



For Immediate Release

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“TALKING TRANSIT” FORUM SET FOR APRIL 8

ST. LOUIS (March 18, 2026) ... Public transit is a critical component of a region’s transportation system—whether you ride it or not. Yet many communities struggle to fully recognize and articulate the value transit brings to the economy, personal mobility and quality of life. This challenge becomes especially important when ongoing public understanding and support are needed, including at the ballot box.

As the St. Louis region prepares to open the newest MetroLink extension to MidAmerica St. Louis Airport in Mascoutah, Ill., and considers Bus Rapid Transit in the City of St. Louis’ Northside-Southside corridor, Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) is convening transit leaders from various cities for a virtual “Talking Transit” forum to address this issue. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, April 8 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. It is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required and can be completed at www.cmt-stl.org.

Those in attendance will gain a behind-the-scenes look at major transit initiatives in Austin, Minneapolis and Kansas City, along with the associated messaging strategies that successfully resonated with the public. These case studies will underscore how effective communication can transform transit projects into community-supported efforts.

Tom Underwood, senior transit project manager at HDR, will explain how they successfully introduced a new light rail system in Austin, Texas. **Ronald Forrest**, executive vice president and COO of Metro Transit, who previously served as **Deputy Chief Operating Officer** at Metro Transit in Minneapolis, Minn., will talk about the winning campaign to introduce Bus Rapid Transit. **Tom Gerend**, executive director of Kansas City Streetcar Authority, will highlight efforts tied to the ongoing success to the KC Streetcar. The discussion will be moderated by **Kimberly Cella**, CEO of CMT.

“Public transit delivers value far beyond the riders who use it regularly—it strengthens our economy, expands access and improves quality of life for entire communities,” said Kim Cella, CEO of Citizens for Modern Transit. “As regions invest in major projects and ask voters for continued support, it’s critical that we communicate transit’s benefits clearly, consistently and in ways that resonate with the public.”

CMT hosts quarterly “Talking Transit” events 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 addressing 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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