



## Policy Memo: Better Bus Stops

Bus stops in Syracuse lack amenities common in other transit-friendly cities – namely, digital real-time indicator signs that tell when the next bus will arrive, maps intended for wayfinding and navigability, and a minimum number of heated shelters appropriate for a cold climate.

### Overview

Syracuse residents who commute using the bus are at a disadvantage compared to car owners and even bicyclists. First, bus riders must fit their itinerary to the bus schedule (with some gaps between buses lasting as long as 1hr 30 minutes) but they are also subject to unpredictable delays. Second, riders have limited destinations to choose from and may be forced to take an inefficient route to get there due to the hub-and-spoke route model. Given that, Syracuse bus stops have inadequate signage for residents to chart a path to their destination. Third and finally, despite ranking among the coldest and snowiest major cities in the U.S., Syracuse bus stations provide inadequate shelter and heating.

To improve ridership, Centro must address these quality of life and ease of use concerns by doing the following:

1. **Install real-time indicator signs.** Taking the guesswork out of riding the bus empowers Syracuse riders to plan their commute with more confidence. Additionally, it allows for spontaneous trips and encourages even car-owners to take the bus rather than drive because of added convenience & predictability. A public-facing indicator would also serve residents without mobile devices, increasing accessibility for all.
2. **Invest in beautifully designed maps and signage.** The average bus stop in Syracuse, if it even has a shelter at all, lacks a coherent design and tools for residents to chart their course. It is essential for all sheltered bus stops to incorporate maps clearly depicting the current location, major destinations around the city, and the bus routes that must be utilized to get there. Each route map should be paired with a breakdown of schedules.
3. **Provide a minimum amount of heating for winter.** With an average winter temperature ranging from 32°F to 18°F overnight, Syracuse residents deserve bus shelters protected from the elements and capable of providing heat to improve comfort and, truly, the safety of riders who depend on Syracuse buses for transportation.

Centro must strike a balance between improving bus shelters with the highest ridership and ensuring ample geographic coverage. In the short term, residents should be guaranteed these improvements within a mile of their address. Within five years, residents should find them less than half a mile away. We urge these changes to begin before next winter.