

**Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Office of the Inspector General**

**Review of Transit Station and Park & Ride
Maintenance and Parking Utilization**

We found that most transit stations and park & rides were clean, safe, and user friendly; and the majority of park & rides were being well utilized. However, at several stations and park & rides, we found maintenance matters that needed to be resolved. We also found that some park & rides were underutilized.

Report No. 12-AUD-04

February 3, 2012





Metro

**Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

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DATE: February 3, 2012

TO: Arthur Leahy
Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Jack Shigetomi
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SUBJECT: Final Report: Review of Transit Station and Park & Ride Maintenance and
Parking Utilization (Report No. 12-AUD-04)

The subject draft report is enclosed for your review and response.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performed a review of the maintenance of the transit stations and adjacent Metro park & rides (parking lots) and the utilization of these park & rides. The review was performed to determine if Metro transit stations and park & rides were being adequately maintained and if the park & rides were being sufficiently utilized. The OIG review team visited the 93 Metro transit stations¹ and the 41 adjacent parking lots on various workdays.

We found most stations and park & rides were clean, safe, and user friendly; and the majority of park & rides were being used at half to full capacity. We also determined the transit stations were generally well maintained. However, improvements are needed at some stations and park & rides.

- Out of 93 transit stations, 10 (10.8 percent) stations had 11 maintenance issues. This shows that the Operations Department's internal controls over maintenance are working in most instances.
- Of the 41 park & rides, 14 (34.1 percent) had 20 maintenance deficiencies that resulted in the parking lots looking unattractive, being unsanitary, and potentially causing confusion to patrons.

Park & ride utilization was generally consistent with parking availability at most of the 41 park & rides. However, 11 (26.8 percent) of the park & rides had low usage rates. Metro should do an in-depth assessment of their parking needs and develop strategies for the underutilized park & rides.

Metro management provided a corrective action plan that is responsive to the recommendations in the report. The full text of management's response is included in this report.

¹ These stations were on the Red, Purple, Blue, Green, Gold, Orange, and Silver Lines.

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performed a review of the maintenance of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) transit stations and adjacent Metro park & rides (parking lots) and the utilization of these parking lots. Metro operates subways, light rails, and buses that provide transportation to the visitors and citizens of Los Angeles and surrounding communities. Ensuring the transit stations and park & rides are well maintained and that the park & rides are utilized is critical to operating a well-run transit system. Metro has 93 transit stations, which have 41 adjacent park & rides available to Metro patrons.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF REVIEW

The objectives of this review were to evaluate maintenance of Metro transit stations and park & rides and utilization of park & rides. The initial purpose of our review was to create a photo catalog of the signage, parking conditions, and general layout of the transit stations and park & rides for use by the Metro Transit Court. At the suggestion of the Chief Executive Officer and when several matters came to our attention, we expanded the review to include maintenance and utilization of the stations and parking lots. On August 30, 2011, the OIG presented preliminary results of the review to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Metro executives; and, in September 2011, binders and CDs of our photo catalog of transit stations and park & rides were provided to the Chief Ethics Officer for distribution to Transit Court Hearing Officers and other Metro officials. This photo catalog was also available for viewing in the Board Conference Room on October 27, 2011. In addition, Transit Court hearing officers received training on the use of the photo catalog binders. On August 5, 2011, we informed the Metro and Caltrans management of an issue at the Vermont Station park & ride. (See page 6 for a further discussion.)

Between July 6 and September 19, 2011, the OIG review team visited the 93 Metro transit stations and the 41 adjacent parking lots on various days of the week (Monday through Friday) between 8:37 a.m. and 3:13 p.m. (See Appendix A for a full listing of the transit stations and park & rides we reviewed.) We chose days and times for our visits with the intention of capturing typical workday parking usage. We made observations on two subway lines, three light rail lines, and two bus lines.

We took pictures and recorded our observations about the conditions of the transit stations and adjacent park & rides. We also conducted interviews with Metro Operations and Countywide Planning & Development staff and reviewed parking utilization documentation, crime statistics, and Metro Planning and Programming and Operations Committee reports.

Because this was a review and not an audit, we did not perform the review in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

BACKGROUND

Transit Stations: Metro has two heavy rail subway lines (Red and Purple), three light rail lines (Gold, Blue, and Green), and two rapid transit bus lines (Orange and Silver). For these seven transit lines, Metro has 93 transit stations where regular stops are made to load and unload passengers. These stations are located throughout Los Angeles County and service many areas, such as the San Fernando Valley, Pasadena, Long Beach, and downtown Los Angeles.

Park & Rides: Metro has 41 park & rides that are adjacent to the transit stations. These 41 lots have over 20,000 parking spaces. The parking lots offer Metro patrons the convenience of parking their cars and transferring to light rail and subway trains, buses, and vanpools. In addition to free parking spaces, riders have the option of paying a monthly parking fee to receive a permit for reserved spaces at 12 lots or pay a daily fee for parking in a garage at a 13th lot. After 11 a.m. these paid/reserved parking spaces are available to all Metro patrons. The park & rides are managed by Metro, Caltrans,² and other private and public entities.

Metro Management Responsibilities: The Operations Department is responsible for maintaining all Metro transit stations and Metro-owned park & rides, performing structural inspections and repairs, performing painting maintenance, and contracting for services, such as landscaping care.

The Metro Countywide Planning & Development Department handles policy, practices, and implementation for Metro, including parking issues. Metro subsidizes funding to other entities that are responsible for creating and maintaining park & rides, such as Caltrans.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

We found that most transit stations and park & rides were clean, safe, and user friendly; and the majority of park & rides were being used at half to full capacity. However, at several stations and park & rides, we found maintenance matters that needed to be resolved. Poor maintenance can result in unsanitary conditions, damage to Metro property, and potentially the loss of customers. We also found that some park & rides were underutilized. Over maintaining park & rides that have low utilization is an inefficient use of resources. However, under maintenance of park & ride lots might cause low utilization. Therefore, optimization of the right level of maintenance is the challenge and objective.

²Caltrans is the state agency responsible for building, maintaining, and operating California's state highway system and certain intercity rail services.

A. Maintenance Matters

Transit stations and adjacent park & rides should receive regular cleanings and inspections to properly ensure Metro rider safety and comfort. We visited all 93 transit stations and 41 park & rides and found 31 maintenance issues at 24 locations (10 stations and 14 park & rides). (See Appendix B for a full listing of the issues by location.) Four departments under Operations are responsible for the maintenance at the Metro transit stations and Metro-owned park & rides.

- Rail Custodial Services (RCS) provides custodial staff to the stations on the Gold, Red, Blue, Green, Purple, and Orange Lines 24-hours a day.
- Rails Facilities Maintenance (RFM) performs all mandated, regulatory, and preventive maintenance and repairs to the transit stations and Metro-owned park & rides, including signage issues.
- Facilities Maintenance Contracts Administration (FMCA) manages numerous service contracts for bus and rail properties and stations, including landscaping and graffiti removal services. They also administer contracts for custodial services for the Silver Line stations.
- Property Maintenance's Paint Group (PMPG) performs paint services at the transit stations and Metro-owned park & rides.

1. Transit Station Maintenance. Of the 31 deficiencies we identified, 11 (35.4 percent) were related to station maintenance and were found at 10 transit stations. We reported these maintenance issues to appropriate Metro staff.

a. Graffiti: Graffiti is unsightly and negatively impacts Metro's image. We found graffiti at five transit stations: Artesia and Slauson (Blue Line); Avalon (Green Line); and Los Angeles Country/USC Medical Center and Manchester (Silver Line). Station walls, signs, and elevators had been defaced by spray paint.



Photograph 1. Graffiti at LA Country/USC Medical Center Station.

As previously mentioned, FMCA manages the contract for graffiti removal. The contractor's 13 member abatement team makes daily visits to each transit station checking for graffiti. The contracted staff are also notified of issues from the "trouble desk" (a Metro hotline for complaints) or from four FMCA supervisors who make weekly inspections of random transit stations. The contracted staff must remove graffiti within 48 hours of it being reported. Graffiti removal that requires paint cover up for the Orange and Silver Lines are handled internally by the PMPG. FMCA officials stated the vandals are relentless. After removing graffiti one day, the vandals may return that night and spray again.

b. Trash: Trash is unsanitary and unsightly and could be a “trip or slip” hazard. We found excessive amounts of trash at three stations. At Southwest Museum Station (Gold Line), the trash was at the entrance of the station, and at Imperial/Wilmington Station (Green Line), debris was on a station building roof that was visible to patrons taking the stairs. Artesia Station (Blue Line) had trash in the landscaping.

The custodial staff on-site is responsible for trash pick-up at all the stations in the non-landscaped areas. Custodial staff work in three shifts. Each shift is required to look for and remove trash from the station. The trash we found at Southwest Museum and Imperial/Wilmington Stations may have been placed there by patrons between cleanings. FMCA manages contracts for landscaping services which includes the removal of trash from landscaped areas. The contracted staff are assigned to the stations and come once a week. A FMCA official suspects the trash in the landscape was placed there between visits.



Photograph 2. Trash at the entrance of the Southwest Museum Station.



Photograph 3. Chipped paint at the Florence Station.

c. Damaged Property: A wall at the Allen Station (Gold Line) had evidence of prior water seepage through the concrete, and the Indiana Station (Gold Line) had a broken gate between the platform and the tracks. The broken gate could be a hazard to riders and employees. At the Florence Station (Blue Line), the painting on a pole near the ticket machines was severely chipped. (In addition to these issues, while riding the Blue Line light rail, we noticed an overgrown palm tree hitting the train between Slauson and Florence. Because of the potential damage to the train, we notified FMCA which contracts with landscapers for Metro. They plan to take corrective action immediately.)

The managers for RFM and PMPG plan to review the water damage at the Allen Station and take appropriate corrective actions. We reported the broken gate to Metro management, and it was repaired. RFM was aware of a system-wide problem with the hinges on the platform gates and developed a new hinge prototype to prevent similar issues in the future. The chipped paint on the pole is the PMPG’s responsibility to fix. The PMPG is made aware of paint issues at the transit stations when complaints are made to the Metro trouble desk or when the Paint Group supervisor makes random visits to the locations.

The chipped paint had not been called in before our review. After we informed a Property Maintenance official about the pole, he generated a work order and plans to have it painted soon.

2. Park & Ride Maintenance. The park & rides adjacent to the transit stations are owned and operated by various entities. According to the Metro's Real Estate Department, Metro owns 20 (48.8 percent) of the 41 park & rides (2 of which are owned jointly with the City of El Segundo and the Los Angeles County); Caltrans manages 15 or 36.6 percent; 3 are privately owned; and the City of Pasadena, Southern California Edison, and the Community Redevelopment Agency/Los Angeles (CRA/LA)³ each manage one. Metro officials stated that the maintenance of park & rides not owned by Metro is the responsibility of the owners. We found 20 maintenance issues at 14 park & rides (4 Metro lots and 10 lots owned by other agencies).

a. Signage: Proper signage should be easily visible, accurate, and in good condition (see Appendix C for pictures of various signage at park & rides). We found four park & rides with missing, confusing, or damaged signage.



Photograph 4. Damaged sign at the Reseda Station park & ride.

- A disabled person parking sign was leaning and possibly ready to fall at the Orange Line's Reseda Station park & ride owned by Metro. At the same location, another disabled person parking sign was missing. A stub in the ground where the sign once stood was still there. RFM handles signage issues in the Metro-owned park & rides. RCS has 10 general service supervisors who conduct random inspections of the transit stations and Metro-owned park & rides and inform RFM of issues. The issues we identified may have occurred between supervisory visits or may have been overlooked. We brought these issues to a RFM official's attention. He has since reported that the leaning sign has been fixed and that he plans to correct the issue of the missing sign.

- At the Mission Station park & ride (Gold Line), which is maintained by the City of South Pasadena, we found there was no sign at the entrance of the parking garage to identify it as Metro parking. The Metro park & ride signage was not visible to patrons until after going underground into the parking garage.

- At the Lake Station park & ride (Gold Line), although a sign was on a side street, there was no Metro sign on Lake Avenue, the major street, to direct patrons to the

³ CRA/LA is a public agency regulated by the State of California to revitalize communities through projects, such as developing commercial sites and building affordable housing within the city of Los Angeles.

parking lot. This privately owned park & ride is located at the back of a church parking lot. The lack of signage could it difficult for patrons to find the parking lot.

- At the Vermont Station park & ride on the Green Line, which is owned by Caltrans, outdated signage was not removed. Although the actual Metro lot is across the street, the signage to the park & ride on Vermont Avenue pointed in the wrong direction to a former park & ride lot. During a visit, OIG staff followed the erroneous signage that led them to the former park & ride lot (sold in 2005 by Caltrans to a private party). The former parking lot was fenced and when the OIG staff approached the area, they were accosted, sworn at, threatened with bodily harm, and chased down the street by several individuals loitering in the lot. Disastrous consequences could occur if this happened to a Metro patron. We reported this issue to Metro management and the Caltrans Park & Ride Coordinator on August 5, 2011. We verified on October 6, 2011 that the out of date signage had been removed.

b. Paint: Properly painted parking stalls and curbs help prevent parking violations and patron confusion about where they can legally park. We found four park & rides with faded or missing paint.



Photograph 5. Faded paint on a curb at the North Hollywood Station park & ride.

- At the Red Line's North Hollywood Station park & ride which is owned by Metro, the paint on one curb was severely faded, and it was difficult to distinguish whether the curb was red (no parking), white (unloading), or gray (parking allowed). As previously discussed, PMPG is made aware of paint issues through the trouble desk or random supervisory inspections. This issue we identified had not been reported to the PMPG. However, after we brought it to their attention, they generated a work order and plan to correct the problem.

- Paint for parking stalls at Slauson and Manchester Stations park & rides on the Silver Line (both owned by Caltrans) was severely faded. This included faded blue paint for handicap parking stalls.

- At the Green Line's Norwalk Station park & ride (owned by Caltrans), a curb was partially painted red and the rest was not painted. Patrons parked along the unpainted section. Signs were posted that said unmarked spots were not parking spots. However, to make it clearer for patrons, the entire curb should be consistent, either all red or no paint. This station also had a red painted curb that was severely faded.

c. Graffiti: The Blue Line's 103rd Street Station park & ride (owned by CRA/LA) had graffiti on the entrance sign, and a parking sign at the privately owned Fillmore Station park & ride (Gold Line) had been spray painted. We also found graffiti on two parking signs at

the Green Line's Vermont Station. Although the Vermont Station park & ride was owned by Caltrans, Metro's FMCA had their graffiti contractors remove the markings after the OIG reported this matter.

d. Trash: The presence of trash in the parking lots is unattractive and should be removed. We found excessive amounts of trash at the Green Line's Norwalk Station and Long Beach Station park & rides (both owned by Caltrans).

Metro custodial staff do not clean park & rides that are not owned by Metro. However, if enough complaints are received and Caltrans does not respond, the custodial staff will do the clean up.



Photograph 6. Trash at the Long Beach Station park & ride.

e. Landscaping: Overgrown shrubbery can make a park & ride look neglected and could attract unwanted pests. We found two park & rides where shrubbery was overgrown.



Photograph 7. Overgrown grass at the 103rd Street Station park & ride.

- The Blue Line's 103rd Street Station park & ride (owned by CRA/LA) had overgrown grass and shrubs surrounding the parking lot.

- In early July, the Gold Line's Lincoln/Cypress Station park & ride (owned by Metro) had overgrown shrubbery that obscured a red painted no-parking curb. A FMCA official acknowledged that the landscaping contractor may have inadvertently overlooked this shrubbery and reported that the shrub was cut in August.

f. Transients: Transients at the park & rides and transit stations could result in panhandling, unsanitary conditions, and safety concerns. We found transients sleeping under a staircase at the Silver Line's Slauson Station park & ride (owned by Caltrans) and in the shrubbery at the Blue Line's 103rd Street Station park & ride (owned by CRA/LA). According to a RCS official, the reporting of transients to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department is everyone's responsibility, including the custodians assigned to the transit stations. Since the transients were in the parking lots, the station-based custodial staff may not have been aware of their presence.

g. Tandem Parking: We found two park & rides that had tandem parking⁴ that were unmanned. One was at the Gold Line's Mission Station park & ride (owned by the City of Pasadena) and the other was at the Green Line's Lakewood Station park & ride (owned by Caltrans). The tandem parking spaces at these lots are not being fully utilized because transit commuters will not park in the front parking spaces because their cars could be blocked from exiting if another car parks in the rear parking spot.

h. Unnecessary Equipment: The Gold Line's Sierra Madre Villa Station park & ride (owned by Metro) had three pay kiosks that were not being used. The parking lot has free and reserved parking spaces. The reserved parking permits are obtained online so the pay kiosks are not needed. These machines should be removed to prevent patrons from getting confused and prevent them from being unnecessarily exposed to vandalism.

3. Metro Initiatives. According to Metro Operations officials, the CEO has emphasized to the staff to ensure the transit stations are clean and well maintained. As a result, several initiatives are being implemented.

Random Monthly Inspections. In September 2011, RCS began an initiative to coordinate a team of Metro employees to randomly inspect transit stations monthly using a checklist of cleanliness standards. They plan to roll the results into a "Rail Stations Cleanliness" report that will go to the Chief Operations Officer who will present it to the Metro Board of Directors. This initiative is in its early developmental stages. It currently does not include inspecting the park & rides. In a discussion with a RCS official, he agreed that reviewing the park & rides would be beneficial.

Transfer of Caltrans Park & Rides to Metro. Because of Caltrans' budget issues and limited ability to maintain their park & rides, the Metro Board of Directors voted and approved on September 22, 2011, to transfer 41 Caltrans park & rides to Metro, including 15 park & rides on the Green and Silver Lines that were part of this review. Because of issues, such as negotiations and amending a consent decree that would allow the transfer of certain park & rides, this transfer is expected to be done in phases over several years.

Task Force and Funding. A new Parking Task Force has been commissioned to make recommendations to improve parking operations. The task force includes a diverse group including planning, legal, transit security, maintenance, and transit citation appeals. In addition, an Operations Department official informed us that they received \$3.2 million in the FY 2012 budget towards fixing the currently owned parking lots as well as the parking lots they will acquire from Caltrans.

⁴ Definition of "tandem parking:" where two motor vehicles park nose-to-end in tandem. The first motor vehicle does not have independent access, and the rear vehicle must move to allow the front vehicle to exit.

B. Park & Rides Utilization Levels

1. Some Parking Lots Were Underutilized. Of the 41 park & rides designated for Metro patrons, we found 11 (26.8 percent) parking lots were completely empty, nearly empty, or a quarter full. (See Appendix D for a table of utilization levels by location.) Of the 41 park & rides, free parking was available at 38 lots. Ten of the 38 park & rides also provided reserved parking. In addition, three other park & rides only had paid or reserved parking. During our visits, we observed the parking usage levels for both the free and paid/reserved spaces. A summary of our results follows:

Table 1. Park & Ride Utilization Levels

<u>Usage Level</u>	<u>Free</u>		<u>Paid/Reserved</u>	
	<u># Park & Rides</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u># Park & Rides</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Full or Relatively Full	24	63.2%	5	38.4%
Half Full	5	13.1%	6	46.2%
Quarter Full or Less	9	23.7%	2	15.4%
Totals	38	100.0%	13	100.0%

Of the 11 park & rides that were a quarter full or less, 6 were on the Green Line, 2 on the Blue Line, 2 on the Silver Line, and 1 on the Gold Line. Countywide Planning & Development's Central Area Team (CAT) performed an in-depth assessment of parking utilization and documented their conclusions in a report (*Parking Utilization & Site Assessment of Stations Along Existing Metro Rail & Orange Lines, Summer 2007 & 2008*). In addition, this department also conducts a study of the parking space usage levels nearly every summer. As part of this study, they determined usage rates for the park & rides for 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2011. Their information also showed a historical trend of low usage for some of the same park & rides we identified as having low utilization.

- a. Green Line. Six of 14 parking lots along the Green Line had low usage levels. All six are owned by Caltrans except for the Redondo Beach Station park & ride which is owned by Southern California Edison.
 - The Avalon Station park & ride, which has 158 free parking spaces, only had 5 cars parked in it on a Monday at 10:30 a.m. This is a usage rate of only 3.1 percent. The CAT study also showed historically low usage at this lot: 4 percent in 2007, 8 percent in 2008, 1 percent in 2010, and 7 percent in 2011.
 - The Vermont Station park & ride which has 155 free spaces only had 2 cars parked in it on a Monday at 10:00 a.m. This lot also showed a low usage trend: 4 percent in 2007, 5 percent in 2008, 4 percent in 2010, and 1 percent in 2011.

- The Long Beach Station park & ride has two parking lots (an East Plaza and a West Plaza) with 650 free spaces. On a Monday at 11:45 a.m., one lot was about half full while the other lot was completely empty.
 - At the Hawthorne Station park & ride, 623 free spaces were only about a quarter full on a Monday at 9:30 a.m. The CAT study also showed low usage rates, from a low of 14 percent in 2007 to a high of only 19 percent in 2011.
 - On a Wednesday at 10:40 a.m. only about 25 percent of the El Segundo Station park & ride's 90 free spaces were filled.
 - The Redondo Beach Station park & ride has a North lot and South lot with 403 free spaces. On a Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. the North lot was about half full, but the South lot was completely empty.
- b. Blue Line. Of the seven park & rides along the Blue Line, one free lot and one paid lot had extremely low usage rates.
- The CRA/LA owned 103rd Street Station park & ride which had 62 free spaces was empty on a Thursday at 11:13 a.m.
 - While the Del Amo Station park & ride's 351 free spaces were completely full at 9:55 a.m. on a Thursday, its 15 reserved spaces were only a quarter full on the day of our review. Patrons were circling the lot searching for free spaces while the reserved spaces sat empty. This park & ride is owned by Metro.
- c. Silver Line. The six park & rides along the Silver Line are all owned by Caltrans. Two of the six had low usage rates.
- Rosecrans' parking lot had 342 free spaces, but, on a Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., only about 25 percent of the spaces were being used. The CAT study showed that in 2008 Rosecrans had an 8 percent usage rate, and in 2011 it decreased to 5 percent.
 - The 160 free spaces at the Slauson Station park & ride were only about a quarter full on a Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. According to the CAT study, in 2008, the usage rate was 3 percent, and in 2011 it was only 8 percent.
- d. Gold Line. The Gold Line has nine park & rides. The Del Mar Station parking garage (privately owned) which has 290 paid spaces was only about 25 percent full on a Monday at 12:10 p.m.

2. Possible Reasons for Low Utilization. Discussed below are several possible reasons why park & rides have low utilization levels:

a. Security and Maintenance. Six of the parking lots we found with low usage were on the Green Line and are managed by Caltrans. According to a CAT official, Caltrans is having budget constraints and, as a result, curtailed maintenance and security of their parking lots. This resulted in unattractive lots and increased criminal activity. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department reported that between January 2007 and September 2011, there were 745 vehicle crimes (such as car thefts and break-ins) at the park & rides on the Green Line. Under these conditions, patrons may feel less safe parking their cars at these park & rides.

b. Lack of Activity. The Blue Line's 103rd Street Station park & ride had no cars parked in it the day of our review. OIG staff observed that the parking lot was neglected (overgrown shrubbery, homeless people living there, and graffiti). Because of the lack of activity, Metro patrons may have the perception the park & ride is not in use or it is unsafe to park their vehicle.

c. Placement of Parking Lots. Utilization of park & rides could be impacted if parking lots are too close to one another. According to a CAT official, the placement of park & rides should be well thought out and planned. For example, the Gold Line's Del Mar Station parking lot which has 290 paid parking spaces (\$2 per day) is only approximately 5 miles from the Sierra Madre Villa Station park & ride which has 950 free spaces. Also, fewer riders will use park & rides and adjacent stations if there are no major employers along the transit line.

d. Middle of the Line. According to a CAT official, park & rides at the beginning and the end of a line are the most utilized. The parking lots in between normally have less patrons. For example, the Green Line's two major park & rides are at the Norwalk Station (far east) and the Aviation/LAX Station (far west). These two locations are historically used to maximum capacity while the parking lots between them have much lower usage levels.

3. Possible Options to Improve Utilization Levels. We identified several options available to Metro to increase the utilization levels of park & rides that experience low usage. Metro should consider these options in an in-depth study to determine which options are the most suitable considering the current situation and future plans.

a. Joint Use: Sharing parking with local businesses would increase parking lot usage and help deter crime. Currently the 103rd Street Station park & ride is not being used by Metro patrons, but it could have greater usage in the future. A CAT official stated that a new theater is expected to open in Watts, and its patrons will need parking. There is discussion that the 103rd Street parking lot could be used jointly with the theater. This development of business could also increase ridership on Metro's transit system.

- b. Lease Spaces: Metro could lease some of the parking spaces to nearby businesses or event planners which would increase revenue for Metro while also increasing the utilization of its parking lots.
- c. Increase Activity. In addition to security patrols, park & ride crimes are deterred when more people are actively going in and out of the parking lots. Encouraging the use of vendors at these lots would help reduce crime by increasing the level of activity onsite. A CAT official gave an example of a Caltrans owned park & ride that allowed RVs to park on the park & ride property. This arrangement was mutually beneficial because it increased the number of people keeping watch over the parking lot.
- d. Advertisement and Signage: The feasibility of promoting underutilized park & rides through better signage and/or increased advertisement should be explored. Promoting nearby underutilized park & rides at heavily used lots would encourage riders to consider alternative parking sites. For example, the Aviation/LAX Station parking lot was filled to capacity on the day of our review. The Hawthorne Station park & ride which is about 1.7 miles away was only about a quarter full. Signs could be placed at the Aviation/LAX location informing patrons that the Hawthorne parking lot is an alternative and provide directions.
- e. Increase Security and Improved Maintenance. Continuing to maintain safe and clean parking areas could increase utilization at some park & rides.
- f. Use Portion of Underutilized Parking Lots. Maintenance costs⁵ could be minimized by only using a portion of an underutilized parking lot and fencing off the remainder of the lot until parking demand increases.

CONCLUSION

We found most stations and park & rides were clean, safe, and user friendly; and the majority of park & rides were being used at half to full capacity. We also determined the transit stations were generally well maintained. However, improvement needed to be made on maintenance at some stations and park & ride lots.

- Out of 93 transit stations, 10 (10.8 percent) stations had 11 maintenance issues. This shows that the Operations Department's internal controls over maintenance are working in most instances.
- Of the 41 park & rides, 14 (34.1 percent) had 20 maintenance deficiencies that resulted in the parking lots looking unattractive, being unsanitary, and potentially causing confusion to patrons.

⁵ Lighting, landscaping, paving, painting, etc.

Park & ride utilization was generally consistent with parking availability at the 41 park & rides. However 11 (26.8 percent) of the park & rides had low usage rates. The low usage rates may have been a result of security and maintenance issues, lack of activity, poor placement, or station location. We are not suggesting that low utilization parking lots are entirely bad because these lots have adequate capacity to accommodate future growth. However, over maintaining (lighting, trash removal, painting, paving, and graffiti removal, etc.) underutilized park & rides is an inefficient use of resources. Metro should do an in-depth assessment of their parking needs, and develop strategies for reducing maintenance costs of the underutilized park & rides.

After the transfer of Caltrans park & rides is complete, Metro will be responsible for 35 (85.3 percent) of the 41 park & rides adjacent to the transit stations. This transfer could take several years to complete. Because Metro patrons consider the park & rides to be part of Metro regardless of who owns the lot, Metro should take steps now to ensure Metro and non-Metro owned park & rides are properly maintained. Metro should also include the review of these park & rides in the on-going program to conduct monthly random station inspections. Additionally, Metro Parking Task Force should seek ways to maintain and improve park & rides consistent with management's philosophy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that:

1. The Chief Operations Officer should:
 - a. Instruct custodial staff and RCS supervisors to be alert for transients in the parking lots and report them to the Sheriff's Department.
 - b. Include non-Metro owned park & rides adjacent to transit stations as part of the random inspections that will be conducted by RCS.
 - c. Reconfigure tandem parking spaces at the Lakewood Station park & ride once ownership is transferred from Caltrans to Metro. One possibility is to convert the front portion of the tandem parking spaces into areas where motorcycles and bicycles could park.
 - d. Request the non-Metro park & ride owners to address the issues we found at their park & rides.
 - e. Work with appropriate Metro departments to arrange for removing or covering to protect the pay kiosks from the Sierra Madre Villa Station park & ride garage.

- f. Continue to inspect and maintain transit station areas to ensure that they meet standards that Metro has established.
2. The Countywide Planning and Development Executive Director should work with other Metro departments and the Parking Task Force to assess parking needs and develop strategies for increasing usage of underutilized park & rides and minimizing maintenance costs.

METRO MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

On January 23, 2012, and December 1, 2011, Metro management provided a response to the OIG draft report. Management generally agreed with the recommendations and provided a corrective action plan.

In response to recommendation 1, the corrective action plan stated that Rail Facilities:

- Staff will continue their current practice of inspecting non-Metro owned park & ride lots.
- Agrees with the recommendation to consider converting tandem parking spaces to motorcycle and bicycle at the Lakewood park & ride once Metro takes ownership.
- Will report deficiencies found at non-Metro owned park & ride lots to responsible third parties.
- Staff and supervision will remain alert and continue to report to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) any transients discovered in Metro station parking lots.
- Will inform the Revenue Collection Department to remove or cover pay kiosks at the Sierra Madre Villa Station park & ride.
- Will continue to inspect and maintain transit station areas to ensure established Metro standards are met. (See Attachment E-1 for full text of management comments.)

In response to recommendation 2, Metro management stated that the Executive Officer, Countywide Planning and Development will work with other Metro departments and the Parking Task Force to assess parking needs and develop strategies for increasing usage of under-utilized park & rides and minimizing maintenance costs. The Executive Officer will initiate meetings with other departments working, on system wide parking issues during the 1st quarter of 2012. (See Attachment E-2 for full text of management comments.)

EVALUATION OF METRO MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

Metro management's proposed corrective action plan is responsive to the findings and recommendations in the report. Although the responses to the recommendations are acceptable, staff must follow up on the recommendations that are still open until all corrective actions are completed. This requirement is set forth in Management Audit Services Audit Report Follow-up & Resolution Policy (MAS 1).

Metro Transit Stations and Park & Rides

This appendix lists the 93 transit stations and 41 park & rides we visited during our review. (The park & rides are underlined.)

Line	Station Name	Line	Station Name
1 Blue	<u>103rd St</u>	48 Green	<u>Long Beach</u>
2 Blue	1 st Street	49 Green	Mariposa
3 Blue	5 th Street	50 Green	<u>Norwalk</u>
4 Blue	Anaheim	51 Green	<u>Redondo Beach</u>
5 Blue	<u>Artesia</u>	52 Green	<u>Vermont</u>
6 Blue	Compton	53 Green//Blue	<u>Imperial/Wilmington</u>
7 Blue	<u>Del Amo</u>	54 Green/Silver	<u>Harbor Freeway</u>
8 Blue	Firestone	55 Orange	<u>Balboa</u>
9 Blue	<u>Florence</u>	56 Orange	<u>Canoga</u>
10 Blue	Grand	57 Orange	De Soto
11 Blue	Pacific	58 Orange	Laurel Canyon
12 Blue	Pacific Coast Highway	59 Orange	North Hollywood
13 Blue	Pico	60 Orange	<u>Pierce College</u>
14 Blue	San Pedro	61 Orange	<u>Reseda</u>
15 Blue	Slauson	62 Orange	<u>Sepulveda</u>
16 Blue	Transit Mall	63 Orange	Tampa
17 Blue	Vernon	64 Orange	Valley College
18 Blue	<u>Wardlow</u>	65 Orange	<u>Van Nuys</u>
19 Blue	Washington	66 Orange	Warner Center
20 Blue	<u>Willow</u>	67 Orange	Woodley
21 Gold	Allen	68 Orange	Woodman
22 Gold	<u>Atlantic</u>	69 Purple	Wilshire/Normandie
23 Gold	Chinatown	70 Purple	Wilshire/Western
24 Gold	<u>Del Mar</u>	71 Red	Hollywood/Highland
25 Gold	East LA Civic Center	72 Red	Hollywood/Vine
26 Gold	<u>Fillmore</u>	73 Red	Hollywood/Western
27 Gold	<u>Heritage Square</u>	74 Red	<u>North Hollywood</u>
28 Gold	Highland Park	75 Red	<u>Universal City</u>
29 Gold	<u>Indiana</u>	76 Red	Vermont/Beverly
30 Gold	<u>Lake</u>	77 Red	Vermont/Santa Monica
31 Gold	<u>Lincoln/Cypress</u>	78 Red	Vermont/Sunset
32 Gold	Little Tokyo/Arts District	79 Red/Purple/Blue	7 th St/Metro Center
33 Gold	Maravilla	80 Red/Purple	Civic Center
34 Gold	Mariachi Plaza	81 Red/Purple	Pershing Square
35 Gold	Memorial park	82 Red/Purple	Westlake/MacArthur Park
36 Gold	<u>Mission</u>	83 Red/Purple	Wilshire/Vermont
37 Gold	Pico/Aliso	84 Red/Purple/Gold	Union Station
38 Gold	<u>Sierra Madre Villa</u>	85 Silver	37 th St/USC
39 Gold	Soto	86 Silver	<u>Artesia Transit Center</u>
40 Gold	Southwest Museum	87 Silver	Cal State LA
41 Green	<u>Avalon</u>	88 Silver	<u>El Monte Station</u>
42 Green	<u>Aviation/LAX</u>	89 Silver	LA County + USC Medical Ctr
43 Green	<u>Crenshaw</u>	90 Silver	<u>Manchester</u>
44 Green	<u>Douglas</u>	91 Silver	<u>Rosecrans</u>
45 Green	<u>El Segundo</u>	92 Silver	<u>Slauson</u>
46 Green	<u>Hawthorne</u>	93 Silver	Union Station
47 Green	<u>Lakewood</u>		

Summary of Maintenance Issues

This appendix shows the 31 maintenance issues we found during our review of the 93 transit stations and 41 park & rides.

Line	Location	Station Issues			Park & Ride Issues								Total Issues	
		Graffiti	Trash	Damaged Property	Signage	Paint	Graffiti	Trash	Shrubs	Transients	Tandem	Kiosk	Managed By	Total Issues
	Totals	5	3	3	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	1		31
	Percent of Total	16.0%	9.7%	9.7%	12.9%	12.9%	9.7%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%	3.1%		100.0%
Blue	103rd Street						✓		✓	✓			CRA LA	3
Blue	Artesia	✓	✓											2
Blue	Florence			✓										1
Blue	Slauson	✓												1
Gold	Allen			✓										1
Gold	Fillmore						✓						Private	1
Gold	Indiana			✓										1
Gold	Lake				✓								Private	1
Gold	Lincoln/Cypress							✓					Metro	1
Gold	Mission				✓						✓		City of So Pasadena	2
Gold	Sierra Madre Villa											✓	Metro	1
Gold	Southwest Museum		✓											1
Green	Avalon	✓												1
Green	Imperial/Wilmington		✓											1
Green	Lakewood										✓		Caltrans	1
Green	Long Beach							✓					Caltrans	1
Green	Norwalk					✓		✓					Caltrans	2
Green	Vermont				✓		✓						Caltrans	2
Orange	Reseda				✓								Metro	1
Red	North Hollywood					✓							Metro	1
Silver	LA Country/USC Medical Ctr	✓												1
Silver	Manchester	✓				✓							Caltrans	2
Silver	Slauson					✓				✓			Caltrans	2

Pictures of Signage at Park & Rides



Park and Ride Signage

(Top left picture) Sign states "Parking for Transit Patrons Only"

(Bottom left picture) Shows three signs; top sign states "Must Park In Marked Parking Stalls," middle sign states "Park-N-Ride, Parking lot is maintained by Caltrans," bottom sign states "Parking for Transit Patrons Only"

(Bottom right picture) Sign states "Park & Ride Info Call 800-Commute, This Space Provided Courtesy of Caltrans"



Pictures of Signage at Park & Rides



Handicap Parking Warning Signs

All signs state the same message, but are of different colors and use different wording. All signs state the message that "Unauthorized vehicles parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed away at owner's expense"



Pictures of Signage at Park & Rides

Parking Lot Rules Signs

(Top left picture) Shows three signs; top sign states "Park-N-Ride, Parking lot is maintained by Caltrans," middle sign states "State Property, No Dumping, To Report Call," and the bottom sign states "Must Park In Marked Parking Stalls"

(Bottom left picture) Shows three signs; top sign states "State Property," middle sign states "No Soliciting," and the bottom sign states "No Loitering, Camping, Vending or Parking of Vehicles 30 Feet or Longer"

(Bottom right picture) Sign states "Keep Pathway Clear, Park Only in Designated Areas, No Motorcycle Parking, No Bicycle Parking, No Scooter Parking"



Pictures of Signage at Park & Rides



Parking Lot Rules

(Top left picture) Sign states "Parking For Transit Users Only, No person shall park any vehicle 18 or more feet in length or engage in loitering or camping, or vending or any other commercial activity, and no disconnecting of trailer on any fringe or transportation corridor parking facility, violators will be cited and/or towed at owners expense"

(Bottom left picture) Sign states "Passenger Vehicles Only, 72 Hour Limit, No Boats-Trailers-RV's Allowed"

(Bottom right picture) Sign states "No Stopping At Red Curb, No Fire Lane Parking, vehicles will be cited and/or towed at owners expense"



Pictures of Signage at Park & Rides

Miscellaneous Parking Signs



(Top left picture) Paid permit signs, top sign states "Paid Permit Only Until 11:00 AM Mon-Fri" and bottom sign states "Permit Information"

(Bottom left picture) Shows two sign; top sign states "Additional Parking at Park-Ride Lot Corner of Lankershim/Ventura Blvds," and the bottom sign states "Private Property L.A.C.M.T.A., Parking for Patrons of LACMTA Only, Violators will be cited and towed at owner's expense"


(Bottom right picture) Shows two sign; left sign states "No Parking, Violators will be cited and/or towed at owner's expense, transit vehicles exempt" and right sign states "Foothill Transit Relief Vehicles Bus Stop"





Summary of Park & Ride Utilization

The table below shows the number of parking spaces and the utilization levels we observed at the 41 park & rides.

Line	Location	Owner	Free		Paid/Reserved	
			No. Spaces	Usage	No. Spaces	Usage
Total Spaces Available			19,083		1,145	
Blue	103rd St	CRA LA	62	<div></div>		
Blue	Artesia	Metro	292	<div></div>	76	<div></div>
Blue	Del Amo	Metro	351	<div></div>	15	<div></div>
Blue	Florence	Metro	103	<div></div>	12	<div></div>
Blue	Wardlow	Metro	82	<div></div>	10	<div></div>
Blue	Willow	Metro	879	<div></div>	20	<div></div>
Blue/Green	Imperial/ Wilmington	Caltrans	975	<div></div>		
Gold	Atlantic	Metro	413	<div></div>		
Gold	Del Mar	Private			290	<div></div>
Gold	Fillmore	Private	131	<div></div>	16	<div></div>
Gold	Heritage Square	Metro	129	<div></div>		
Gold	Indiana	Metro	43	<div></div>		
Gold	Lake	Private			100	<div></div>
Gold	Lincoln/Cypress	Metro	89	<div></div>	5	<div></div>
Gold	Mission	City of So. Pasadena			118	<div></div>
Gold	Sierra Madre Villa	Metro	950	<div></div>	60	<div></div>
Green	Avalon	Caltrans	158	<div></div>		
Green	Aviation/LAX	Caltrans	405	<div></div>		
Green	Crenshaw	Caltrans	513	<div></div>		
Green	Douglas	City of El Segundo/MTA	30	<div></div>		
Green	El Segundo	Metro	90	<div></div>		
Green	Hawthorne	Caltrans	623	<div></div>		
Green	Lakewood	Caltrans	545	<div></div>		
Green	Long Beach	Caltrans	650	<div></div>		
Green	Norwalk	Caltrans	2050	<div></div>		
Green	Redondo Beach	So. Cal Edison	403	<div></div>		
Green	Vermont	Caltrans	155	<div></div>		
Green/Silver	Harbor Freeway	Caltrans	253	<div></div>		
Orange	Balboa	Metro	270	<div></div>		
Orange	Canoga	Metro	612	<div></div>		
Orange	Pierce College	Metro	373	<div></div>		
Orange	Reseda	Metro	522	<div></div>		
Orange	Sepulveda	Metro	1205	<div></div>		
Orange	Van Nuys	Metro	776	<div></div>		
Red	Universal City	Metro/ LA County	779	<div></div>	125	<div></div>
Red/Orange	North Hollywood	Metro	803	<div></div>	298	<div></div>
Silver	Artesia Transit Center	Caltrans	980	<div></div>		
Silver	El Monte Station	Caltrans	1760	<div></div>		
Silver	Manchester	Caltrans	127	<div></div>		
Silver	Rosecrans	Caltrans	342	<div></div>		
Silver	Slauson	Caltrans	160	<div></div>		

 = Quarter Full or Less

 = Half Full

 = Full or Relatively Full

Management Comments to Draft Report


Metro

Interoffice Memo

Date	January 23, 2012
To	Karen Gorman Acting Inspector General
Through	Arthur T. Leahy Chief Executive Officer
From	Lonnie Mitchell Chief Operations Officer
Subject	Response to OIG Draft Report on Review of Transit Station and Park & Ride Maintenance and Parking Utilization (Report No. 12-AUD-04)

OVERVIEW

I have reviewed the results of the subject draft report and in general, I agree with your recommendations but not necessarily the specific recommended approaches for correcting the situations. Please see my detailed responses below.

PROPOSED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- In response to recommendation 1a, Rail Facilities staff and supervision will remain alert and continue to report to the Los Angeles Sheriffs Department (LASD) any transients discovered in our station parking lots. At an inter-departmental all hands staff meeting on January 11, 2012, this issue was addressed and staff was instructed to immediately share with all subordinate personnel. A memo is being prepared for posting prior to January 30, 2012 directing all staff to comply. This recommendation has been satisfied.
- In response to recommendation 1b, Rail Facilities staff will continue their current practice of inspecting non-Metro owned Park & Ride lots. This recommendation has been satisfied.
- In response to recommendation 1c, Rail Facilities is in agreement with the recommendation to consider converting parking spaces to motorcycle and bicycle spaces at the Lakewood Park & Ride once Metro takes ownership. This recommendation has been satisfied.
- In response to recommendation 1d, Rail Facilities will report deficiencies found at non-Metro owned park & ride lots to responsible third parties. However, once reported, ownership of the deficiency must necessarily reside with the third party. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Management Comments to Draft Report

- In response to recommendation 1e, we will inform the Revenue Collection Department by February 6, 2012 of your recommendation to remove or cover pay kiosks and work with them should they decide to take this course of action. This recommendation has been satisfied.
- In response to recommendation 1f, all Rail Facilities staff will continue to inspect and maintain transit station areas to ensure established Metro standards are met. The recommendation has been satisfied.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Thank you.

Management Comments to Draft Report


Metro

Interoffice Memo

Date	December 1, 2011
To	Karen Gorman Acting Inspector General
Through	Arthur T. Leahy Chief Executive Officer
From	Martha Welborne <i>MW</i> Executive Director, Countywide Planning
Subject	Response to OIG Draft Report on November 23, 2011 (Report No. 12-AUD-04)

OVERVIEW

I have reviewed the results of the subject draft report, and I generally concur with your recommendations.

UPDATES:

Page 9, item 2b (Lack of Activity -103rd Street): Wattstar (local non-profit) and a theater operator, in cooperation with CRA, have partnered to construct a movie theater at this location that includes evening and weekend use of the 103rd Street Blue line park and ride (shared use with Metro patrons).

PROPOSED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Per Page 14: Item 2: The Countywide Planning and Development (CPD) Executive Officer will work with other Metro departments and the Parking Task Force to assess parking needs and develop strategies for increasing usage of under-utilized park and rides and minimizing maintenance costs.

CPD will initiate meetings with other departments working on systemwide parking issues during the 1st quarter of 2012.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Thank you.

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