JULIA M. CARSON TRANSIT CENTER

CATEGORY | New Construction (Project Cost Greater Than $1 Million)
PROJECT TYPE | Public Transportation Facility
ADDRESS | 201 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202
COMPLETION | June 2016
As the bus system in Indianapolis grew, the Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IndyGo) studied potential sites for their first transit center, a multi-modal hub that would increase efficiency and spur ridership. In 2014, they found an ideal site – a parking lot immediately south of the City-County Building. Here, a new transit center would serve as a gateway to downtown and embody IndyGo’s values: dignity-of-ridership and accessibility-for-all.

This site, while ideally located, came with technical challenges. A shallow, north-south tunnel bifurcated the area, and numerous cultural resources and poor soil conditions were present. The designs had to address these challenges while maximizing the number of bus loading bays. The site also had to provide safe pedestrian movement and an enduring, yet comfortable, environment.

The site includes 19 bus bays. A continuous string of glass and metal canopies connect the bus bays, shelter riders from precipitation, and direct safe flow across the site. The transit center also provides ample bike parking, connects passengers to city-wide bikeshare and electrical carshare services, and borders the beloved Indianapolis Cultural Trail.

The siting of the transit center building creates an inviting environment, and one that does not impede the flow of passengers who move directly from city sidewalks to their buses. The building also serves as a iconic gateway to Indianapolis, especially for cars driving west on U.S. Route 40, the National Road.

The building’s curved, upturned roof; glass walls; and bright interior establish a welcoming character, and its multiple entrances make passenger flow easy and efficient. The design reflects, in contemporary ways, the Modernist aesthetic of the adjacent City-County Building. The transit center expects to receive LEED Silver certification, and its sustainable strategies include the diversion of all stormwater to underground detention or planters, which provide a natural setting in an urban landscape.

IndyGo and IndyGo riders report better connectivity, easier route finding, and an accommodating and comfortable environment. The sculptural design, airy interior, and connectivity enhance the entire experience of a rider. Fittingly, the transit center is named for the late Julia M. Carson, the U.S. Congresswoman who, for many years, worked tirelessly for the people of Indianapolis, and helped secure funding for this important city hub.
The transit center serves as a hub for existing IndyGo bus routes, and is at the heart of future rapid transit directives. Its downtown location connects IndyGo passengers with the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, an electric carshare service, and a city-wide bikeshare system.
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SITE PLAN

1. Transit Center
2. Bus Loading Zone
3. Seating/Gathering Space
4. Plant Bed
5. Rain Gardens
6. Bench
7. Seat Wall
8. Bollard
9. Pavedrain Infiltration Area
10. Parking
11. Canopy (Overhead)
12. Water Feature
13. Covered Bike Parking
14. Northbound Bus Only Lane
15. Access to Island
16. Connection to Cultural Trail
The first floor serves as a public space, and individuals can enter the transit center from any direction. The passenger waiting area includes flexible seating options, an IndyGo ticket office, coordinated signage, Wi-Fi, and an interactive wall that provides real-time route information. Office space and driver amenities are also located on the first floor.
The second floor includes a training room and a board room, which features glass walls and overlooks the passenger waiting area. The transit center also includes an area for pre- and post-function space, with views of the city.
Overall themes include connectivity, integrity, and transparency. Glass walls erase the barrier for first-time passengers, and the building’s welcoming atmosphere and sleek, contemporary form allow for a seamless transition between the interior and exterior spaces.
Flexible seating, coordinated signage, and the targeted use of color and texture provide a welcoming, navigable space that enhances the passenger experience. Glass walls bathe the waiting area in natural light, and allow individuals to see both into the transit center, and see out – to the public plaza, to the bus bays, to the surrounding urban environment.
Curved canopies mimic the transit center building’s sculptural forms, and
shield passengers from the rain and snow. They also define the bus bays,
which are organized in a sawtooth pattern to increase efficiency and
visibility. Bus detection systems incorporated into the canopies display
real-time schedule information.
The public plaza includes seatwalls, rain gardens, a tree allée, and custom lighting. The plaza invites both passengers and passersby into the space, and provides a garden-like escape in the heart of the city.
Recessed stormwater planters feature natural planters, serve as a natural backdrop to the bus bays, and collect and filter stormwater on-site. The stormwater management systems detain 100 percent of a 25-year storm event.
The transit center serves as an iconic gateway to downtown Indianapolis. Its welcoming atmosphere, active public spaces, integration into the urban fabric, and connectivity to multi-modal services transform what individuals think about public transportation.