

Bus Stop Spacing

The spacing of bus stops involves a trade-off between the competing goals of maximizing access to the transit system and maximizing travel speed, on-time performance, and efficiency. The general goal is to space bus stops as far as possible without removing substantial walk access to the service. This maximum distance is generally considered to be one-quarter mile.

Bus stop location, and therefore spacing, is often driven by the geometry of the street network and the presence of ridership generators. A range is given below for bus stop spacing targets to account for this non-uniformity. Generally, **longer routes with higher frequency** should have a stop spacing towards the upper end of the range since they are more vulnerable to delays and missing a bus is less of a penalty. **Shorter routes with lower frequency** should have a stop spacing towards the lower end of the range since they are less vulnerable to delays and missing a bus can cause a wait of up to 60 minutes or worse.

Table 6
Bus Stop Spacing Guidelines

Route Category	Bus Stop Spacing Guidelines
Core Routes	3/16 to 1/4 mile (330-440 yards), no stops should be less than 1/8 mile (220 yards).
Peripheral Routes	3/16 to 1/4 mile (330-440 yards), no stops should be less than 1/8 mile (220 yards). Flexible routes may have flag stop service where passengers may request a stop anywhere along the line.
Commuter Routes	3/16 to 1/4 mile (330-440 yards), no stops should be less than 1/8 mile (220 yards). Limited stop service should be 1/2 to one mile and express service may have no stops.
Circulator Routes	3/16 to 1/4 mile (330-440 yards), no stops should be less than 1/8 mile (220 yards).

Bus Stop Location and Amenities

Bus stops should be sited so that they meet bus stop spacing goals while also maximizing the utility for transit passengers. The considerations in Table 7, along with judgment, should be used to site bus stops.

Table 7
Factors for Locating Bus Stops

Consideration	Discussion
Ridership	Bus stops should be located where transit ridership is the highest relative to adjacent stops. High ridership areas do not necessarily need more bus stops than lower ridership areas.
Attractions	Bus stops should be located close to ridership generating attractions, such as schools, retail and employment centers, and apartment buildings, to the extent practical.
Street Crossings	Bus stops should be located where transit riders have access to the safe and convenient street crossings, to the extent practical. Facilities that support safe and efficient street crossings are traffic signals, marked crosswalks, and bicycle/pedestrian overpasses.
Operations	Bus stops should be located where bus operators can easily enter and exit the stop with minimal delay and without excessive negative impacts on other traffic.
Other	Other factors may be used to determine the best placement for bus stops, including future land use plans, amenities for waiting passengers, lighting, bicycle parking, and community input.

A major decision on locating bus stops is whether to place them near side an intersection (the bus stops before entering the intersection), far side (the bus stops after exiting the intersection), or mid-block. The general preference for new bus stops or relocated bus stops is far side, alleviating the problems with near side bus stops described below. Mid-block bus stops are discouraged unless they immediately serve a destination because they generally lack crosswalks and are difficult to locate for passengers. In some cases, such as in-lane bus stops at traffic signals, near-side bus stops are the most appropriate.

Many bus and streetcar stops were historically placed near side. Near side bus stops provide closer access from the bus door to the curb ramp, particularly useful at bus stops without boarding platforms during wintry weather. However, bus operators are sometimes blocked from serving near side bus stops by traffic queues. Dwelling buses may create a blind spot for passing traffic that is hazardous for right-turning vehicles and crossing pedestrians. Additionally, parked vehicles may make it difficult for bus operators to see waiting riders at near side bus stops or they may be mistaken for pedestrians crossing the street. Near side bus stops require more parking removal to properly access the curb than far side bus stops, and when not provided, it is difficult for operators to square the rear wheel with the curb.

The basic amenities at bus stops include a sign, concrete platform, bench, printed schedule, and shelter. All shelters have printed schedule information and benches. In general, the level of amenities at bus stops should be proportional to the ridership, and upgrades should be prioritized by bus stop ridership. In some cases, other factors are taken into account, such as difficult construction, land uses, or transfers. Table 8 shows recommended thresholds for installing amenities.