

Planning, Research, and Communications

Merit Award

Cross County Metrolink Extension

Landscape Master Plan

St. Louis, Missouri

Austin Tao & Associates

st. louis chapter - american society of landscape architects



Planning, Research, and Communications

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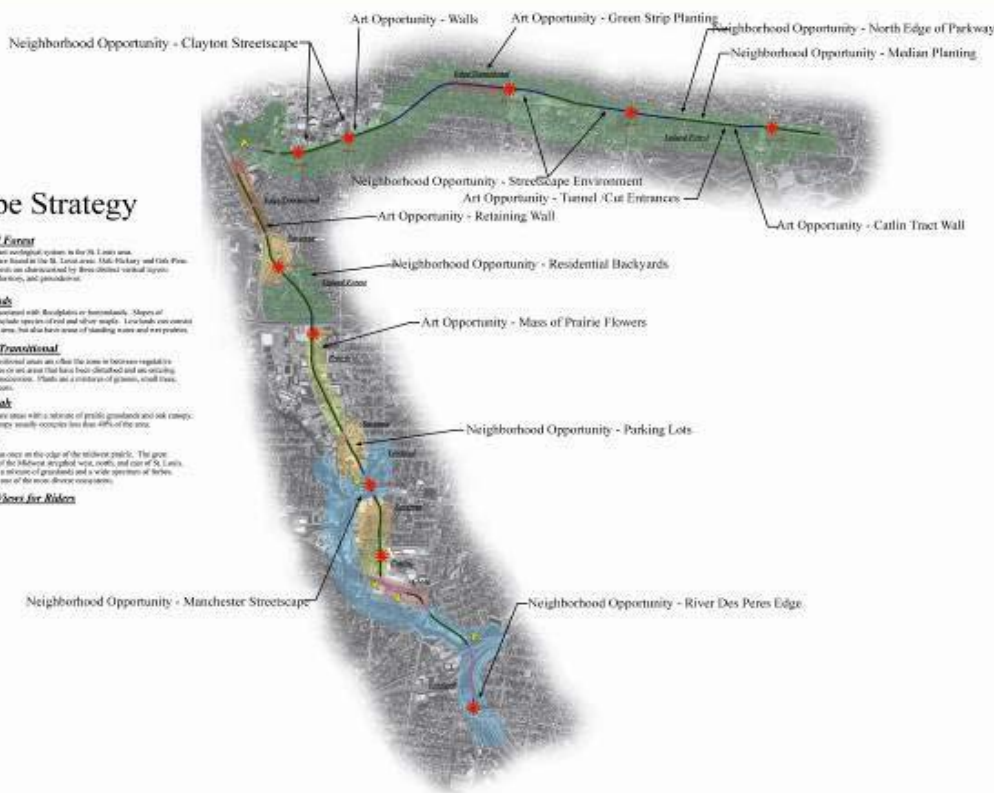


Cross County Metrolink Extension Landscape Master Plan



Landscape Strategy

- Upland Forest**
The dominant ecological system in the St. Louis area. Tree types are based on the St. Louis area. Mid-History and Late Pleistocene Forests are characterized by three distinct vertical layers: canopy, understorey, and groundcover.
- Lowlands**
Typically associated with floodplains or terraces. Many of the plants include species of reed and sedge. Lowlands are covered of forested areas, but also have areas of standing water and wet prairie.
- Edge / Transitional**
Edge / Transitional areas are a flow the area between regulated landscapes or an area that have been disturbed and are waiting secondary succession. Plants are a mixture of grasses, small trees, and shrubs.
- Savannah**
Savannah are areas with a mixture of prairie grasslands and oak canopy. The oak canopy usually occupies less than 40% of the area.
- Prairie**
St. Louis was once on the edge of the tallgrass prairie. The great grasslands of the Midwest occupied most, north, and east of St. Louis. Prairies are a mixture of grasslands and a wide spectrum of trees. Prairies are one of the most diverse ecosystems.
- Scenic Views for Riders**



Master Plan

Cross Country MetroLink will connect our communities with the environmental heritage and history of St. Louis

The St. Louis region, in pre-settlement times, was a rich tapestry of natural ecosystems. The meeting of these natural environments caused St. Louis to have a wonderful mixture of meadows, woodlands, savannahs, glades and wetlands with an abundance of fauna and beautiful flora.

The landscape design of Cross Country MetroLink seeks to recapture the character of the natural heritage of St. Louis. Although the area has changed over time through agricultural cultivation to present day urban development, the history of our natural heritage is still present, from oaks thriving in our parks to willows lining the edges of our streams.

Cross Country MetroLink will use the natural history and heritage of the region along its path as a framework for landscape treatment, organized into six environmental types: Upland Forest, Lowlands, Edge Transitional, Savannah, Prairie and Missouri Glades.

Although we will never return to our past, we can use our past to frame decisions about our future, including ways to beautify and integrate design into the communities served by the Cross County MetroLink communities.

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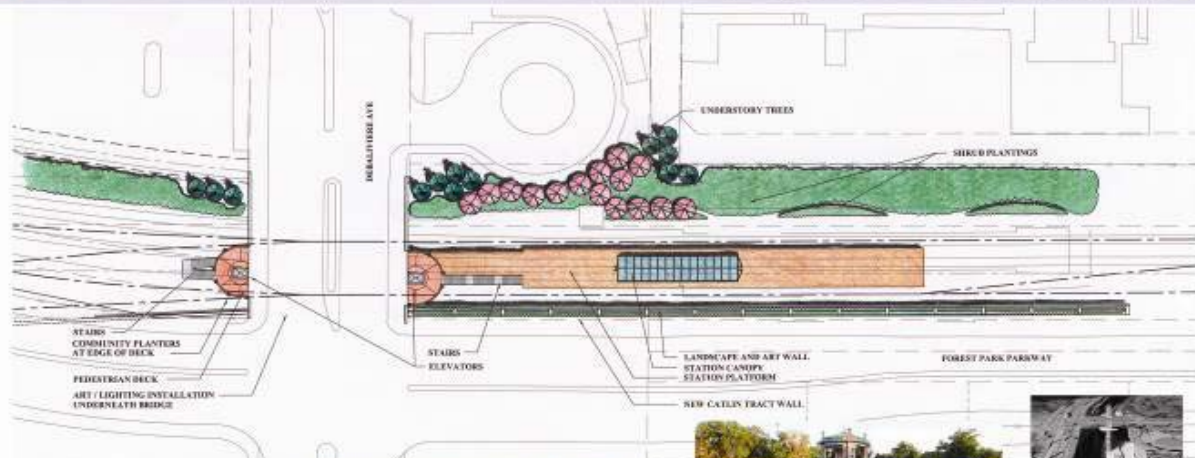
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CROSS COUNTY

Metrolink

Forest Park Station - upland forest





STAIRS - COMMUNITY PLANTERS AT EDGE OF DECK
 FEDERERIAN BECK ART / LIGHTING INSTALLATION UNDERLEATH BRIDGE
 STAIRS - ELEVATORS
 UNDERSTORY TREES
 SHRUB PLANTINGS
 LANDSCAPE AND ART WALL STATION CANOPY STATION PLATFORM
 NEW CATALIN FRACT WALL
 FOREST PARK PARKWAY
 DEBALIVIERE AVE

Neighborhood Context

The Forest Park Metrolink Station is located at the intersection of Forest Park Parkway and DeBaliviere Avenue in the City of St. Louis and will serve as the junction of the existing light rail line with the Cross County Extension. The station served as a hub of activity for the 1904 World's Fair and the neighborhood retains many material reminders of the historic event. In the early 1970's, renovation was spurred by the area's designation as an historic district. Over 2000 riders use the existing Forest Park Metrolink Station on an average weekday. Daily use is expected to more than double when the Cross County Extension opens. The Station is a short walk to the 1200-acre Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the country.








Station Design

The redesigned Forest Park Station will continue to serve as a gateway to adjacent residential neighborhoods and to historic Forest Park and its cultural institutions.

The preliminary Station Design is for a station with a center platform from which passengers will board trains. The platform area is in an open cut, below street level, accessible by elevator and stair. The elevators are planned to be constructed of glass and steel, and will be lit at night to act as beacons for the station.

Landscape Strategy

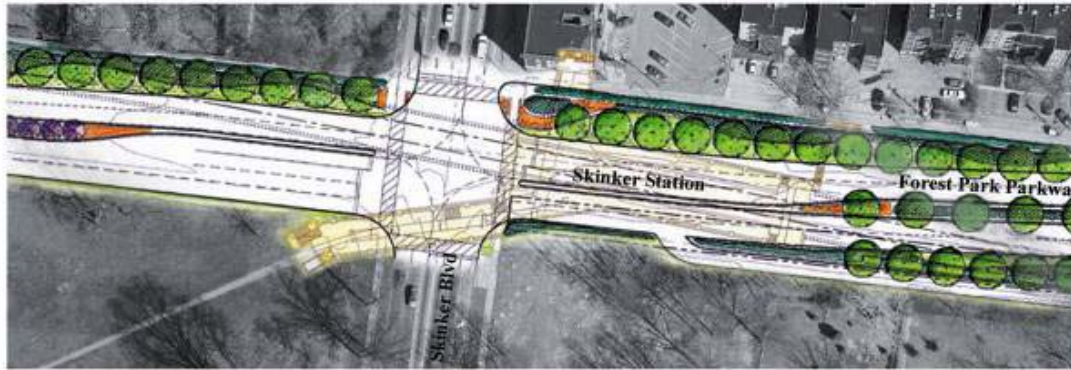
Upland Oak-Hickory Forests were once the dominant ecological system in the region. Dominance and species composition varies in response to topography, soils, geology and disturbance history. Over time, urban areas that were once dominant Oak-Hickory Forest have retained some of its character by continued planting of oaks. The other dominant canopy species, hickory, often is gone from urban stands due to the lack of hickory available in the nursery stock.

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Cross County Metrolink Extension Landscape Master Plan

CROSS COUNTY Metrolink Skinker Station - upland forest

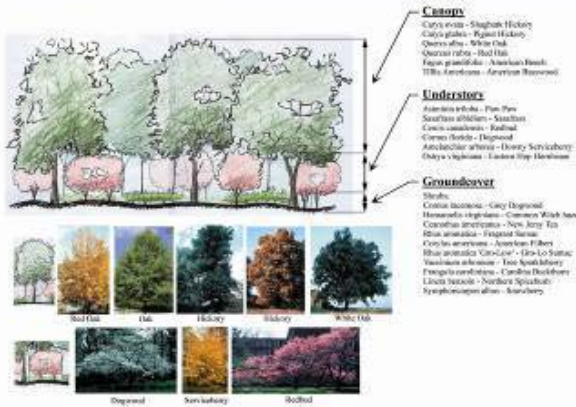


Neighborhood Context

The Skinker Station will be located just east of the border between the City of St. Louis and University City at the intersection of Forest Park Parkway and Skinker Boulevard. Washington University in St. Louis with its 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students is located immediately adjacent to the future station. Two major residential areas surround the station, and comprise an historic district of homes built in the early 1900's. Located to the north, the "Loop" area - noted for its thriving entertainment venues, restaurants and cafes - continues its development, with recent successful additions eastward into the City.

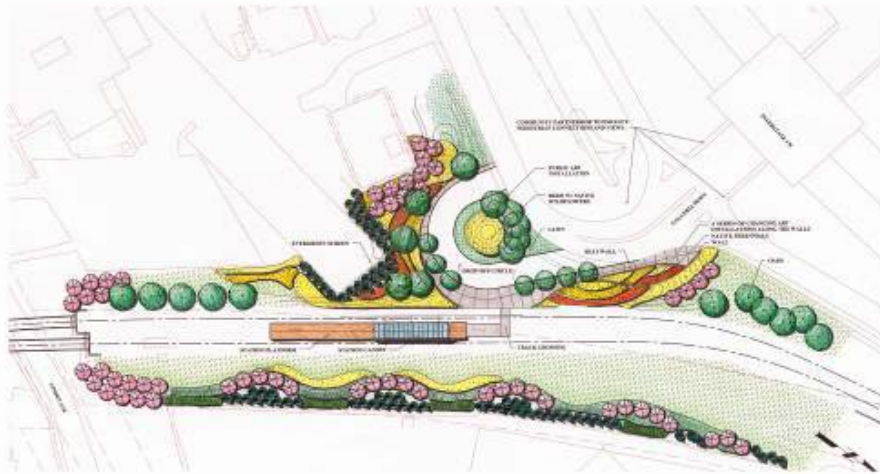
Station Design

The Skinker station will be an enclosed, underground, side platform station, accessible from street level by stairs and elevators. The station will also have an open mezzanine level, bounded by decorative railings. The design team envisions glassed display areas in the station passageways to accommodate changing art installations and local history exhibits. At the platform and mezzanine levels, ribs in the walls and ceiling will create rhythmic spaces. Curved panels will be installed in these spaces to deflect light and create interesting light and shadow.



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Cross County Metrolink Extension Landscape Master Plan



Neighborhood Context

In 1912, the area surrounding this future station was incorporated as Richmond Heights, its name indicating a southern heritage while highlighting the area's topography, said to be the second highest point in St. Louis County. The construction of I-64/40 and I-70 changed the nature of the residential suburb and fueled commercial growth. The station will be located close to the St. Louis Galleria, the largest shopping center in the region. The residential population of the immediate area remains relatively small.



Station Design

This station will serve the community of Richmond Heights and the Galleria shopping mall. The station, to be located adjacent to the Galleria Parkway, will be a center platform, at-grade station with an adjacent shuttle waiting area. The station will include a significant amount of planting bounded by retaining walls, which will also function as seating. The station plaza and shuttle waiting areas will be linked through decorative paving designs.

Landscape Strategy

Savannas consist of widely spaced trees, mainly oaks with occasional hickories, growing over an open understory and a thick ground cover of prairie grasses and wildflowers. The simplest way to describe a savanna is that it is a prairie with trees.

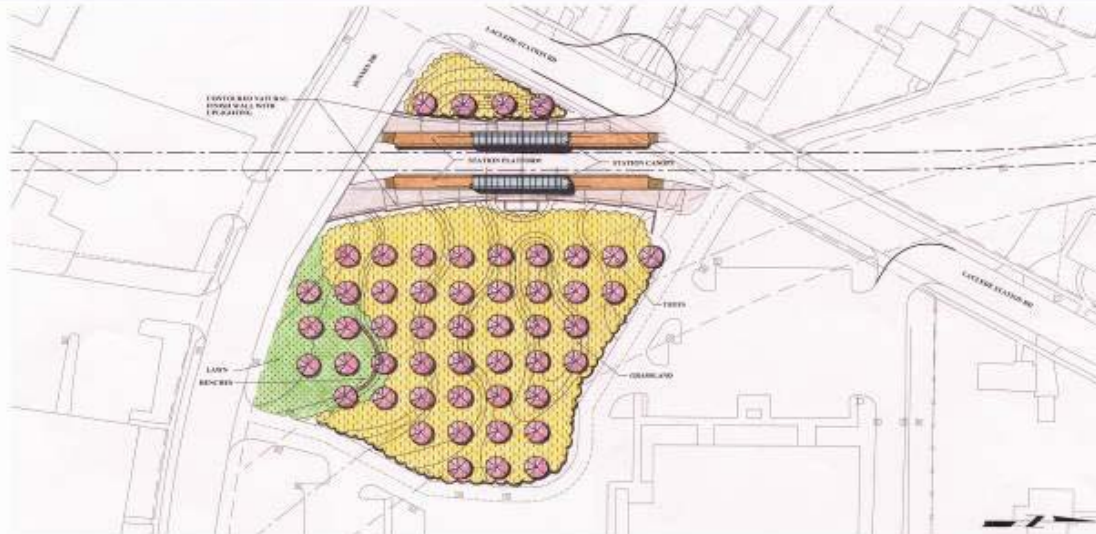


Range of oak savanna in the Midwest. Note that this area is the transitional area between the eastern woodlands and the western prairies.



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Neighborhood Context

This station is part of an inner-ring suburban industrial park developed in the 1990's. At present, the 550,000 square foot Sunnen Business Park is home to about 50 companies and over 1800 employees. Of all the suburban station areas, this station has one of the highest percentages of households without cars. To the northwest of the station, the City of Maplewood hopes to develop a public-private partnership to take advantage of economic development activity anticipated to result from Metrolink development.

Station Design

Sunnen Station will be located within the City of Maplewood, in the Sunnen Industrial Park located at Laclede Station Road and Sunnen Drive. A major feature of the side platform station will be a contoured wall behind the southbound platform. The wall will be stepped in elevation, tracing the form of the earth behind it. Plans also call for deliberate contouring of the adjacent land and formal plantings consisting of a grove of trees and prairie grasses.



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