

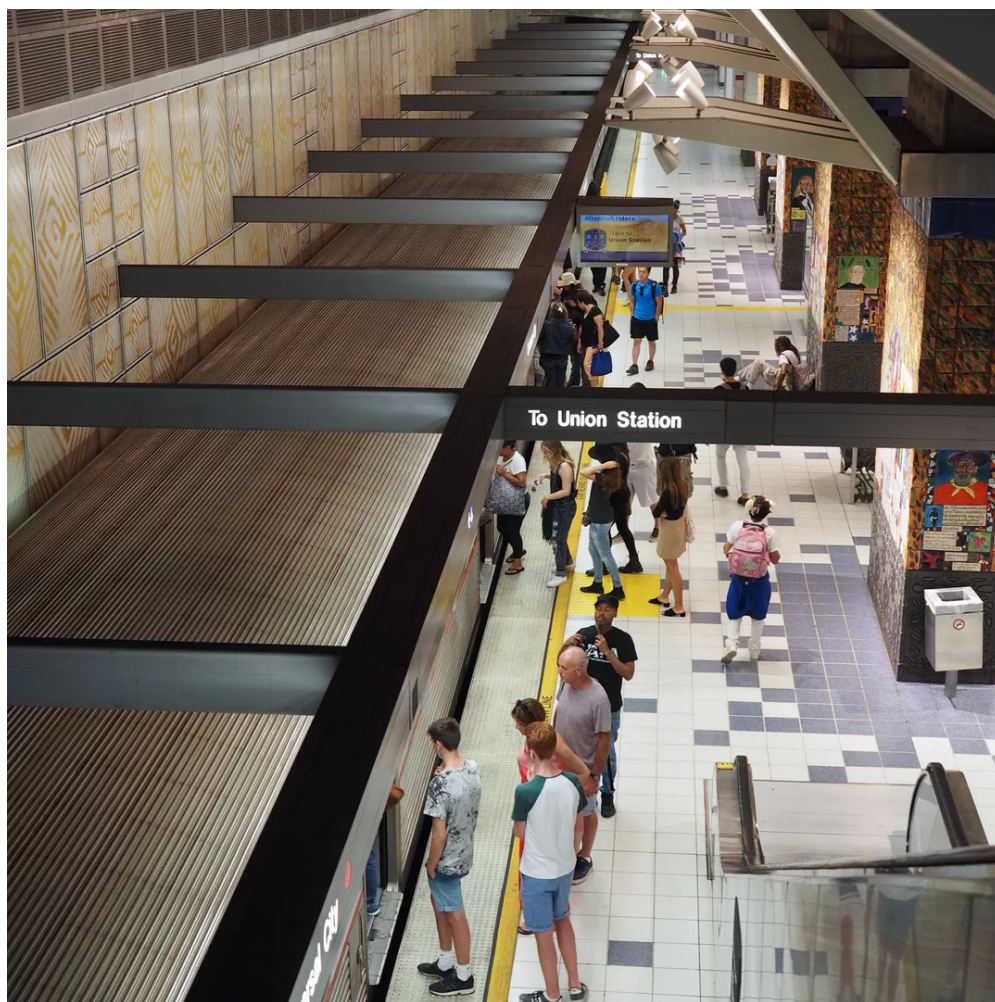


LOS ANGELES
DOWNTOWN

A guide to the subway formerly known as the Red Line

Now called the B Line, it reaches some of the most iconic landmarks in Los Angeles, including the Broad

By **Elijah Chiland** | Jan 28, 2020, 2:28pm PST



The train travels between Union Station in Downtown LA and North Hollywood. | PG/Bauer-Griffin/GC Images

The most-used train line in Los Angeles is no longer called the Red Line. As part of a [line-naming shakeup](#), it's become the B Line—though the route is still outlined in red on Metro system maps.

Whatever its name, the 27-year-old train line is the backbone of Los Angeles's growing rail network, carrying more than 100,000 daily riders—and [at least one regular Oscars attendee](#). Opened in 1993 and expanded to its current form in 2000, it's also LA's first modern subway line (parts of the city's old trolley system [ran underground](#) in the early 20th century).

As Metro expands its system, the role of the line—and the number of riders—could grow.

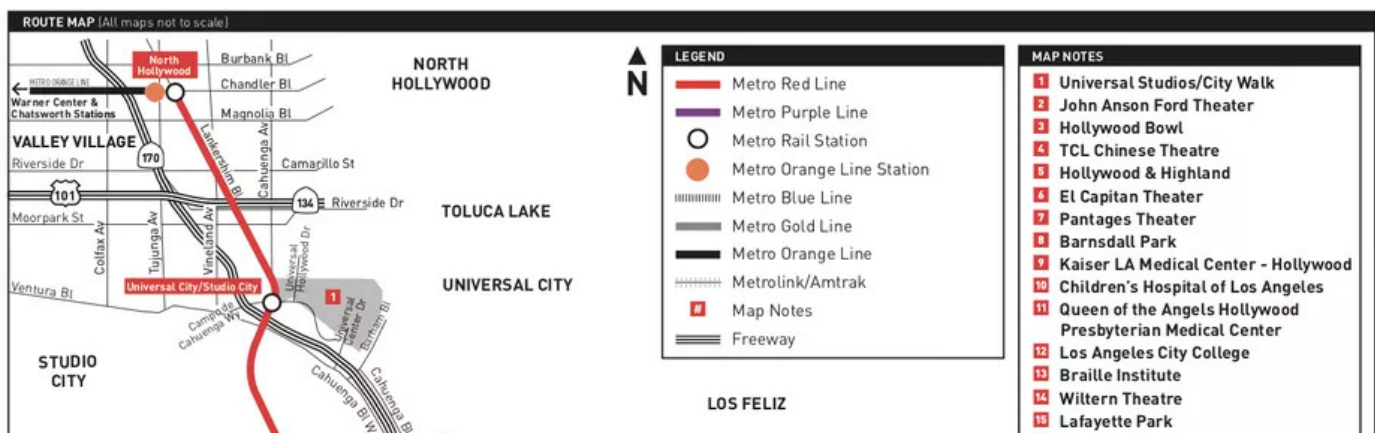
Plans are in place for a project that would allow [trains to arrive more frequently](#), meaning passengers could be transported more efficiently during busy travel times. And [new train cars with bench seating](#) will be added to the line in the next few years, ensuring there's more room for riders when trains are carrying standing-room-only crowds.

Until then, here's what to know about the newly renamed B Line.

Where does it go?

The train travels between Union Station in Downtown LA and North Hollywood, a distance of roughly 16 miles. It stops at 14 different stations, passing through Downtown's [Civic Center](#), [Historic Core](#), and [Financial District](#)—before crossing into [Westlake](#), [Koreatown](#), [East Hollywood](#), [Hollywood](#), and [Universal City](#).

The B Line and D (formerly Purple) Line share tracks between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont Station, so make sure you're boarding the right line when a train pulls into the station.





A map of the B Line route | Via Metro

What places can you get to from there?

The B Line is accessible to some of the [most iconic landmarks](#) in Los Angeles, as well as major commercial centers, cultural sites, and historic places. Here are some of the highlights:

In the Downtown area, train stations are within walking distance of Olvera Street and the [El Pueblo de Los Angeles](#) Historical Monument, as well as [City Hall](#), [Grand Park](#), the [Los Angeles Music Center](#), the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#), [Pershing Square](#), [Grand Central Market](#), the [Angels Flight Railway](#), the historic theaters of [Broadway](#), the [Broad Museum](#), the [Los Angeles Public Library](#), the [U.S. Bank Tower](#), and the [Wilshire Grand](#).

Moving west (and then north), the train can easily be used to access [MacArthur Park](#), Los Angeles City College, [Barnsdall Park](#), the [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#), the [Capitol Records building](#), the [Cinerama Dome](#), [Grauman's Chinese Theatre](#), the El Capitan Theatre, the [Dolby Theatre](#), [Universal Studios](#), and the North Hollywood Arts District.

If that's not enough, B Line stations are also a quick bus ride from [Dodger Stadium](#), [Griffith Park](#), and the [Hollywood Bowl](#).

How often does it come?

The B Line runs roughly between 4:30 a.m. and 1 a.m. on weekdays, with [trains scheduled](#) until around 2:30 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Trains arrive at intervals between 10 and 20 minutes. During peak hours in the morning and late afternoon they come every 10 minutes; late at night, you'll probably be waiting on the platform a little longer.

A trip from one end to the other takes roughly a half-hour.

Metro's rail system is expanding. How will the B Line be affected?

Metro has plans in place for [more than a dozen projects](#) that would create or extend local rail and bus rapid transit lines over the next few decades. Many of these will connect with the B Line.

The most imminent of these is an [extension](#) of the D/Purple Line that will bring the train first to the eastern edge of Beverly Hills and [eventually to Westwood](#). Right now the D Line runs along the same tracks as the B Line for most of its route. The trains diverge at the Wilshire/Vermont station, and the D Line makes two more stops in Koreatown before turning back for Downtown. Once the D Line starts picking up riders farther west, transfers between the D and B lines will likely become more common.

A separate project would result in a [brand-new train line](#) connecting LA County's

Riding Metro

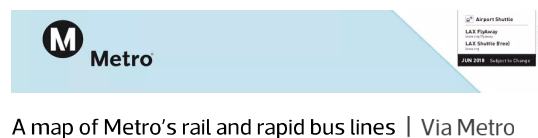
Fares: All Metro trains and buses cost \$1.75 for a one-way ride (which includes free transfers to other lines for up to two hours).

How to pay: To board trains, you'll need a [TAP card](#), which can be purchased at any rail station and from [vendors around LA County](#). TAP cards can be loaded with a stored dollar amount or can be purchased in the form of a monthly, weekly, or daily pass.

Discount programs: Metro offers several discounted options for [students](#), [seniors](#), and [people with disabilities](#). There's also a [subsidized fare option](#) for low-income riders.



Gateway Cities to Downtown (and the B Line). Both that rail route and the D Line extension are on a list of 28 projects that Metro aims to [complete in time for the 2028 Olympics](#).



Beyond those projects, Metro is also planning three different [bus rapid transit](#) lines that could connect to the B Line—one on [Vermont Boulevard](#), one in the [North San Fernando Valley](#), and one that would connect [North Hollywood and Pasadena](#).

As these lines go into operation, B Line trains could get more crowded, which is one reason Metro is planning to create a new [turnback facility](#) south of Union Station that would allow B and D line trains to run more frequently in peak hours. Once it's completed, trains could arrive as frequently as every four minutes.

Are any changes in store for the B Line?

In 2017, at the [request of the agency's Board of Directors](#), Metro staff began studying the possibility that the Vermont Avenue bus rapid transit line could eventually be [converted into a train route](#). One way to make that happen: extend the B Line further south.

The train already makes four stops on Vermont, but doesn't travel further south than Wilshire Boulevard. Under one proposal the agency is studying, the B Line would be extended 10 miles south to 120th Street, eventually replacing the rapid bus line.

But that project is purely conceptual at this point. If it happens, it would be far in the future; even the bus line isn't slated to open until 2028.

How was the current route chosen?

Local leaders originally planned for the B Line to travel [farther west on Wilshire](#), before hooking north toward Hollywood along Fairfax Avenue. Those plans shifted when a 1985 [explosion at the Ross Dress for Less store](#) near Third and Fairfax raised concerns about the dangers of tunneling in an area rich with underground methane.

More than three decades later, Metro officials are confident that tunneling can be

accomplished without explosive results, and the extended D Line will finally bring subway service to the [Miracle Mile](#).

Station Art

As is the case on Metro's other rail lines, every B Line station has a unique design scheme and permanent art installations. Some of the more noticeable highlights include replicas of LA's famous [Red Car trolleys](#) at the Hollywood/Western Station, enormous protruding boulders inspired by the geologic makeup of Los Angeles at the Vermont/Beverly Station, and thousands of film reels that line the ceilings of the Hollywood/Vine Station.



The North Hollywood Station features a large arching gateway and 4,000 square feet of hand-painted tile murals by artist Anne Marie Karlsen. At the Universal City Station to the south, tiles by artist Margaret Garcia tell the story of Mexico's 1847 surrender of California to the United States. | Shutterstock

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The candle quagmire

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