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# **CHAPTER-4: FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES**

## **Great Streets Goals**

The goal of the Great Streets Program is to improve our regional streets by demonstrating best practices in design and the value of landscaping, lighting and pedestrian safety. This Natural Bridge Great Streets Pilot Project was funded initially through a multi-year federal transportation bill called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), "SAFETEA-LU". The pilot project was completed and the current project was given notice to proceed by East-West Gateway Council of Governments in October 2009. This project is being funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The initial design project was defined for Natural Bridge Road between Lucas and Hunt Road and west of West/Clearview Drive (the primary study area) to meet the needs of the street, neighborhoods and community. Due to its impact on the market area, an extended area of influence will be considered along Natural Bridge Road between Lucas and Hunt Road and I-170 (Including I-170 to west of West /Clearview Drives) to provide insight into the revitalization of this portion of the road. The secondary study area will be discussed at the end of certain chapters in order to emphasize the priority of the primary study area and to avoid confusion as to the location being discussed.

Typical enhancements within the Great Streets Initiative include road diets, bike lanes, parking, expanded planting areas, sidewalk furnishings and lighting improvements. In addition, economic development impact and strategic planning for future development opportunities set this program apart and provides for implementation possibilities that are usually not included in typical infrastructure planning projects.

With respect to any project or a specific area to be served by a project, "transportation enhancement" means projects that are designed to improve transportation facilities or use and that are physically or functionally related to transportation facilities. Eligible projects include:

- Historic preservation, rehabilitation, and operation of historic public transportation buildings, structures, and facilities (including historic bus and railroad facilities)
- Bus shelters
- Landscaping, street furniture, street lights and public art
- Pedestrian access and walkways
- Bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and installing equipment for transporting bicycles on public transportation vehicles
- Transit connections to parks within the recipient's transit service area
- Signage
- Improved access for persons with disabilities to public transportation

These elements of transportation enhancements go a long way to establish patterns of travel, and create market stability necessary for economic development improvements. In the case of the primary study area, visitors' access to highways, roads, MetroLink, sidewalks, and bike trails make traffic patterns and people places of great importance. These areas serve to improve the overall health and economic well being of the municipalities functioning as an economic engine in the St. Louis region. To this end, the Great Streets Initiative is an ideal tool to augment, support, and sustain the primary study area.

In summary, East West Gateway Council of Governments (EWGCOG) and its consultant partners will provide validated recommendations for enhanced infrastructure improvements and economic development strategies along Natural Bridge Road from Lucas and Hunt to west of West Drive, all within the Great Streets Initiative parameters.

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## **Role of Infrastructure in Future Development**

Infrastructure plays an essential role in creating realistic economic development opportunities. This chapter discusses suggested transit and multi-modal alternatives ideal for the study area. Each concept builds on the idea that there is a balance between infrastructure investment and the economic development opportunities created by public investment.

Chapter 3 of this document discussed in some detail the importance of I-70 to the sustainability of the Natural Bridge Road commercial corridor. In summary, it was identified that major highway access points serving Natural Bridge Road include:

- I-170 – farthest access point from the primary study area and a commercial development area adjacent to the highway
- Hanley Road – primarily residential development upon leaving the I-70 interchange
- Florissant Road – Office and UMSL access points mixed with multi-family
- Bermuda Road – Residential neighborhoods front this narrow road
- Lucas and Hunt Road – Primarily residential with commercial development at its intersection with Natural Bridge Road

Once within the primary study area, local access and travel patterns become important to the long term success of the various land uses within the corridor. Natural Bridge Road serves a complex market composition consisting of:

- Residential areas designed with cul-de-sac and independent internal circulation roads have resulted in limited automobile access to Natural Bridge Roads from within the neighborhoods
- Institutional entities attracting a daily influx of commuters from outside the marketplace relying on Natural Bridge Road as a means of traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle distribution around the area
- Commercial development relying on numerous points of access for automobile access
- MetroLink station generating public bus and pedestrian traffic along the corridor
- Various sites that result in continuous access and automobile movement throughout the corridor such as the St. Louis County Public Library, filling stations, and fast food restaurants that produce a continuous flow of in and out traffic movements

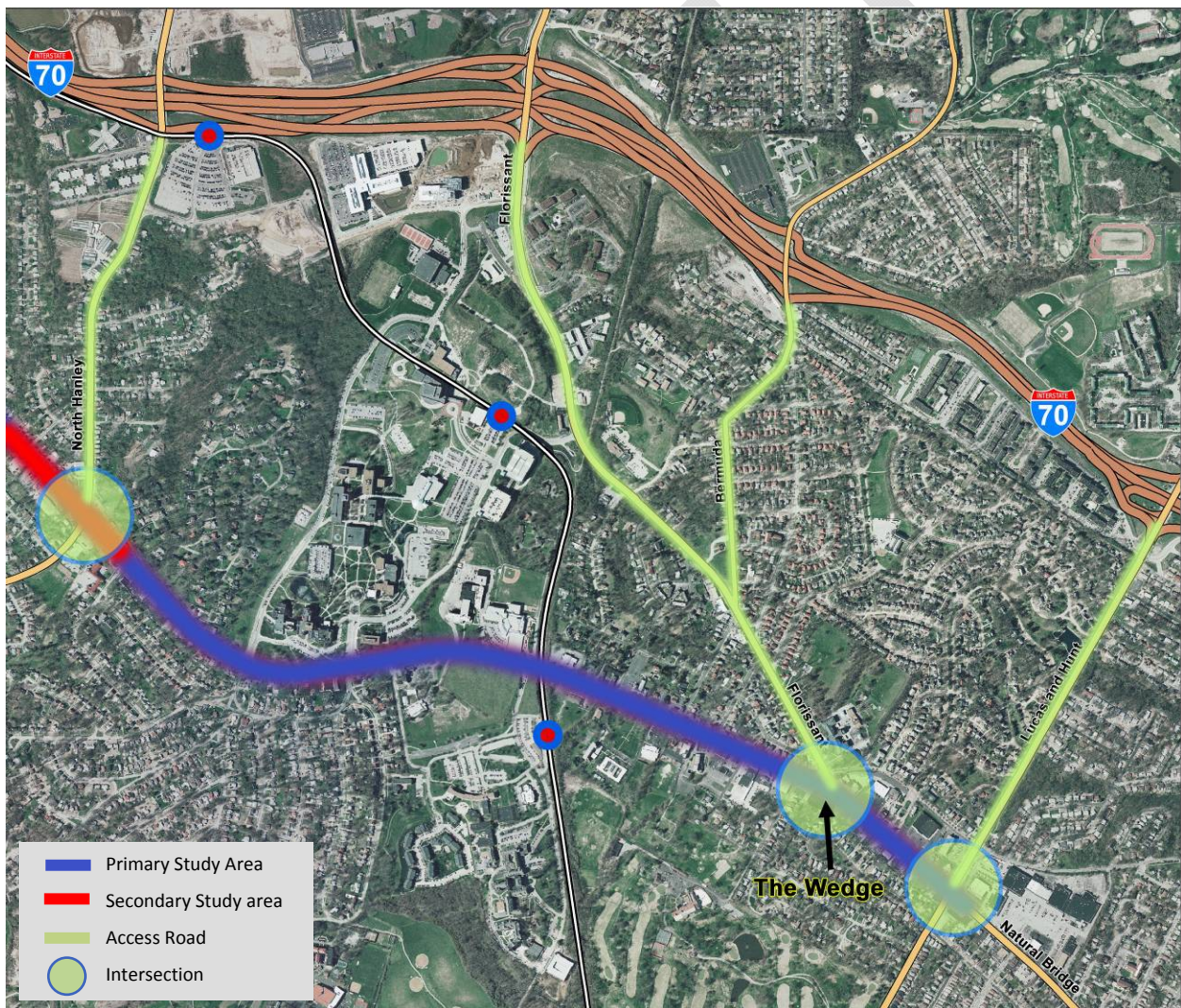
The Natural Bridge Road corridor within the primary study area has few full intersections at which to disburse automobile movement (Lucas and Hunt Road; Florissant Road; and, Hanley Road). This serves to capture traffic within the corridor making parking, bicycle, and pedestrian movement key to the long term success of the commercial development opportunities. Between Hanley and Lucas and Hunt Roads for instance, an approximate 1.61 mile distance, there is only one full intersection located at Florissant Road that connects I-70 to the Primary Study Area in the Natural Bridge Road corridor.

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## **Florissant Road and Natural Bridge Intersection**

The importance of Florissant Road is critical to future investment and the potential for economic revitalization. Due to Florissant Road’s relationship to I-70 and its central location within the road expanse between Hanley and Lucas and Hunt Roads, this corridor is essential to attracting new business and the long term sustainability of new investment. Today, infrastructure and traffic movements provide adequate local access to commercial areas. Revitalization and new investment will require regional access to assure business success and employment opportunities. To achieve regional access, the Florissant Road corridor at its intersection with Natural Bridge Road will facilitate broader market access.

**MAP 4.1: MAJOR INTERSECTIONS IN THE PRIMARY STUDY AREA**



Source: St. Louis County GIS

*Note: The map above illustrates the intersection number and locations within the market area emphasizing the importance of Florissant Road.*

The intersection at Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads have been discussed in some detail pursuant to the idea that the Florissant Road corridor and its linkage to I-70 is essential to providing regional market access to the proposed revitalization of commercial property on Natural Bridge Road. It follows that at the point of intersection at Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads, the efficient movement of all modes of transportation is critical to the success of the corridor. There are two alternative design concepts that may provide improved access:

*Infrastructure creates a grid into which economic development patterns emerge. These patterns may be greatly enhanced or devalued based on the configuration of highways, roads, trails, and transit options creating the grid.*

- A Roundabout Structure
- A “T” Intersection

As a primary portal to the corridor, the configuration of the subject intersection will need to complement existing and planned land uses, providing convenient access to all modes of travel. As important to the promotion of business investment, the intersection design needs to provide for immediate access to all adjacent or impacted land by either intersection mentioned above. Future land use is recommended to be festive and to provide a public gathering place for special events supporting businesses and to experience activities that establish this intersection as the activity center of the corridor. At the same time, private property around this location must be considered and either incorporated into the focal point theme or be allowed to conduct their business without loss of access, parking, and visibility.

Future land use planning around the intersection will need to include:

- Planning related to adjacent land uses, creating a balance between public amenities and development options on private property, including adequate access
- Design and traffic patterns that recognize the mixed use elements of potential investment and the varied demographic composition of the market, including elderly, elementary and college students, shoppers, and recreational walkers and bicyclists
- Recommendation for underground utilities throughout the primary study area to create a clean, well defined sense of place and unique quality of life environment
- Planning and installation of landscaping and public amenities at the intersection to create public space and a sense of “arrival” into the corridor including space definition that can translate into the entire corridor as a place to be, a place to experience
- Signage, traffic control and lighting that complements the ambiance of the corridor and provides for a safe pedestrian and bicyclist environment
- Public art and water features that add perspective and interest to the corridor

The design configuration of the intersection will need to provide:

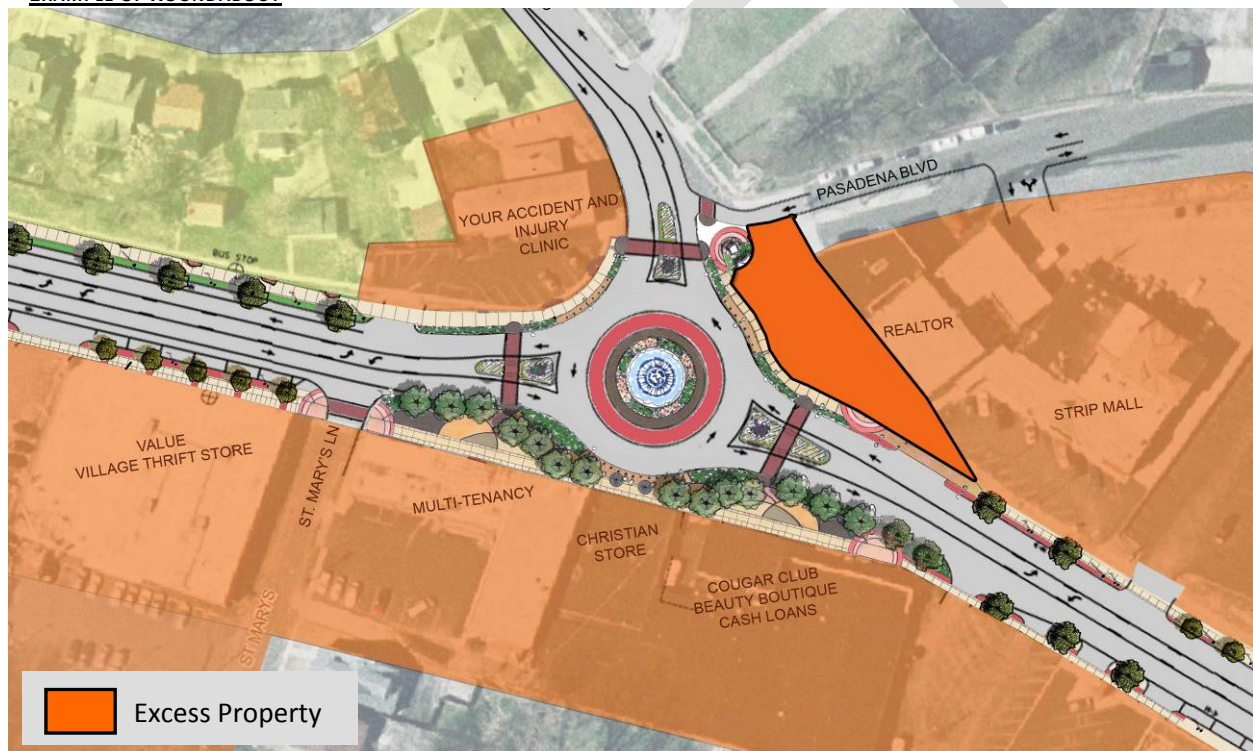
- Safe, convenient access for drivers, pedestrians, shuttle/trolley and bikes
- Visibility for businesses located around the intersection

- Direct automobile access for properties adjacent to the structure(s)
- Maximize useable excess right of way property in the creation of public spaces

### **Roundabout Intersection:**

Inherent in the design of the roundabout is limited access points to the intersection, requiring careful consideration to those nearest points of access in relation to existing and future commercial and residential investments. The implementation of a roundabout intersection may warrant the redesign of internal circulation on adjacent property. Any design of the roundabout configuration will need to take into consideration public access to private property assuring that property values are not minimized by lack of access to buildings and parking adjacent to the existing right of way.

#### **EXAMPLE OF ROUNDABOUT**

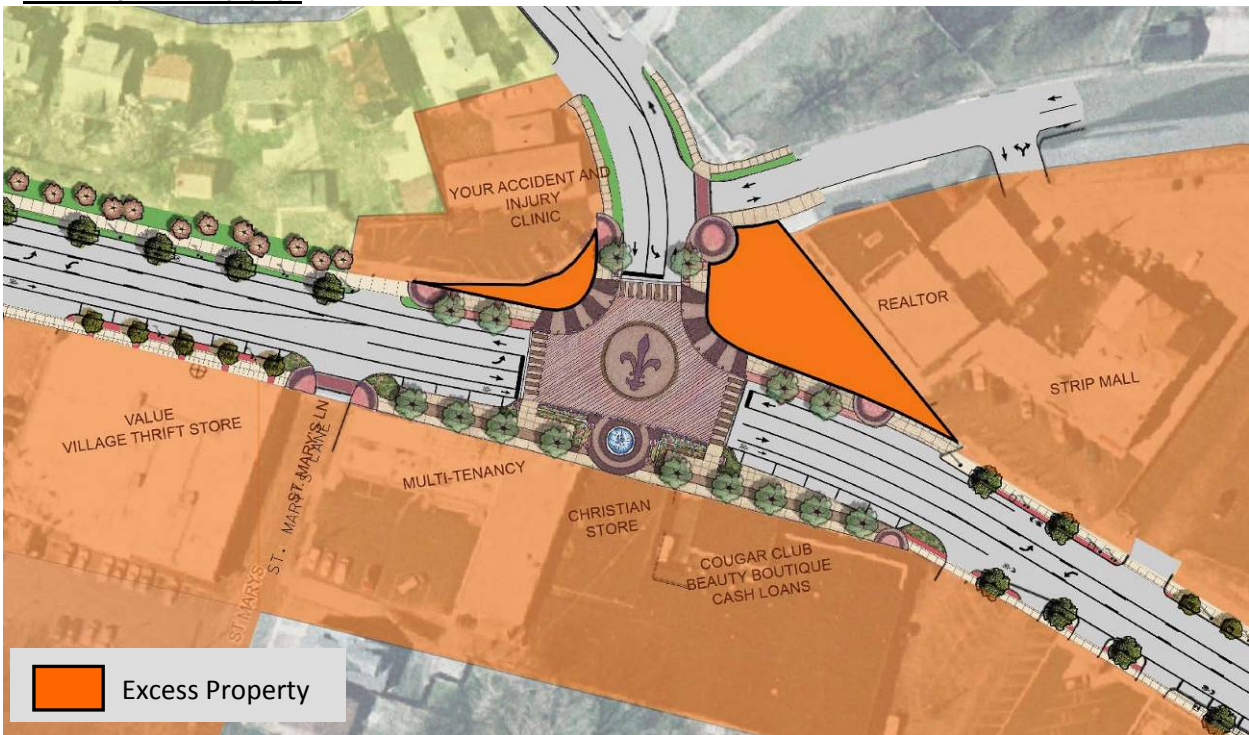


Source: CH2M HILL

### **The "T" intersection:**

The "T" intersection, a more traditional design, will be influenced by the perpendicular intersection configuration at Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads. While a roundabout intersection limits access by design, traditional intersections tend to provide easy access adjacent to property while providing safe movement of pedestrians and traffic. At the intersection, the existing roadway and sidewalks will be modified to accommodate the "road diet" concept and the interface with Pasadena Drive approximately 115' north of the defined intersection. In the preliminary review of the "T" intersection, considerable excess property becomes available for public enhancement as described above.

**EXAMPLE OF T- INTERSECTION**



Source: CH2M HILL

In summary, considering both design concepts, excess useable property is created and depending upon the final, engineered concept for the intersection, excess right of way can be made available for public use and as a transition from public to private property. Land use planning associated with the excess property will account for existing and future development of adjacent property in order to complement and not detract from economic development options, visibility, access, and corridor design guidelines that may be adopted by the city as part of their zoning codes. The Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads intersection, more than any other access point within the study area, provides for regional vehicular access that supports new investment.

## Infrastructure Related Components Impacting Future Land Use

To follow are elements of infrastructure related components that directly impact future land use and economic development opportunities. Presented here are not engineering concepts, but concepts for creating a public environment that influences the perception and appeal of the corridor.

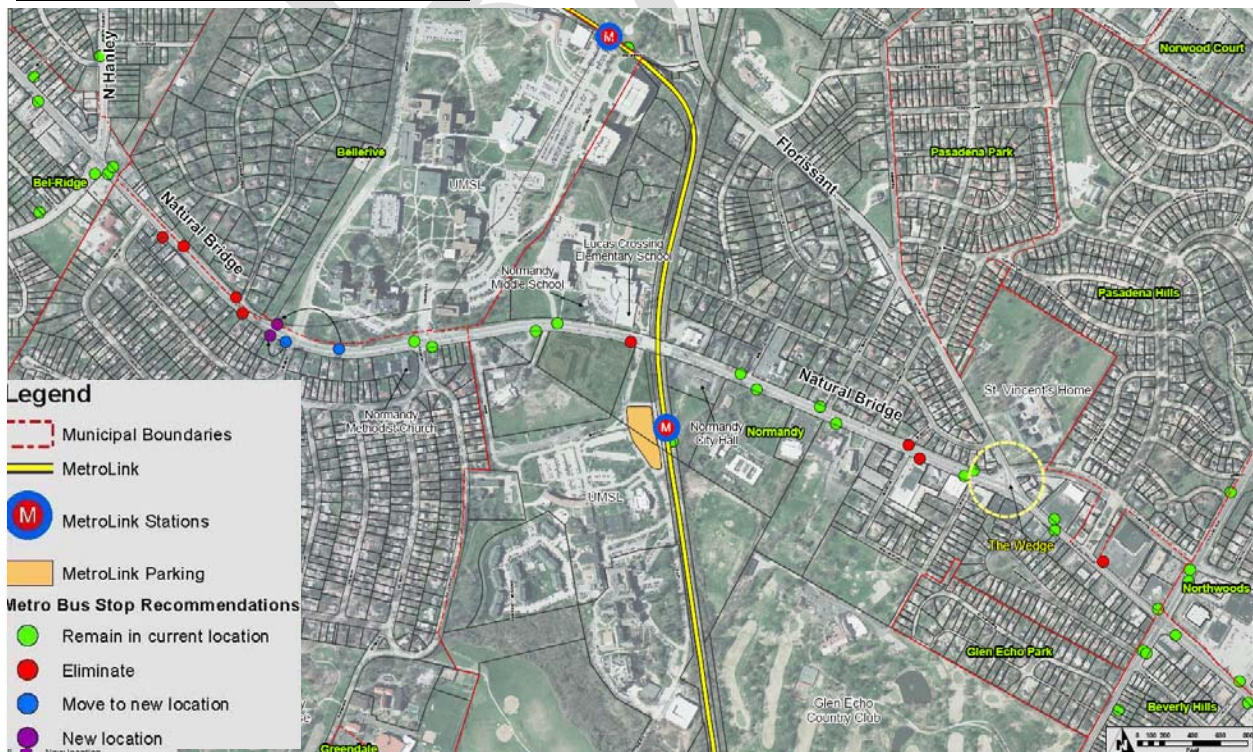
In order to meet market demand for consumer access and convenience related to vehicular movement and truck access, the design of Natural Bridge Road will need to take into consideration the following modes of multi-modal transit:

### MetroBus



In most large metropolitan areas, bus transportation is an integral part of regional transportation options and connectivity. And, this is true of transit options along Natural Bridge Road. The MetroBus service available within the area adds to the multi-modal elements in the market place and provides connectivity at the MetroLink station to the entire region. This linkage to commercial areas at Lucas and Hunt Road provides safe, easy access for visitors to the area as well as providing mobility to the elderly and students wishing to move within as well as outside the Natural Bridge Road. Metro has implemented new bus schedules to improve service. Schedule adjustments will be complemented by new bus stop enhancements and improved public environment at stop locations. A map of recommended bus stop locations is included here demonstrating the level of service and availability of MetroBus as a transit option.

**MAP 4.2: RECOMMENDED BUS STOP LOCATIONS**



Source: St. Louis County GIS and Bi-State Agency

## Shuttle/Trolley\*



The movement of local market traffic in and around the corridor is essential to the long term investment potential and revitalization options within the primary study area. A shuttle/trolley route may be established to move those individuals living, working, and visiting the area with a convenient and alternative means of moving about within the marketplace. Students, faculty, professionals, and those living near Natural Bridge Road will have the option to conveniently leave their place of work or residence and lunch or shop in the commercial district. Transit locations are recommended to be placed far enough away from the actual Florissant Road functions to prevent roadway traffic from backing up into the intersection. Bus and shuttle/trolley pullouts will be an important element to the overall roadway design. Shuttle/trolley stops are considered market focus areas and public amenities such as landscaping, seating, art, and other right of way features are recommended to be incorporated at shuttle/trolley stop locations. Additionally, it is recommended that stops be strategically planned to coincide with strategic business locations and public activity areas to assure maximum market penetration.

\* The term “shuttle/trolley” refers to local market movement. It is recommended that the shuttle service be established initially (perhaps an extension of the existing UMSL service). As the market evolves and matures, a trolley service will add interest and uniqueness to the area and provide regional interest in the area.

## MetroLink



METROLINK

**MetroLink’s** UMSL South station provides an important transportation perspective to the primary study area that expands this marketplace and sets it apart from other mixed use area in the St. Louis region. Stops along the MetroLink corridor near and adjacent to the **UMSL South station** include St. Louis Lambert Airport; the Hanley Road station serving the Express Script and future office markets; and UMSL’s north campus. Capturing the interest and participation of riders at these locations will increase revitalization potential. MetroLink access provides for the capture of ridership that includes both Missouri and Illinois routes and the increase of visitors to the Natural Bridge Road corridor. In addition, the physical location of the **UMSL South station** offers an opportunity to update and add features that promote the marketplace as riders pass through or access the station. Creating a sense of place with kiosks, imaginative signage and other promotional options, as well as events, designed to inform riders of activities in the area, make this location exciting and more connected to the region. MetroLink also provides an excellent opportunity to participate in development adjacent to the station including the south campus of UMSL and the Normandy City Hall site.

### TOP TEN REASONS FOR RIDING

#### METROLINK

*Reason #1 — getting to Work is the Number #1 Reason Commuters Ride Metro*

*Reason #2 — Getting to School is the 2nd Most Popular Destination for Metro Commuters*

*Reason #3 — Average Cost to Drive to Work is \$587 a month. A Metro Monthly Pass is \$68*

*Reason #4 — MetroLink Runs on Electricity and Takes over 80 Single-Occupancy Cars off the Road with each Trainload*

*Reason #5 — MetroLink is On-Time 98% of the Time.*

*Reason #6 — To date, \$15 Billion in New Development has occurred within a Ten-Minute Walk of MetroLink stations*

*Reason #7 — 96% of all Job Centers in Metro’s Service Area are within One-Quarter Mile of a MetroLink Station or Metro Bus Stop.*

*Reason #8 — Metro Eases Traffic Congestion and Crowded Roads by Taking 45,000 Vehicles Off the Roads Each Day.*

*Reason #9 — From 1995 through 2008, Public Transportation Increased by 38%, a Growth Rate Higher than the 14% Increase in U.S. Population and a 21% Growth in the Use of the Nation’s Highways over the same period.*

*Reason #10 — Every Dollar Communities Invest in Public Transportation Generates Approximately \$4 in Economic Returns*

## **Truck and Larger Commercial Vehicles:**



Providing goods and services to the various commercial and institutional sites is important to the long term success of the existing and future investment areas. The roundabout design option for Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads will be designed to accommodate large truck traffic entering, circulating, and exiting the intersection. The integration of normal pedestrian, bicyclist, and automobile traffic movements with large truck movements will be an important design detail. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways to keep the intersection compact, yet make sure trucks do not damage curbs and do not encroach on sidewalk areas. As important, truck access points along the Natural Bridge Road corridor is required so that normal deliveries and special over-the-road truck traffic can be accommodated at drives and alley entrances. Inconvenient movements and time delays to trucks and, as importantly, the normal flow of traffic, will limit the long term success and economic development opportunities in the area over time. Rear access to businesses and institutions through internal driveways or alleys adjacent to building sides should be considered in addressing this challenge. Commercial and institutional locations rely on large truck deliveries and these truck movements along the Natural Bridge Road corridor, as well as ingress and egress at driveways and side streets are important to the success of the primary study area. Large truck interaction with automobiles, trolley/shuttles, buses, bikes and pedestrians will also be a consideration in the final design of the corridor.

## **Pedestrian Traffic**



The Federal Highway Administration publication (FHWA-RD-00-067) called “Roundabouts: An Informational Guide”, indicates that fewer pedestrian accidents with less severity occur at roundabouts when compared to signalized and unsignalized intersections with comparable traffic volumes. In this market, immediately adjacent to existing and future commercial opportunities, slow entries and exits for pedestrian safety will be important whether a roundabout or “T” intersections is finally constructed. Demographics in the study area include a mix of students, elderly, shoppers, professionals, and those individuals from outside the local market seeking the amenities within the area all converging at the “wedge” location. Choosing the appropriate crossing locations for pedestrians that provides the greatest safety and access to businesses will need to be well planned. Crosswalks and well designed curb ramp treatments will be important design elements at the “wedge” for pedestrian safety and security. Pedestrian use of the sidewalks throughout the primary study area is essential to the long term success of this marketplace. Therefore, the safety, aesthetics, and public amenities experienced by pedestrian traffic will determine the long term use of sidewalks and crosswalks and continued public interest in commercial venues.

The roundabout intersection presents additional challenges for pedestrians. While providing continuous flow for motor vehicles, there are no traffic or pedestrian signals, therefore gaps in traffic that exist are the means for pedestrian crossing, as well as the prioritization of pedestrian movements in an unsignalized intersection. Crosswalk pattern, color and texture, signing and striping all are critical for safe movements in the intersection.

## **Bicyclists**



The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a nonprofit organization funded by auto insurers, reports that roundabouts provide a ten percent reduction in bicycle crashes at roundabouts compared to signalized intersections. Roundabout design option will need

to consider all levels of experience related to bicyclists' needs and will give consideration to less experienced bicyclist as well. Adjacent public amenities will include creative storage of bikes that complement the overall aesthetics of the area. Intermingling with traffic and the movement of vehicles through the roundabout may warrant means of walking bikes within the pedestrian travel ways. Providing a ramp from the roadway to a shared-use path prior to the intersection can allow bicycles to exit the roadway and proceed around the intersection safely. Whether a roundabout or "T" intersection is constructed, cycling safety for all levels of rider experience will be considered in the final design of the structure. It is anticipated that due to existing and planned trails and bikeways in the region; the growing interest in the general populations associated with the health benefits of biking; the acceptance of bikes as an alternative mode of transportation; and the increase of bikes in this marketplace associated with student populations, infrastructure design at the "wedge" will need to be well planned to accommodate increased bike travel and safety.

Bicycle parking will be a key to increased use of bicycles as an effective form of transportation in the corridor. Both public and private spaces should allow for the effective and safe parking of bicycles. Bicycle parking is a policy element and a critical part of development in the area to encourage healthy and active employees and businesses. This is supported by bicycle parking in the form of bike racks along streetscapes that encourage this travel mode.

### **Emergency Vehicles**



Emergency vehicles will experience the same issues and physical conditions as larger truck traffic and will not tolerate any delay passing through the roundabout or "T" intersection. Obviously all traffic must yield to the emergency vehicles which may result in important design considerations in the overall engineering of the structure (for instance, shoulder width as a place to pull over as emergency vehicles pass). As a significant point of convergence, the "wedge" road design will need to take into consideration emergency vehicle safe passage among pedestrian, bike, shuttle, bus, and automobile traffic.

### **Underground Utilities**



Installation of underground utilities, including electrical and telephone service, assures the safety and aesthetic integrity of the entire marketplace by eliminating unsightly wires crisscrossing vehicular and pedestrian ways. Natural Bridge Road, by necessity, will be reconstructed in order to implement new road configurations (the road diet) and roundabout or "T" intersection structure. Therefore, the installation of all underground utilities may be possible extending from Nordic Drive to Lucas and Hunt Road along the subject corridor due to the surface disruption associated with the recreation of alignment configuration. Although underground utilities may add greater expense to construction costs associated with initial design and installation, the long term benefits are worth considering when planning new streetscape environments. Revitalization of any market includes "reinventing" market conditions and physical space. Success associated with revitalization relies on the creation of a safe environment and aesthetic elements that make local and regional visitors comfortable and interested in returning to experience the corridor. The elimination of overhead lines and power poles add to the clean, unobstructed ambiance of major commercial corridors.

## **Landscaping and Public Furniture**



Landscaping and public furniture are those design elements that create an environment of safety and well being necessary for attractive and functional public gathering places.

Successful landscaping and public amenity choices consider scale, color, planting patterns, the history of the area, location of amenities, and the way the public will use these amenities over time. There are many potential landscaping opportunities along the new corridor extending from Nordic Drive to Lucas and Hunt Road. As the market investment areas change, so the landscaping and public amenities can reflect the various elements of the corridor by providing excitement and uniqueness to the overall streetscape experience. Any environment is improved with landscaping and the addition of color and patterns. Well placed public gathering places, planted with creative landscaping and other public amenities can provide the ambiance and interest along the corridor that attracts public interaction and keeps people interested in returning to the corridor as a place to shop and to be experienced overall.

A separate landscape plan will be prepared to address the needs and opportunities of the corridor. In no case will the landscaping and public amenities obstruct or detract from commercial signage, safety directions related to the movement of the public, or access. Physical and visual obstruction of entrances and signage for instance, impedes business activities and distracts from the overall productivity of the corridor. The goal of this plan is to enhance and promote business and facilitate the long term growth and success of the institutions, businesses and residential neighborhoods.

## **Signage, Traffic Control and Lighting**



There are many opportunities for the creative use of signage, traffic control, and lighting to enhance public areas and to significantly improve commercial and institutional areas by making their frontage along Natural Bridge Road aesthetically pleasing. Incorporating signage, traffic control, and lighting into the overall landscaping plan will add value to the corridor and the various land uses while provide a safe environment. Signage, traffic control and lighting do not need to be utilitarian, especially in commercial areas. These public safety necessities provide an excellent opportunity for creative elements and in some cases whimsical designs that make a statement about a particular locations as well as providing fundamental information and well being.

## **Public Art, Signing, and Water Features**



An ideal opportunity for public art and water features are available along the Natural Bridge Road created by the road diet concept. An example of the effective use of the corridor may include, but are not limited to:

- Creative signage, branding, and way finding
- Public art (this area is historically significant and finding ways to celebrate that history is one idea for artistic expression along the corridor)
- Use of Stormwater Best Management Practices
- Public gathering places
- Outdoor dining areas at commercial locations

Creative signage will link the villages and cities along the corridor to create a consistent, visual character throughout the corridor, while allowing the unique individuality of various land uses to remain. Design elements may also allow the corridor to become a more distinct destination through the use of creative branding styles that reflect existing and future economic development activities. Wayfinding signing is critical to any destination. Distinct signage and design elements will allow confidence while traveling and provide guideposts to mark locations and directions to institutions and significant areas of activity.

Art work defines public spaces and provides an opportunity to distinguish this corridor from all other roadways in the region. Sculpture and artist outdoor art pieces can reflect the history of the area as well as defining specific market conditions along the corridor enhancing large, institutional campus environments to bringing focus and interest to smaller places along the business sections or at the “Wedge” location. When incorporated into the overall streetscape design elements, public art will enhance signage, wayfinding, public furnishing areas and corridor ambiance. Artwork can become so interesting or compelling that it becomes a visual attraction for the area to visitors, adding to the appeal of the corridor.

Water features provide a focal point for pedestrian travel. Their placement along the corridor provide opportunities for public gathering, places of reflection, and additional aesthetic value at points of interest. Due to climatic conditions in St. Louis, winter time care and maintenance of water features need to be taken into consideration as well as their visual impact when not in use.

Land use and market growth are directly related to the design and function of supporting infrastructure. Public amenities planned as part of infrastructure design is the vital link between the travel way and the land use in the corridor. The creation of public spaces throughout the entire corridor will be realized and planned as part of the Natural Bridge Road. This will allow the addition of functional landscaping that will not only provide areas for landscaping, but also areas that will reduce pollutants and lengthen concentration times for storm water entering the currently stressed storm water system. The proper selection of plants for functional landscape from native plants in areas such as the medians, bump out areas, tree lawns, and excess open areas will ultimately reduce ongoing costs for these plantings and eliminate the need for irrigation as typically proposed in such areas.

Well designed and implemented public gathering places become the communities “living rooms” providing locations for public markets, celebrations, and special events. Typically, the treatment of these public areas create development opportunities as well, due to increased regional market interest and the pleasant and urbane atmosphere created by the “place” and the “activity”.

## **Chapter Summary**

In summary, infrastructure design can influence public areas as outlined above providing immediate impact to the appearance and use of the corridor. Proposed new infrastructure includes:

- Roundabout or “T” intersection structure at the intersection of Natural Bridge and Florissant Roads
- Improved road configuration that allows for the safe and convenient movement of automobiles, buses, bikes, shuttle/trolley service, and pedestrians
- Establishment of a shuttle/trolley service important for local consumer movement and adding uniqueness to the marketplace for regional visitors
- New bus stops and enhanced public amenities at these location
- Landscaping, lighting, and public amenities that enhance public areas

The planning and financing of public infrastructure represents a substantial investment. It also represents opportunity for revitalization and improved market conditions for communities. The prospect of a reconfigured road alignment, optimizing the I-70 corridor, expanded shuttle service, and new public amenities places important emphasis on future development community renewal.