



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

November 8, 2011

From: Suja Lowenthal, Second District 

Subject: Naming of Metro Rail Station & Facilities

REQUESTED ACTION:

Request the City Manager work with Long Beach Transit, Downtown Long Beach Associates and the Promenade Area Residents Association to reach consensus on a new name for the Transit Mall and forward the name to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for approval.

BACKGROUND:

The Transit Mall station was originally constructed in 1982 with local, state and federal funding intended to create a state-of-the-art multi-modal transit hub serving the region. After decades of wear and tear, the transit mall underwent \$7 million renovation in 2010/11, made possible by federal stimulus funding. It currently serves an average of 20,000 commuters daily, and accommodates passengers taking Long Beach Transit buses, Metro Blue Line trains and buses and Torrance Transit. It was officially reopened on June 2, 2011.

Improved night lighting, newly designed bus shelters, marine habitat-themed public art, and upgraded landscaping support a recently improved transit and visitor information center offering a comprehensive list of services such as bus pass sales, real-time transit schedule display, touch-screen kiosk with 24 hour transit information, ID card processing for Seniors, Students, Legally blind & LBT Dependents, Lost and found services, customer & visitor service and three ADA-accessible windows. Also important to note are downtown Long Beach's first public restrooms with a dedicated attendant for custodial and surveillance services.

In recognition of the major renovations to First Street and other facilities such as the Promenade and the Bikestation, Long Beach Transit asked MTA to consider a new name for the Transit Mall. A name suggested by LB Transit was "First Street Transit Gallery". However, it is appropriate for the City and relevant stakeholders such as LB Transit, DLBA and the Promenade Area Residents Association to submit a mutually agreed upon name. According to MTA's policy for naming transit centers and facilities, names must refer to: a nearby street or freeway; a well-known destination or landmark; a community or district name; or a city name. The policy also states that it is preferable to use one name but multiple names can be used separated by a slash.

Properties may have a MTA Board-adopted official name and a shorter, more commonly known operational name. The policy states that the MTA Board may dedicate a property name to honor a deceased person who has demonstrated unique and extraordinary service to public transportation in Los Angeles County. The names dedicated in these instances are part of the official name. Finally the policy requires that proposals for new names or name changes will be reviewed at a public forum to receive input.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no significant fiscal impact to the General Fund. Any changes to the actual transit facility will be funded through the MTA.

Summary of Policy

The purpose of the Property Naming Policy is to make certain that the names attached to properties are meaningful to customers attempting to navigate the transit system. The policy rationalizes disparate property naming policies into a single, coherent one, and supersedes them.

The following principles will guide the naming of all property:

- Names will reflect the property's location, relative to the entire transit system. They must be distinct and not duplicated elsewhere in the system.
- They will provide specific information about the property's location relative to the surrounding street system.
- Where appropriate, property names will acknowledge the communities and neighborhoods that the system's stations and stops serve.
- Names will be short, easily recognizable and fit within the technical parameters for signage and mapping.

The policy offers guidance to Board members, staff and stakeholders in naming property. First, transit facilities, which include rail stations, bus rapidway stations, transit centers, bus stops, and other properties frequented by the public must use names that refer to a nearby street or freeway, a well-known destination or landmark, a community or district name, or a city name—if only one property is located within that city.

If space permits, and there is a clear customer benefit, a combination of a street name and well-known destination may be used. Business, product or personal names are prohibited, unless the

name is part of a street name or well-known destination, or part of a corporate sponsorship or cooperative advertising revenue contract.

Second, property names should be kept simple. A single name is preferable to multiple names. A maximum of two distinct names separated by a slash is permissible. The length of the name should be minimized to ensure readability by the visually disabled and general public. Twenty-four characters or less are preferred. And unnecessary words—such as words that are inherently understood—should be avoided, if possible.

Third, properties may have a Board-adopted official name and a shorter, more commonly known operational name. The Board-adopted official name will be used for Board documents, contracts, and legal notices, while the operational name will be used for maps and other printed operational materials, and station and stop announcements, as well as other operational uses, such as vehicle head signs and fare media.

Fourth, the process for naming properties must follow a specific procedure. Properties names will be initially identified during the planning process and should primarily reflect geographic location. When the project advances to the preliminary engineering phase, staff will initiate a formal naming process. They will solicit suggestions from cities, communities, and other stakeholders. A focus group of transit system users and non-users will review the suggestions to help identify recognizable names. Staff will submit its findings to the appropriate Board committee, and then to the full Board, for the final adoption of property names. The adopted official property names will be included in final engineering bid documents and other

Rail Station Naming

ATTACHMENT B Property Naming

agency materials. The Board may change the names with a two-thirds vote. All the costs associated with the name change must be borne by the persons requesting the change, unless the Board decides otherwise.

Finally, the Board continued its practice of honoring deceased persons by dedicating sites to them through a Board motion. The policy states that the honor should be reserved for those who, according to the Board, have demonstrated unique and extraordinary service to public transportation in Los Angeles County.

Historical Perspective

Each of the predecessor agencies had adopted naming policies. In June 1989 the Southern California Rapid Transit District Board adopted names for the first five stations of the Metro Red Line. During the planning phase of the project, Metro Red Line stations were named after adjacent streets. Later, during the construction stage, four of the first five stations were named for well-known station area destinations—Union Station, Civic Center, Pershing Square, and Westlake/MacArthur Park. Since there was no major landmark nearby, the fifth station was named 7th Street/Metro Center, after an adjacent street and a new transit facility.

The Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) developed a naming policy for the Blue Line Stations. According to the LACTC policy, stations could have two names separated by a slash. The first, which was the operational name, identified the adjacent street, while the second could refer to a community point of interest. The policy also encouraged suggestions for station names from communities, cities and public groups before the Commission adopted the names.

In June 1993 the Board adopted the LACTC's naming policy, which was used for the names of the Green Line, and remaining Red Line stations. Four years later, in March 1997, the Board approved a separate policy to honor individuals who made significant contributions to transportation in Los Angeles County by naming properties after them.

Recently, the Board decided to review its policy for opportunities to improve the property naming process. Shortly thereafter, the Board adopted its new policy.

Last Board Action

August 28, 2003 – Property Naming

The Board approved a consolidated and enhanced policy for the naming of all properties that will supersede several existing policies, and ensure that properties are named in a timely, cost-effective manner for the maximum benefit and convenience of our customers.

Attachment

Property Naming Policy