Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

Action / Information	MEAD Number:	Resolution:
(●) Action ( ) Information	101238	( ) Yes (●) No

TITLE:

Station Naming Policy-Research and Recommendations

PURPOSE:

Report on station naming policy customer research and recommend revisions to the policy.

DESCRIPTION:

In preparation for the transition of the Dulles extension, Metro is planning service changes to the rail system that will require a major customer communications program, starting with revisions to the Metro map. Design work has been initiated on the map.

At the same time, Metro is also reviewing its policy on station names, as the names play such a central role in the map and customer communications. Policy/Instruction 4.1/2 on Metro System Station Names provides the principles and process for establishing and changing station names, and sets forth the responsibility in updating the list of adopted station names.

To ensure that the station name policy serves customer navigation needs and reflects customer preferences, Metro conducted qualitative research utilizing focus groups and explored customer reactions to and perceptions of the following:

- Current station naming policy principles
- Common references to long station names
- Effectiveness and expectations of names in aiding navigation
- Proposed station names
- Options for displaying station names on signage and maps

Research Findings

Current station naming policy principles: Overall, focus group participants support having a station naming policy and agree on existing provisions - that the names should be should be based on geography, centers of activity, be distinctive, evoke imagery and be limited in length to a maximum of 19 characters. There was confusion about why the tenets of the policy had not been followed. Also, participants believed that a landmark listed in station names should be within walking distance of that station. The vast majority also agreed that Metro should preclude commercial naming rights.

Common references to long station names: For the longer station names, participants most often chose to refer to the station by the first section of the name or the historical names. For example, people often refer to Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan as Woodley Park and Archives-Navy Mem`l-Penn Quarter as Archives.

Effectiveness and expectations of names in aiding navigation: All participants agreed that shorter station names that are distinctive and bring a location to mind are preferable. They indicated that names should not be more than two words. Station names that were cited as good examples were Rosslyn, Bethesda, Rockville, Pentagon, Smithsonian, Silver Spring, Union Station and Metro Center. Those deemed ineffective were more than two words (i.e., U St-African Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo), the two that list GMU, and Navy Yard since it does not indicate ballpark or Nationals.

Proposed names: Participants thought that two of the proposed Dulles Extension names were distinctive and helped with navigation, Tysons I & II and Reston Town Center. There was confusion about the location of the remaining stations, especially because of the repetitive use of the words "Tysons", "Reston" and "Herndon." Most thought that Herndon-Dulles East would lead people to believe that it was located at Dulles Airport.

A series of names that have been informally discussed were also tested. Most were rejected by the participants with the exception of Navy Yard with the curly W (or some designation that the station is near the Nationals` Ballpark) and Smithsonian-National Mall.

Options for displaying station names on maps and signage: Respondents preferred simpler displays with the least amount of clutter. They liked the idea of using primary and secondary name listings on the map and other signage. The primary name, or commonly used name, would be listed in a larger font and the secondary, or the less used portions of the name, would be listed under the primary in a smaller font. Most agreed that the cross streets should stay on the

map but a smaller font size was acceptable. Also, some participants liked the idea of using icons inside of some station circles to help tourists find points of interest like the Capitol and the zoo.

Timeline:
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 June 2012, December 2013, and late 2016. This phased-in transition will allow an opportunity to address customer preferences for station names.

As part of preparations for the Blue/Yellow service changes next June, jurisdictions have an opportunity to submit name changes that could be included in the overall change. Under the current timeline, changes submitted by September could be incorporated in the June 2012 change with station names and map needing Board approval by October 2011. Future changes will be a part of the opening of Phase 1 of the Dulles extension planned for December 2013 and the opening of Phase 2 planned for late 2016.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No funding impact	
Project Manager:	Barbara J. Richardson
Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing (CSCM)

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on stakeholder feedback, management recommends the following actions and/or revisions for the Station Naming Policy.

<u>Adhere</u> to current policy so that names are:
- Based on geographical features or `centers of activity`;
- No more than 19 characters; no longer than 13 characters for transfer stations; and
- Formally submitted by jurisdictions, along with a funding commitment to change the name throughout the system.

<u>Amend</u> the policy to:
- Incorporate 120-day customer input process
- Require landmark names to be within walking distance
- Preclude commercial naming rights;
- Update departmental names; and
- Clarify the process for cost estimates.

In addition to the above, staff also recommends that:
Metro transition to a primary (in bold)/secondary name approach on maps/signage beginning with the Blue/Yellow Realignment (June 2012) using the following primary names:

Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan
New York Ave-Florida Ave-Gallaudet U
Mt. Vernon Sq/7th St-Convention Center
Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter
West Falls Church-VT/UVA
U Street/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo
Vienna/Fairfax-GMU
Georgia Ave-Petworth
Grosvenor-Strathmore
Dunn Loring-Merrifield
Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

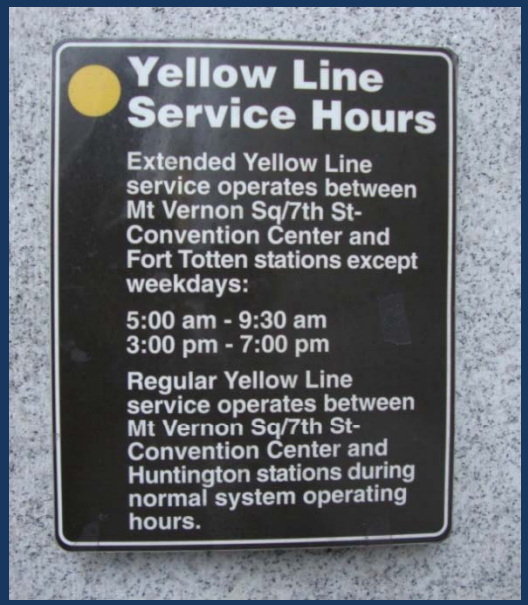
Station Naming Policy

Customer Service and Operations Committee

July 7, 2011

Purpose

- Report on customer research for station naming policy
- Recommend revisions



Research Objectives

Explored customer reactions to:

- Current station naming policy principles
- Effectiveness and expectations of names in aiding navigation
- Common references to long station names
- Proposed station names
- Options for displaying station names on signage and maps

Research Findings-Policy

- Support having a station naming policy
- Agree on existing principles:
  - Geographical features or centers of activity
  - Distinctive and evoke imagery
  - Relatively brief- ideally no longer than 19 characters except transfer stations which should be 13 or less
- Question why tenets of the policy have not been followed

Research Findings-Policy

- Strongly support shorter, distinctive station names
- Landmarks in name should be within walking distance
- Effective: Rosslyn, Bethesda, Pentagon, Crystal City, Smithsonian, Silver Spring, Union Station and Metro Center
- Ineffective: U Street/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo; Vienna/Fairfax-GMU and Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan

Research Findings-Common Names

Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan

New York Ave-Florida Ave-Gallaudet U

Mt. Vernon Sq/7th Street- Convention Center

Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter

West Falls Church-VT/UVA

U Street/African–Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo

Vienna—Fairfax-GMU

Georgia Ave-Petworth

Grosvenor-Strathmore

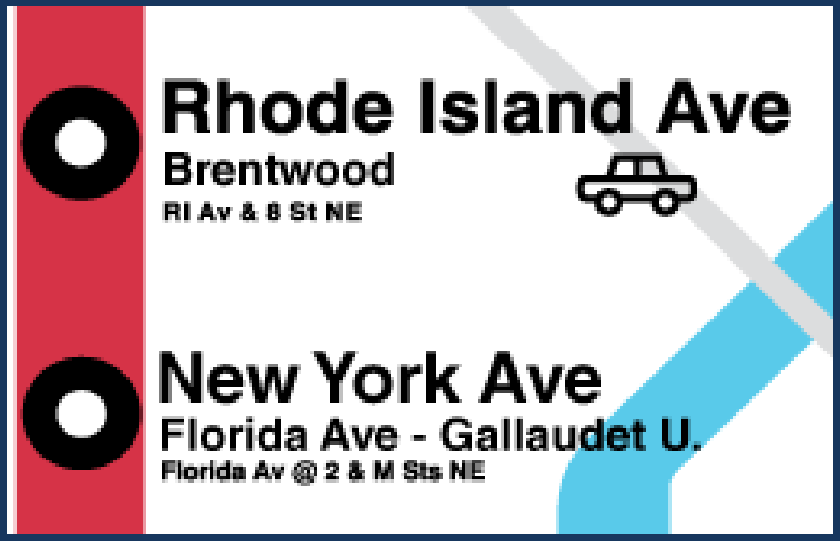
Franconia-Springfield

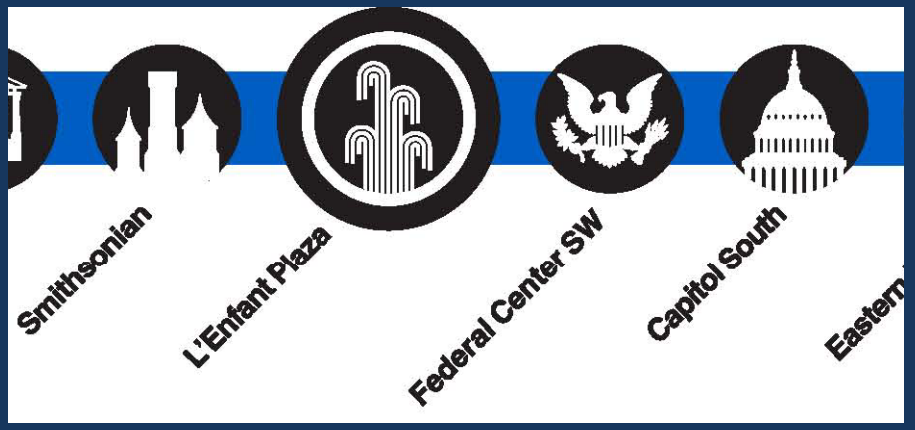
Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood

National Airport—Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (mix)

Research Findings-Display Alternatives

- Keep the map simple
- Primary/secondary names were favorable
- Icons were seen not as replacement, but as aid for tourists





Research Findings-Dulles Extension

- Tysons – McLean
- Tysons I & II
- Tysons Central
- Tysons – Spring Hill Rd
- Reston –Wiehle Ave
- Reston Town Center
- Herndon – Reston West
- Herndon – Dulles East

- Tysons I & II, Reston Town Center deemed effective
- Difficult to determine location for remainder
- Confusing repetition of Tysons, Herndon and Reston
- Herndon-Dulles East viewed as the airport stop

Research Findings-Informal Proposals

- Most reject potential changes to existing names
- Exceptions
  - Smithsonian-National Mall
  - Navy Yard—logo, Ballpark or Nationals (without Capitol Riverfront)
- Mixed Reviews
  - Forest Glen-Holy Cross Hospital
  - Waterfront-Arena Stage
  - King Street-Old Town
- Oppose station naming rights

Recommendations—Policy Revisions

- Adhere to current policy provisions
  - Geographic features/centers of activity
  - 19 character limits/13 for transfer stations
  - Formal submission by jurisdictions with funding commitment
- Amend policy
  - Incorporate 120-day customer input process
  - Require name landmarks to be within walking distance
  - Preclude station naming rights
  - Update departmental names; clarify process for cost estimates

Recommendations / Actions

- Transition to primary/secondary approach
- Use common names identified in research except airport
- Begin June 2012 Map

Common Names for June 2012

Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan

New York Ave-Florida Ave-Gallaudet U

Mt. Vernon Sq/7th Street- Convention Center

Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter

West Falls Church-VT/UVA

U Street/African–Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo

Vienna—Fairfax-GMU

Georgia Ave-Petworth

Grosvenor-Strathmore

Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood

Next Steps

- September: Station name submissions
- October: Board action on station names for 2012 map
- June 2012: New System map for Blue/Yellow realignment
- December 2013: Dulles extension start

Appendix-Informal Proposals

Georgia Ave-Petworth/Park View

Navy Yard-Capitol Riverfront

Navy Yard with Curly W (Washington Nationals logo)

Forest Glen-Holy Cross Hospital

Waterfront-Arena Stage

Smithsonian-National Mall

Old Town or King Street-Old Town

Appendix-Informal Proposals

McPherson Square-Chicago School of Psychology

Judiciary Square/Georgetown University Law School

NoMa-Gallaudet U

Rosslyn/Georgetown University

West Hyattsville/Mt. Ranier

Farragut North/Golden Triangle

Anacostia/Frederick Douglass House

White Flint-North Bethesda