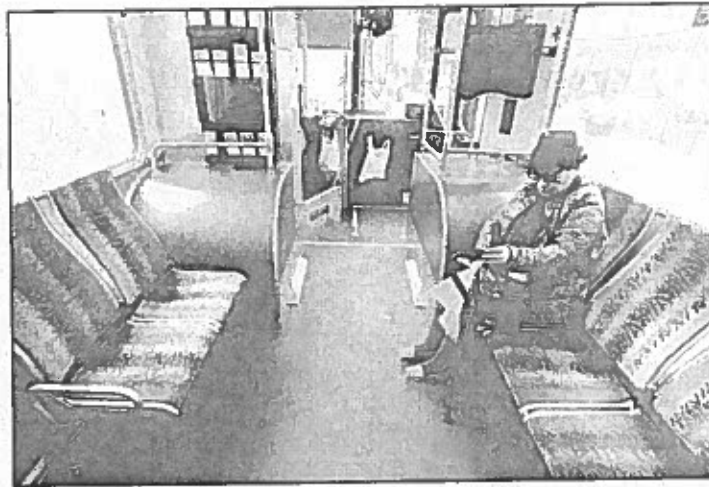


# OPINION

## LETTERS

### EDITORIALS



AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

**METRO BUS** ridership has dropped by 18% since 2009, while rail ridership has jumped by 21%.

## Failing bus riders

Re "Metro is riding high ... except for ridership," Feb. 21

The only surprise in Metro's continued ridership drop is that anyone is surprised. Metro is not surprised: It engineered the drop.

The only recent interval in which L.A. transit ridership consistently increased was when federal Judge Terry J. Hatter Jr.'s consent decree mandated that Metro improve bus service. Between 1996 and 2007, Metro could build as much new rail as it wanted, but it could no longer cannibalize bus services to do so. Special Master Donald Bliss oversaw Metro's bus operations.

The consent decree expired in 2007, Bliss departed, and Metro went back to expanding rail operations at the expense of bus service, reconfiguring bus lines to feed trains and maximize transfers (L.A. transit trips have more than twice the national average number of transfers), reducing bus service and raising fares.

It is time to go back to court.

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