

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## FIRST BUS BENCH INSTALLATIONS IN EAST ST. LOUIS AND CAHOKIA HEIGHTS UNVEILED DURING PROGRESSIVE RIBBON CUTTING

*Goal is to Help Build Better Bus Stops Through the Addition of a Basic Amenity – a Bench*

**EAST ST. LOUIS, IL (Nov. 5, 2025)** ... There are hundreds of bus stops throughout the region without any type of amenities for riders to utilize while waiting. In response, Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) and AARP in St. Louis launched “The Story of a Bench” Placemaking Program earlier this year to help build better bus stops by adding a simple yet impactful amenity – a bench. The first two bus bench installations in East St. Louis and Cahokia Heights were unveiled in conjunction with St. Clair County Transit District during a Progressive Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Nov. 4.

Project partners made formal remarks before the official ribbon cuttings took place at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. The first was held in East St. Louis at MetroBus Stop #12961, located at 505 S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street near the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center, followed by one in Cahokia Heights at MetroBus Stop #12985, located at 1110 Camp Jackson Road near McDonald’s.

These MetroBus Stops now boast a red, all-weather, 6-foot-long bench featuring the slogan “Enjoy the Ride.” Each bench has a customized plaque listing community sponsors and a QR code connecting riders to a survey where they can share how the newly installed seating has impacted their transit experience. Both bus bench installations were funded by Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis and installed by St. Clair County Transit District.

“We want to create space for riders to be able to sit back, relax and unwind while waiting on the bus,” commented Kimberly Cella, CEO of Citizens for Modern Transit. “The concept is simple, and the cost is minimal, but we believe the impact will be profound.”

AARP in St. Louis Community Outreach Director Amber Nicolson added, “This is just the beginning of the story. We are going to engage the surrounding community, riders and stakeholders for the next six months to chronicle its impact. It’s all part of our mission to ensure livable communities for all ages. Projects like this are critical to making sure transit is more a part of the fabric of the community.”

Partners had a goal of completing five bus bench installations in the program’s inaugural year, while chronicling whether the investment in the benches leads to additional enhancements at the stops, including amenities like a trash receptacle, shelter, landscaping, etc. The program’s first two benches were installed in Swansea, Ill., in June. Three additional installations in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County were completed in October, helping to achieve the original goal. The East St. Louis and Cahokia Heights installations bring the total to seven, and additional projects are set to be completed before the end of the year. The Swansea installations have also delivered a \$30,000 return on investment, with the Village of Swansea working to install bus shelters at both sites.

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## **PARTNERS UNVEIL BUS BENCH INSTALLATIONS FIRST AND FINAL ADD**

“Having a comfortable place to sit can make all the difference in someone’s day,” said Ron Forrest, Chief Operating Officer of Metro Transit. “We are grateful to have partners like Citizens for Modern Transit and St. Louis AARP for their hard work and investments that make a real difference for our riders and our communities.”

“The Story of Bench” Placemaking Program is building off the success of seven, larger scale Transit Stop Transformation Projects that have turned these MetroBus Stops and Transit Centers into colorful, engaging spaces – with seating, lighting, greenery and artwork – to help cultivate community and enhance rider experiences. Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis, with the help of St. Clair County Transit District and Metro Transit, have invested more than \$745,000 to date to transform the Maplewood MetroBus Stop, the MetroBus Stop at 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Gravois Avenue in Soulard, and the Transit Centers serving Emerson Park in Belleville, North Hanley, 5<sup>th</sup> & Missouri and Fairview Heights. These transformations have yielded \$34 million in additional investment around these sites.

MetroBus Stop #13101, located in the retail corridor of East St. Louis in front of Walgreens at 2510 State Street, is the next site selected for a Transit Stop Transformation. The design phase was finalized in October. Construction will soon get underway with the transformed site set to open in Spring 2026.

“The St. Clair County Transit District is honored to have been able to play such an integral role in the installation of four bus benches in St. Clair County, as well as the completion of three Transit Stop Transformation projects on this side of the river,” commented Lonnie Mosley, St. Clair County Transit District Board of Trustees Vice-Chair. “These efforts make a very real impact. We look forward to installing additional benches and soon unveiling all that we have in store for the transformation in East St. Louis.”

CMT and AARP in St. Louis are actively seeking additional partners – including businesses, organizations, municipalities, community groups and individuals – willing to support the installation of “The Story of a Bench” program at bus stops community wide. An investment of between \$4,000 to 5,000 is needed per bus stop to cover the cost of each bench installation. Sponsor recognition is included on a commemorative plaque at each location. To learn more about partnership opportunities, visit [www.cmt-stl.org](http://www.cmt-stl.org) or call 314.231.7272.

### ***Citizens for Modern Transit***

*Citizens for Modern Transit is the St. Louis region’s transit advocacy organization. Established in 1985 to help bring light rail to St. Louis, CMT’s mission is focused on championing, challenging, encouraging and advocating for public transit in an effort to drive economic growth and improve quality of life. To help support this mission, the organization works to develop ridership programming, transform spaces around transit stops, help secure local and federal transit funding, serve as a strong and effective voice on transit-related issues and opportunities, and ensure safe, convenient, user-friendly and affordable access to the area’s integrated public transportation system. To learn more, visit [www.CMT-STL.org](http://www.CMT-STL.org) or follow the organization on Facebook, X, Instagram or LinkedIn.*

### ***AARP in St. Louis***

*AARP in St. Louis is the local connection for AARP - the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. Locally this is done through virtual & in-person engagement opportunities, legislative efforts on the local, state and federal level, educational resources, and volunteer opportunities. Advocating for and supporting efforts that contribute to creating a lifelong community is at the core of what we do in the St. Louis region. Learn more at [www.aarp.org/stlouis](http://www.aarp.org/stlouis).*

### **About St. Clair County Transit District**

The St. Clair County Transit District (SCCTD) was founded in 1981 and contracts with Bi-State Development to provide public transportation services in St. Clair County, Ill., by way of 11 MetroLink stations and 14 MetroBus routes and with Southwestern Illinois College to offer paratransit services as well as on-demand, micro transit via the SCCTD Flyer in seven communities. SCCTD has also established and maintains the ever-evolving MetroBikeLink System of interconnecting trails and bike paths that seamlessly connect to six Metro Transit Centers – linking individuals to jobs, education, healthcare, entertainment, trails and other destinations throughout the bi-state region. To learn more, visit [www.SCCTD.org](http://www.SCCTD.org) or follow the District on Facebook, X, Instagram or LinkedIn.

**About Metro Transit**

*Metro Transit operates the St. Louis region's public transportation system, which includes 24 battery electric buses and 237 clean-burning diesel buses that serve 59 MetroBus routes in eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois. Metro also operates MetroLink light rail vehicles on 46 miles of track serving 38 stations in the two-state area, and operates Metro Call-A-Ride, a paratransit fleet of 123 vans. Metro Transit is a Bi-State Development enterprise. To learn more, visit [www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org) or follow Metro Transit on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.*

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