



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.