



Customer Service and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-B

May 26, 2011

Station Naming Policy

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input type="radio"/> Action <input checked="" type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number:	Resolution: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Station Naming Policy

PURPOSE:

Provide an overview of the current Policy/Instruction on Metro System Station Names and suggest updates to the policy.

DESCRIPTION:

Metro is preparing for significant changes and improvements to rail service in the next six years as it transitions to extend service to Dulles Airport. How this change is introduced, including station names and changes to the system map, is critical to achieving Metro's goal of delivering quality service to customers and the region. Metro has begun a process to revise the Metro map. Concurrently, a review of Metro's Station Naming Policy is also appropriate, as the policy was last updated in 2001.

Policy/Instruction 4.1/2 on Metro System Station Names provides the procedure for establishing and changing station names, and sets forth the responsibility in updating the list of adopted station names. The procedure must be consistent with other relevant Authority policies, rules, and regulations.

Under the existing policy, proposed station name changes or new names are to come to the Board for approval from the jurisdictions, along with a funding commitment to change the name throughout the system on station signage, maps and so forth. Funds for station names and signage associated with the Dulles extension are included in the Dulles project budget.

The primary purpose of station names is to identify the station locations by geographical features or centers of activity to help customers successfully navigate the system. There is a wide range of options provided to comply with the geographical features or `centers of activity` requirement. The current policy also addresses station name length (no more than 19 characters, except transfer stations which should be no longer than 13 characters).

The character limit and location specifications date back to the system's

beginnings. In 1969, Metro's first General Manager Jackson Graham listed four criteria, as documented by Zachary Schrag's *The Great Society Subway* (256), which would 'indicate location, distinctively and briefly':

- Natural, such as Rosslyn, Pentagon, and Bethesda;
- Location by one coordinate, such as Suitland and Southern Avenue;
- Traditional and/or colorful rather than mechanical, such as Foggy Bottom and Navy Yard; and
- Limited to two words, but preferably one.

Brevity of the names is important to customers for quick comprehension in navigation. Over time, customers have indicated a preference for simple names, and with only one hyphen, if necessary.

The emphasis on brevity is also important for clarity of train announcements. Train operators and station managers are encouraged to pronounce the full name of stations in a clear and distinct manner. A succinct naming convention aids customers in decision-making as well as contributes to the safe and efficient ingress and egress of customers. Brief and simple names are also helpful in navigating the nation's capital for millions of domestic and international visitors who come to our region each year.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) do not speak to naming conventions used in way-finding. However, the character height, proportion, finish and contrast, as well as mounting height and location are to be considered in designing station signage.

In addition to ADA considerations, long names are harder for customers to read than shorter ones. In instances where names exceed the signage character limit, text is expanded to two lines on the pylons and signage parameters are enlarged, which can be more costly.

Today, 15 of 86 stations exceed the existing 19 character limit with seven of those having more than one hyphen or slash marks and three of eight transfer stations exceed the 13 character limit.

It should also be noted that the existing Policy is silent about customer input and feedback on proposed names as well as commercial naming rights.

There are provisions of the Policy that are out of date, such as the approximate cost of the station sign change, which is listed at \$100,000. The policy should reflect the process, which is that staff conducts estimates to determine the exact cost of each name change based on station location, other stations affected by the change, other station name or system changes, necessary signage, and so forth. Also, to reflect Metro's existing organizational structure, the internal Department responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Policy no

longer exists. Today, such responsibility would align with the Office of Track and Structures.

Over the next six years, Metro is planning three major service enhancements that will require updates to station signage and to the system map in FY2012, FY2014, and FY2017. With the Blue/Yellow line service changes that are proposed to take place June 2012, Metro anticipates the need to replace approximately 2,600 of its station signs and reprint nearly 5,000 copies of the system map. This provides an opportunity for jurisdictions to submit name changes prior to the transition that could be included in the overall change without added expense. Under the current timeline, changes submitted prior to ~~August~~**September 1, 2011** could be incorporated in the overall FY2012 change. The opening of Phase 1 of the Dulles extension is planned for December 2013 and this will impact the system map and station signage at a number of Orange and Blue line stations. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors have already communicated to Metro its formally-adopted suggested station name recommendations for the Dulles Phase I stations. The opening of Phase 2 of the Dulles extension is planned for late 2016.

To date, there have been informal discussions with the jurisdictions regarding approximately 20 requests for station name changes, including those for the Dulles extension.

FUNDING IMPACT:

This is an information item. Staff will develop processes and procedures for developing cost estimates for station name changes.	
Project Manager:	Barbara Richardson
Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing (CSCM)

RECOMMENDATION:

Management recommends the following actions for the Station Naming Policy:

- Reinforce existing criteria outlined in the policy with all new station names;
- Incorporate the process for cost estimates instead of listing an approximate cost, since costs can vary widely;
- Require Metro customer input, testing and feedback;
- Preclude commercial naming rights; and
- Update roles and responsibilities for Metro departments.



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Policy Provisions

- Outlines purpose of names
 - Geographical features or centers of activity to help navigate
- Addresses station name length
 - 19 characters with 13 for transfer stations
- Establishes process for naming
 - Jurisdictions submit names and commit to fund cost of change
- Outlines roles and responsibilities



Origins of Station Naming Principles

- Metro's first General Manager Jackson Graham used four criteria to ensure station names were distinctive and brief:
 1. Natural, such as Rosslyn, Pentagon, and Bethesda;
 2. Location by one coordinate, such as Suitland and Southern Avenue;
 3. Traditional and/or colorful rather than mechanical, such as Foggy Bottom and Navy Yard; and
 4. Limited to two words, but preferably one.



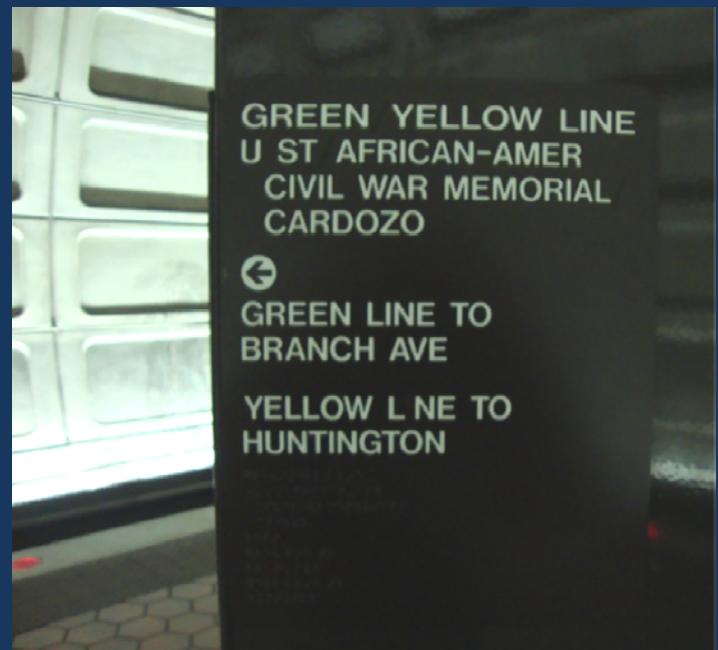
Importance of Brevity

- Visual and audio cues
- Safe ingress and egress of customers
- Customer preference
- Sign limitations, costs
- Simple map and way finding



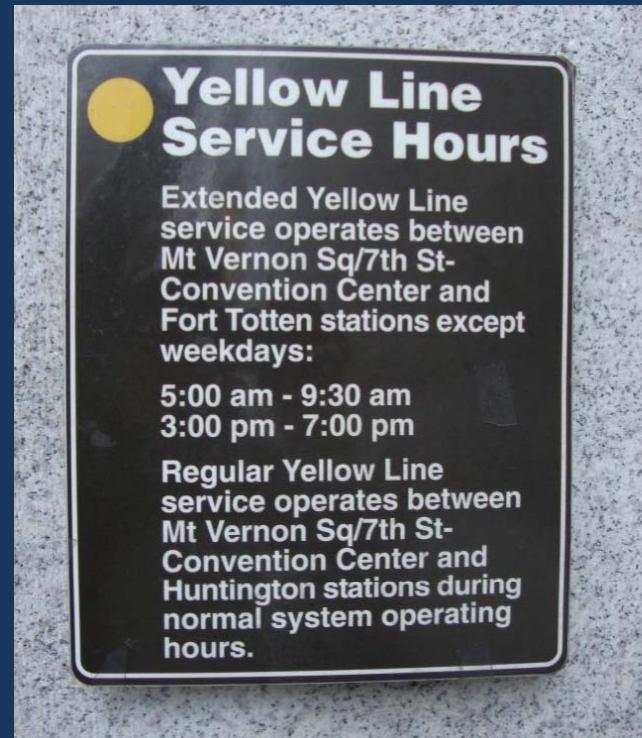
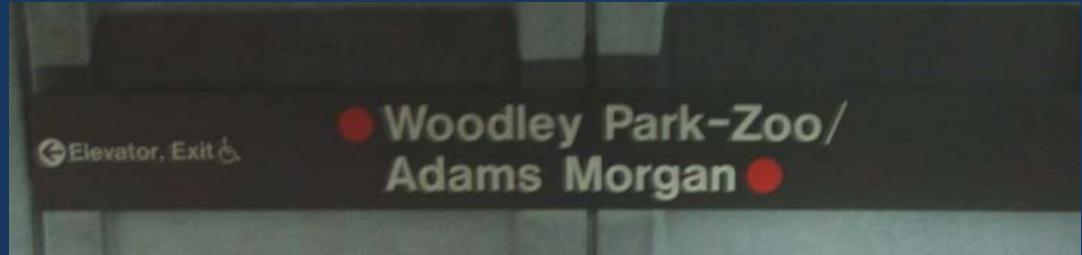


Station Signage





Station Signage





Vehicle Signage and Announcements



[On-board/station announcement](#)



Recommendations for Consideration

Policy Element	Current Policy	Recommendation
Station Naming Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use geographical features or centers of activity• Distinctive; evoke imagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to policy
Length of Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19 characters including spaces• 13 characters for transfer stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to policy
Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal endorsement from sponsoring jurisdiction• Approval by WMATA Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to policy
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost per station name change of about \$100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate process for developing cost estimates (factors, inventory elements etc.)



Recommendations for Consideration

Policy Element	Current Policy	Recommendation
Customer Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include customer input, testing and feedback into station naming process
Commercial Naming Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preclude commercial naming rights
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses outdated departments for roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update to indicate appropriate department roles and responsibilities



Next Steps

- June: Conduct customer research
- July: Approval of revised policy
- September: Station name submissions
- October: Board action on station names for 2012 system map



Appendix



Inventory affected by station name change

Station-Specific:

- Station entrance pylon
- Gate-mounted station name signs
- Entrance station names - bronze letters on granite
- Platform pylons with station names
- Outboard station name signs
- Outboard vault mounted station ahead lists
- Neighborhood Maps on platforms & mezzanines
- Raised letter and Braille signs
- Platform shelter case mounted, backlit station ahead lists
- Platform information display case station ahead lists
- Bus bay maps
- Bus information maps



Inventory affected by station name change

System Wide:

- Platform pylons with station ahead lists
- System maps – rail cars, mezzanines and platforms
- Fare charts on fare machines, kiosks and platform time/fare matrix overlays
- Brochures: *would incorporate changes as reprints are needed*
- Metro Pocket Guides (English, Large Print, 10 other foreign languages)
- Your Guide to Metro and the Nation's Capital
- Tips for Riding Metro for People with Disabilities and Senior Citizens
- Metrorail (evening, midday and weekend) timetable brochures
- Any Metrobus timetables that would include the affected station(s).