

Station Codes: Pictogram Replacement

Rider Experience and Operations Committee

11/3/22

Why we are here

Purpose

- Informational briefing on replacing pictograms with station codes to better assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, visitors, and passengers with disabilities.

How we got here

- RCW requires non-Roman alphabet-based station identifier
- Opportunity to integrate with new line names & best practice
- Opportunity to roll out with Link Light Rail expansion

Agenda

- Current pictograms & peer review
- Station code development & testing
- Next steps

***Current pictograms & peer
review***

Pictograms have learned meaning

- **Pictograms** = specific, learned meaning, scalability challenges
- **Universal** = general universal meaning, same system to system



Northgate



Roosevelt



U District



University of Washington



Capitol Hill



Westlake / Seattle



University Street



Pioneer Square



International District /
Chinatown



Stadium



SODO



Beacon Hill



Mount Baker



Columbia City



Othello



Rainier Beach



Tukwila International Blvd



SeaTac/Airport



Angle Lake

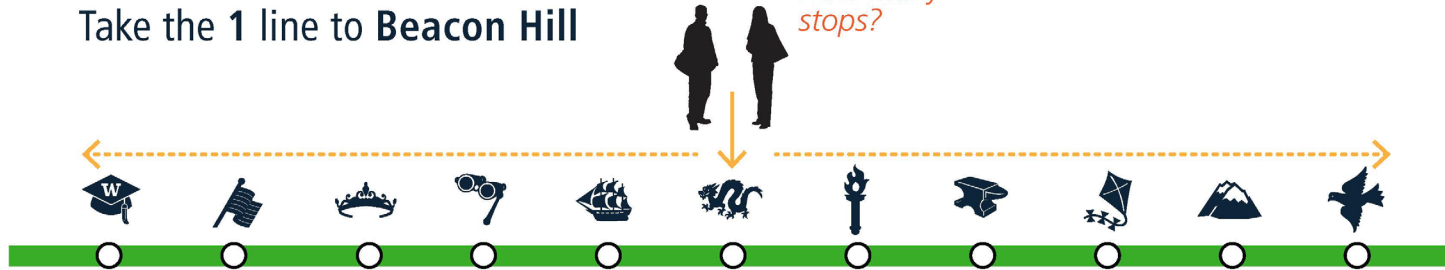


Bicycle Parking /
Bike Access

Station codes could assist with wayfinding

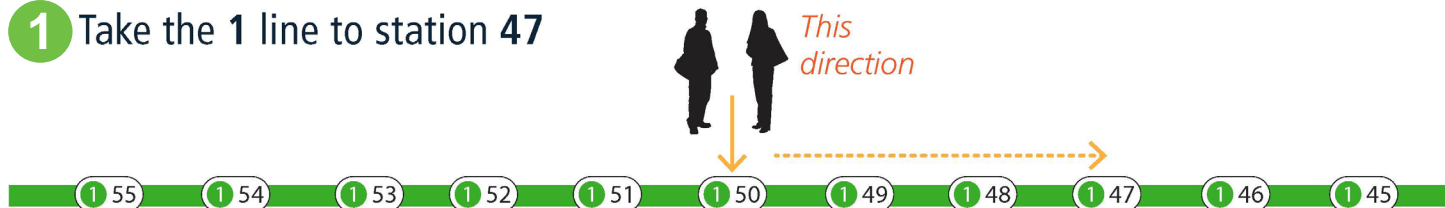
Take the 1 line to **Beacon Hill**

Which direction?
How many stops?



1 Take the 1 line to station **47**

3 stops
This direction



Station codes could integrate with line names

A simple regional strategy is:

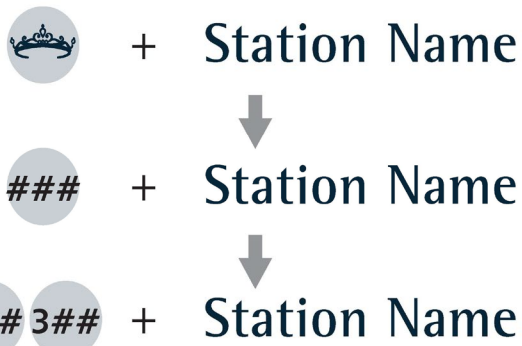
- Integrated, e.g.
 - ① Ballard–Tacoma
 - ③ Everett—West Seattle
- Best practice
- Prioritizes wayfinding & how passengers use our system
- Scalable with our system growth



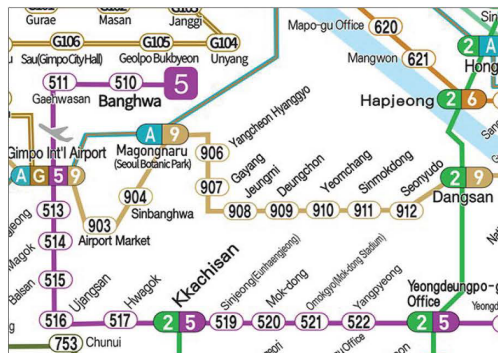
International best practice is station codes

Use numeric codes

- Likely 3 digit, relate to line name
- Language agnostic, Arabic numerals globally understood
- Test both station codes & stop codes



Dubai



Seoul

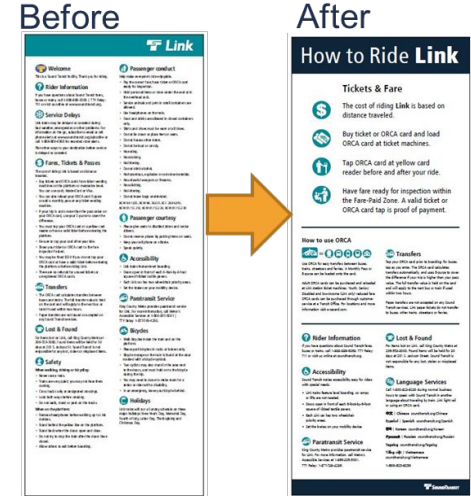
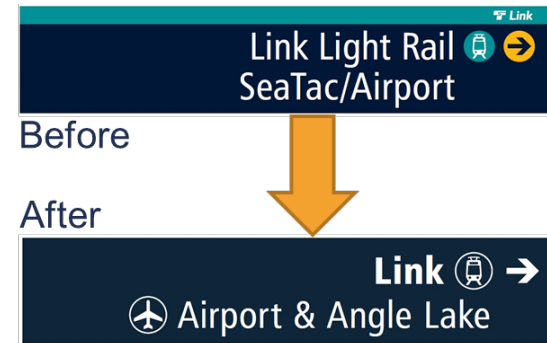


Tokyo

Signage program utilizes expansion

System-wide signage updates are tied to extension openings

- Develops standards & maintains customer signage / standards
- Standard kit-of-parts applied across all modes
- Leverage expansion work & resources to update and improve visual / tactile signage
- Provide consistency between new & old stations
- Station codes would be rolled out with next light rail expansion



Station code development & testing

Diverse user testing is key to success

Testing objective

- Test potential station codes to assess ease of use for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations and passengers with disabilities to interpret and navigate

Milestones

- 6 LEP Focus groups in 5 languages
- 1 ADA Townhall Workshop – 4 breakout groups: vision & cognitive
- 2 Blind & Deaf/Blind Workshops
- Sounding Board: English survey
- Public survey translated to 8 languages w/ paid social
- Community engagement thru community liaisons

Comparing our 3 options

Unique 3-digit codes for each station

Study 1: Station Code

+ Station Name

Westlake	053
Capitol Hill	054
Denny	154

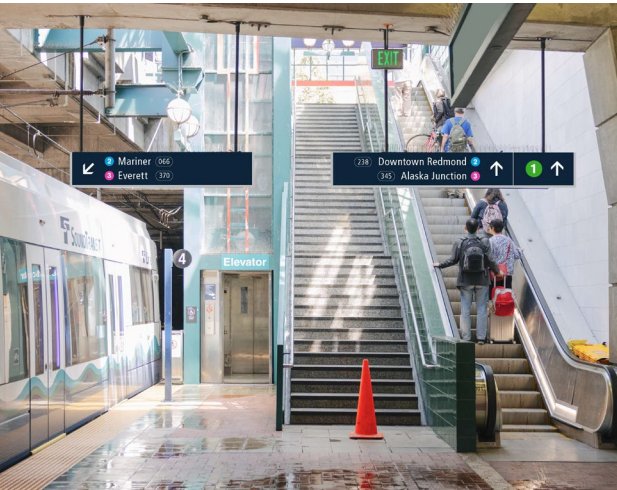
Study 2a & 2b: Stop Codes

1## 2## 3## + Station Name

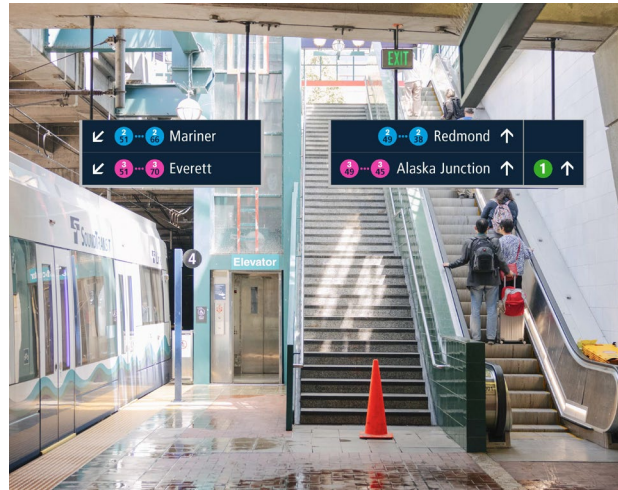
Westlake	1 ₅₃ 2 ₅₃ 3 ₅₃	3 ₂₁ 53
Capitol Hill	2 ₅₃ 3 ₅₃	3 ₂ 54
Denny	1 ₅₃	1 54

Same travel scenarios used across testing

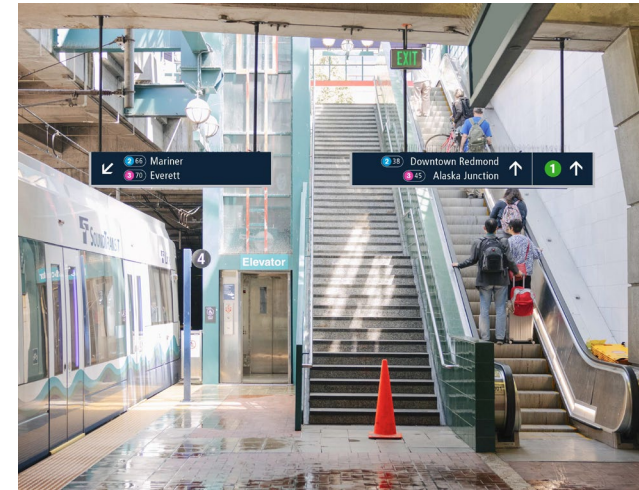
- Questions about current pictograms
- Trip 1: Rainier Beach to IDS
- Trip 2: Bellevue Downtown to Seattle Center, transfer at IDS required
- How would you describe getting to the airport to a friend?
- Comparative questions



Study 1: Station Code



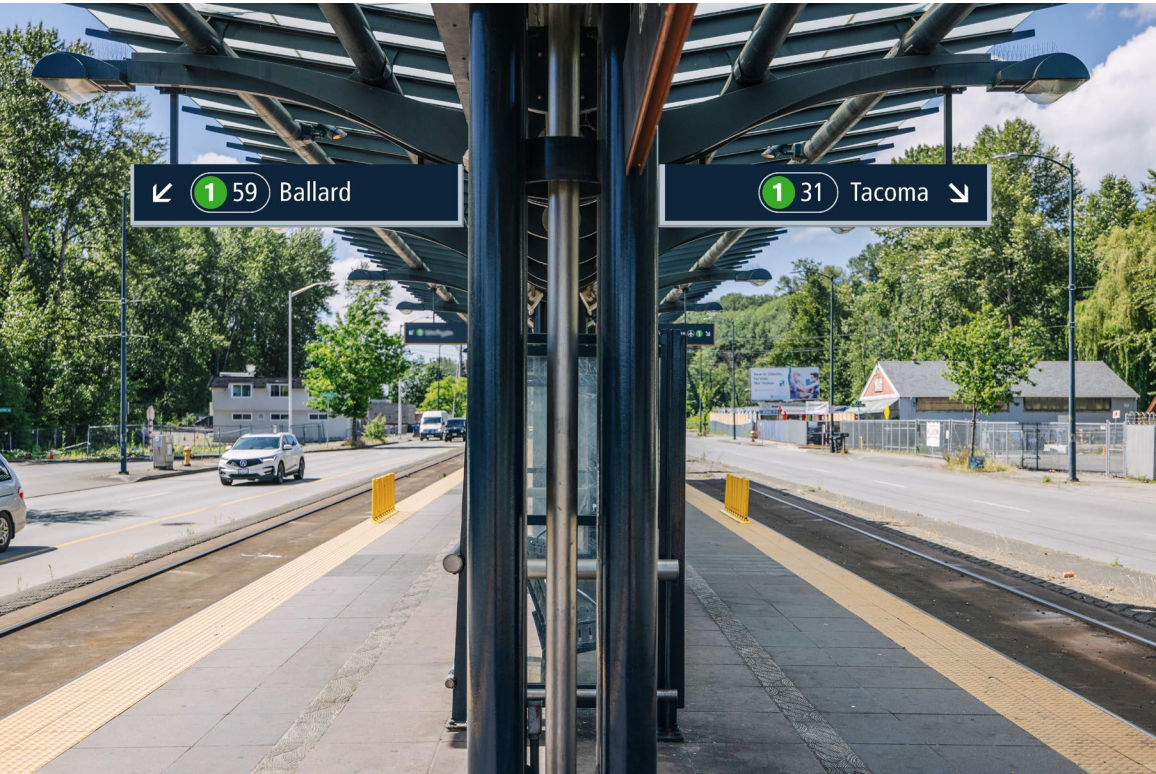
Study 2a: Stop Code



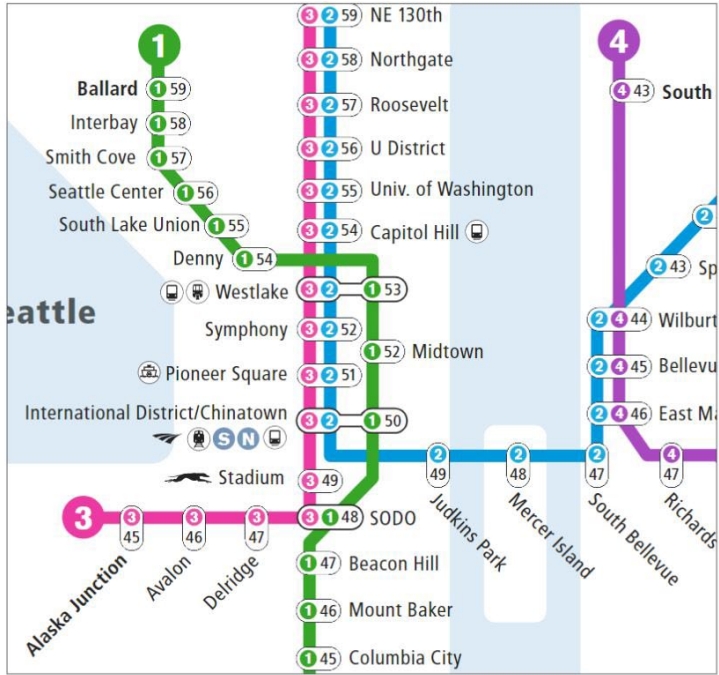
Study 2b: Stop Code

Preferred option 2b: stop codes

1## 2## 3## + Station Name



1 2 3 50 International District / Chinatown



Passengers with disabilities

Observations

- Station codes to identify stations was a new concept
- Not a clear preference
- Desire for explicit explanations about what numbers represent
- Concerns that people could mistake codes for bus lines
- Feedback on braille format
- Lots of general wayfinding feedback given



LEP focus groups

Observations

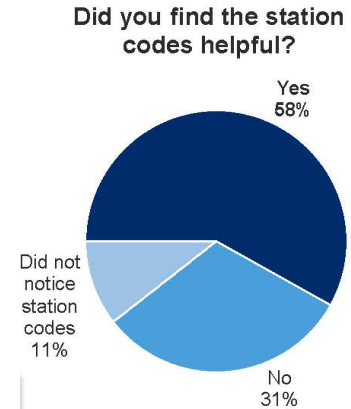
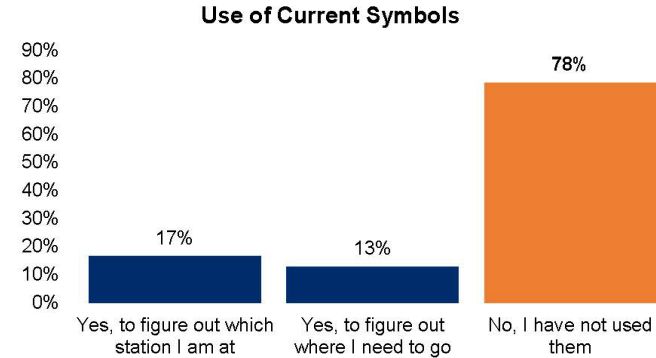
- 5 languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Somali
- Stop codes were favored with option 2B preferred
- Quickly picked up on how to read map
- Line colors often used for reference
- Not all saw a need for codes, but they did not struggle to comprehend them
- Familiarity with other transit systems provided a frame of reference
- Transfer was successfully identified



Sounding board: survey results

Pictograms vs Station Codes

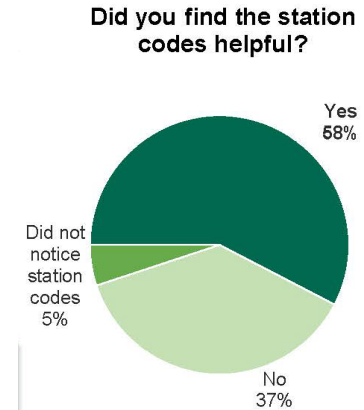
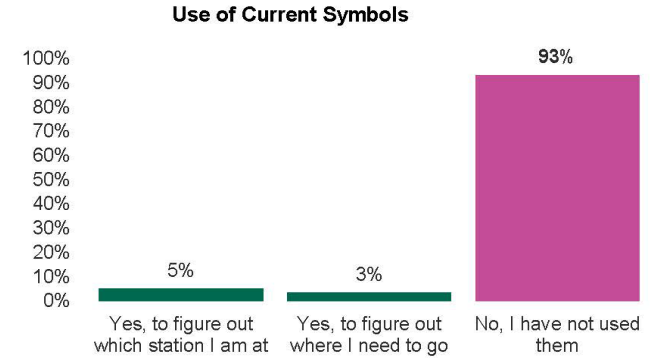
- Pictograms were not widely used <20%
- 80% of respondents recognized pictograms
- 58% did not find current pictograms helpful
- Overall, majority of respondents found station codes helpful (58%)
- Station code option 2b scored the highest across all metrics except for “simple”: Helpful (90%), Intuitive (80%), Easy (75%), Attractive 71%, Simple (59%)



LEP: Survey Results were Similar

Pictograms vs Station Codes

- Pictograms were not widely used <10%
- Less than half of LEP respondents recognized the pictograms
- Nearly three-quarters did not find current pictograms helpful
- Overall, majority of respondents found station codes helpful (58%)
- Station code option 2b scored the highest across metrics: Helpful (78%), Intuitive (75%), Easy (75%), Attractive 63%, Simple (61%)



Key takeaways – station code testing

Station codes will replace pictograms

- **Pictograms** were not widely used
- **Station code option 2b was preferred**, and will replace pictograms
- **Station codes may not be used by all passengers**, but for those who do, they are a useful tool to supplement wayfinding information



Key takeaways – station code testing

Design considerations

- **Some info conveyed visually does not translate well tactilely**
- **Additional context/attractions is desired**
- **Universal icons** are well received

Transit experience

- **Digital assistance technology** – has strong demand
- **Tactile signage** – further standardization desired
- **Safety & cleanliness** – major concerns



Next steps

Next steps

- **Nov**– Station Codes to REO
- **Q4 2022 - Q1 2023** – Incorporate into updated Customer Signage Design Manual
- **Q2 2023** – Begin incorporating into East Link and/or Lynnwood Link signage packages / scope retrofit projects
- **2023-2024** Link Light Rail Expansion opens utilizing station codes

Thank you.



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