats (in the aisles where it safely permitted) could provide for a better experience for women by providing an opportunity to be hands free and have their laps free of items.</i>	X			
<i>Pueblo Addition: Employ a second person to assist with boarding and alighting so that this is not on the operator's shoulders or left to transit riders. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.</i>		X		
Boarding and Alighting				Adaptation
Empower bus operators to wait for some riders to sit before resuming their routes. Need a clear protocol.		X	X	
Avoid overcrowding so that seated passengers can reliably reach an exit without having to stand and wait prior to the bus or train stopping.		X		
Provide more continuous railings down the aisle.	X			
Provide more guidance about the use of reserved seating up front, so that the most easily accessible seats are likely to be available when needed.		X		
Create space for bags, carts, and strollers near the front door, so those traveling with such items can deposit them and more easily make their way to a seat safely (and to an exit when alighting).	X			
Empower bus operators to intervene when riders try to board while someone is alighting through the front door.		X		
Add stop buttons on both window and aisle seats.	X			
<i>Pueblo Addition: When possible, having operators approach stations more slowly until making a complete stop (both on busses and trains), can help women be able to prepare to exit more seamlessly.</i>		X		
Bus Stops, Train Stations, and Platforms				Adaptation
Ensure that all bus stops are clean and well-maintained, with adequate lighting, seating, shade, safe and	X	X		

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comfortable pedestrian access, trash cans, and information about routing.				
Ensure that train stations and platforms are clean and well-maintained, with adequate lighting, seating, shade, safe and comfortable pedestrian access, trash cans, and information about routing and schedules.	X	X		
Ensure that elevators and escalators are always working.	X			
Provide real-time information about arrival times.	X			
Ensure that trees, poles, and other objects don't obstruct waiting bus riders' views of oncoming traffic. Attending to such sight lines will also ensure that waiting riders are visible to bus operators.	X			
Ensure that lighting is continuous between train stations and nearby bus stops that serve as transfer points.	X			
Ensure that speakers and announcements work properly so that information about delays or stops can be heard by all.		X		
Ensure that Local and Rapid service along the same route shares the same stops.		X		
Ensure that stops serving opposite directions of a route have equivalent amenities.	X			
CCTV				
Discontinue the use of these real-time feedback screens.	X			
Explore options for providing real-time feedback of back-of-bus activities to bus operator (or remote security?)	X			
Children and Strollers				Special Needs
Provide more guidance about the use of reserved seating up front, so that the most easily accessible seats are likely to be available when needed. (Children should be included in the categories called out for reserved seating.)		X		
Create space for bags, carts, and strollers near the front door, so those traveling with such items can deposit them and more easily make their way to a seat safely (and to an exit when alighting).	X			
Farebox				Operator
Provide secondary TAP surface on left side of front door to facilitate more efficient boarding.	X			
Improve screen and information provided by farebox.	X			
Provide extra poles and support at front of the bus, for those who need to brace themselves while they consult the bus operator or pay their fare.	X			
Empower bus operators with clear protocols about how to handle riders who can't pay their fare. <i>(It is Pueblo's recommendation that policy be changed to not require Operators to not have to serve as a "hard" enforcer of</i>		X	X	

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<i>fairbox payment in order to remove any potential conflict).</i>				
Advertise the ability to load TAP stored value on the bus and provide instructions.		X		
<i>Pueblo Addition: Employ a second person to provide system information. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.</i>		X		
Interaction				Adaptation; Racialized Space
Avoid overcrowding so that individuals feel comfortable in their own personal space.	X	X		
<i>Pueblo Addition: Undertake further research on how to foster positive multiracial interactions on transit.</i>		X	X	
<i>Pueblo Addition: Employ a second person to provide system information. Alternatively, create a certification that empowers riders as trained helpers.</i>		X		
Music and Noise				Solo Activity
Empower bus operators to censure riders playing music loudly, but there should be room for some nuance here. <i>(It is Pueblo’s recommendation that policy be changed to not require Operators to not have to serve as a “hard” enforcer of noise abatement in order to remove any potential conflict).</i>		X		
<i>Pueblo Addition: Using a humorous approach, create a soundtrack that Operators can play over loudspeakers when loud music is heard as a way to remind riders to keep their music to themselves. Over time, this soundtrack will become familiar to riders and part of Metro culture.</i>		X		
Operators and Metro Staff				Operator
Empower bus operators to use their mic systems and to communicate relevant information to riders.	X	X		
Ensure that protocols are in place to accommodate bathroom breaks, other breaks, and stoppage to catch up to a schedule.			X	
Empower bus operators to provide superior customer service, making every effort to answer riders’ questions and/or direct them to resources in other languages when necessary. <i>Pueblo Comment: Further research is needed-Ask operators directly about what they do in terms of customer service and what impedes good customer service in order to determine what specifically could be improved and how the operators could be empowered to provide superior customer service. Build upon what is currently working.</i>		X	X	
Offer cognitive bias training to bus operators and Metro staff to ensure that they are not unwittingly discriminating against certain riders.		X	X	

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Encourage bus operators to greet riders when boarding and respond to those who thank them while alighting.		X	X	
Empower bus operators to enforce prohibitions on eating and drinking and paying fare. When someone boards with food or drink in hand, it should be the operator's responsibility to intervene then and there. <i>(It is Pueblo's recommendation that policy be changed to not require Operators to not have to serve as a "hard" enforcer of prohibition of food and drink in order to remove any potential conflict. Using customer service advertisements and a PSA campaign that does not criminalize people is preferred.)</i>		X	X	
<i>Pueblo Addition: Minimize police presence in train stations and replace with unarmed Metro customer service agents.</i>		X		
Phones				Telepresence
Create signage and make announcements that remind people to pay attention to their surroundings, yield seats to seniors, those with disabilities, and others.	X	X		
Police				Adaptation
Minimize police presence in train stations.		X	X	
Establish protocols so that arrestees are not brought onto train cars.		X	X	
Seating				Adaptation
Consider offering women's only seating at the front of buses and women's only cars on trains.	X		X	
Explore alternative bus and train designs that provide more single seat options.	X			
Seniors				Special Needs
Provide more guidance about the use of reserved seating up front, so that the most easily accessible seats are likely to be available when needed. (Children should be included in the categories called out for reserved seating.)	X			
Create space for bags, carts, and strollers near the front door, so those traveling with such items can deposit them and more easily make their way to a seat safely (and to an exit when alighting).	X			
Develop space for bags, carts, and walkers at the front of the bus. When the bus isn't crowded, reserved bench might offer an opportunity to serve as a rack of some sort (folded up).	X			
Add stop buttons on both window and aisle seats.	X			
Sexual Harassment				Adaptation
Provide information about what constitutes sexual harassment (including staring) and how to report it. Could	X	X		

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be posted on the backs of seats, for example.				
Standing				Solo Activity
Consider adding vertical poles in train cars to provide more options for those standing.	X			
Wheelchairs				Special Needs
Ensure that bus operators are well-trained in accommodating wheelchairs of all types and are adept at assisting them board and alight.		X		
Ensure that sidewalks leading to and from bus stops are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs of all types.	X			
Install curb cuts at all intersections near bus stops and ramps at stations. Keep elevators running in good order.	X			
Cleanliness				
<i>Pueblo Addition: Make hand sanitizer widely available in stations and on buses.</i>		X		
<i>Pueblo Addition: Offer public health information and care such as flu shots at transit hubs.</i>		X		
Other				
<i>Pueblo Addition: Move Metro maps on train to back of seats, near doors, or in locations where it can be read without requiring people to place their bodies in an uncomfortable and vulnerable position in order to view the map.</i>	X	X		