



Metro

**COMMUNICATIONS
External Communications Policy**

(COM 2)

POLICY STATEMENT

To maximize the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) brand identity, image and communications processes, and maintain consistency in the eyes of our customers and other stakeholders, all processes and materials intended to represent Metro and its services, programs and projects to external audiences must be created, reviewed and/or approved by Metro's Communications Department (Communications). No other department or contractor is authorized to develop, design or implement Metro customer materials or other communications initiatives, or represent Metro through communications processes, without first consulting or getting direction from Communications.

PURPOSE

To provide the necessary guidelines for development and authorization of external communications and to ensure consistency in the processes, materials, statements, images and logo usages that are intended to explain, promote or otherwise represent Metro services, programs and projects to external audiences.

APPLICATION

This policy and its procedures apply to all Metro employees and consultants.

Caecilia G. Langston
APPROVED: County Counsel or N/A

Paulitta Loures
Department Head

J.A. [Signature]
ADOPTED: CEO

Effective Date: 7/27/17

Date of Last Review: _____



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1.0 GENERAL

External communications keep Metro's customers, stakeholders and the general public informed, educated and engaged in the agency's services, programs and projects. Communications is responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing external communications processes and materials such as logos; slogans; nomenclature; standard messaging platforms; campaigns; social media, web, mobile; media relations, visual communications; and community outreach and engagement. If an outside contractor is tasked with any external communications efforts on behalf of Metro, all processes and materials must be coordinated through and approved by the Communications' staff. This ensures a consistent, coordinated and accurate presentation of Metro to the public. In keeping with best industry practices, it is imperative for Metro to have Communications as the central point where external communications are created and/or reviewed, and the central point to apply, coordinate, approve and authorize the processes and materials that are intended to inform the public about Metro's services, programs and projects.

2.0 PROCEDURES

Marketing

The Marketing unit (Marketing) within Communications is responsible for developing Metro's marketing strategy, branding, identity and image, and ensuring it is applied consistently by Metro staff, consultants and vendors across all customer-facing channels. In collaboration with agency partners, the Marketing team is also the primary developer of Metro's external communications materials and digital channels, and is responsible for ensuring the goals and objectives of the Agency and partner departments are met, while approving materials and ensuring their accuracy and consistency within the Metro brand. No other department is authorized to develop and/or approve customer communications materials and digital channels without first consulting the Marketing Unit.

Any Metro department proposing to utilize an outside contractor for marketing services must contact their Marketing Representative first. Marketing will evaluate the request to see if it can be accommodated internally. If it cannot be accommodated, Marketing will partner with the requesting department, and oversee the marketing strategy and contractor's development of materials that follow Metro's Style Guidelines.

Community Relations

The Community Relations unit within Communications is responsible for community outreach and engaging with the public, and is therefore the lead in developing, guiding, coordinating and approving engagement strategies, processes and activities, including those legally required through the environmental, engineering and construction phases.



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Community Relations is also responsible for guiding messages, materials and presentations used for community outreach. If an outside contractor is tasked with performing such activities on behalf of Metro, they must get guidance from, and coordinate with Community Relations staff in advance of the activities. This includes interactions with, and coordination of elected officials and key stakeholders, public/community meetings, community notices, and engagement processes. All messages and visual communications to project stakeholders should be coordinated through Community Relations to ensure consistency of Metro's overall messaging.

Public Relations

The Public Relations unit within Communications is responsible for developing, guiding and approving the Metro's media relations strategies and materials, and approving all informational, educational, in-kind promotional and service-related digital content, processes and activities that represent Metro services, programs and projects. This includes but is not limited to press releases, service alerts, talking points, articles, guest columns or opinion editorials, and interviews with media organizations.

Art and Design

The Art and Design unit within Communications is responsible for improving customer environments through the integration of art and design and for developing and implementing all agency public art, art asset management and cultural programs including all community outreach and communications related to those programs. Art and Design is also responsible for the development and oversight of Metro's brand identity in the built environment (facilities, fleet, etc.).

2.1 Types of Materials

Uses of materials affected by this policy generally fall into the categories of advertising, customer information, study, project and construction information; signage and wayfinding; renderings or images; social media, web, and mobile channels; illustration; photography; videos; media and public relations; public information displays, community relations; promotions and recruitment. The executive management for Marketing, Public Relations, Art and Design, and Community Relations are the points of contact for their respective areas to approve communications materials designed to explain, promote or otherwise represent Metro and/or its services, programs and projects to external audiences. If materials requests originate outside of Communications, Marketing will confer with the appropriate parties prior to development and approval.

Exceptions: The content of Board reports, legal documents, contracts, technical presentations and other regulatory documents which do not serve as promotional pieces for Metro services are not subject to this policy. Wayfinding signage



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elements as regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as well as printed and other materials required during emergencies such as disruptions to transit service are also excepted. However, logo use, typography, printed covers and other graphic design considerations for such pieces must follow Communications guidelines as described in the Metro Style Guide or be otherwise generated and/or approved by the Chief Communications Officer or designee prior to release.

The content of media communications, including press releases, is covered in the Contact with Media (COM 1) policy.

2.2 Generation of Materials

Marketing will develop campaigns and materials that support the Strategic Marketing Plan or that are tied to strategic marketing objectives. Requests for any other communications materials from other internal departments will be referred to Marketing. Marketing Representatives are assigned to individual departments and projects to ensure that their communications needs and projects are satisfied. Marketing staff will collaborate with staff from the requesting department to develop and deliver the materials either through Marketing or an outside contractor overseen by Marketing.

Marketing staff members partner with other Metro departments to identify goals, objectives and budgets for specific marketing projects. In collaboration with the partner department, Marketing staff will develop the project strategy, define audiences, develop a paid media plan, create messaging, and design communication materials to meet the required goals and objectives. Such materials are then produced through Marketing's internal Printing Services group, which also has a bench contract for outside production resources for projects they are unable to produce in-house. With Marketing approval, outside contractors may be used if internal printing services are unable to produce/complete job requests.

2.3 Release of Materials

Release of Metro external communications materials for use/reuse by external parties such as contractors; consultants; regional partners; other transit agencies; city, municipal, state and federal authorities; print and electronic media or other internal departments must be approved by Communications to ensure the most current and accurate information is communicated, and that applicable copyright and trademark protections are respected. Use of logo, graphic, photo and video properties by third parties must be approved in advance by Communications and accompanied by a credit to Metro. All requests for approval



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shall be facilitated by the Marketing Representative assigned to the requesting department.

2.4 Advertising

Paid promotion of Metro's external communications materials, including print, broadcast, out of home, web, mobile, and social media advertising to external parties will be coordinated with Marketing. Based on the identified goals, objectives and budget outlined in the advertising brief, Marketing will advance and manage a request to the Metro Media Buyer for development of a strategic paid media plan that identifies audience targets, conversion metrics, and media platforms to meet the partner's goals and objectives. All ads will be designed and trafficked by Marketing to ensure consistency with the Metro Strategic Marketing Plan and to maximize brand impact, scale, reach, and advertising budget.

Additionally, all inquiries, solicitations, and proposals from paid media vendors and services must be forwarded to the Marketing Department so they can be vetted by Metro's media planning and buying agency of record.

2.5 Digital Channels

Digital channels include customer-facing websites, applications, social media platforms, blogs and paid digital media. All new or modified web, mobile and applications must be coordinated, and are subject to approval by Communications. Communications staff meets regularly to coordinate ongoing social media strategy and efforts. For specific requirements related to social media channels, refer to Metro's Social Media Policy (COM 7).

3.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Brand Identity – the combination of graphic and text elements used in a consistent manner to represent a product, service or company which, when combined with quality standards, behavioral characteristics and public persona, impart a consistent impression of that product, service or company to the public.

Digital Channels – owned and paid online distribution properties including social media, websites, applications, and mobile platforms.

External Communications Materials – any information conveyed through print media, electronic media or other means intended to explain, publicize, advertise or identify Metro services, programs or activities to external audiences. This includes, but is not limited to printed or electronic brochures; take-ones; fact sheets; publications; announcements; flyers; banners; report covers; stationery; outdoor advertisements; on-



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board bus and rail fleet ads, signage, and decals; bus, rail and station wayfinding and/or directional signage; maps; web sites and pages; mobile applications; social media channels; wearables and other promotional/specialty items; press releases; talking points; key messages; official statements; videos; logos; graphic symbols; photography; illustration; and other customer communications materials.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Communications Department generates external communications materials and processes in accordance with Executive and Board-directed priorities; reviews and approves all external customer-focused communications materials to ensure consistent use of design, logos, slogans and factual information; and guides and approves marketing, media, community outreach and engagement strategies.

Chief Communications Officer (or designee) reviews and approves prior to production any communications materials intended to explain, inform, educate, promote or otherwise represent Metro and/or its services, programs and projects to an external audience.

5.0 FLOWCHART

Not Applicable

6.0 REFERENCES

- Metro Style Guide
- Metro Logo Guidelines
- Contact with Media (COM 1)
- Social Media Policy (COM 7)

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

Not applicable

8.0 PROCEDURE HISTORY

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| 03/10/97 | Memo from CEO issued to Executive Staff outlining guidelines for approval of communication materials. |
| 02/07/01 | Formal policy approved and adopted by Office of the CEO. |
| 02/19/04 | Memo from CEO issued to all employees regarding authority of the Communications department, formed subsequent to the adoption of the policy. |



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- 06/28/05 Policy revised to reflect current organizational structure.
- 11/05/09 Biennial review and update. Policy updated to include references to timetables, social media and Agency Nomenclature policy.
- 7/23/13 Biennial review and update. Policy updated to include mention of PUC and MUTCD; clarified external communications materials, and interaction between Communications and other departments; changed Metro references to LACMTA.
- 06/26/17 Review: changed the title from Approval of External Communications Materials to External Communications Policy; added Art & Design unit; clarified departmental duties.