



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel
metro.net

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE 
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: MATTHEW RAYMOND  FOR MATT RAYMOND
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

SUBJECT: LINE IDENTIFICATION STANDARDS

ISSUE

Metro will establish agencywide standards providing interdepartmental guidelines and procedures on line identification and how information will be presented to ensure that it is consistent across mediums. Currently customers may see the same transit line identified in several different ways on bus stop signs, vehicle headsigns, timetables and in the Trip Planner available on metro.net. Multiple divisions and departments within the agency are responsible for various elements of these forms of communication; therefore, service change information updates are not often implemented consistently. By establishing clear guidelines for the way line identifiers are presented, updating information will be easier and passengers will benefit by being able to correctly select timetables, locate corresponding bus stops or rail stations, and board bus or rail trips traveling to desired destinations.

DISCUSSION

To varying degrees, many line names are consistently referenced on timetables, bus stops and vehicles. However, some references are not identical due to a lack of a consistent policy and coordination and hinders Metro's ability to effectively communicate transit-related information to its customers. For instance, when a transit line is referenced differently in the timetable, on the bus stop and on the bus headsign, customers may be confused when determining where they can access the service and where the service will take them. Customers should be confident that the information supplied by Metro is clear and helpful.

Line Identification History

Although some guidelines were used by Metro's predecessor agencies to refer to lines, all that remains is the bus and rail line numbering system. Bus line numbers dictate the type of service provided (for example, the 300s represent Metro Local buses with Limited service and the 700s identify Metro Rapid bus service). In support of the numbering convention, the new bus color scheme established bold colors for Metro Local, Metro Rapid and Metro Express to reinforce the type of service represented by the line number.

In addition to identifying the type of service, the numbering system also indicates where the line travels. For example, Lines 1 – 99 are lines that travel into Downtown Los Angeles, referencing general corridors consecutively in a counter-clockwise rotation. The 100s run from West to East and the 200s run from North to South, both series traveling outside of Downtown Los Angeles. However, even if most customers know this system, and for example would know that Line 202 travels North to South, without the name, the destination points are unknown.

The line numbering system was re-affirmed in the early 1980s, with the additional referencing of the corridor it traveled. For example, Line 14 was named Beverly Boulevard because it was a local service traveling mainly along that street. However, based on customer input obtained through research and general industry practice, destination-based line identifiers have since become more common and the gradual shift to destinations is where inconsistencies occur. For example, a bus stop sign may use the corridor reference but the timetable may use the destination identifier. This causes confusion for customers and a complete shift to one system will eliminate this confusion. Customers have positively rated the changes on timetables that display destinations in recent customer satisfaction on-board surveys.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact for the majority of the activity related to the new standards. Updating line names on timetables and other printed materials will be done during the normal course of reprinting information. For example, when service changes are made, new timetables and other related materials will be printed using the new naming convention. Signage and information products controlled by internal electronic databases will require no additional material costs to update line names using the new standards. Examples of these items include HASTUS, vehicle headsigns, automatic bus voice announcements, metro.net and the Trip Planner.

Changing the line identifiers at bus stops would have the greatest financial impact to the agency. In particular, optimum implementation would require that all bus stop signs that serve lines that will be modified be entirely replaced using a revised signage design that accommodates the new line reference standards. Staff has estimated that changing the blades at all bus stops will cost about \$2.2 million. Staff will pursue funding to implement a replacement of the bus stop signage, but currently no funding exists for this activity. However, the new information can be used when new signs are produced through the usual signage maintenance process which will not require additional funding. Staff is also pursuing lower-cost methods for replacing information on signs that would allow a more rapid implementation schedule. Since this is a multi-year project, the managers of the various impacted cost centers will be responsible for budgeting the costs in future years.

Proposed Line Identification Framework

The new bus line naming standards would further expand a destination-based naming scheme and would require departments to present line information in a consistent manner. The guidelines would continue to uphold the numbering scheme and continue to identify service using the existing numbering. The standards will include the following:

- The full name of the line will contain both end points, or destinations. These would be known cities, communities, major landmarks, rail stations or transit centers.
- The destination points will be listed in a West to East or North to South order, consistent with how lines are represented and read on a map, except in cases where Downtown Los Angeles is one of the end points. In those situations, Downtown Los Angeles will lead the name.
- The name of the line will also list at least one major corridor on which it travels.
- Timetables, all internal documents, HASTUS and other electronic databases and printed materials will list the line by its full name.
- Bus stop signs will list the destination point the bus is traveling towards and if space permits, include the corridor name(s) the route travels along. Special route conditions, including but not limited to rush-hour service and weekday-only service will also be noted if space permits. Short-line destinations will not be shown on bus stop signs.
- Headsigns, the Trip Planner and external automatic bus voice announcements will note the destination point the bus is traveling towards only. For short-line trips, the destination shown will be the destination of that trip and not of the entire line.
- Headsigns will list the destination in the first frame.
- Headsigns will read “Not in Service” or “No Service” in one frame, with no line number.
- Name abbreviations, street extensions and other topics will be dictated by the Metro Signage Guidelines.
- Line identifiers will be proposed by Service Sector staff and reviewed by Communications staff.

Service Sector Input

At the September Executive Management and Audit Committee, Director Fasana requested that staff seek further input from the Service Sectors to ensure all who are impacted had an opportunity to provide comment. Since then, Communications staff has met with Service Sector staff on a number of occasions and has established a working relationship to refine the proposed standards and facilitate their implementation. Staff also presented the proposed standards to each of the Service Sector Governance Councils at their October meetings and the overwhelming majority of input was supportive of the staff proposal. Based upon input from Service Sector staff it was determined that the standards were most appropriate as an Administrative Policy as opposed to being adopted as Board Policy.

NEXT STEPS

Upon the establishment of the standards, all future bus and rail line referencing efforts will follow the approved convention. Sector staff will make the initial recommendations on the line identification. Communications will review the references recommended by Sector staff to ensure that there is consistency across the county. Sector staff will be conferred with on any changes to the initial identifiers they recommended. It is expected that implementation of the standards will occur gradually over time as service changes are implemented. Implementation will begin with the December 2006 service change.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Table of Line Identification Standards Implementation Sample

LINE IDENTIFICATION STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION SAMPLE

ELEMENT	STANDARD*	EXAMPLE: LINE 2
Line Identifier	<u>Metro Bus:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line #, Destination-Destination via Corridor(s) <u>Metro Rail/Metro Liner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Name (ex. Metro Orange Line) 	Line 2: Downtown LA – Pacific Palisades via Sunset Bl
Destination Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City, Community, Landmark, Rail Station, Transit Center No Intersections Shown in West – East or North – South Order Downtown LA Lines Lead w/Downtown LA 	
Printed Materials	Full Name	Line 2: Downtown LA – Pacific Palisades via Sunset Bl
Electronic Databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Name If Information is Directional, then Directional Destination Only (ex. Trip Planner) 	Line 2: Downtown LA – Pacific Palisades via Sunset Bl Trip Planner: Eastbound – Line 2: Downtown LA Trip Planner: Westbound – Line 2: Pacific Palisades
Bus Stop Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line#, Directional Destination via Corridor(s) Special Conditions (ex. Rush Hr Only) No Short-Line Trip Destinations 	Eastbound – Line 2: Downtown LA via Sunset Bl Westbound – Line 2: Pacific Palisades via Sunset Bl
Vehicle Head Signs	<u>Metro Bus:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line #, Directional Destination Only Short-line Trips Show Shortened Destination No Line# on “Not in Service” Sign “Not in Service” Sign Shown in 1 Frame <u>Metro Rail/Metro Liner:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directional Destination Only 	Eastbound – Line 2: Downtown LA Westbound – Line 2: Pacific Palisades
Voice Enunciator	External Message Notes Directional Destination Only	

*In limited cases, exceptions may be made to standards provided that the review task force agrees on variance