

# Testing the Health in Transportation Corridor Planning Framework in Akron, Ohio

The Akron, Ohio METRO Regional Transit Authority's service along the South Arlington Corridor is a 3.5-mile segment of high frequency transit. It is METRO's busiest ridership route in the system. Residents along the corridor include large concentrations of minority, low-income, and elderly populations that warrant special consideration. METRO found that 45 percent of riders walk one block or less to their bus stop, and that bus stops are too closely spaced system-wide. The results are long travel times and schedule adherence problems, making it difficult to attract and retain customers. The corridor was selected for testing the Health in Transportation Corridor Planning Framework (Framework)<sup>1</sup> to establish planning methods and outreach strategies to improve service quality across all fixed routes.



*Metro Route 2 – South Arlington*

Although bus stop consolidation is generally associated with the positive health outcomes of additional walking to reach bus stop locations, it may present a hardship for some groups. Also, shifting paratransit riders to scheduled line service, a secondary objective of the effort, requires identifying customers who are able to travel independently without any major barriers to accessing a nearby bus stop. The Framework was used to consider physical activity, equity, and access as input to the bus stop consolidation process. Some highlights include:

- The Framework prompted METRO to develop partnerships with groups that would likely not have been engaged in the process. (page 3)
- The project resulted in a notable combination of positive transportation and health outcomes. (page 5)
- In the past, stop consolidation projects focused on statistical analysis or did not involve enough prior public engagement. Considering health impacts may benefit the agency with improved public relations and financial savings. (page 6)

For detailed information on how the Framework was used, see the full case study report<sup>2</sup>

METRO was able to complete five Framework Steps during the beta test period. The Framework was used to ensure that transit decision making considers the needs of the population in the corridor and engages them in the decision making process. Study findings allowed METRO to develop a bus stop consolidation scenario that protects access to medical/health facilities and purveyors of healthy food while improving travel time and schedule adherence for transit customers.

## For More Information

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<sup>1</sup> Health in Transportation Corridor Planning Framework: FHWA 2016

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health\\_in\\_transportation/planning\\_framework/the\\_framework/index.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health_in_transportation/planning_framework/the_framework/index.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> Testing the Framework in Akron, Ohio: FHWA 2016

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health\\_in\\_transportation/planning\\_framework/framework\\_beta\\_test/akron/case\\_study/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health_in_transportation/planning_framework/framework_beta_test/akron/case_study/)