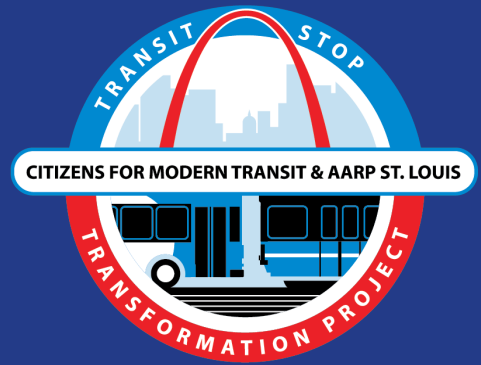


CASE STUDY

Transit Stop Transformation Project at Maplewood MetroBus Stop



Impacting Communities through Transformation of Transit Stops

CITIZENS FOR MODERN TRANSIT
www.cmt-stl.org

AARP IN ST. LOUIS
www.aarp.org/stlouis



MetroBus Stop Partners:

- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- City of Maplewood
- Citizens National Bank
- Kaboom!
- Business owners/Chamber of Commerce
- Bi-State Development

Project Description

Maplewood is a diverse, inner ring community with significant transit access, including MetroLink and MetroBus service. The goal of this program was to determine the impact of activating spaces in Maplewood around transit for current and future riders and residents. Also under consideration were the implications those changes would have on ridership, impact on community safety and security, and sustainability. At the start of the project, the Metro Transit Centers and MetroBus Stops were merely brief stopping points on the way to another destination. This is especially true along the Manchester corridor which serves the heart of downtown Maplewood and is serviced by the #31 MetroBus.



The Maplewood bus stop transformation included renovated shelters, seating, and art. Citizens National Bank owned the property where the shelter was located.

AARP in St. Louis and CMT proposed a three-step process over 12 months.

with the new installation

1. Policy and Public Engagement

The first step in this three-step process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. In Fall 2019, AARP in St. Louis and CMT engaged residents, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders, students, artists, the landowner and other interested parties in visioning events around the MetroBus Stop at the corner of Manchester and Marshall, including the space in between.

Events included walk-throughs of the prospective site, two community visioning events at Foundation Grounds (local coffee house across from site), surveying of transit riders at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop and Maplewood-Manchester Transit Center, outreach to local business owners, engagement with local artists, workshop with middle school children from the local school district, and an online survey to determine the following:

- Community viewed obstacles including ideas to improve safety/security
- Community viewed opportunities
- Ideas for permanent art/installation tying in with the themes of the Maplewood community
- Ideas to tie in all four corners of the intersection

Ideas Generated:

- Color
- Interactive
- Green
- Connecting
- Seating/Swings
- Play
- Front porch

A resounding theme from this project was to create a “modern front porch” for Maplewood through the transit stop site. Elements included art, sidewalk activation, Maplewood identity signage, bus shelters with amenities including lights, gliders, and rider information.

This engagement provided the framework for the placemaking construction during the summer of 2020 based on renderings from Black + Arc Design. This partnership included a permanent installation through a collaboration with KABOOM!, a national organization focused on activating spaces with play, Citizens National Bank (landowner), City of Maplewood, AARP in St. Louis and Citizens for Modern Transit.

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The process included RFPs for an architect for site work and artist for community art portion.

2. Placemaking Installation Events

The next step was to schedule a Placemaking Community Art Event based on the 'vision' from the local engagement work while demolition was underway under the supervision of the City of Maplewood. The event was set for March 14 with the local artist under contract to work on the art component of the final design. The public painting event would have provided an opportunity for additional community engagement, project ownership and activities for children. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, this portion of the engagement plan had to be canceled. The art portion was completed by the commissioned artist.

Construction was managed by Black + Arc Design through a sub-contract with KABOOM!

3. Put into Action

The final step was the promotion of this new amenity to the community and the region as a whole. In addition, programming around transit in Maplewood, including healthy/active living activities like Ten Toe Express Walks, will have increased awareness of opportunities in other areas.

Due to the pandemic, a large-scale community engagement event was not possible. A virtual opening video was created with interviews from various stakeholders highlighting the project.

This project laid the framework as a pilot for other St. Louis municipalities to explore transit placemaking transformations.

Coverage Included:

- Earned media
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- Blogs/websites

Funding Partners:

- CMT
- AARP in St. Louis
- Citizens National Bank
- City of Maplewood
- KABOOM!



PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Stop Transformation Projects are replicable. A variety of communities and organizations have expressed interest in developing their own projects.

2. Public Partners. The City of Maplewood was a key public partner. The City stepped up on several issues including demolition, project management, outreach to community businesses, engagement with local artists and schools, construction, and project oversight. The City also agreed to maintain the project site following completion. Local governments are key partners in the public sector for assisting with planning, zoning, construction and permitting. Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of the project site.

3. Corporate Participation. These projects provide an opportunity for corporations to potentially take ownership of transit stops outside their doors or in communities where they are located. Citizens National Bank provided the land for the Maplewood MetroBus Stop. Sponsorships could include monetary donations, land donations, maintenance, etc.

4. Private Partners. AARP in St. Louis is a key, founding partner. The organization represents thousands of constituents in areas across the region. In addition, they are a respected organization which provides additional credibility to these placemaking efforts.

5. Funding Sources. There is an opportunity moving forward for CMT to create a matching fund to begin work on other stops.

6. Additional Activation. Since the transformation of the stop in Maplewood, they have seen increased activation and programming at the site as the “front porch” to downtown Maplewood.

Challenges:

1. Funding. While these developments are not large-scale Transit Oriented Development sites, there are costs associated with developing a transit site into a more permanent, substantial piece of the fabric of the community.

2. Project Oversight. There are many moving pieces, including consultants, which require project oversight from one or several organizations spearheading the project.

3. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) Agreements between partnering organizations outlining areas of accountability related to the transformation.

4. Project Goals. Goals need to be clearly delineated prior to hitting “go” button. This will help ensure collaboration throughout the process.