

Wellston, Missouri

Wellston Station Walkabout Brief



Summary:

On the hot, record breaking morning of June 28, 2012, more than thirty people attended the Wellston MetroLink Station Walkabout. This event, sponsored by CMT, was also part of the Walk Live St. Louis 2012 Conference. The purpose of the effort was to ask attendees to analyze the current MetroLink station located in Wellston Missouri, as well as the immediate surroundings in order to understand how Transit Oriented Development, building around light rail, could benefit the surrounding community. A post-walk discussion included a survey focused on the types of development that would best benefit the community.

Background and Site Information:

The Wellston Station is one of thirty-seven light rail stations located in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and run by the regional transit authority, Metro. The current station includes a two hundred and forty-two space Park-Ride Lot, a total of 2.6 acres, owned by Metro, immediately adjacent to Plymouth Road, the only access road. The Wellston Station, as it is known, has ridership below the system average. Where the Missouri Station Average is 42,000 monthly boardings, the Wellston station is estimated to have 24,700 daily ridership.

Wellston is home to approximately 6,859 residents, of those residents, forty percent are considered to be living at or below poverty level. Of the occupied housing units in Wellston, nearly sixty percent are rentals and forty percent of the homes are owner occupied. "Nearly one-third of households do not own a vehicle; only half of the workforce reported using their own vehicle to commute to work; 20% carpool; 15% use transit." (*Wellston Station Profile Report, Metro St. Louis*) The overall density, or number of people per acre, in Wellston is 3.4 people. This density is extremely low and indicates opportunity.

For the most part, the area immediately surrounding the MetroLink site is either industrial or vacant land. There are no residential structures easily visible from the site and most housing is at least a quarter of a mile away.

Findings:

Based on the conversations, post-surveys and post-walk interviews, the Wellston Station is an ideal location for a multi-use development plan. The land around the station, although there are a few active businesses, is under-utilized and of little immediate benefit to the community. One of the biggest issues regarding the significant vacant land which is to the north of Plymouth Avenue is that it is zoned for light industrial. The vacant land totals over twenty acres and offers opportunities for mixed use development given local support and zoning changes.

The community, as well as the MetroLink Station, would benefit from a variety of improvements. These improvements, coupled with mixed-use development would provide a vast resource to the community. Short term improvements suggested include:

- Better station signage and maintenance of existing worn areas.
- Wider sidewalks and new sidewalks where current 'cow paths' exist and more defined sidewalks where streets and sidewalks meet.
- Improved accessibility for the disabled and seniors.
- Cut back overgrown vegetation from sidewalks.
- Better street lighting. Cobra heads are not pedestrian scaled and are too far apart.
- More trees, vegetation and benches to provide shade and comfort to pedestrians



Diagram by permission from Metro St. Louis



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- Reduced trash, increase trash receptacles.
- Better orientation of current building sites to development.

Other long term improvements suggested include:

- Multi-family and single family housing
- Retail amenities, i.e., grocery, restaurants
- Healthcare services, such as Urgent Care and a Pharmacy
- Improve access to the station through the new trail system and sidewalks.
- Better orientation of current building sites to the station.

Next Steps:

The Wellston MetroLink station is located in a light industrial area. The station is not immediately adjacent to homes, stores or other public areas or amenities. In order to promote mixed-use development in the immediate vicinity will require first and foremost the re-evaluation of the current zoning. In addition, working to educate and engage community leaders, county economic council, Beyond Housing and other area organizations to work towards creating a phased development plan for the area is critical for success. Such a plan needs to promote all the elements that make an area walkable and desirable while supporting the basic needs of the community. The Wellston community leadership needs to be willing to put into place the framework for such a development.



*Metro Station Area Profile, Rock Road Station, Metro St. Louis, Mark Phillips, 2012



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