



9. IDENTITY AND BRANDING GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be considered collectively when making identity and branding decisions for transitways.

9.1. INTEGRATED BRANDING AND IDENTITY SCHEME

The branding and identity scheme that is developed for Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station-to-station services will be integrated and reflected on all system components including stations, vehicles, signage, and customer information.

The integration of the branding scheme is important for customer clarity. It will reinforce the message that LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services are **premium** modes that offer a similar level of transit service and transit facilities. Research indicates that transitway services should be branded everywhere they serve, even if other services exist at the same location. A balance needs to be struck between transitway services and other services, when present.

The branding and identity scheme includes the line name, system name, system colors, maps, and other components that may be developed to unite the LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services.

While Arterial BRT may be branded separately from Highway BRT and LRT, it should be branded with equal importance and distinction. Many proposed Arterial BRT corridors are the strongest existing transit markets and will continue to have high potential for increased ridership and increased high-density development.

9.2. LINE NAMES

LRT and Highway BRT line names will be colors and selected by the Metropolitan Council with input from the impacted communities through the corridor policy advisory committee. All line names need to be distinct from one another, fit within the regional transitway system, and allow for line through-routing. Commonly known, simple colors are preferred (red, blue, green, orange, etc.).

Commuter Rail lines should be given a unique name chosen by the lead agency in consultation with partnering agencies. Commuter Rail line names should not be colors, but Commuter Rail lines should be represented on transit system maps using a unique line type and color that visually reinforces Commuter Rail service as integrated with the rest of the transit system, specifically with LRT and Highway BRT.

Community input in corridor naming decisions is an important component of the branding process. At the same time, naming decisions need to be weighed against regional context and system-wide integration. For LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station, community input on which color name will be used to identify a line should be sought, recognizing that the name may be limited by color names



already planned or in use. The Metropolitan Council will generally assign line names once a locally preferred alternative is adopted for a transitway.

Commuter Rail lines also represent significant regional investments and should be identified uniquely in the system. Their market is more localized (thus, less regional) than LRT and BRT and as a result, community involvement can play a more significant role in identifying a line name. National practice indicates that Commuter Rail names are usually tied to the communities they serve, specifically the outbound endpoints, or to a unique corridor name, like a geographic feature (valley, river, coast, etc.).

Arterial BRT lines should be identified as a premium service, but the details behind the service are not developed enough at this time to specify the role of branding in the regional transit system. The Arterial BRT corridors should not be branded with the color-coded line system because the service attributes are different from LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services. However, a line-naming scheme specific to Arterial BRT could be developed and added to the Transitway Guidelines after the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study is complete and more is known about how the service will interact with local bus and other transitway services.

9.3. STATION AND SIGNAGE BRANDING

The most important aspects of the branding and identity at transitway stations are the system brand, line identity, and station name. These aspects should be included at each station. Transitway/system brands take precedence over provider brand. Though less important, provider brands may be present because they are important for customer information and other transit services.

System brand elements for all LRT and Highway BRT services should be consistent and visible at all stations.

Branding at stations can be complicated due to the number of messages that need to be communicated to the customer. Most importantly, signage at stations needs to communicate location and what transit services are provided at that station. Signs at each platform should indicate which direction the transit service is heading (inbound/outbound, eastbound/westbound). Information about the line(s) served by the station and the geographic location of the station needs to be prominent. In addition, information needs to be provided about connecting transit routes and any other transit services that are provided at that station.

Transitway stations should be distinct and appealing in their design, and their design should become a part of the overall branding of the transitway system. It is expected that there will be consistency in the architectural design of stations along an individual transitway corridor, but that each corridor may have its own architectural character. More information about station design is provided in Chapter 4: Station and Support Facility Design Guidelines.



9.4. VEHICLE BRANDING

The most important aspects of branding on transitway vehicles are the system brand, line name/route identity, and where to find additional service information. These aspects should be included on each vehicle. System and transitway brands take precedence over provider brands on each vehicle. BRT vehicles should have a unique paint scheme, using the regional system colors, that distinguishes them from regular route and express buses in the region.

LRT and Commuter Rail are branded, in part, by the vehicle that provides the transit service. Buses providing Highway BRT station-to-station or Arterial BRT service will likely also have some unique characteristics that will distinguish them from other buses in the transit system. However, the most important distinguishing element for buses will likely be the branding.

The most important information needed on transit vehicles are the type of service (system brand), the line or route (primarily through changeable message signs), and where users can go to get more information (customer information). The last component is important because transit vehicles move throughout the region and, essentially, act as marketing mechanisms for transit services. The unique design or look of transitway vehicles is intended to draw in potential new transit users who may not be familiar with where additional transit information is available.

9.5. STATION NAMING

Transitway station names should be selected based on the criteria listed below. Station names will be selected by the Metropolitan Council with input from the lead agency and impacted communities.

- **The name should reflect local geography (major cross-street or landmark).**
- **The name should be easy for the general public to recognize, particularly potential customers who are not familiar with the region and/or the corridor.**
- **The name should be distinct from the names of other stations to the extent feasible so that the name does not create confusion for potential customers or emergency responders.**
- **The name should be succinct and the use of two names for one station should be avoided.**
- **When station naming rights are sold, the name must continue to have a clear link to a nearby landmark or regionally recognizable destination. If a station name is sold, the sale should be for a period of at least 20 years and the price should be based on market exposure.**

The primary purpose of a station name is to provide a geographic reference for customers to know where to access the transit system for boarding and alighting. However, stations also have the potential to become a focal point for a neighborhood, a business district, and/or an emerging transit-oriented development. Names reflecting these and other aspects of local geography can help create



distinctive places and strengthen local assets. There may be an opportunity to generate revenue by selling the name of a station to a nearby enterprise. Regional guidelines are needed in order to provide consistency throughout the transitway system, to ensure that station names are not confusing or duplicative, and to ensure that customer service remains a priority when stations are named. Priority should be given to names that have a clearly and broadly understood geographic reference.

9.6. CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Signage, maps, and schedules for transitway service should reinforce the unique and premium quality of the services. Signs, system maps, and schedules should be simple and easy to understand.

All materials prepared to support LRT and BRT services should be coordinated with the system-branding framework (system logo, system colors, graphical elements, etc.). Information technology, such as real-time passenger information signs, should also be designed to support the transitway branding framework. If multiple providers are operating service along a transitway, all services should be incorporated into the transitway's marketing and customer information materials. Provider/operator logos should be incorporated into these materials but should not be a dominant feature.

9.7. ADVERTISING

Station, shelter, and vehicle designs should not preclude the potential for advertising. Customer information requirements should always be given priority over advertising. BRT vehicles should only include advertising if it does not interfere with the vehicle brand, which is an integral element in distinguishing it from regular bus service.

Advertising at stations, shelters, and vehicles are all potential sources of revenue. Thus, it is important that the opportunity for generating advertising revenues should not be precluded in the design of stations, shelters, or vehicles. However, wrapping of BRT vehicles should be avoided in early stages of implementation, as it would likely interfere with Guideline 9.4. Vehicle Branding. The same would apply to rail vehicles; however, they are less likely to be confused with other services in the region so more flexibility would be appropriate. Issues such as visibility, ease of maintenance, and appropriate content should also be considered when designing stations and shelters and making decisions on proposed advertising.