

Janesville Transit System

Transit Amenity Guidelines

Final – Updated 2022

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Prepared by:



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Table of Contents

Transit Amenity Guidelines.....	1
Bus Stop Spacing.....	1
Shelter Placement.....	2
Bench Placement.....	4
Ongoing Coordination.....	4

Transit Amenity Guidelines

Following the 2018 Transit Development Plan, JTS discontinued its previous “flag stop” system and implemented a policy of stopping at signed stops only. This change was made to improve the following service characteristics:

- **Safety** – A signed stop gives a bus driver a signal to be aware of passengers and pedestrians and prepare to slow and stop a bus. Signed stops are also typically in places that are safe for passengers to board and alight the vehicle. Additionally, they reduce the incidences of passengers running toward a bus, or having to navigate hazards upon exiting a bus.
- **Ease of Access** – Bus stops provide equitable access to transit service and are typically priorities for physical improvements to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Paved landings, sidewalks, wayfinding, and shelters are all features of bus stops that aide in ease of use and promote access to fixed route service. Moreover, signed bus stops make a transit system easier to understand for a new user, as this is more of a customary procedure.
- **Operational Efficiency** – Having an unpredictable number of bus stops can make it difficult to plan running times for bus routes, require additional “slack” to be built into a schedule, and can cause unexpected delays due to making more stops than necessary and excess bus maneuvering.

Based on a field review and inventory of existing bus routes and stops, the following standard guidelines were identified.

Bus Stop Spacing

Bus stop spacing for a fixed route system is typically $\frac{1}{4}$ mile for regular route service; $\frac{1}{4}$ mile is generally recognized as the average distance people are willing to walk to reach local bus service. Higher quality services (express bus, bus rapid transit, light rail) can tolerate greater spacing. However, bus stop placement must be done in such a way that balances providing access to transit service and maximizing travel speed and convenience. The $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile spacing is intended as a general rule. Areas of higher activity – such as the downtown core of a city – may warrant closer spacing to manage higher boarding and alighting patterns. Areas with low activity – suburban areas with less intense land use or lower density – may not require close spacing.

The following routes were received additional stops upon conversion to a signed stop system:

- 1: Milton Avenue Route: 4 additional stops
- 5: Milwaukee Street Route: 1 additional stop
- 2: Kellogg Avenue Route: 1 additional stop

The BJE is a hybrid between a regular route (local bus) service and an express or limited stop service. There were nine segments of the BJE that have greater than ¼-mile spacing, however placing stops in those segments may not be necessary due to low activity.

Shelter Placement

Bus shelters are a critical amenity of any fixed route transit system, protecting customers from weather and offering a venue to communicate system information. Shelters should be placed at stops where there is adequate space for accessible routes, places where route transfers are made, and at areas of high activity and boardings. Per the Janesville Area 2015-2050 LRTP:

The City of Janesville’s Distribution of Transit Amenities Policy regarding passenger comfort and safety dictates that bus shelters will be strategically placed on inbound stops in residential neighborhoods and areas that serve 50 or more boarding or transferring passengers daily, and have an evenly distributed daily ridership. All [existing] shelters are located at major destinations (grocery stores, retail centers, medical facilities, job sources, and educational institutions) or residential developments with high ridership (Environmental Justice Section, page 10).

Table 1 shows JTS bus stops with existing shelters and their associated number of daily boardings, as collected by JTS during the two-week period of May 22 to June 5, 2022.

Table 1. Bus Ridership at Stops with a Shelter

Location	Stop Number	Shelter Type	2022 Daily Boardings
Downtown Transfer Center	100	JTS	964
Walmart / Sam's Club	179	Private	96.3
N Crosby / W Court (Kwik Trip / Sentry)	186	JTS	35.3
Janesville Mall	157	Private	26.5
Kellogg (Job Center)	376	Private	22.1
N Main (Janesville Garden Court)	124	JTS	18.7
Milton / Kettering	237	JTS	17.6
Beloit Transfer Center	N/A	BTS	17.2
N Lexington (Shopko / Woodman's)	161	JTS	16.3
W Court (Sunnyside Shopping Center)	201	JTS	15.3
Mineral Pt (Mercy Hospital)	196	JTS	14.3
N Washington / Greenview	193	JTS	14.3
Festival Foods	162	Private	12.9
St Mary's Hospital (SSM Health)	231	Private	12.8
Deerfield (Pine Tree Plaza)	181	JTS	11.7

Location	Stop Number	Shelter Type	2022 Daily Boardings
E Milwaukee (Mercy Clinic East)	134	JTS	11.5
S Oakhill / W State	286	JTS	9.8
Milton / Creston Park	155	JTS	9.2
Midland (BioLife Plasma Services)	229	JTS	7.4
N Pontiac (Van Galder Bus Terminal)	164	JTS	5.9
Deerfield (Mercy Clinic North)	180	JTS	2.5
Black Bridge / N Parker (Transit Services Center)	222	JTS	0.4
UW-Whitewater at Rock County Campus	109	JTS	0.4

As shown in Table 1, just two bus stops with shelters – the Downtown Transfer Center and Walmart/Sam’s Club – were observed to have about 50 or more daily boardings. JTS should consider revising its shelter placement policy (to a lower minimum daily boardings threshold) to better reflect boarding patterns.

For the purposes of this report, bus stops that were observed to have 20 or more boardings per day have been identified as being potential candidates for shelter locations – today or in the future. There are no industry standards for passenger activity necessitating a shelter; however, most transit systems apply a daily boardings measure as part of their assessment. Based on observed boarding data compiled JTS and reviewed by the consultant team, there are two bus stop locations in Janesville that may benefit from a shelter using this 20-boarding threshold: Franklin Middle School and Milton Avenue/Black Bridge Road (Table 2).

Table 2. Bus Stops with Twenty or More Boardings per Day

Location	Stop Number	Observed Daily Boardings	Existing Shelter?
Downtown Transfer Center	100	964	Yes
Walmart / Sam's Club	179	96.3	Yes
N Crosby / W Court (Kwik Trip / Sentry)	186	35.3	Yes
Mineral Pt / N Crosby (Franklin MS)	188	32.8	No
Janesville Mall	157	26.5	Yes
Kellogg (Job Center)	376	22.1	Yes
Milton / Black Bridge	156	20.2	No

Due to the nature of offering Extra Service Routes before and after each public school day (with tripper buses present at school dismissal times), it is not JTS policy to install shelters at middle and high school locations. Rather, students, who comprise most of the ridership at such stops, may wait

indoors at dismissal in the event the tripper bus is not yet present. Therefore, it would not be recommended to install a shelter at the Franklin Middle School stop.

After identifying potential shelter locations using the ridership threshold, JTS should examine the physical feasibility of installing a shelter at any stops that meet the threshold. At the intersection of Milton Avenue and Black Bridge Road, for example, the current layout of Milton Avenue does not permit installation of a JTS shelter within the existing WisDOT road right-of-way. Unfortunately, the existing sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate a shelter that meets ADA standards, so JTS cannot install a shelter unless WisDOT makes changes to the roadway or the City of Janesville acquires private property to install a shelter. Until these conditions are met, JTS will not install a shelter.

Going forward, JTS should continue to collect stop-level boarding and alighting data to continually evaluate where shelters are most needed. Once locations are identified, a site feasibility analysis should be conducted to assess whether a shelter can be accommodated within existing roadway infrastructure, or whether JTS should coordinate for future roadway changes that can better facilitate shelters. JTS regularly coordinates with other City of Janesville departments to analyze upcoming roadway changes and seek opportunities for transit improvements.

Bench Placement

As with shelters, there is no industry standard threshold for passenger activity necessitating a bench at a bus stop. JTS does not currently have such a standard. In addition to areas of moderate or high ridership, benches are warranted at bus stops in high activity locations (e.g., pedestrian activity, density); where seniors, children, and passengers with special needs frequently board; wait times are longer; and there is no other shelter from the elements.

Moving forward, JTS should consider placing benches at bus stop locations that might not yet meet standards for shelter placement and where it is safe to do so. Bench placement should be approached as an incremental improvement to passenger amenities if shelter placement is not feasible. Further, benches should be placed at bus stops based on the general guidelines listed above and where there may be advertising revenue opportunities, such as areas with high pedestrian/vehicular traffic. JTS' existing marketing contract represents a potential opportunity to advertise on benches in addition to existing on-bus advertisements.

Ongoing Coordination

In order to ensure that bus stops, shelters, benches, and other amenities are placed at the locations of greatest need, it is a best practice for transit systems to work with other city departments, private businesses, and residential developers to incorporate transit amenities as new construction or redevelopment activities are completed.

As part of its relationship with the City of Janesville Planning Department, JTS regularly reviews plans for upcoming developments. First, when the planning department finds that a development projects meets thresholds for review (based on physical development standards, multifamily housing

development standards, it reaches out JTS to discuss amenities that might be needed. These can include benches, bus stops, concrete bus pads, and other features.

The physical development standard threshold applies to any developments that include multiple buildings or sites, while multifamily housing development standards apply to developments that include more than 50 units. Other instances for transit review may also exist where a logical connection can still be made between certain improvements (such as pouring a new bus stop pad in the terrace) and the City of Janesville's conditional use criteria. JTS is also asked to review projects that involve roadway or access changes that might impact existing transit operations, such as when a new proposed driveway could conflict with an existing bus stop.

As a result of its coordination with the planning department, JTS has successfully partnered with private businesses and other organizations to install five on-property shelters at the following major travel destinations:

- Walmart/Sam's Club
- Uptown Janesville (Janesville Mall)
- Dr. Daniel Hale Williams Resource Center (Rock County)
- Festival Foods
- St. Mary's Hospital (SSM Health)

When shelters are installed on private property, they are purchased and maintained by the business or entity that owns the property. Property owners can purchase JTS shelters directly from the City of Janesville to easily achieve visual consistency with other JTS facilities. Otherwise, property owners can work with JTS to ensure that a shelter designed or purchased privately will comply with ADA requirements and that its location will be compatible with the agency's buses. JTS provides these required dimensions upon request.

Even if a location does not immediately meet the ridership threshold for implementing a bus shelter, certain destinations that are large developments, are set back from the street, or that serve vulnerable populations warrant consideration for added customer amenities. JTS will continue to work with property owners and other city departments to ensure that customer-friendly waiting areas and features are proactively provided at high-priority locations.