

Appendix A | Model Ordinance Language for Better Bus Stops

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provides municipalities with authority to conduct planning and regulate how land is developed, to achieve the type of development and community vision they desire. The MPC empowers counties and municipalities to enact and establish zoning ordinances and/or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs) to control land use.

Zoning ordinances regulate land use (type), location (where), and density (concentration) of uses, including building coverage and dimensions such as lot size, height, and parking. A SALDO regulates how parcels are divided and improved. While a zoning ordinance regulates the type, location, and density of land use, a SALDO regulates the layout and design of new development and required supporting infrastructure improvements.

The following model ordinance language is offered to assist counties and municipalities with incorporating policies and design guidelines for new or improved bus stops into zoning ordinances and SALDOs. The language could also be used to craft a stand alone bus stop ordinance, which can be incorporated by reference into zoning ordinances and SALDOs. The intent of the language is to:

- Permit and encourage the installation of bus stop infrastructure in appropriate locations as part of the land development process to serve the needs of all members of the community.
- Promote coordination between municipalities, transit agencies, and developers for the installation of bus stop infrastructure.
- Reference applicable design requirements for bus stop infrastructure.
- Define the roles and responsibilities for the review and approval for new bus stop infrastructure.

Since each municipality and transit agency is different, the model ordinance language will need to be modified and tailored to the specific needs of the community and transit service. The model language includes several notes, options, and opportunities for customization, which should be reviewed and considered by the municipal governing body, planning commission, and solicitor and include coordination with the transit agency prior to adoption. In addition, existing zoning ordinance and/or SALDO language may need to be reviewed and revised to incorporate and reference new ordinance sections related to bus stops. The adoption process should comply with the zoning ordinance and SALDO requirements specified respectively by Articles VI and V in the MPC.

In some situations, bus stop infrastructure may not be necessary given current conditions, but could be needed in the future. Municipalities can work with developers and transit agencies to plan for future bus stops during the land development review and approval process. This could include the dedication of an easement to reserve space for a future bus stop or the collection a fee-in-lieu of providing bus stop infrastructure or connecting sidewalks. However, the MPC does not allow municipalities to require off-site transportation improvements as part of the land development approval process. The municipality can adopt an official map that identifies future bus stop locations and planned sidewalk connections.



Definitions

The following definitions should be included, added, or updated in the definitions sections of a municipal Zoning Ordinance and/or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

- **ADA** – The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- **ADA Loading Pad** – A level loading area with a firm, stable surface where the front door of a bus opens to receive and discharge passengers. The ADA loading pad may be a stand-alone facility or may be integrated with the adjacent sidewalk.
- **Bus Passenger Bench** – A seat where multiple people may sit at one time while waiting for a bus.
- **Bus Shelter** – A permanent roofed structure located at a bus stop that provides protection from the weather to persons waiting for a bus. The shelter is often semi-enclosed and may provide seating.
- **Bus Stop** – A designated place where a bus may stop to allow boarding or alighting of public transit riders. A bus stop is marked with a bus stop location sign and may include infrastructure or amenities, such as a bus shelter or bus passenger bench.
- **Bus Stop Infrastructure** – Facilities located at a bus stop that are designed and intended to provide safe access to fixed route public transit service, including ADA loading pads, bus passenger benches, and bus shelters.
- **Bus Stop Passenger Information Sign** – Printed or electronic display at a bus stop that provides information to waiting passengers related to the public transit services, such as maps, schedules, or real-time information about the location or anticipated arrival of a transit vehicle.
- **Bus Stop Street Furniture** – Bus stop street furniture that provides comfort to public transit riders and may include, but is not limited to, bus passenger benches, leaning rails, waste receptacles, and bicycle racks.
- **Bus Stop Location Sign** – A marker identifying a location used as a bus stop, typically listing the name of the public transit service provider and bus routes serving the stop.
- **Crosswalk** – Any portion of a roadway at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other pavement markings, often connecting sidewalks or paths.
- **Fixed Route Public Transit Service** – Public transportation service provided in vehicles operated on public or private roadways along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule, not including school bus service or intercity bus service.
- **Park and Ride** – Parking lots designated to allow people to park at a common site and use public transportation, vanpools or carpools.
- **Sidewalk** – Paved right-of-way, adjacent and generally parallel to, but separated from a street or driveway that is accessible and designed for use by all pedestrians.



Model Zoning Ordinance Language for Bus Stops

The following section can be added to the General Provisions, General Regulations, Requirements Applying to All Districts, or another comparable section of a county or municipal zoning ordinance. The following language is also intended to be administered and enforced in conjunction with the model SALDO language in the following section. The language could also be used to craft a stand alone bus stop ordinance, which can be incorporated by reference into the zoning ordinance and SALDO.

Section XXX. Bus Stops and Shelters for Fixed Route Public Transit Service

The following general provisions shall apply to all bus stops for fixed route public transit services.

- A. Bus stop infrastructure, including ADA loading pads, bus passenger benches, and bus shelters, as well as bus stop location signs and bus stop passenger information signs, shall be permitted by right in all zoning districts and shall be considered an accessory use/structure that can stand alone without the accompanying principal use.
- B. Bus stop infrastructure shall be exempt from minimum lot size, open space, yards, and setback requirements as specified under the applicable zoning district(s).
- C. The location and design of the bus stop infrastructure shall be reviewed and approved by the transit agency and the municipality. The transit agency shall provide written documentation certifying that a location is an existing or potential future bus stop.
- D. The municipality may authorize a credit towards the off-street parking requirements specified in this Ordinance for the provision of bus stop infrastructure. Whenever an ADA loading pad, bench for a bus stop, and/or bus shelter is provided, the applicable off-street parking requirements may be reduced by one (1) or more vehicular parking space(s) for each bus stop location.
- E. Bus stop location signs and bus stop passenger information signs installed and maintained by the transit agency shall be permitted within the public right-of-way and on private property and shall be exempt from municipal sign ordinance requirements.
- F. Bus stop infrastructure must comply with all provisions of SALDO Section ____ [specific municipal ordinance section in SALDO related to bus stops].

A bus stop can be considered an accessory use because it may be located on the same parcel as a principal use and is incidental to the principal use.

The location of a bus stop is not related to specific zoning districts. Rather, bus stops should be located to provide access to existing and planned bus routes and serve the surrounding land uses.

This optional credit offers a small incentive to applicants for providing bus stop infrastructure and improving access to public transportation by offsetting the additional impervious surface areas associated with bus stop infrastructure.

A municipality may elect to offer additional incentives by reducing off-street parking requirements due to transit access and usage in the appropriate section of the zoning ordinance. Reductions in off-street parking requirements may be appropriate in areas with frequent bus service and connected pedestrian infrastructure.

Applicable for a municipality that has or also adopts bus stop infrastructure requirements in their SALDO.



- G. If bus stop infrastructure is located within a public right-of-way, the provider of the bus stop infrastructure shall secure all necessary rights/permissions from any governmental entity responsible for the particular right-of-way to be used.
- H. If bus stop infrastructure is located outside a public right-of-way, the provider of the bus stop infrastructure shall secure all necessary rights/permissions from the applicable private property owner(s) for the infrastructure to be located on the property and open to the public.
- I. All applicable permits shall first be obtained by the provider of the bus stop infrastructure.

For bus shelters within state-owned right-of-way, PennDOT requires a Transit Shelter Right-of-Way Placement Agreement with the transit agency.

Park-and-ride lots and bus maintenance facilities can also be incorporated into zoning ordinances, particularly to specify the zoning districts where these principal land uses are permitted and specify other size and setback requirements.



Model Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO) Language for Bus Stops

The following section can be added to a county or municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). These requirements are intended to apply to new or improved bus stops that are part of a land development project. Installation of bus stop infrastructure that is not associated with a subdivision or land development application may be subject to a different review/approval process based on the administration and requirements of other county or municipal ordinances or policies. The bus stop location and design guidelines included in the model ordinance reflect best practices and applicable design requirements. The language could also be used to craft a stand alone bus stop ordinance, which can be incorporated by reference into the zoning ordinance and SALDO.

Section XXX. Bus Stops and Shelters for Fixed Route Public Transit Service

A. General Provisions

- a. The applicant shall notify and coordinate with the transit agency to determine if a bus stop is appropriate when the proposed subdivision or land development meets any one of the following criteria:
 - i) Located within three-quarters of a mile of an existing or planned fixed route public transit service.
 - ii) Has a character, magnitude, or location that will have substantial effect upon the health, safety, or welfare of citizens in more than one municipality and could be considered a development of regional significance and impact, such as regional shopping centers, industrial or commercial parks, warehouses, residential developments, regional entertainment or recreation centers, hospitals or medical care facilities, and educational institutions. Proposed land development that meets any one of the following characteristics, which are consistent with Transportation Impact Study warrants included in PennDOT’s Transportation Impact Study Guidelines (Publication 282):
 - (1) Site is expected to generate 3,000 or more average daily trips or 1,500 vehicles per day.
 - (2) During any one hour time period of any day of the week, the development is expected to generate 100 or more vehicle trips entering the development or 100 or more vehicle trips exiting the development.
 - (3) For existing sites being redeveloped, the site is expected to generate 100 or more additional trips entering or exiting the development during any one hour time period of any day of the week.
 - (4) In the opinion of the municipality, the development or redevelopment is expected to have a significant impact on the transportation system, even if the above warrants are not met.

The criteria provided in this section are intended to identify proposed land development projects that warrant review by the transit agency and consideration by the municipality for transit service. The criteria should not be used to evaluate the validity or feasibility of providing transit service to the proposed project.

The three-quarters of a mile distance is provided as a general guideline and can be modified based on the context of the community, transit network, and input from the transit agency.

The thresholds provided to define “development of regional significance and impact” are consistent with PennDOT’s Transportation Impact Study warrants as specified in PennDOT’s Transportation Impact Study Guidelines (Publication 282). Alternatively, municipal thresholds for traffic studies could be used or thresholds could be developed based on the land use and size of the proposed development. The thresholds should be adjusted based on the specific context of the municipality and transit system.



- b. The location and design of a bus stop shall be reviewed and approved by the transit agency. The transit agency shall provide written documentation certifying that a location is an existing or potential future bus stop.
- c. The location and design of a bus stop, including conformance with other approved municipal ordinances and construction standards, shall be reviewed and approved by the municipality.
- d. On-street parking and loading zones shall be prohibited or limited at the bus stop to avoid obstructing the curbside in the area of the bus stop and provide sufficient space for the bus to pull to the ADA loading pad and/or curb. The no parking zone shall be based on the location and configuration of the bus stop, designated with signs or pavement markings, and reviewed by the municipality and/or government entity responsible for the public right-of-way.

e. Bus stop infrastructure for fixed route bus stops shall be designed and constructed in accordance with ADA requirements, including Section 810 of the United States Department of Transportation’s ADA Standards for Transportation Facilities (2006), the Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association’s Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide, and ___ [transit agency specific bus stop design guideline documents].

f. There shall be a written and legally binding agreement by a responsible entity to properly maintain a stand-alone ADA loading pad, bus passenger bench, and/or bus shelter in good condition and remove the bench and/or shelter if the transit agency determines it is not needed or it is not properly maintained. No bus passenger benches and/or bus shelters shall be removed without the mutual and written approval by the municipality and transit agency.

g. ADA loading pads that are integrated with the adjacent sidewalk shall be maintained in compliance with requirements for the maintenance of adjacent sidewalk as specified in ___ [specific municipal ordinance title and section addressing maintenance of sidewalks].

h. Bus stop infrastructure must comply with all provisions of Zoning Ordinance Section ___ [specific municipal ordinance section in Zoning related to bus stops].

B. ADA Loading Pads

a. A level loading pad shall be provided adjacent to the curb or roadway edge where the front doors of a fixed route bus service open to receive and discharge passengers at a designated bus stop. A second loading pad located at the rear door of the bus may be required.

The following bus stop design guidelines can be referenced in municipalities within the service areas for the respective transit agencies:

- SEPTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines, 2nd Edition (2019)
- Port Authority of Allegheny County’s Bus Stop and Street Design Guidelines (2019)
- Northwest Commission’s Bus Stop Guidelines: Design and Amenity Standards (2018)

Transit agencies may be able to enter into a blanket agreement with a municipality or PennDOT to specify maintenance responsibilities for multiple bus stops within a jurisdiction or PennDOT District.

If the county or municipality does not have an existing ordinance addressing maintenance responsibilities for sidewalks, the local municipality or property owner is responsible for sidewalk maintenance. Additional language could be added specify other maintenance requirements for ADA loading pads or the connecting sidewalk segments.

Applicable for a municipality that has or also adopts bus stop infrastructure requirements in their zoning ordinance.



- b. All ADA loading pads shall be provided at curb-height to accommodate bus wheelchair lifts and/or ramps. A street-level ADA loading pad may be provided as an alternative with approval from the transit agency and municipality.
- c. All ADA loading pads shall be connected via an ADA accessible route to adjacent pedestrian infrastructure, such as a sidewalk, path, or multi-use trail. ADA loading pads may be integrated with the sidewalk or other pedestrian infrastructure. A stand-alone ADA loading pad with an ADA accessible route to the nearest roadway or public right-of-way may be provided as an alternative with approval from the transit agency and municipality.
- d. Utility poles, fire hydrants, street furniture, overhangs, trees, shrubs, and similar obstacles shall not obstruct the minimum clear area of the ADA pad for boarding and alighting, which is five (5) feet measured parallel to the roadway and eight (8) feet measured perpendicular to the roadway.
- e. Dimensions.
 - i) The minimum clear width of five (5) feet shall be provided for the loading pad, measured parallel to the roadway.
 - ii) The minimum clear length of eight (8) feet shall be provided for the loading pad, measured perpendicular to the curb or roadway edge.
 - iii) A longer and/or wider loading pad is desirable and shall be provided if directed by the transit agency or municipality.
- f. Slope.
 - i) Parallel to the roadway, the slope of the loading pad shall be the same as the roadway, to the maximum extent practicable. Perpendicular to the roadway, the slope of the loading pad shall not be steeper than 1:48.
- g. Minimum construction standards.

- i) The ADA loading pad shall have a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface, preferably concrete built consistent with the minimum construction standards for sidewalks as specified in ___ [specific municipal ordinance title and section addressing concrete sidewalk construction standards] or asphalt consistent with the minimum construction standards for paths and multi-use trails as specified in ___ [specific municipal ordinance title and section addressing asphalt path/trail construction standards]

If the county or municipality does not have an existing ordinance that addresses materials and construction standards for sidewalks and paths/trails, provide standards specifically for ADA loading pads.

C. Bus Shelters

- a. All aspects of the bus shelter shall comply with ADA requirements, including but not limited to access points, clearance and circulation within the shelter, and seating.



- b. The bus shelter shall be integrated with the ADA loading pad or connected to the ADA loading pad via an ADA accessible route.
- c. A bus shelter includes a roof or canopy and may be enclosed on up to three sides with partial enclosure of a fourth side permitted for protection against wind or other weather elements. A bus shelter may be integrated with the structure of an adjacent building or externally attached.
- d. For security and safety purposes, the majority of the side and rear panels of the shelter shall be constructed of a clear, shatter resistant material.
- e. Bus stop passenger information signs may be provided within or on a bus shelter and shall be considered exempt from municipal sign ordinance requirements.
- f. All advertising within or on a bus shelter must comply with municipal sign regulations. If included, advertising panels shall be placed on the interior or exterior of the side shelter panel farthest from oncoming traffic and perpendicular to the road. Advertising panels shall not obstruct sight lines for pedestrians, transit vehicles, or other road users.
- g. Any lighting for a bus shelter shall be installed in such a manner to provide adequate visibility during darkness for patrons of the transportation system. The lighting shall be installed in such a way so that the source of light shall be shielded from all abutting residential properties and traffic along the roadway where the shelters are located. The lighting shall not conflict with any traffic control devices.
- h. Bus shelters shall be installed according to the manufacturer's design specifications.
- i. Location.
 - i) The shelter shall be located near the front end of the bus stop zone to minimize the distance to access and board the bus.
 - ii) The shelter shall not obstruct the required minimum clear area of the ADA loading pad for boarding and alighting, which is five (5) feet measured parallel to the roadway and eight (8) feet measured perpendicular to the roadway.
 - iii) The shelter shall be within fifty (50) feet of the ADA loading pad.
 - iv) The location of a bus shelter shall not interfere with horizontal clearance for access and maintenance, including pedestrian traffic along a sidewalk or curb ramps. A minimum clearance of four (4) feet shall be maintained around the shelter, but may be reduced to two (2) feet for the distance between the back of the shelter and a building face, wall, or similar vertical barrier.
 - v) The shelter, including roof or panels, shall be located a minimum of four (4) feet from the curb or roadway edge.

Possibly reference county or municipal specific sign requirements provided in an existing ordinance or provide additional language to clarify requirements for advertising signs at bus stops.



vi) The location of the bus shelter shall conform to clear sight triangles and other minimum sight distance requirements for driveways and intersections.

vii) The shelter shall provide a clear view of the roadway and approaching bus.

j. Dimensions.

i) The minimum clear floor area of thirty (30) inches by forty-eight (48) inches shall be provided within the perimeter of the shelter.

ii) The minimum shelter opening of thirty-six (36) inches shall be provided.

k. Foundation.

i) The bus shelter shall be anchored and attached to a concrete foundation with a slope that is not greater than 1:48.

ii) Specifications for the bus shelter and foundation shall be consistent with the manufacturer's specifications (if applicable) and approved by the transit agency and municipality.

D. Bus Stop Street Furniture

a. Bus stop street furniture may include, but is not limited to, bus passenger benches, leaning rails, waste receptacles, and bicycle racks.

b. Bus stop street furniture shall not obstruct the required minimum clear area of the ADA loading pad for boarding and alighting, which is five (5) feet measured parallel to the roadway and eight (8) feet measured perpendicular to the roadway.

c. The location of bus stop street furniture shall not interfere with horizontal clearance for access and maintenance, including pedestrian traffic along a sidewalk.

d. The location of street furniture shall conform to clear sight triangles and other minimum sight distance requirements for driveways and intersections.

e. Furniture shall be anchored securely to prevent unauthorized movement, but must be able to be relocated or replaced by those authorized to maintain the furniture.

f. Bus Stop Passenger Benches.

i) Benches shall be ADA compliant in terms of dimensions and construction.

ii) Benches shall be placed facing the roadway and outside of boarding and alighting areas and pedestrian routes.

iii) Benches shall be installed on a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface.

iv) Benches shall be located a minimum of four (4) feet from the curb or roadway edge.

Possibly reference municipal specific sight distance requirements provided in an existing ordinance.

Provision of bus stop street furniture is optional. Street furniture can improve the comfort and convenience of passengers and help integrate the bus stop with surrounding land uses.

Possibly reference municipal specific sight distance requirements provided in an existing ordinance.



E. Bus Stop Signs

- a. Bus stop signs, including bus stop location signs and bus stop passenger information signs, installed and maintained by the transit agency shall be permitted within the public right-of-way and on private property and shall be considered a governmental sign.
- b. All advertising signs posted at a bus stop or integrated with bus stop infrastructure shall comply with municipal sign regulations.
- c. **Bus Stop Location Signs.**
 - i) Bus stop location signs shall be placed to clearly identify the location where passengers access fixed route public transit service. The bus stop sign shall be located in close proximity, but not within the ADA loading pad.
 - ii) The sign post shall be located a minimum of two (2) feet from the curb or roadway edge.
 - iii) The minimum and maximum vertical clearance from the ground to the bottom of the sign shall be seven (7) feet and eight (8) feet, respectively.
 - iv) The sign shall be visible to approaching buses and other traffic, as well as pedestrians on the sidewalk. It shall not be blocked by trees, signs, or other obstacles.
 - v) Bus stop location signs shall be mounted on either their own post or on another existing pole or bus shelter to minimize clutter or conflicts. Bus stop location signs shall not be mounted on the same pole as a traffic control device.
- d. **Bus Stop Passenger Information Signs.**
 - i) Bus stop information signs shall not obstruct pedestrian access routes or the required minimum clear area of the ADA loading pad for boarding and alighting, which is five (5) feet measured parallel to the roadway and eight (8) feet measured perpendicular to the roadway.
 - ii) Bus stop information signs shall be either mounted on the same post or pole as the bus stop signs or shall be integrated with the bus shelters.

Possibly reference county or municipal specific sign requirements provided in an existing ordinance or provide additional language to clarify requirements for advertising signs at bus stops. Advertising signs could be provided to off-set capital or maintenance costs of bus stop infrastructure.

