

# Guidelines for Selecting and Installation of Bus Shelters For Knoxville Area Transit

## Introduction:

Quite often bus stops are a passenger's first entry point into Knoxville's transit bus service. Location, placement, spacing, design and service provided at bus stops significantly influence Knoxville Area Transit's system performance and passenger experience. KAT provides over 1500 bus stop locations throughout the bus service area. Stops which include extended amenities, such as bus stop shelters, are designed to provide the best rider experience. In a perfect world with unlimited resources, all bus stops would provide shelter amenities. Resource limitations, however, require KAT and City staff to carefully plan provision of transit system amenities and strive for an effective return on investment. The intent of this document is to describe bus stop shelter considerations and educate the public on the means of providing input for bus shelter planning.



## KAT's Bus stop shelter planning considerations:

KAT periodically assembles staff members from its internal departments to meet as a bus stop committee. This committee reviews bus system ridership trends, impacts of potential route changes, bus stop location changes, requests from the public, and resources available. When considering nominations for potential placement of bus stop shelters, the committee considers several factors.

- How many passengers utilize the stop? Are there enough passengers to justify upgrading the bus stop to include extended amenities?
- Will the terrain and road design reasonably allow for construction of a bus stop shelter location?
- Does enough City right-of-way exist?
- What impact would an improved stop have on pedestrian and traffic flow?
- How would traffic, pedestrian and passenger safety be impacted?
- Can ADA requirements be met?
- Is funding available for construction and installation of a bus stop shelter?
- Once installed, is there enough funding and resources to service and maintain the shelter amenities?

Once a shelter nomination successfully passes these gates, a long process begins that ultimately results in placement of a bus stop shelter.

## Public shelter requests:

For those desiring to provide input to bus stop shelter placement, KAT makes available an online shelter request form for public input. The more information you provide, the easier it is for KAT staff to consider your input. The request form can be found on KAT's website at [www.katbus.com](http://www.katbus.com).

### **Private/Public shelter partnerships:**

Partnerships sometimes form between members of the public and the City and KAT when mutual benefits can be realized from construction and installation of a bus shelter. These partnership requests may be from commercial property owners, churches, neighborhood associations, or private individuals. The same request form available on KAT's website should be used to formally request a partnership. Before initiating a partnership request, several factors should be considered to determine feasibility.

- Is the proposed location on an existing bus route? If not, then the practicality of constructing a new shelter becomes questionable. KAT cannot easily create a new route or make minor changes to an existing route. All bus routes are networked and, to the maximum extent possible, buses are scheduled to converge upon the downtown transit center at the same time. Minor changes to a route, including adding additional stops, impacts the entire system. Also, adding distance to an existing route or creating a new route can be extremely expensive and create a significant drain upon KAT's operating budget.
- Does ridership justify need for a shelter?
- What land is available for the bus stop shelter? Is it on City right-of-way, private land, land owned by another government agency, or a combination thereof? Before a bus stop shelter can be constructed, the land on which it sits must allow for City control. This may involve extension of right-of-way, easements, or land use agreements all of which are obtained through their own distinct process. If the shelter is to be provided without City assistance or involvement and constructed on private land, the structure is subject to compliance with City building codes and requires permitting.
- What funding is available? Does the requester have funding available to defray the costs? In terms of 2019 dollars, typical shelter concrete pad construction normally ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and KAT's standard shelter with related amenities range from \$7,000 to \$14,000, depending on size and construction/installation requirements at the location. Ongoing maintenance costs will also be a factor to consider.
- What shelter design is desired? A KAT standard shelter, a non-standard functional design, or a non-standard artistic design? All bus stop shelters, regardless of design, must comply with KAT's published standard available on KAT's web site at [www.katbus.com](http://www.katbus.com).
- How will the shelter be serviced and maintained? Servicing involves periodically emptying the shelter trash can (if equipped), sweeping up debris, removing graffiti and cleaning the shelter glass if needed. Maintaining involves repairing damage from vehicle accidents or vandalism. KAT has the ability to service and maintain a limited number of shelters. Private entities may be required to enter into an agreement for the maintenance and service of shelters built through public/private partnerships.

### **Private Shelters:**

Residential complexes and other businesses along KAT routes sometimes choose to install covered waiting areas on their own property near a bus stop. This can often be a quicker option to installing a shelter, especially in cases where low passenger numbers or cost effectiveness makes it difficult for KAT and the City to justify investment in a bus stop shelter. In these cases, the property owner should consider several factors.

- Will the private bus stop shelter be in the immediate vicinity of an existing bus stop?
- Do City building codes allow for the structure? Note an approved shelter design will require permitting during construction.
- Depending upon distance from the property owner's shelter to City right-of-way where the bus stops, a property line stand-off variance may be necessary.
- Will the shelter be properly located and oriented so waiting passengers can see the bus approaching the stop?
- How will access to the shelter and the shelter itself provide for compliance with ADA?
- What property insurance and liability concerns should be considered?
- How will the property owner service and maintain the shelter?

#### **Non-Standard Shelters – Additional Considerations:**

Sheltered waiting areas can be more than just a place to wait – they can be interactive, artistic, playful, landscaped spaces that create a community space for a neighborhood while enhancing the transit experience. Private/public partnerships provide a great way to create these park-like spaces.

While KAT utilizes a standard shelter design, some neighborhoods or partners may desire shelters of functional or artistic design. These unique shelters are a great way to improve an area's appeal and improve riders' transit experience.

Shelter requests involving designs outside of the KAT standard shelter design must be accompanied with professional engineering design plans demonstrating the proposed shelter complies with KAT's published standard. When KAT and City staff agree a non-standard shelter request is practical, financially acceptable and justifiable in terms of ridership, the request is subjected to varying approval processes. Additionally, non-standard shelters of artistic design are submitted to the Knoxville Art Council for review and approval.

***Your part*** – A specialized, non-standard shelter request requires a commitment of participation in the review process. Once KAT and City staff determine a request should enter the formal review process, the requester must commit to the right amount of participation. Please ensure your shelter request is complete: addressing all areas pointed out above, provide professional engineering design plans consistent with KAT's published standard, and be available to meet with KAT and City staff to answer questions.