



## **FAStops Bus Stop Consolidation Project Frequently Asked Questions**

### **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 consultant firm Nelson\Nygaard to evaluate all 4,000+ regular service bus stops in the Metro system. This review includes 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 closely together. On some routes, there is a bus stop located on every block. This can make service slow, and affects reliability and on-time performance. This study will determine which stops are most used today, which stops may need improvements, and which stops may be removed without impacting access to service.

Stop consolidation 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:** Consolidating 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.

Consolidating stops will also 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 are made, the consultants will conduct 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 are developing 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 (Fall 2018) – Technicians inventoried all Metro stops, taking photos of each stop and noting 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 will be available for the public to view on Metro's website – [www.go-metro.com](http://www.go-metro.com). During this same time, the consultants also gathered bus stop feedback from Metro operators and worked with Metro's Planning staff to measure ridership on a stop-by-stop basis.

- Phase 2 (Winter 2018 – Spring 2019) – Using this information, the consultant will run a 'stop spacing' model to create recommendations for a pilot program. The pilot program will suggest removing the identified stops on selected routes and will test how effective the changes are in reducing travel times and increasing operational efficiency. The model will key in on removing stops that are bunched closely to one another, less safe, or inaccessible, so that all of the residents and neighborhoods affected will still have quality access to regular bus service.
- Phase 3 – Once the pilot program is complete (Spring - Summer 2019), Metro will decide whether to expand *FAStops* system-wide using any insights learned during the pilot.

### **What is the timing for this?**

Consultants began gathering bus stop data in September 2018. The pilot program will be ready to launch in March 2019. Based on the results of the pilot program, the full rollout of the *FAStops* program may begin as early as Fall 2019 if the decision is made to move forward on this project.

### **Which routes will be included in the pilot program?**

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

- Rt. 17 Seven Hills - on Hamilton Ave. from Spring St. (North of Knowlton's Corner) to the Seven Hills Center
- Rt. 31 West End-Evanston Crosstown - from Clifton and McMillan St./Calhoun St. eastbound to the layover at Montgomery Rd. and Dana Ave.
- Rt. 33 Western Hills-Glenway - on Glenway Ave. from 8<sup>th</sup> and State to the Western Hills Plaza
- Rt. 41 in its entirety

### **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.

### **How can the public give feedback on this project?**

If you have any questions or comments, including about specific bus stops, you can contact Metro by email at [RouteComments@go-metro.com](mailto:RouteComments@go-metro.com).

Before the pilot program launches, members of the public will be able to view all of Metro's stops online using the interactive CARTO maps, and can provide suggestions on stops to keep, stops to discontinue, and any other comments. In addition, there will be several public meetings, community outreach initiatives, and surveys to gather community feedback on the proposed changes to ensure they meet customers' needs.

Be sure to visit [www.go-metro.com](http://www.go-metro.com) in the coming months 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

- And the direction of travel – whether it's on the inbound (toward town) or outbound side (away from town) of the street

**Where can I get more information?**

Visit [www.go-metro.com](http://www.go-metro.com) for more information and send questions or suggestions to [RouteComments@go-metro.com](mailto:RouteComments@go-metro.com).