

APTA Multimodal Operations Conference - San Francisco, CA July 28-31, 2013

Transit System Map Display and Contest

Agency	City or Region	Size (W X H)	Contact Person	Scoring Basic Info.	X3	Scoring Construction	X2	Scoring Transit Info.	X5	Total	Rank	Notes specific to agency
SFMTA	San Francisco, CA	34.25 X 21.75	Paul Bignardi	2.3333	3	2.1111	2	2.1852	5	22.15	6	
SamTrans	San Mateo County, CA	12.00 X 35.75	Eric Harris	2.2500	3	2.2857	2	2.1429	5	22.04	7	
Santa Clara VTA	San Jose & Santa Clara County, CA	33.75 X 26.50	Kermit Cuff	2.7857	3	2.3571	2	2.2500	5	24.32	1	
Golden Gate Transit	Marin & Sonoma Counties + San Francisco, CA	23.50 X 33.50	Ron Downing	2.0385	3	2.0385	2	1.8462	5	19.42	17	
North County Transit District	North San Diego County, CA	22.00 X 28.00	Damon Blythe	2.1786	3	2.3929	2	2.1429	5	22.04	7	
Sacramento RTD	Sacramento and Vicinity	33.00 X 22.88	James Drake	2.4444	3	2.3704	2	2.2222	5	23.19	2	
Twin Cities Metro	Minneapolis / St. Paul and Vicinity, MN	36.00 X 26.88	Cyndi Harper	2.3333	3	1.8889	2	2.0370	5	20.96	12	
Chicago Pace Suburban Bus	Chicago and Vicinity, IL	23.75 X 36.88	Erik Lewellyn	2.1923	3	2.2692	2	1.6923	5	19.58	16	
Utah Transit Authority	Salt Lake City and Vicinity, UT	19.25 X 24.00	Bryan Romrell	2.0370	3	2.1111	2	2.0741	5	20.70	13	
Antelope Valley Transit	Lancaster / Palmdale and Antelope Valley, CA	11.00 X 17.00	Nate Pitkin	2.1852	3	2.0000	2	2.3333	5	22.22	5	
Spokane Transit	Spokane, WA	25.38 X 18.25	Mike Hynes	2.4643	3	2.6071	2	2.0357	5	22.79	3	
OC Transpo	Ottawa, Canada	39.00 X 24.00	Pat Scrimgeour	2.2069	3	2.0690	2	1.9310	5	20.41	15	
King County Metro	Seattle and Vicinity, WA	17.00 X 36.00	David Lantry	2.1786	3	2.3214	2	2.0357	5	21.36	9	Shelter map size listed here.
Portland Tri-Met	Portland and Vicinity, OR	40.00 X 30.00	David Crout	2.1786	3	2.2500	2	2.2500	5	22.29	4	
San Diego MTS	San Diego and Vicinity, CA	22.00 X 32.00	Brent Boyd	2.3704	3	2.2222	2	1.9259	5	21.19	10	
VIA Metropolitan Transit	San Antonio and Vicinity, TX	36.00 X 26.88	Tracy Manning	2.3333	3	1.9259	2	1.9630	5	20.67	14	
Chicago Transit Authority	Chicago and Vicinity, IL	31.88 X 24.50	Steve Abrams	2.2632	3	2.2632	2	2.1579	5	22.11	6	
MARTA	Atlanta and Vicinity, GA	31.88 X 24.50	Don Williams	2.1579	3	2.1579	2	2.0526	5	21.05	11	

Agency	City or Region	Design Features												Notes specific to Agency mapNotes: * G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor ** = unable to determine info from map *** = shelter map reviewed, not a paper map
		Rail Distinct from Bus (G / F / P)*	Span / Freq. Table	Frequency shown on Map	Map Area Coverage (Distances)	Font Size Rte. Marker	# of Rtes.	Use of Icons / Symbols / Photos on Back of Map	Fare Info.	Major Roads & Neighbor Transit Shown (G / F / P)*	Bike Info	Prevalent font sizes on back	Ads	
SFMTA	San Francisco, CA	F	Yes	Key Corridors	68 sq. miles	6 pt.	79	Minimal	Yes	R = P NT = F	Yes	7-8 pts.	No	Only map with complete street grid.
SamTrans	San Mateo County, CA	P	No	No	320 sq. miles	7 pt.	**	None	Yes	R = F NT = G	Yes	9 pt.	No	English & Spanish.
Santa Clara VTA	San Jose & Santa Clara County, CA	G	Yes	No	444 sq. miles	9 pt.	79	Extensive	Yes	R = G NT = G	Poor	8-9 pts.	No	
Golden Gate Transit ***	Marin & Sonoma Counties + San Francisco, CA	P	No	No	272 sq. miles	7 pt.	**	Front map only	No	R = G NT = P	Poor	7-8 pts.	No	Shelter map submitted. Public maps are in a multi-page book.
North County Transit District	North San Diego County, CA	G	No	No	650 sq. miles	14 pt.	46	Moderate	Yes	R = G NT = G	No	10 pt.	No	
Sacramento RTD	Sacramento and Vicinity	G	Yes	No	490 sq. miles	12 pt.	50	Moderate	Yes	R = G NT = F	Yes	12 pt.	No	
Twin Cities Metro	Minneapolis / St. Paul and Vicinity, MN	G	Yes	Key Corridors	325 sq. miles	5 pt.	209	Minimal	Yes	R = G NT = NA	No	8-9 pts.	No	
Chicago Pace Suburban Bus	Chicago and Vicinity, IL	G	No	No	3,850 sq. miles 450 sq. miles	7 pt.	**	Minimal	No	R = G NT = F	No	8-12 pts.	No	Two maps. The insert map = big enough to be a primary map.
Utah Transit Authority	Salt Lake City and Vicinity, UT	G	Yes	Yes	480 sq. miles	11 pt.	74	Minimal	No	R = P NT = NA	Yes	7-10 pts.	No	
Antelope Valley Transit	Lancaster / Palmdale and Antelope Valley, CA	F	Yes	Yes	270 sq. miles	9 pt.	12	Moderate	Yes	R = G NT = F	No	4-8 pts.	No	Only map with complete schedules of all service.
Spokane Transit	Spokane, WA	NA	Yes	Yes	225 sq. miles	11-12 pts.	47	Minimal	Yes	R = F NT = NA	No	8 pt.	No	
OC Transpo	Ottawa, Canada	G	No	No	158 sq. miles	7 pt.	**	Extensive	Yes	R = P NT = NA	Yes	9 pt.	No	English & French.
King County Metro	Seattle and Vicinity, WA	G	No	Yes	175 sq. miles	8 pt.	**	Moderate	Yes	R = F NT = G	No	8 pt.	No	Small map-10x17 analyzed. Shelter map also submitted. One of five overlapping area maps.
Portland Tri-Met	Portland and Vicinity, OR	G	No	Key Corridors	350 sq. miles	8 pt.	82	None	No	R = F NT = NA	Poor	7-8 pt.	No	
San Diego MTS	San Diego and Vicinity, CA	G	Yes	No	660 sq. miles	5 pt.	102	Moderate	Yes	R = F NT = G	No	7 pt.	No	Map coverage included entire area served by North County TD.
VIA Metropolitan Transit	San Antonio and Vicinity, TX	NA	Yes	Yes	740 Sq. miles	7 pt.	90	Moderate	Yes	R = G NT = NA	Poor	8-11 pts.	No	English & Spanish.
Chicago Transit Authority	Chicago and Vicinity, IL	G	Yes -some frequency	No	637 sq. miles	6 pt.	144	Minimal	Yes	R = P NT =	Yes	7-9 pts.	No	Span shown, but limited frequency info. present.
MARTA	Atlanta and Vicinity, GA	G	Yes	No	450 sq. miles	8 pt.	96	Minimal	Yes	R = G NT = P	No	9-10 pts.	No	

APTA Multimodal Operations Conference - San Francisco, CA July 28-31, 2013

Transit System Map Display and Contest

Map Display and Contest Summary

The transit system map display and contest at the APTA Multimodal Operations Conference was a new idea that attempted to expand traditional Multimodal Operations program to include an interactive element not present at previous conferences. The role of transit maps and the elements that comprise their design are a good source of discussion and debate, and that discussion and debate was evident during the conference as attendees viewed maps and scored them on a series of criteria drafted by the sub-committee. The task of creating a good transit map - or possibly more accurately - a transit map that is good as seen through the eyes of many different types of people with many different needs is much harder than it would seem.

For this contest, the fairly clear first place winner, and recipient of the first Stephen Parry Memorial Award, was the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). The Sacramento Regional Transit District (RTD) finished second, and the Spokane Transit District scored a third place finish. Portland Tri-Met and the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) tied for a fourth place rating. A total of 30 attendees voted.

Following the basic scoring tally, I took time to look at the maps a bit closer to record some of the outstanding (good and bad) features of design. The table above lists the information, and after an analysis of the data, some patterns appear, and some issues become evident that are not easily discernable at a quick glance. These issues, if acknowledged by transit map cartographers, should result in the production of better transit maps for all agencies.

Basic Information Issues

- Several maps did not include a distance scale in the legend information or somewhere on the map.
- Coverage areas averaged 300-600 square miles, with a range of 68 square miles (SFMTA) to 3,850 square miles (Chicago Suburban RTA (Pace)).
- Several maps did not include an alpha-numeric locator guide on the map edge.
- Most, but not all maps, included fare information on the map.
- Two maps were bilingual - English and Spanish, and one map was bilingual - English and French.
- Most maps were printed on a non-standard paper size (including non-standard sizes used on large scale printer-plotters).

Transit Information and Construction Issues

- Maps with route marker symbols that were 7 pt. font or smaller are difficult to read for many people.
- Maps with text information (mostly on back, but sometimes on front) that used 7 pt. font or smaller are difficult to read for many people.
- Many maps, but not all, used a span and frequency table to effectively provide more detailed service information.
- Some maps used color, pictograms / symbols / icons, and good graphic design to effectively fit more information into a small space.
- Most, but not all maps, included fare information on the map.
- Most, but not all maps, included bicycle information.
- None of the reviewed maps was sponsored by a 3rd party, or contained advertising.

Full sized and reduced size PDF's of the maps have been saved and can be sent to interested planners. The reduced size total of all 18 maps is 70 megabytes, so they can be sent via a series of emails or placed onto a storage device (CD) and sent via regular mail. Full sized PDF's have to be copied onto a storage device (CD) and sent via regular mail.