

# Better Bus Stops: Information Session for Subcontractors

April 14, 2016 1- 4 PM

## Notes from Question-and-Answer

These notes reflect questions asked throughout the session and questions posted on the “parking lot”. Answers are those given at the session plus additional information gathered afterwards.

## Service Planning

**Question: Title VI – how does that play into service planning? In bus service planning, does the number of transit reliant people count as double, as it does for modelling ridership for new transitway projects?**

Answer: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a federal law that protects individuals and groups on the basis of race, color, and national origin from discrimination in programs receiving federal financial assistance. Metro Transit evaluates the level and quality of transit service and facilities to ensure that the current distribution of service and facilities does not result in discrimination against minority and/or low-income populations.

More information about Title VI can be found at <http://www.metrotransit.org/TitleVI>

Regarding modelling ridership, bus service planning doesn’t follow the same modelling practices as new transitway projects. It’s different because we have information about how service is currently performing and routes that serve people who rely on transit generally perform well. The Service Improvement Plan prioritizes service improvements and takes into account car availability, service to disabled populations, and low wage jobs. For more information: <http://www.metrotransit.org/sip>

**Question: Does Metro Transit contract with other bus companies for routes in Minneapolis (such as Lowry Avenue)?**

Answer: Yes, the Metropolitan Council (not Metro Transit) does contract with private providers to operate select routes. Route 32, the Lowry Avenue crosstown, is an example. Generally, though, contracted routes are lower frequency and lower ridership, such as the Route 716 and 717 circulators serving Robbinsdale Transit Center. In this regard Route 32, which has strong ridership, is the exception.

Blogger referenced: Jarrett Walker <http://humantransit.org/> and the specific post on route design mentioned in the presentation <http://humantransit.org/2015/07/mega-explainer-the-ridership-recipe.html>

## Bus Stop Locations

**Question: How do you approach the resident when relocating a bus stop?**

Answer: If there is a property owner requesting that a bus stop is located away from their property, it would be up to the requestor to decide how to contact the resident living by the proposed location. If Metro Transit needs to contact a resident, Metro Transit sends a letter. For example, if a route changes to a different street, Metro Transit mails letters to area residents.

Metro Transit contacts Minneapolis City Council if relocating a bus stop. City of St Paul doesn’t require a notice to a Councilmember; Metro Transit does communicate with City of St. Paul staff. Metro Transit

communicates with affected property owners, residents, and businesses as well. Signs are posted at the bus stop. Residents and riders can give comments (usually within a 2 week period).

**Question: What are the alternatives to shutting down a bus stop when city police seek to close it?**

Answer: Metro Transit Police Department can add more police patrols in the area, and seeks more involvement from the community.

**Question: Are stops that were removed in prior years due to police requests put back now?**

Answer: Stops were removed temporarily due to a police request, not permanently removed. Bus stop permanent closures mentioned in the presentation were part of improving bus stop spacing and were not in response to police requests. The permanently closed stops were to make bus stop spacing consistent around the metro and so wouldn't have had a Title VI impact.

**Question: Where are Metro Transit Police putting more officers?**

Answer: The Metro Transit Police Department reviews crime trends on a regular basis to best understand where resources are best placed. Crime trends do sometimes follow bus routes and the LRT lines. Metro Transit Police Department understands that these stats do not indicate that riders are more likely to be suspects or victims in those crimes. The Department sometimes sees increases and decreases in issues along routes/lines; there are likely many reasons as to why that is. Public safety in and around the transit system is the Department's number one priority.

In addition to patrolling the organization's rails and bus routes, there are established community policing teams that work to build relationships in the communities where bus stops and light rail stations are located. In the winter of 2014 / 2015, the department added the Northside Community Policing Team to its ranks. At the attached link, you can find out more about them and their work.

<http://www.metrotransit.org/transit-police-going-beyond-the-bus-in-north-minneapolis>

## Transit Info

**Question: Will all shelters have these new signs?**

Answer: Yes, by the end of 2017 every bus stop and bus shelter will have the new signs.

**Question: Where are the electronic signs (Real Time Signs), and how do their locations get decided?**

Answer: Some signs are due to private property owner decisions, where a business might host a screen. Metro Transit owns Real Time Signs at transit centers. The Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> transit corridor signs were put in as part of that construction project, which has signs budgeted as part of the project. High-ridership transit stops and transfer locations are recent priorities.

**Question: For example, the bus stop near Pioneer Press has a lot of amenities, and the stop around the corner is used by more riders but doesn't have the amenities. Why?**

Answer: Access to power, space, and long term plans for the site can all factor into why a shelter and amenities are not at high ridership stops. The bus stop on 5<sup>th</sup> at Wabasha is difficult to put a shelter because of limited space and the steep slope. Additionally, making electrical connections to this stop is difficult.

**Question: Do you ever have corporate sponsorship and support of signs or shelters?**

Answer: Sometimes there are privately owned shelters. City or privately owned shelters usually include Metro Transit-provided transit information. Metro Transit may enter into a maintenance agreement if there are a lot of transit riders boarding at that bus stop.

**Question: The map in the presentation showing when bus stops signed are replaced, the West Side of St. Paul doesn't show any lines on it. Will those routes get new signs?**

Answer: Yes, all routes will get new signs by the end of 2017.

**Question: What was the community engagement that went into the design of the new signs, and how were those participants selected?**

Answer: There were three key strategies. First, Metro Transit staff did rider intercept surveys (primarily at the intersection of Lyndale Ave N and Broadway Ave N because that was in the pilot study area and has several busy bus stops). Second, Metro Transit worked with a market research firm that did one-on-one usability testing with a diverse cross section of riders and potential riders. Third, Metro Transit worked with adult English language programs to do testing and get feedback from community members who do not speak or read English fluently.

**Question: Do any of the signs have braille, or are push-button annunciators provided at bus stops?**

Answer: No, in the work of redesigning the sign, we learned that braille is not commonly read. We want to learn more about providing transit information to people with visual impairments. Rail stations have braille and annunciators.

**Question: How many languages will the mobile app support?**

Answer: The app will be available in English with assistance in foreign languages. The method for that assistance hasn't been determined yet. Fairly recently, Metro Transit added Google language translation capability to its website for Spanish, Hmong and Somali languages.

## [Shelter and Bus Stop Design and Orientation](#)

**Question: Are all the shelter designs compatible with light and heat?**

Answer: Yes, lighting and heater elements can be affixed to any of the standard shelter types, but the ability to actually have working light and heat depends on access to power at any given site.

**Question: Why not use solar panels instead of electrical connections?**

Answer: Solar can't power a heater, only a light. If a shelter is in a shadow most of the day, the solar panel will only power a light for a couple hours, not all hours that bus service runs to that stop. Metro Transit is tracking new technology and alternatives as they develop.

**Question: When is advertising placed on shelters? The ad blocks sight lines into the shelter and creates concerns about safety.**

Answer: Ad shelters were owned and operated by a third party, not Metro Transit, until recently. Metro Transit acquired them in St. Paul and Minneapolis and is working to replace many of them with new

advertising shelters. For those replacements, Metro Transit makes sure the ads are not blocking the view between the bus and shelter.

**Question: Coordination with agencies (MnDOT, county, city) on right-of-way acquisition during construction projects?**

Answer: When cities and counties are planning roadway construction projects and involve Metro Transit in the design process, Metro Transit reviews and comments on plans for pedestrian and transit infrastructure, including right-of-way needs for transit. The level of Metro Transit's involvement and outcomes for transit vary project by project.

**Question: ADA guidelines? How do you decide whether to put up a bus stop and shelters?**

Answer: In cases where Metro Transit is putting in a new bus stop, the location is evaluated for accessibility, including: Is there concrete? Is there access from the sidewalk? Is there connecting ADA access such as a ramp? Are there any obstructions in the proposed boarding area that would inhibit safe boarding? We have to make any new stop ADA compliant before we open it up. If we add a shelter, the bus stop needs to meet ADA requirements.

**Question: ADA – draining – landing pad at stops as well as shelters?**

Answer: Drainage off of landing pads and shelter pads is a concern. When melting ice or snow can't drain off the pad, all of that water freezes on the pad. This can be caused by topography at a stop, ground settling or parts of pads being raised by tree roots. Maintenance staff are aware of the problematic sites on their routes, and try to create a trench to allow the melt-off to drain, if possible.

**Comment: Bus panel designs – hard to see bus coming inside shelter**

Answer: Shelter glass features a design (called frit glass) that deters vandalism. The glass has either a maze pattern with bus and train icons, or a diagonal stripe. Addition of lighting inside the shelter helps with visibility.

**Comment: Width needed for different sizes**

Answer: The narrowest shelter, Type F, is 2 feet wide. Types D and E are 4 feet wide. Type C is 6 feet wide. At minimum, a 4-foot wide clear pedestrian access route (path for moving past the shelter) is needed. Depending on if the shelter is near the curb or near a building, more width may be needed. Generally, a minimum of 10 feet in width is needed, though 13 feet is preferred.

## [Shelter Maintenance](#)

**Question: What are biohazard materials?**

Answer: Any bodily fluids.

**Question: Any consideration to recycling receptacles?**

Answer: We don't put trash cans or recycling receptacles at bus stops. Those are handled by the city or a business. We don't have the capacity to take care of trash cans. Metro Transit is working on green initiatives including recycling. These efforts are fairly new.

**Question: If someone calls 311 about graffiti, does it get to Metro Transit?**

Answer: Yes, it does. You can also call Metro Transit customer service (612) 373-3333. The number is posted in the shelter.

**Question: Today we have heard about high/medium/low frequency and boardings. What does that mean?**

Answer: It is confusing to talk about high frequency service and high level of boardings. High-frequency service means routes where the bus comes every 15 minutes (or better) throughout most of the day on weekdays and Saturdays. There isn't a single agency standard for defining high ridership or high level of boardings. In terms of adding heat to shelters, we consider 80 boardings or more to be high and is the minimum for considering adding a heater. We will work on being more clear on this going forward.

**Question: For safety, are there ways for a push button signal at bus stops to call for help?**

Answer: We don't have emergency telephones/buttons at bus stops due to costs of getting communications and power to all bus stops. They are at rail stations and will be at ABRT stations.

**Question: Regarding snow removal – three years ago there were high snow piles and it was difficult for seniors. Sometimes Metro Transit is responsible, sometimes the business owner, sometimes the city. Is that still true?**

Answer: Yes, there are a lot of entities responsible for snow clearing. Metro Transit clears snow from shelters and some limited mobility stops. Clearing sidewalks are the responsibility of either the city or property owners.

**Question: Is there a chart listing responsibility for snow clearance for bus stop shelters, etc.?**

Answer: Currently, no. Good suggestion.

**Comment: See Click Fix app** <http://en.seeclickfix.com/apps>

Answer: Thank you. Suggestion provided to Facilities Maintenance to consider.

**Question: What is the bidding process for maintenance contracts, to maintain bus stops?**

Answer: Except in specific situations, internal resources are used to maintain Transit-owned facilities. We do not have resources available to maintain all bus stop locations within the system, so our priority is to those locations where we provide shelter or other amenities. Any opportunities to contract for snow removal or related services at Metro Transit facilities can be found here: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/About-Us/Organization/DoingBusiness/Contracting-Opportunities.aspx>

## Regional Transit System Providers and Funding

**Question: Why is there no park-and-ride in St. Paul?**

Answer: There is one park-and-ride in St. Paul; it has been in place for a long time but is a unique arrangement and location for Metro Transit. Metro Transit generally doesn't put Park-and-Rides in areas with a lot of local transit service. The purpose of Park-and-Rides is to serve more spread-out suburban areas where transit riders need to come to a central place because local transit services don't perform well in those environments. And, City of Minneapolis opposes Park-and-Rides in their community.