



Regional Real-Time Transit Information System

511 Proposed Transit Stop Naming Guidelines VERSION 1.0

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Metropolitan Transportation Commission



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Background

Transit agencies maintain comprehensive stop inventory – primarily to meet internal operational needs. While most stop names are very simple and easily understood by the public, some stop names can be further streamlined to make more customer-friendly. Traditional stop naming practices do not consider public information dissemination channels such as Phone, Internet, and mobile platforms. Stop name has now become a critical part of public transit information. Stops now must be named so that it can be recognized and disseminated in a user-friendly manner. For dissemination of transit information through 511 mobile, SMS, phone, web, and API, stop names must be consistent and easily recognized by users in all of these channels.

A number of stop naming issues from the public information dissemination perspective have been recognized over time. These issues vary among transit agencies. To remedy these issues it is thought that a set of stop naming guidelines would be helpful for all Bay Area transit agencies to move toward a common standard that would provide consistent stop naming across all dissemination channels for their customers. The following is a set of ideas proposed as draft guidelines for transit stop naming.

General Rules

1. Stop names distributed for public consumption should reflect how the public would recognize stops on the ground. If necessary, a separate operational name may be maintained in the inventory. For example, ‘Green Division Yard’ for Muni’s ‘Balboa Park Station’ should be maintained in a non-public field.
2. All stop names should be maintained in one standardized case, preferably the Title Case, where principal words are capitalized, e.g. Market Street; except in situations when exception is necessary, e.g., ‘MacArthur Blvd.’.
3. Where hyphen is suggested in this document for stop names it should be used without space before and after the hyphen.
4. Route direction information should not be included in stop names. For example, ‘Westbound’ in parenthesis in ‘Alida Way & Rotary Plaza (Westbound)’ should not be used.
5. Pickup/dropoff information should not be included in stop names. It is generally maintained and provided as a separate stop attribute.
6. ‘Nearside’ and ‘farside’ should not be included in stop names. This information is generally maintained and provided as a separate stop attribute.
7. In some cases additional helpful qualifying information may be necessary in stop names. When such need arises, the following guidelines should be followed:
 - a. If different stops with the same name or if the same physical stop appears more than once in a route-direction/pattern combination, the stop names should be made unique by concatenating additional qualifying information such as the city/neighborhood name or information that explains where the stop is within the direction/pattern configuration. A hyphen must be used to concatenate the additional qualifying information. See examples below.
 - i. When a stop name appears twice in a route-direction because there are two stops with the same two intersecting street names but happen to be in different cities or neighborhoods, include, after a hyphen, the city or neighborhood name, e.g., ‘El

- Camino Real & Oak Grove Ave-Menlo Park’ and ‘El Camino Real & Oak Grove Ave-Burlingame.’
- ii. When a stop name appears twice in a route-direction because the same physical stop is visited twice, additional information explaining where the stop is within the direction/pattern configuration can be used to distinguish them, e.g., ‘Myra Way and Molimo Dr-toward Molimo’ and ‘Myra Way and Molimo Dr-away from Molimo.’
8. To ensure that 511 can recognize alias stop names, maintain and provide the stop name aliases in a separate file. For example, aliases such as ‘UC Berkeley Business School’, ‘Cal Business School’, or ‘Haas Business School’ for ‘University of California Berkeley Business School’ should be maintained and provided in a separate text file using Stop ID as the key. Similarly, for stop names that include streets with known aliases, an alias entry should be maintained separately and provided in the alias file. For example, in Oakland, E 14th Street is also known as International Blvd. Therefore, ‘E 14th St & Main St’ can be an entry in the alias file for ‘International Blvd & Main St’. The stop name used as the primary name should be used consistently throughout the stop name inventory.

Roadway Naming in Stop Names

9. Name portion of a full street name should not be abbreviated. However, if the street is popularly known by its abbreviated version, e.g., ‘MLK’ for ‘Martin Luther King’, then abbreviated version may be used as the primary stop name. In that case the full street name should be provided in the alias file.
10. Street suffix/type (ave, st, pkwy, etc.), and pre and post directional (N, E, NW, etc.) elements of street name should either be fully spelled out or be abbreviated as per the standards set in Appendices B and C of the USPS publication <http://pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub28/pub28.pdf> (Appendices B and C of this publication is attached separately). USPS standard abbreviation is preferred. USPS standard suggests use of single standard abbreviation for each suffix and directional. For example, USPS suggested standard abbreviation for ‘Avenue’/’Ave’/’Av’ is ‘Ave’. Period should be avoided in abbreviated suffix and directional elements.
11. Freeways and highways used in stop names should be named with their abbreviated (USPS standardized abbreviation) designation followed by the highway number. For example, ‘I 280’ or ‘Hwy 280.’ The hyphen, e.g., in ‘I-280’, must be avoided and highway names should NEVER start with the highway number (e.g., ‘280 Hwy’ is not allowed.)
12. Hyphen in street names, when used in a stop names, must be avoided even if that is how the street name is. For example, ‘Alvarado Niles Rd’ should be used in stop names instead of ‘Alvarado-Niles Rd’.

Intersection Stop Names

13. In case of intersection location, stop name should include ‘On Street’ first, then an associative term, such as “at”, then ‘At Street’.
14. For intersection stop names, acceptable associative terms/symbols between the on street and at street are ‘@’, or ‘&’. A single associative term should be used consistently throughout the entire stop inventory of the same transit agency. Do not use ‘and’ as an associative term. It is reserved for other usage (see below).

15. Associative terms/symbols should ONLY be used for the purpose of separating street names in an intersection stop name. When associative term/symbol is necessary to describe something other than an intersection, an alternative style or the word 'and' should be used. For example, in the incorrect stop names such as 'Main Street & Park & Ride' or 'Hilltop Park & Ride', styles such as 'Main Street & Park N Ride' or 'Hilltop Park and Ride' can be used, instead.
16. For stop names at intersections where streets have different names on either side of the road on which the bus is traveling, the name of the additional ON/AT street should be included using a forward slash (/). For example, 'Decoto Rd & Royal Ann Dr/Clover St' or 'Clover St/Royal Ann Dr & Decoto Rd'. Notice that in the first example name, the 'Royal Ann Dr' appears before the (/) because the stop is on the 'Royal Ann' side of the intersection. Similarly, in the second example name, 'Clover St' appears before the (/) because the stop is on the Clover St side of the intersection.

Addressed Stop Name

17. Stop names with numbered address should always begin with the address number. A stop at 123 Main St should be named as '123 Main St', not as 'Main St at 123.' Stop names other than the numbered address should NEVER start with a number. If there is a street name that begins with a number (e.g., 5 St) the number should be replaced with the corresponding word (e.g., Fifth St).
18. The stops that are not at an intersection but identified using a well known entity/business should be named using the numbered address with hyphenated name of the known entity. For example, 'Fitzgerald Ave at Sizzler' should be renamed to '3483 Fitzgerald Ave-Sizzler'. This allows user to approximately locate the stop on a digital map and at the same time know that it is near the Sizzler restaurant.
19. Stop names like 'Gurdwara Cul-de-sac' should be avoided. It does not provide a good sense of the location. A better option would be the address on Gurdwara Rd with hyphenated information like '251 Gurdwara Rd-Sikh Gurdwara.'

Stops at Landmarks

20. Stop names at landmarks/known places should be fully qualified. For example, 'San Carlos Caltrain Station' is preferred over 'San Carlos Caltrain' or 'San Carlos Station.' If commuters regularly identify a landmark/known place in a more abbreviated manner, provide those alternate names in the alias file. For example, 'San Carlos Caltrain' and 'San Carlos Station' should be aliases to 'San Carlos Caltrain Station.'
21. When a stop is located within a larger known place/area the stop name should start with the larger place/area name followed by a hyphenated more specific location name. For example, 'University of California Berkeley-Business School', 'College of San Mateo-CSM Dr', 'Southland Mall-Macy's', 'Millbrae Bart-Bay 5', or 'South San Francisco Bart-Bay 7 Eastside.'
22. A period may be used if it is part of the landmark name. For example, 'O.com Coliseum'. An alias 'O dot com Coliseum' may be provided.

Extra Qualifiers in Stop Names

23. Extra qualifying information in a stop name such as 'overpass' in 'Ralston Ave & Hwy 101 overpass' should be hyphenated as 'Ralston Ave & Hwy 101-Overpass.' Another example is 'El Camino Real & Alta Loma-Stairway' or 'Hwy 1 & Hwy 35-Bus Pad.'

Shared and Non-Revenue Stops

24. If transit agencies share a physical stop location, the stop name should be the same in stop inventories of all agencies sharing the stop. This will help regional information dissemination.
25. Non-revenue/non-public stop names should either be removed from data dissemination or attributed as 'NR' so that they can be filtered out from public dissemination.