



# Building Better Bus Stops

## Resource Guide

Developed by



In partnership with



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# Introduction

## About this Guide

Bus stops provide a vital connection between transit service and the communities they serve. Ensuring bus stops meet the needs of all riders, transit agencies, and the community is essential in providing quality, efficient transit service. In Pennsylvania meeting the needs of all transit riders is particularly important as the Commonwealth's 67 counties and 2,560 municipalities vary from densely populated urban centers to rural communities with just a few residents. Bottom-line, there is no one size fits all bus stop solution in Pennsylvania.

Recognizing the vital transit connection point that bus stops provide, Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association (PPTA), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), developed this resource guide to support the planning and design of better bus stops across the Commonwealth.

A core group of Pennsylvania public transportation agency partners provided insight and direction during the development of this guide. Additional input from planners, engineers, and local government associations helped to refine the document.

## Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide a common set of tools and resources for municipalities, transit agencies, local planning and engineering staff, and the development community to use in planning, designing, and constructing new or upgrading existing fixed route bus stops.

The guide is based on applicable design guidelines and best practices found across Pennsylvania and throughout the country. It includes resources for municipalities and transit agencies to enhance the safety, accessibility, attractiveness, connectivity, and uniformity of fixed route bus stops.

## Public Transportation Services in Pennsylvania

This guide is focused on bus stops for fixed route public transportation services. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines fixed route as public transportation service provided in vehicles operated along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule. For the purpose of this guide, fixed route public transportation does not include school bus service, charter services, intercity bus transportation, or sightseeing buses.

There are 34 transit systems in Pennsylvania that operate fixed route scheduled bus and other public transit services. Collectively, these transit systems provided over 387 million passenger trips in fiscal year 2018-2019.

While this guide is focused on providing resources related to bus stops for fixed route public transportation services, there are components that may be relevant for some types of demand responsive transportation services. A demand responsive service does not typically operate on a fixed route or a fixed schedule, and rather individuals schedule rides in advance. However, some demand responsive services operate to/from predetermined stop locations and providing an ADA compliant bus stop at these locations may benefit transit operators, riders, and the community.



This guide is focused, in part, on ensuring that over time each passenger trip begins or ends at a bus stop that has been planned for at the local level and is designed to meet local, federal, and state standards.

## Roles, Responsibilities, and Partnerships

Interagency coordination and partnerships are needed for the successful planning and design of bus stops. Starting this process requires transit supportive partnerships between municipalities, which control land use and community design, and transit agencies that provide the transit service. Building a robust partnership extends to citizens who use transit services and the development community that can incorporate transit into development plans. Effective transit supportive partnerships, which include the roles and responsibilities outlined below, will result not only in coordinated planning for better bus stops, but implementation through development plans and projects.

**Municipalities:** Municipalities are responsible for establishing land use regulations, including transportation planning and design, and can convene and set the direction for planning partnerships. In addition, municipalities have jurisdiction over local roadways and sidewalks that support fixed route bus service.

**Transit Agencies:** Transit agencies provide public transportation services, as well as oversight for transit facilities and related capital improvements. Transit agencies should work cooperatively with municipalities and other partners to communicate operational needs and educate citizens about transit.

**PennDOT:** PennDOT is responsible for administering federal and state funds for public transit and roadways. Additionally,

PennDOT is directly responsible for maintaining and improving state-owned roadways.

- PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation (BPT): PennDOT BPT oversees operating and capital investments for 34 fixed route (scheduled local bus, light rail and commuter rail) systems, 44 community transportation systems, passenger rail service between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and 13 intercity bus routes provided by four intercity bus companies. BPT is directly responsible for administering a variety of FTA grant programs for public transportation and provides both financial and technical resources to the transit agencies across Pennsylvania.
- PennDOT Regional Offices / Engineering Districts: PennDOT has 11 regional offices, also known as engineering districts. Each regional office/district covers certain Pennsylvania counties and oversees programs and policies affecting highways, urban and rural public transportation, airports, railroads, ports, and waterways. In particular, each regional office/district plans and manages maintenance and improvements to state owned roadways, including those that support fixed route bus service. Through initiatives like PennDOT Connects, PennDOT works with municipalities, transit agencies, and others to consider community needs before undertaking improvements to the transportation system. PennDOT helps transit supportive partnerships collaborate on integrating transportation and land use.

**MPOs/RPOs:** There are 23 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) in Pennsylvania that have authority and responsibility for transportation planning. Each MPO and RPO works closely with PennDOT and public transportation agencies to develop regional transportation plans, including Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP), Transportation Improvement



Programs (TIP), and Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plans. MPOs and RPOs play a key role in establishing priorities for investments of federal and state transportation funds, including public transportation improvements.

**Developers:** Developers transform existing properties or buildings into something new or different. Developers can take responsibility for assembling land, identifying a building program and design, obtaining necessary permits and approvals, and constructing new residences and businesses. Developers can incorporate bus stops elements into a new development or help to plan and design for accommodating future transit service.

**Planning and Design Professionals:** Planners, engineers, landscape architects and other design professionals can provide technical assistance for the planning and design of bus stops.

**Community:** Community members, including transit riders and their employers, can ensure a transit partnership meets rider needs, maximizing public transportation potential in each community.

## Importance of Coordinating with Transit Agencies

Transit agencies must be involved in planning and design of bus stops within the communities they serve. Transit agencies have unique first-hand knowledge of bus operations, ridership data and trends, transit vehicle specifications, and ADA requirements. They bring knowledge and experience that is necessary for the design of safe, convenient, and accessible bus stops. It is important for all partners to work closely with transit agencies early and often throughout the bus stop planning and design process.

## Using This Guide

The Resource Guide includes three parts.

**Part 1: Planning and Policy Resources**—This component provides guidance to incorporate fixed route bus stops into comprehensive plans, land development ordinances, and transportation plans. It emphasizes the importance of partnerships in achieving effective transit planning. It also introduces the model ordinance and plan review check list, which are provided in the appendix.

**Part 2: Design Resources**—This part provides guidance related to the design of bus stops. It covers fixed route bus stop placement, configuration, key elements, and amenities.

**Part 3: Bus Stop Typologies**—This part includes graphical renderings and notes regarding design treatments for eight different bus stop configurations. The bus stop typologies reflect different contexts and different levels of supportive infrastructure for bus stops.

## Intent

This guide serves as a reference document only; tools and resources herein are not required per legislation or regulation. PPTA recognizes that not each existing bus stop in Pennsylvania is designed per the specifications presented in this guide. Local and financial capacity might not currently be in place to implement some of the tools or resources presented. Further, each community is unique, and some of the guidance might not be relevant to every municipality. Additionally, some communities and transit agencies have developed their own bus stop design resources. It is PPTA's intent that over time and with sufficient financial resources, the transit planning and design concepts presented in this guide can be implemented in communities, as required.

