Metro Writing & Style Guide

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Introduction

The Metro Writing & Style Guide has been developed to encourage greater consistency in Metro’s written communications, for external and internal audiences.

While the Metro Writing & Style Guide isn’t designed to re-educate on matters of basic grammar, word usage and style, its goal is to provide a set of communication standards for consistency in all Metro’s information.

Typical target audiences include current and potential customers, the general public, media, elected officials, other agencies, Board members and employees.

By applying principles outlined in this Guide to all written materials, messages will be consistent and clear to reinforce Metro’s leadership role.
2.0 The Metro “Tone”

The presentation of Metro (and the Metro brand) goes well beyond a logo. The tone that should come across in any Metro communication is an impression of safe service, strategic mobility planning, dependability, and a welcoming and friendly environment.

Careful consideration given to the tone of written materials is absolutely critical to promoting Metro’s positive image.

**EXAMPLE:**

Words that describe the Metro “tone”:
- Conversational
- Friendly
- Optimistic

Negative: Terms that DO NOT describe the Metro “tone”:
- Authoritative
- Elite
- Complicated

2.1 Standard Description

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is unique among the nation’s transportation agencies. Created in 1993, Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that transports about 1.2 million passengers daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines. The agency also oversees bus, rail, highway and other mobility-related building projects and leads transportation planning and programming for LA County.

2.2 The “Rule of First Mention”

An important writing principle typically used in legal papers, contracts and other formal documents relates to the first mention of a subject, name, date, project or other concept.

The first mention typically spells out the full and correct nomenclature, followed by a shortened form within parentheses immediately following the formal language.

**EXAMPLE:**

Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT)

The shortened form is then consistently used throughout the remainder of the document.

**EXAMPLE:**

LADOT

The Rule of First Mention also holds true for schools readily identifiable throughout the region such as UCLA, USC, CSULA, CSUN, etc. and agencies such as the LAFD and LAPD.

An acceptable adaptation of this method for less official messages would be to cite an abbreviated or more conversational form of the technical term soon after its first mention, and then using that form thereafter.

Please note that in the case of Metro’s marketing materials and other Communications products, a “first mention” often is not required. “Metro” suffices and is more effective.
2.3 Writing Tips

Keep the audience(s) foremost in mind and never forget who you’re writing for. Tell them what they want to know, not just what we want them to know. Focus on making the point quickly.

> Use a cordial tone, emphasizing a connection between Metro and the audience(s). When appropriate, use pronouns such as “we” and “our” to convey a personal connection, but avoid an “us” vs. “them” approach.

> Keep technical terms to a minimum and provide simple explanations when technical terms are needed. Avoid officious “geek speak” and the use of excessively technical terminology. If necessary, create a glossary of terms to accompany complex documents.

> Avoid mixing terms. When a technical term must be used but an informal term is preferred, state the technical term on first mention and immediately identify the informal term to be used. Use the informal term thereafter; do not introduce new terms for the same technicality. (Also see section 2.2.)

> Vary sentence structure and length to create an animated reading rhythm and to engage the audience. Shorter sentences interspersed with longer ones ease reading.

> Refrain from producing large blocks of copy that tend to overpower the reader. Break up copy into short paragraphs.

> Use a single space after a semi-colon or a period marking the end of a sentence.

> Use brief headlines, bullets and sidebars to demonstrate organized thoughts and present them in a quickly digestible format. Remember that body copy is the least-read part of any document.

> If at all possible, have someone else edit and proofread your copy. This will ensure that not only have you gotten your message across, it will go a long way in checking for any errors in grammar, punctuation, content and language usage.

> Remember: When writing, a fresh point can be helpful. A trusted source can help you eliminate unnecessary words and rearrange your phrases for greater clarity.
2.4 Grammar, Usage and Punctuation Guidelines

Normal punctuation should be used for all written materials. When a preferred Metro style is present, the preferred punctuation should be used. For any specific style issues not clarified in this guide, please default to Associated Press Style outlined in the AP Stylebook at apstylebook.com.

> Abbreviations – Use acronyms for agencies and other entities on first use. Utilize the acronym to avoid having to repeat lengthy titles.

**Example:**
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) released a report stating that...

Abbreviate full titles such as “Dr.,” “Gov.,” “Sen.,” “Mr.,” “Rep.” before a full name. Abbreviate junior or senior after an individual’s name.

Abbreviate company (Co.), corporation (Corp.), incorporated (Inc.), limited (Ltd.) and limited liability corporation (LLC) when used after the name of the corporate entity.

Exceptions to the above would include the names of companies and other entities that use trademarked designations such as “Coca-Cola” or “IBM.”

> ADA – For mentions of individuals protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) use acceptable, sensitive terminology.

**Correct Usage:**
...who uses a wheelchair.
...who has a disability.
...who is blind or visually impaired.
...who has total hearing loss or partial hearing loss.

**Incorrect Usage:**
...confined to a wheelchair.
...in a wheelchair.
...disabled person.
...who cannot see.
...who cannot hear.

> Ampersand (&) – As a rule, do not use an ampersand as a substitute for the word “and.” Exceptions are limited to use on the Metro website where “tab” space considerations are a factor; on maps and signage where space limitations are a factor; on titles or headers on printed materials where space is limited or design style warrants it; or where the official name of a company or entity demands its usage, such as the names of law firms – eg: Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.

> Angeleno – A native or inhabitant of Los Angeles. For example, Eric Garcetti is a fourth generation Angeleno.

> Bullets – Use simple dots (·), carets (>), or dashes (–) for bullets when needed to highlight components of lists. Once selected, be consistent in size and style. For full sentences appearing in bulleted lists, capitalize the letter following the bullet and use a period at the end of the sentence.

> Capitalization – Capitalize names of holidays, special events, proper names of nationalities/peoples, universities/colleges, programs/departments, proper names of buildings and places, proper names of artworks ad publications and days of the week and month names. Do no capitalize compass points, seasons, occupational descriptions or informal references to any of the items in the list above. Do not capitalize words outside of these categories for emphasis.

> Comma – Do not use a “serial” comma before a conjunction (eg: and, or) in a simple list, whether alphabetized or not.

**Correct Usage:**
The Metro Red Line, Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line...

**Incorrect Usage:**
He could use the Metro Red Line, the Metro Blue Line, or the Metro Green Line...

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series only if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction.

**Correct Usage:**
We invest in our employees with regard to professional development, compensation, and effectively and quickly remedy employees...
INCORRECT USAGE:
We invest in our employees with regard to professional development, compensation, and effectively, and quickly remedy employees...

> Dates – When dating correspondence, reports or other materials, use the standard month-day-year arrangement (emails will automatically imprint this information, in the normal arrangement).

The year should comprise four digits, except in some cases when referring to the fiscal year, when a two-digit description is acceptable.

In any case, the first mention rule and consistency should be maintained throughout the written piece. European, digital and other styles are not appropriate.

Metro uses two types of abbreviation for some materials: Month/year, such as January 2017, is used for regularly updated information; abbreviated, all caps month/year, such as JAN 2017, is used for map legends.

CORRECT USAGES:
January 7, 2017
January 2017
JAN 2017
FY 17
FY 2017

NOTE:
In reference to “Fiscal Year,” lowercase and spell out fiscal year 2017 in the first reference. And spelling out FY 2017 (not FY2017) in the second reference is acceptable. FY17 permitted in charts or Twitter (where space is an issue).

INCORRECT USAGES:
January 7, 17
7 January 2017
2017.01.07

> “e-mail” – Short for “electronic mail.” The correct usage is “e-mail.”

INCORRECT USAGE:
E-mail, E-Mail or email

All email addresses should be written in italics with all lowercase letters.

> Government Agencies – Use the full name of the agency when space allows, followed by the appropriate acronym, if necessary for future reference. eg: Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Do not use periods in acronyms such as “LAPD,” “DOD,” “LADOT,” “USCG,” “TSA,” “USPS,” etc.

NOTE:
The acceptable acronym for the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department is LASD. Do not capitalize “state” and “federal” when used generally without a full agency name. Lowercase in all state constructions: the state of California, the states of Illinois and New York.

> Headlines and Banners – For headlines and banners, use sentences or phrases. When using sentences, use sentence case capitalization; when using phrases, use initial capital letters.

CORRECT USAGES:
Try the new Metro Day Pass.
More Service in Your Area

> Hyphens – Use for compound modifiers, except when an adverb is involved.

CORRECT USAGES:
Long-term
Zero-liability
Readily available

INCORRECT USAGES:
Well-intentioned
Readily-available

> “internet” – The 2016 AP Stylebook lowercases the words “internet” and “web.” Lowercase web in all instances and for webpage and webfeed write as one word non capitalized. The spelling of the words internet and the web are changing from proper nouns to common nouns reflecting a growing trend and a change by our official dictionary, Webster’s New World College.

INCORRECT USAGE:
InterNet
the Web
> **Intersections** – Use a slash to indicate intersections or Metro stations identified by an intersection.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
Board the southbound Metro Rapid Line 740 at Hawthorne/Rosecrans to get to the Galleria at South Bay.

Visitors to both Hollywood/Vine and Hollywood/Highland Stations can visit the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

> **“Los Angeles”** – To abbreviate Los Angeles, as a rule, do not use periods – use “LA.”

When referring to the city’s central core, it’s not necessary to capitalize “downtown” either when used alone or when utilized in the phrases “downtown Los Angeles” or “downtown LA.”

“Los Angeles County” is the acceptable usage, rather than the more formal “County of Los Angeles.” Also acceptable is “LA County.”

The correct acronym for “Los Angeles International Airport” is “LAX”; the government entity of which LAX is a part is “Los Angeles World Airports” or “LAWA.”

> **Mail Stops** – Mail stops should be designated “MS” followed by the stop numbers – eg: MS 99-03-27 and should be positioned after the street address and before the city designation in any address.

**CORRECT USAGE:**
John Smith, Human Resources Dept.
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority
One Gateway Plaza, MS 99-03-27
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

> **Maps** – To mitigate clutter when designing with very limited space, use the abbreviations “St,” “Av,” “Bl,” “Dr,” “Rd” without periods when designating a street address. Exception “Broadway.”

Similar designations such as “Circle”, “Terrace” and “Way” should be spelled out. Exceptions: Numbered avenues can be designated either Avenue 30, or Ave 30, for example, if space is an issue.

Other street abbreviations are permissible, however, consistency is to be a primary consideration.

> **Measurements** – Use hyphens when describing measurements and write out unit of measurement.

**EXAMPLES:**
- 40-foot bus
- 30-inch wheelchair
- 20-inch folding bike

> **Media References** – The names of newspapers, magazines, books and reports, as well as the names of television and radio stations and internet websites should be italicized in all written materials.

**EXAMPLES:**
The story ran in yesterday’s edition of the *Los Angeles Daily News*...

I heard it yesterday on *KNX NewsRadio*...

> **‘metro.net’** – When using *metro.net* or any other URL or e-mail address in writing, italics and lowercase must be used. This is an electronic-age standard that maintains the whole address as a discrete unit. It also avoids the reading difficulty of punctuation at the end of a sentence after a URL with a dot in it.

**NOTE:**
Use a period after a URL. Ex. Get more info at *metro.net*.

When the general text is in italics, the reverse should be used.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
Please contact *customerrelations@metro.net* to obtain a printed map.

*Por favor, vea los horarios actualizados en metro.net.*

> **Military** – Capitalize names of military branches when full name is used. Lowercase for incomplete names. eg: Air Force, National Guard, the guard and reserves.

> **Numbers** – Write out numbers below 10. For 10 and above, use the numeral. Numbers greater than one million can be partially written. Ex. eight, 12, two, 44, 10 million.

> **Other Titles** – Lowercase informal titles like spouse, domestic partner, dependent children, brother, sister, etc.
> **Personal Names** – Cultural sensitivity is critical here as the need arises for non-English or non-Westernized personal names to be frequently communicated in writing. In everyday use, customs widely vary, but, in general, follow the individual’s preferred spelling.

> **Position Titles** – When identifying individuals by title, the first letter of the title is capitalized when it precedes the name. If the title follows the name, it will be in all lower case letters.

Readily identified titles such as CEO and CFO can be abbreviated on first usage, however, less common titles should follow the rule of first mention.

Department names should also have the first letter capitalized.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
Communications Manager John Smith is looking for interns.

John Smith, communications manager in the Marketing Department, is looking for interns.

> **Post Office Box Designations** – In addresses, use the acronym “POB” as a standard followed by the appropriate box number: “POB 11307”

> **Quotation Marks** – Place outside of punctuation as a general rule. Can be used without a comma preceding when not used for dialogue.

**EXAMPLES:**
She said, “How are you?”

Find your polling place by texting “VOTE” or “VOTO” to 468683.

> **State Designations** – Spell out the names of the 50 US states when they are used alone in any editorial material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical needs by using the standardized two-letter state abbreviations utilized by the US Postal Service.

> **Street Abbreviations/Addresses** – Use the abbreviations “St,” “Av,” “Bl,” “Dr,” “Rd” when designating a numbered address. Exception: “Broadway.” Write out when used in phrase.

Similar designations such as “Circle,” “Terrace” and “Way” should be spelled out. Exceptions: Numbered avenues can be designated either Avenue 26, or Av 26, for example, if space is an issue.

Abbreviate compass points used to indicate directional ends of a street – eg: 247 E 103rd St. Don’t abbreviate if the street number is omitted: East 103rd St.

Other abbreviations are permissible when readability is a concern or when plurals need to be considered, however, consistency is to be a primary consideration.

Do not mix abbreviations. If a street designation is spelled out in one area then it should be spelled out throughout the text.

> **“Suite” and “Room”** – These designations should be spelled out. When space is limited, use the abbreviations “Ste” and “Rm.” Exception: When an address contains both a street designation and a suite number (Main Street Suite 910, for example), suite should always be spelled out.

> **Telephone Numbers** – Use numbers and periods. 213.922.2200. Do not use parentheses or dashes such as (213) 922-2000 or 213-555-5555.

> **Time Designation** – Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes and do not separate the time from the morning (am) and afternoon (pm) designations with a space: “10pm,” “3:30am.”

Do not use periods between am and pm. This usage applies to all time designations with the exception of Metro timetables.

Avoid redundancies such as “10am this morning” or “tomorrow evening at 8pm.”

Do not use military time and do not use arbitrary designations such as “305p” or “9:38a.m.”

> **Transit Agencies** – Metro partners with a number of transit agencies to expand the scope of its service profile in Los Angeles County. Partner agencies include AVTA, Big Blue Bus, CulverCity Bus, Foothill Transit, LADOT, Long Beach Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, Norwalk Transit, Santa Clarita Transit and Torrance Transit.
> **Union Names** – The formal names of unions should be used followed by the acronym in parentheses, if necessary, eg: “United Transportation Union (UTU),” or “Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 123.”

The acronym can be used after first mention.

> **US** – Similar to Los Angeles and other acronyms, do not use periods between U and S when describing the United States. Abbreviation should be used for both adjective and noun forms of United States.

> **Websites** – Do not include http:// or www for metro.net URLs or any other web address. Use italics and lowercase for all web addresses. For the term website, write as one word non capitalized.
3.0 The Metro Name

Metro’s official and legal name is “Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.” The popular – and correct – name is the case-sensitive “Metro.”

Metro’s popular name is how the public identifies the organization.

Each experience with Metro accumulates to an image of what Metro is and what Metro does for LA County. Consequently, each communication should clearly use the Metro name.

Do not use either “MTA” or “METRO” when referring to the agency in any communication.

For references that require geographic clarity, use LA Metro. Do not use Los Angeles Metro.

3.1 Use of the Metro Name

The adopted use of Metro as the popular name replaces the previously used acronym “MTA,” which was found to have less meaning and name recognition by the public.

Official documents should use the legal name in the first instance, followed by the popular name in parentheses: (Metro). Metro should then be used for the balance of the document.

Promotional and printed materials, presentations, displays, e-mails and other electronic communications should only use the popular name, Metro.

Where geographic clarification is required, use LA Metro.

Avoid using an article with the name to describe service:

**CORRECT:**
Take Metro...

**INCORRECT:**
Take the Metro...

3.2 Examples of Metro Name Use

Typical uses for “Metro”: customer materials (maps, brochures, timetables, etc.); customer facilities (Metro Customer Center); system-wide signage; advertising; publications and brochures; uniforms and badges; stationery; and press releases and all materials released to the media.

Typical uses for first instance legal name: Board reports; bond and finance documents; contracts; checks; court documents; Board and executive titles; advertisements for employment; and advertisements for procurement.
4.0 The Metro Identity

Metro’s campaign to rebrand itself began in 2004 with the unveiling of the agency’s new logo. Since then the public has come to identify Metro’s many transit-related projects and identify the agency as the leader in LA County’s campaign to improve and maintain its transit infrastructure.

However, vigilance must be maintained to keep the Metro identity clear in the public eye. The Metro logo has specific guidelines for usage that must be followed, while all previous names used for Metro and its predecessor agencies must be put aside.

Metro has five name-brand transportation services (see Section 4.1). The brand-name service should always be fully written out. Metro also brands other services, programs and projects by placing Metro in their proper name.

When branding a service or project, use Metro at first mention. It’s acceptable to refer to Metro as the “agency” after the first mention.

4.1 Metro Name-Brand Transportation Service

When identifying Metro name-brand service, the full brand name should always be used.

**METRO TRANSPORTATION SERVICE BRANDS:**
- Metro Local
- Metro Rapid
- Metro Rail
- Metro Busway
- Metro Bike Share
- Metro ExpressLanes

**NOTE:**
Metro bus service is not a brand name; bus service brands are identified in the list above.

When using “local,” “rapid” or “rail” as a general description, no capitalization is necessary and Metro should not accompany the terms.

However, mixing brand names and service descriptions can be tricky and should be avoided when there is uncertainty – proofreading by a qualified individual is highly recommended.
4.2 Metro Services, Programs and Projects

Metro has many services, programs and countywide projects. Written materials should use the full service, program or project name on first mention and if possible brand it with the Metro name; thereafter, an accepted abbreviation can follow.

Remember to be consistent in any abbreviated use. The abbreviated form should not be further abbreviated or renamed. The accepted abbreviation should be one that is authorized for systemic use, and there should be no deviation from this in any written materials.

**METRO SERVICE EXAMPLES:**
- Metro Commute Services
- Metro Customer Service
- Metro Freeway Service Patrol

**METRO PROGRAM AND PROJECT EXAMPLES:**
- Metro Orange Line Extension
- Metro I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project
- Metro Joint Development Program
- Metro Call for Projects

**NOTE:**
Metro branding takes place at the first mention of the service or project. Repeating Metro is not necessary unless emphasis is desired. The terms “the agency” or “the transit agency” are acceptable and can be used as an alternative.

4.3 Relative Geographic Perspective

A key point to remember about geographic location is that it is relative. Bus and rail lines run from one point to another, in both directions.

“To” and “from” are therefore relative geographic terms. To avoid showing any geographical prejudices, Metro communications should state that a line runs *between* two points. “Connects” or “links” can also be used to avoid repetition.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
The Metro Blue Line runs between LA and Long Beach.
The Metro Gold Line connects Pasadena and East Los Angeles.

**INCORRECT USAGES:**
The Metro Blue Line runs from LA to Long Beach.
5.0 Terminology and Usage Guidelines

> **Bus and Train** – The words “bus” and “train” are not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence.

> **Bus Rapid Transit, BRT** – Bus Rapid Transit and BRT are industry terms that are meaningful to transit professionals but not to the general public. Minimize industry jargon in all written communications aimed at non-industry groups or persons, and avoid jargon in materials directed to customers and the public.

> **Fixed Guideway** – A fixed guideway is designed and equipped for exclusive use by any light, heavy or rapid rail system; monorail; bus; funicular or tram. Be specific to indicate mode for customer clarity.

> **Line Names** – Capitalize “Line(s)” when identifying specific Metro routes. The line number or the route name identifies Metro Rapid service.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
Take the Metro Blue Line to Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station to connect to the Metro Green Line.

Metro Local Lines 150 and 240 travel along Ventura Boulevard.

**INCORRECT USAGE:**
The Rapid line 750 travels along Ventura Boulevard.

> **Metro Brand Transit Services** – Metro brands of bus service include Metro Local, Metro Rapid and Metro Busway. Metro’s rail service is Metro Rail.

> **Metro Local** provides local service in and between communities, and uses brightly colored buses painted “California Poppy.”

> **Metro Rapid** provides priority, limited stop service with buses that are painted “Rapid Red.”

> **Metro Busway** service is provided on the Orange Line with its long articulated, “accordion-bend” buses painted silver.

In using Metro brand service, let the name brand stand alone, do not add “bus” or “train” to the name brand. Metro Local, Metro Rapid and Metro Busway are key service brand identifiers, and stand alone, just like Metro Rail.

**CORRECT USAGES:**
Metro Rapid offers service every 10 minutes.
Metro Rail service is convenient.

**INCORRECT USAGE:**
Metro Rapid buses arrive every 10 minutes.
Metro Rail trains are frequent, too.

> **Metro Busway** – Metro Busway service refers to bus service with rail amenities such as stations on dedicated bus lanes with boarding area, station markers, ticket vending machines and fare validators, prepaid boarding, sheltered seating and vehicle stops at regular intervals. Metro Busway service is provided on the Metro Orange and Silver Lines.

> **Metro Orange Line** – Metro’s Busway in the San Fernando Valley is the Metro Orange Line. When referring to the Metro Orange Line, use Metro on first mention and capitalize “Orange Line.” When combining Metro Rail and the Orange Line, use Metro once.

> **Metro Rail** – Metro Rail is the brand name for Metro’s rail service. Always capitalize “Metro Rail” when referring to the name brand service: Metro Red Line; Metro Purple Line; Metro Blue Line; Metro Green Line; and Metro Gold Line. When referring to more than one Metro Rail line, use Metro once and capitalize “Lines.” When listing lines, do so in chronological order of their opening.

**EXAMPLE:**
Metro Red and Purple Lines
> **Metro Stations** – Metro Rail, Metro Orange Line, Metro Rapid and Busway stops are referred to as stations. Capitalize “Station” when it is part of the proper name of a rail or Busway station. When identifying a Metro Rail station, the preference is to combine the station name with Metro Rail rather than the color of the rail line. Attaching Metro Rail to the station name reinforces the wholeness and integration of the rail system rather than deconstructing it into parts.

**Correct usages:**
Pershing Square Metro Rail Station
Pershing Square Station

**Incorrect usages:**
Pershing Square Red Line Station
Pershing Square Purple Line Station

Metro Rail stations are identified by their street intersections or area locations. Some stations have been dedicated to special individuals who have been honored by Metro. Stations which have been dedicated may be informally cited by the name of their honorees, however, this is to be avoided in wayfinding or instructive materials.

Station dedications include: the Pico Station dedicated to Chick Hearn; the 7th Street/Metro Center dedicated to Julian C. Dixon; and the 103rd Street Station dedicated to Kenneth Hahn. An exception is Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station, which includes the dedication in its operational name.

> **Metro System** – The Metro System includes all Metro bus and rail service. Capitalize “Metro System” to identify the entirety of bus and rail service.

**Example:**
The Metro System serves millions of passengers yearly.

> **Park & Ride** – Consistent with Caltrans style guide, the facility where you park your car and then take transit or vanpool is a “park & ride.” This designation will be used for maps and other materials where the park and ride facility must be formally or precisely identified. Do not use “park ‘n ride” or “park/ride.” For information about Metro parking management, rules or enforcement, general terms like parking lot, parking structure and parking garage are preferred.

> **Subway, Heavy Rail, Light Rail** – Metro now has two underground lines – the Metro Red and Purple Lines. Writers may use “subway” to refer to the underground lines. Industry professionals often refer to subway transit as “heavy rail.” Heavy rail systems typically comprise four- and six-car trains and thus have larger capacity than light rail.

However, this jargon is to be avoided in materials for customers and the public. Light rail refers to above-ground rail service with two- and three-car trains that carry fewer passengers than heavy rail. Light rail is usually referred to simply as “rail” unless a point or contrast with heavy rail is being made.

> **Transit Centers, Bus Centers, Stations** – There are many locations throughout LA County that have multiple transit connections. These locations use various names such as transit centers, bus centers, stations, depots and other similar terms.

Many of these locations have been in existence for many years and the name associated with an individual facility may have been elevated to a landmark. While a uniform set of terms would be helpful, doing so could infringe on a local cultural site and there is no wish on Metro’s part to impose new naming in these cases.

**Examples:**
Harbor Gateway Transit Center
Torrance Transit Center
LAX City Bus Center
El Monte Station
Union Station
Patsaouras Bus Plaza
5.1 LA Union Station

LA Union Station is a transit complex that encompasses:

Metro Headquarters, including building and plaza with Metro Customer Relations and Employment Office; Patsaouras Bus Plaza, with bus bays for connecting buses and LAX Flyaway service; Union Station East, including the East Portal, the entrance to the Metro Red and Purple Lines, the Metro Customer Center, aquarium and food vendors; Union Station West with Amtrak thruway bus service and taxi service, waiting room, newsstand and restaurants; the passageway, with Metrolink and Amtrak platforms and Metro Gold Line entrance; and a multi-level underground parking garage.

“LA Union Station” should be used when referring to the entire complex.

“One Gateway Plaza” is the Metro Headquarters street address and should appear only on letterhead and for mailing address instructions. Always use the full zip code: 90012-2952.

When space is a premium, maps, timetables or bus head signs, an area of the LA Union Station can be abbreviated to “Union Station” or “LAUS.”

**EXAMPLES:**
- Patsaouras Bus Plaza
- LA Union Station

5.2 TAP

TAP refers to the Transit Access Pass, a fare platform used across Metro’s system and 24 other transit systems in LA County.

Always capitalize and do not use periods. TAP is the one acronym that can be used without the full name written out on first reference. The word “TAP” should be displayed in all uppercase letters when used as a brand name and proper noun in written copy. When used as a verb, use “tap” in lowercase.

Machines that sell TAP cards are TAP Vending Machines. Avoid TVM acronym in customer materials.

Capitalize names of specific fare media products – Day Pass, 30-Day Pass, Stored Value, etc. Do not capitalize general references to passes, such as monthly pass, weekly pass, etc.

For specific information on the TAP brand, please refer to the TAP Brand Guidelines.
5.3 Freeway Names

When referring to freeways in any written communication, the following usage is preferred:
“Work has begun on the bridge that will carry the Metro Gold Line Extension over the eastbound I-210 (Foothill) Freeway...”

When mentioning the direction of the flow of traffic, do not capitalize or hyphenate the words eastbound, westbound, northbound or southbound.

Refer to the following alphabetical list of the names and number designations of the freeways located in LA County:

- **I** = Interstate Route
- **SR** = California State Route
- **US** = US Route

- Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14)
- Artesia Freeway (SR-91, between I-710 and I-5)
- Foothill Freeway (I-210)
- Garden Grove Freeway (SR-22)
- Gardena Freeway (SR-91, between SR-110 and I-710)
- Glen Anderson Freeway (I-105)
  - aka “the Century Freeway”
- Glendale Freeway (SR-2)
- Golden State Freeway (I-5, north of downtown LA)
- Harbor Freeway (I-110, south of downtown LA)
- Hollywood Freeway (US-101, south of downtown LA)
- Hollywood Freeway (SR-170, north of downtown LA)
- Long Beach Freeway (I-710)
- Marina Freeway (SR-90)
- Orange Freeway (SR-57)
- Pacific Coast Highway – or “PCH” (SR-1)
- Pasadena Freeway (SR-110, north of downtown LA)
- Pomona Freeway (SR-60)
- Riverside Freeway (SR-91, between I-5 and I-215)
- San Bernardino Freeway (I-10, east of downtown LA)
- San Diego Freeway (I-405)
- San Diego Freeway (I-5, south of the I-5/I-405 junction)
- San Gabriel Freeway (I-605)
- Santa Ana Freeway (I-5, south of downtown LA)
- Santa Monica Freeway (I-10, west of downtown LA)
- Santa Paula Freeway (SR-126)
- Simi Valley Freeway (SR-118)
  - aka “the Ronald Reagan Freeway”
- Ventura Freeway (US-101, northwest of downtown LA)
- Ventura Freeway (SR-134, northeast of downtown LA)
Metro is committed to providing accurate information through clear and consistent communications.

For more information or help in representing Metro in writing, contact your marketing communications representative directly.