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Sound Transit style guidelines

Sound Transit's Communications Department compiled this style guide to maintain a high-quality standard across all agency communications. Whether producing materials for the public or employees, it is important for grammar, naming and style conventions, voice, usage, tone and design elements to remain consistent across flyers, brochures, newsletters and other written communications.

Communications asks all employees who write for the agency to follow these guidelines.

The department based Sound Transit style on the Associated Press Stylebook for the following reasons:

- AP style is the commonly accepted journalistic standard for usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- As the standard style guide for most U.S. newspapers, magazines and public relations firms, readers have familiarity with this style.
More important than blindly following rules, the Communications Department seeks to make publications as clear and consistent as possible. There are times when AP (even Merriam-Webster) guidelines are awkward, do not fit the goals of a Sound Transit publication or are inconsistent with transit industry standards, so this style guide contains a few customized exceptions.

As a living document, this guide will receive periodic updates. Please contact the department if you have additional style or grammar questions we can address in future editions.

Please contact Galen Crawford, Ext. 7526, if you have style guideline questions or additional entries you would like to see in future editions.
Corporate and service mode information
Use the following when preparing external and internal publications or reports:

Logos

Sound Transit logo: Include the Sound Transit logo on all publications or reports, preferably on the first page. [Graphic files for download and guidelines are available here.]

Program logos: Individual program and service line logos (Link light rail, Sounder and ST Express regional bus) are for use only on signage and equipment.

Use of agency and service names:

Sound Transit: Two words. Do write using all capital letters. Do not abbreviate to ST in public documents. Use our legal name — The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority — in contracts and board resolutions and actions. All other public documents should use Sound Transit.

ST Express regional bus: The name ST Express refers to the regional express bus routes Sound Transit operates. Do not refer to the buses as REX in public documents. Avoid using all capital letters, italics or quotation marks when referring to ST Express.
**Link**

Use Link light rail on first reference. May refer to as Link on later references. As a generic term, Link is inclusive of all five current or future lines (Orange, Red, Blue, Green and Purple). Avoid using all capital letters, italics or placing in quotation marks. Do not hyphenate light rail, even when used as a compound adjective. (Wrong: *They delivered light-rail cars to Tacoma in September 2002.*)

To reinforce an understanding of existing service as the Red Line and Orange Line, begin pairing references to Tacoma Link and the Orange Line, and refer to service from University of Washington to Angle Lake or points in between as the Red Line. Examples: *He traveled from the University of Washington to Sea-Tac Airport via the Red Line. The Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension will more than double the length of Tacoma Link, the Orange Line.* Avoid referring to the Orange Line as a streetcar, and avoid the acronyms LRT and LRV. Refer to vehicles as cars or light rail vehicles, and refer to a set of linked cars as a train. See [project names](#), [Red Line](#), [Blue Line](#), [Green Line](#) and [Orange Line](#).

**Sounder**

Refer to as Sounder on all references. Avoid use of “commuter rail” as much as possible. Avoid using all capital letters, italics or quotation marks when referring to Sounder. For the service running from Everett to Seattle, use Sounder North. For the service running from Lakewood/Tacoma to Seattle, use Sounder South. Do not use North Sounder, South Sounder, Sounder north line or Sounder south line.

**STRIDE**

Stride is the name for I-405 and SR 522 bus rapid transit that will connect to light rail and communities north east and south of Lake Washington. Bus rapid transit is a new high-capacity transit service that utilizes features such as specialized buses with multiple doors for fast entry and exit; platform-level boarding; and off-board fare payment, as well as new bus lanes and transit priority improvements, to provide fast,
frequent and reliable service similar to rail on rubber tires. Stride and ST Express are not interchangeable. Look for more editorial guidelines as Stride service begins in 2024.

**STart:** Refer to as the Sound Transit Art Program on first reference and **STart** (with “art” italicized, no space) on later references.

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**Standard statements**

For inclusion in printed materials prepared for broad distribution to the public and/or employees:

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**Sound Transit mission statement:**
Connecting more people to more places to make life better and create equitable opportunities for all.

**Address/phone/internet:**
Sound Transit Union Station, 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104-2826, 1-800-201-4900 / 1-888-889-6368 / TTY Relay: 711, main@soundtransit.org, soundtransit.org.

**Contact information:**
**General** – For information about Sound Transit projects or services, visit us online at soundtransit.org or call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay: 711. Sign up for service alerts and other updates at soundtransit.org/subscribe.

**Project** – For more information about [insert project/service/topic], contact [insert contact name] at [insert phone] or [insert email]. Or visit us online at soundtransit.org.
Rider information – For [insert Sounder, ST Express or Link light rail] rider information, call toll free 1-888-889-6368 / TTY Relay: 711 or visit soundtransit.org.

ADA statement:
For information in alternative formats, call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org. Please direct requests for an accommodation to participate in a public meeting to organizers of the meeting. For assistance, contact Accessible Services Manager Donna Smith at 206-370-5534.

Construction hotline:
If you have concerns or complaints about construction activities, please call the 24-Hour Construction Hotline at 888-298-2395.

Web subscription:
To receive email updates about this project, subscribe online at soundtransit.org.

Title VI, translation requirements, foreign language block

Title VI comments:
Sound Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been unlawfully discriminated against for these reasons may file a complaint with Sound Transit.

Obtain more information on Sound Transit’s Title VI Policy and the procedures to file a complaint via one of the following:
• Calling 888-889-6368; TTY Relay: 711.
• Emailing stdiscriminationcomplaint@soundtransit.org.
• Visiting our offices located at 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104.
File a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building, fifth floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590 or call 888-446-4511.

If you have questions about Title VI regulations please contact Small Business Program Specialist Mitzi McMahan (mitzi.mcmahan@soundtransit.org).

**Determining languages for translation and interpretation** (Title VI requirement)

Early in the process, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff are available to provide data to help determine Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons in the project area. Contact GIS staff (Charlie Morton Charlie.morton@soundtransit.org or Mike Strong mike.strong@soundtransit.org) for further assistance.

Limited English Proficiency persons must receive equal access to information. In the early planning/outreach phase staff determines, through GIS data, investigation and work within the community, where there is a need for translation and/or interpretation services, and which languages are prevalent/meet the legal threshold (?). LEP individuals can also request services.

**Translation services for limited English proficiency persons** (Title VI requirement)

The pictogram should not take place of a language block, but it should accompany the language block. If you are using a language block, please include the pictogram to public documents.
Foreign Language Block (Title VI requirement)
For information about a project or transportation service, please call the language line (Language Link) at 1-800-823-9230. The caller must identify the language they seek to the customer service representative, who then conferences in a translator. A three-way call will take place between the person requesting help, the translator and the customer service representative.

Spanish: (Arial Unicode)
Para obtener información sobre el proyecto, llame al 1-800-823-9230.

Chinese: (Arial Unicode)
欲知關於此項目的資訊，請致電 1-800-823-9230.

Korean: (Arial Unicode)
프로젝트에 관한 정보를 위해, 1-800-823-9230로 전화 부탁드립니다.

Japanese: (Arial Unicode)
プロジェクトについて情報が必要な方は 1-800-823-9230 までお電話ください。

Russian: (Arial Unicode)
За информацией об этом проекте обращайтесь по телефону 1-800-823-9230.

Ukranian: (Arial Unicode)
За інформацією щодо проекту звертайтеся за телефоном 1-800-823-9230.

Tagolog: (Arial Unicode)
Para sa impormasyon tungkol sa proyektong ito, tumawag sa 1-800-823-9230.
Somali: (Arial Unicode)
Wixii macluumaad ah ee mashruuca ku saabsan, lahadal 1-800-823-9230.

Vietnamese: (Arial Unicode)
Để biết thông tin về dự án, hãy gọi số 1-800-823-9230.

Amharic: (Nyala with Arial phone #)

Arabic (Times Roman with Arial phone #)
الاتصال على الرقم التالي: 9230-823-800-1 لحصول على معلومات بشأن المشروع، يُرجى

Khmer (Khmer Sangam MN with Arial phone #)

From Google translate:
Tigrinya: (Kefa with Arial phone #)

For quick, accurate translation services for any printed material, email Sound Transit’s Dynamic Language Account Manager Kimm Lee at kimm@dynamiclanguage.com and include the following required information:

- The text to be translated, either in the body of the email or (preferably) in attached documents so that translators can see context in the document.
- Which languages you are requesting.
- Your deadline (rush fee may apply, so provide plenty of lead time).
• Account code. This is very important to include from the outset, so that the Communications Department can promptly pay invoices.

If you have questions about which languages you need to include, please contact Small Business Program Specialist Mitzi McManan
(mitzi.mcmahan@soundtransit.org).

Meeting interpretation and announcements:
Arrange interpreters with sufficient notice by contacting Dynamic Language Account Manager Kimm Lee at kimm@dynamiclanguage.com. For announcements, include foreign language block and pictogram as appropriate.

10 rules for writing for the web
People read web content differently than they do printed publications. A few things to keep in mind when putting web content together are simplicity, skimming ability and white space.

1. Write short — make every word count: You are not a writer now; you are an information provider. Write 50 percent shorter than you would for print. Paragraphs no more than three or four sentences. CUT lead-ins, CUT introductions for table of contents. Shorten intros for lists tables.

2. Assume people will scan, and help them: Write for scanners by using bullet points, “five ways to” or steps in a process. Break the information down into components.

3. Write functional, explanatory headlines: Headlines are very important online, in fact, they may be all people read. Be functional and tell the reader exactly what information is going to follow. Give yourself some time to write great headlines with active verbs: Specific subject + dynamic active verb + specific object. Only capitalize the first word of a headline and proper nouns. A comma can replace “and” in
headlines. You can use numerals in headlines, such as: 5 ways to catch a phish

4. Use simple, clear, objective language whenever possible. Objective language is fair and accurate; it avoids exaggeration and bias and shows respect for the views of others. Everyday language, opinions and marketing text are subjective. If someone is using subjective language, they may include words such as delicious, interesting, horrible, which are opinions. This is also the difference between “showing” and “telling.” Instead of telling your reader the event is exciting, use language that describes what could make the event exciting.

5. Use white space strategically: No large blocks of text. The amount of white space is more important than the length of your story. If a story is long, use subheadings to help break up blocks of text.

6. Use the inverted pyramid style: Include the most important information first. Scanners who read just the first screen will get all the important information.

7. Use hyperlinks properly: Empower readers to decide how much information they want. Give people a jumping-off point. Do not duplicate what is already on the web.

8. Limit your use of graphics: Select graphics carefully to illustrate and clarify content. Be careful not to crowd text or dilute messages with overuse of images. To the extent possible, only use graphics or photos produced by the Communications department.

9. Do not make web stories look like print stories: The eye moves differently when looking at a web page. Avoid graphics in the middle of a web page or complex sidebars.

10. Update when it makes sense: Web page content changes at different times. It depends on the amount of detail provided online and how quickly decisions and changes occur in projects. (Update triggers: A mailer, ad or event that drives people to your portion of the web, a news article surrounding your subject matter, or a major change in a service or project.)
Style guide entries

A

a, an Use the article a before consonant sounds: historic event, a one-year term (sounds as if it begins with a w), a united stand (sounds like you). Use the article an before vowel sounds: an energy crisis, an honorable man (the h is silent), an NBA record (sounds like it begins with the latter e), an 1890s celebration.

abbreviations and acronyms

- Avoid alphabet soup. Do not use an abbreviation or acronym that the reader would not recognize quickly. **When in doubt, spell it out.**
- Avoid following the name of an organization, project or program with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes; Associated Press style never places an acronym in parentheses. *State Department of Ecology (DOE).* If the abbreviation or acronym would not be clear to readers on second reference without a parenthetical introduction, avoid using it. Instead, use a shortened version of the name or a generic word, such as *the agency, the committee, the department or the company.*
- Omit periods in most abbreviations unless the result would spell an unrelated word: *M.A.N. built the buses.* There are exceptions to this rule.
- You may use many abbreviations in tabulations, certain types of technical writing, and internal reports and documents.
- If the meaning is clear, you may use abbreviations in headlines and headings.
- States (Read more under state names):
  - Avoid using state abbreviations in headlines whenever possible.
  - Abbreviations of states DO NOT use postal codes.
  - Always spell out the following states in datelines or text: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

academic degrees

- If mention of a degree is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as *John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology.*
- Capitalize an academic major only if the discipline is a proper noun. *She holds a master’s in French literature. Bachelor of Arts in English. Degree in pharmacy.*

- Use an apostrophe in *bachelor’s degree, a master’s*, etc., but there is no possessive in *Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science*. Also: *an associate degree* (no possessive).

- Use such abbreviations as *B.A., M.A., LL.D.* and *Ph.D.* only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name — never after just a last name.

- When used after a name, set an academic abbreviation off by commas: *John Snow, Ph.D., spoke.*

- Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference. Not: *Dr. John Snow, PhD.*

**academic offices, departments** Formally named academic offices are generally capitalized. AP would lowercase advertising communications program in a news story, even though a school might capitalize it.

**accident, collision** Avoid the words accident or crash when referring to collisions between buses, trains, people walking and people cycling. Accident implies that the event is unavoidable and implies a lack of fault by any party. Overuse of the term accident can minimize or trivialize injuries or fatalities. Also, two objects must be in motion before they can collide. A moving train cannot collide with a stopped train. Use collision with caution.

**active vs. passive verbs** If you take one thing from this guide, it is this: Use active voice whenever possible. A verb is active when it shows that the subject acts or does something: *The woman caught the bus. The council passed the resolution unanimously.* A verb is passive when the subject of the verb is acted upon: *The bus was caught by the woman. The resolution was passed unanimously by the council.* The active voice is simpler, more direct, more forceful and makes the subject take responsibility for actions. Passive voice may be acceptable when the person or thing receiving the action is more important than the person or thing doing the acting. Also, avoid shifts between active and passive within a sentence. Change: *Sounder riders were impacted by mudslides on Monday to Mudslides delayed and canceled Sounder trains on Monday.*
**actually** Vague, overused, nearly always superfluous. Avoid. Change: *They actually finished the project on time*. To: *They finished the project on time.*

**addresses**

- Always use numerals for an address number: She lived at 531 Pine Rd.
- Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as a street name: The bus drove down Second Avenue.
- Use numerals with two letters for 10th and above: She lived on 22nd Street.
- Always spell out and capitalize the full name of a street, avenue, road or boulevard when used without a number: He lived on South Washington Street, Pennsylvania Avenue. You may leave off the words, street, avenue, road and boulevard on later references.
- Lowercase street, avenue, boulevard or road when using the plural form: The Bellevue Transit Center is between 108th and 110th avenues northeast on Northeast Sixth Street. Do not lowercase those words when the form is not plural: You can catch a bus on Second or Third Avenue. Also, lowercase and spell out street, avenue, boulevard or road when used alone: He drove down the tree-lined boulevard.
- Abbreviate compass points (all caps and periods) used to show directional ends of a street or quadrants of a city in a numbered address: The building is at 543 N.W. 252nd St. **Exception:** Omit periods in compass points for ST maps, postcards and project folios.
- Do not abbreviate if omitting the number: The building is on Northwest 252nd Street.
- Abbreviate only avenue, boulevard and street as Ave., Blvd. and St. when used with a numbered address: Sound Transit is located at 401 S. Jackson St., 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Or when part of a station name: Tukwila International Blvd. Station.
- It is acceptable to abbreviate street names in tables or on maps. You may also eliminate periods in directions on maps and ST postcards (more information on this ST-specific rule is coming.) **Exception to the rule about spelling out directional names without an address:** MLK Jr. Way S. or in a folio, MLK Jr Way S.
- Always spell out words such as alley, drive, road, way and terrace. Capitalize them when part of a formal name: He worked on Holman Road Northwest. Lowercase when used alone or with two or more names: The crew will repave Holman and Somerset roads.
- **Exceptions:** You can use abbreviations in situations when there are foreseeable restraints in the size of the copy. These exceptions are in maps, signage and if the abbreviated form is the official name of the center or station.
administration (presidential) It is the Trump administration (lowercase a). Reason (per AP Stylebook): It is lowercase as a descriptive, collective term for the executive branch of government. The lowercase usage helps differentiate it from the formal names of various U.S. agencies, including the Federal Housing Administration, Food and Drug Administration and National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

affect, effect Often misused or confused. Usually used as a verb, affect means "to influence, to have an effect on." Construction will affect Link service. Avoid using the noun version of affect (pronounced AFF-ect) from the field of psychology: The gambler’s flat, emotionless affect served him well at the poker table. Effect is usually a noun, meaning "result" or "consequence." The total effect of the project was disappointing. Effect is sometimes used as a verb, meaning "to cause, to bring about, to produce." She will effect many changes in the group. But use those other simpler, clearer terms instead. Use impact sparingly. Do not use impacted.

alignment The horizontal and vertical path followed by a rail line, busway, transitway or other public work. For public-facing documents, use route or route and station locations instead. Alignment is fine for technical documents.

annual Avoid the term “first annual.”

annual meeting Lowercase in all uses.

anytime vs. any time Anytime is an adverb that means “whenever” or “at any time.” Call me anytime. When in doubt, write any time as two words, which is what writers used to do. It might look a little old-fashioned, but it will not be wrong. If you are not sure if you are using anytime as an adverb, try substituting some other adverb like “quickly or “loudly.” My new bicycle allows me to go anywhere quickly. If the adverb works, then it’s OK to make anytime one word. 

- If you are using a preposition like at, you have to make it two words. They could call at any time.
- Use two words if talking about an amount of time: Do you have any time to speak to us today?

AP Acceptable on second reference for The Associated Press. On second reference use AP or the AP (only capitalize the article when using the formal name).
at-grade Describing a junction or intersection where two or more transport axes cross at the same level (or grade). See *hyphens*.

B

backward Not backwards.

baiku Sound Transit's Bicycle Program uses this to mean bike-related haiku, which is a Japanese verse form, rendered in English as three unrhymed lines of 5, 7 and 5 syllables respectively (total 17 syllables), often on some subject in nature. (Singular and plural)

beside, besides Often confused. Beside means "at the side of or "next to." Besides means "also, in addition to or other than." See *in addition to*.

biannual, biennial Biannual means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual. Biennial means every two years.

Blue Line Effective September 2019, refer to East Link only when discussing construction-related issues. Use Blue Line when describing the service that opens in 2023. Examples:

*Two new Blue Line stations open in 2024 at Marymoor Park and Redmond Town Center.*
*When the Blue Line opens in 2023, trains will serve 19 stations from Overlake to Northgate.*
*The Blue Line includes 10 new stations in Judkins Park, Mercer Island, Bellevue and Overlake.*
*The Red and Blue lines will combine for service every four minutes from International District/Chinatown Station to Northgate.*

bulleted lists, lists AP uses em dashes (which are the width of a capital M) instead of bullets to introduce individual sections of a list; others may choose to use bullets. Put a space between the dash or bullet and the first word of each item in the list. Capitalize the first word following
the dash or bullet. Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each section, whether it is a full sentence or a phrase. See one-word bullet lists as completing a single sentence with each bullet point.

The flag is:
- Red.
- White.
- Blue.

- Use your best judgment if creating bullet lists for a PowerPoint, postcard, poster or flyer. Sometimes periods just do not look right.
- Use parallel construction for each item in a list:
  - Start with the same part of speech for each item (in this example, a verb).
  - Use the same verb tense for each item.
  - Use the same sentence type (statement, question, exclamation) for each item.
  - Use the same voice (active or passive) for each item.
  - Use just a phrase for each item.
- Introduce the list with a short phrase or sentence: Our partners: or These are our partners: or Our partners are:

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Use on first reference. BNSF railway or the railway is acceptable on second reference.

bus, buses Avoid jargony or branded terms such as Gillig or New Flyer or MCI. Acceptable descriptions include 40-foot, 60-foot, articulated, charter, double deck, double decker, express (unless ST Express), feeder, intercity, longer, regional, shorter.

- Use the verb forms: bus, bused, busing. Not bussed, bussing. You may use coach as a noun to avoid redundancy, especially in employee and transit publications.

bus stop Two words.

busway Exclusive right-of-way for buses only. One word.
capitalization

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Excessive capitalization, rather than highlighting words, impedes reading. If there is no listing in this manual for a particular word, consult Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary. Avoid capitalizing all the letters in more than one or two words in a sentence. For emphasis instead, try other typographical uses: boldfacing, italics, underlining, different typefaces.

Some basic principles:

- **Proper Nouns**: Capitalize nouns that constitute the unique identification for a specific person, place, or thing: *John, Mary, America, Boston, England*. Some words, such as the examples just given, are always proper nouns. Some common nouns receive proper noun status when used as the name of a particular entity: *General Electric, Gulf Oil*.

- Capitalize common nouns such as *party, river, street* and *west* when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing: *Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia*.

- Lowercase these common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent references: *the party, the river, the street*.

- Lowercase the common noun elements of names in plural uses: *the Democratic and Republican parties, Main and State streets, lakes Erie and Ontario*. Exception: Capitalize plurals of formal titles with full names: *Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump*.

- Capitalize the names of rail stations or transit hubs, for example: *International District Station, Tacoma Dome Station*.

- Capitalize transit centers when using the full title, for example: *Bellevue Transit Center, Aurora Village Transit Center*.

- Capitalize recognized districts, for example: *International District, University District, Tacoma Theater District*. Use SODO for the area in Seattle south of the International District and north of Georgetown. See *University District*.
 Capitalize *Sound Transit Board* or *Sound Transit Board of Directors* on all references. In a deviation from AP-based style, please uppercase *Board* when used alone in reference to the Sound Transit Board: *The Board will meet next Thursday.* The word remains lowercase (per AP Style) when referring to boards other than Sound Transit.

 Boardmember is **one word** and capitalized when it appears before a name. However, it is **two words** when referring to board members (*this same rules applies to Councilmember _____ and council members)*: *Boardmember Claudia Balducci toured the site. Claudia Balducci spoke to a room filled with Board members (if the ST Board; board members if generic board).*

 Capitalize *chair* when used as a formal title before the name of a person in a council or committee position: *Sound Transit Chair John Marchione spoke to the press.* Lowercase when used generically. *The chair called the meeting to order.*

 Spell out and capitalize the full name of the Sound Transit Board committees. The standing committees are: *Executive Committee, Rider Experience and Operations Committee, System Expansion Committee, and Finance and Audit Committee.* Avoid turning the name into an acronym.

 **city, cities:** Capitalize the names of cities and towns in all uses.

  o Capitalize “city” only as part of a proper name: *Kansas City, Salt Lake City* or when it is part of the full name of a governing body or formal title *Seattle City Council, City Manager Frank Smith.* Lowercase when not part of a proper name or formal title, *city Health Commissioner, city government,* and all city of phrases.

  o The AP rule for all “city of” formulations: Lowercase “city” unless “city” is part of the formal name: *The city of Spokane approved its annual budget last night. City of Angels.* Lowercase when referring to geographic description or multiple jurisdictions.

  o **city of:** Capitalize “city of” constructions in folios, postcards or other project documents if the city is in a partnership relationship with Sound Transit. *City of Tacoma, City of Seattle.* In keeping with AP Style, please do not uppercase city of constructions across the board or when referring to cities that are not working with ST.): *The city of Spokane approved its budget. The city has*
many historic resources. The Puget Sound Regional Council members include more than 80 entities, including King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties, as well as cities, towns, ports, state and local transportation agencies, and tribal governments within the region.

- Capitalize city when part of a formal title before a name: City Manager Francis McGrath. Lowercase city when not part of a name or formal title: city Health Commissioner Frank Smith. Lowercase when not part of a proper name or formal title: city Health Commissioner, city government.

- **job titles**: Capitalize specific job titles preceding a person’s name; do not capitalize descriptions. For example, Marketing Director John Doe is correct, but Marketing Chief John Doe is not, unless “marketing chief” is John Doe’s actual title. After a name, titles are lowercase regardless of whether they are specific or general. Exceptions are letter salutations, program or flyer listings, etc. Sound Transit’s Chief Executive Officer Peter Rogoff addressed a packed house. Peter Rogoff, chief executive officer, has been at Sound Transit since January 2016. Never capitalize ordinary job titles in isolation. The park ranger asked for our permit is a mere description and needs no emphasis. If someone no longer holds a position, what appears to be specific becomes an apposition, part of a job description rather than a title: former marketing director John Doe. Summary: Only capitalize a job title if it is the exact wording, if it appears immediately before a name and if it is not itself preceded by a qualifier (former, for example) or an article (a, an, the) or followed by a comma.

- Capitalize anything you are using as a proper name, including a job title or description when it is standing in for a name, “I’ll get right on it, Chief,” “I’ll let Mom know,” but not “I saw your mom yesterday.”

- Capitalize the full name of programs, projects or plans adopted formally by the Sound Transit Board. Otherwise, avoid capitalizing them. Always lowercase program, project or plan when the word stands alone or when using only part of the formal name. The Sound Transit Board adopted the System Expansion Implementation Plan. The plan implements Sound Transit’s expansion projects. See projects and service names.
• Unless part of a formal name, Washington state is not capitalized; Washington State is a university. (Ignore spellcheck when it tries to capitalize outside this rule.)

• **committee**: Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when part of a formal name: *the House Appropriations Committee*. Do not capitalize committee in shortened versions of long committee names: The Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, for example, becomes *the Senate banking committee*.

• Lowercase legislature when used generically: *No legislature has approved the amendment*.

• Capitalize *No-Build Alternative* and full names of alternatives: *Ballard Alternative, Tacoma Dome Alternative*, etc. Do not capitalize “alternatives” when used generically. *Sound Transit evaluated alternatives for the Ballard Station*.

• Capitalize recognized districts, for example: *International District, University District, Tacoma Theater District*. See *University District*.

• **academic titles**: Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as chancellor, chairperson, etc., when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere. Lowercase modifiers such as department in department Chairman Jerome Wiesner.

• **academic departments**: Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives: *The department of history, the history department, the department of English, the English department*, or when department is part of the official and formal name: *University of Connecticut Department of Economics*.

• **Sound Transit departments**: In a departure from Associated Press style guidelines, do capitalize the names of all departments and divisions at Sound Transit and other agencies and organizations. *Communications Department*.

• Capitalize reservation when referring to an Indian tribe reservation (do not abbreviate reservation) *the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation*; however, lowercase if it is not part of the official name of a tribe. For example, it is just the Puyallup Tribe of
Indians. Check with the tribe to find out if it would be correct to also refer to them as the *Puyallup Nation*. In all cases, defer to a specific tribe’s preferences for how they want to be known.

- Capitalize the main words and enclose in quotation marks the titles of dissertations, essays, lectures, short musical compositions, short poems, short stories, songs, speeches, radio and television programs, articles in periodicals and chapters of books.

- Capitalize, but do not italicize, underline or enclose in quotation marks the names of brochures, bulletins and reports and catalogs of reference material, such as almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications.

- **constitution**: Capitalize references to the U.S. Constitution, with or without the U.S. modifier: *The president said he supports the Constitution*. When referring to constitutions of other nations or of states, capitalize only with the name of a nation or a state: the French Constitution, the Massachusetts Constitution, the nation’s constitution, the state constitution, the constitution. Lowercase in other uses: the organization’s constitution. Lowercase constitutional in all uses.

- **congressional**: Lowercase unless part of a proper name: congressional salaries, *the Congressional Quarterly, the Congressional Record*.

- **congressional districts**: Use figures and capitalize district when joined with a figure: *the 1st Congressional District, the 1st District*. Lowercase district whenever it stands alone.

- **ordinal directions**: Capitalize north, south, east, west and derivative words when they designate definite regions or are an integral part of a proper name. *Many waterskiers have relocated from the Northeast to the South*. Do not capitalize these words when they merely indicate direction or general location. *They headed south to Tacoma*.

**carpool** One word. You may use as a noun, verb or adjective: *The neighbors formed a carpool to save time and money. They carpooled to work to save time and money. She requested some carpool information.*
cellphone One word not two. Use mobile instead.

Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority The legal name of Sound Transit. Use the agency’s legal name only on contracts and board motions and resolutions. Do not refer to the agency as the RTA.

CenturyLink Field Football and soccer stadium in the SODO District.

cents For amounts less than a dollar, use figures, spell out, and lowercase cents. For larger amounts, use the $ sign and decimal system: 25 cents, $1.01, $4.50. Do not use the cents symbol: 50¢. Do not use zeros if there are no cents: $6, not $6.00. Including double zeroes is acceptable, however, when aligning multiple dollar amounts in charts and tables when some amounts include cents. See dollars.

charts, tables Charts and tables are useful in reports to present information concisely. They should have titles. When using several charts or tables, assign numbers. When referring to a chart or table in the text, capitalize the word chart or table and use the numeral: As Table 4 shows, ridership is increasing.

cliches A cliche is a phrase or opinion that is overused. It’s something a lot of people say all the time. Cliches in your writing reveal a lack of original thought. AP Stylebook writes, “It is tempting to advise writers to avoid cliches like the plague; they are the bane of our existence.” Get the picture? “Cliches are the junk food of the literary pantry, much loved by lazy writers. But platitudes and shopworn phrases serve as signals to the reader to move along, there’s nothing to see here. Don’t push readers away, or lull them to sleep. Engage them with original, specific phrasing.”

colon capitalization Capitalize the first word after a colon only when it’s a proper name or the start of a complete sentence or the first word in bulleted lists.

commas In general, to make the meaning clear, do not use a comma if it’s not needed. Use a comma if necessary for clarity and accuracy. Following are examples:
- Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in most simple series:
  - The flag is red, white and blue.
  - He would nominate Tom, Dick, Harry or Jeannette.

- Include a final (also called serial or Oxford) comma in a simple series if omitting it could make the meaning unclear. In the following example, if Schneider and Torres are the most trusted advisers, do not use the final comma: The governor convened his most trusted advisers, economist Olivia Schneider and polling expert Carlton Torres.

- If the governor is convening unidentified advisers plus Schneider and Torres, use the final comma: The governor convened his most trusted advisers, economist Olivia Schneider, and polling expert Carlton Torres.

- Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.

- In a complex series of phrases, use a comma before the concluding conjunction to aid readability: She opened the closet door, grabbed a coat, and picked up an umbrella. The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

- Very short introductory phrases don't require a comma unless ambiguity would result without it. In 2017 the company experienced …

- Introducing direct quotes: Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation within a paragraph. Wallace said, "She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent." But use a colon to introduce quotations of more than one sentence.

- Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: Correct: He said the victory put him "firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination." Not: He said the victory put him, “firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination.”
Before attribution: Use a comma instead of a period at the end of a quote that is followed by attribution: "Write clearly and concisely," she said.

Do not use a comma; however, if the quoted statement ends with a question mark or exclamation point: "Why should I?" he asked.

With hometowns and ages: Use a comma to set off an individual's hometown when it is placed next to a name: Mary Richards, Minneapolis, and Maude Findlay, Tuckahoe, New York, were there.

If using an individual's age, set it off by commas: Maude Findlay, 48, Tuckahoe, New York, was present.

Names of states and nations used with city names: His journey will take him from Dublin, Ireland, to Seattle, Washington, and back. The Tacoma, Washington, group saw the governor.

Use parentheses, however, if a state name is inserted within a proper name: The Huntsville (Alabama) Times. (Since this is a newspaper, you would not put it in italics, just straight text.)

With yes and no: Yes, I will be there.

In direct address: Mother, I will be home late. No, sir, I did not take it.

Separating similar words: Use a comma to separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing: What the problem is, is not clear.

In large figures: Use a comma for most figures greater than 999. The major exceptions are street addresses (1234 Main St.), broadcast frequencies (1460 kilohertz), room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers, and years (1876). See separate entries under these headings.
- Placement with quotes: Commas always go inside quotation marks.

- With full dates: When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with a comma: *Feb. 14, 2020, is the target date.*

**Commuter rail** Avoid when possible. In North American usage, commuter rail is typically understood to mean train operations between a central city, its suburbs and/or another central city with a focus on commute hours. Often shares tracks and/or employment arrangements with host freight railroads. ST branding for Sounder omits the words “commuter rail” because it is transit jargon and not all passengers are commuters. Just use Sounder.

**Composition titles** Capitalize all words in a title except articles (a, an, the); prepositions of three or fewer letters (for, of, on, up, etc.); and conjunctions of three or fewer letters (and, but, for, not, or, so, yet, etc.) unless any of those start or end the title. This applies to books, reports, long poems, long musical compositions, movies, newsletters, plays and works of art such as paintings and sculpture. Italicize the names of such works, or underline them if italic type is not available: *To Kill a Mockingbird, The Marriage of Figaro.*

- Capitalize an article — the, a, an — or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

**Construct** When used as a verb, try replacing with the simpler “build.” When used as a noun, construction is fine.

**Corridor** A long, relatively narrow area within a region that follows a general directional flow. Do not capitalize when referring to geographic location of corridors unless used in the formal title of a report: *north corridor, south corridor.*

**Cut and cover** A method of tunnel or tunnel station construction involving digging or “cutting” a trench along a route and “covering” it with a lid to form the tunnel or station. Hyphenate when used as an adjectival phrase: *Using the cut-and-cover construction method was less expensive than tunneling.*
coworking (n., adj.) vs. co-worker Sharing workspace and amenities, such as Wi-Fi, a printer, fax machine and the like, when people don’t actually work for the same company but instead are self-employed or remote workers. No hyphen for this use. But: co-worker for a colleague within the same company.

dates In reports, news releases and other materials for broad distribution, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. when used with a specific date: We opened the park-and-ride lot Feb. 11, 1997. Spell out these months in personal correspondence. Spell out when using a month alone or with a year alone. Do not separate the month and the year with a comma, unless used with a date: We plan to open the park-and-ride lot in November 1998. (Not November, 1998)

- **Seasons**: Lowercase when proceeding a year: The Northgate extension will open in fall 2021.
- Do not follow numerals used with dates with st, nd, rd or th. Instead of June 5th, write June 5.

decision-maker decision-maker, decision-making (two words, hyphenated) but policymakers.

degrees Doctorate preferred over the Ph.D. abbreviation. She holds a doctorate in public administration… X holds a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Central Oklahoma. AP stories generally use MBA (no periods). Capitalize formal names of a degree; make descriptive names lowercase.

departments and divisions Capitalize the names of all Sound Transit departments and divisions.

Department of Transportation Refer to the Washington State Department of Transportation as the state Department of Transportation. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms, such as WSDOT, on first reference.
**diagonal to** or **diagonally across from** Both are preferable to *kitty-corner*, which is OK. Don’t use *catty-corner* or *catercorner*. Cater, which means four, is obsolete.

**dimensions** Use figures and spell out *inches, feet, yards*, etc., to indicate depth, height, length and width. Hyphenate adjectival forms before nouns. EXAMPLES: *He is 5 feet, 6 inches tall. the 5-foot-6-inch man, the 5-foot man, the basketball team signed a 7-footer. The car is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide and 5 feet high. The rug is 9 feet by 12 feet, the 9-by-12 rug. The storm left 5 inches of snow. The building has 6,000 square feet of floor space.* Use an apostrophe to indicate feet and quote marks to indicate inches (*5’6”*) only in very technical contexts. Note: In the examples above, you can use a numeral with exact measurements — even numbers below 10.

**directional words ending in -ward** Virtually none of the following directional words ending with this suffix end with an s: *Toward, backward, forward, downward, upward, onward, outward, inward, southward, skyward, Earthward, heavenward, homeward.* British speakers say “towards,” but it is preferable in American English to omit the s.

**disabled** Recognize that people with disabilities have rights, among them the right to privacy. Treat persons with disabilities with respect. Avoid mentioning a disability when it is not pertinent. When necessary to mention a disability, put the person first, not the disability. If in doubt about referring to their disabilities, ask them. People who are blind, for example, may prefer blind instead of partially sighted. Here are some reminders when writing about people with disabilities:

- Avoid impersonal phrasing such as the handicapped or the disabled. Instead (putting the person first) say *people with disabilities.*
  
  *The man who is blind. The child with a mental illness.* Do not say the paraplegic, the schizophrenic, the brain-damaged person.
  
  o Avoid condescending euphemisms such as handicapable and special.
  
  o Avoid the use of disabled or crippled when referring to inanimate objects such as disabled vehicle. Try *stalled vehicle* or change the sentence structure: *The bus with mechanical problems blocked traffic for an hour.*

- **confined**: Instead of confined or wheelchair-bound, say a person uses a wheelchair, has a wheelchair or gets around by wheelchair. Emphasize abilities, not limitations.
• **deaf and dumb, deaf mute**: Most people who are deaf have healthy vocal cords. If they do not speak, it is because they do not hear the correct way to pronounce words. Say a person who is deaf, a person with a hearing impairment, a woman without speech, a child who has a speech disorder.

• **disease**: Most people with disabilities are healthy. Use condition.

• **invalid**: Do not use when referring to people. The interpretation can mean “not valid.”

• **suffers from**: Do not say a person with a disability suffers from the disability. Say *the person has a disability.*

• **unfortunate**: An adjective that describes someone with bad luck, not a person with a disability.

• **victim**: Having a disability does not make a person a victim.

**diversity**: Use to describe Sound Transit policies that are inclusive of people of color, women and transgender persons. The term “people of color” is generally preferred to using specific ethnic backgrounds, such as African American or Asian American (do not hyphenate either word).

**dollars** Lowercase this word. Beware of accidentally using the word dollars and the dollar sign with the same amount: $465 dollars. Except for casual references or amounts without a figure, use the $ sign instead: *The book cost $20. Dollars stopped flowing into King County.* See **numbers**.

**double decker** In an exception to AP Style and Merriam-Webster, Sound Transit treats *double decker* as a noun, which is two words. Hyphenate if using it as an adjective before a noun, so *double-decker bus.*

**downtown** Lowercase unless part of a formal name: *downtown Tacoma and downtown Seattle, but the Downtown Seattle Association.*

**Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, DSTT**: The old term for the four Link stations in downtown Seattle originally opened by King County Metro as a bus tunnel in 1990. Effective March 23, 2019, bus operations ended and the four stations no longer exist as a separate entity. Do not use the term or its abbreviation in public-facing communications unless specifically referring to retrofits or capital projects affecting only the four older stations. If there is an instance requiring description of Link stations located in downtown Seattle, you can use *downtown Link stations* or *downtown tunnel stations.* Whenever possible, refer instead to specific stations or lines, such as “Four Red Line stations are closed this...
weekend in downtown Seattle. "You can also use the project title “Downtown Seattle Light Rail Tunnel” to refer to the project that will build a new tunnel by 2035

**drop-off** n. 1) A very steep drop. 2) A decline or decrease, as in sales, prices, etc. 3) A location where a person or thing can be dropped off [a drop-off for rental cars]. Hyphenated drop-off (n. and adj.) and drop off (v.); however, **pickup is one word as both a noun and adjective.**

**E**

**Eastside** Capitalize when referring to the area that includes Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and other King County communities east of Lake Washington.

e.g., *i.e.* Often confused. The first is the abbreviation for exempli gratia, a Latin phrase meaning "for example." The second is the abbreviation for id est, a Latin phrase meaning "that is" introducing a clarification of the words that precede it. Unless the material is scientific or academic, use the simpler English words. Commas or semicolons usually precede both, and commas usually follow both. Phrases containing these abbreviations may be contained in parentheses.

**either** Use it to mean one or the other, not both. Right: *She said to use either door.* Wrong: *There were lions on either side of the door.* Right: *There were lions on each side of the door. There were lions on both sides of the door.*

**elderly** Use this word carefully and sparingly. It is appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific people: *concern for elderly people,* *service for the elderly.* Try phrases like *people in their 70s and older* instead. Apply the same principles to terms such as senior citizen.

**em dash, en dash, hyphens** Em dashes are long dashes (about the width of a capital M) that are stronger than commas or parentheses. Use them to signal abrupt change, with a space on both sides of a dash. *Example: The rare glitch — she had never done this in practice —*
ulled her execution score and worse, irritated Biles beyond belief. An en dash is about half the width of an em dash, approximating the width of a capital letter N. While AP style does not use en dashes, ST may use them for artistic purpose – such as in posters. In general, when writing time frames, use a hyphen with no space on either side of the hyphen: 6:30-8 p.m.

**ensure, insure, assure** Use ensure to mean guarantee: *They took steps to ensure accuracy.* Use insure for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.* Use assure to mean to make sure or give confidence: *She assured us the statement was accurate.*

**Environmental Impact Statement, EIS** A comprehensive study of likely environmental impacts resulting from major federally assisted projects; the National Environmental Policy Act requires such statements. Spell out on first reference. EIS is acceptable on second reference. Capitalize only when used as part of a proper title: *The Brown Street Tunnel Project Environmental Impact Statement.* Avoid overuse of the abbreviation by substituting impact statement. Always spell out draft, final or supplemental when used with the document: *The project team printed the draft EIS last month. The supplemental impact statement is ready for printing.* Not: *The project team printed the DEIS. The SEIS is ready.*

**exclamation point** Use the mark to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion. In general, avoid. When writing for internal audiences, don’t “tell” them something is exciting with an exclamation point, “show” them with descriptive words.

**F**

**farebox** One word.

**federal** Use a capital letter for corporate or governmental bodies that include the word as part of their formal names: *Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission.* Lowercase when used as an adjective: *federal Department of Transportation and state Department of Transportation.* Always lowercase the phrase *federal courts.* Use the proper name of the court on first reference.
Federal Transit Administration Formerly the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. FTA is the agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation, which administers the federal program of financial assistance to public transit. Abbreviate as FTA on second reference.

ferry, ferries, ferryboat Ferry is preferable and acceptable as both a noun and a verb. Plural is ferries.

fieldwork One word, per Websters.

first-aid kit It’s first aid as a noun, but first-aid as an adjective. After taking a first-aid course, she was able to give first aid.

first-ever/first ever This should be hyphenated, though first should suffice. First-ever is redundant and trite, says the AP stylebook. Make it the first such event or the inaugural event.

first come, first served Not first come, first serve. As a compound modifier it’s hyphenated: first-come, first-served basis.

fixed guideway A system of vehicles that can operate only on its own guideway built for that purpose. Avoid the term when possible in favor of simpler alternatives.

fixed route Service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed-route trip serves the same origins and destinations, unlike demand responsive transit and taxicabs.

flier vs flyer In 2018, the Associated Press changed their style to flyer for people in an aircraft and for handbills. He used his frequent flyer miles; they put up flyers announcing the show.
**freeway station** A bus stop located on an off ramp of a freeway. Freeway station (or stop) is preferred. To avoid reader confusion, do not use Flyer stop.

**G**

**goal setting or goal-setting** Hyphenate as modifier, otherwise not.

**good, well** *Good* is an adjective that means something is as it should be or is better than average. When used as an adjective, *well* means suitable, proper, healthy. When used as an adverb, *well* means in a satisfactory manner or skillfully. Do not use *good* as an adverb. It does not lose its status as an adjective in a sentence such as *I feel good*. Such a statement is the idiomatic equivalent of *I am in good health*. An alternative, *I feel well*, could be interpreted as meaning that your sense of touch is good.

**government** Always lowercase, never abbreviate: *the state government, the U.S. government*.

**governmental bodies** Capitalize the full, proper names of federal, state and local governmental agencies, departments and offices: *the U.S. Department of State, the state Department of Transportation, King County Department of Public Works*. Also, capitalize the shortened version: *the State Department, the Ecology Department, Public Works Department*. But lowercase the department.

**governor** Abbreviate and capitalize before a name: *Gov*. Lowercase after a name and when standing alone. In business correspondence, spell out before a name.

**grade crossing** The intersection of a railroad track or rail line with a surface street or road.
Green Line  During the project development and the Environmental Impact Statement phases, refer to the project as the combined West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions. When describing future service, use Red Line for all stations from Everett to West Seattle and use Green Line for all stations from Ballard to Tacoma. Examples:

In 2030, Red Line stations from Stadium Station to Federal Way will become part of the Green Line to Tacoma.
In 2035 eight new Green Line stations will open in Ballard, Interbay, Queen Anne, South Lake Union and downtown Seattle.
Green Line riders can transfer to the Red or Blue lines at Westlake and International District/Chinatown stations.

groundbreaking  adj. 1 designating or of the ceremony of breaking ground, as for a new building 2 pioneering — n. a groundbreaking ceremony for a new building — groundbreaking — groundbreaking.

H

headlines
If the meaning is clear, you can use abbreviations in headlines. Capitalize only proper nouns and the first word in headlines. To improve readability, avoid capitalizing all the letters in more than one or two words in a headline. For emphasis, other typographical uses may be more effective: different typefaces, italics, boldfacing, larger type. You may use figures for numbers in headlines. See abbreviations and acronyms; capitalization; numbers, numerals.

- Punctuate headlines like sentences. Some exceptions: A comma may substitute for the word “and;” use semicolons instead of periods to show sentence breaks within the headline.
- Omit end punctuation after the headline.
- Use single quotation marks instead of double quotation marks in headlines. In quote attribution, colons may substitute for “said” after the speaker’s name (before a statement), and dashes may substitute for “said” before the speaker’s name (after a statement).
- Avoid using passive voice in headlines.
- Infinitive phrase is preferred to future tense: Governor to speak, not Governor will speak.
headway Time between vehicles moving in the same direction on a particular route. Avoid in favor of plain talk, so *four-minute headways* becomes *trains every four minutes*.

heavy rail. Avoid. See *light rail*.

high-capacity transit A transit system that uses rail or special busways. See *light rail*.

high-capacity vehicle Buses, carpools and vanpools are high-occupancy vehicles. They can travel in high-occupancy-vehicle lanes.

high-occupancy vehicle Spell out on first reference. HOV lane is acceptable on second reference. Bus and carpool lane is also acceptable. Avoid referring to the “diamond lane.”

high-occupancy-vehicle lane Spell out on first reference. HOV lane is acceptable on second reference. Bus and carpool lane is also acceptable. Avoid referring to the “diamond lane.”

high-speed rail Intercity rail service with exclusive right-of-way traveling at speeds of 124 miles per hour and greater. No examples of this in the western U.S or Canada. Avoid the term.

high-speed rail Intercity rail service with exclusive right-of-way traveling at speeds of 124 miles per hour and greater. No examples of this in the western U.S or Canada. Avoid the term.


him, her Do not presume maleness in constructing a sentence. Usually it is possible, and always preferable, to reword the sentence to avoid sex or gender: *Reporters try to protect their sources*. If essential, use the pronoun *they* as a singular, with a plural verb: *The Trump administration told public schools to grant bathroom access even if a student’s gender identity isn’t what’s in their record. The official said they are afraid for their safety*. Be sure the context makes clear that only one person is involved. See *they, them, their*.

human-made An acceptable alternative to man-made.
hyphens

- Hyphenate compound adjectives made of more than one word when they precede a noun. Do not hyphenate when they follow the noun: This is an on-site building (versus the building is located on site).

- **double vowels**: Hyphenate double-vowel words: re-entry, re-engage.

- Do not use hyphens when just discussing dimensions or distances, only when referring to or describing a noun: The project consists of an 11.8-mile corridor (versus the corridor is 11.8 miles long). I ate a 2-foot-long hot dog (versus the hot dog is 2 feet long).

- The following words are hyphenated: High-capacity transit, long-range plan, low-income fare, pre-construction, right-of-way, park-and-ride, at-grade.

- The following words are not hyphenated: Light rail, light rail system, groundwater, stormwater.

- Generally do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. Thus: subconsultant.

- Words with “wides” are all one word (no hyphens): Systemwide, departmentwide, agencywide, citywide, statewide, countrywide, corridorwide.

- Hyphens are unnecessary after the adverb very and after all adverbs that end in ly: A very good time, an easily remembered rule, randomly selected addresses.

- Indicate suspensive hyphenation as follows: The agenda included a 10- to 15-minute period for questions. Dig a 3- to 5-inch-deep hole.
impact Do not use as a verb to mean affect: “This closure will impact …” or as a noun to mean effect: “This closure has community impacts.” Consider using simpler affect or influence, or use more specific language such as “This closure will delay trips by five minutes.” As a verb, only use impact to mean to force tightly together, pack or wedge, or to hit with force.

implement Jargon. Do not overuse this word. Instead, try a form of begin, carry out, follow, fulfill, do, put in place, put into use, put into effect, start or set up, as a verb, or tool, as a noun.

imply, infer Often confused. Imply means to show, hint or suggest, not to express. Infer means to conclude or deduce from evidence or facts. Writers or speakers imply in the words they use. A listener or reader infers something from the words: He implied in his speech. I inferred from her comment.

in- No hyphen when it means not: inaccurate, insufferable. Some words take a hyphen: in-depth, in-group, in-house, in-law. See prefixes.

in addition to Wordy. Simplify. Try besides, beyond, also or and. See beside, besides.

inbox One word.

inter- Rules in prefixes apply, but in general, no hyphen: interagency.

intermodal Used to denote movements of cargo or passengers interchangeably between transport modes. Intermodal and multimodal are transit jargon, avoid when writing (or speaking) to general audiences. For example: The Tacoma Dome Station is a transit hub for many types of transportation (or transportation modes).
jargon The special vocabulary and idioms of a particular class or occupational group. William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White put it simply in “The Elements of Style”: “Be clear.” Jargon is the opposite of clarity. In general, rewrite to avoid jargon. Example: The biota exhibited a 100 percent mortality response. Rewrite: All the fish died. When jargon is necessary, explain or define the terms likely to be unfamiliar to most readers. See plain language.

jeopardy Commonly misspelled.

join together, link together Both are redundant. Remove together.

judge Capitalize before a name when it is the formal title for an individual who presides in a court of law. Do not continue to use the title in second reference. Do not use court as part of the title unless confusion would result without it. No court in title: U.S. district Judge John Bates, federal Judge John Bates, appellate Judge Priscilla Owen. Court needed in the title: Juvenile Court Judge John Jones, state Supreme Court Judge William Cushing.

judgment Not judgement.

junior, senior Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names, and do not precede with a comma. Do not separate the abbreviations from the name with a comma: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Similarly, do not use a comma to separate Roman numerals from a person’s name: Larry Moe IV is losing his patience.
**K**

**Kickoff** As a verb, *kick off* (two words; not hyphenated). As a noun or adjective, *kickoff* (one word).

**King County Metro** The primary provider of bus service in King County. King County Metro operates some of Sound Transit’s ST Express routes, as well as Link Red Line service. Use King County Metro on the first reference; Metro is acceptable on second reference. Do not use the acronym KCM in public-facing communication.

**Kiss-and-ride** Do not use this term for a passenger drop-off area.

**Kitty-corner** AP style uses it, Sound Transit prefers *diagonal to*. The derivation has nothing to do with kittens, its origin is the obsolete cater (four at dice) from Middle English.

**L**

**Lake Washington Ship Canal** Lake Washington Ship Canal runs from Lake Washington to the Puget Sound and encompasses the Montlake Cut and Portage Bay. Use full name on first reference. Ship canal (lowercase) is acceptable on second reference.

**Layover** (n.), **lay over** (v.) Time built into a schedule between arrival at the end of a route and the departure for the return trip, used for delay recovery and preparation for the return trip.

**Lead or lede** Refer to the first paragraph of an article as *your lead*. AP says, “*The lede is journalistic jargon.*”
The term light rail has no accepted definition but is instead derivative of the traditional term heavy rail, implying relative contrast of capacity, fuel/power, grade separation and other features. In North American usage, light rail is generally understood to mean electric trains of coupled vehicles powered by overhead catenary wire.

- Light rail may have at-grade operations or may be mostly or fully grade-separated. Heavy rail is generally understood to mean fully grade-separated trains with traditional third rail or induction motor power with longer trainsets.

- Regional examples of light rail include MAX (Portland), Muni (San Francisco), VTA (San Jose) and LA Metro (Expo, Blue, Green and Gold Lines). Examples of heavy rail include LA Metro (Red and Purple lines) and BART (San Francisco). Some systems have features of both, such as TransLink in Vancouver, where heavy rail features such as induction motors and automated operation coincide with limited capacity and small trainsets.

- In local usage, light rail has an unusually wide and inclusive definition, referring both to Orange Line service that runs at-grade with a single vehicle like a streetcar, or the mostly grade separated, two-to-four car trains operated by the current Red Line and the future Blue, Green and Purple lines.

- Light rail is two words with no hyphen.

- **Central Link, Airport Link, U Link, University Link.** Legacy names for previous extensions. Do not use in public documents unless referring to past construction or project management.

- **The Northgate Link Extension** opens in 2021 and adds three new Red Line stations at Northgate, Roosevelt and the U District. Whenever possible use **Red Line instead**.

- **The East Link Extension** opens in 2023 and adds 10 new stations in Judkins Park, Mercer Island, South Bellevue, downtown Bellevue, BelRed and Overlake. East Link is acceptable when describing construction issues or projects but whenever possible use **Blue Line** when referring to service.
- **Tacoma Link** is a 1.6-mile rail line running between Tacoma Dome Station and downtown Tacoma. It opened for service in August 2003. Using **Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension** is acceptable when referring to the construction project that opens in 2022, but whenever possible use **Orange Line** instead.

**long range** Hyphenate when used as a compound adjective: *long-range plan*.

**long term, short term** Hyphenate when used as compound adjectives: *The team developed a long-term regional plan*.

**M**

**man, manned, manning** Outdated. Do not use man as a verb. Use staff instead or forms of use, operate, work or run. Change: Three employees man the office to *Three employees staff the office*.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization** The organization designated by local elected officials as being responsible for carrying out the urban transportation and other planning processes for an area. The Puget Sound Regional Council is the MPO for the Puget Sound region. Spell out on first reference. MPO is acceptable on second reference.

**mid-** No hyphen unless a capitalized word follows: *midday, midair, mid-America, mid-Atlantic, midterm*.

**miles** Use figures, including for amounts under 10, in dimensions, formulas and speed: *The land measured 2 miles by 3 miles. The bus traveled 60 miles per hour. The coach gets 6 miles per gallon*. Spell out below 10 in distances: *He drove eight miles*.

**miles per gallon** The abbreviation *mpg* (lowercase, no periods) is acceptable on second reference.
miles per hour The abbreviation mph (lowercase, no periods) is acceptable in all references.

Minority/Women/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Spell out on first reference. M/W/DBE is acceptable on second reference in internal documents. Capitalize when referring to the program. Lowercase when referring to a minority business enterprise, a women business enterprise or a disadvantaged business enterprise.

mitigate Means to moderate or to make or become milder, less severe, less rigorous, less painful, less harsh or less hostile. If possible, consider using a synonym for mitigate, such as moderate, compensate for, ease, soften, relieve or reduce, or define the word: Sound Transit will mitigate, or reduce, the environmental impacts. Also, mitigate against is incorrect.

modal split, mode split A term that describes how many people use alternative forms of transportation. Frequently used to describe the percentage of people using private automobiles as opposed to the percentage using public transportation. Avoid using this term in information intended for a general audience.

monorail An electric railway in which a rail car or train of cars is suspended from or straddles a guideway formed by a single beam or rail.

more than versus over In 2014, AP Stylebook ruled that both “over” and “more than” are acceptable terms when referring to something of greater numerical value. However, many communicators and companies, including Sound Transit, maintain the old guidance: Use more than when referring to numbers and over when referring to spatial elements. For example: We acquired more than 100,000 customers. The cow jumped over the moon.

motion, resolutions The Sound Transit Board adopts motions and resolutions. Capitalize motion and resolution when referring to a specific Sound Transit Board motion or resolution and abbreviate Number (No.): The Board will consider Resolution No. 1112 and Motion No. 4119 Thursday. Lowercase when standing alone.
multilingual One word, no hyphen.

multimodal Most often used to describe a location, site or transit center that connects two or more kinds of transportation modes. For example, Tacoma Dome Station, with access to commuter rail, light rail and regional express and local buses, is a multimodal station. Avoid using intermodal and multimodal when writing or speaking to general audiences. These words are transit jargon. Instead, try: Tacoma Dome Station is a hub for many modes of transportation.

N

nation Regarding the use of “nation” in reference to native American tribes. Formally it is Navajo Nation Reservation; informally Navajo reservation. However, not all tribes use nation in their formal names. Do not capitalize nation if used as a synonym for the United States or another country. The museum brings to life the people who created our nation. Do not capitalized nation when used alone (not part of a formal name).

National Environmental Policy Act A comprehensive federal law requiring analysis of the environmental impacts of federal actions such as approval of grants; also requiring preparation of an environmental impact statement for every major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Spell out and capitalize on first reference. NEPA is acceptable in later references.

next generation ORCA The Central Puget Sound region’s public transit agencies are planning to improve the transit customer experience through the development of a next generation ORCA system. The new ORCA system will be flexible to allow more methods of payment and utilize maturing technologies. The transition to the new system may begin in late 2021. Next Gen ORCA is acceptable.

non- The rules of prefixes apply, but in general no hyphen when forming a compound that does not have special meaning and can be understood if not used before the base word. However, use a hyphen before proper nouns. Examples of compounds with special meaning
include names with proper nouns: non-U.S. government questions, non-Ambassador, non-Euclidean geometry, non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Hyphenate as a compound modifier, for clarity: non-degree-seeking student.

**northbound, southbound** One word.

**numbers/numerals** Spell out most whole numbers below 10. Use figures for 10 and above: *five, nine, 15, 650*. Also, spell out first through ninth when they show sequence in time or location: *first base, Third Avenue*. Exceptions include county, legislative and congressional districts: *She lives in the 2nd District*. Use **No.** as the abbreviation for number in conjunction with a figure to indicate position or rank: *No. 1 woman, No. 3 choice*. Do not use in street addresses, with this exception: *No. 10 Downing St.*, the residence of Britain’s prime minister. See [miles](#).

- **annual events**: AP spells ordinals of ninth and below and uses figures for 10th and above (this is within text; posters can use figures). Do not describe an event as annual until it has taken place at least two successive years. Capitalize annual if it is part of the formal name: *Third Annual Spring Fair*.

- Use figures for all distances, including measures of numbers below 10: *He walked 4 miles*, instead of *four miles*.

- Use figures with million, billion or trillion in all except casual uses: *I’d like to make a billion dollars*. But: *The nation has 1 million citizens. I need $7 billion. The government ran a deficit of more than $1 trillion*.

- Do not drop the word million or billion in the first figure of a range: *The project could cost $20 million to $25 million*, not *$20 to $25 million*, unless you really mean $20.

- Do not use a hyphen to join the figures and the word million or billion, even in this type of phrase: *The president submitted a $300 billion budget*. 
- In amounts more than a million—unless the exact amount is essential—round off to one decimal point. Write out the word million or billion: *The grant was for $6.5 million.*

- Do not go beyond two decimal places. *7.51 million people, $256 billion, 7,542,500 people, $2,565,750,000.* Decimals are preferred where practical: *1.5 million.* Not: *1 1/2 million.* Do not use decimals with round numbers: *$2 billion.* Not: *$2.0 billion.*

- Do not mix millions and billions in the same figure: *2.6 billion.* Not: *2 billion 600 million.*

- In headlines, abbreviate only millions, billions. Use capital M and B with no space: *$5M lawsuit, $17.4B trade deficit.*

- Avoid beginning a sentence with a number. If unavoidable, spell the number out. However, you can start a headline with a number: *8 ways to join Sound Transit’s gift drive.* Also, spell out casual expressions: *thanks a million, a thousand bucks.*

- Avoid confirming a written number in a text by enclosing the numeral in parentheses. Avoid: *The contract will expire in eight (8) days.*

**Objective vs Subjective Language**

Objective refers to the elimination of subjective perspectives and a process that is purely based on hard facts. Objective information is fact-based, measurable and observable. Considered far and accurate, it avoids exaggeration and bias, and shows respect for the views of others. With subjective language, personal points of view, emotions or judgment enter the decision-making process. Everyday language is subjective. It expresses opinions based on personal values, beliefs or preferences rather than evidence. This is the reason stories on the Hub tend to not contain exclamation marks. (Which are also characteristic of writing that attempts to “show” rather than “tell.” Instead of saying something is exciting and adding exclamation marks, describe what makes it exciting. Use words to paint the picture.

Example: Objective paragraph (From [PublicHealth website](#))
U.S. public health officials and physicians have been combating misconceptions about vaccine safety for more than 20 years. They’ve had mixed success. Despite the fact numerous studies have found no evidence to support the notion that vaccines cause autism and other chronic illnesses, a growing number of parents are refusing to vaccinate their children.

Researchers now link falling immunization rates to recent resurgences of vaccine-preventable diseases. In 2010, California saw 9,120 cases of whooping cough, more than any year since the whooping cough vaccine was introduced in the 1940s. Ten infants too young to be vaccinated died of whooping cough during the outbreak. The CDC warns that events like these will become more frequent and harder to control if vaccination rates continue to fall.

Fears over the safety of vaccines are understandable. The CDC vaccination schedule calls for children to receive up to 14 inoculations by the age of six — many of them vaccines developed within the last twenty years. Many parents distrust these vaccines; worried about the potential for risks and long-term side effects. Research, however, shows that most of our biggest fears about vaccinations are unfounded.

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Example: Subjective paragraph (From the University of Adelaide’s Writing Centre)

Indeed, there are countless values that are shared by our Australian community and which are extremely relevant to the life-threatening issue of compulsory childhood immunization. Of course, the protection of the health and well-being of Australian kids must be a shared response. Obviously, they are such vulnerable creatures who cannot protect themselves, and it is the full responsibility of our
communities to stop endangering their fragile lives. Mandatory childhood immunization is definitely consistent with the view we share as Australians, that is, our children’s health care is a total priority. Clearly, if childhood immunity is not vigorously promoted across Australia, then all our children will contract ghastly vaccine-preventable diseases leading to death!! So, enforcing childhood immunization programs TODAY is the only logical way for us to watch over the precious youth of our nation.

**off-peak** Hyphenate. Try to use simpler language such as “outside commute hours.”

**offshore** One word.

**off-site** Hyphenate. Hyphenate compound adjectives made of more than one word when they precede a noun. Do not hyphenate when they follow the noun: *This is an on-site building (versus the building is located on site).*

**on** Do not use on before a date or day of the week when its absence would not lead to confusion, except at the beginning of a sentence: *The meeting will take place Monday. His inauguration will be Jan. 20. On Sept. 3, the committee will meet to discuss the issue.* Use on to avoid an awkward juxtaposition of a date and a proper name: *John met Mary on Monday. He told Obama on Thursday that the bill was doomed.* Use on also to avoid any suggestion that a date is the object of a transitive verb: *The House killed on Tuesday a bid to raise taxes. The Senate postponed on Wednesday its consideration of a bill to reduce import duties.*

**online** One word in all cases for the computer connection term. Also acceptable for new transit service “coming online.”

**onto vs. on to** Onto is the more common prepositional phrase for “to and upon,” or the slang for “aware of” or “familiar with.” Use “on to” more in the sense of following, as in *go on to page 400. Hang on to your hat.*
Orange Line Since 2003, the light rail line from Tacoma Dome to the Theater District has been “Tacoma Link.” To avoid confusion with the Tacoma Dome extension and future Green Line service, as of September 2019 the name for this service is the Orange Line. Use Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension sparingly and when referring to the construction project, and use Orange Line when talking about current or future service. Examples:

Six new Orange Line stations are under construction in central Tacoma.
Orange Line service to Stadium and Hilltop begins in 2022.
The Orange and Green lines will connect at Tacoma Dome Station by 2030, linking Hilltop to SeaTac Airport and downtown Seattle.

ORCA Card The ORCA Card is the regional fare media used in the Central Puget Sound region. The ORCA Card uses smart-card technology, and all Sound Transit and partner services will accept it. All capitals, no periods. ORCA stands for One Regional Card for All.

Ordinal directions Do not capitalize north, south, east, west unless part of a proper name, etc.

Overreach 1) To reach or stretch beyond or above; extend beyond 2) To defeat oneself by seeking to do or gain too much. 3) To get the better of [someone] by cunning or cheating; outwit.

Page numbers Use numerals and capitalize page when used with a figure: Page 1. Spell out and capitalize the page numbers lower than 10 in business correspondence: Page Five.
**paratransit** Forms of transportation services that are more flexible and personalized than conventional fixed-route, fixed-schedule bus service. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires these comparable transportation services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transportation systems.

**parentheses** Avoid the use of parentheses as they are jarring to the reader. AP does not follow a full term with the abbreviation in parentheses. Rather AP uses the abbreviation in a follow-up or substitutes a shorthand form of the full term to avoid an abbreviation that may not be well-known to audiences.

**park-and-ride lot** A parking lot where transit riders can leave their cars and ride transit, carpool or vanpool to another location. For news releases, news stories and texts, capitalize the P and R and hyphenate park-and-ride lot: *Federal Way Park-and-Ride lot, Mercer Island Park-and-Ride lot.* Lower case park-and-ride lot when not used with a formal name. Do not refer to a park-and-ride lot as a park-and-ride. Avoid using facility or facilities unless the text becomes redundant. Do not use an ampersand (&) for the word “and” in park-and-ride. You may use the ampersand for signs, maps and in advertising copy such as marketing brochures. See the Signage Manual available from the Transportation Services Department.

**passenger drop-off area** Usually a turn-around point where people drop off or pick up transit riders. Do not use the term “kiss-and-ride.”

**passive voice** When the noun being acted upon is made the subject of the sentence. (Note: this definition is passive.) *The house was haunted.* Active voice is when the noun doing the action is the subject. *Ghosts haunted the house.* Use “by zombies” to help identify passive voice: If you can add “by zombies” after the verb and it makes sense, you probably have passive voice. *The town was attacked (by zombies).* But *Zombies attacked the town (by zombies).* Doesn’t work, so this is active voice. See [active vs passive verbs](#).

**per year, a year** “A” is preferable in constructions such as *a gallon, a mile, a barrel, a share.* Use per when the phrase is a modifier, such as *a breakdown of earnings on a per-share basis.*
percentages (New 07/15/2019) Use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases: Average hourly pay rose 3.1% from a year ago; her mortgage rate is 4.75%; about 60% of Americans agreed; he won 56.2% of the vote. Use figures: 1%, 4 percentage points.

- For amounts less than 1%, precede the decimal with a zero: The cost of living rose 0.6%.

- In casual uses, use words rather than figures and numbers: She said he has a zero percent chance of winning. Constructions with the percentage sign take a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction: The teacher said 60% was a failing grade. He said 50% of the membership was there. It takes a plural verb when a plural word follows an of construction: He said 50% of the members were there.

- Use decimals, not fractions, in percentages: Her mortgage rate is 4.5%. For a range, 12% to 15%, 12%-15% and between 12% and 15% are all acceptable. Use percentage, rather than percent, when not paired with a number: The percentage of people agreeing is small.

- Be careful not to confuse percent with percentage point. A change from 10% to 13% is a rise of 3 percentage points. This is not equal to a 3% change; rather, it’s a 30% increase.

periods (.) This punctuation mark has two main purposes. It ends all sentences that are not questions or exclamations, and it’s used in some abbreviations.

- Use periods to break up complicated sentences into two or more readable sentences. See sentence length.
- Use a period, not a question mark, after an indirect question: He asked what the score was.
- Don’t put a space between two initials: T.S. Eliot.
- Use periods after numbers or letters in listing elements of a summary: 1. Wash the car. 2. Clean the basement. Or: A. Punctuate properly. B. Write simply.
- Periods always go inside quotation marks.
Use only one space after a period at the end of a sentence. The following advice comes from an article entitled "Nothing says over 40 like two spaces after a period." Please do not write 'We had dinner. It was good.' Unless you are typing on an actual typewriter, you no longer have to put two spaces after a period or a question mark or an exclamation point. The rule applies to all end punctuation.

pickup, drop-off pickup (n. and adj.), but drop-off (n.) hyphenated or drop off (v.)

Pierce Transit Sound Transit's partner agency. Pierce Transit operates the ST Express regional buses that serve Pierce County, with some King County service.

plain language Also called plain English, or plain talk, plain language is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Plan language is also likelier to translate well for people using services such as Google Translate. Plain language means:

- Using the clearest, simplest language possible; everyday, familiar words, please.
- Avoiding or explaining jargon and technical words.
- Omitting useless words.
- Being careful with abbreviations.
- Writing in active voice.
- Writing short sentences.
- Avoiding double negatives.
- Using lists.

plans, projects, programs Capitalize the full name of programs adopted formally by the Sound Transit Board. Otherwise, avoid capitalizing them. Always lowercase program, project or plan when the word stands alone or when using only part of the formal name: The project is underway. Avoid interchanging the words program, project or plan within a text.

policymaker One word, not hyphenated.
prefixes  Usually, follow these rules for adding a prefix: Don’t hyphenate when using a prefix with a root word that begins with a consonant. Use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the root word that follows begins with the same vowel. Insert a hyphen if the first listing of the word includes one. If the word is not hyphenated or not listed, drop the hyphen. In addition, use a hyphen when capitalizing the root word. Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes: sub-subcommittee. At times, a hyphen is necessary for clarity of meaning: *He will reform (correct or improve) the congregation. She will re-form (change the shape of) the clay figure.*

preplanned  Per Associated Press and Webster’s, no hyphen.

presidential administration  It is the Trump administration (lowercase a), per *administration* entry. Reason (per AP Stylebook): It is lowercase as a descriptive, collective term for the executive branch of government. The lowercase usage helps differentiate it from the formal names of various U.S. agencies, including the Federal Housing Administration, Food and Drug Administration and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Generic use of administration without its current occupant is always acceptable, e.g. “the administration.”

project and service names  It is important to be consistent and use names that easily and logically convey our projects’ benefits to the public. Please use these names in all communications, especially in public-facing communications. Project names are for use internally, or during planning, design, engineering and capital construction. As of September 2019, when describing current or future Link service, use line colors instead of project names. See *Red Line, Blue Line, Orange Line, Green Line.* Because the future line to Issaquah and Kirkland is not an extension and will not enter project development until the mid-2020s, do not use Purple Line at this time. Use “South Kirkland-Issaquah Link.”

*Examples:*
- Two new Blue Line stations open in 2024 serving Marymoor Park and Redmond Town Center.
- Lynnwood City Center Station will be served by both the Red Line to Federal Way and the Blue Line to Redmond Town Center.

Non-Link project or service names include:
- *Sounder South*
- *Sounder North*
- *S Graham St, S Boeing Access Road, and/or NE 130th St Infill Stations*
- *Stride Bus Rapid Transit*
• Sounder Maintenance Base
• DuPont Sounder Extension
• Sounder South Capacity Expansion
• Auburn, Kent, Puyallup and Sumner Stations Parking and Access Improvements
• Edmonds and Mukilteo Stations Parking and Access Improvements

**pronouns** See him, her and they, them, their.

**Puget Sound** Use Puget Sound on first reference when referred to the body of water. In an exception to AP style, use uppercase Sound on future references when the word stands alone: *The study focused on Puget Sound. Scientists sampled the Sound during November.* Do not use Puget Sound alone but add the term Central when referring to the region Sound Transit serves: *the Central Puget Sound region.*

**Puget Sound Regional Council** Formerly the Puget Sound Regional Council of Governments. PSRC is the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization. Spell out on first reference and use PSRC on all other references.

**punctuation** To quote and paraphrase the Associated Press Stylebook (using active voice), “the basic guideline is to use common sense.” The purpose of punctuation is to make a thought clear. If it does not serve that purpose, get rid of it. The following words from “The Elements of Style” by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White applies to punctuation: “Clarity, clarity, clarity. When you become hopelessly mired in a sentence (note passive voice), it is best to start fresh; do not try to fight your way through against terrible odds of syntax. Usually what is wrong is that the construction has become too involved at some point; the sentence needs to be broken apart and replaced by two or more shorter sentences.” If commas, semicolons and dashes clutter a sentence, start over. See commas, hyphens, em dashes, periods, quotation marks, semicolons. Please, avoid the use of the exclamation point.

- For punctuation answers that do not appear in this style guide, please visit Sound Transit’s online copy of the Associated Press Stylebook. Login: library@soundtransit.org; Password: L*brary1.
quarters When referring to financial calendar periods, use Q4, not 4Q.

question and answer Write as Q&A, no spaces.

quotation marks In American English, the period and the comma always go within the quotation mark, it’s a long-established printers’ rule. The dash, the semicolon, the colon, the question mark and the exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence. Examples: Other people may ask questions such as, "Where are they going?"; "Why are they going there?"; "Who will they be visiting?" If a period is part of an abbreviation that comes at the end of a sentence, that period is a hard worker, doing double duty by also serving as the sentence-ending punctuation.

EXAMPLES: (Italics only appear here to illustrate examples; do not use italics around titles such as these.) “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” “Gone With the Wind,” “Of Mice and Men,” “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” “Time After Time,” the NBC-TV “Today” program, the “CBS Evening News,” “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” “Star Wars,” “Game of Thrones.”

race, ethnicity Consider carefully when deciding whether to identify people by race. People may interpret drawing unnecessary attention to someone’s race or ethnicity as bigotry. However, race is pertinent when writing about significant, groundbreaking or historic events: Barack Obama was the first black U.S. president. Sonia Sotomayor is the first Hispanic justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Jeremy Lin is the first American-born NBA player of Chinese or Taiwanese descent.

- black(s), whites(s) (n.) Do not use either term as a singular noun. For plurals, phrasing such as black people, white people, black teachers, white students is often preferable when clearly relevant. Black officers account for 47% of the police force and white officers nearly 43%. The gunman targeted black churchgoers. The plural nouns blacks and whites are generally acceptable when
clearly relevant and needed for reasons of space or sentence construction. *He helped integrate dance halls among blacks, whites, Latinos and Asian Americans.* °Black and white are acceptable as adjectives when relevant. (AP is moving toward capitalizing Black, but ST will still lowercase).

- **black (adj.)** *African American* is acceptable for an American black person of African descent. Use *Negro* or *colored* only in names of organizations or in rare quotations when essential. For example if writing about South Africans who identify as “*colored,”* use quotation marks around the first use of the word, then use the word, if necessary. *The United Negro College Fund is responsible for financing college educations for hundreds of thousands of African Americans each year.*

- **dual heritage** Do not use hyphens in expressions denoting dual heritage. For example, *African American, Asian American,* among others. Note: Sound Transit dropped this hyphen before AP dropped it in 2019, mainly because it makes someone appear less than fully American. Also, use of a hyphen is not inclusive. All black Americans are not African Americans. When possible, find out if a person wants to be referred to as *black* or *African American.*

- **Caucasian** is not a synonym for white. Use this term only when necessary in quotations.

- **people of color, racial minority** The terms *people of color* and *racial minority/minorities* are generally acceptable terms to describe people of races other than white in the United States. Avoid using *POC.* When talking about just one group, be specific: *Chinese Americans or members of the Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida,* for example. Be mindful that some Native Americans say the terms *people of color* and *racial minority* fall short by not encompassing their sovereign status.

- **minority** Avoid referring to an individual as a minority unless in a quotation.

- **biracial, multiracial** Acceptable, when clearly relevant, to describe people with more than one racial heritage. Usually more useful when describing large, diverse groups of people than individuals. Avoid *mixed-race,* which can carry negative connotations, unless a story subject prefers the term. Be specific if possible, and then use biracial for people of two heritages or multiracial for those of two or more on subsequent references if needed. Examples: *She has an African American father and a white mother* instead of *She is*
biracial. But: The study of biracial people showed a split in support along gender lines. Multiracial can encompass people of any combination of races.

- Latino, Latina, Latinx Romance languages such as Spanish build gender into all nouns. Latino, the male form, has often been the preferred generic noun or adjective for a person from, or whose ancestors were from, a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Latina is the feminine form. Sound Transit prefers the recently coined gender-neutral adjective Latinx, which may need to carry a short explanation. Plural nouns currently use the gendered forms. For groups of self-identified females, use the plural Latinas; for groups of self-identified males or of mixed gender, use the plural Latinos. Hispanics is also generally acceptable for those in the U.S. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican, Brazilian or Mexican American.

- Hispanic A person from—or whose ancestors were from—a Spanish-speaking land or culture. Latino, Latina or Latinx are sometimes preferred. Follow the person’s preference. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican or Mexican American.

- American Indians, Native Americans Defer to whatever terms a particular group prefers. Both are acceptable terms in general references for those in the U.S. when referring to two or more people of different tribal affiliations. For individuals, use the name of the tribe; if that information is not immediately available, try to obtain it. He is a Navajo commissioner. She is a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Some tribes and tribal nations use member; others use citizen. If in doubt, use citizen. In Alaska, the indigenous groups are Alaska Natives. First Nation is the preferred term for native tribes in Canada. Indian describes the peoples and cultures of the South Asian nation of India. Do not use the term as a shorthand for American Indians. Acceptable when self-identified, eg. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

- tribe Refers to a sovereign political entity, communities sharing a common ancestry, culture or language, and a social group of linked families who may be part of an ethnic group. Capitalize the word tribe when part of a formal name of sovereign political entities, or communities sharing a common ancestry, culture or language. Identify tribes by the political identity specified by the tribe, nation or
community: *the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation.*

- **Orient, Oriental** Do not use when referring to East Asian nations and their peoples. Asian is the acceptable term for an inhabitant of those regions.

- **indigenous** A term used to refer to original inhabitants of a place. *Aboriginal leaders welcomed a new era of indigenous relations in Australia. Bolivia’s indigenous peoples represent some 62% of the population.*

- **ghetto, ghettos** Do not use indiscriminately as a synonym for the sections of cities inhabited by minorities or poor people. *Ghetto* has a connotation that government decree has forced people to live in a certain area.

- **reverse discrimination** A term sometimes used to describe bias or perceived bias against majority groups. Limit its use to quotes; generally just *discrimination* will suffice to describe such allegations or practices.

**railcar** a generic term for a railway vehicle. Use when referring to Sounder railcars. For Link, use cars or light rail vehicles.

**railroad** Capitalize when part of a name: *Union Pacific Railroad.* Lowercase when using railroad alone.

**ranges** The form: *$12 million to $14 million.* Not: $12 to $14 million. Also: *A pay increase between 12% and 15%, or A pay increase of 12 percent to 15 percent.* For full calendar years, hyphenated *2015-16* is acceptable. Also acceptable per AP: *2018-2019.* See *percentages.*

**rapid transit** A transit system serving an urban area using relatively high-speed rail cars or buses in exclusive rights-of-way, with few grade crossings.

**re-** Generally do not hyphenate, except as noted in the prefixes entry. A 2019 change: In recognition of common usage, do not hyphenate double-e combinations with re- and pre-. Examples: *reelect, reemerge, reemphasize, reemploy, reenact, reengage, reenlist, reenter, reequip,*
reestablish, reexamine. It is also important to consider the meaning of the word: recover (regain) vs. re-cover (cover again); reform (improve) vs. re-form (form again); resign (quit) vs. re-sign (sign again), re-create (create again) vs. recreation (play), re-dress a child, but redress a problem.

Red Line Effective September 2019, Sound Transit uses line colors for Link light rail. As of 2019, the Red Line is the name for Link service from Angle Lake to the University of Washington. When possible, do not refer to project names “Northgate Link Extension” etc., unless specifically speaking about construction issues. Examples:

- The Red Line will operate from Angle Lake to Northgate.
- Three new Red Line stations open in 2021 at Northgate, Roosevelt and the U District.
- By 2036, the Red Line will operate from West Seattle to Everett.
- By 2030, the Red Line will terminate in West Seattle, with new stations at Delridge, Avalon and Alaska Junction.
- Red and Blue line trains will combine for service every four minutes between International District/Chinatown and Mariner Station.

redeploy One word, no hyphen.

Regional “T” Designation of a transit facility with multiple modes of transit. This can include express buses and commuter rail, or express buses and local buses. A yellow “T” on a purple background marks these centers. To be phased out in the 2020s.

reverse commuting Movement in a direction opposite the main flow of traffic, such as from the central city to a suburb during morning rush hour.

ride-hailing Ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft let people use smartphone apps to book and pay for a private car service or, in some cases, a taxi.

ride-sharing Ride-sharing refers to app-based services that let people book a shared shuttle. Zipcar, ReachNow, Car2Go and similar companies are short-term car rental services.
ridership  The number of one-way rides taken by people using a public transportation system in a given time period. Measure rides by each individual boarding. A rider who transfers from one vehicle to another is counted as taking two rides.

right-of-way, rights-of-way  Land acquired for, used by or occupied by a transportation service, including unused space along edges or medians. AP does not hyphenate; Sound Transit and King County Metro both do. The plural is rights-of-way, not right-of-ways.

road  Capitalize when part of a formal name. Lowercase when used alone or with two or more names. Do not abbreviate:  We drove down Holman Road. The crew will pave Altamont and Pine roads.

rolling stock  The vehicles used in a transit system including buses, light rail vehicles, and Sounder railcars. Avoid this jargony term when possible.

round trip  Two words as a noun, but hyphenated as an adjective.  He made a round trip on Route 582. He bought a round-trip ticket.

route  The horizontal path taken by a rail line or bus (i.e. what streets or alignment it runs along). Use instead of alignment.

route number  Do not abbreviate route. The preferred usage for bus route designation is to capitalize Route and follow with the number:  Route 550, Route 595. Lowercase when the reference is to two or more routes:  routes 550 and 595. On first reference, refer to all Sound Transit buses as ST Express Route 590.

S

scoping notice  Lowercase.
**scoping process** Scoping is the first step necessary to develop an environmental impact statement to assess the probable environmental effects of a project. Scoping determines what to analyze in an EIS and eliminates alternatives from further study.

**SeaTac** The city in south King County. No space or hyphenation between Sea and Tac.

**SeaTac/Airport Station** Sound Transit’s Link light rail station. This custom usage intends to be inclusive of both the city of SeaTac and the airport.

**Seattle-Tacoma International Airport**, or acceptable on second reference, **Sea-Tac Airport** To avoid confusion with the city of SeaTac, avoid using Sea-Tac alone. Use the abbreviated version with the hyphen only when referring to **Sea-Tac Airport**.

**Seattle Times** Do not use underlines or italics for names of newspapers, just straight type.

**semicolons** (;) Use semicolons to separate parts of a series when at least one item in the series also contains a comma. A semicolon also goes before the final and in such a series: *Attending were Tina Lopez, 223 Main St.; Ron Larson, 1414 Broadway; and Robert Zimmerman, 1976 E. Pine St.*

**sentence length** Varying sentence length makes writing more interesting. Short sentences, 10-15 words or fewer, are good for emphatic, memorable statements. Longer sentences, no more than about 30 words, are good for detailed explanation and support. Try to include only one idea in a sentence, with an average length of 20 to 25 words. See **plain language**.

**shared-ride** See **rideshare, ridesharing**.

**single-occupant vehicle** (SOV) A motor vehicle carrying only one person. Spell out. Avoid abbreviation SOV. You may also use solo where contextually appropriate, *e.g. solo driver permits* instead of “SOV permits.”
SODO District  The Seattle district south of the stadiums.

Sound Move  The name of the regional transit system plan approved for the Central Puget Sound region by voters on Nov. 6, 1996. The plan includes a mix of Link light rail, Sounder, Regional Express buses and high-occupancy-vehicle access improvements. Italicize *Sound Move* on all references. When possible, use system expansion instead of referring to specific vote packages.

Sound Transit  The name the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority operates under. Use Sound Transit alone in most cases. Except use the legal name—The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, in contracts and board resolutions and actions. Two words. Do not use all capital letters. See Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority.

Sound Transit 2  Sound Transit's second phase of regional transit investments, approved by voters in 2008. It followed the *Sound Move* plan and preceded ST3, which voters approved in 2016. Avoid talking about ST2 or ST3. When possible, use system expansion.

Sounder  Just say *Sounder* on all references. Do not use all uppercase letters. For the service between Lakewood/Tacoma and Seattle, use *Sounder South*. For the service between Everett and Seattle, use *Sounder North*. Do not use North Sounder, South Sounder, Sounder north line, or Sounder south line. Use “commuter rail” very sparingly and only when necessary to distinguish it from Link or Amtrak.

South Sound  A geographic name referring to south King, Pierce and Thurston counties.

Southend  To prevent ambiguity, avoid this term to refer to the area of Seattle and King County south of downtown Seattle. Use more precise area names if possible, such as Rainier Beach, Burien, Kent, Federal Way and South King County, which is an increasingly accepted term to refer to areas between Seattle and the Pierce County line.

split infinitives  Split infinitives are sentence constructions that split the infinitive forms of a verb by putting a word or words between to and the verb, such as *to quickly leave* or *to boldly go*. Despite what you may have learned in school, most past and present writing authorities approve
the use of split infinitives. Splitting infinitives is grammatically correct—and even useful if it helps strengthen the meaning of a sentence by placing the modifying word or words before the verb they’re modifying: *He wanted to really impress the council.* However, you should try to not awkwardly split infinitives, as in this sentence. Use of split infinitives also might distract some readers who incorrectly think they are incorrect.

**ST Express** Sound Transit’s regional bus routes operating predominantly on the state’s high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Do not use the outdated term REX.

**STart** Name of Sound Transit’s art program. Use full title on first reference STart—Sound Transit’s Art Program, STart is acceptable on later references.

**standby** One word.

**State Environmental Policy Act** Spell out and capitalize on first reference. SEPA is acceptable in later references.

**state names** Spell out names of the 50 U.S. states when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. Abbreviate in short-form listings of party affiliation: *D-Ala., R-Mont.*

- **Punctuation:** Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence or indicating a dateline: *He was traveling from Nashville, Tennessee, to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She said Cook County, Illinois, was Mayor Daley’s stronghold.*
- **Headlines:** Avoid using state abbreviations in headlines whenever possible.
- **Abbreviations of states DO NOT use postal codes.**
- **Never abbreviate the following states in datelines or text:** Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
- **Use state of Washington or Washington state within a story when it is necessary to differentiate the state name from the U.S. capital, Washington. Write Washington, D.C., with the added abbreviation if the city might be confused with the state.
**station area** The neighborhood immediately surrounding a bus or rail station.

**station-area planning** Planning activities that take place in the area immediately surrounding a transit station. Station-area planning usually defines the neighborhood vision in terms of neighborhood character and plans for accommodating any expected growth or development.

**sub-** In general do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant, thus: *subconsultant, subrecipient*. See [hyphens](#).

**suffixes** If a word combination does not appear in Webster’s New World (or has a separate listing in the AP Stylebook), use two words for the verb form but hyphenate any noun or adjective forms.

**super-** In general, no hyphen. Superagency, superhighway, supercarrier, superpower, supercharge. As with all prefixes; however, use a hyphen if a capitalized word follows: *super-Republican*.

**T-Mobile Field** Baseball stadium in the SODO District, formerly Safeco Field.

**Tacoma Link** The 1.6-mile light rail system with five stations running from Tacoma Dome Station to downtown Tacoma. Refer to current and future service as the *Orange Line*.

**telephone numbers** Use a hyphen, not parentheses, to separate the area code from the rest of the phone number: *206-937-XXXX, 1-800-XXX-XXXX, XXX-NU2-XXXX, XXX-FOR-FREE (367-3733)*. Don't use periods (or dots) instead of hyphens. For extension numbers, abbreviate and lowercase extension, and separate it with a comma from the main number: *937-XXXX, Ext. XXX*. See [hyphens](#).
that, which  That is the defining, or restrictive, pronoun for essential clauses:  *The lawn mower that is broken is in the shop* (tells which one). Which is the nondefining, or nonrestrictive, pronoun for nonessential clauses:  *The lawn mower, which is broken, is in the shop* (adds a fact about the only mower in question). See *that, who* below.

- In the examples above, note the correct use of commas: Always set *which* clauses off with commas (or sometimes dashes or parentheses), and *that* clauses aren't. You cannot cut essential clauses without changing the meaning of a sentence. Do not set off an essential clause from the rest of a sentence with commas. You can drop nonessential clauses without changing the meaning. Set off a nonessential clause with commas.

that, who  When an essential or nonessential clause refers to a human being or an animal with a name, introduce the clause with *who* (or *whom*). Do not use commas to separate the who clause from the rest of the sentence if the clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence: *The customer who called the office* … If the clause is not essential to the meaning, use who:  *Jack, who lives in Covington, …* That is the preferred pronoun to introduce essential clauses that refer to an inanimate object, an animal without a name, and other things: *Greg built the house that burned down Tuesday.* (Which is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a nonessential clause that refers to an inanimate object: *The house, which Greg built, burned down Tuesday.*) See *that, which*.

the  A few rules for usage:

- The is an article that defines a noun as specific or unspecific.  *The* is a definite article, which means it limits the meaning of a noun to one particular thing. Specific: *Are you going to the party this weekend?* General: *Are you going to party this weekend?*

- Abstract nouns represent concepts, not real things. When talking about a general abstract noun or about something that is a general concept or idea, we do not use “the.” Example: If talking about *quality of life* as a general idea, do not use *the*. If specifying which/whose quality of life, then use “the.” *The quality of life for my family is important.* That is specific, so use *the*.

- In a comma-separated list of companies in an article, you do not need to include “the,” just refer to the name: National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration.
When there is only one of something, use the. 

they, them, their In most cases, a plural pronoun should agree in number with the antecedent: The children love the books their uncle gave them. They/them/their is acceptable in limited cases as a singular and/or gender-neutral pronoun, when alternative wording is overly awkward or clumsy. However, rewording usually is possible and always is preferable. AP Style recommends against using other gender-neutral pronouns such as xe or ze. Usage example: You might use a singular they when you must shield an anonymous source’s gender and other wording is overly awkward: The person feared for their own safety and spoke on condition of anonymity.

- Arguments for using they/them as a singular sometimes arise with an indefinite pronoun (anyone, everyone, someone) or unspecified/unknown gender (a person, the victim, the winner). Examples of rewording: All the class members raised their hands (instead of everyone raised their hands). The foundation gave grants to anyone who lost a job this year (instead of anyone who lost their job). Police said they would identify the victim after notification of relatives (instead of after notification of their relatives or after notification of his or her relatives). Lottery officials said the winner could claim the prize Tuesday (instead of their or his or her prize).

- In stories about people who identify as neither male nor female or ask not to be referred to as he/she/him/her: Use the person’s name in place of a pronoun, or otherwise reword the sentence, whenever possible. If they/them/their use is essential, explain in the text that the person prefers a gender-neutral pronoun.

- Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person. Hendricks said the new job is a thrill (instead of Hendricks said Hendricks is thrilled about the new job or Hendricks said they are thrilled about the new job). Lowry’s partner is Dana Adams, an antiques dealer. They bought a house last year (instead of Lowry and Lowry’s partner bought a house last year or Lowry and their partner bought a house last year).

- When they is used in the singular, it takes a plural verb: Taylor said they need a new car. (Again, be sure it’s clear from the context that only one person is involved.) Do not use themself as it is substandard English. The AP Stylebook’s guidance on singular they
does not address the question of themself, which some have proposed and others reject. The AP Stylebook suggests to avoid using a singular themself and instead consider a singular themselves if it works for your audience. If the witness does not make themselves available.

ticket vending machine Use the simpler ticket machine when possible. Do not use TVM.

time Lowercase and use periods for a.m., p.m. Use numerals except for noon and midnight. Do not put a 12 in front of noon or midnight. Don’t use 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. (In Latin, these abbreviations stand for ante meridiem, "before noon," and post meridiem, "afternoon.")

- Times on the hour do not take zeros. Including double zeroes is acceptable, however, when aligning multiple times in charts and tables. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 1:30 p.m., 11 a.m., not 11:00 a.m.

- Here are styles for giving ranges of time: The hours are 8:30-10 a.m. and 6-9 p.m. (or 8:30 to 10 a.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.). Service will run from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., from noon to 1:30 p.m., from 1:30-3 p.m.).

- Avoid redundancies like 11:30 a.m. this morning or 11:30 p.m. Tuesday night. Instead, use 11:30 a.m. today, 11 p.m. Tuesday. The wording 3 o’clock in the afternoon is acceptable but wordy.

time frame Two words. A particular time frame: Provide at least a 24-hour notice. Please provide at least 24 hours’ notice.

timeline One word.

timesaving One word.

toward Not towards, which is not a word in American English.
trackbed one word. Try using track foundation instead.

transit center A transit stop or station where several routes or lines meet. Capitalize the full name of transit centers: the Bellevue Transit Center, the Federal Way Transit Center. Lowercase transit center when the term stands alone (is not the proper name): The transit center is near Northgate Shopping Center. Avoid the acronym TC whenever possible.

tribes, tribal Refers to a sovereign political entity, communities sharing a common ancestry, culture or language, and a social group of linked families who may be part of an ethnic group. Identify tribes by the political identity specified by the tribe, nation or community: the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation. Ethnic group is preferred when referring to ethnicity or ethnic violence. Normally lowercased in text; however, if corresponding with entities that capitalize their titles, follow their convention.

- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Indian Tribe (although the tribe often uses Nisqually Tribe)

transit operator On first reference, transit operator is the preferred term for people who operate buses or light rail trains. To avoid confusion with other types of operators, include the word transit on first reference. Bus driver or operator is acceptable to avoid redundancy. Always lowercase.

transit oriented development A public and private development supporting transit use by emphasizing pedestrian and transit access, clustering development, and mixing land uses and activities. Abbreviate to TOD on second reference, but use sparingly. (Note: Transit-oriented development is correct; however, Sound Transit is making an exception by omitting the hyphen in this compound modifier.)

transportation demand management Cooperative efforts by transit agencies, local government and business to manage transportation demand and make public transportation more attractive. Methods include limiting parking, promoting flextime and building park-and-ride lots. Spell out on first reference. TDM is acceptable on second reference, but use very sparingly.
Transportation Improvement Program A program of intermodal transportation projects, to implement over several years, growing out of the planning process and designed to improve transportation in a community. This program is required as a condition of locality receiving federal transit and highway grants. Spell out on first reference. TIP is acceptable on second reference.

trolley bus Two words. Trolley coach or trolley is acceptable in texts to avoid redundancy. Use the term to refer to a bus propelled by electrical power from two overhead wires.

TTY Abbreviation for telecommunications device for the deaf and teletypewriter. Acceptable on first reference when used following a phone number. The following is a recommended format for stating a TTY telephone number: (888) 713-6030 TTY. Do not use TDD.

U underway One word in all uses.

union names You can shorten formal names of unions to conventionally accepted names: Change: United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America to: United Auto Workers union. Capitalize short-form names with the exception of union. Capitalize union when it is part of the formal name: Amalgamated Transit Union.

University District Spell out and capitalize on first reference for the neighborhood. On later references, U District may be used. For the station opening in 2021, it’s just U District Station.

University of Washington Spell out and capitalize on first reference. UW (all caps, no periods) or the university (lowercase) may be used on second reference. Use the same convention when referring to the University of Washington, Tacoma. UW Tacoma can be used on second reference.
vanpool One word. A vanpool is a prearranged service using passenger vans to carry commuters with similar origins and destinations.

via Means “by way of,” not “by means of.” Use via (or, simpler, use through) to show the direction of a journey: *The route goes from Seattle to Southcenter via Rainier Beach.* Don’t use via to show the means by which someone makes a journey: He made the trip via bus. Say: *He made the trip by bus.* Use VIA in all caps when referring to shuttle service to Link stations in the Rainier Valley.

website One word Also, webcam, webcast, webmaster, webpage. But web address, web browser.

well Hyphenate as part of a compound modifier: *She is a well-dressed woman. He is well-fed.*

well-being Hyphenate well-modifiers.

workforce One word, joining workbook, workday, workhorse, workout, workplace, workstation and workweek.
Y

**year-end** Hyphenate both the noun and adjective.

**yearlong** One word.

**year-round** Hyphenate.

**years** Use numerals without commas: *In 2003* ... Use an “s” and no apostrophe to show spans of decades or centuries, but use an apostrophe at the start of the year when omitting the first two numerals: *1990s, 1900s, ’68, ’60s*. Years are the one exception to the rule against beginning a sentence with numerals: *1994 was one of his best years*. See *dates, numbers*.

Z

**zero, zeros** Don't include unnecessary zeros in times and dollar amounts: *10 a.m., $35;* not *10:00 a.m., $35.00*. Including double zeroes is acceptable; however, when aligning multiple times or dollar amounts in charts and tables. See *cents, time*.

**ZIP code** A rare case where you should only use the abbreviation, not the longer Zone Improvement Plan. Run the five digits together without a comma, and do not put a comma between the state name and the ZIP code: *New York, NY 10020*. Except for mailing addresses in business correspondence, put only one space between the state abbreviation and ZIP code; use two spaces in business correspondence. Following post office guidelines, don't include the ZIP+4 digits in return addresses printed on envelopes, postcards and publications.
When writing for the public, avoid acronyms or use them only as a second reference.

Communications thanks Terry Beals for compiling most of this list.

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<td>ACOE</td>
<td>United States Army Corps of Engineers</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
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<td>PAHs</td>
<td>Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons</td>
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<td>Technical Provisions</td>
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<td>Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons</td>
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<td>Traction Power Substations</td>
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<td>TPU</td>
<td>Tacoma Public Utilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRA</td>
<td>Trip Reduction Act</td>
</tr>
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<td>TS&amp;L</td>
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<td>TSS</td>
<td>Total Soluble Solids</td>
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<td>Total Toxic Organics</td>
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<td>TVM</td>
<td>Ticket Vending Machines</td>
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<td>UBC</td>
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<td>Underwriter's Laboratory</td>
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<td>UUP</td>
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<td>USFW</td>
<td>United States Department of Fish and Wildlife</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCP</td>
<td>Voluntary Cleanup Plan (DOE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMS</td>
<td>Variable Message Signs</td>
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<td>VOC</td>
<td>Volatile Organic Compounds</td>
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<td>WABO</td>
<td>Washington Association of Building Officials</td>
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<td>WAC</td>
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<td>WDFW</td>
<td>Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife</td>
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</table>
WET     Whole Effluent Toxicity
WOBO    World Organization of Building Officials
WRIA    Water Resource Inventory Area
WSBCC   Washington State Building Code Council
WSBLE   West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions
WSDOE   Washington Department of Ecology
WSDOT   Washington State Department of Transportation
WUTC    Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

Style guide resources

For additional information, please consult the following resources:

- The Associated Press Stylebook. Access the library’s online version as follows:
  Login: library@soundtransit.org
  Password: L*brary1


- Webster’s New World Dictionary
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