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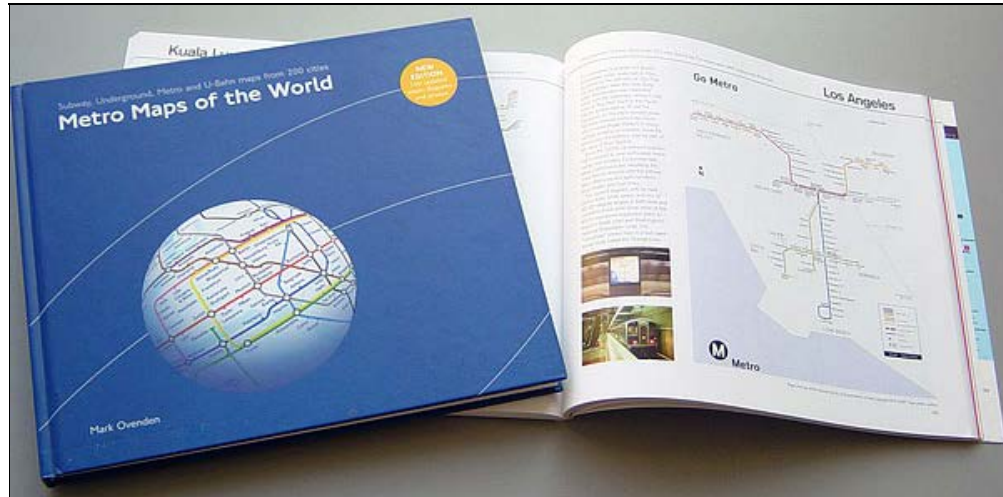
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The book to the left was the second edition of *Transit Maps of the World* and included Metro's rail system map. The book to the right is the latest edition and features the current Metro Rail map created by the Metro Design Studio. Photo: Jimmy Stroup



Form and Function

Metro's Rail Map Makes it into a Coffee Table Art Book about Rail Maps of the World

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 10, 2008) Because we see it everyday, it's easy to miss how striking the Metro Rail system map is; how it subtly combines an angular form while remaining informative in directing riders to their destinations.

Author Mark Ovenden didn't miss those qualities, though, when he chose to include Metro's rail system map in his latest edition of *Transit Maps of the World*. The heavily-illustrated book describes the history of rail maps all across the world and even mentions the beginnings of rail transit in Los Angeles.

Metro's rail system map was featured in the last edition, too, but as the system changes, so does the map. Maya Emsden, Creative Services Deputy Executive Officer, said that the map was created to make the system easy to use for riders – that its also attractive is really a side benefit.

"You don't even have to be into transit," she said. "[The book is] just beautiful on its own and very popular as a coffee table-type book. It's a great honor to be included in there."

Book critics didn't miss the beauty inherent in transit maps such as Metro produces, either: the book received universally good reviews from major newspapers coast to coast, including the *Los Angeles Times*, which called the book "fantastic," and the *The New York Times*, which described it as "pure catnip."

'Quality of the design'

"We dramatically updated our map in 2003 and made some significant design changes, really improving the overall design of the map," Emsden said. "It's because of the quality of that design, I think, that we were asked to be included in the second edition in 2005 and now this most recent edition, too."

Emsden has been familiar with Ovenden's book since its first printing in 2003 and refers to it frequently when discussing the creation of Metro's many maps with anyone from designers to Metro Board members.

The Metro Rail system map will be getting a minor face-lift in the coming months when it's adjusted to reflect the growing number of parking areas near Metro's rail lines.

The map will be altered more substantially when the Gold Line Eastside Expansion and the Expo lines are completed in the coming years.

The Metro Rail system map appears midway through *Transit Maps of the World*, next to Kuala Lumpur's rail design, as the cities featured in the book are listed alphabetically.