



Frequently Asked Questions Phase 3

What is *FAStops*?

FAStops is a project currently underway at Metro to reduce travel times and improve service reliability for Metro riders. Since September 2018, Metro has been working on *FAStops* with transportation consultants Nelson\Nygaard to evaluate all 4,000+ regular service bus stops in the Metro system. This review included ridership, location, amenities, safety and accessibility for each stop.

Why is Metro doing this?

Metro has more than 4,000 bus stops in its system, but some of these stops are spaced very close together; on some routes, as close as every block. This can make service slow, and affects reliability and on-time performance. This study determined which stops are most used today, which stops may need improvements, and which stops may be removed without impacting access to service.

Stop balancing done right makes service faster and more reliable while maintaining convenient access. The *FAStops* project aims to improve our riders' experience with faster trip times and more reliable service, with potential operational and maintenance cost savings for Metro.

How will *FAStops* improve bus service?

- **More reliable service:** Balancing stops makes travel times more consistent, leading to more dependable service. A bus might need to stop at 90% of stops on some trips, while it might only stop at 60% of stops on other trips. As a result, travel time varies widely from trip to trip, making service less predictable – and less reliable for riders.
- **Faster service:** On average, it takes a bus up to 20 seconds to slow down, stop and pick up a passenger, and accelerate back up to speed. That stop-and-go service can add up to longer travel times. Limiting stop spacing from nine per mile down to six per mile can save up to one minute per mile (or up to five minutes on a five-mile trip), while still serving riders within convenient walking distance.
- **More comfortable service:** Stop-and-go service is frustrating and uncomfortable. When a bus route has stops that are very close together, it is more likely to stop frequently as riders choose to board/get off as close to their home or destination as possible. More appropriate spacing of bus stops means a smoother and more predictable ride.
- **Better stop facilities and amenities:** With over 4,000 stops in the system, Metro cannot afford to provide high quality facilities and amenities at every stop. Balancing stops will allow Metro to focus on providing high quality facilities and amenities at higher ridership stops.

How will you determine which stops to eliminate?

Before any decisions were made, the consultants conducted a full study of each stop, including such things as:

- The number of people who use a particular stop
- The number of routes that serve that stop
- The number of other stops nearby
- How accessible the stop is to people with disabilities
- How safe it is for people to wait there
- How close it is to destinations like hospitals, schools, apartment complexes, etc.

The consultants developed a detailed 'stop spacing' model to bring together all of these factors that affect the quality of Metro's bus stops to prioritize the poor performers for potential removal to improve service.

What is the process for doing this study?

The *FAStops* project has three phases:

- **Phase 1 Pilot project (Fall 2018)** – Technicians inventoried all Metro stops, took photos of each stop and noted its exact location. They also captured details like whether the stop features a shelter or bench, what is located near the stop and any physical characteristics that might affect its use, safety or accessibility.

They used this information to create a database in an online mapping tool called CARTO, which is available on Metro's website – www.go-metro.com. During this same time, the consultants gathered bus stop feedback from Metro operators and worked with Metro's Planning staff to measure ridership on a stop-by-stop basis.

Finally, Metro launched the pilot project on five routes in March 2019 to determine the bus stop balancing program's effects on ridership and performance.

- **Phase 2 (Aug. 2019)** – Using the data from the pilot project, the consultants applied the spacing model to create recommendations for rest of Metro's routes. Phase 2 launched Aug. 18, 2019 on 23 routes.
- **Phase 3 (Dec. 2019)** – This final phase will be launched Dec. 1, 2019 on the remaining 23 routes in Metro's system.

Which routes were included in the pilot program?

The pilot program included segments of four routes and one entire route:

- Rt. 15X Daly/Mt. Healthy Express - on Hamilton Ave. between Spring St. (north of Knowlton's Corner) and the Hilltop Plaza

- Rt. 17 Seven Hills - on Hamilton Ave. between Spring St. (north of Knowlton's Corner) to the Seven Hills Center
- Rt. 31 West End-Evanston Crosstown – between Clifton and McMillan/Taft and the layover at Montgomery & Brewster
- Rt. 33 Western Hills-Glenway - between 8th and State and the Western Hills Plaza
- Rt. 41 Glenway Crossing-Mt. Airy-Bond Hill-Oakley Crosstown – entire route

Was the pilot program successful?

Yes, while it was only tested on portions of four routes, the results were very encouraging to both our operators and our customers. For example:

- With the exception of Rt. 41 east bound, all routes in pilot exhibited significant early operation*
 - Rt. 33 inbound experienced a 54% increase in early operation during the pilot
 - Rt. 31 east bound experienced a 35% increase in early operation during the pilot
- Metro operators reported decreased travel times with fewer stops
- Metro customers reported better on-time performance on the pilot routes

* Early operation was overcome by creating new schedules with adjusted running times

How many stops are being eliminated in Phase 3?

Phase 3 goes into effect Dec. 1, 2019. The number of stops being eliminated in Phase 3 differs by route according to the table below:

Route	# of total stops	# of eliminated stops	% of total stops
11	263	51	19%
14X	125	27	22%
15X	179	38	21%
16	217	49	23%
17	295	54	18%
19	198	44	22%
20	210	37	18%
23X	183	32	17%
24	257	70	27%
25X	106	20	19%
28	136	36	26%
29X	117	36	31%
30X	139	44	32%
41	284	63	22%
42X	45	0	0%
51	267	42	16%
52X	21	0	0%
74X	120	32	27%

Route	# of total stops	# of eliminated stops	% of total stops
75X	21	0	0%
78	386	106	27%
81X	74	16	22%
82X	24	0	0%
85	32	2	6%

Why is my stop being removed?

The consultants have done a thorough study of all stops in the Metro system, looking at such things as how many riders use that stop, how safe the stop is, whether it is accessible for people with disabilities and any amenities it may have.

The consultants used a detailed 'stop spacing' model to bring together all of these factors that affect the quality of Metro's bus stops to prioritize the poor performers for potential removal to improve service. If your stop is being removed, it is because it did not meet the requirements of the stop spacing model. Any stop slated for elimination should not have a negative impact on riders.

If you feel your stop should not be removed, please contact us at RouteComments@go-etrol.com and tell us why.

How will I know if my stop is being removed?

There are a couple of ways to know if the stop you use is slated for removal.

Visit go-metro.com/fastops and see a map of each route and the stops that are being removed. You can also click on a link to view all of Metro's stops using the interactive CARTO map software.



Also, a special bus stop sign has or will be installed at each stop slated for removal several weeks before the effective date, so you should have plenty of time to identify the nearest stop that is not being removed.

How will you make sure that riders with disabilities are not negatively impacted?

The 'stop spacing' model can be updated with specific information about stops used by riders with disabilities so that they are taken into consideration when making recommendations for stop removal. We will also rely on feedback from members of the community to understand what stops are currently used by riders with disabilities or riders with special needs.

Are Xtra service stops being removed?

No stops that are exclusively used by Xtra service routes are being removed, but some stops that are shared by regular Metro routes and Xtra service routes are on the list for removal. Metro is working with Cincinnati Public Schools to ensure that students are not negatively impacted by the FAStops program.

Are Metro operators being involved in this project?

Yes. Throughout the FAStops project, Metro operators have been presented with the proposed bus stop balancing plans and provided the chance to give suggestions and feedback.

How can the public give feedback on this project?

There are many ways for the public to provide feedback:

- If you have any questions or comments, including about specific bus stops, contact Metro by email at RouteComments@go-metro.com.
- Metro is holding a series of public meetings to gather community feedback on the proposed changes to ensure they meet customers' needs.
- There is also an online comment form.
- Visit www.go-metro.com for more details about the project, upcoming events and new opportunities to share your feedback.
- If you want to send a suggestion about a specific bus stop or stops, be sure to let Metro know the following so we can be sure which stop you are referencing:
 - The route(s) served by the stop
 - The exact location of the stop
 - The street the stop is located on, including the nearest cross street
 - The direction of travel – whether it's on the inbound (toward town) or outbound side (away from town) of the street
 - Any landmarks or destinations nearby
 - And the four-digit bus stop number found on the sign

Where are the public meetings?

Metro will host information sessions at the following locations:

- Oct. 28 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Colerain Township Community Center Hall B
Served by Rt. 17 Northgate
- Oct. 29 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Downtown Public Library, 3rd floor Tower Room
Served by all downtown Metro routes
- Nov. 4 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Goodwill Industries Auditorium
Served by Rt. 78

- Nov. 4 (official public meeting) 5 - 7:30 p.m.
SORTA board room, 12th floor 602 Main Street
Served by all downtown Metro routes
- Nov. 7 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Anderson Township Administration Building Lower Atrium
Served by Rts. 24, 30X, 75X and 81X
- Nov. 11 10 - 11 a.m.
Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Served by Rt. 17
- Nov. 12 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Forest Park Senior Center
Served by Rt. 20
- Nov. 19 5 - 7:30 p.m.
College Hill Recreation Center
Served by Rt. 17

Where can I get more information?

Visit go-metro.com/fastops for more information and send questions or suggestions to RouteComments@go-metro.com.