

# Pagedale, Missouri Rock Road Walkabout Follow Up Brief 2013



## Summary:

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT), along with area Ten Toe Walkers, residents and local activists, gathered at 3 PM, Sunday October 13 at the Rock Road MetroLink Station in Pagedale to revisit the 2012 walkabout. Sponsored by CMT, this event not only aimed to look for progress or changes since the 2012 Walkabout, but to expand attendees understanding of the issues facing residents and pedestrians who use transit in the immediate surrounding community.



## Background and Site Information:

The Rock Road Station is one of thirty-seven light rail stations located in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and run by the regional transit authority, Metro. The current station sits on approximately three acres and includes a one hundred ninety-one space Park-Ride Lot, owned by Metro, immediately adjacent to St. Charles Rock Road, a MoDOT arterial. The Rock Road station, as it is known, has ridership in excess of the system average, and is approximately the 16<sup>th</sup> busiest station. The immediate adjacent area is primarily industrial / commercial with a significant number of vacant structures with single family housing beyond those areas.

Of the approximate 4,866 residents of Pagedale, forty-three percent are considered to be living at or below poverty level. Forty-six percent of the residents are home owners and fifty-four are renters. Eighteen percent of the households and thirty-one percent of the renters do not own a vehicle, and ten percent of the self-identified workers reported using transit for their daily commute.\*

## Walk Findings:

Walkers met on the northern end of the station, close to the platform, and farthest from St. Charles Rock Road. The two hour walking tour started in the parking lot of the MetroLink Station. From the entry of the parking lot the group went south from St. Charles Rock Road and into the neighborhood down historic Kingsland Avenue, one of the first streets in the area. The group walked past vacant and occupied industrial sites as well as residential areas off Page Avenue. At Page the group continued west and at Ferguson Avenue, turned north to return to St. Charles Rock Road, then back to the station.

The group found the following:

- Pathways to the station are not where people want or need them- 'Cowpaths'.
- Disabled transit users have the longest route as 'cowpaths' are not options.
- Parking lot is unattractive and not pedestrian scale.
- Metro station signage, general identification from St. Charles Rock Road is poor, barely visible.
- Placement of key points on site i.e., train platform, bus loading- farthest from pedestrian users.
- St. Charles Rock Road traffic speeds are too high. Crossing at station has pedestrian crossing lights but timing is not adequate.
- Pedestrian curb-cuts within island barriers are too narrow and at right angles making challenges for disabled, strollers, families.



Diagram by permission from Metro St. Louis

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- Kingsland has unsafe speed
- Poor wayfinding
- Lack of sufficient bus shelters
- Page has no strongly defined edge between street and stores and parking.
- Significant slope that is not pedestrian friendly.
- Gutter is debris filled
- No trees
- Undefined pedestrian crosswalk, crossings at Ferguson and Page
- Area needs 'Kids at Play' or crossing signage on Ferguson by City Hall and Beyond Housing, and possible flashing warning light.
- Electrical pole locations interfere with potential sidewalk changes and visibility and are unattractive.
- Electric signal at Ferguson and St. Charles Rock Road is poorly aligned with North side of Ferguson. The alignment and the lack of crosswalk and pedestrian signals makes this intersection very dangerous.
- The streetscape on St. Charles Rock Road, similar to Page, lacks poorly defined sidewalks, lack of lighting, uneven surfaces, trash and debris. This is a major thoroughfare for MetroLink users and Normandy students.
- Few options for retail shopping and those that are present are not safely accessible
- Lighting in the area and at the Metro station is not pedestrian scale and too few.
- Poor sidewalk conditions including:
  - Sidewalks are not continuous. Completely missing in some areas.
  - Poorly defined sidewalk edges, sidewalks lack curb line.
  - Some sidewalks have significant elevation changes that cannot be overcome by those using wheel chairs.
  - Neighborhood sidewalks are 2' wide and have debris such as broken glass.
  - Narrow sidewalks don't allow two people to pass
  - Sidewalks in some locations, close to intersection, are without a buffer to the curb and traffic.

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In May of 2012, a similar walkabout was hosted by Citizens for Modern Transit. The findings then are almost identical to the findings in 2013. Walkers felt that the MetroLink Station has significant development potential, but that the land itself and the surrounding area is underutilized. There has been no significant improvement to the area even with distribution of the 2012 brief to stakeholders.

### Priorities:

As the walkabout wrapped up the attendees discussed what, of all those issues discussed, were most critical to serve the surrounding community.

Priority	Improvement	Possible Organization
Priority 1	Sidewalk Improvements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve widths</li> <li>▪ Pave 'cowpaths'</li> <li>▪ Add more sidewalks to provide better, more direct access to amenities.</li> <li>▪ Debris removal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Pagedale</li> <li>▪ Metro</li> <li>▪ MoDOT</li> <li>▪ Beyond Housing</li> </ul>
Priority 2	Pedestrian Comfort	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More shelters</li> <li>▪ Trees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Pagedale</li> <li>▪ Metro</li> </ul>
Priority 3	Develop the Area Around Transit	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan and develop multi-use area around transit station. Could provide a solid economic spark.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Pagedale</li> <li>▪ Beyond Housing</li> <li>▪ Outside Developers</li> <li>▪ Grants</li> </ul>

### Recommended Next Steps:

1. An area champion must be identified to help work with the community leaders, St. Louis County Economic Council, Metro, MoDOT, St. Louis County, Beyond Housing and other area organizations to work towards accomplishing some of the smaller priorities. These changes offer the opportunity to make a big physical and psychological impact on the community.
2. Small improvements can lead to implementing a phased development plan for the area around the transit station that would include all the elements that make an area walkable and desirable while supporting the basic needs of the community and identifying funding mechanisms.



3. Put tools in place to entice development such as:
  - a. Form based code
  - b. TIF District
  - c. Tax credits, such as Empowerment Tax Credits.
  - d. Grant funding for cleanup
  - e. Partner with MoDOT to look at street improvements, including intersections.
  - f. Partner with grassroots organizations, Beyond Housing, to coordinate and manage efforts.

\*Metro Station Area Profile, Rock Road Station, Metro St. Louis, Mark Phillips, 2012

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