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FIRST BUS BENCH INSTALLATIONS IN ST. LOUIS CITY AND COUNTY UNVEILED DURING PROGRESSIVE RIBBON CUTTING

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

ST. LOUIS (Oct. 10, 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 and AARP in St. Louis launched “The Story of a Bench” Placemaking Program early this year to help build better bus stops through the addition of a basic amenity – a bench. The first two bus bench installations in the City of St. Louis and the first one in St. Louis County were unveiled in conjunction with Metro Transit during a Progressive Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Oct. 9.

Project partners made formal remarks before the official ribbon cuttings took place at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. in the City of St. Louis at MetroBus Stop #926, located at 4402 Natural Bridge Rd, and MetroBus Stop #4134, located at 1100 S. Grand Ave., respectively. These were followed by another ribbon cutting at 1 p.m. in St. Louis County at MetroBus Stop #5609, located at the southwest corner of South Lindbergh Blvd. and Baptist Church Rd.

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. All three bus bench installations were funded by Citizens for Modern Transit and AARP in St. Louis and installed by Metro Transit.

“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. The installations in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County helped achieve the original goal, yet expectations will be surpassed as additional bus bench projects are in the works and set to be completed before the end of the year. Swansea installations have also generated 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

“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 13th Street and Gravois Avenue in Soulard, and the Transit Centers serving Emerson Park in Belleville, North Hanley, 5th & Missouri and Fairview Heights. These transformations have yielded \$34 million in additional investment around these sites.

“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.”

CMT and AARP in St. Louis are seeking additional partners – including businesses, organizations, municipalities, community groups and individuals – willing to support the installation of “The Story of a Bench” program benches 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 names are included on a plaque. To learn more about partnership opportunities, visit 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 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.

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 or follow Metro Transit on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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