



Transit Stop Transformation Projects

Impacting Communities through the Transformation of Transit Stops



Table of Contents

3 Overview

8 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop

12 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Emerson Park Transit Center

15 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Belleville Transit Center

18 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the North Hanley Transit Center

22 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center

26 Case Study: Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Fairview Heights Transit Center

30 Case Study: City of St. Louis – Build A Better Bus Stop – 13th & Gravois

32 Contact information

Overview

While it may be hard to see through the lens of the current transit stop on your street, the benefits of public transit extend well beyond the ride. A transit stop can serve as a transformational tool to:

- Reconnect a community
- Promote social equality
- Increase accessibility and sustainability
- Position an area for growth
- Activate and beautify the public space
- Create opportunities for physical activity
- Enhance neighborhood safety

The goal is to turn public spaces at bus stops and transit stations into vibrant community centers for people of all ages.



History and Success of Projects in the St. Louis Region

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT), the St. Louis regional transit advocacy organization, and AARP in St. Louis initiated a pilot Transit Stop Transformation Project in 2019 to demonstrate this concept in the City of Maplewood, which is a small bedroom community just outside the limits of the City of St. Louis. The effort converted an older, rundown bus shelter – located at the southwest corner of Manchester Rd. and Marshall Ave. – into a fun, artistic space that encourages active play, cultivates community, and increases transit use. The transformed, ADA accessible, site boasts vibrant colors and green spaces. New shelters, a glider and bench were installed, and lighting and better sight lines were incorporated to improve visibility, safety and security. There is now more waiting space, better access to the adjacent green spaces, a hopscotch game that adds a play element and an art installation graphically depicting Maplewood landmarks created by a local, award-winning painter and mixed media artist.

The success of this initial project sparked interest in transforming other transit stops and stations in the St. Louis region. To date, Transit Stop Transformation Projects have been completed at six stations: the Emerson Park and 5th & Missouri Transit Centers in East St. Louis, Ill., the Belleville Transit Center in Belleville, Ill., the North Hanley Transit Center in unincorporated St. Louis County, the MetroBus stop in Maplewood, Mo., and the Fairview Heights Transit Center in Ill. Plans for additional projects are currently in the works.



Since inception, these projects have generated an additional \$33 million in investment across 6 stations / stops.

Transit Stop Transformation Projects are Products of Partnerships in Action



Goals:

- Create a deep understanding and commitment to equitable development around transit, the impact and possibility of play and the ability for creative interventions to produce long-term impact in neighborhoods.
- Work with stakeholders to build consensus and policies to move permanent development forward.
- Establish a lasting development (shelter, play area, etc.) at the transit stop to improve safety and security, build ridership on the system, and increase activity around transit.
- Reinforce the element of fun and sense of community that comes with activating space around transit.

Possible Partnerships:

- Local Governments
- Corporations
- Local Businesses
- Non-profits
- Community Groups
- Transit Agencies
- Area Influencers

Deliverables:

- Team of Influencers
- Site Selection
- Community Engagement
- Project Development
- Design and Construction
- Funding Opportunities
- Legislative Support
- Policy Changes

Not every project will be the same size or have the same cost associated with it. To have the greatest impact across a region, projects need to be scaled at different levels based on transit needs, community partnerships and funding options.

Transit Placemaking Process

1

COMMITMENT TO TRANSIT

A key element to the initiation and success of every project in the St. Louis market was making sure partners collectively understood the significance of public transit and the service it provides. While a bus stop or transit station may look less than desirable in its current form, the access the site provides to a bus route or transit line plays a critical role in the community. Once that is understood, anything is possible.

In St. Louis, two organizations that were seemingly unlikely to partner – a small, regional transit advocacy organization and AARP in St. Louis – teamed up and became a catalyst for change. Each demonstrated a commitment to transit accessibility, providing the necessary foundation for success.



Possible partners in a community for these programs:

- Advocates
- AARP
- Transit District or Agency
- Cities/Towns
- Local Governments
- Academic Institutions
- Corporate Partners
- Local Businesses
- Community Groups
- Non-Profits
- Realtors
- Foundations
- Healthcare

2

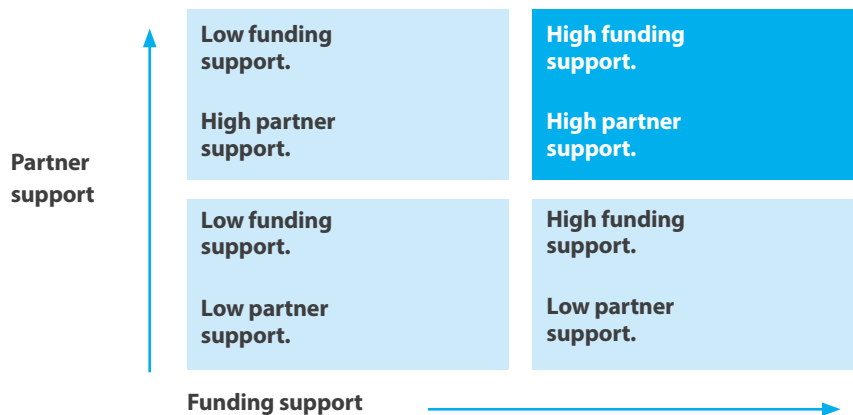


SITE SELECTION

Sites identified for transformation in the St. Louis market were selected based on local support, transit agency buy-in, community engagement, funding/grant support and geographic diversity. Site selection requires significant outreach at the local level to determine if a critical mass of partners is there to make the project feasible. Questions to ask:

- Who owns the land?
- Are they willing to partner on the project?
- Will they maintain the infrastructure changes at the end of the project?
- Who owns the current transit infrastructure (i.e. bus shelter, bench, sign)?
- What are the transit agency requirements, if any, around this stop or station?
- What local partners are in the community who may support this project?
- How many riders are impacted by this site?
- Is there a corporate or local business partner onsite?
- What do the riders think of this stop?
- What do the neighbors think?
- Is there a community plan this transformation can build from?

Of greatest concern will be determining capacity to take on more than one project at a time. One way to prioritize projects is to create a matrix to define funding and partner agency support.



Funding Support

Focusing time and energy on projects that have both high partner support and high funding support maximizes return on investment. Lower priority projects may still move forward, just at a slower pace until such time as funding or partner resources can help accelerate the process.

Site selection parameters for St. Louis area projects included: footprint of project (must be feasible and fundable), diversity of locations (St. Louis transit system spans two states, numerous municipalities), impact on riding population at that stop, current condition of the stop, and possible barriers to transformation in the community. In addition, possible funding sources/partners are a significant factor on the final decision.

Possible Funding Sources For The Projects:

- Grants
- Matching funds
- Sponsorships
- Fundraising

3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While every transformation has a completely different profile, a key element of each transformation is engaging the surrounding community. These projects require an outside-the-box look at who in the community will be impacted and how to offer meaningful ways to contribute. The goal is to build ownership for transit in the community. In addition, community engagement around these projects is ongoing throughout the entire timeline of the project. Initial engagement typically lasts two to three months, with approximately six weeks needed for final concept engagement.

The following are critical voices that must be heard throughout the engagement process:

- Transit Riders
- Transit Operators
- Residents
- Surrounding Businesses
- Elected Officials
- Community Organizations
- Students
- Older Adults
- Academic Institutions
- Emergency Service/Security Personnel
- Local Government Staff

Community Engagement Channels:

- Initial surveys on what community wants/needs and any associated themes
- Community visioning sessions
- Onsite interviews with riders and operators
- Online surveys
- Direct mail
- Door-to-door visits
- Student engagement on art
- Geofencing and Social Media

Post Concept Development

- In person voting on concepts
- Stakeholder meetings
- Community meetings
- Online voting

4



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Based on results of initial community engagement efforts and themes which emerged throughout the process, a design firm was retained to develop the concepts for each station. Themes have ranged from a welcoming front porch to a nod to the musical history of East St. Louis to highlighting a strong arts community. Your group may have that capability in-house, however, it is critical that the initial design is brought back to the community to weigh in before moving to implementation.

Contracts in St. Louis for the design development ranged from \$12,000 - \$25,000.

5



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The final step for each of these projects is design and construction following robust community engagement of riders, residents and stakeholders. The goal is to produce a design with buy-in from the surrounding community from the very beginning. While the rider asks may be similar at many of the stations including shelter, seating, color, community engagement has underscored the different community's cultures and values in each design. Construction for these projects historically is about a two-three month timeframe with a community opening to mark the transformation.



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop

MetroBus Stop Partners:

- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- City of Maplewood
- Citizens National Bank
- Maplewood Residents
- 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.

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

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

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop

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 with the new installation

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, business owners, Chamber of Commerce, Bi State Development, AARP in St. Louis and Citizens for Modern Transit.

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



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

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.

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop

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 (MOU.s)

Agreements between partnering organizations were established outlining areas of accountability related to the transformation.

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



The community in Maplewood asked for a “front porch” feel to their downtown area. Identification sign was included in design.



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Emerson Park Transit Center

Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois
- East St. Louis High School

Project Description

The St. Clair County Transit District (St. Clair County Transit District) teamed up with Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis to activate the space at the Emerson Park Transit Center in East St. Louis, Ill., in 2020. This location provides access to the MetroLink, MetroBus, Madison County Transit Buses and the St. Clair County Transit District Flyer.

A transit stop can serve as a transformational tool to reconnect a community, promote social equality, increase accessibility, position an area for growth, activate and beautify the public space, and enhance neighborhood safety. With the permission of Bi-State Development/Metro Transit as the property owner, St. Clair County Transit District and its partners completed the project in August of 2021. The Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Emerson Park Transit Center converted the concrete area between the bus bays and MetroLink entrance into an interactive, playful, engaging space that boasts a vibrant-colored jazz theme, spaces to gather, greenery, shaded seating, canopies and a mural inspired by design concepts submitted by local high school students.

Prior to the transformation, this site had seen significant investment and development, including newly renovated parking lots, LED lighting installations, development of Neighbors Grocery, and the future \$2.5 million investment in the area for the 911 Dispatch Center for the MetroLink Police Unit.

CMT & AARP IN ST. LOUIS PROJECT PROCESS

1. Public Engagement

The first step in this process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. In winter 2021, AARP in St. Louis and CMT engaged with the consulting team Added Dimension to partner with community members/residents, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders, students, artists, the landowner and other interested parties in visioning events.

Events included onsite surveying of MetroLink and bus riders at the Emerson Park Transit Center, attendance at community events, outreach to local business owners, engagement with residents adjacent to the station, outreach to students at East St. Louis High School, onsite engagement with transit operators, and an online survey to determine the following:

- Themes for the transformation
- Possible design elements
- Ideas for permanent art/installation at the site
- Amenities for riders

Ideas Generated:

- Color
- Interactive
- Vibrant
- History of Music
- Safety
- Shelter
- East St. Louis Culture

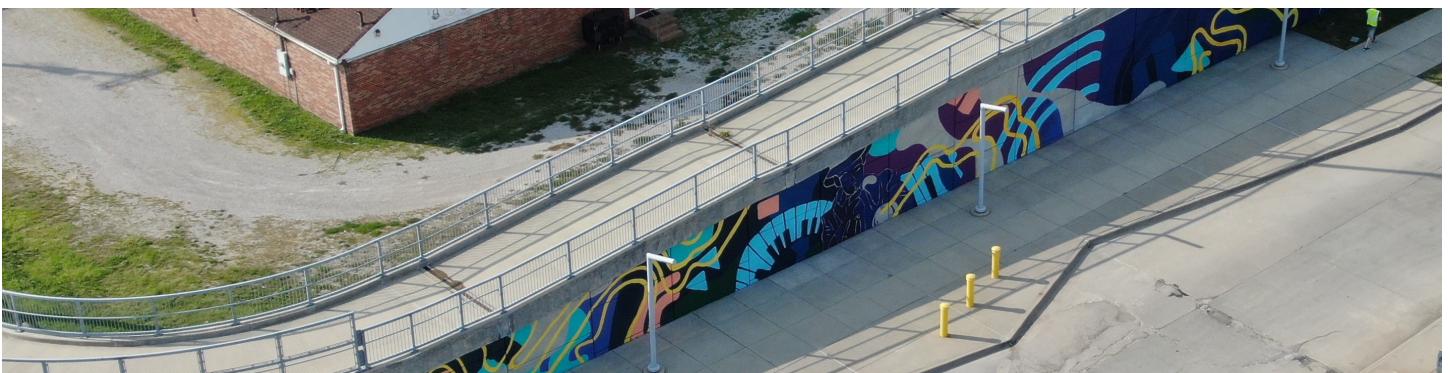
A resounding theme from this project was to create a space with a nod to the history of music/jazz in East St. Louis. Elements included wall mural, sidewalk activation, benches, stools, canopies and piped in jazz music at the site.

This engagement provided the framework for the placemaking construction for the summer 2021 based on renderings from CBB/PGAV.

The process included RFPs for an architect for site work and artist for wall mural.

2. Placemaking Installation Events

This project included a Community Plant Day and a celebration of art and music for the opening in August 2021.



Significant community engagement around the Emerson Park Transit Center resulted in a design that gives a nod to the history of music in East St. Louis. From pavement paint to a wall mural, images reflect the culture and the growth of music as a part of the community in the area.

3. Put into Action

The final step was the promotion of this new amenity to the community as well as the region as a whole. In addition, programming around the station was a top priority.

Coverage Included:

- Earned media
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- Blogs/Websites
- Video

Funding Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- CMT
- AARP in St. Louis
- AARP Community Challenge Grant
- REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Stop Transformation Projects are Replicable.

While many of the project parameters differed from the Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Maplewood MetroBus Stop, this project was also able to leverage partnerships to create a colorful, inviting, interactive, vibrant space that energizes transit riders and creates a sense of place for the community.

2. Public Partners. St. Clair County Transit District was a critical partner on this project. They provided capital assistance and agreed to maintain the site in partnership with Metro Transit. Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of the 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. REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois saw the impact and value of this project for East St. Louis and became a project partner.



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 efforts.

5. Additional Investment. Following this transformation, St. Clair County Transit District, with a \$9.75 million Rebuild Illinois grant, opened the \$15 million Emerson Park Public Safety Center in 2024.

Challenges:

1. Funding. While these developments are not large-scale Transit Oriented Development sites, there are costs associated with developing a light rail stop 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 (MOU.s). Agreements between partnering organizations were established outlining areas of accountability related to the transformation.

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



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Belleville Transit Center

Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- City of Belleville
- Bi-State Development
- REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois

Project Description

Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis teamed up with the St. Clair County Transit District (St. Clair County Transit District) and Metro Transit to activate the space around the

Belleville Transit Center in Belleville, Ill. This joint initiative focused on the area between the MetroBus bays, serving both Metro Transit and the St. Clair County Transit District Flyer riders, and the entrance to MetroLink into a fun, artistic space that encourages active play, cultivates community and increases transit use. With the permission of Bi-State Development/Metro Transit as the property owner, partners initiated the project in late-October 2021 with community engagement.

Recently this site has seen significant investment and development, including newly renovated parking lots, LED lighting installations, investment in the building onsite that serves both riders and community members. St. Clair County Transit District and Metro Transit will be responsible for maintenance of the project moving forward.

CMT & AARP IN ST. LOUIS PROJECT PROCESS

1. Public Engagement

The first step in this process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. In Winter 2022, utilizing a local consulting team, AARP in St. Louis and CMT engaged, with community members/residents, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders, students, artists, transit operators, the transit agency and other interested parties in visioning events.

Events included onsite surveying of transit riders at the station, attendance at community events, significant social media outreach, engagement with operators at the bus garage in Illinois, engagement with residents adjacent to the station, outreach to students at Belleville East and West High Schools, engagement with the mayor and other elected officials in Belleville, community meetings via zoom, and an online survey to determine the following:

- Themes for the transformation
- Possible design elements
- Ideas for permanent art/installation at the site
- Amenities for riders

Ideas Generated:

- Importance of the Arts community
- New logo for City of Belleville
- Vibrant
- Safety
- Shelter
- Color
- Growing and blooming theme
- Creating a space that fits surrounding Belleville neighborhoods

Community engagement resulted in a vision around the theme, "Art Grows in Belleville."

2. Placemaking Installation Events

This project included a Community Plant Day, ribbon cutting celebration with food trucks and a music festival celebrating the opening of the transformation project in June 2022.

3. Put into Action.

The final step was the promotion of this new amenity to the community as well as the region as a whole. In addition, programming around the station was a top priority.



The Belleville transformation included a community plant day to engage residents, riders, and stakeholders to build ownership.

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Belleville Transit Center



Coverage Included:

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

Funding Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- CMT
- AARP in St. Louis
- City of Belleville
- REALTOR® Association of Southwestern Illinois

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Stop Transformation Projects are Replicable. As evidenced by the growing number of transformations in the St. Louis region, placemaking transit projects can be implemented in a variety of different spaces and communities.

2. Public Partners. As is evident by the commitment and support of St. Clair County Transit District on this project, a strong public partner impacts the final outcome of the development. They provided capital assistance and agreed to maintain the site

in partnership with Metro Transit. Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of the site.

3. 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 efforts.

Challenges:

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

2. Finding a Local Artist. It was imperative to find an artist who understood the scope of project and importance of art to the community.

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

4. Additional Investment. Following this transformation, St. Clair County Transit District invested an additional \$300,000 to renovate the public building onsite.

CASE STUDY



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the North Hanley Transit Center

Partners:

- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- St. Louis REALTORS®
- Employment Connections
- Bywater Development Group

Project Description

Citizens for Modern Transit, AARP in St. Louis and Metro Transit – in partnership with St. Louis REALTORS®, Employment Connections and Bywater Development Group – converted the concrete area between the bus bays and MetroLink entrance into an interactive, playful and engaging space, boasting a vibrant-colored “Transit: We All Ride Together” theme. The revitalized space features shade structures, seating, ground murals and window designs. The project reflects the diverse group of riders who utilize this significant MetroLink and MetroBus connection point.

CMT & AARP IN ST. LOUIS PROJECT PROCESS

1. Public Engagement

The first step in this process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. Community engagement efforts have been ongoing since 2016 around this transit stop, including Metro Market pop-up events, walk audits, community engagement events at the station, and Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Programs. In the winter and spring of 2022, AARP in St. Louis and CMT engaged, through a partnership with the consulting team, with community members/residents, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders, students, transit operators, the transit agency, and other interested parties through a series of virtual design workshops, surveys, walk audits, and community

events to determine:

- Themes for the transformation
- Possible design elements
- Ideas for permanent art/installation at the site
- Amenities for riders

Ideas Generated:

- Seating
- Shading
- Public art
- Safety enhancements
- Lighting
- Color



Through community engagement, it became apparent that riders from all walks of life utilized this station which was reflected in the theme.

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the North Hanley Transit Center

Community engagement resulted in a vision focused on the theme of “We All Ride Together,” highlighting the riders who utilize the transit system on a regular basis, and featuring shade structures, enhanced seating, interactivity, and art installations.

2. Placemaking Installation Events

This project included a Community Clean Up Day and a grand opening celebration in October 2022.

3. Put into Action

The final step was the promotion of this new amenity to the community as well as the region as a whole. In addition, programming around the station was a top priority.

Coverage Included:

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

Funding Partners:

- CMT
- AARP in St. Louis
- APTA Local Coalition Grant
- AARP Community Challenge Grant
- St. Louis REALTORS®
- Bywater Development/Employment Connections
- Metro Transit

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Stop Transformation Projects are Replicable.

The Transit Stop Transformation Project at the North Hanley Transit Center was the fourth transformation project completed in the St. Louis area, continuing to showcase the feasibility of implementing projects at locations, and within communities, with a variety of different characteristics.



2. Public Partners. Metro Transit was a key partner on this project, agreeing to maintain the site. Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of the site.

3. Corporate Partners. These projects provide an opportunity for corporations to potentially take ownership of transit stops outside their doors or in communities where they are located. St. Louis REALTORS® saw the impact and value of this project for the community and reached out to CMT and AARP in St. Louis to become a project partner.

4. Private Partners. AARP continues to be a key, founding partner. The organization represents thousands of constituents across the region and are a respected organization, providing additional credibility to these placemaking efforts.

Challenges:

1. Funding. While these developments are not large-scale Transit Oriented Development sites, the costs associated with developing transit stops into a more permanent, substantial piece of the fabric of the community necessitate difficult design choices to remain within budget, while fulfilling the vision of the transformation.

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the North Hanley Transit Center



The transformation included art, seating, canopies and images of actual riders.

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

3. Project Goals. Project goals need to be clearly defined and roles delineated in order to achieve a successful transformation project. Collaboration and frequent communication throughout the process is key. Consultants and stakeholders need to have a shared vision.

4. Coordination with Key Players. Coordinating key players and identifying appropriate contacts within organizations, such as the operations department within transit agencies, is vital to ensuring successful implementation and project sustainability.



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center

Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- Employment Connection
- Bywater Development Group

Project Description

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT), AARP in St. Louis, St. Clair County Transit District and Metro Transit – in partnership with Bywater Development Group and Employment Connection – unveiled the “Transit Stop Transformation Project” at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center, located at 150 N. 6th Street in

East St. Louis, Ill on July 25, 2023. With the permission of Bi-State Development/Metro Transit as the property owner, partners initiated the project in Fall 2022 with community engagement.

This project converted the large grey, concrete areas between the bus bays and MetroLink entrance into an interactive and engaging urban oasis, featuring hundreds of plants and bushes and a “City of Champions” theme. A large central shade structure, seating, a gathering space and art – with a nod to influential East St. Louisans throughout history – were also incorporated into the revitalized space.

The “Transit Stop Transformation” Project at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center was led by Citizens for Modern Transit, AARP in St. Louis, St. Clair County Transit District and Metro Transit. St. Louis-based architectural firm Trivers completed the planning and design, while Arbolope Studio did the landscape plan, and Added Dimension, LLC, oversaw community engagement.

Transit Stop Transformation Project at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center

Before



The artwork was created by Design Lab 443. Other contractors and vendors involved in the project included Lake Contracting, Inc., Warning Lites of Southern Illinois, LLC, Anova Furnishings, Muralist Michael Killeen, United Ink, Weiss Monument Works and Dintlemann's Nursery.

There was significant community engagement which empowered residents, riders and stakeholders to influence the design of their station.

This project was funded by the St. Clair County Transit District, Citizens for Modern Transit's Placemaking Pilot Funds Program, AARP in St. Louis, Bi-State Development, Bywater Development Group and Employment Connection.



Community engagement for the transformation at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center ran through March 2023.



Dozens of volunteers rolled up their sleeves and planted nearly 450 flowers and bushes to create an urban oasis at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center in East St. Louis.

Community Engagement

The first step in this process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. In winter 2022, AARP in St. Louis and CMT, through a partnership with the consulting team, engaged with community members/residents, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders, students, transit operators, transit agency and other interested parties in visioning events.

Events and outreach included onsite surveying of transit riders at the station, Engagement Street Team, attendance at community events, pop-up events, social media outreach, engagement with operators at the bus garage in Illinois, engagement with elected officials, direct mail to households within one mile of the station, local newspaper ads, transit ads, and a web survey to determine the following:

- Possible design elements
- Theme
- Critical components
- Ideas for permanent art/installation at the site
- Amenities for riders
- Ridership from surrounding residents
- Transit usage at station

Ideas/themes generated:

- List of homegrown Champions from East St. Louis
- Theme – City of Champions
- Shade as a top priority
- Necessity for seating and updated bus shelters
- Green space including trees and other vegetation to create oasis from the sea of concrete
- Words that emerged through community engagement to describe East St. Louis from residents and riders:
 - Champions
 - Home
 - Family
 - Nice
 - Resilient
 - Happy
 - Fun
 - Improvement
 - Memory
 - Hopeful

Community engagement resulted in a vision around the theme, “East St. Louis: City of Champions.” To build further ownership, a Community Plant Day was held at the station on Juneteenth (June 19) which brought the community together to celebrate the transformation and help bring it to life.

Final transformation opened in July 2023.

Coverage included:

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

Funding Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- CMT
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- Employment Connection/Bywater Development Group

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Transformation Projects are replicable. The Transit Stop Transformation Project at the 5th & Missouri Transit Center was the fifth transformation project completed in the St. Louis area, continuing to showcase how transit placemaking projects born of local partnerships benefit transit riders and create valuable assets for local communities.

2. Public Partners. St. Clair County Transit District was a critical partner on this project. They provided capital assistance as well as agreed to maintain the site in partnership with Metro Transit. Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of site.

3. Catalyst for further investment. The Transit Transformation project catalyzed the transit agency to replace all 7 bus shelters at the station in partnership with St. Clair County Transit District at a value of \$38,500.

4. Private Partners. AARP continues to be a key partner moving forward. AARP represents thousands of constituents across the region. In addition, they are a respected organization which provides credibility to these placemaking efforts.

Challenges:

1. Funding. This was the largest transformation to date. The initial concept provided by the designer reflected a capital budget three times the amount of available funds. While these projects are not large-scale Transit Oriented Development sites, there are costs associated with developing a light rail stop into a more permanent, substantial piece of the fabric of the community. Partners were required to scale down this project and tweak design provided to ensure viability of final product.

2. Finding a local artist. It was necessary to find an artist who understood the scope of the project and the importance of art to this community.

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

4. Staff Time. The projects are time consuming with many moving parts. It requires a certain amount of dedicated staff time to make these projects possible.



Transit Stop Transformation Project at the Fairview Heights Transit Center

Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- City of Fairview Heights

Project Description

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT), AARP in St. Louis, St. Clair County Transit District and Metro Transit – teamed up for the 6th “Transit Stop Transformation Project” at the Fairview Heights Transit Center, located at 9200 Saint Clair Ave, in Fairview Heights Ill. With the permission of Bi-State Development/Metro Transit as the property owner, partners initiated the project in the Fall of 2023 with community engagement. Construction commenced in summer 2024 and was completed in August 2024.

At the Fairview Heights Transit Center, large grey, concrete areas

Before



between the bus bays and MetroLink entrance and nearby grass space was converted into an interactive, playful and engaging corridor, featuring a “Love Where You Live” theme. Project highlights include a large, centralized shade structure, trees and 5-foot planters, the integration of bright colors and a series of banners. Another shade structure is adjacent to the rail line and includes vibrant sidewalk paint and a community seating area.

1. Public Engagement

The first step in the process was the opportunity to garner public engagement around the idea of placemaking around transit. Community engagement efforts included community pop-up events at the station, direct mail to households within one mile of station; stakeholder meetings; operator engagement; social media and an online survey. Items generated from engagement:

- Theme: Love Where You Live
- Possible Design Elements
- Amenities for riders
 - Color schemes
 - Safety enhancements
 - Plantings/vegetation options

2. Placemaking Installation Events

This project included a community plant day on August 12, 2024 with a grand opening celebration on August 21, 2024.

3. Put into Action

The final step for this project was the promotion of the new amenity to the community and region as a whole.

Coverage included:

- Earned media including television and print
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, X
- Blogs/websites
- Video
- Local community presentations

Funding Partners:

- St. Clair County Transit District
- AARP in St. Louis
- Citizens for Modern Transit’s Placemaking Pilot Funds Program,
- City of Fairview Heights



Partners and stakeholders cut the ribbon on the 6th transit transformation on August 21, 2024.

PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities:

1. Transit Transformation Project are replicable. The Fairview Heights Transit Center “Transit Stop Transformation Project” is the sixth of its kind in the St. Louis region. Each project showcases a deep understanding of and commitment to equitable development around transit, the possibility of play, the ability for creative interventions to produce a long-term impact for residents of all ages and the need for collaboration to succeed.

2. Public Partners. St. Clair County Transit District was critical partner on this project. They provided capital assistance as well as agreed to maintain site in partnership with Metro Transit.

Maintenance can be a hurdle unless the local government or a local partner agrees to take on ongoing maintenance of the site.

3. Catalyst for further investment. The transformation project served as a catalyst for the transit agency to replace the ADA ramp and pedestrian crosswalk as a part of this project in partnership with St. Clair County Transit District.

4. Private Partners. AARP in St. Louis as key partner moving forward. AARP represents thousands of constituents in areas across the region. In addition, they are a respected organization which provides credibility to efforts.

“ *Creating spaces that provide comfortability and the opportunity to connect with others, all while delivering a sense of pride for people of all ages locally and regionally, continues to be the foundation by which this project and all the other transformations are built. AARP is truly honored to partner with organizations like Citizens for Modern Transit to bring changes we are confident will enhance the transit experience for all.”*

– **Sheila Holm**, community outreach director for AARP in St. Louis.

Challenges:

- 1. Funding.** While these developments are not large-scale Transit Oriented Development sites, there are costs associated with developing a light rail stop into a more permanent, substantial piece of the fabric of the community. Partners worked to raise outside funding including a commitment from the City of Fairview Heights.
- 2. Finding a local artist.** It was necessary to find an artist who understood scope of project and importance of art to this community.
- 3. Project Oversight.** There are many moving pieces including consultants which require project oversight from one or several organizations spearheading the project.
- 4. Supply Chain.** This project was pushed back due to supply chain issues.



The Fairview Heights transformation included a new community seating area between light rail entrance and bus bays.



City of St. Louis – Build A Better Bus Stop – 13th & Gravois

Partners:

- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- Bi-State Development
- St. Louis REALTORS®
- City of St. Louis

Project Description:

Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis announced that the MetroBus stop located at 13th St. and Gravois Ave. near Soulard in the City of St. Louis was selected as the site for the next “Transit Stop Transformation Project” in January 2024.

The MetroBus stop at 13th St. and Gravois Ave. was selected out of 44 nominations received through the “Build a Better Bus Campaign” launched in early October 2023, inviting people from around the region to nominate a bus stop within the St. Louis City limits for revitalization. A selection committee featuring representatives from Citizens for Modern Transit, Commerce Bank, AARP in St. Louis, the City of St. Louis, and St. Louis REALTORS® chose the MetroBus stop based on various metrics that included assessment of the space and the availability of community partners that could help bring the transformation to life.

The “Transit Stop Transformation” Project at 13th St. and Gravois Ave. aims to transform the dilapidated corner stop into a fresh, vibrant space with seating, a bus shelter, paved walkways,

City of St. Louis – Build A Better Bus Stop – 13th & Gravois



The design concept for the City of St. Louis bus stop includes seating, shade, walking and community space.

landscaping and more. The design concept was released in the spring 2024 with the final concept revealed in the summer 2024 following multiple rounds of community engagement.

Construction is set for late fall 2024 with an opening in early 2025.

Funding Partners:

- Citizens for Modern Transit
- AARP in St. Louis
- AARP Community Challenge Grant
- Bi-State Development
- St. Louis REALTORS®





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