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CITIZENS FOR MODERN TRANSIT EXPLORES EFFECTIVENESS OF BUS RAPID TRANSIT DURING FORUM *System Type Reportedly Delivers Quicker Economic Results with Lower Costs and Increased Flexibility – Yet Poses Challenges*

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (Dec. 9, 2025) ... As the region embarks on an alternatives analysis study to determine the feasibility of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in lieu of the St. Louis MetroLink Green Line and potentially puts funding for the project back on the ballot, Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) hosted a virtual “Talking Transit” event tied to the topic. The forum on Dec. 9 explored the design, development, funding, implementation and challenges of BRT systems in Minneapolis and Kansas City and how these projects are transforming transit networks, improving access and driving economic growth. Updates on the scope, funding and next steps of the BRT project in the City of St. Louis were also discussed. To view the “Talking Transit” event in its entirety, visit www.CMT-STL.org.

More than 80 CMT members, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders and others in attendance heard from leaders of BRT projects in Minneapolis and Kansas City, as well as the lead on the BRT study in the City of St. Louis and the head of the St. Louis metropolitan planning organization who discussed designing and funding this transit infrastructure project. Panelists included **Brian Funk**, COO and Deputy General Manager, Metro Transit, Minneapolis-St. Paul; **Bobby Hosack**, Associate Vice President, Project Manager, HNTB; **Tyler Means**, Chief Mobility & Strategy Officer, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), and **Jim Wild**, Executive Director, East-West Gateway Council of Governments. Citizens for Modern Transit’s CEO Kimberly Cella served as moderator.

Presentations on BRT in Minneapolis and Kansas City echoed the operational success of these types of systems, which offer fewer stops, quicker boarding and expedited service. BRT systems are also adaptable, present fewer risks, can be tailored to suit community needs with enhanced amenities and can be a catalyst for additional investment with the permanency of the line. They also offer cost efficiencies, as construction costs range from \$20 million to \$60 million per mile for BRT, whereas light rail projects typically require \$250 million to \$600 million per mile. BRT projects do face certain challenges, such as consistently maintaining signal priority, ensuring adequate staffing and upkeep of high-quality stations, and securing as well as servicing the necessary fleet of buses for new routes. None the less, BRT projects are gaining momentum nationwide. In 2008, just seven BRT projects were in the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Capital Investment Grant pipeline; today, they account for nearly 70% of projects.

On the local front, progress is being made to build on the work invested in the St. Louis MetroLink Green Line through an alternatives analysis now underway that aims to enable the City of St. Louis to do more with less.

“We are looking beyond the initial 5.2-mile MetroLink corridor,” commented Hosack of HNTB, which is leading the local BRT study. “It is serving as our starting point. We are building on extensive work already completed and making changes. This includes potentially extending it further to the north and to the south and adding a connection into downtown. It will provide enhanced connections that will do more. We are potentially looking at a 10-mile line. We are jumping off, not going back to the drawing board.”

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BRT SYSTEMS FIRST AND FINAL ADD

This project seeks to meet the goals and the needs of the community. The study will look at extending the alignment, adding additional stations and amenities, and determining service characteristics and how it will tie into the existing MetroLink system and further the strong east/west connection into the north and south.

Over the coming months, the St. Louis community will see very robust public engagement as project leaders want the preferred alternative – expected in Spring 2026 – to be a community-driven plan. From there, the project will advance into the design phase and the FTA’s funding pipeline. It will move quickly.

Wild of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments cautioned that securing federal funding may be challenging as the nation enters a new phase of Federal Funding Law reauthorization. The competition for federal transit project funding is expected to remain intense – something regional leaders will need to keep in mind as they proceed with the process.

In closing, the CEO of Citizens for Modern Transit reinforced that this type of system can help transform how people move, improve access to jobs and services and drive economic growth. “The Northside-Southside corridor has been on CMT’s radar since the original line of MetroLink was opened,” stated Cella. “This is a corridor ripe for transit investment that will help move the needle on further investment. If light rail is not a possibility in this corridor, then we definitely would like to see if BRT is an option, while at the same time ensuring the 2017 economic tax can be used for matching funds.”

To view the “Talking Transit” event in its entirety, visit www.CMT-STL.org. To stay up to date on the alternatives analysis study and next steps for a potential BRT system in St. Louis visit: <https://metrolinkgreenline.com/get-involved/>

CMT hosts “Talking Transit” events quarterly to keep members, elected officials, stakeholders, transit riders and others in the loop on issues and efforts influencing the local transit system. These educational gatherings feature guest speakers and panel discussions that address a wide range of topics, including transit-oriented development, safety and security, best practices, service changes and more. To learn more about these events and how CMT is working to further transit access in the St. Louis region, visit www.cmt-stl.org.

About Citizens for Modern Transit

Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) 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.

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