Equitable & Sustainable Transit Service Guidelines

METRO DIRECT

Introduction

Background – What is METRO?

Akron Metropolitan Regional Transit Authority (METRO) is responsible for public transportation services for Summit County, as granted by the State of Ohio. As a regional government authority, METRO is able to operate on any public roadways that are fit for transit vehicles, and to establish transit stops in the public right-of-way.

METRO provides service to over 3 million trips a year. METRO is funded by a local sales tax, state and federal grants, and other revenue sources like fares. METRO works directly with stakeholders representing residents and businesses throughout the County.

Equity Definition and Statement

Equity means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment (Executive Order No. 13,985, 2021).

METRO is committed to providing service in an equitable manner. In November 2020, the Board of Trustees adopted the following Racial and Social Equity Statement as part of their Governing Principles.

Together We Will...

METRO's team stands together in solidarity against racism and oppression. We will ensure equity and dismantle systemic processes that may impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color each and every day. Uncomfortable conversations are needed and change is necessary. Being outraged is not enough and silence is not an option.

We will listen.

We will speak openly.

We will stand up against racial and social inequities.

We will be intentional in our words and in our actions.

We will not be silent.

What is the purpose of this document?

By titling this document "Equitable & Sustainable Transit Service Guidelines," we are bringing the focus of our mission to the forefront of our service. Equity and sustainability are essential for our community as we transition our network in order to better serve transit loyal customers with transportation options beyond conventional gas-engine cars. METRO is committed to safe, dependable, cost-effective and customer-focused service to the traveling public. With an equity-first mindset, METRO can better address disparities within our system and make our services more effective at addressing injustice in the broader transportation network.

Due to a limited budget and constraints on labor, equipment, and property – METRO must make difficult decisions on transit access. This document may be used by the public to understand the decision-making process used by METRO team members and the Board of Trustees when it comes to providing transit service for Summit County.

METRO is required to establish service standards and policies by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which are compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. This document will be shared publicly in order to ensure transparency and accountability with our transit loyal community and key stakeholders.

Service Design: Developing the Fixed-Route Transit Network

What is Service Design?

Before determining the type of service that METRO provides to the community, we must decide where service can and should go. This means designing a network that fits the needs of the community and provides equitable transportation access.

METRO redesigned our service network based on the 2022 Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) & Transit Development Plan (TDP). The new network, called Reimagine METRO, follows the principles established in the TDP and has plans set in place for future transit growth in Summit County. The Service Design guidelines established by this section will form the basis of future route decisions. Bus transit is flexible and must respond to conditions on the ground as they change. While METRO has established a redesigned bus network, conditions can easily change due to road construction changes, growth of activity centers, route performance etc. Service design guidelines will provide the basis for route design in the event of necessary change.

Background – Equity in the Community

METRO recognizes that areas of Akron and Summit County that were redlined and segregated by freeway projects and urban renewal historically still suffer from the legacy of those decisions today. Some neighborhoods have concentrations of poverty in marginalized groups – especially people of color.

There are many other factors that have contributed to concentrations of people who may struggle with transportation access including age, income status, disability status, use of a mobility device, and possibly sexual orientation, or gender expression.

It is important for METRO as a provider of a public service to ensure equitable access to destinations across the region by disadvantaged people. METRO recognizes that there are broader impacts on equity that are outside of our control. However, we have the unique abilities to advocate for our transit loyal customers as we bridge gaps in access and to work with partners to address needs outside of our scope. By prioritizing those who rely on us to get where they need to go, we can improve the lives of members of our community one trip at a time.

Some of our approaches to equity in service design and operation can be seen below. This list is by no means exclusive or exhaustive, but it should provide the public some insight on what METRO staff considers when designing and operating transit service with an equity-first mindset.

Considerations for Service Design Race and Ethnicity

In Summit County, approximately 23% of the population is non-white according to the U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 (5-year estimates). Many people of color live within the City of Akron, where 41% of the population identifies as non-white according to ACS 5-year estimates. People of color have been segregated due to historical redlining in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Akron. While Downtown Akron is still a major job center, a spatial mismatch has occurred. Many jobs are now in the outlying suburban areas, where the highest concentration of people of color do not live within walking distance. This requires METRO to focus on providing job access for people of color living in areas that are not near major job centers.

Disability and Mobility Devices

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990, guaranteeing people with disabilities equal opportunity in employment and public accommodations, including transit service. All METRO vehicles are accessible; however, special attention must be provided to the built environment where we place our services and to how we best serve our transit loyal riders who use mobility devices. All METRO vehicles are accessible; however, special attention must be provided to the built environment where we place our services and to how we best serve our transit loyal riders who use mobility devices.

Additionally, our service must be communicated clearly to be easily understood by our riders with an intellectual and mental health disabilities, so that we may enhance their transportation freedom and improve their quality of life. Paired ADA demand response service is a required service that METRO provides to fill in access gaps for those who may be unable to utilize the fixed-route buses.

More information on this service can be found here: www.yourmetrobus.org/metro-ada.aspx

Age

Considerations for both seniors and children are essential in determining transit service design.

Some seniors may not be able to walk long distances, or they may no longer have the ability to drive a motor vehicle. Transit provides a great alternative form of transportation. METRO takes senior housing locations and populations into account when deciding where transit is provided. It is important for METRO to promote the independence of our senior population.

Children are always welcome onto METRO vehicles. Many children live in zero or one car households that would already require access to public transit. However, since children under 16 cannot drive themselves, transit can open opportunities for socialization, connection to activities, and allow for greater independence. METRO aims to serve children and adolescents with safe and reliable transportation, focusing specifically on parks and schools where children congregate.
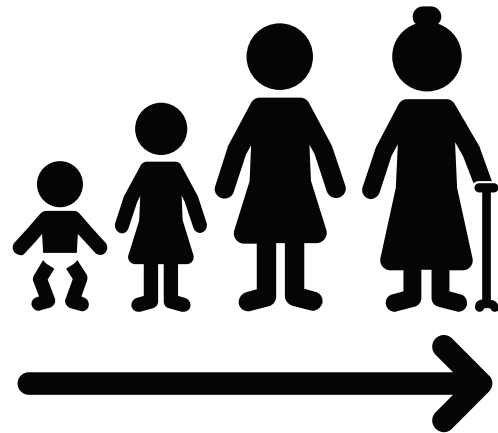
Low Income

Public transit provides an affordable transportation option for low-income residents. In the lowest income areas of our community, Summit County residents report the lowest amount of car ownership. People without access to a car are often transit-loyal and depend on our service for their day-to-day activities. Service design at METRO takes into account areas of the region with low income per capita as high priority areas to serve.

Transportation Disadvantaged Census tracts

Historically Disadvantaged Communities

Many of the above factors are included in the U.S. Department of Transportation USDOT) definition of Transportation Disadvantaged Census tracts, as outlined in the Justice40 Initiative. An HDC exceed the 50th percentile (75th for resilience) across at least four of the following indicators:

Health disadvantage	**Identifies communities based on variables associated with adverse health outcomes, disability, as well as environmental exposures.** (CDC Social Vulnerability Index)
Transportation Access disadvantage	**Identifies communities and places that spend more, and longer, to get where they need to go.** (CDC Social Vulnerability Index, Census America Community Survey, EPA Smart Location Map, HUD Location Affordability Index)
Environmental disadvantage	**Identifies communities with disproportionate pollution burden and inferior environmental quality.** (EPA EJ Screen)
Economic disadvantage	**Identifies areas and populations with high poverty, low wealth, lack of local jobs, low homeownership, low educational attainment, and high inequality** (CDC Social Vulnerability Index, Census America Community Survey, FEMA Resilience Analysis & Planning Tool)
Resilience disadvantage	**Identifies communities vulnerable to hazards caused by climate change.** (CDC Social Vulnerability Index)
Equity disadvantage	**Identifies communities with a high percentile of persons (age 5+) who speak English "less than well."** (FEMA National Risk Index)

METRO's service design will evaluate service provided to historically disadvantaged neighborhoods to ensure they are receiving the transit services they need.

Built Environment Considerations

To be useful to many people, transit service must be available in places where the development pattern supports its use. The built environment factors shown below are critical to designing a broadly useful transit network:

Density

Density determines how many people are near a given transit stop that someone could potentially choose to ride. Where there are many residents, jobs and activities in an area, there are many places' people might want to go.

Walkability

An area only becomes accessible by transit if most people can safely and comfortably walk to and from the nearest transit stops. Walkability is about more than street connectivity alone.

Street connectivity is a baseline prerequisite of urban environments that enable walking, but the question of whether someone is likely to choose to walk, to transit or somewhere else, depends on many other factors such as the availability of sidewalks and safe crossing points, the speed and quantity of auto traffic, the distances between major destinations, and their own sense of personal safety in a particular area.

Linearity

Direct paths between many destinations are faster and cheaper for METRO to operate. Straight lines are also easier to understand and more appealing to most potential riders.

Proximity

The longer the distance between two places to serve, the more expensive it is to connect them. Areas with continuous development are more cost- effective to serve than areas with big gaps.

Mix of uses

When there is a mix of land uses along a direct path, transit can provide direct access to a broad range of destinations. Mixed-use transit corridors also tend to be very productive, because people ride in both directions at many times of the day.

Regional Connectivity

Where feasible, METRO will link with other regional transit authorities in Northeast Ohio to allow for easier transfers and more regional connectivity. METRO actively works with GCRTA (Cuyahoga County), PARTA (Portage County), SARTA (Stark County), Laketran (Lake County), and MCPT (Medina County) to provide a regional transit network. METRO will be willing to cross the county line to provide service to Summit County residents' transportation needs.

Sustainability in the Community

Public transit is one of the most environmentally-friendly options for area residents to reduce their carbon footprint as just a single bus takes the place of many personal automobiles. Public transit works best when coupled with safe walkable and bikable paths. However, complicated routing and frequently stopping or idling make transit less efficient and wastes fuel and energy. METRO service will be as efficient as operationally possible when designing routes to reduce the impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs) in our communities.

Whenever feasible, METRO will locate bus service in corridors with high walkability, bikeability, and on complete streets. METRO will leverage its ability to work with local governments to make improvements to nodes and corridors for better transit access.

Transit Stops

Transit stops include facilities that are used by our riders to access the transit network. These range from bus stops on the side of the road, to transit centers with amenities and the ability to transfer to multiple routes.

METRO has permission to place a bus stop in any publicly owned right-of-way in the state of Ohio by the State Legislature. METRO uses multiple factors to determine stop locations and the level of investment that each facility receives. METRO will not remove or relocate bus stops without investigation into the impacts to riders. METRO is not required to provide justification to adjacent landowners for new or removed stops within the public right-of-way.

Stop Spacing Policy

With adequate stop spacing, METRO can fulfill its commitment to riders. Transit stops are located at set distances along routes to provide a gateway to transit service while also making sure the bus does not stop every block, slowing down everyone's ride. Too many stops can mean transit vehicles come less frequently and take longer to arrive to their destinations, potentially missing transfer times at key stops.

Stop locations are geographically and contextually set. **Keep in mind, stop polices are *frameworks* so stop spacing will not always be exact**. METRO will always try to serve activity centers with a stop, and to make sure stops are located in safe locations with pedestrian facilities.

Bus Stop Spacing
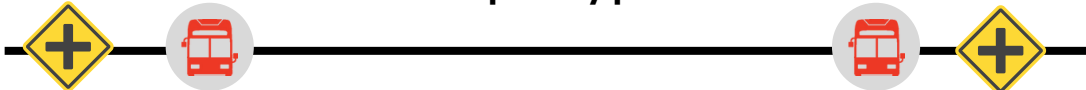
Urban Core: 4–5 stops per mile

High-Density Neighborhood: 5-6 stops per mile

Medium-Density Neighborhood: 6-7 stops per mile
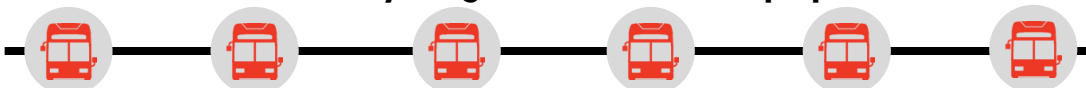
Rural: stops vary per mile

It's not necessary to stop at equal intervals if there are major destinations

Service Contexts

Context	Description	Stops per mile
Urban Core	Center of a large city with high walkability, accessibility and mixed-use density of major regional institutions, civic uses, and connections to multiple forms of transportation. A large activity center. Ex. Downtown Akron	4-5
High-Density Neighborhood	Area with high walkability, accessibility, mixed-use development, high housing density, and nodes of activity along a major corridor. Ex. Highland Square (Akron), Downtown Barberton	5-6
Medium-Density Neighborhood	Area with low walkability, medium density, majority single-family housing, large commercial, or industrial uses, and little to no mixed-use development. Walkability is further constrained by car-oriented land use. Ex. Silver Lake, Twinsburg	6-7
Rural	Area with low or no walkability, low residential density, low job concentration, with little or no nodes of activity. Car-dependent. Ex. Portage Lakes, Bath	At major intersections, and may vary

Overlay Spacing

Bus Rapid Transit	Rapid transit with enhanced stations spread out to allow for quick rides competitive with car travel	3-4
Limited Stop	Variation of a route that only stops at selected high-ridership stops to improve trip time	4-5
Express	Intercity route that makes few stops to allow for quicker trip times	May Vary

Service Standards & Policies:

A Baseline for Transit Operation

What are service standards?

Service standards give an expectation of how transit service will operate in the service area. Standards include definitions of service categories, service time span, and key performance indicators. Service standards communicate the base level of service METRO is committed to providing.

Service Tiers

Core Services- Services that are most critical to maintaining regional transportation ridership, dependability and connectivity

Supporting Services- Transit services that benefit regional transportation connectivity and efficiency and assist the Core Services

Fixed-route Bus Service

Core Services

Bus Rapid Transit	Transit service that operates along with frequent, fast, reliable service that travels on corridors with enhancements to the customer experience and acts as the backbone of METRO's core services network.
Frequent	Transit service that operates with 15 minute headways or better along key corridors, moving the most passengers in METRO's network.
Standard	All other local fixed-route bus services operating in Summit County to serve ridership outside of identified key corridors.

Supporting Services

Limited Stop	A variant of a core service that only stops at high-ridership stops to shorten travel time for busy routes
Express	A non-local route that serves key destinations and travels via freeway for quick intercity connections
Specialty	A fixed-line route that serves a need-based purpose on select days and is open to the public. Routing and stops served is subject to change based on need.

Service Availability

Due to the limited ability of METRO to provide service to every resident of the county, network decisions must be made based on the concept of equitably serving the highest amount of people as possible, while still providing transportation options for those who rely on the service.

A common consideration by transit agencies is one of coverage versus ridership. When transit is designed to achieve ridership, it tends to focus on providing high-frequency service to busy places. Transit designed to be widely available and achieve high coverage must spread those resources out to serve a wider area, so less service is available for high frequency in busy places. Routes that are focused on coverage may not serve the greater amount of people and may be slower and less efficient. However, coverage routes offer essential lifeline services to people that have no other transportation options. Routes focused on ridership attempt to serve the highest amount of people in the most efficient fashion. These routes have higher frequencies, more direct routing and less stops.

In the 2020 Strategic Plan process, METRO began to engage the public on whether the balance between ridership and coverage should be changed. Feedback from the public during that process was favorable towards a redesign of the bus network that provided more frequent service on high-demand corridors and less coverage in lower-demand places.

This informed the Strategic Plan's overall recommendation that the network redesign focus more on high frequency service than the existing network. The Reimagine METRO engagement process continued to ask the public about this key question. A majority of participants in METRO's surveys responded in favor of alternatives designed to shift the balance of service towards ridership – but it remains just that, a balance between the two.

Based on the equity considerations established by METRO, service is made available within the community based on many factors. These include: job population, population density, retail density, location of medical facilities, major nodes like downtowns, and areas with existing transit loyal ridership. The strategies of coverage and ridership are important to deciding where a route should go in accordance with these factors.

Service Span

How long the buses run can impact the types of trips people can take and how dependent our riders can be on METRO service for their transportation needs. METRO riders can expect a bus to come at regularly fixed intervals in the determined service spans.

Fixed-route

Core Services	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Bus Rapid Transit	5:00 am – 1:00 am (next day)	5:00 am – 11:00 pm	9:00 am – 8:00 pm
Frequent	5:00 am – 1:00 am (next day)	5:00 am – 11:00 pm	9:00 am – 8:00 pm
Standard	5:00 am – 1:00 am (next day)	5:00 am – 11:00 pm	9:00 am – 8:00 pm

| Supporting Services	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Limited Stop	6:00 am – 9:00 pm	No service	No service
Express	Varies by route	Varies by route	No service

Service Peaks

Peak time refers to the hours throughout the day that see the highest amount of travel demand and traffic. These coincide with the morning and afternoon commute hours, shift times, and school openings and dismissals.

☀ **AM Peak: 6:00 am – 9:00 am**

🌙 **PM Peak: 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm**
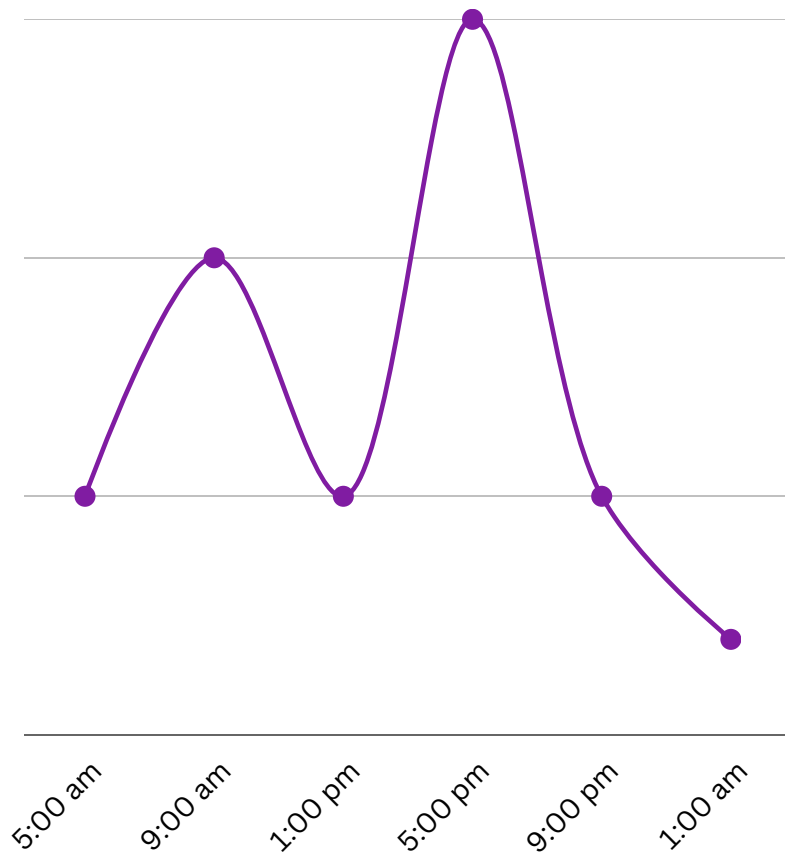
Service Peak Headways

Peak service on METRO's network is from 6:00 am to 9:00 am and 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm on weekdays. While there is increased ridership during these time periods, it does not taper off dramatically between these two periods. Therefore, METRO is committed to providing the headways below from at least 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Fixed-route

Core Services

Bus Rapid Transit	15 mins or better
Frequent	15 mins or better
Standard	60 mins or better

Supporting Services

Limited Stop	60 mins or better
Express	Varies by route

On-Time

Buses are affected by the same road conditions, traffic, crashes, inclement weather, and construction as other road users. Sometimes, the bus will be late. However, with careful planning, METRO can improve on-time performance to make traveling on public transit more reliable.

METRO does not allow buses to be early, but METRO may allow a bus to be up to five (5) minutes late to a determined stop (a timepoint) due to road conditions and other delays such as passengers boarding with mobility devices, bicycles, carts, carriages, and fare payment.

Equitable Distribution of Transit Assets, Amenities & Vehicles

METRO is committed to equitably dispersing assets, amenities, and vehicles across Summit County. What this means is that all neighborhoods will have access to new buses and amenities. All residents adjacent to transit routes should see the benefit of our continued investment in new cleaner technologies, like low or no emissions buses, and the placement of stop amenities.

The Evaluation & Change Process for Transit Delivery

Evaluating the service that METRO provides is essential to ensuring that we are responsibly using taxpayer money to provide transportation for Summit County residents who need it most. Like all taxpayer funded agencies, METRO has a limited budget and constraints of labor availability that affects service availability. With the following evaluation metrics, METRO will determine a routes performance and make decisions on how to improve its future operation.

Performance Metrics
On-time performance

On-time performance is one measure METRO uses to evaluate its service. On-time performance measures the percentage a route is on-time out of all trips operated.

Routes with low on-time performance may need higher frequencies, schedule adjustments or routing evaluation. Other measures to improve on-time performance can be by altering the physical location of bus stops, and by using technologies that allow for transit priority.

METRO's on-time performance goal for all routes together is 85%. Individually, routes should improve their on-time performance from year to year. **A goal of achieving higher than the previous year on-time performance is in place for each route.**

85%
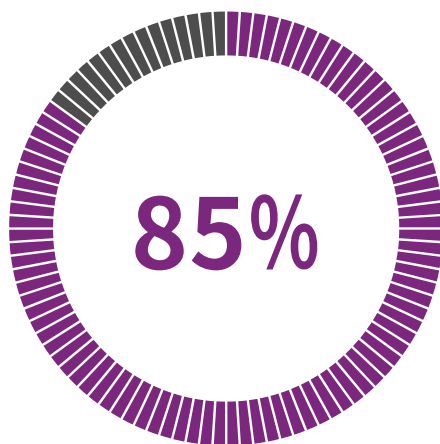
Productivity

Transit is a taxpayer investment, so we want to get the best bang for our buck. Looking at productivity can give a good indication of how many transit-loyal customers take each route. The higher the productivity, the more likely increased investment would benefit a great number of people.
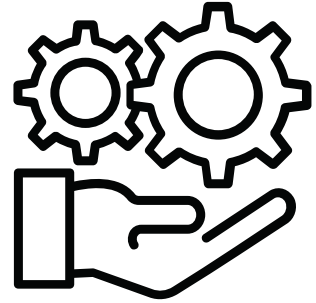
Lower productivity routes may need adjustment to improve so that buses are not running empty all day. METRO uses **Passengers per Revenue Hour** as its productivity measure. In other words, in the time a route is being operated – how many people are using it per hour?

METRO's goal is to increase Passengers per Revenue Hour system wide every year.

Passenger Load

Passenger load is the measure of how many people are on-board the bus at any one given time. Usually this is calculated as a percentage of seating capacity so it can be compared across vehicle types/sizes. Buses are not limited to their seated capacities, so passenger loads can and often do exceed 100%.

Currently, there are four types of vehicles that METRO uses for fixed-route service: 35ft, 40ft, 45 ft and 60ft articulated buses (the ones with the bendy section in the middle). Each has different seated capacity. This list may not be reflective of all buses METRO operates in the future.

35 ft. Gillig bus: 31 seated
40 ft. Gillig bus: 37 seated
60 ft. New Flyer (articulated) bus: 53 seated
45 ft. Motor coach international commuter bus: 57 seated

35 ft. and 40 ft. buses may be used on any transit line. 60 ft. buses are reserved for the most frequent routes with highest ridership demand. Commuter buses are only used for express bus services to provide a more comfortable ride over longer travel distances, often mostly on the freeway.

Off Peak Passenger Load Limit: 125%
Peak Passenger Load Limit: 150%

Buses that regularly exceed the peak limit of 150% may need additional capacity. Passenger load metrics on each route have the potential to determine the size of vehicles that serve a route. Similarly, a bus that frequently runs empty or has low passenger load may have too much service based on demand.

Average Bus Speed

Average bus speed is a metric that measure how efficiently a bus is running. Higher speeds mean that people get to their destinations quicker and don't spend a lot of time waiting while on the bus – in traffic, for boardings, fare payment or a host of other reasons. By analyzing average bus speeds, we can mark progress being made to the customer experience and our utilization efficiency.

Improving bus speeds makes rides on transit more comparable to automobile travel, and thus makes transit a better alternative to using a car.

Network Quality (NQ) Score – Equity Analysis

The NQ score is an equity metric that is designed to measure and compare the quality of individual routes within METRO's service.

Each route produces an NQ score **based on established metrics that represent many of the service standards, policies and performance metrics** represented in this document. By comparing the NQ score of low-income and minority routes to the NQ scores of other routes, we can directly quantify disparity in our routes, and take steps in order to address them.

The NQ Score lies on a scale that goes from -9 to 9. The lower a route's score, the lower its quality. The higher a route's score, the higher its quality. To determine the NQ score, we measure six metrics on each route (three scores are weighted to be worth twice as much as the others).

Developing the NQ Score

1. Each metric can earn a route a score of -1.0, -0.5, 0, 0.5, or 1.0

2. The score each metric earns is awarded based on how it compares to the county average of that same metric

   a. If a route is 10% or more worse in a metric, a score of -1 is given

   b. If a route is 5% to 9.9% worse in a metric, a score of -0.5 is given

   c. If a route is between 5% worse and 5% better than the county average, a score of 0 is given

d. If a route is 5% to 9.9% better in a metric, a score of 0.5 is given

e. If a route is 10% or better in metric, a score of 1 is given

3. Once the six scores have been aggregated, they are added together to form our NQ score ranging from -9 to 9

4. Three of the metrics were deemed more important to network quality than the others, and were weighted by having their points doubled, explaining why a six metric scoring system can go up to 9.

The Metrics

1. On Time Percentage (Weighted)

a. OTP is already calculated by METRO as a percentage of how many bus trips arrive on time out of all the trips driven on that route

b. The average OTP for the entire county is measured and compared to the average OTP of the route being analyzed

i. If the route OTP is 10% or worse than the county average, a score of -2 is given

ii. If the route OTP is 5% to 9.9% worse than the county average, a score of -1 is given

iii. If the route is between 5% worse and 5% better a score of 0 is given

iv. If the route is 5% to 9.9% better than the county average, score of 1 is given

v. If the route is 10% better than the county average, a score of 2 is given

2. Transit Stop Accessibility (Weighted)

a. TSA measures the number of residents that are within ¼ mile of a bus route. The more residents that can be reached based on walkshed, the higher the score.

b. The walkshed is determined by distance to the route, not to individual bus stops, since these can be changed to better accommodate METRO riders.

c. The scoring is the same as the OTP

3. Bus Speed (Weighted)

a. This metric measures the average bus speed of a route and seeks to analyze if a bus is being bogged down by things like traffic, too frequent bus stops, or slow rider pick up

b. The metric should be measured in distance/time and compared to the county average

c. The scoring is the same as OTP and transit stop accessibility

4. Passenger Loads

a. Passenger loads seek to quantify the amount of passengers in a bus compared to that buses total capacity.

b. It is usually measured as percentage of riders/seating capacity

c. For the NQ score we will look at the average percentage of the passenger load of each route.

d. Unlike in the other scores we will evaluate the line individually without comparing it to a county average.

i. If a route's average load is from 0% to 30%, the route is too empty and will be assigned a score of -1

ii. If a route's average load is from 31% to 50% it will be assigned a score of 0

iii. If a route's average load is from 51% to 99% it will be assigned a score of 0.5

iv. If a route's average load is from 100% to 150% this is considered optimal and will receive a score of 1

v. If a route's average load is over 150%, this is too crowded and will receive a score of -0.5

5. Stop Amenities

a. We will be considering four factors when it comes to rating amenities: sidewalks, trashcans, shelters, and benches.

b. Routes will have their amenities evaluated on a per stop basis. The stops will be scored from -4 to 4.

i. Each amenity present at the stop is worth one point.

ii. Each amenity missing from a stop is worth a negative point

iii. If a stop has none it would be scored -4. If it has all four, then it will be scored a full 4.

c. Once every stop on a line has been evaluated and scored, the scores will be added up and averaged to produce a route average amenity score.

d. Once a route score has been collected for every route, they will be averaged to find the county average amenity score.

e. Route scores will then be compared to the county average score and will be awarded a Stop Amenity Score that lies between -1 and 1.

6. Vehicle Age

a. Vehicle age is designed to ensure that our low-income and minority lines are not receiving the older, more worn buses more often than our other lines.

b. For this metric, we can do a simple: vehicles over 10 years of age/vehicles driven on route

c. This will then be compared to a county average to extract our score of -1 to 1.

Performance Review & Route Evaluation

METRO staff will report to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis with an easy-to-understand dashboard that if applicable, compares the performance metrics listed above to previous quarters and calendar years. The Planning team will evaluate route performance on a monthly basis for service planning purposes. The Network Quality (NQ) Score will be reported to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis or with any major service change.

Transit service is evaluated continuously and changes to routing, runtimes, and schedules are made seasonally in accordance with sign-up dates.

Major Change Procedure

If a change affects more than 25% of a route's mileage, METRO considers this to be a "major change." A major change requires a public hearing under Title VI regulations, and an official comment period. This is to allow the public to receive information and provide feedback on the change requested by METRO staff. Once the official comment period is over, staff will make any necessary changes and report them to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will vote on whether or not to accept the major change or require METRO staff to amend the change based on the public feedback. This section will be updated in accordance with any Board-approved alterations to the Title VI Major Changes policies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't my bus route be changed to be closer to my home or workplace?

For transit to serve the greatest number of people while maintaining efficiency and value, bus routes need to be direct with limited deviation. METRO buses serve major roads and try to maintain a simple direction of travel. METRO is not able to make major bus route adjustments exclusively based on individual rider feedback. Door-to-door bus service is neither financially viable nor operationally possible for METRO to provide. For qualified individuals with limited mobility, METRO offers ADA paratransit service. Please contact METRO Customer Care or see our website for more information.

Why can't a bus stop be located closer to my home or workplace?

Bus stops are located along route corridors. If there are more bus stops along a route the bus must stop more often, which slows down the bus and often makes bus trips longer for passengers. METRO must balance bus stop access and passenger convenience with the desire to keep the bus in motion and minimize travel time.

Why is my bus running late?

Traffic, road construction, crashes, and weather-related events may delay the arrival of your bus. A lot of passengers boarding at a stop, and frequent bus stops also may delay the bus. METRO has committed itself to provide on-time performance at an acceptable level determined by these service standards. Routes are continuously monitored and adjusted when consistent reliability issues are seen by METRO.

Why is my bus full or crowded?

High demand and ridership for bus service along a route can be the reason for a full bus. METRO monitors passenger load to determine options for regularly full buses, which may include adding more buses to a route, or using a transit vehicle with more

Why does my bus stop not have a shelter or a bench?

METRO does not have the financial resources to provide shelters and benches at every stop location. Shelters and benches require significant dedicated capital and operating expenses. Due to these limited resources, shelter locations are prioritized to serve as many riders as possible; stops may not have room in the public right-of-way (municipal-owned street space) for a shelter, as well. METRO evaluates shelter proposals continuously.

Why don't buses run all the time?

METRO does not currently have demand for 24/7 service, so this is not a feasible option at this time. However, METRO is dedicated to operating routes to provide reliable service for most routes every day. If additional funding becomes available or ridership increases, service hours may be altered for individual routes first. available resources, adjacent land use, and development context. These are evaluated on a continuous basis and may be adjusted seasonally.

Why is the bus so slow?

Buses operate on the same roads as cars. They are impacted by the same delays as a private vehicle, like traffic. We are dedicated to the safety of our riders. Buses must allow for passengers to board and disembark safely at stops.

Why is the bus running empty?

METRO buses may have fewer passengers on them when they are beginning or ending a trip, or when they are headed to and from the garage. METRO strives to provide regular service for those who need it most as a "lifeline" for those without other means of transportation.

Why aren't there buses out to rural areas?

It is important for METRO to serve the largest population as possible with limited available funds. Service is most impactful in areas with existing high ridership and/or transit supportive land use (concentrations of housing or jobs). In many cases, operating a route into rural and low population density areas is not efficient or financially viable.

Glossary of Transit Terms

Alighting: To step off a vehicle, i.e. to deboard a bus or rail car

AM peak: The portion of the morning where the greatest level of ridership is experienced

APC: Automatic Passenger Counter

Arrival time: Time a vehicle is scheduled to arrive at a time point

Automatic Passenger Counter: Electronic device that is installed on a transit vehicle to accurately record boarding and alighting data

Boarding: To enter a vehicle for the purpose of taking a ride from one location to another

Bus rapid transit: Also called a BRT, busway or transitway, is a bus-based public transport system designed to improve capacity and reliability relative to a conventional bus system. It typically operates on a fixed-route with designated right-of-way, limited stop and operates similarly to a light-rail or streetcar.

Bus stop: A place where passengers can board or alight a vehicle, indicated by a route sign

Commuter: A person who travels regularly

Deboarding: (see alighting)

Departure time: Time a vehicle is scheduled to depart from a time point location

DOT: Department of Transportation

Express Bus: A bus that operates a portion of the local route with or without limited stops and also operates a portion of the route via freeway

Fare Box: Device used to accept paper, coins, swipe cards, or mobile fare payments

Fare Box recovery ratio: Measure of the proportion of operating expenses covered by passengers' fares divided by operating expenses

Fare structure: A system set up to determine how much is to be paid by various passengers using a transit vehicle

Fixed-route: Service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers between specific locations Frequency How often trips operate

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

Headway: Defined by the scheduled time interval between vehicles operating in the same direction on the same route (or bus frequency)

Inbound: Trips traveling towards the downtown Akron or a major hub

Intermodal: Trips involving more than one mode of transportation (also: multimodal)

Load Factor: Ratio of passengers actually carried versus vehicle passenger capacity (also Passenger load)

Local: A bus that operates its entire route via local thoroughfares

Micromobility: Range of small, lightweight vehicles operating at low speeds (<25 mph) and driven by users personally

Microtransit: Form of demand-responsive transport using flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling; operate in an area not along a fixed-route

Multimodal/MAAS (mobility as a service): Seamless connectivity between different modes of transportation

ODOT: Ohio Department of Transportation

Off peak period: time of operation that is not an AM or PM peak

On-time performance: Percentage of time buses depart their time points at their scheduled times

Operating assistance: Financial assistance for transit operating systems, such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments

Operating costs: All costs involved with running a transit system

Outbound: Trips traveling away from downtown Akron

Paratransit: Comparable transit service required by the ADA for qualified individuals with disabilities

Park & Ride/Park-and-ride: Designated parking areas for automobile drivers who then board transit vehicles from these locations

Peak period: Morning and afternoon time periods when transit riding is heaviest

PM peak: Afternoon portion where the greatest level of ridership is experienced, and most frequent level of service is scheduled

Reverse commute: Trips in opposite direction to the main flow of traffic (ex. traveling from the city center to the suburbs during commuting hours)

Ridership: The total number of a passengers on a trip

Route Fixed: service consisting of start and end locations with time points in between, typically covering a specific area, destination, or major roadway

Service area: An agencies' operating area, consistent with ADA requirements

Shelter: A structure located near a bus stop to provide protection from the elements for the convenience of passengers

Shuttle: A vehicle that travels back and forth over a particular route, usually a short route that provides connections between transit centers, employment center, etc

Span of service: The hours of service a route operates from the first trip on a route to the last trip

Time point: Locations along a route that operators must arrive on-time to ensure transit is reliable

Transit center: Location where multiple routes intersect or layover, providing passengers with transfer opportunities

Transfer center or point: A fixed location, where passengers interchange from one route or vehicle to another

Trip: The one-way operation of a vehicle between a starting time point and an ending time point, typically indicated by either inbound or outbound

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

Variant: Leg or branch of a route that does not follow the main route path