

Bus Layover Locations



Port Authority's Values

Efficient, Sustainable, Accessible

Overview

To facilitate scheduled operation of buses, recovery time is built into transit schedules so that if a bus arrives at its end point behind schedule, the driver can begin the next trip on time. The recovery times also provide time for drivers to use comfort facilities between trips, time for changing drivers (if needed), and time to make minor adjustments to equipment. In some agencies, recovery time is also used for quick interior bus cleaning. This recovery time is built to occur at layover locations at various places around the service area. Layover locations at key points within the service area allow for maximum efficiency of operations so that vehicles do not need waste time and/or miles returning to and from bus depots or garages unnecessarily. Where there are multiple public transportation providers, such facilities can also be utilized for buses operated by other carriers.

Layover locations also enhance the ability to maintain bus service during detours or other unplanned events. This includes construction, rallies/marches, street infrastructure failures and other events. Layover facilities also provide locations for staging vehicles to accommodate peak demand during special events or during emergencies.

Many of Port Authority's existing layover locations are legacy facilities established when its major predecessor, Pittsburgh Railways, created loops for streetcars to turn around to be positioned for the return trips. These loops also functioned as recovery facilities and the properties are currently used for bus layover

locations. Other layover locations have been set up at parking lots for shopping centers, malls, hospitals, a community college campus and at the Pittsburgh International Airport. Some layovers are sited on local streets. As Port Authority updates its existing passenger facilities, it is building in facilities for layover and recovery functions, such as the one currently under construction at the McKeesport Transportation Center.

Analysis

Port Authority needs additional layover facilities in its direct ownership or with permanent or long-term easements to enable it to continue and advance the scheduling and operation of efficient and reliable transit service. Many locations where Port Authority operations layovers are not in its control and it often is asked to move or vacate facilities on short notice, at the detriment to its operators and patrons. Port Authority should program capital projects to support operations on other private property owners' sites or to acquire its own property, in cases of significant transit activity, to support the values in this long-range plan. In a highly developed urbanized area, such as Allegheny County, dedicating space for transit operations is difficult, but the lack of layover space near the end of routes is a major constraint to the introduction of new or expanded bus service. Port Authority needs places for its buses to layover between trips, preferably in proximity to restrooms which operators can safely access.

Obtaining the required land for layover locations can be challenging, however, especially when factoring route efficiency and proximity to comfort stations. Additionally, some people may oppose any bus layovers in

their communities due to perceptions about air pollution, noise, and aesthetics.

Peer Examples

Washington, DC

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments conducted its *Regional Bus Staging, Layover, and Parking Location Study* to analyze the need for bus staging, layover, and parking locations in the District of Columbia (D.C.) and Arlington County and recommend sites for staging, layover, and parking. The addition of curbside layover locations could enable buses to not have to circle downtown blocks or park illegally.

Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia is a dense city, making it difficult to dedicate space for transit operations. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)'s lack of layover space for buses is a major constraint regarding exploring the implementation of new routes, redesigning services, and increasing the frequency of existing routes. Layover space is needed for buses to wait between trips, preferably in close proximity to an operator-accessible restroom. In the 2021 Philadelphia Transit Plan, it says the City government can help SEPTA by allocating public space for transit centers or coordinating space with private development to help improve transit. It is also mentioned that layover space planning is a critical component of fleet electrification when it comes to space for charging stations.

Level of Effort for Implementation: Moderate

- o Planning, design, and construction of on and off-street layover facilities requires extensive coordination with municipalities and/or property owners.
- o Establishment of off-street layover facilities may require land acquisition, planning, engineering, and construction. At a minimum, bus pads would be

required to maintain pavement integrity at the facilities.

- o For on- and off-street layover facilities, if no comfort facilities are available in nearby buildings, new comfort facilities will need to be installed and maintained. Layover facilities can also be constructed in conjunction with other corridor-related improvement projects.
- o Coordination with municipalities, community groups and other local stakeholders is needed.

Resources

[Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#)
[City of Philadelphia](#)