

Bus Stop Improvement Guidelines

Introduction

The Better Bus Stops program is Metro Transit’s commitment to improving the transit customer experience at bus stops on the regular route bus network. The program invests in bus stop accessibility and bus shelters. These Bus Stop Improvement Guidelines describe the criteria Metro Transit uses to prioritize bus stop amenities.

Metro Transit monitors the agency’s capacity for ongoing maintenance when considering whether to add additional shelters, light, or heat. Not all bus stops that meet criteria for shelters, light, or heat are added to the capital plan.

These guidelines apply to bus stops served by Metro Transit’s regular route bus service, not METRO stations or other transit customer facilities. Better Bus Stops does not prioritize adding bus shelters, lighting, or heating at bus stops on bus routes that will be substantially replaced by a METRO line. METRO projects will build stations with shelters, lighting, heating, and other amenities.

Guidelines summary

<i>Accessible boarding areas</i>	Constructed annually as part of Metro Transit’s ongoing capital program and ADA responsibilities
<i>Adding a bus shelter</i>	20+ daily boardings and prioritized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major transfer points • Equity consideration areas • Community destinations
<i>Adding shelter lighting</i>	Where a source of power is readily available, prioritized by boardings between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., or where there are documented personal safety concerns
<i>Adding shelter heating</i>	Major transit transfer point and 70+ daily boardings
<i>Replacing existing shelters</i>	10+ daily boardings
<i>Permanently removing a bus shelter</i>	Fewer than 10 daily boardings and no planned service improvements
<i>Personal safety at bus shelters</i>	A shelter bench or bus shelter may be temporarily removed at stops with recurring violations of Metro Transit’s rules to interrupt the pattern of behavior, along with urban design changes and more staff visits.



An example of a bus shelter.

For more information about Better Bus Stops: metrotransit.org/better-bus-stops

Accessible boarding areas

The accessible boarding area is where customers get on and off the bus's front door, and meets standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Information about bus stop usage by people with disabilities and transit ridership are used to prioritize accessibility improvements.

Metro Transit addresses accessibility barriers at bus stops through an ongoing capital program and as part of the agency's responsibilities to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Details at metrotransit.org/accessibility.

Metro Transit partners with city, county, and state departments of transportation and public works to improve accessibility of bus stops across the transit system. Pedestrian transportation routes such as sidewalks are constructed by the roadway authority. Roadway projects often include accessible boarding areas at bus stops.

When adding or replacing a bus shelter, Metro Transit evaluates the site and makes any necessary updates for accessibility, such as removing obstacles, creating clear spaces, replacing concrete, or constructing a boarding area.

Bus shelters

Metro Transit places shelters at bus stops to help improve transit customers' comfort while waiting for the bus. Bus shelters provide a roof and three walls for weather protection, and include a bench and schedule poster as standard features. Shelter lighting or heating are not standard features.

Bus stops with 20 or more daily boardings may be considered for a bus shelter. Shelters are prioritized by the following factors:

- The bus stop is a major transfer point where customers wait to change transit routes.
- Equity consideration areas: where the demographics near the bus stop show more people with disabilities, older adults, people with lower income, and households with fewer cars.
- Community destinations: where the stop is near grocery stores and food access; hospital, healthcare, or social services, or where children are waiting (schools, parks, community center, library).

Once a bus stop is identified as a priority for a shelter based on the guidelines, site factors such as available space, slope, and obstructions determine if a shelter can be located at a bus stop.

Shelter lighting

Metro Transit considers adding lighting to bus shelters where a source of power is readily available.

Site-specific design factors determine the feasibility.

Shelter lighting is prioritized based on boardings between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., or where there are documented personal safety concerns.

Shelter lighting may not be added if the area surrounding the shelter is determined to be well lit.

Shelter heating

Metro Transit considers adding heating to bus shelters at major transfer points where customers wait to change transit routes and have 70 or more daily boardings.

Replacing a bus shelter

Typically, aging bus shelters are replaced at bus stops with 10 or more daily boardings. Metro Transit replaces aging bus shelters where there are no plans to remove the shelter.

Permanently removing a shelter

Metro Transit considers permanently removing a bus shelter where the bus stop consistently has fewer than 10 daily boardings and no transit service improvements are planned.

A shelter may be permanently removed due to planned service changes with an expected decrease in ridership or due to site constraints where there are no feasible design solutions.

Personal safety at bus shelters

Occasionally people use a bus shelter in ways that violate Metro Transit's rules, negatively impacting transit customers and neighbors.

Where there is a repeating issue, Metro Transit attempts to make design changes to improve visibility. Rules for Riding may be posted. As resources allow, additional visits from Metro Transit staff and partner organizations may address the concerns.

Metro Transit strives to retain bus stop amenities for customers. Removing a bus shelter or shelter bench may move the behavior elsewhere, not solve the issues. Metro Transit strives to place bus shelters equitably according to income, race, and ethnicity, and measures the distribution of transit stop amenities for consistency with guidelines as part of compliance with the Civil Rights Act: Title VI.

If persistent or illegal activities create dangerous conditions, Metro Transit may temporarily remove a shelter bench or bus shelter to interrupt the pattern of behavior. In these cases, Metro Transit will:

- Talk to transit customers and neighbors.
- Review data on transit ridership, equity, transit customer comments, shelter maintenance, and police calls for service.
- Post a Rider Alert communicating to transit customers why the bus shelter or shelter bench is temporarily removed.

If a shelter bench or bus shelter is temporarily removed, Metro Transit monitors conditions with the intent to reinstall the shelter bench or bus shelter for customers after several months and if possible before winter.

For more information:

metrotransit.org/rider-rules

metrotransit.org/public-safety

metrotransit.org/TitleVI

Custom shelters

Some custom shelters exist in the system and are handled on a case-by-case basis. Metro Transit favors standardized shelter types and materials for ease of maintenance and speed of repairs to improve customer experience.

Exceptions & variations

Metro Transit may make exceptions to the guidelines, such as:

- Bus stop improvements may not be made where service changes are planned and customers would shift to different transit stops.
- Bus shelters may not be added to bus stops that are spaced closer than the region's bus stop spacing guidelines (usually one-eighth to one-quarter mile).
- When considering permanently removing bus shelters, bus shelters may be left in place even if there are fewer than 10 boardings, based on:
 - Major transfer points
 - Equity consideration areas
 - Community destinations

Requests

Metro Transit documents requests for bus stop improvements. The request information is used for understanding conditions at the bus stop. Metro Transit is not able to make all requested improvements.

Accountability

Metro Transit is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of these guidelines and providing information to the public. Metro Transit:

- Notifies the public about plans to add or remove bus shelters.
- Makes shelter location data publicly available.
- Monitors for compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

About

These guidelines were last updated in August 2024. Metro Transit prepared the shelter placement guidelines in 2018 after a yearlong community engagement process to ensure that the guidelines reflect transit customer and community priorities.