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All aboard

If your role is to connect with the public and deliver information that affects our passengers’ daily commutes, this guide is for you.

These guidelines outline our passenger communication style and the most effective ways of expressing it.

Find more resources, including passenger communications assets at:

soundtransit.org/brand
**Style strategy**

As we serve Link, Sounder and ST Express passengers, it’s important that we keep them informed of any changes or updates to their commutes. Our communications style is easy to understand, visually engaging, friendly and consistent — which gives our riders confidence that we will transport them to destinations safely and on schedule.

Use this guide to ensure that our visuals and voice are consistent across all of our customer touchpoints.
There are many ways we connect with our passengers and they connect to us. We call these connections touchpoints. These touchpoints keep them informed and updated, so they can manage their daily commutes or plan ahead for evening and weekend trips.

Our passenger communications style is consistent across all of our customer touchpoints. It’s easy to understand, and it’s relatable, so we can better serve the diverse communities within our service area.
Customer journey

All of our customer touchpoints have distinct purposes. They allow us to connect with riders to deliver specific types of content and provide a better user experience. Here are three main purposes:

**Alert**

Notifications — digital and print — with the purpose of calling attention to temporary changes or service disruptions, and giving riders our alternatives.

**Inform**

These provide more content and tools to help riders understand the system and stay aware of the latest developments.

**Update**

Notifications — digital and physical — with the purpose of updating service changes or the conclusion of service disruptions.
Below are some examples of our communications style.

**Sound Transit**

**Passenger Communications Style Guide**

v1.0 | May 2021

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Below are some examples of our communications style.

**Alert**

- Customer touchpoints: SoundTransit.org
  - Ride with Us
  - Service alerts
  - The Platform blog
  - ST microsites

- Social media
  - Paid
  - Organic

- Email
  - Text messages

**Inform**

- Print
  - Temporary signage
  - Brochures and rack cards
  - Posters and channel cards
  - Vinyl banners
  - Displays

**Update**

- Sound Transit
- Passenger Communications Style Guide
  - v1.0
  - May 2021
Style expression

When presenting ourselves to our riders, all of our information should have a consistent look, feel and tone — in other words, a unified style expression. This improves our riders’ experience, because it’s identifiable, relatable and builds trust in our brand promise.

The following elements make up our style expression:

- Voice and tone
- Colors
- Typography
- Iconography
- Illustration
- Photography
These elements make up our style expression:
Hello. We’re Sound Transit.

Think of us as your smart and likable friend you can count on to help you navigate our system and keep you informed on the latest developments. Our trusted advice is simple, helpful and conversational. Our Voice and tone is:

Positive  Helpful
Conversational  Empathetic
Knowledgeable  Competent
Genuine  Confident

These guidelines give you some boundaries so no matter what you’re communicating, and to whom, it should feel like it’s coming from the same person.
Customer insights

People’s feelings and emotions are different, depending on the kind of information they seek or receive. Knowing and understanding this will help you craft messages to ease their concerns and guide them in a positive direction. Here are some examples:

**Alert**

Fear | Anticipation | Anger | Relief

“How am I going to make my connection?” to “It looks like there is another bus that will get me there.”

**Inform**

Caution | Uncertainty | Positivity | Excitement

“How do I take Link light rail to the airport?” to “Where do I put my luggage?” to “This is way better than driving and a lot cheaper than parking at SeaTac.”

**Update**

Anticipation | Relief | Excitement

“Are they almost done with that construction project?” to “This is going to make my commute so much easier.”
High-level messaging

When it comes to headlines and alerts, we want to ensure that they are simple, empathetic and convey competence. The tone needs to assure that we care about our riders and their concerns.

Alert

Please allow extra time.

Inform

Know before you go.

Update

Link light rail is back on track.
Colors meet the accessibility standard for sufficient contrast for readability. This applies in instances when text is placed on top of the color. Note the use of white text for darker colors and black text for lighter colors.

Use these colors for service lines on interactive/responsive web maps and in user interfaces.
Typography

Words communicate, and so do typefaces. They offer subtle visual cues to frame our messages, reinforce our identity, and complement our Voice and tone. Our Rider Information typeface families consist of Akzidenz Grotesk, Nunito Sans and Hind. Use Akzidenz Grotesk for print, social media, animations and video graphics. Use Nunito Sans and Hind for web (HTML) fonts on soundtransit.org.

Know before you go

So many ways to travel, so little time:

🔗 soundtransit.org

Ride with us

Looking for a stress-free, easy way to get around the Puget Sound? Just jump on Link light rail, Sounder train or a ST Express bus.

New to Sound Transit?
Typography

Print, video and social

Our core typeface, Akzidenz Grotesk, offers a clean and clear complement to our full style expression. Use it for printed materials, social media assets, videos and .gif animations.*

Akzidenz Grotesk Bold Italic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10234567890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Akzidenz Grotesk Regular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1234567890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Akzidenz Grotesk Bold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1234567890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Akzidenz Grotesk Regular Condensed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10234567890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Font licenses can be purchased through the [H. Berthold Typefoundry website](https://www.hberthold.com).
Web-based products
Our web and digital properties call for a more open-source typographic solution. Complementary to our core typeface, **Nunito Sans + Hind** together set the standard on our agency website and outreach microsites.* Use Nunito Sans for headlines and subheads, and use Hind for bodycopy.

*NBoth webfonts can be found, license-free, at [fonts.google.com](http://fonts.google.com).*
Usage
Not all copy fits neatly into this style format. So use this as a starting point to help you design more elaborate communications.

Your Link to the airport

Fly past traffic with Link light rail. It's quick, easy and economical.

Getting to the airport takes just 38 minutes from the heart of downtown Seattle.

Check out our handy trip planner at soundtransit.org.

Call-to-action
soundtransit.org
Graphic assets

We’ve developed a library of visual elements that are available to better help you communicate with our riders.

For access to these and more assets, go to:

soundtransit.org/brand
Our icons are universal. They share ideas that bypass language and literacy barriers and act as a visual language to help our riders navigate our transit system. Our passenger communications icons are a branch of our larger icon family — simple, elegant shapes that successfully depict complex concepts and ideas.
Illustrations can often convey what photos can’t. When communicating simple ideas or complex instructions, we need visual tools that tell stories and inform our riders, often without the use of language.
Core elements

Use simple Illustrations, like these, in combination with other shapes and elements to create dynamic visual graphics. These and many more are available in the Sound Transit illustration library.
ST Vehicles

Here are two illustration styles of Sound Transit vehicles. Consider the final size, location and audience of your communications when choosing a style. The photo-realistic style is visually dynamic for promotions and sponsorships. The simple style illustrations are perfect for infographics and animations.

Photo-realistic vehicles

Simple style vehicles

Go to: https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/our-brand to download these images.
Principles and tips

Use illustrations for a purpose, not to decorate. They should communicate a single and specific scenario. Always be instructive and purposeful, never decorative or superfluous. Use the following tips to guide your communications.

Tell a clear story
Visual metaphors can communicate complex ideas and detailed instructions. Visual storytelling is about using metaphors to symbolize big ideas.
Simplify the story down to the basic elements to maintain clarity.

Use geometry and simple shapes
Keep shapes simple and geometric. For people, use real body postures and remember that the human form is never static.
Think in layers. The farther away from the focal point an object is, the less detail it needs.

Keep an open composition
Give the story room to breathe and don’t include unnecessary detail. Stay simple and maintain a central focal point. Elements that don’t add to the story can be eliminated.
Principles and tips

Good compositions can communicate valuable information nonverbally, which makes translations easier and promotes positive brand equity.

Show diversity
Illustrations can effectively portray diversity and inclusion for all of our passengers and the communities we serve.

Friendly, approachable and authentic
Our employees are friendly, helpful and approachable. Use our illustrations to communicate this to our audience, so they feel comfortable in our stations and on our vehicles.

Use the brand colors
ST brand colors should be dominant in every composition, to maintain accuracy and consistency. When our materials are consistent, they are easily noticeable and identifiable, even when placed out of context.
Our photo library has a unique style that beautifully features our services and stations. There are hundreds of images to help riders understand our system better. When selecting photos, consider the nonverbal information in the composition and how it supports the message of your communications.
Considerations

Use these tips to help you select the right photography for your projects.

**Do this:**
Select close-up images to capture specific information and clearly show the Sound Transit vehicle.

Always portray our ambassadors as friendly, approachable and helpful. This builds trust with our riders. Show their faces and let the image tell a story.

Select images of passengers that are interesting and have a purpose. Show diversity and authenticity. This ensures that passengers will feel welcome on our system.

**Don’t do this:**
While this photo shows an ST bus, it’s not prominent in the picture and looks incidental to the scene. The location is meaningless and the passengers appear without purpose. The image tells nothing about our services, our stations or our passengers.
Examples

To provide context and demonstrate how to apply these guidelines, the following section contains examples of some common forms of rider communications. Note the consistent use of visuals and voice from one touchpoint to another.

For access to these and more assets, contact:

✉️ STbrand@soundtransit.org
Soundstransit.org and ST microsites are the hubs where riders get information and updates. When producing content, use descriptive photography or simple illustrations to clearly communicate information and shape a user-friendly experience.
Sound Transit videos are one of our most engaging channels for passenger communications. Good typography and graphics shape the details of the video and pass on information seamlessly to the viewers.

**Title card/intro**

Use bold type and a colored outline box to contain the title and logos. The color should match the service line or construction project featured in the video. If necessary, use a darker tone within the box to maximize contrast and legibility.

**Captions/infographics/lower thirds**

Use white type for names and job titles. Add a color underline to identify the service line or construction project.

Use white type and colored outline boxes. The color of the outline box should match the service lines or construction project.
Social media

Profiles and covers

The Sound Transit logo is consistent across all social media platforms for ease of recognition and readability. Use only the ST letter graphic as our profile image and select dynamic photos from the ST photo library for the Cover Photo. All of the elements work together to create a branded space.

Profile Image: ST icon on Dark Wave Blue as the default image for all social media platforms.

Cover Photo: Use ST photos and the transit line graphic.
Social media

Service alerts

Sound Transit service alerts are clear, easy to read and consistent. They call attention to the type of alert, while the copy in the social post communicates more specific information and/or hyperlinks to the page on ST.org.

Twitter/Facebook

Sizes
Twitter/Facebook: 1200 x 675 pixels
Instagram Stories: 1080 x 1920 pixels

Always check that social media graphics are consistent with the Service Alerts on the soundtransit.org homepage.
Service changes and updates

Use accurate photos and graphic icon tags to make these easy to read, even on the smallest digital devices. Call attention to the type of alert and let the copy in social post give the details.

Twitter/Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Proposed Service Changes 540, 541 &amp; 545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Proposed Service Changes 557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>New stop on Jackson St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Social media Examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sizes
Twitter/Facebook: 1200 x 628 pixels
Instagram Stories: 1080 x 1920 pixels

Always cross-check that the social media images and information are accurate and match the content posted on soundtransit.org.
Consistent use of Sound Transit icons, illustrations and colors make these easy to identify and understand.

Brochures and rack cards communicate detailed rider information, like maps, schedules and updates. All materials are available in alternative formats. To request a brochure in an alternative format, call 1-888-889-6368 (TTY: 711) or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.
Temporary signage is essential for alerting and informing passengers in our stations and vehicles. Consistent use of fonts, iconography and colors give visual cues to understanding the sign's intention at a glance.

Templates have been created to ensure design consistency and information hierarchies.
Promotional and public service posters and banners, unlike temporary signage, can have more personality because the messages are generally more broad and brand-focused. These are often placed in less visible locations, so they rely on bright colors and illustrations to capture the viewer’s attention.
For most passenger communications, the messages are clear and simple. Use multiple touchpoints to ensure that riders get the information they need. Temporary signage, text messages and social media are applied to get the main message out to the public, and soundtransit.org is the hub for more detailed information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary peak-hour service reduction</td>
<td>Link will run every 12 minutes during peak hours on weekdays. Service during all other periods remains unchanged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, please call 888-889-6368 / TTY: 711
Examples

Campaigns

For big events, like system changes and station openings, a full campaign of communications is necessary to inform our riders at multiple touchpoints. Consistent messaging and graphic standards provide clarity, so our riders can understand the message and gain confidence in our services.

Paid social media

Organic social media

Soundtransit.org

Display sign

On-board posters/channel cards

In-station vinyl banners
For more information about this style guide and to access assets and templates, contact:

✉️ STbrand@soundtransit.org