

Color Designations for Metro Lines and Fixed Guideways

Summary of Policy

Each of the Metro Rail lines and the Metro Orange Line are identified by a color for operational and customer communications purposes. The purpose of designating a color for rail and other fixed guideway projects is to create a stronger identity for the lines and help reinforce awareness of these transit facilities as part of the overall Metro system and thereby build ridership. Designating a color ensure consistency in all communications materials about the line as it is built, opened and operated. The primary factor considered in suggesting colors for these lines is maximizing the benefit and convenience of our customers.

Criteria used in recommending colors for the lines are as follows:

- Should be bright and legible in printed and electronic media
- Must address broad range of operational requirements (visual and audible)
- Must be short, preferably less than two syllables
- Must be easy to print and produce
- Consider connotations/associations

Color designations already in use by Metro include red, blue, green, gold, orange, purple, silver, and bronze.

While all transit systems use colors to distinguish lines on their maps, the majority do not name their lines by color but use either an alphabetical or numerical designation (e.g. Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Mexico City, Moscow, New York, Paris, Seoul, Tokyo, etc.) or, in some cases end points or place/event names (e.g. London).

As the Metro Rail system grows, the Board may choose to consider following the practice used by most large transit agencies and add an alphabetical designation for each of the Metro Rail lines and fixed guideway projects, and to gradually effect a transition to letters as the primary means of identification for each line. Among the advantages of alphabetical line designations are simpler and clearer verbal directions, more accurate signage elements with less dependence on the English language, and less dependence on color recognition which is difficult for customers with visual impairments.

Historical Perspective

In 1988 the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) agreed to an eight point plan that included the transition of SCRTD's Metro Rail project and LACTC's Los Angeles/Long Beach Light Rail project to a newly formed third entity, the Rail Construction Corporation. As part of the transfer, the agreement stated that the Metro Rail heavy rail project would be renamed the Metro Red Line and that the Los Angeles Long Beach Light Rail project would be renamed the Metro Blue Line.

In 1989 the Rail Construction Corporation (RCC) board renamed the Norwalk/El Segundo Light Rail project as the Metro Green Line. After the formation of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 1993, the RCC was disbanded and its duties assumed by the LACMTA Board of Directors.

In 2002 the Board renamed the Los Angeles Pasadena Blue Line as the Metro Gold Line.

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In 2004, the Board renamed the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway as the Metro Orange Line.

The Board's most recent action provides some guidelines to consider in referring to fixed guideway projects, and adds new communications designations to the El Monte Busway, Harbor Transitway, the Exposition right of way light rail project and the westerly extension of the subway.

Last Board Action

August 24, 2006 – Color Designations for Metro Lines and Fixed Guideways

The Board approved

- A. Adopting the name Expo Line to designate the Metro Rail Mid-City/Exposition Line Rail Transit Project
- B. Adopting the color purple to designate the Union Station-Wilshire/Western subway line, and refer to the project as the Metro Purple Line;
- C. Adopting the color silver to designate the El Monte express busway; and
- D. Adopting the color bronze to designate the Harbor express busway

Attachment

See Related

[Metro System Advertising Property Naming](#)