

# Technical Assistance Panel Grand MetroLink Station St. Louis, Missouri



Panel Recommendations to  
Citizens for Modern Transit  
and Metro, November 2012

## ULI St. Louis

The mission of ULI St. Louis is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

The Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program provides expert, multi-disciplinary advice to public agencies and non-profit organizations facing complex land use and

real estate issues in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI St. Louis conducts TAP programs to offer objective and responsible advice on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide sponsoring organizations a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. ULI St. Louis members from across the region participate as panelists, volunteering their time and expertise to the process.

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*Grand MetroLink Station*

## Introduction

At the invitation of Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT), in partnership with Metro (the Bi-State Development Agency), ULI St. Louis was asked to form a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to address possible development around the Grand MetroLink (light rail) Station located at Grand Avenue, below the Grand Avenue bridge.

The primary stakeholders include representatives from the City of St. Louis, Citizens for Modern Transit, Metro, Saint Louis University, and surrounding businesses. As part of the TAP process, the various stakeholders were interviewed, and one message was clear: this is a site with tremendous transportation access. At the same time, it was

also quite clear that the site posed significant challenges to development, including its positioning below and literally underneath a major thoroughfare and its location within an area currently marked by heavy industrial uses.

The area is anchored by Saint Louis University, Grand Center, and Harris Stowe State University to the north; Saint Louis University Medical Center to the south; the eastern edge of CORTEX (Center of Research, Technology and Entrepreneurial Exchange) to the west; and Sigma Aldrich and Metro to the east. Grand Station is located in an area that is primed for creative redevelopment.

## Panel's Charge

Citizens for Modern Transit, the Sponsor, in partnership with Metro, turned to the Panel for answers to the following questions:

### *Short Term*

1. What is the best way to integrate, and design for, the land uses at and around the station given the grade separation along Grand?
2. What potential incentives, i.e. physical infrastructure and financial incentives, could stakeholders provide to increase the desirability for this location?
3. In addition, how can any project better integrate the successful Grand bus line with record ridership into the development?

### *Long Term*

4. Considering the parcels owned or controlled by Metro and the City of St. Louis around Grand Station, what potential uses will attract development, talent, and investment capital to the site while supporting the needs/goals of Saint Louis University and Harris Stowe State University as two of the primary stakeholders in the area?

## TAP Process

The TAP Panel, consisting of seven professionals selected from the ULI membership, represented the following skills and perspectives: architecture and design, urban planning, finance, real estate development, municipal and real estate law, and institutional real estate development.

Prior to the TAP workday, Panelists assembled at the station for a walking tour of the MetroLink platform, the bus station on Grand, and the immediate surrounding neighborhood.

With firsthand experience of the station, the TAP Panelists reassembled on the TAP workday and conducted

meetings with groups of stakeholders, including: the sponsoring organization – Citizens for Modern Transit – in partnership with Metro; community leaders, City planning officials, and representatives from institutions in the immediate area, including Saint Louis University, Grand Center, and Sigma-Aldrich; and real estate, economic development, and related professional advisors.

Following the stakeholder meetings, the Panel spent the remainder of the day processing the information and insights gathered from the meetings and reviewing the information and maps provided by the Sponsor. During this work session, drawing on the Panel members' professional expertise, the group further explored the Sponsor's charge and formulated recommendations designed to help attract and facilitate desirable development.

The new Grand Avenue bridge and MetroLink Station represent a vast improvement to the area. That said, the Panel recognized that a "game changer" was necessary to further revitalize this area. They focused on a long-term vision for the area, followed by short-term measures that could be taken to enhance the area and position it for redevelopment with the long-term vision in mind.



## Grand Station Study Area



*Aerial of the station area*

Following a recent complete reconstruction of the Grand Avenue bridge, Grand bus stop and Grand MetroLink Station, the Sponsor turned its focus to enhancing the current riders' experience, driving additional ridership at the station, and, in the long term, encouraging Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around the station. TOD can ultimately serve as a catalyst for investment around the station, changing the pattern of development through the region.

Studies of other stations along the MetroLink rail line are currently underway. However, given the numerous complexities inherent in this station, the Sponsor turned to ULI for a thoughtful evaluation of the Grand Station area. During this TAP process, the Panelists quickly recognized that several factors combine to create a compelling opportunity for an even deeper study and evaluation of how this area can be transformed and positioned for TOD. Those factors include the centrality of the station in the City of St. Louis (the City), its location along the busy Grand Avenue bus line, and its proximity to Saint Louis University, Grand Center, South Grand entertainment district, as well as several other large employment centers in Midtown.



*View of the station platform under Grand Avenue*

## Station Challenges

The station presents a number of challenges, the first of which is its location in a “valley” and under the wide Grand Avenue bridge. The immediate surrounding area, at grade with the station and below Grand Avenue, is characterized by a number of heavy industrial uses. Airgas, Corrigan, and Ameren UE each have a significant presence in the area. Gas canisters, six-foot chain-link fencing, ubiquitous semi-trucks and the electrical substation add to the industrial feel of the surroundings.

Pedestrian access to the station is handled via elevators or stairs from Grand Avenue. Pedestrian access for employees of businesses immediately surrounding the station has not been seriously considered as evidenced by the lack of street lights and the incomplete sidewalks or, in other places, absence thereof.

Vehicular access to the station is also a challenge. Access from the west is provided via an exit from I-64/40 via Bernard Street to Theresa and then to Scott Avenue and the station; and access from the north, east, or south is available via one entry point off Compton Avenue, via Spruce. It is a difficult route with little way-finding signage. Parking at the station appears adequate for current ridership, with 70 spots available adjacent to the station that appear to be full mid-day.

Conversely, the Panel questioned whether increased/better vehicular access to the station might provide additional ridership and cause a need for additional parking. Most transit riders using the station to-date are using it as a transfer point between the Grand bus line (which enjoys the highest ridership throughout the system) and the light rail line.

In addition to the industrial users in the immediate area, there are also a significant number of vacant lots and buildings, with many of the buildings in various stages of disrepair.

Safety did not appear to be a problem at the station, due to attentive Metro staff and on-site security. However, the lack of pedestrian traffic, the industrial users, the number of derelict properties, and the location of the station under a bridge could lead to a perception of an unsafe environment.



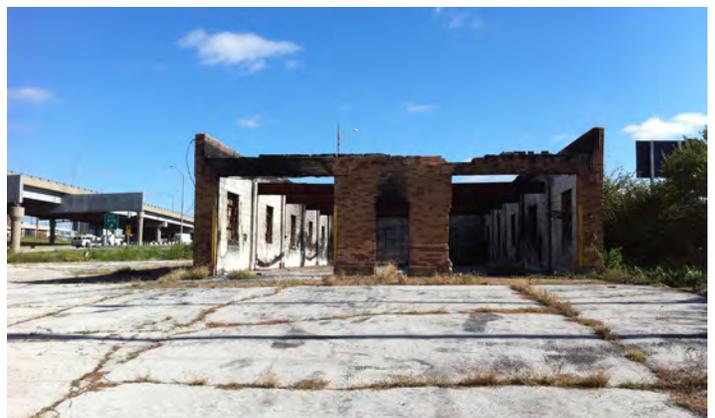
*Stair access from station to Grand with Airgas adjacent*



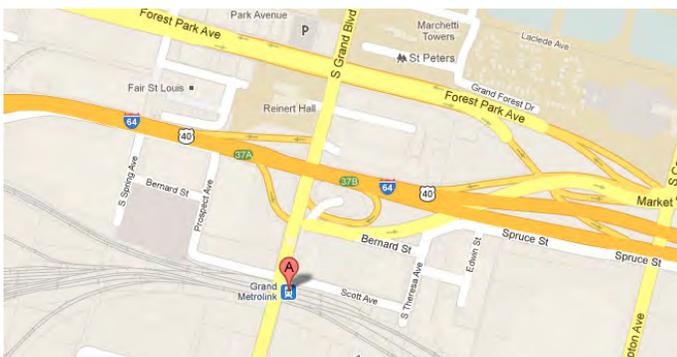
*Airgas property directly north of the station parking lot*



*Active rail line adjacent to MetroLink light rail line*



*Abandoned buildings in immediate station area*



*Map showing vehicular access to station*



*Grand Avenue bus station*



*Planters and knee walls along Grand Avenue bridge*



*Stairwell connecting MetroLink station to bus platform on bridge above*

## Station Highlights

The location of the station relative to large employment centers, downtown St. Louis, and the CORTEX Redevelopment Area makes this location attractive from a macro development point of view. Additionally, as mentioned previously, the reconstruction of the Grand Avenue bridge triggered the redevelopment of the bus stop and MetroLink station at Grand Station, resulting in what could be considered the most attractive station on the line.

A colorful and inviting plaza now sits directly below the Grand bridge, north of the station, flanking the north side of Scott Avenue. The plaza provides visual interest, as well as seating for transit riders.

New elevators and wide, open stairways move passengers easily from Grand Avenue and the bus stop above to the station platform below. The open nature of the stairway provides better sight lines than previously available at the station and the outward-facing metal skin is both transparent and attractive.

Once riders disembark the train and travel up to Grand Avenue, they are welcomed by attractive canopies covering the bus boarding area, planters along the sidewalks, and solid knee walls separating them from the busy Grand Avenue traffic.

Although it is not a highlight of the station area, it is worth noting again that the presence of Airgas directly east of the station stairwell and north of the station parking lot is of great concern to the Panel. The improvements noted here lose a certain degree of positive impact when viewed as pieces of a larger station area dominated by industrial users, particularly Airgas.



*Archway welcoming pedestrians to Grand bus station platform*

## Short-Term Improvements

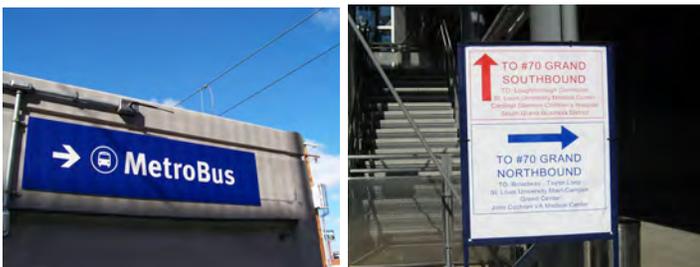
The first question posed to the Panel related to short-term improvements to Grand Station and the surrounding area that could enhance the current rider's experience as well as generally support efforts to increase train ridership.



*Station entrance, showing improvements to Scott Avenue*

The station today is clean, attractive, and well-staffed. It is unclear why more employees from area businesses do not currently utilize transit. One employer tracked employee use during the reconstruction of I-64/40 and noted that, even with employer-subsidized passes, only 6% of employees used MetroLink. Possible explanations could be the lack of inviting sidewalks and lighting in the areas beyond the station area and the perception of less safety in the heavily industrial area. Metro could build on the current positive attitudes surrounding the bridge improvements and solicit input from business owners and employees to better understand current barriers to use.

Today's riders could also benefit from improving the current signage at the station that directs riders up to Grand Avenue and to the bus lines. Although some signs are clearly part of the original design of the station (such as those pointing to the bus access), others appear rather temporary and could benefit from a more permanent and graphically interesting installation.



Additional thought should be given to installing signage that both promotes and directs passengers to the surrounding attractions and institutions. A rider debarking here for the first time would have no idea how to get to Grand Center or the Medical Center, nor would they know where SLU lies in relation to the station. These are all likely destinations for MetroLink riders and, as such, effective and

attractive signage should be present in some form at the station. The design should be in harmony with the City's current way-finding signage.



*Plaza under Grand Avenue bridge, at station level*

The plaza under the Grand bridge is attractive and a great addition to the station. By building on the existing art installation and bringing it out and around to the surrounding area (on the bridge platform, along the parking lot, etc.), the station area becomes more cohesive and inviting. Riders begin to feel a "sense of place" at the station.

Although pedestrian access at the station below Grand Avenue has not been adequately addressed, pedestrian access across the bridge, from north to south, has been fairly well thought out. The wide sidewalks, knee walls, medians, and planters all serve to keep pedestrians safe as they traverse the bridge and provide, through the plantings in particular, some soft edges and greenery in the midst of the concrete and steel. At the same time, there is a clear and disturbing end to this pedestrian experience where the sidewalks again narrow and get pushed back adjacent to the street. The kneewalls and wide sidewalks should be extended into the north and south portions of Grand Avenue that were not addressed during the bridge reconstruction.



*Grand Avenue sidewalk, western side, north of the station, at end of bridge and sidewalk improvements*

Additional measures such as trimming grass and eliminating weeds along the sidewalks as well as filling cracks to prevent further vegetative growth in the sidewalks would go a long way to improving the visual experience and making pedestrians feel they are using a well-maintained and safe passage.

With the idea of creating a sense of arrival, a sense of place at Grand Station, additional thought should be given to addressing the bridge deck above and the automobile traffic on Grand. As a major north-south artery, Grand Avenue carries a significant amount of daily traffic. At the same time, pedestrians, bike riders, and bus passengers are also moving along and across Grand. Although it may not be practical to slow traffic considerably, installing a pedestrian crosswalk and pavers across Grand and connecting the bus stops might help calm traffic slightly and lend a sense of place to the bus stops above and station below. Taking the idea a step further and creating an even more positive impression, one could physically connect the bus station canopies across Grand and create an arch similar to those on the SLU campus under which drivers would pass.



*Grand Avenue, looking south to the SLU Medical Campus*

Throughout the study, the Panel found a prevalent need to create linkages between the areas north and south of the station. The valley below the bridge and the current state of the bridge itself create a connection that is largely vehicular, with safe and inviting connections for bikes and pedestrians missing. Enhancing the north-south connection, shortening the perception of distance across the bridge, and creating a more cohesive experience across and past the bridge will go a long way toward enhancing the current riders' experience as well as inviting new riders to use the station.

Bike lanes are currently missing on the bridge, forcing bikes into the automobile lanes or onto the sidewalks. Given the high degree of bicycle use by university students, bikes should be given their own space on the bridge, inviting additional bike riders as well as keeping existing ones safe. This alone would provide a better non-vehicular connection between the "anchor" areas on either end of the bridge.

The ability for pedestrians to cross Grand while on the bridge was also called into question. The current crosswalk at the I-64/40 exit onto Grand is unsafe in its current state. The "walk" signal timing is short and it is difficult for automobile traffic exiting the highway to Grand north to see pedestrians using the crosswalk. Although it is not feasible to eliminate the crosswalk, these safety issues should be addressed. Closer to the university, there is even greater pedestrian traffic and need for safe crossings along Grand.

Moving north to the Forest Park Parkway (the Parkway) area noted above, significant improvements could be made at the Parkway and Grand intersection to improve traffic flow along Grand and keep pedestrians safe as they cross to enter the new businesses now open in that area. It was noted during the stakeholder interviews that the new Starbucks located at the southeast corner of this intersection may be the most interesting and attractive Starbucks in the country. However, its location may also make it the most dangerous. The confluence of the two major arteries, the existence of multiple stoplights with confusing stop points/distances, and the lack of separation between the sidewalks and busy Grand Avenue create an environment that is unsafe for pedestrians and unclear for drivers.

One solution posed by the Panel would be to raise the Parkway to at-grade status. Raising the road would eliminate the need for the entrance and exit ramps flanking the Parkway to the north and south. It would drive traffic back to the middle of the Parkway and away from the business entrance points. Consolidated and clear stoplights and stopping points would assist motorists and allow for safe pedestrian crossings.

The second solution involved allowing the Parkway to continue below-grade, but eliminating the entrance and exit lanes onto Grand Avenue. This would allow the Parkway traffic to continue briskly east and west (without the above noted traffic light/intersection) while allowing for an enhanced pedestrian experience not only from aesthetic improvements, but also from a safety point of view for the numerous students and seniors in the area. Traffic flow north of I-64/40 on Grand was noted repeatedly as full and problematic, particularly through Grand Center and specifically on performance days/evenings. By eliminating these entrances/exits, some traffic would be pulled off Grand and redirected onto streets flanking the corridor, such as Vandeventer and Compton.



## Progress Points

Following a discussion of short-term improvements to the station and surrounding area, the Panel turned to steps that could be taken throughout the process which would assist with the long-term improvements to the station and the surrounding area and better position the area for future development. Whatever steps are taken should support the long-term vision for the area.

With the City's support and/or assistance, consideration should be given to possible land banking opportunities and opportunistic acquisitions in the station area. The current uses in the area are not compatible with the long-term vision of TOD at this site and, as such, should not be allowed to expand either in the same location or within the half-mile radius of the station. Saint Louis University has created a land bank and continues to purchase properties in areas of interest to its campus. Care should be taken to coordinate any new land banking with existing efforts.

For those vacant properties or buildings no longer in use, cleaning up the area, demolishing crumbling buildings, and providing greater opportunities for green space would increase the attractiveness of the station area and support increased perceptions of safety. Hollowed out, boarded up, and/or vacant buildings create a sense of disrepair and distrust, inviting vandalism and crime.

Should the opportunity arise, efforts should be made to relocate incompatible uses out of the station area. The proximity of Airgas adjacent to the station, for example, is simply not acceptable, not only from an aesthetic point of view, but also from a station and bridge safety point of view. Rightly or wrongly, St. Louisans have vivid memories of the air gas tank explosions when Praxair was in the Lafayette Square neighborhood. It is easy to envision similar explosions at the station and bridge areas. Every effort should be made to relocate the business to an industrial area not served by light rail. The Airgas site could

be utilized as an expanded Metro parking area until there is demand for TOD at the site.

Today, zoning in the station area is largely industrial with commercial on the outer edges of the half-mile radius. By instituting a form-based code, the City could support the long-term goals of the Sponsor to encourage uses in the station area more compatible with traditional TOD.



Chapter 353 Redevelopment Area

In addition to the traditional financial incentives available for developments in areas such as this, an opportunity might exist to utilize the Chapter 353 Urban Redevelopment Corporation Law to support the goal of eventually drawing TOD to the station area. A 353 Redevelopment Corporation is a not-for-profit corporation formed to acquire, construct, maintain, and operate redevelopment projects in conformance with the redevelopment guidelines. In this instance, the Chapter 353 district should be bounded by Forest Park Parkway on the north, Chouteau on the south, Compton on the east, and Vandeventer on the west. The 353 Board of Directors (made up of interested stakeholders) could set redevelopment guidelines for the district, realize a 25 year real property tax abatement (up to 100% for 10 years and up to 50% for 15 years), and possess the ability to borrow and mortgage.

## Long-Term Vision – The Game Changer – Bold Ideas

The Panel discussed the long-term redevelopment potential of Grand Station. Again, the proximity to downtown, major centers of employment, Saint Louis University and its medical center, and the burgeoning CORTEX district, all point to the redevelopment potential of this site. The physical location of the station below-grade and the current uses surrounding the station point to the need for patience and creativity when shaping a development plan. The Panel also discussed the need for creativity – the need to consider unexpected solutions.

To introduce the need for a long-

*“Transformative change cannot occur in incremental steps here. It needs a bold vision... something to transform the site.”*

- ULI St. Louis Grand Station TAP Panelist

term vision – a “game changer” – the Panelists noted three examples of other game changers. First, the Panelists discussed the long-term vision of CORTEX founders and noted the recent momentum gained, following 10 years of slow and steady ground work. Second, they discussed the redevelopment of Union Station in Denver. Over 30 years in the making, including consolidation of rail lines and land assembly, the redevelopment of the Union Station area is just now being realized.

Third, and by way of example, one panelist served on a national ULI Advisory Services panel to determine

the location for Denver's Convention Center in 1987. All signs pointed to two competing sites outside the city's center, and it was expected that the panel would determine which of those two would be selected. Gasps were heard in the crowd, however, when the panel announced that their recommendation was to locate the convention

center in an entirely different location – on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in the heart of downtown. It was unexpected, and, 25 years later, downtown Denver is enjoying the benefits of ULI's recommendations regarding this development decision.

Grand Station could benefit from one or a combination of the following Bold Ideas.

## Bold Idea #1 - Chouteau's Greenway

Fourteen years ago, leaders from McCormack Baron, HOK, and the Danforth Foundation conceived of an idea to bring back to life the natural springs located along the southern edge of downtown and incorporate a series of lakes and ponds into a greenway that would stretch from the riverfront downtown to Forest Park at the City's western most edge. The discussions sparked the creation of Great Rivers Greenway and the idea for the greenway, in particular, became known as Chouteau's Greenway.

Although funding for the Greenway over the years has yet to crystallize, the plans have been drawn and include a number of elements that would dramatically change the uses found within the Grand Station area. Most notably, the

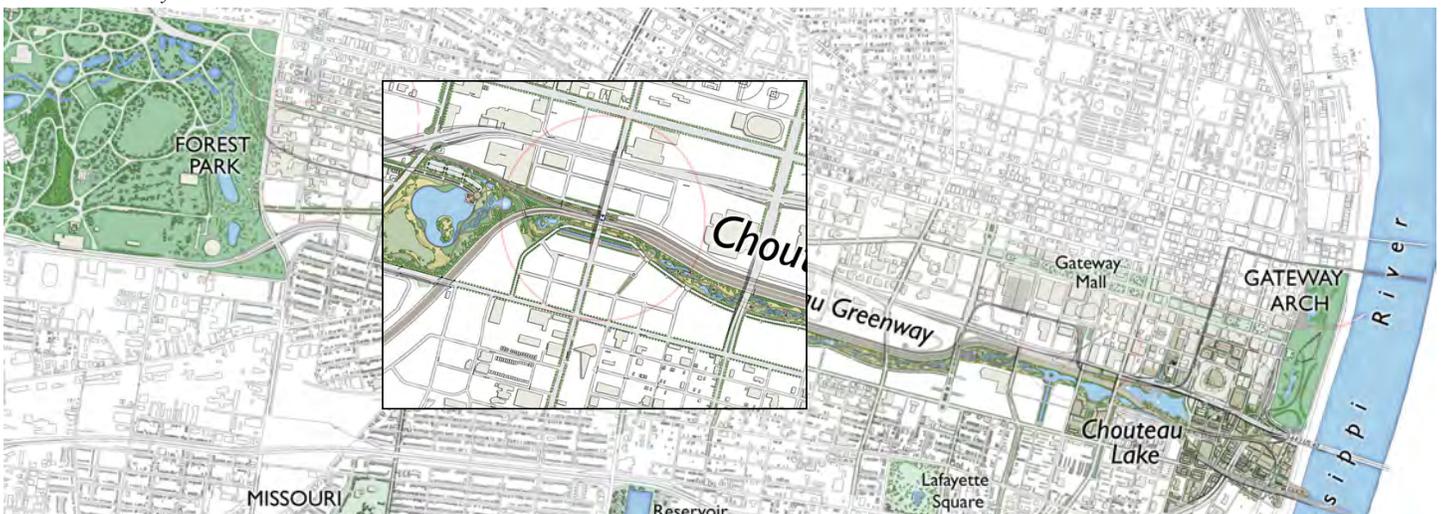
rail lines would be consolidated and the area transformed from heavy industrial to green space bounded by business and additional development that turn to face the Greenway. The rail lines would be embraced as part of the Greenway. Today, the Greenway remains a viable development idea, yet funding continues to be an issue.

The realization of Chouteau's Greenway would be a game-changer for Grand Station. As such, every development decision and effort should be made with the realization of the Greenway in mind. Today, leaders could carve out space in the Grand Station area and start to implement the Greenway. Metro, together with Great Rivers Greenway, could begin to assemble land for the eventual Greenway. As a collaborator in the endeavor, Great Rivers Greenway would make the best partner to purchase the property, while the City could use its resources to incentivize incompatible businesses to move with relocation benefits. COTREX envisions the Greenway as part of its long-term strategy. Continuing it through the Grand Station area could create momentum for expanding it further to the east and downtown.

Ultimately, a variety of local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources could provide funding in cooperation with Great Rivers Greenway, the Metropolitan Sewer District (Green infrastructure initiative and funding) and the City.



*Chouteau's Greenway*



*Grand Station shown within Chouteau's Greenway*

## Bold Idea #2 - High-Speed Rail Station @ Grand

High-speed rail (HSR) is becoming increasingly important as cities strive to compete regionally and maintain or improve connections to global transportation hubs. Among other Midwestern cities, St. Louis has participated in HSR discussions and several interested groups are coming together to consider what it might take to draw HSR to St. Louis.

For our region, two separate HSR proposals are under consideration – one that makes use of existing rail lines and provides service at a 110 mph; and a second proposal that requires new rail lines to provide 220 mph service, connecting St. Louis to Chicago. The Panel viewed the latter as a game-changing idea for St. Louis and for Grand Station in particular.

Although current discussions are focused on trying to locate HSR as close to the Civic Center near St. Louis Union Station as possible, the Panel's understanding is that there is limited room at the existing multimodal station to maximize all of the opportunities that would be realized with HSR service. While lines serving St. Louis's Union Station could be reconfigured to allow for HSR, perhaps the most unexpected, yet least problematic option, would be to locate the HSR station at Grand. (If a downtown HSR station is a "must," then, at a minimum, a secondary stop at Grand should be seriously considered.) Grand Station, already equipped with multimodal connections and with sufficient room for the HSR train, would be able to leverage these connections to move passengers easily to and from the station. The station also enjoys close proximity to the St. Louis Central Business District (downtown), Saint Louis University, Harris Stowe State University, and Grand Center as well as CORTEX, Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University via easy existing light rail connections.

Grand Station generally meets many of the criteria being evaluated by planners of the proposed HSR system, particularly the space needed to create a simple, seamless experience for all modes of transit as well as providing adequate space for ticketing, waiting areas, queuing, and accessing the trains. Additional building and parking needs could also easily be met at Grand.

Connectivity to the global market is critical to the future of St. Louis, thus the ability to provide high-speed rail is crucial. The realization of HSR at Grand would support additional commercial development around the station area as well.



### HIGH-SPEED INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL PROGRAM Federal Investment Highlights (2009-11)



Image courtesy of HOK



Image courtesy of HOK

## Bold Idea #3 - Platform Development

It will be quite difficult to attract development, particularly Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which generally includes a mix of residential and commercial uses, to the Grand Station area in its current form – under the Grand Avenue bridge.

However, if development were raised to the street, level with the bridge deck, the area could experience game-changing redevelopment. A relatively recent ULI Hines Urban Design Competition<sup>1</sup> challenged students to evaluate the Grand Station area and create a design to enhance the site. Armed with the results from this competition, the Panel evaluated the students' proposal and determined it a game-changing solution for attracting development, particularly TOD, to the Grand Station site. Dubbed a platform development, the idea is to overcome the challenge of the bridge by incorporating it into the development design. Garage parking would exist on the initial two or three building levels, starting at the current station's below-grade site and building up to the bridge deck. At the bridge/street level, commercial uses would be viable, placed directly on top of the garage parking and fronting a busy street (Grand Ave.) with incredible automobile traffic as well as pedestrian and bicycle traffic moving across the bridge.

Residential units could be placed atop the commercial uses, fully rounding out the TOD and creating a complete

change in the station environment. Building housing and creating a commercial corridor along the Grand bridge would create a more pleasant connection between the SLU campuses and encourage additional pedestrian traffic and transit use.

This bridge provides a rare opportunity for this type of development extension.

This could also become the confluence of a greenway and great north/south connector. By changing the environment drastically and by locating 300 housing units along Grand, the area around the station would feel more inviting to all and promote the great connections to transit.

A platform development of this nature would embrace the light rail and bus connectivity, build and strengthen the connection between SLU campuses, enhance travel along Grand, and encourage pedestrian use. Additionally, this area could include platform-developed hotels and offices that would complement the other commercial and residential uses, all enhanced by incorporating high speed rail at Grand Station.



*Short North, a new commercial development centered on High Street in Columbus, Ohio, effectively caps a major interstate, creates a retail and arts destination, and provides an inviting pedestrian experience for shoppers and students from The Ohio State University.*



*Sketch of platform development at the Grand Ave. study area*



*Street-level view of Short North bridge over the interstate with downtown Columbus in the distance.*



*Grand Avenue bridge rendering (image courtesy of the 2006 Hines Competition Harvard University team)*

<sup>1</sup>2006 ULI Gerald D. Hines Urban Design Competition Winner, "Bridging Innovation at Grand Crossing," Harvard University Graduate School of Design

## Summary

The Panel offered the following key points as the stakeholders evaluate short-term and long-term improvements and land use strategies for the Grand Station area. They identified the need for a long-term vision for the area, then the incorporation of short-term and progress point improvements that support and encourage that long-term vision.

In the **short-term**, a number of improvements should be made to enhance the pedestrian experience, keeping in mind the record ridership on the Grand bus line, the connectivity to light rail, and the anchor destinations north and south of the bridge:

- creating or improving pedestrian connections to the station from neighboring businesses;
- adjusting pedestrian connections to and across Grand Avenue; and
- continuing improvements to pedestrian thoroughfares north and south of the new Grand bridge.

At the same time, several **progress points** should be addressed, including efforts to ready the station area for redevelopment through the formation of a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Corporation, land banking, relocating incompatible uses, and cleaning up existing sites.

Consideration should also be given to changes at the Forest Park Parkway and Grand intersection to streamline the automobile traffic, provide safe and easy access for pedestrians, and support the business owners' efforts to draw customers safely into their establishments.

Along the way, care should be taken to promote Chouteau's Greenway. Ideally, any new uses in the station area or any changes made to the infrastructure would be compatible with and support the eventual development of the Greenway.

A variety of funding sources, including local, state, federal, philanthropic sources in cooperation with Great Rivers Greenway, MSD (Green infrastructure initiative and funding), the City, etc. should be explored in order to support development in the area and the realization of the Greenway.

Finally, the Sponsor, Stakeholders, and the City should consider a **game-changing vision** for the Grand Station area, possibly envisioned as Chouteau's Greenway, a high-speed rail station, and/or innovative platform development.

### Envisioning what the area could become is critical:

Below the bridge:

- greenway with bike trails and seating areas;
- high-speed rail station;
- existing light rail;
- existing freight rail screened with aesthetically pleasing surroundings; and
- garage parking with platform developments above fronting Grand.

Bridge level:

- enhanced pedestrian experience north and south of the bridge;
- pedestrian connectivity between the northbound and southbound bus stops;
- street-level commercial businesses with residential above; and
- incorporation of offices and hotels.

With these improvements, it is easy to envision this area as a key linkage connecting downtown, Grand Center (Fox Theater, St. Louis Symphony, and other cultural institutions), Forest Park (the Zoo, the Muny, the Art Museum), and the BJC/Washington University medical complex. It could easily be the much-needed connection between each of these separate and important features of our City.

As a final point, it is important to keep in mind the changing lifestyles of active seniors and Generation Y. Both groups seek walkable and livable communities with easy and effective connectivity to other areas. Through the realization of this long-term vision, Grand Station could become a desirable residential option, providing everything anyone would want within reach of public transportation or a short walk.



# Panel Professional Biographies

**Gwen Knight, Enhanced Value Strategies, TAP Chair.** Gwen is Executive Vice President of Enhanced Value Strategies, Inc. in St. Louis, a national consultant on complex real estate issues. Gwen's experience in commercial real estate spans the spectrum of advisory and consulting services, development, public and private partnership ventures, financing, strategic planning, acquisitions, brokerage and marketing. She recently secured over \$60 million in refinancing for multifamily cooperative units. Gwen was instrumental in the \$80 million redevelopment of the Old Post Office in St. Louis and the \$85 million redevelopment of 600 Washington and the Seventh Street Garage. The St. Louis Business Journal named her one of St. Louis's Most Influential Business Women. She is a licensed real estate broker in Missouri and Utah and holds an M.B.A. from Washington University.

**Chris Cedergreen, Forum Studio.** Chris, President of Forum Studio, brings over 30 years of multi-disciplined design experience for a variety of projects, including multi-million square foot mixed-use projects, historic building renovations, high-rise office buildings and sports facilities around the world. Chris leads Clayco's wholly-owned design firm subsidiary, Forum Studio, and is responsible for all design and business leadership and ensures that clients receive the best possible design and engineering solutions for their most complex projects.

**Chip Crawford, Forum Studio.** As a Senior Principal for Forum Studio, Chip is a practice builder, creative thinker and problem solver. An award-winning Landscape Architect, Chip has more than 30 years of experience leading some of the world's most complex planning, landscape architecture and urban design projects. Chip connects with clients and has a unique ability to stimulate creative thinking and problem solving, bringing the best expertise and newest thinking to the table. Chip is a Fellow with the American Society of Landscape Architects, past President of the Landscape Architecture Foundation, and Fellow at Kansas State University. He is also a registered Landscape Architect and LEED GA accredited professional by the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Marc Hirshman, U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation.** Marc is Senior Vice President, Director of Tax Credit Syndications and New Business Development at U.S. Bancorp CDC, one of the nation's most active tax credit equity investors utilizing Affordable Housing, New Markets, Historic and Renewable Energy Tax Credits. Marc oversees a team responsible for the Syndication of tax credit portfolios to third party corporate investors, innovation through exploration of new business opportunities and review of current business model and coverage of non-core business issues. The syndication portfolio consists of over \$2B of syndicated transactions with over 20 investors utilizing all four of the major tax credit asset classes. Marc was previously Director of the NMTC/HTC, Renewable Energy Production group investing approximately \$1B annually in over 100 transactions. Marc has served on the boards of both the New Markets Tax Credit and Historic Tax Credit Coalitions. Marc serves on the board of the St. Louis affiliate of Habitat for Humanity and received his B.A. from the University of Illinois and both his J.D. and LL.M. in Taxation from Chicago-Kent College of Law.

**Alison Marischen, Polsinelli Shughart PC.** Alison is an attorney with the firm, handling real estate transactions and dealing with public law issues. Alison represents both large and small real estate developers on new construction and redevelopment projects, commercial and mixed-use construction, land acquisition and disposition, and landlords and tenants in leasing transactions in both retail shopping centers and office building lease negotiations. She works with clients to coordinate all aspects of real estate transactions, including due diligence, title and survey review, selection of corporate structure for ownership entities, negotiation and drafting of purchase and sale agreements, leases and loan documents, preparation of legal opinions and other activities necessary to close the real estate transaction. Alison serves on the Board of the Community Improvement District for the Partnership for Downtown St. Louis and earned her B.A. from Truman State University and J.D. from Washington University.

**Stan Mulvihill, McCormack Baron Salazar.** As Vice President at McCormack Baron Salazar, Stan is engaged in the conceptualization, planning, marketing, and implementation of community projects. The projects often involve a careful integration of residential, commercial and retail land uses, as well as public improvements to create a successful project environment. Stan has worked both in the public and not-for-profit sectors, and has substantial experience coordinating public approvals and financing subsidies such as tax increment finance and State tax credit programs. His 20 years of experience working on major mixed-income, mixed-use and other mixed-finance transactions makes him a keen troubleshooter and creative identifier of strategies to stretch scarce resources to accomplish the project's objectives. He played an integral role in the development of the TOD at the Westin Hotel and other large public/private partnerships. Stan earned his B.A. from Tulane University.

**Gregory Patterson, BJC HealthCare.** As Director of Real Estate Services for BJC HealthCare, Greg Patterson leads and coordinates all real estate related matters for BJC's 14 million square feet real estate portfolio, including all real estate acquisitions and dispositions, as well as leasing, fit-out construction and property management of the system's 23 medical office buildings and numerous BJC Medical Group sites. Patterson has been instrumental in leading BJC's office standardization, growth and consolidation efforts, led the design and construction of the new BJC Learning Institute and has played a key role in creating cost effective design improvements to BJC's recent medical office developments. Before joining BJC, Patterson was Associate General Counsel for Saint Louis University, primarily responsible for the University's real estate, construction and higher education legal matters. A graduate of Saint Louis University, Patterson also earned a masters degree in education from Saint Louis University and a juris doctorate from the Saint Louis University School of Law. He serves on the boards of St. Louis Civic Pride Foundation and RHCA (Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance) and is actively involved in CORTEX (Center of Research, Technology and Entrepreneurial Exchange).

