

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

R E S E A R C H R E P O R T

**PERSONAL SAFETY AND TRANSIT:  
PATHS, ENVIRONMENTS, STOPS, AND STATIONS**

Mary Vogel and James L. Pettinari  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
University of Minnesota

CTS 02-05

# **Personal Safety and Transit: Paths, Environments, Stops, and Stations**

## **Final Report**

Prepared by

Mary Vogel  
James Pettinari

Department of Landscape Architecture  
University of Minnesota

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Center for Transportation Studies  
200 Transportation and Safety Building  
511 Washington Ave. S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

[www.cts.umn.edu](http://www.cts.umn.edu)

E-mail: [cts@tc.umn.edu](mailto:cts@tc.umn.edu)

Phone: 612-626-1077

Fax: 612-625-6381

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**PERSONAL SAFETY  
&  
TRANSIT:  
PATHS, ENVIRONMENTS,  
STOPS AND STATIONS  
MARY VOGEL & JAMES PETTINARI**



# **Personal Safety and the Transit Environment**

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Mary Vogel, Senior Research Fellow  
James Pettinari, Senior Research Fellow

Department of Landscape Architecture

College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Center For Transportation Studies

University of Minnesota

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# **T a b l e o f C o n t e n t s**

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# **INTRODUCTION**



# INTRODUCTION

As the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area looks to improve transit choices and seeks to improve existing transit service, the safety of transit users needs to be an issue that is considered carefully as each new service is added, old services changed, and new stops are added. This report is intended to be a resource for informing transit decisions in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and in Greater Minnesota. It does not address the safety of the transit vehicle itself; many studies have done that. It focuses on the design of *transit environments* as they impact the personal safety of transit users.

The report looks at site specific physical design issues, that is, transit stop or station design. But it also goes beyond to address the nature of the larger environment in which the transit stop or station is located. Issues of access are also addressed because the character of the pathways leading to and from transit stops are integral parts of the transit environment .

## ***Personal Safety an Important Issue***

Personal safety is an important issue in an effective transit system because personal safety greatly impacts use. The real safety of transit users and their perception of their safety are often crucial factors in the decision to use or not to use transit .

The goal of every transit organization is to provide safe transportation to its customers. Much attention is paid to the safe design and operation of the transit vehicle. Vehicles are inspected regularly to ensure safety. Safe operation is stressed through extensive training and careful supervision. Yet, personal safety considerations do not stop with the consideration of the transit vehicle and its operation; nor does it stop with actual safety. Often decisions to ride transit are based on a perception of safety. How safe a person feels when walking to the stop, waiting at the stop, and walking to his/her destination after leaving the transit vehicle are important considerations in making a choice to use or not to use transit.

## ***Scope of the Study***

This study addresses personal safety considerations encompassing the environments that the rider encounters while going to the transit stop, boarding the vehicle, and leaving for his destination whether the rider comes on foot, bicycle, car, or in another transit vehicle. The issues of vehicle design are beyond the scope of the study.

## ***Methodology***

Using the design principles articulated in *Design for Public Safety Saint Paul: a Guide for Making a Safer Public Realm*, this study uses the case study methods of the architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design professions. It evaluates existing transit environments and suggests new ones.

# INTRODUCTION

## *Selection of Types: Transit Environments*

The study focuses on the physical design issues of transit environments. Transit stops, transit stop environments, the pathways that lead to and from the stop, and the pathway environments were all studied. Traditional bus, light rail, and park and ride facilities, modes of transit that had applicability to the Twin City Metropolitan Area, were all part of the study. Central City, Post World War II Suburbs, and New Urbanism Suburbs, types of communities found in the metro area, were the environments studied.

## *Organization of the Report*

This report is organized so that it can be read from cover to cover or used as a reference. Care has been taken to minimize text. The first chapter presents the personal safety principles. The principles are demonstrated in the following three chapters. Photographs of actual built environments and design drawings of hypothetical or proposed environments show how these principles can be applied or point out things that do not work to support personal safety. The second chapter addresses paths to transit, the third the environments surrounding transit facilities, and the fourth the transit stops and stations themselves.

**CHAPTER I: PERSONAL SAFETY  
DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES : OWNERSHIP

An “owned” environment is safer than one that appears to be abandoned. Often the level of maintenance that a property receives indicates the level of ownership. Well maintained environments appear owned and are less likely to be scenes of crimes because a well cared for urban environment is and feels safer.

Belonging to its surroundings also indicates ownership. Transit stops whose scale, materials, and siting all make it a part of the neighborhood or district are “owned.” Bus stops placed in isolation do not feel owned. Left over spaces next to the pathway to the station can appear to belong to no one making a passerby feel less safe. These “pieces,” especially when they are adjacent to public side walks, can be places where would-be attackers lurk.

When Metro Transit decided to paint its buses white and keep them very clean, it was using the concept of ownership to promote confidence in its customers. Not all signs of ownership are positive, however. Gang graffiti marked environments tag gang territory and intimidate. They are more often scenes of crime than those environments that do not have graffiti.

The lower photograph shows a pathway in the heart of a neighborhood. Because it is unmaintained, it is intimidating even during the day. The upper photograph shows an unowned space near a bus stop.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES : LAND USE/ACTIVITY

**Because** transit systems are important parts of the public infrastructure that make a community, a well designed public realm should support the transit stop, the environment around the stop, and the pathway to the stop. These public areas should also be supported by the types of land uses contiguous to them. Appropriate land uses and the activities associated with those uses add both to transit use and to personal safety. Deserted areas can be intimidating and dangerous. The presence of people is desired because people provide “eyes on the street” which can deter crime and make others feel safer. Areas of mixed use are preferred because areas of single use can be active, vibrant places at times and deserted, formidable areas during other times of the day and days of the week. Areas of mixed uses have a variety of people coming and going and activity around-the-clock, seven days a week. It is important that the mix of use is compatible, however. Notorious bars are not good neighbors to child care centers or to public libraries.

The sidewalk shown above is example of a public realm that is inadequate pathway to the transit stop. The too-narrow sidewalk is punctuated with obstructions. This is a difficult environment at best; during the winter when snow accumulates; it is impassable. The bus stop shown at the bottom is an island that is not supported by the uses of the land around it. Although it is an important transfer point, it is in the middle of nowhere.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES : VISIBILITY

**Transit** environments are safer and feel safer if they are visible to users and observers. Crimes against people are usually committed in places that are hidden from the view of others. Victims that are accosted in visible areas are taken to secluded areas.

Sightlines need to be carefully designed in transit environments. Columns, walls, fences, shrubbery, and level changes can all obstruct sightlines, block observers' views, and conceal an attacker.

Lighting levels are crucial in maintaining visibility and safety throughout the day and night in transit environments. Lighting should illuminate the faces of people. Multi sources of light is more resistant to vandalism and provides even illumination that casts fewer intimidating shadows.

Lighting that is too bright in bus shelters can compromise personal safety. Too bright lights create a fish bowl effect. The transit user in the shelter can be easily seen by others, but can not see outside. Maintenance is necessary to maintain visibility. Burned out lights need to be replaced. Trees that have grown to obstruct the illumination need to be trimmed.

Visibility is good in this downtown bus mall, but it needs some maintenance. The bus shelters are transparent and properly lighted at night. There are good sightlines between the stores, the sidewalk, the bus shelters, and the street. The trees are trimmed so that the faces can be observed. However, the trees need to be trimmed to maintain good illumination.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES : MOBILITY

**Feeling** safe when going to and from a transit stop or waiting for the transit vehicle at a stop is dependent on a sense of mobility. Mobility is the freedom to move to avoid an unsafe or threatening situation. Freedom of movement needs to be designed into the environment so that transit patrons do not feel confined as they walk to the stop and wait there. When transit stops are small, fenced areas, they feel to the users like “people pens.” People feel more comfortable when they are not forced to be too close to the others who are waiting with them. Stops should be spacious so that there is no crowding and that one can move to another part of the stop if one wishes.

Avoiding or minimizing movement predictors and entrapment areas are important considerations when designing transit environments. Movement predictors and entrapment areas are places of potential danger because mobility is restricted in them. When a pathway gives no choice but to enter at one end and leave at the other, such as a tunnel or a bridge, it is a movement predictor. These areas are threatening and dangerous because a would-be assailant can await an intended victim at the exit. Entrapment areas are small, isolated areas where assailants can hide and victims can be confined. Dark nooks along paths are entrapment areas.

The bus shelter in the upper photograph is open ended and has several setting areas. The small space between two buildings in the lower photograph is an entrapment area.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES : READABILITY

We feel safer and are safer if we know where we are, where we are going, and can follow a clear path to get there. Visual cues can make an environment very readable or confusing. Subway stations in Stockholm are designed to be unique environments, each with its own distinct, very recognizable personality. When riding the subway, the signature nature of each station makes it easier to find the right station and avoid mistakes. This environmental design strategy gives the rider a confidence in using the system that makes the rider feel safer.

Clear, assessable signs can give important visual cues in transit environments that make the environment readable. However, the most important readable cues are those parts of the environment that are objects or surfaces. These cues can buffer transit users from potential danger and lead to the stop. Paving surfaces can define a pathway that is easy to follow. Street furniture can be important cuegivers. Bollards can cue where to stand, paving can define a pathway, and potted plants can separate the people area from the area for vehicles.

The top photograph shows a readable transit environment. The paving, the white strip, the maroon signs, the lights with green poles, and the benches define the waiting area for the LRT. The bus shelter, the yellow stripe, the lights with beige poles, and the blue signs define the waiting area for the buses. The trees and waste containers help to define the two separate areas of the environment. In the bottom photograph bus station signs and paving patterns cue people where to stand to wait for the bus. The paving patterns, white strip, and the potted plants delineate where the bus will be.





## **CHAPTER II: PATHS TO TRANSIT**

## PATHS

**Placing** benches and shelters at stops can make the experience of waiting for transit more comfortable, yet the placement of such street furniture can make the pathway past the stop uncomfortable to use. This popular stop would have been better if the bench were not placed on the sidewalk, but next to it, leaving the sidewalk clear for passage. (mobility)

**The** bump-out at this corner helps ease the congestion at the corner, but the store entrance, street display of merchandise, and waiting for the bus all take place in very close proximity to each other. (activity/land use, mobility)



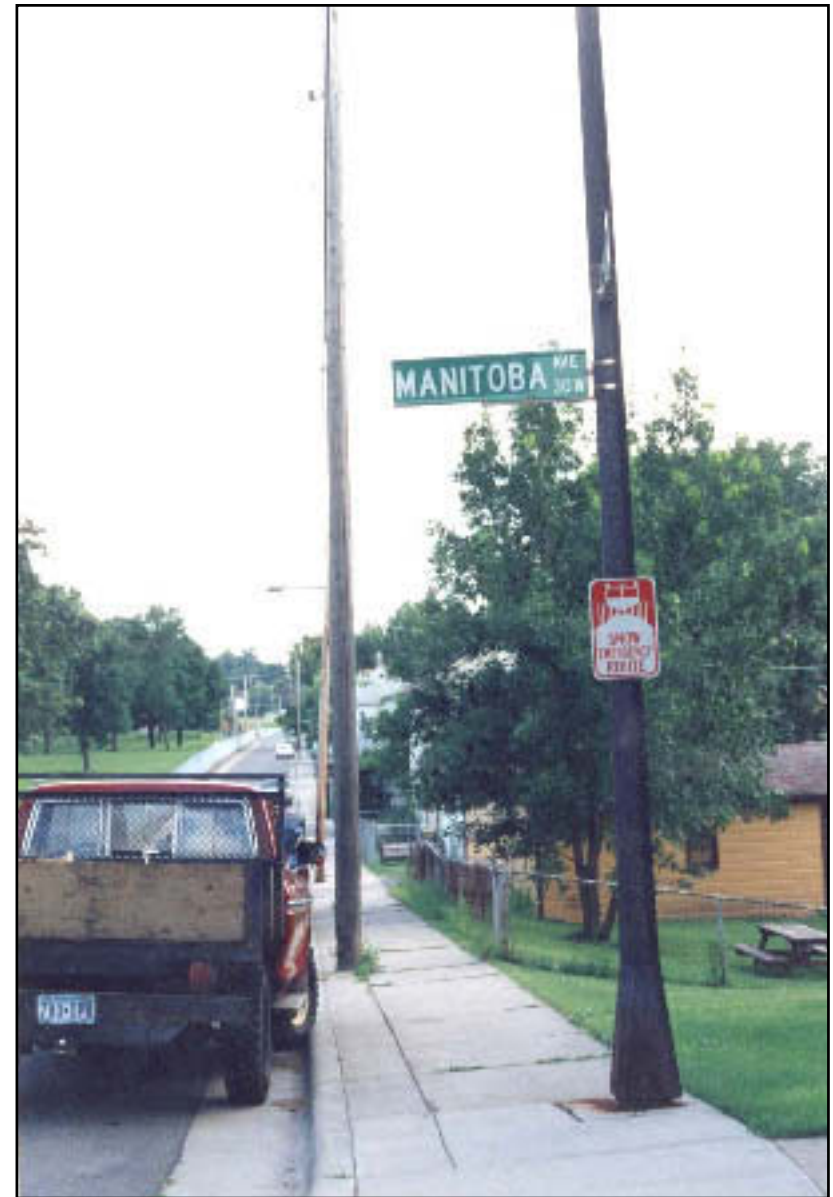
# PATHS

**These** bus shelters really crowd the narrow sidewalks. The street signs, lamp posts, and newspaper vending machines also add to the congestion. (mobility, land use)



# PATHS

**Existing** environments need to be evaluated before siting a pathway to a transit stop. Certain conditions may make some routes inappropriate. Narrow sidewalks that are cluttered with obstacles, as in the photo to the right, are not suitable. Neither are isolated pedestrian bridges like the one below. (mobility, land use)



## PATHS

**Many** efforts have been made to make transit more accessible to those that have physical disabilities. These efforts can be undermined when the path that leads to the transit stop does not feel safe to its users. People with handicaps are particularly vulnerable to attack. This path between an apartment building for people with physical handicaps and the transit stop is isolated, poorly lighted, and lined with bushes that could conceal attackers. Because the front bumpers of cars overhang the sidewalk, the path becomes too narrow for two wheelchairs to pass. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)

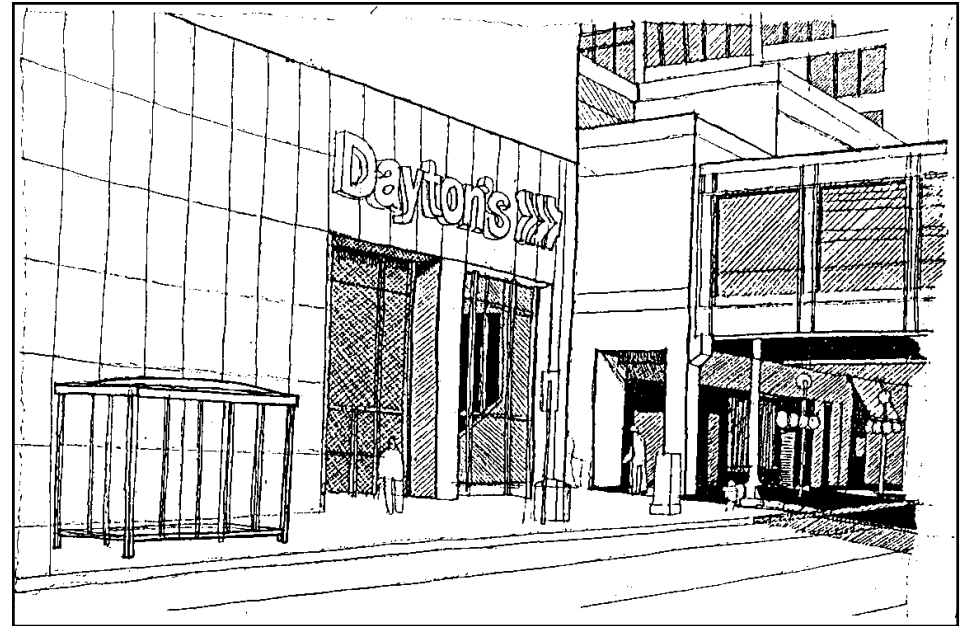


**The** absence of sidewalks in many residential suburban neighborhoods is a barrier to transit use. Developments should be designed to accommodate transit access. This suburban affordable housing development built by the Roosevelt administration had to use land efficiently in order to keep costs down, yet each street has a sidewalk on one side. (mobility)



# PATHS

**Effective** strategies for paths that are comfortable to use incorporate all the pedestrian systems that will be used to reach the transit stops. Skyways are important systems in both downtown Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Currently the skyway system is not as integrated with the transit stops as it could be. (activity/land use)



**Suburban** and exurban park and ride lots are too often vast, isolated islands of asphalt. This one is not. Sidewalks lead to the bus stop, and a pedestrian path is provided through the lot. (activity/land use, mobility)



## PATHS

**The** design of this suburban style shopping mall on a busy central city street has made the sidewalk less safe because the buildings are set back from the street. The seasonal fruit market, however, activates the spaces by the bus stop, making it feel safer. (activity/land use, visibility)



**This** restaurant does not help make the path to the bus stop safer because the “front door” is not on the front of the building. It is on the side and is oriented to the parking lot, not the street. (activity/land use, visibility)



## PATHS

**Often** parking lots can be places of danger and are to be avoided. This parking lot is a good neighbor that helps to make the path to the transit stop feel safer. Its small size and its design is in character with the design of the street. The lot is well maintained and its fencing does not provide hiding places. (ownership, visibility)



**This** parking lot is too big, belongs to no one, and is too isolated from “eyes on the street.” These characteristics make it a potential place for criminal activity and intimidating loitering. A path to the transit stop should avoid spaces like this. (ownership, activity/land use)





# PATHS

**The** gap between these buildings is no longer a potential hiding place because it has been fenced off. This street has such a narrow sidewalk that this strategy is particularly important here. (ownership, mobility)



**This** space between buildings is occupied and separated from the sidewalk. (ownership, mobility)



# PATHS

**This** space between buildings has been claimed as a social space. It is wide enough to permit passage. The bench is placed back from the sidewalk so it does not block traffic, yet it is close enough for people watching. This space could benefit from the addition of lighting. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



**Paths** that do not have people places that border them often are avoided because they seem isolated, unfriendly, and scary, even during the day. Paths that are too narrow, like the sidewalk on the right, require users to step out into very fast traffic in order to pass each other. (ownership, activity/land use, mobility)



# PATHS

**Passages** like this route to the LRT station are to be avoided whenever possible. Narrow, isolated spaces, they are intimidating to cross because there are no places to escape. These spaces need to be well lighted. When transit is built next to a freeway, structures like this are often built so that those across the freeway can reach the station on the other side. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**By** building new multi-unit housing next to the transportation corridor, transit use is encouraged and more activity is added to the station environment. (activity/land use)



**A** mugger could hide at the bottom of these steps that lead from the freeway bridge to the LRT station. A victim could be taken to an area behind the stairs. Although the platform appears to be well lighted, the stairs do not. (visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**Bushes** are adjacent to the bus transfer station and the end of the stairway to the freeway bridge providing potential hiding places for muggers in this isolated setting.  
(activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**This** LRT and bus transfer station is isolated from the shopping center it serves. Some of the path to the station has store windows that overlook it. (activity/land use, visibility)



## PATHS

**This** environment behind the shopping center is not a good place for the pedestrian path between the shopping center and the transit station. It is in a “no man’s land” strewn with abandoned shopping carts. Much of the path is very confined as it passes by the back of the center. Its adjacency to the tracks makes it even more intimidating. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**The** continuation of this path is also problematic. Although the bridge over the wetland is wide enough to provide an interesting place to stop and watch the wildlife during the day (which adds activity), the bridge area with its bushes can be intimidating at night. Pedestrian-scaled lighting is not provided. The large overhead lights may work for the buses, but they can leave areas adjacent to the path in shadow. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)





## PATHS

**This** pedestrian path to a light rail line is bucolic, but it could be frightening, particularly at night when the lights cast shadows. Its separation from activity could make it intimidating to some at any time. The path width permits the pedestrian an opportunity to walk near the middle, away from the threatening foliage at its edges. Trimming of foliage should be part of the regular maintenance routine in order that the bushes do not become hiding places. (activity/land use, readability, mobility)



**This** inner city path is intimidating even in the daytime. (Ownership, Visibility)



## PATHS

**Street** furnishings can add much to personal safety. Lighting is particularly important. However, lighting needs to be placed appropriately and be well maintained. The growth of trees and shrubbery may compromise its effectiveness as in this case where tree branches have surrounded the globe, limiting its effective illumination. Bollards can prove needed people-scaled illumination in dark corners and help define a pathway. (visibility, readability)

**Well** maintained pavement is important to safety. Changes in pavement levels can create hazards for the pedestrian especially when these changes collect water that freezes and turns to ice. (ownership)



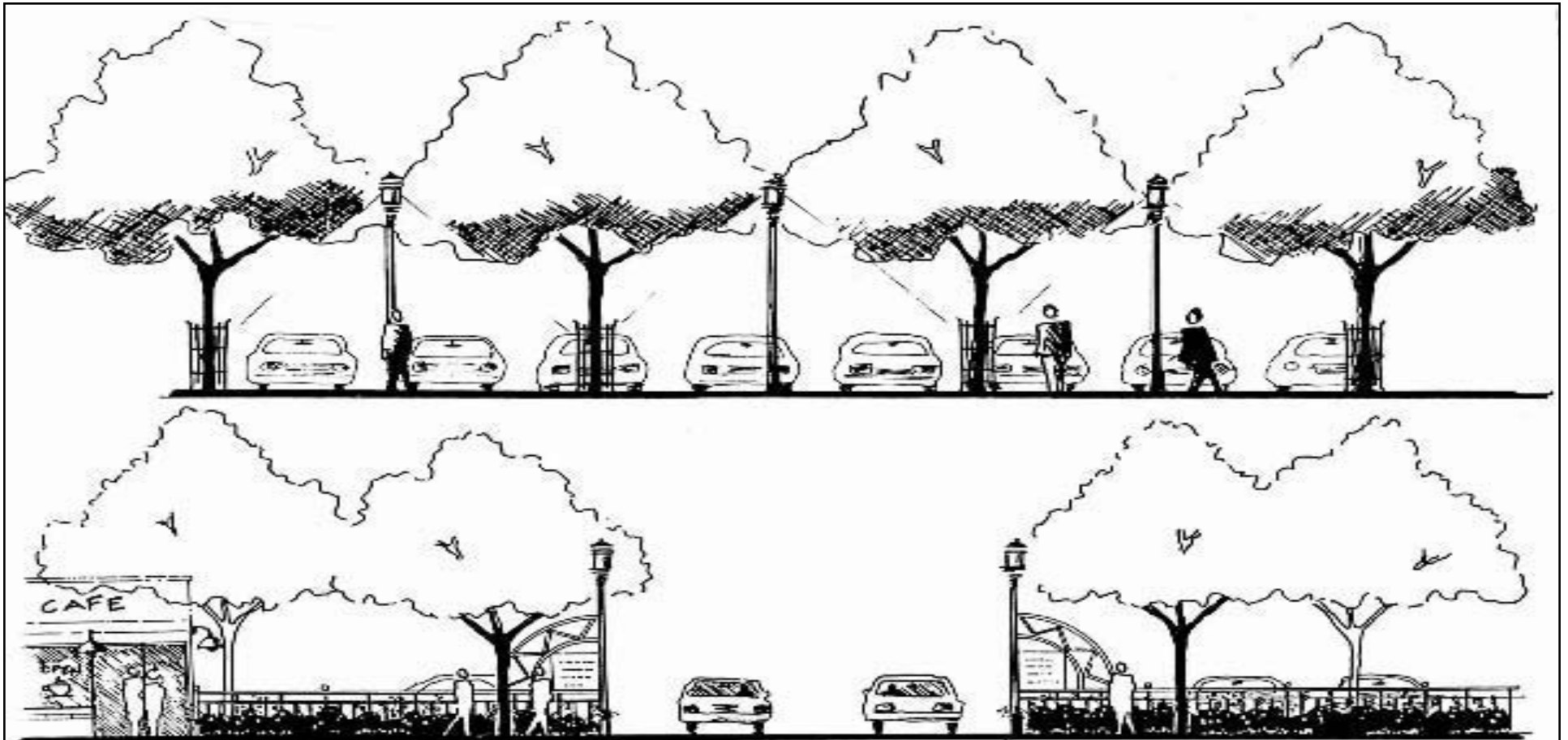
# PATHS

**Careful** design of the street edge can increase personal safety. This pedestrian realm is well-layered and very legible. Paving patterns give visual clues that define areas of use. A pedestrian can read what part of the sidewalk is used for the sidewalk cafe, the bus stop, and walking by. The sidewalk is well lighted and maintained. The trees, the lampposts, and the on-street parking protect the pedestrian from the traffic. (readability, ownership, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**This** street has a well defined pedestrian realm as it passes a parking lot. It is well maintained. The trees are trimmed so the sightlines are not blocked, the fence and plants divide the sidewalk from the parking lot, and the lighting calls out the lot entrance. (ownership, visibility, readability, mobility)



# PATHS

**Bridges** are of particular concern because they are often weak links in a strong pathway to transit. This bridge is part of no person's land right in the middle of the city. There is nothing urban about it. It has no activity that surrounds or overlooks it. It has a sidewalk, but no pedestrian-scaled lighting. It is clearly an environment for automobiles. (ownership, activity/land use)



**This** bridge has some buildings that overlook it. Its sidewalk is lighted with pedestrian-scaled lighting. The railing detail identifies it as a part of the city. Snow has been removed to allow for use. (ownership, activity/land use)

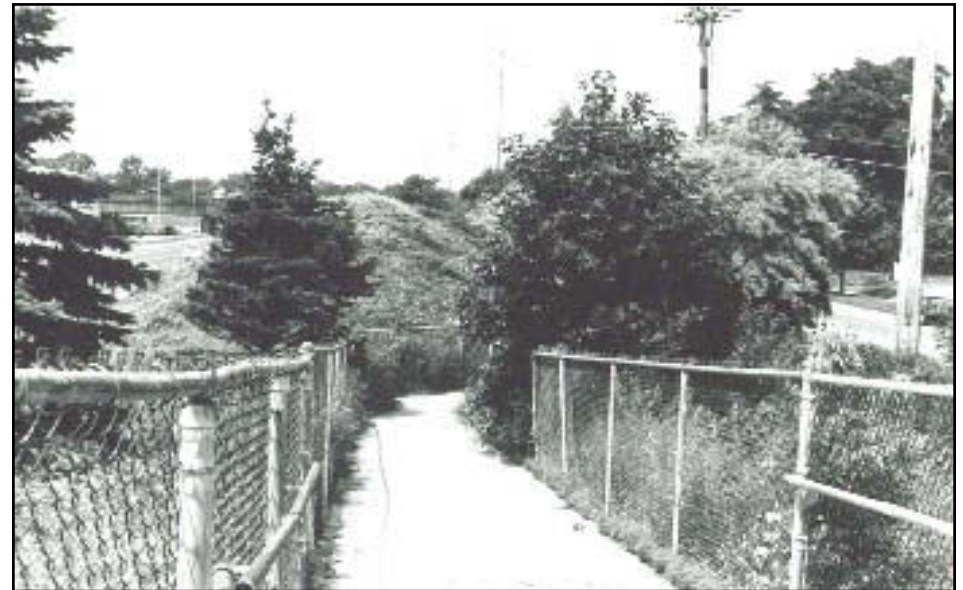


# PATHS

**Even** this small bridge provides a hazard. It is isolated, the guard rail could provide a hiding place, and it is not lighted. (activity/land use)



**This** bridge is scary during any time of the day or night. It is isolated, bushes next to it provide a hiding place, it is poorly maintained, and the fencing creates a space from which it is hard to escape. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**Business** parks provide special challenges for paths to transit. Often these parks are truck-oriented and suburban in form, even when they are built in the inner city. They are designed as enclaves separate from their neighbors. The buildings have blank walls, or they are set so far back from the street that no “eyes on the street” are provided. When the business park to the right was developed, no pathway from the bus line on the arterial above was provided. Because of this, a special bus that went through the park had to be provided. Often these parks have no sidewalk at all, so it is hard to walk from the transit stop to work. If they do have sidewalks, they are often pedestrian unfriendly. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**Paths** should read well and be part of their environment  
This path is part of an experience. One can shop and greet neighbors before reaching the bus stop.  
(activity/land use)



**This** path is well marked. Although the transit stop is separate from the shopping center, the path to and from it is very clear.  
(readability)





## PATHS

**The** design of superblock apartment developments, such as this one, does not support transit use even though they often provide the density needed for transit. They are internally focused around shared open space that is for residential use only. They are separated from the public street by a “moat” of parking. No “eyes on the street” are provided by this arrangement. Usually there are no sidewalks for pedestrians, as can be seen in the example on the right. (ownership, visibility, mobility)

**This** neighborhood path is supported by the placement of the street, boulevard, street trees, sidewalks, and the housing. The layering from the public realm to the semi-private yard, to private house is very clear. Front doors and front porches provide “eyes on the street.” (activity/land use, visibility, readability)



## PATHS

**These** paths radiate from the LRT station to individual bus stations. They are easy to read and have pedestrian scaled lights, but some trees obscure the lights. The areas between the paths have been planted. Plants chosen in such settings should be easy to maintain in order to give the area a well-maintained appearance. (readability, visibility, ownership)



# PATHS

**This** path from a park and ride lot to the transit station reads well as it moves through the lot. It is wide, well lighted and the trees are trimmed up to permit the recognition of faces. (readability, visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

**These** crosswalks that lead from the LRT station are well marked, well lit, and accessible to those in wheelchairs. (readability, mobility)



**The** gates by the station in the lower photograph help protect the transit users from the train. (readability)



# PATHS

**This** path through a wall at a transit station is problematic. The surface is uneven and the wall provides a dark hiding place for a would-be assailant. (visibility, mobility)



# PATHS

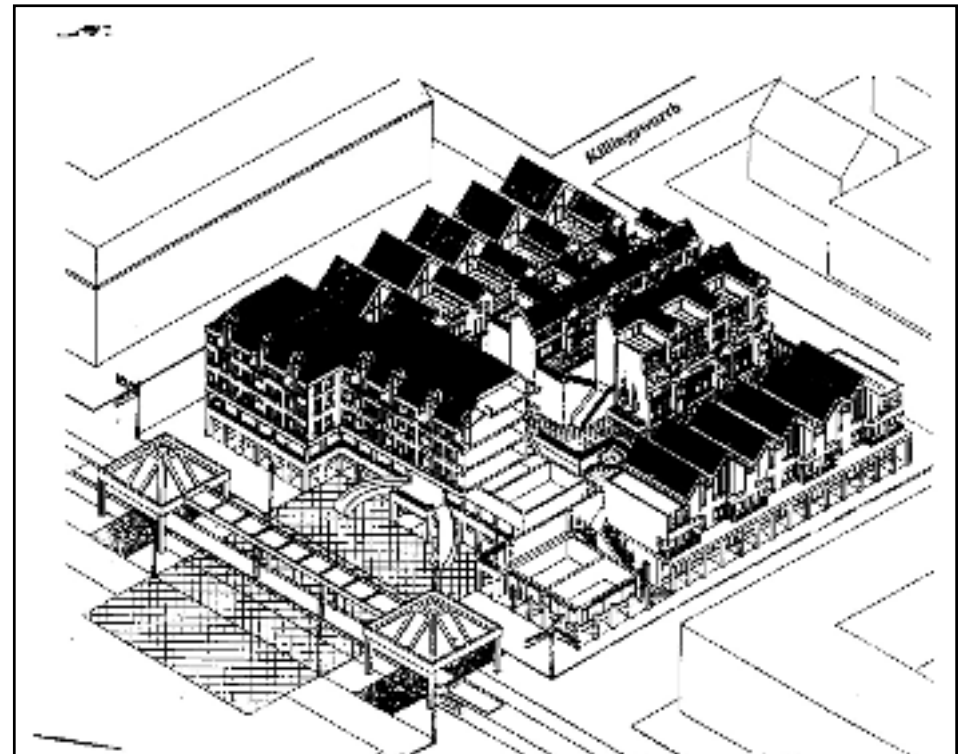
**Crossing** busy arterials to reach the transit stop is a problem, but an island between lanes of traffic helps. The bases of the lamp posts and the bollards on this small island help protect the pedestrian and provide illumination. Wider islands are preferred. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



# **CHAPTER III: TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS**

# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

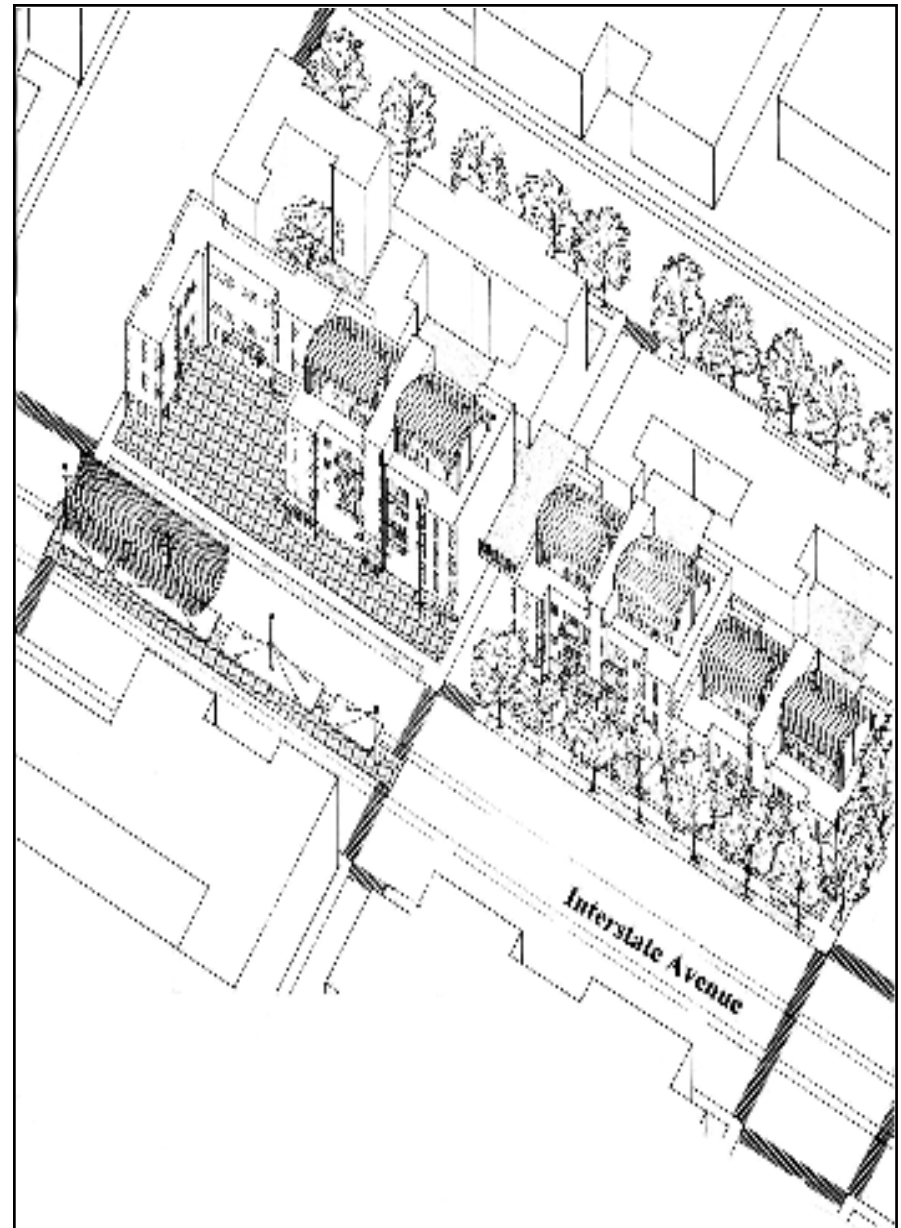
**Transit** environments are very important to transit users. The quality of these areas around stations and stops contribute to their use or discourage their use. The design of the most effective transit environments responds to all of the personal safety principles: ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility, and readability. This infill development is a good example. It responds to the historic character of the block around the transit station. The street level commercial with residential above provide round the clock activity and “eyes on the street.” The clearly defined path to the station is well lighted. The paving patterns, street trees, building massing and siting all work together to make an environment reads well to the user. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, readability, mobility)





## TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**The** mixed use development at this LRT station provides activity around the clock. The residential block on the right is placed to at a sight distance from the station. It is buffered from the line by trees that are trimmed to maintain sightlines. The crosswalks are clearly marked. The commercial/residential block across from the station is well sited. The stores, the public plaza for gathering, and the residential units above provide activity and “eyes on the station” and transit riders. This station environments integrated into the community and has been designed as a destination. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, readability, mobility)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Transit** stations adjacent to public gathering spaces should be large to avoid crowding and to permit easy access. This one next to the major gathering space in downtown Portland has wide sidewalks and good sightlines. It is easy to access from the plaza. (mobility, visibility, activity/land use)

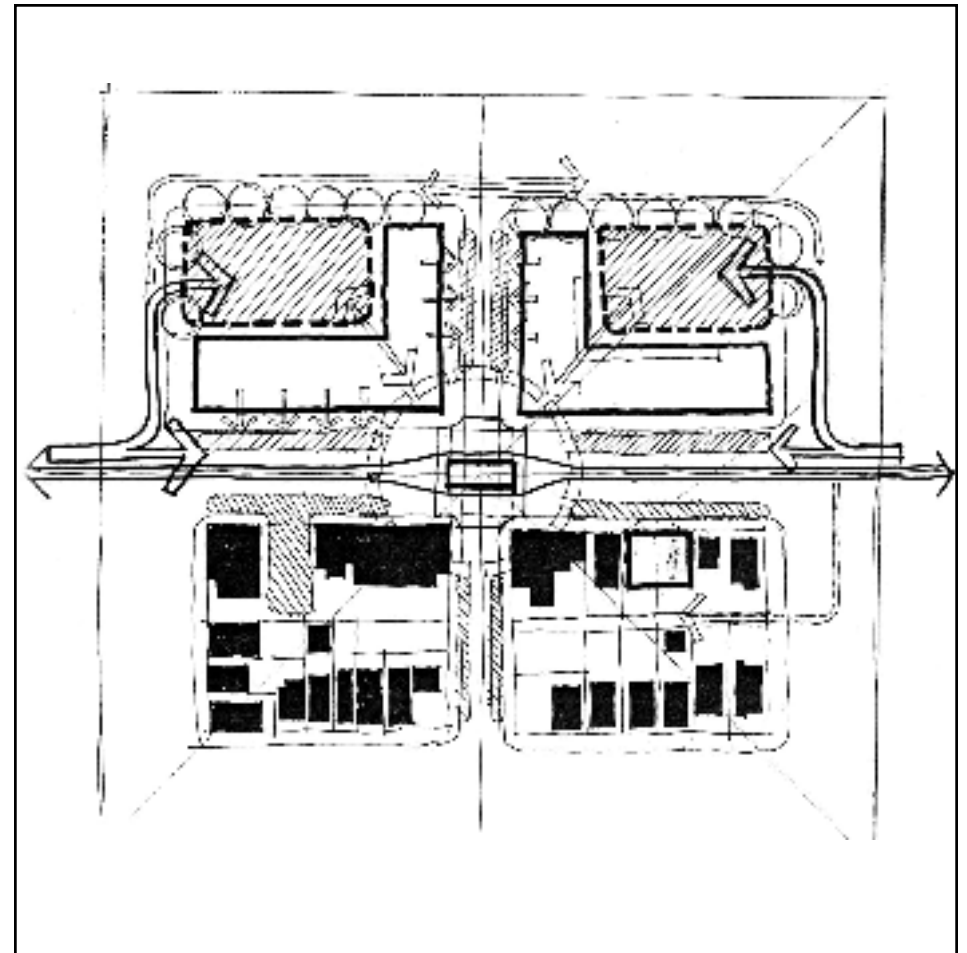


**This** is another view of the station which shows how it relates to the public plaza. (activity/land use)



## TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**This** a diagram of a neighborhood LRT station environment that supports and enhances safe transit use, existing neighborhood businesses, and neighborhood living. The station is placed at an intersection to discourage through neighborhood traffic. Cross walks are well marked. Wide sidewalks are provided. Mixed use buildings of neighborhood commercial with apartments above are placed in L-shaped configurations at the corners to provide activity and “eyes on the street” to both the transit street and the neighborhood street that intersects it. Parking is located on the street and in lots at the rear of the mixed use buildings. Pedestrian access from the parking lots is provided by a small concourse through the buildings. The housing across the street from the parking is buffered by trees. (ownership, activity/land use, readability, mobility, visibility)

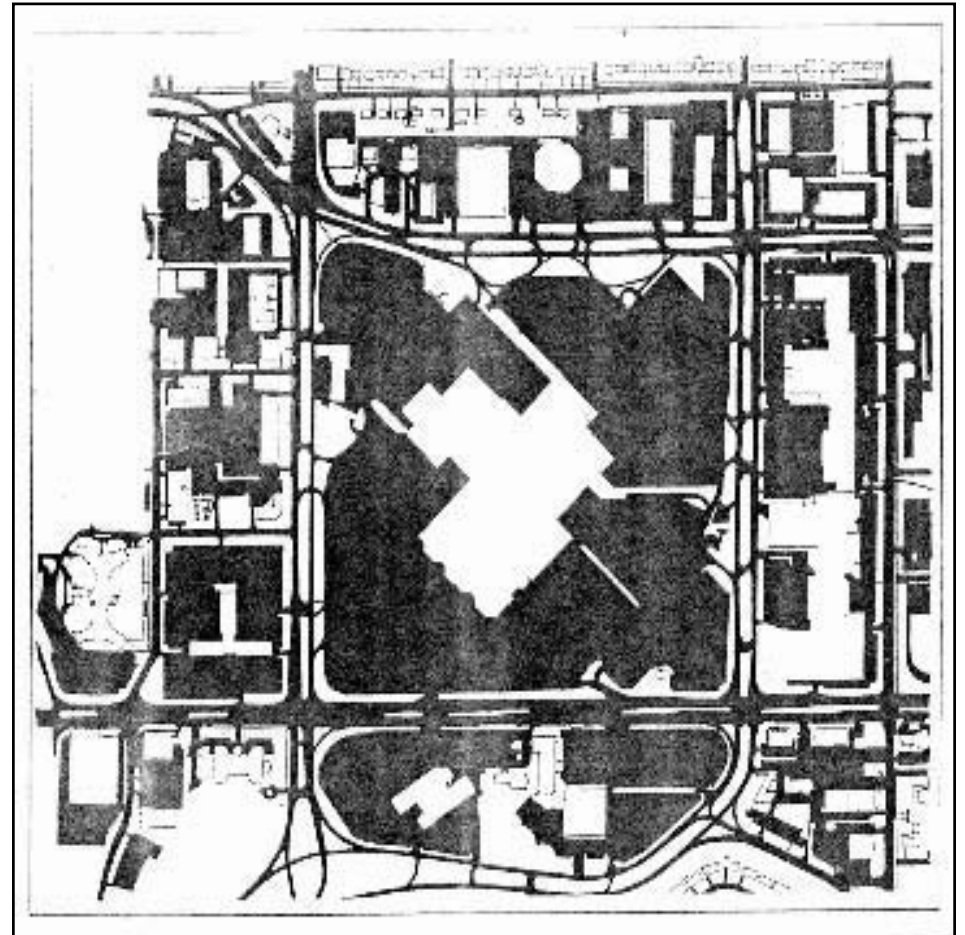


## TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**This** figure/ground drawing of a large shopping center shows what is often wrong with transit environments at suburban shopping centers. The white areas are buildings, the black parking lots and streets. This center was originally built as an enclosed shopping environment to be reached by car. Shoppers parked in one of the large surface parking lots and entered the center through one of the large entries. These centers were usually designed as enclaves separate from their surrounding environments. This one is even surrounded by earth beams to emphasize the separation. Over time these centers spawn adjacent development. Other retail areas are built often in a “hen and chicks pattern” with the original large center being the “hen” and the additional retail being the “chicks.” Movie theaters are added. Offices and multi family residential follow.

A pedestrian system associated with these developments is usually non existent or very inadequate because of the privatized and accreted nature of the circulation systems associated with these environments. This car oriented environment does not accommodate transit well because it is difficult to move from place to place without a car. Eventually it becomes difficult to go from place to place in the precinct in a car because of the increased traffic generated by the dependency on the car.

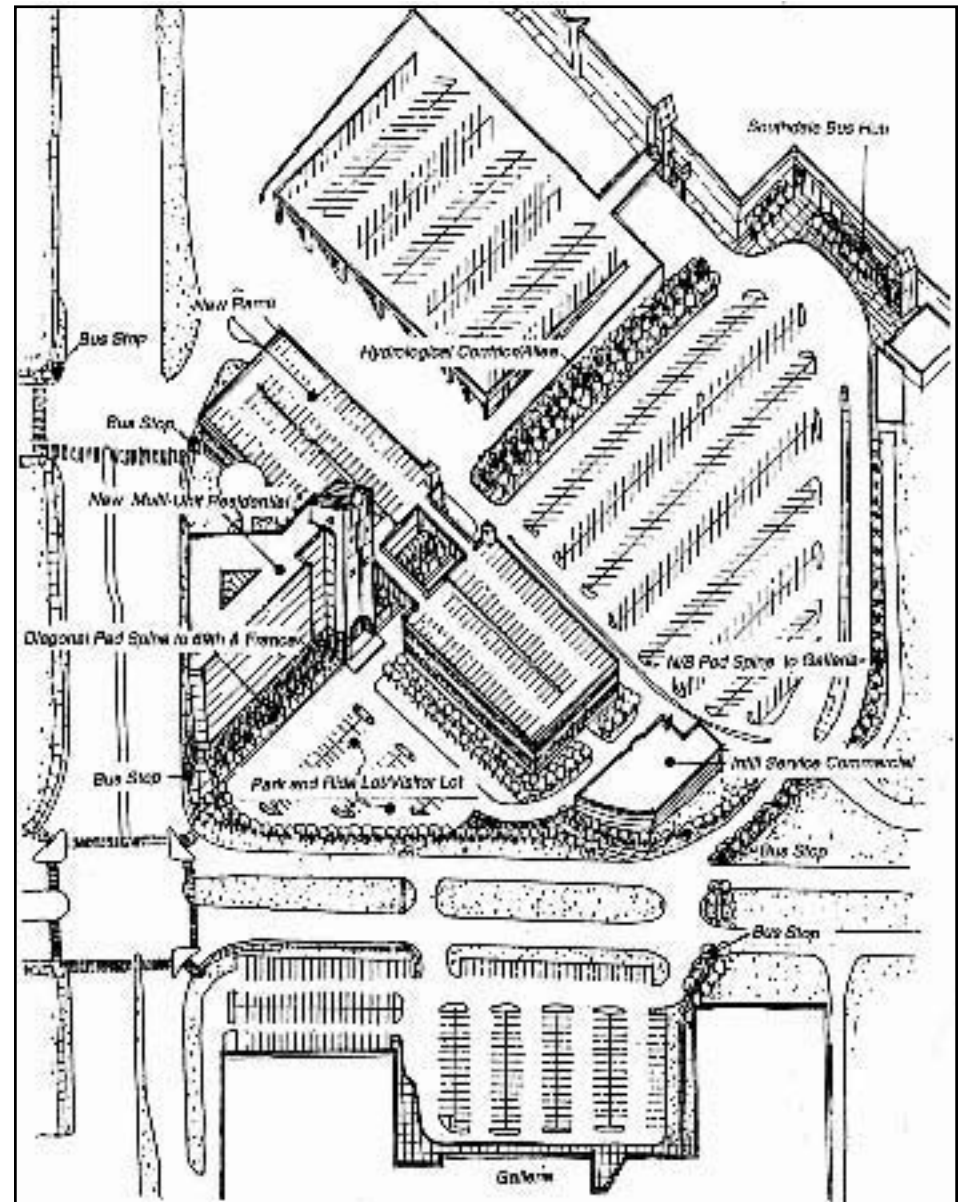
Safe, user friendly transit service to these accreted environments is dependent on the establishment of vehicular circulation systems, building patterns, and pedestrian paths that work together to provide access to cars, transit vehicles and people on foot. A single transit stop can not serve these large environments, they are too diffuse.



Multiple stops/stations are needed. Equally important are clear, easy to follow, well lighted pedestrian paths from transit stops and stations to a number of destinations. These paths need to be a integral part of the design of these environments, not after thoughts. They need to be placed in areas of activity.  
(activity/land use, mobility, ownership, readability)

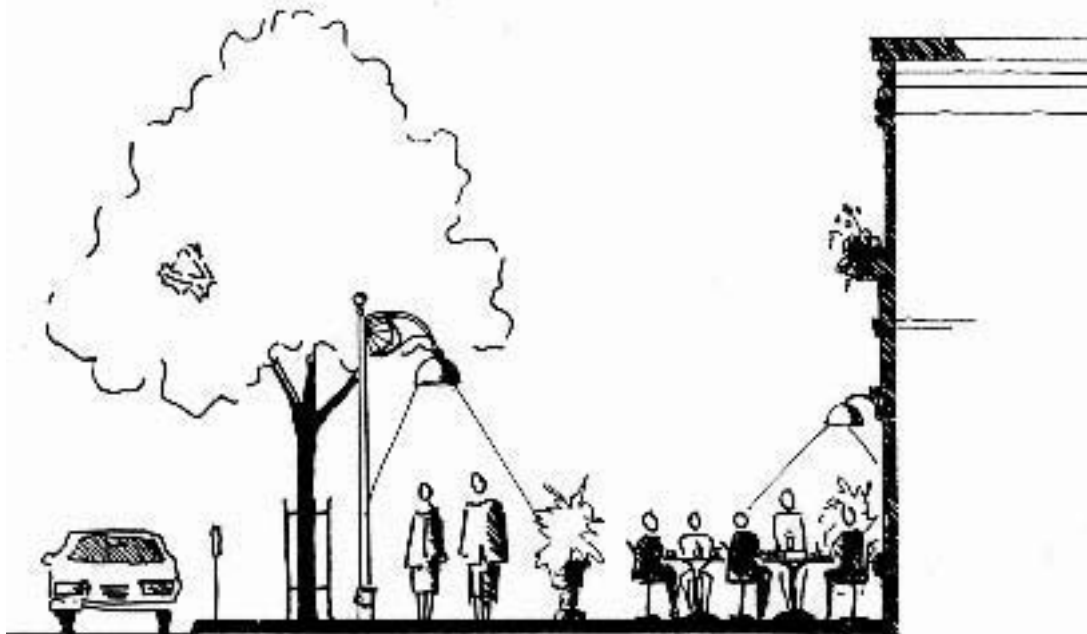
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**This** drawing shows an example of how the shopping center shown on the previous page could start to be retrofitted to make a more transit friendly environment by densifying the development and creating clear pedestrian paths. A parking lot could be retrofitted with residential and commercial buildings while at the same time creating a pedestrian connection to the large enclosed shopping center.(activity/land use,mobility,readability)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Commercial** buildings that support the pedestrian environment edge go a long way to making a transit environment that is people friendly. In the drawing below the restaurant has windows that over look the street and an outdoor seating area that activates the street. Ample room is provided for pedestrians to pass and the semi-private space of the sidewalk seating area is clearly set off from the public sidewalk. Pedestrians are protected from the street traffic by the definition of the public pedestrian realm. Trees, lighting, on street parking, and ample space are provided. The lighting is pedestrian-scaled. In the photo at the right the neighborhood commercial environment accommodates display of merchandise on the street, an outdoor restaurant seating, and a bus stop while leaving room for people to pass comfortably on the sidewalk. (ownership, activity land/use, readability, mobility, and visibility)



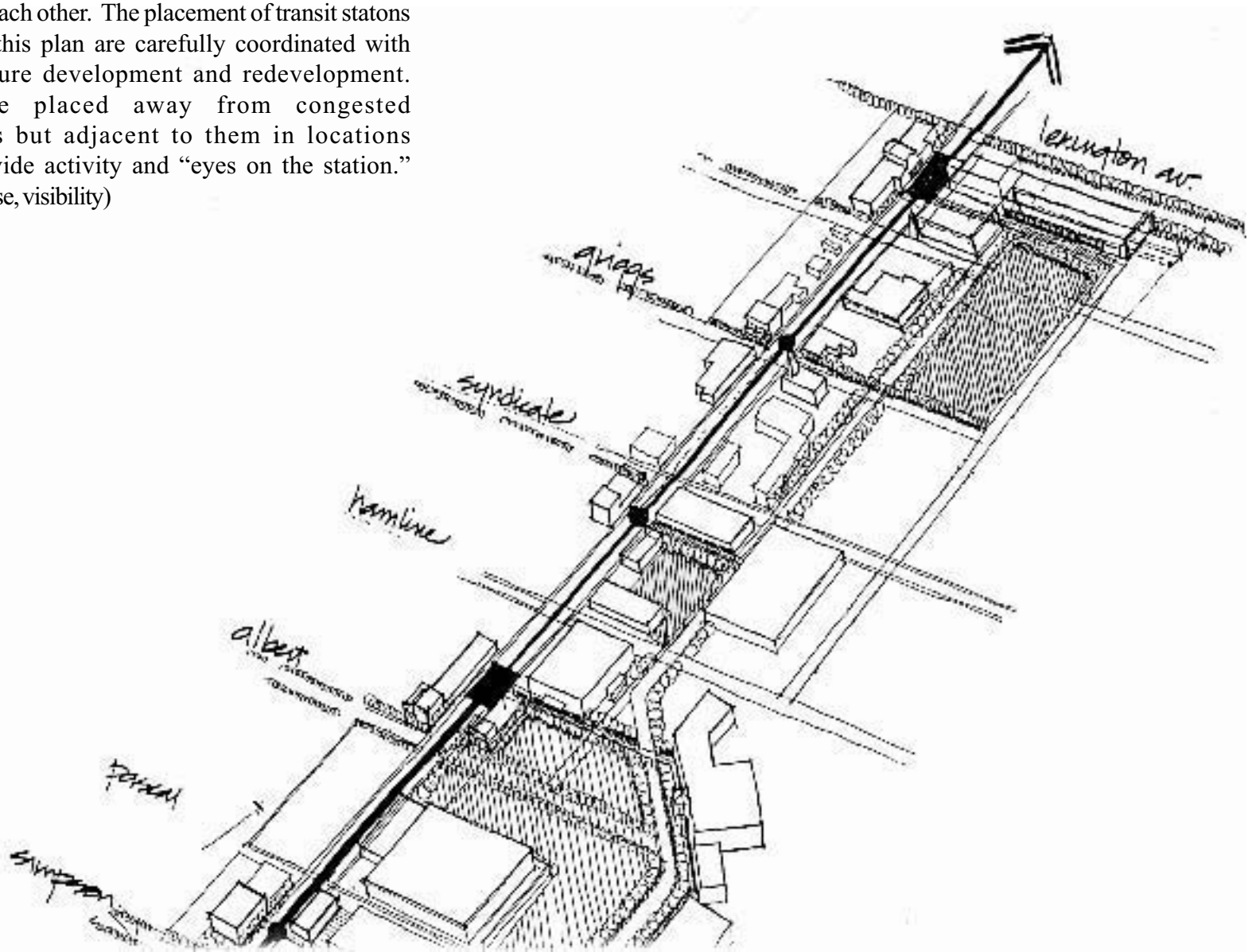
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Public** buildings should help support the transit use by providing activity and “eyes on the street.” Unfortunately both this neighborhood post office and this fire station fall short. Although they are sited near the sidewalk, both present blank walls to the street. (activity/land use, visibility)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

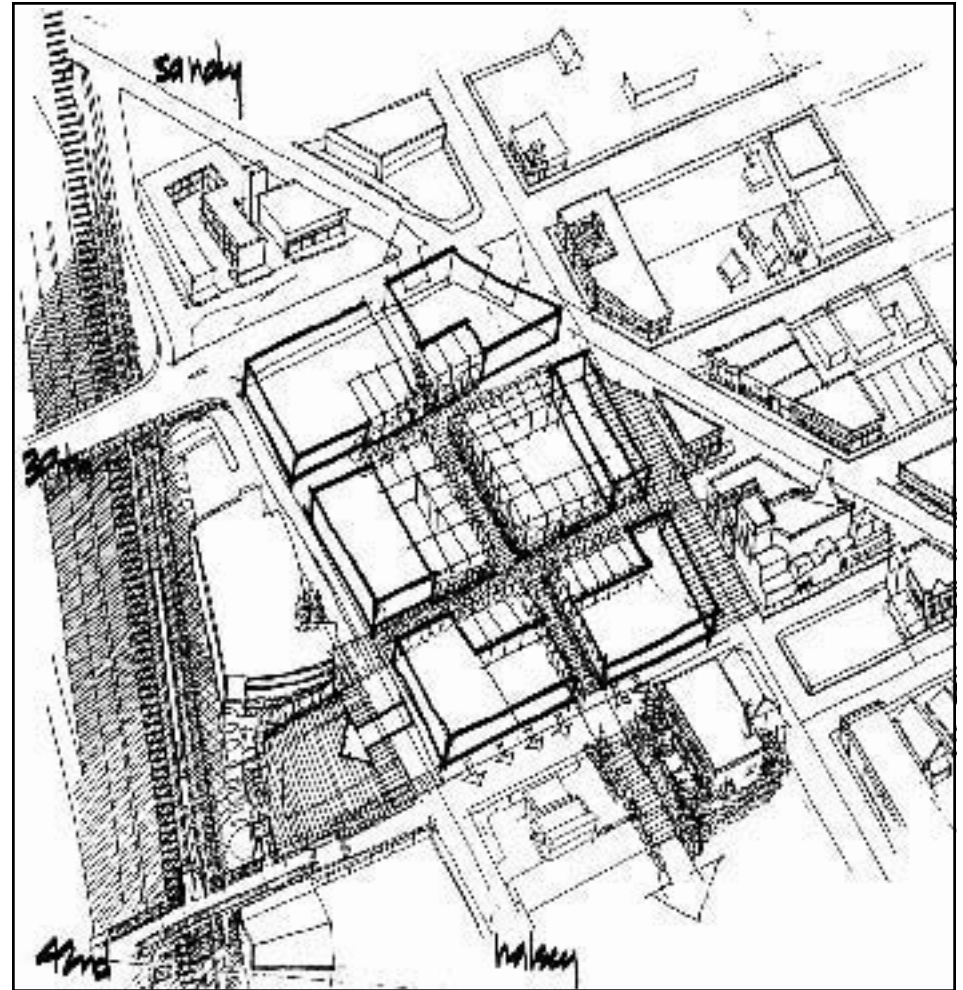
**Transit** lines and developments need to be planned to relate well to each other. The placement of transit stations and stops in this plan are carefully coordinated with plans for future development and redevelopment. Stations are placed away from congested intersections but adjacent to them in locations that will provide activity and “eyes on the station.” (activity/land use, visibility)





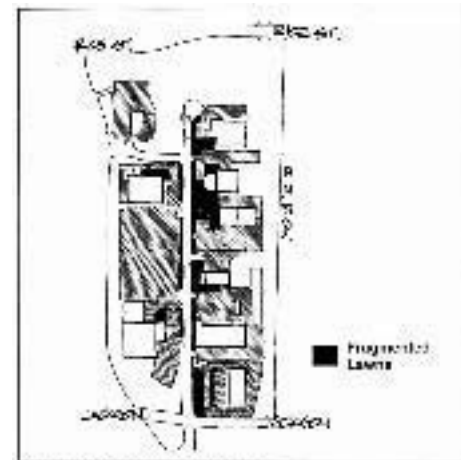
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**This** redevelopment strategy links the existing suburb to transit by building mixed use development between the station and an existing shopping center. This is done by creating a system of city blocks that responds to the existing block system, making sidewalks, bringing the buildings to the sidewalks, and creating interior courts for parking. A number of pedestrian and open space linkages could be used to provide clear pedestrian paths.  
(activity /land use, mobility, readability)

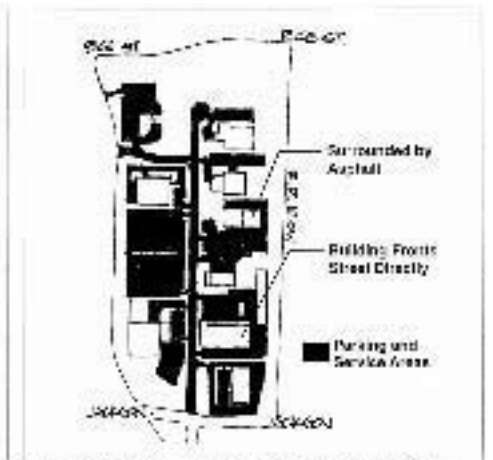


# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**The** type of business area that is currently being developed in exurban, suburban, and central city sites is very difficult to serve by transit. Marketed as industrial or business “parks,” they are large in area. They are characterized by large one story buildings with few windows, large parking lots, and considerable grounds. They are usually separated from each other and their surroundings, often with a fence or other markers that identify them as a precinct set apart. Usually no developed public realm is associated with these areas, although some public streets may pass through them. Sidewalks are scarce if they exist at all. Most buildings are accessed by car or truck. Bus stops tend to be on periphery as stand alone elements in the landscape. If there is a transit line that winds its way through these business areas, service is usually infrequent. Few areas have any sidewalks that connect to transit stops. These are intimidating environments to the transit user and are not conducive to safe transit use. Bus stops are isolated. If pedestrian paths exist to transit stops, they are isolated from activity and are often poorly maintained in the winter. Most often transit users are forced to walk in the street. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



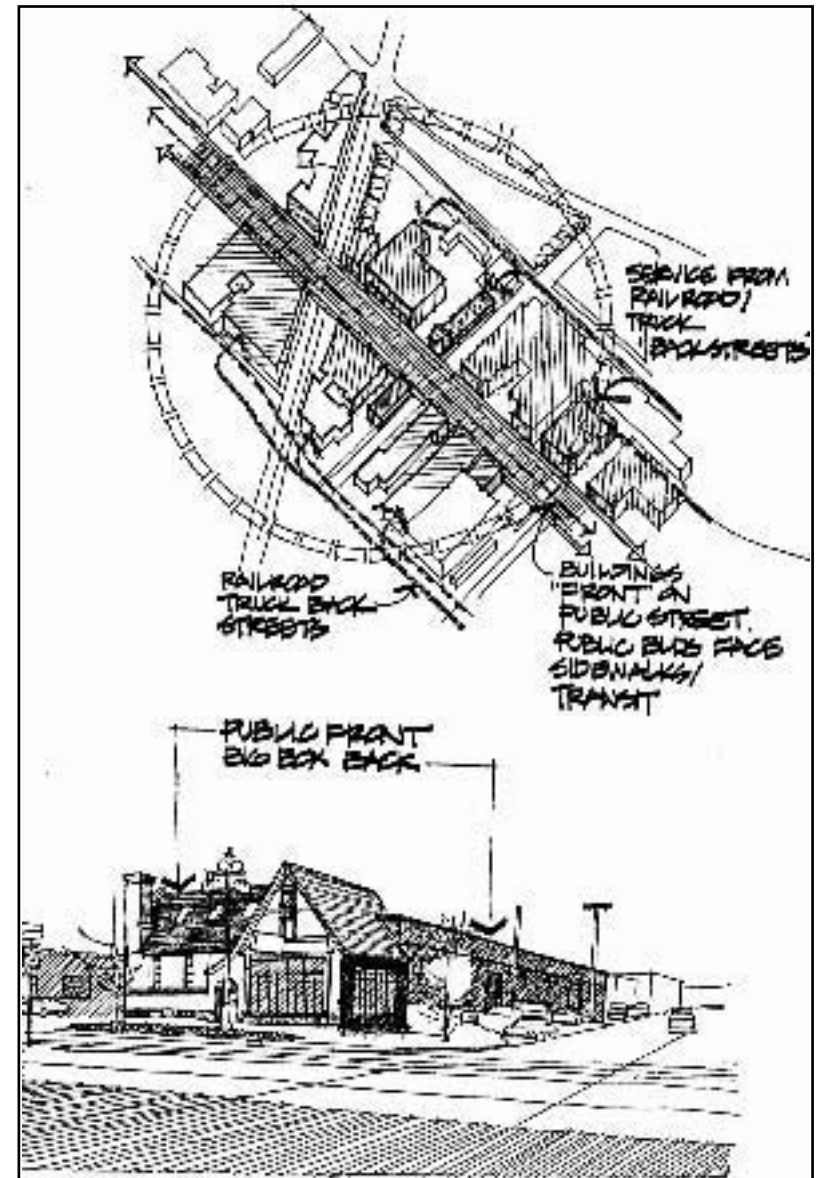
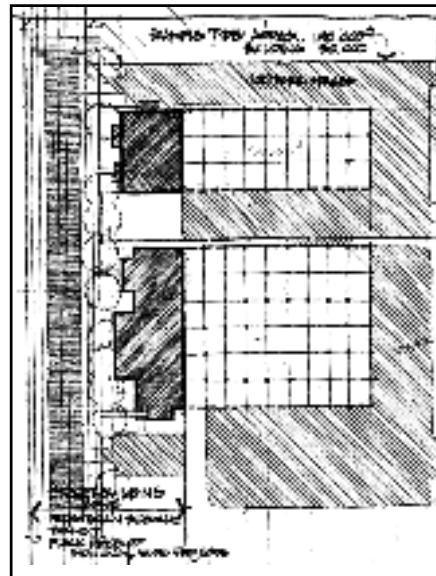
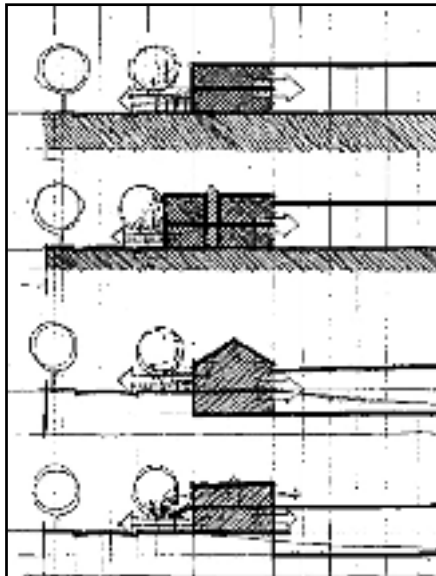
Model for an all-weather bus stop



Parking and service area - an open backside of front door

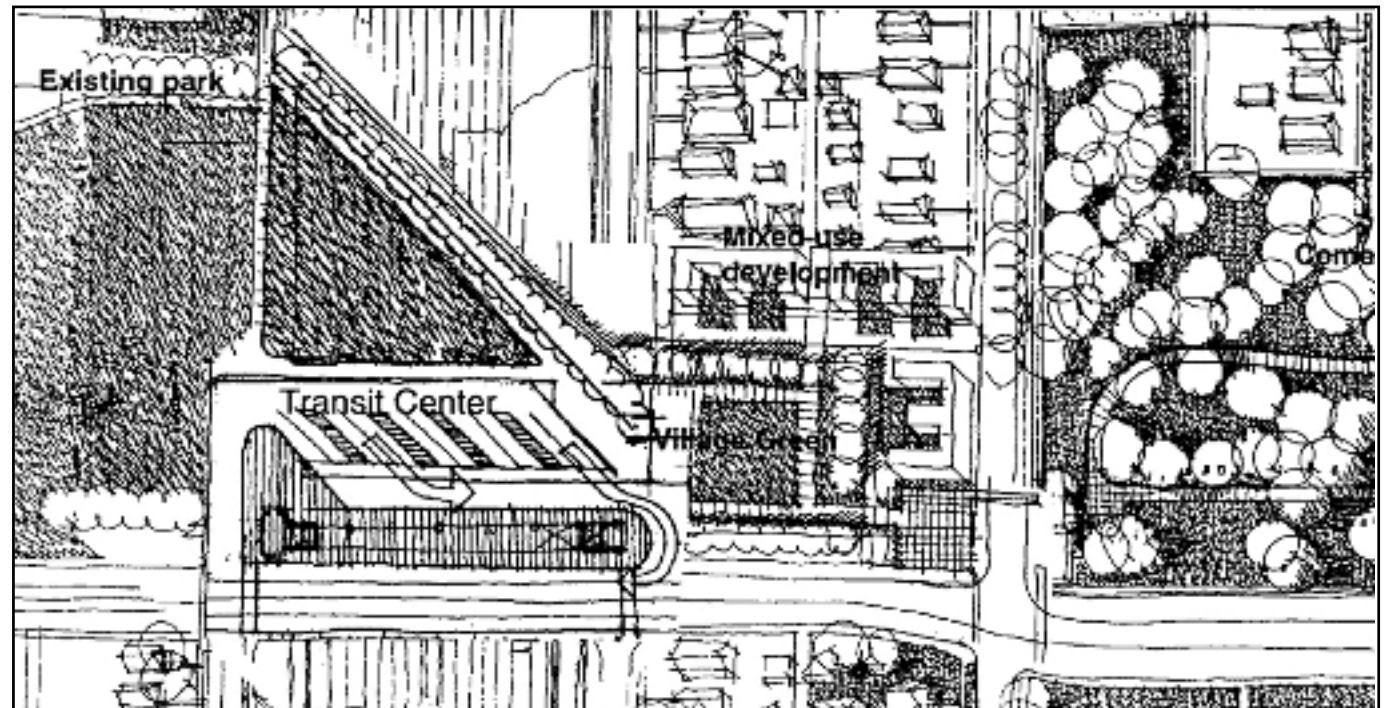
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Business** areas do not have to be isolated enclaves in their communities. Their streets and buildings can be configured to be a part of the community. Street, sidewalks, and buildings can be designed to support a public realm that is served by transit. These drawings show several ways that “big box/head house” buildings can be designed to be more transit friendly and be better neighbors to each other and their community. Each has the same square feet of office space and large industrial/warehouse space being built today in business parks. When appropriate, these configurations could accommodate mixed use development that would further support transit use. (land use, mobility)



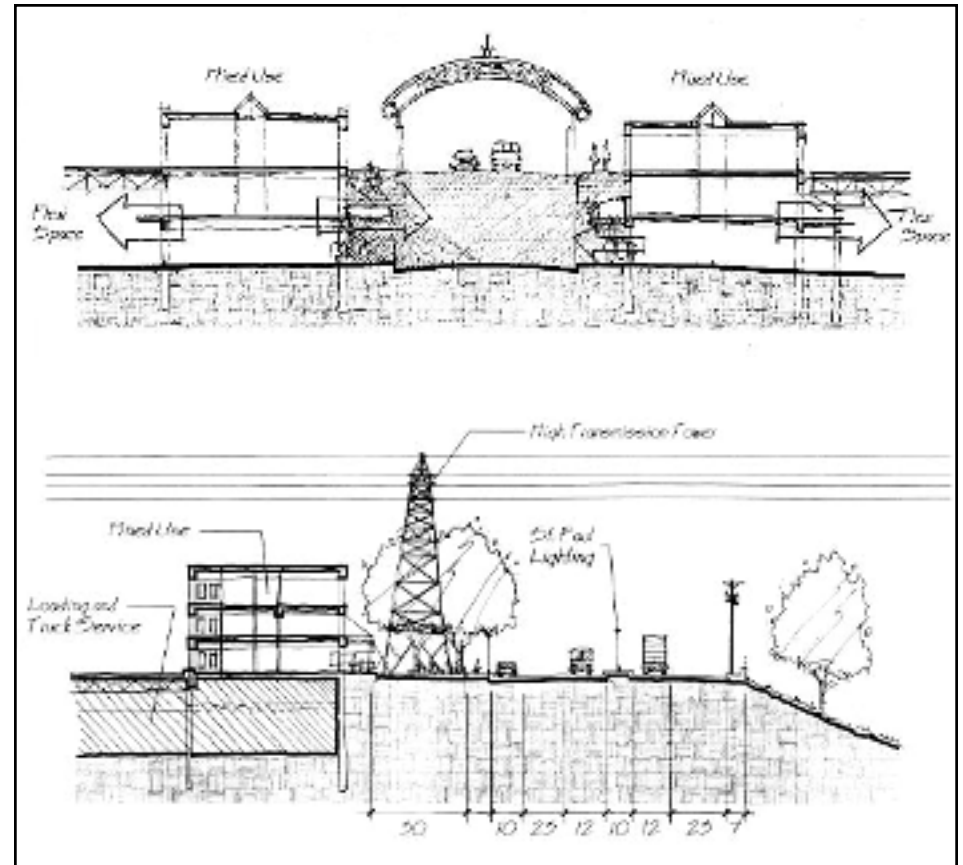
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Transit** facilities can be used to strengthen and enhance community environments while providing safer access to the facilities. Instead of being an island isolated from the neighborhood, this bus hub on a deck over a freeway is an integral part of a new green armature that connects two parts of neighborhood that were separated when the freeway was built. It provides a clear, visible, more friendly pedestrian path to the station from the neighborhood, easier access to the park and the neighborhood commercial to the west, and an opportunity for creating denser housing closer to the station. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility, readability)



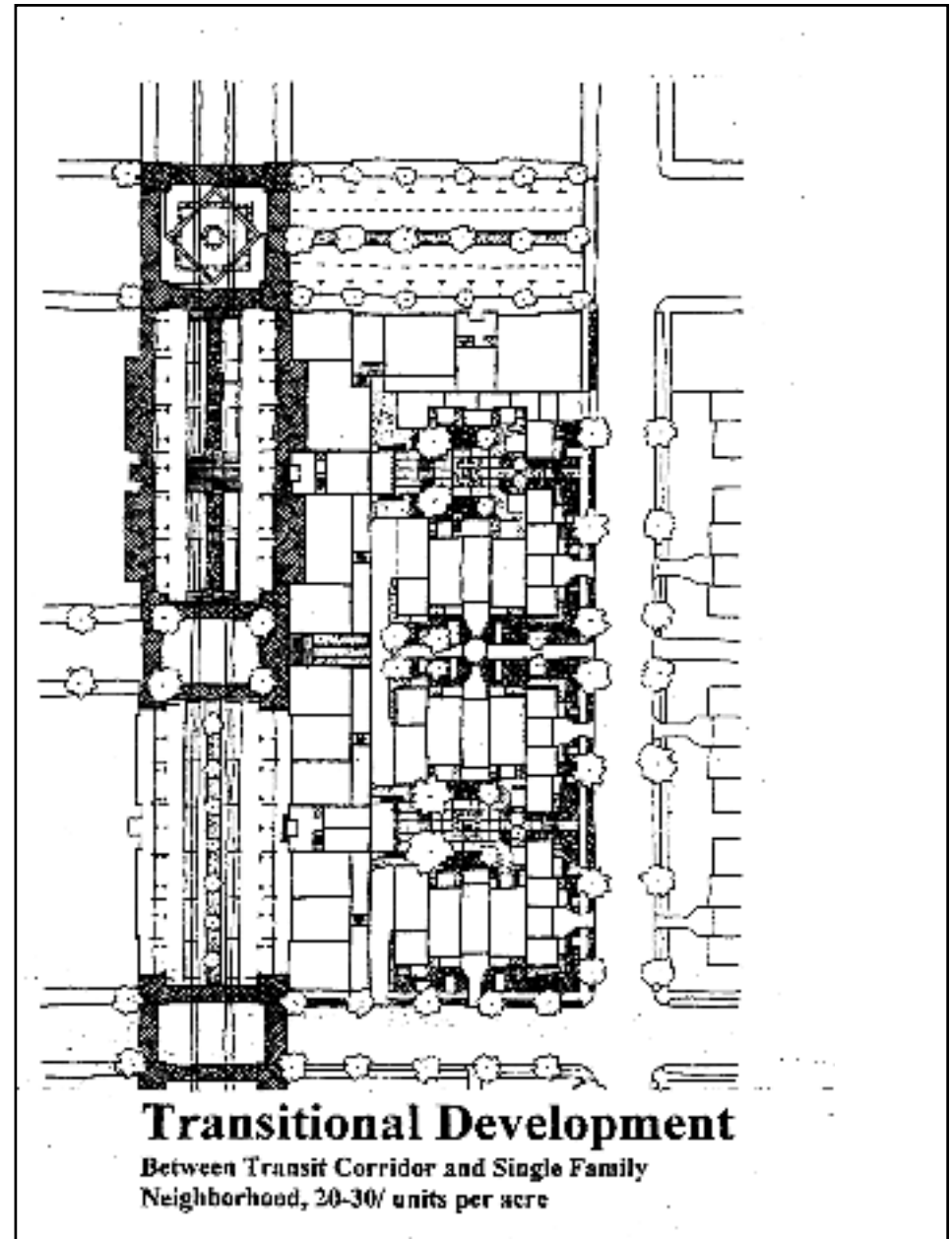
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Bridges** that cross railroad lines or freeways are often the most isolated and intimidating spaces in communities. They can be daunting environments for pedestrians because they are usually separated from the life in the community. To address this problem, pedestrian-friendly transit environments can be retrofitted on bridgeheads. Development strategies that erect buildings contiguous to bridgeheads can provide activity and “eyes on the street” which make using the bridge less threatening. This strategy has other benefits to the community because it uses land that has been too often regarded as leftover and unusable. Using unused spaces can help make the neighborhood safer because unused spaces attract criminal behavior. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Housing** at station areas provide a number of opportunities to support personal safety based on their location and type. Multi-unit housing sited at LRT stations can provide a transitional area between the station and single family housing while providing many riders and enlivening the station area. This housing development has thirty to forty units per acre. (activity/land use, visibility)



## TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**The** new housing at a LRT station in the upper photograph has commercial on the first floor that buffers the housing from the line. Some “eyes on the station” are provided, but the crowns of the trees obstruct some of the view. The housing in the photograph below is sited too close to the tracks and the lanes of traffic. The transition space between the public streets, rail lines and sidewalks is too small. Shades and curtains are drawn on the windows order to maintain some privacy. Therefore, even though there is a potential for “eyes on the street, ” there are none. (activity/land use, visibility)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

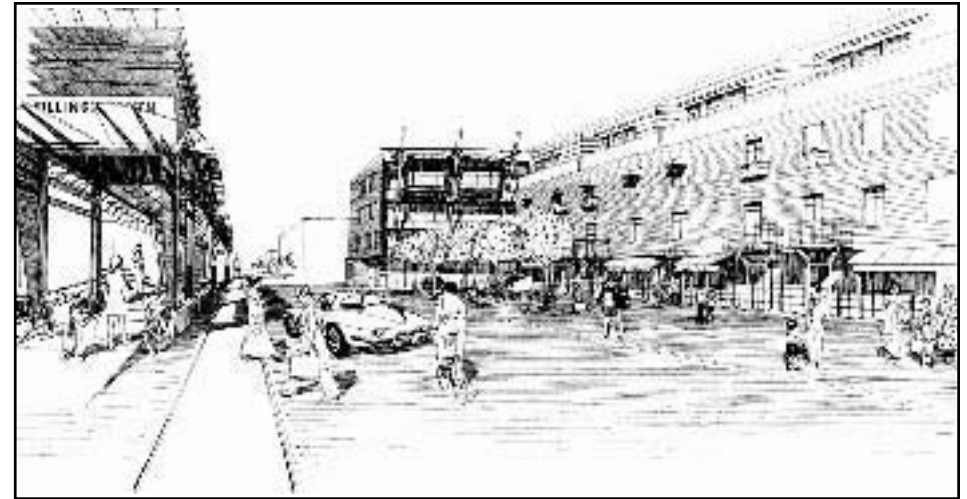
**The** effectiveness of housing and commercial development in contributing to safe transit environment depends on their design, location, and use. The photo at the right shows a commercial building with a public plaza being built right up against the rail line. This could be a very active space during the work week, and a very deserted one during other times if there were only offices in the building. The new housing and commercial development below is placed at a distance from the line and may be too far away to provide activity at the station area. (activity/land use)





# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**New** building and public space relationships can enhance personal safety. The environment in the photograph below is retrofitted in the design shown at right. A plaza connects the station with the adjacent building development. (activity/land use)



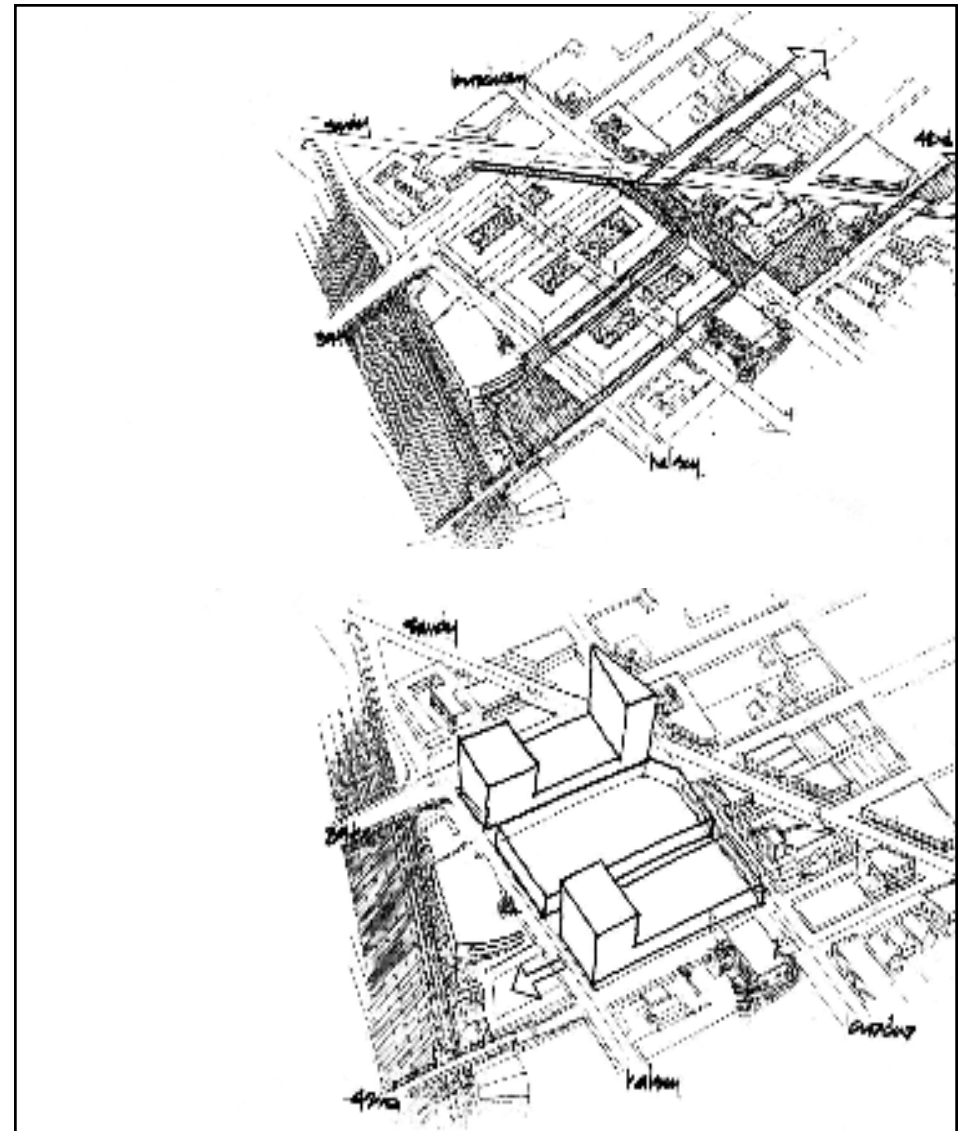
# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**Environments** like this are to be avoided. Although the interface of a variety of transportation modes is very desirable, they need to be designed to relate to each other in a way that makes it easy and safe to switch modes. Places where people change modes can and should be places of activity that are valuable to develop. In the environment below, the freeway, bike trail, bus lane, and light rail line are placed closely parallel to each other. This environment may be lively with people during a few times during the day, but is bleak and unoccupied most of the time. The potential for creating value is lost; there is no room for development between the systems. (activity/land use)



# TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS

**When** stations are really remote from activity centers, development can be used to connect them to the community. All of the personal safety principals need to be used in the design of the development. Public and open space systems, parking strategies, and siting of buildings all need to work together to bring the station to the community and the community to the station. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, mobility, readability)



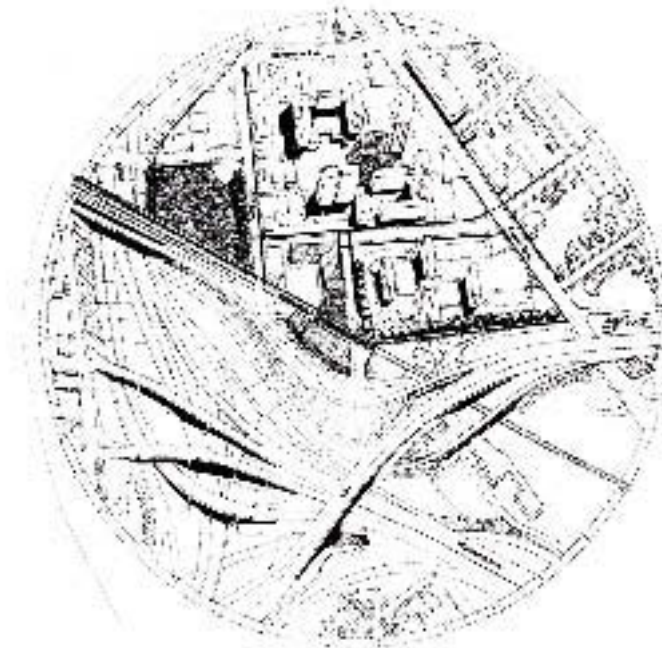
# **CHAPTER IV: TRANSIT STOPS & STATIONS**

## STOPS & STATIONS

**Transit** stops and stations are important parts of the public realm of communities. Their design and location contribute or detract from transit use. As areas of activity where people come and go, they can become places of gathering and vitality that enrich the community. They need to be designed to function well, but as parts of the city they have the potential to also add to the beauty and unique identity of a city. This photo of an entry to a Paris Metro Station shows that even if transit stations are underground, their presence can add to that which makes Paris a truly wonderful city. No city is like Paris, it is unique, but communities can aspire to make their transit stations part of their signature identity. (ownership)



**The** location of transit stations is very important because the station and its “station area” have a reciprocal relationship. If the station is well sited, it will be a catalyst for development with uses that can make transit safer and used more. The placement of this light rail transit line and its station and supporting development (shown in gray) misses an opportunity. Its “back door” location isolates it from the community. It does not support and build on the activity that exists on Cedar Avenue, an important commercial street that could benefit from a light rail station. (activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**In** this location the bus stop and the light rail transit station are conveniently placed close to each other allowing for easy transfer between systems. In addition to convenience for transit users, this proximity increases personal safety. The siting of these facilities permits those waiting for the bus to be watched by those waiting for light rail transit and vice versa. Some transit users do have to cross the street to reach the bus stop, however. This environment could be improved by placing clearly striped cross walks between the two bus stops. (activity/land use, visibility, readability)

**The** design of the bus stop shelter also supports personal safety. Clear sightlines are maintained, no columns, walls, or foliage are obstructions. Trees are trimmed to maintain visibility. Skylights provide lighting during the day under the canopy. The open design also provides ample room for waiting, so transit users are not forced to stand close to those that may make them feel uncomfortable. Its open design provides for free movement. (visibility, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Placing** a transit line in a trench carries with it some very important trade-offs. The change in grade may shield its neighbors from the noise generated by the transit and it may be faster because it has fewer intersections with streets, but this separation has serious consequences for personal safety. These stations are not an integral part of the communities in which they are placed. They are no man's lands. Separated environments by their very nature are less safe than those that are connected to human activity and less visible to passersby. Even stations that are bustling with activity during certain times such as rush hour are often formidable, deserted spaces at night, in the middle of the day, and on week ends. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility)

**Access** to these stations are problematic. There is usually only one way the reach this stations on foot, so that transit patrons can be stalked in these environments. Would-be assailants can await potential victims adjacent to the stair entry or exit. Design strategies have been used to overcome these inherent difficulties in this light rail station sited in a trench. The placement of both of the opposite direction stops together in one combined station location increases the activity at the stop. The elevators do provide an alternative, accessible way of reaching the station. The elevators' transparent walls allow users to be seen. The placement of the two elevators and the two stairways helps to decrease the isolation of each. The environment is well ordered and reads well. It is well signed and lighted. (activity/land use, mobility, readability, visibility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** is another view of the station. It shows how isolated stations sited in a trench are from their community. Those waiting for the light rail can not be seen by those in the building above them, but those waiting across the tracks may be able to be seen. The waiting area is well lighted with multiple lights. The waiting area is large enough so that patrons can maintain a comfortable distance from one another if desired. (visibility,mobility)





## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** light rail line goes through a pedestrian friendly downtown in Portland, Oregon. Mixed uses maintain lively street activity. Smooth sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, light rail stations, and public art. There are places to sit and people watch. The stations are an integral part of the urban environment. The public realm is well maintained. Trees are trimmed to maintain sightlines and pedestrian-scaled lighting abounds. Crosswalks are marked with paving and signs help orient the visitor. (activity/land use, mobility, ownership, visibility, readability)



**In** this suburb a town center was consciously created to centralize commercial activity making an interesting, lively, and walkable heart of the community that also accommodates cars and people. This is a good place to site a transit station for commuters. (activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**In** photos of the bar and the library, the bus stop is located a distance from the entrance of the building. This siting helps to diminish the conflict between transit patrons and those that are entering and leaving the building which is desirable. But both bus stops pictured at the right are illustrative of problems often encountered in siting stops by commercial and institutional uses. The designs of both buildings do not take advantage of the opportunity to provide “eyes on the street.” This is particularly disappointing in the library. Such a public institution should see as its public responsibility making the public realm more safe when possible. Efforts to help make the trip to the library for its patrons who use the bus feel safe is also in its own self interest.

**The** siting of a stop by a bar is problematic. Many transit users feel uncomfortable waiting for the bus outside a bar. (visibility, activity, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Environments** like this are to be avoided for bus stops. They are truly “bus stop“ islands separated from the life of the city. Transit users feel uncomfortably isolated and exposed waiting in this type of stop. (visibility, activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** bus stop is not well sited. It is an important transfer point, but it is isolated. (activity/land use)



**This** bus shelter is well designed and sited. Its transparent walls permits viewing from all four sides and the skyway. It does not block passage. It is placed back from the sidewalk and the steps to the building. The vending machines are placed at a convenient distance from the shelter. The shrubs and plants are low and placed at a distance from the shelter. The trees are trimmed to maintain sightlines. There is pedestrian-scaled lighting. (visibility, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** photo shows the large scale of a the transportation corridor when service road, freeway, light rail and heavy rail are placed together. It also shows how isolated this corridor is from the rest of the community. Many personal safety problems are created when a light rail line is placed in a trench parallel to a freeway. By their very nature these systems are separated from the community making access very difficult and potentially very dangerous. These problems are compounded when there is also a heavy rail line in the trench. These aggregated, parallel transportation systems are very large. They cut wide swaths through communities making it difficult for pedestrians to cross them. Stations in the trench are very isolated. They are singular outposts in a bleak environment. The grade separation separates them from any activity above them. Existing development is usually sited at a distance from the trench. Blank walls face the transit line because windows and entries frequently face the community and turn their backs on the freeway. In addition to being isolated, access is usually difficult. Long ramps, elevators, and stairways are needed to bring the transit user down to station level. (activity/land use, visibility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** is an entry area to the LRT below in a freeway/rail trench. A bus stop is located on the middle of the bridge, an isolated and intimidating environment. Many people may feel intimidated walking on an unoccupied bridge or past the bus shelter if a crowd was waiting for the bus. Others may fear abduction by people in passing cars if waiting for the bus alone. (activity/land use, visibility, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**There** are no “eyes on the station” from the building that “overlooks” the corridor. There is no easy connection between light rail and bus systems. The transit user has to leave the station below, walk up the large stairway to reach the isolated bus stop on the middle of the freeway bridge. The change in grade and the freeway really separate the light rail line from the neighborhood it serves. (visibility, activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Because** the station is separated from the community, waiting for transit in this no person's land can be scary. There is quite a trek from the transit station to the bus hub. It includes two large stairways with only one way in and one way out. (mobility, activity/land use, visibility)





## STOPS & STATIONS

**Locating** a bus hub next to a lumber yard does not provide activities that have “eyes on the bus hub” that other land uses could provide. (activity/land use)



**This** bookstore/coffeehouse overlooks the transit stop during the day and for many hours at night providing “eyes on the transit stop.” (activity/land use, visibility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Transferring** systems is made easier, faster, and safer when transit stations are placed next to bus stops and park and ride facilities as they are in these locations. (activity/land use, readability, mobility)

**This** park and ride station has good sight lines and is well lighted day and night. Its remote location maybe daunting to some. (visibility, activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** light rail station under a freeway is a transfer point. Pedestrian paths are clearly marked. Although it is fenced, there are multiple points of egress. It is important to have good sightlines and lighting in this type of station. Sites under freeways are usually leftover parts of the city. Care should be made to have other activities inhabit the spaces adjacent to the station. (readability, ownership, mobility, visibility, activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Public** art can add personality to a station environment. Whimsical “overstuffed” concrete chairs help create the welcoming character of his light rail station and bus hub. (ownership)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** bus stop works well. There is a choice of seating, information is posted, sightlines are maintained, a trash receptacle is provided to help keep the area clean, and it is set back from the sidewalk so that pedestrian passage is comfortable. Graffiti on the bench should be removed, however. (visibility, mobility, ownership)



**Well** maintained stops and stations are important to creating an atmosphere that feels safe. Some stops may be very hospitable most of the year but not in the winter because they are not kept free of snow. (ownership, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** transit station misses an opportunity to be part of the shopping center it serves. It is an island located on edge the shopping center parking lot. Therefore, “no eyes on the bus station” are provided by the shopping center, and transit users must walk across a street in order to reach it. Although the station is well maintained and the design of the structure is quite open, the walls and the shrubbery could provide hiding places. (ownership, activity /land use, visibility)

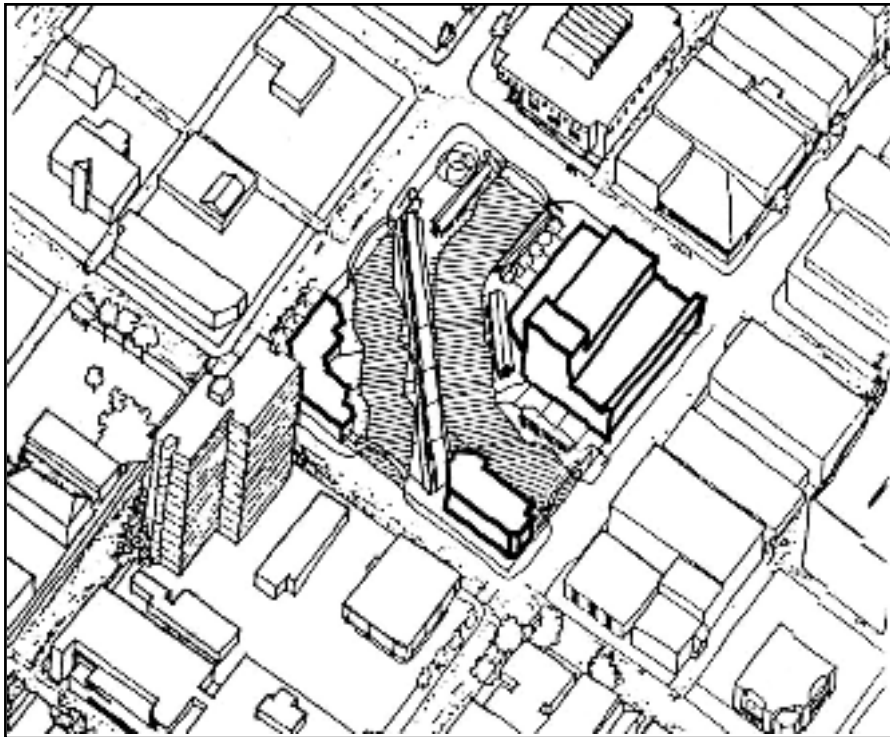


**The** crosswalk to the shopping center is clearly marked. (readability)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** is a city center bus station within a historic city block. Rows of canopied waiting areas alternate with bus bays. Waiting areas and pedestrian crossings are clearly marked with paving patterns. Retail with large windows provide activity and “eyes on the bus station.” (readability, activity /land use, visibility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

An inner block of stores with large windows provide activity and “eyes on the bus station.” Passages are wide for easy movement. (activity/land use, visibility, ownership, mobility)





## STOPS & STATIONS

**The** bus concourse is spacious and well lighted. It has good sightlines and is clearly marked and well maintained. (ownership, visibility, mobility, readability)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Many** parts of this station are well done. The station area is clearly lighted with overhead lights and low bollard lighting. No trees obstruct the lighting. The platform is large so individuals and groups do not have to crowd together. Transit information is provided on clear signs. The fencing and the single access point are problematic. The gateway to the station area and the crosswalk are clear. It is a good idea to separate the station area from the road. However, one exit and cross walk are not enough because it does not offer an option when fleeing from a pursuer. (visibility, activity/land use, readability, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** transit center has a number of safety features. The buildings are transparent. Waiting areas are both inside and outside of the structures. The crosswalks are marked. Railings protect users from the traffic, but they are not places of confinement. They do permit flight from the area. However, pedestrian scaled lighting seems to be lacking, and there are no areas of activity located adjacent to the facility. (visibility, mobility, activity/ land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** downtown transit mall is well designed for personal safety. It uses all the safety principles. On one side of the street it is adjacent to a lively public square and on the other businesses that have windows that overlook the street. Wide sidewalks accommodate bus patrons, people watchers, passing pedestrians, and street furniture. Generously sized waiting areas are well marked. The mall is well lighted and well maintained. (ownership, activity/land use, visibility, readability, mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** LRT stop on a dedicated LRT/pedestrian street is designed well. The stops have good sightlines. The waiting areas and the sidewalks are defined by paving patterns, tree placement, and street furniture. The adjacent retail and commercial uses help make this an active street around the clock. The street is well maintained. (readability, visibility, mobility, activity/land use, ownership)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**This** underground dedicated busway station is well lighted and has good sightlines. It is clean. The waiting areas are clearly marked with paving patterns. The station is well marked with signs. The large waiting areas provide choice. (visibility, ownership, readability, mobility)



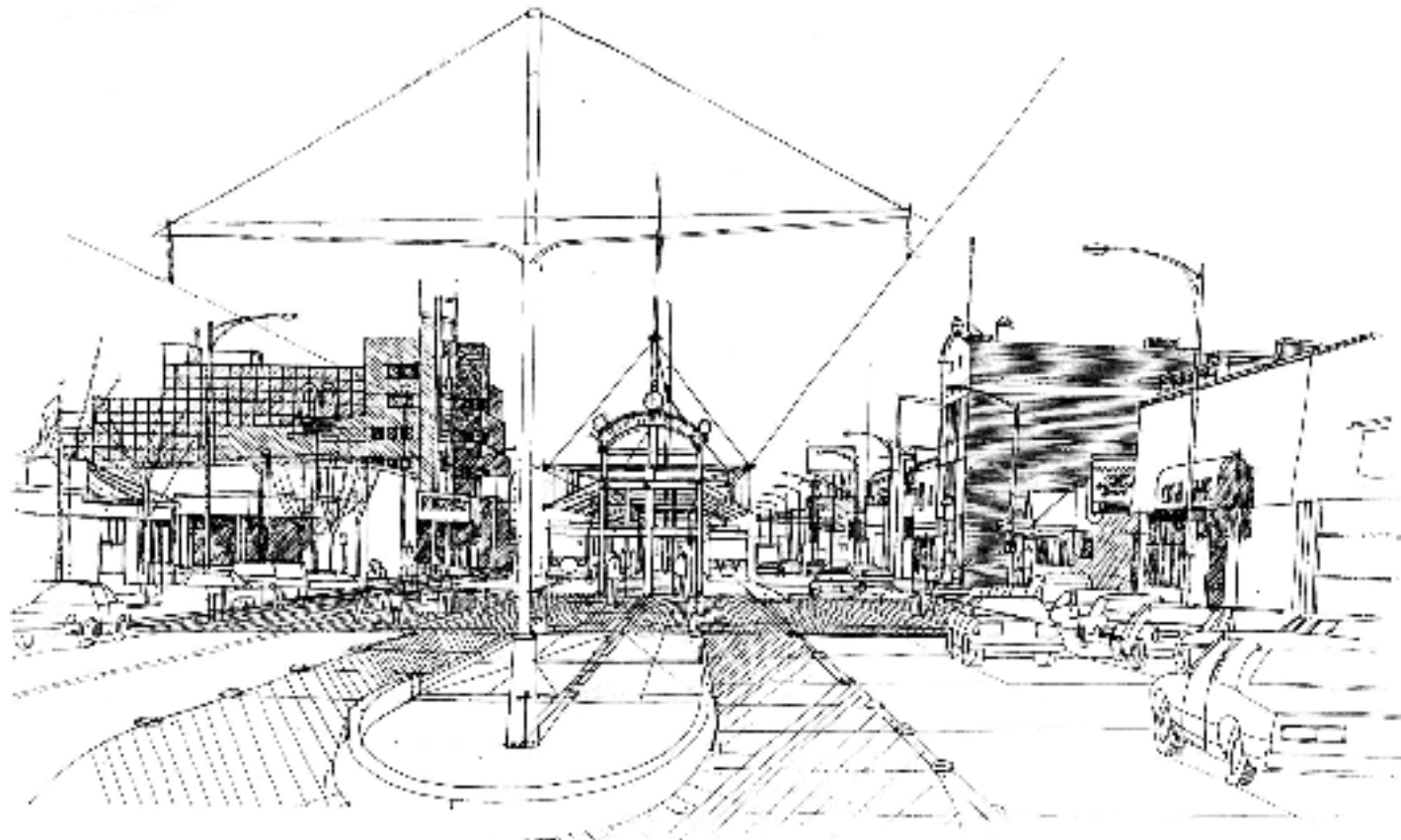
## STOPS & STATIONS

**Entrances** to this downtown underground bus spine are not as successful as the interior. During the warm months they are active spaces, but during cold months they are isolated and devoid of activity. (activity/land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

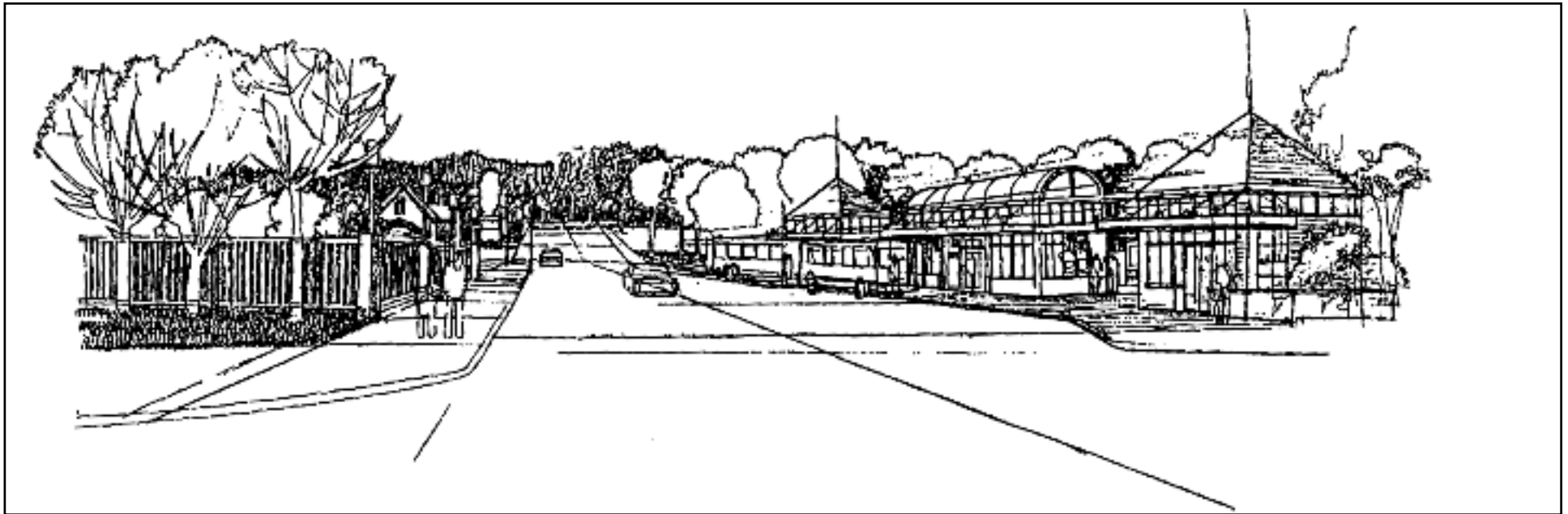
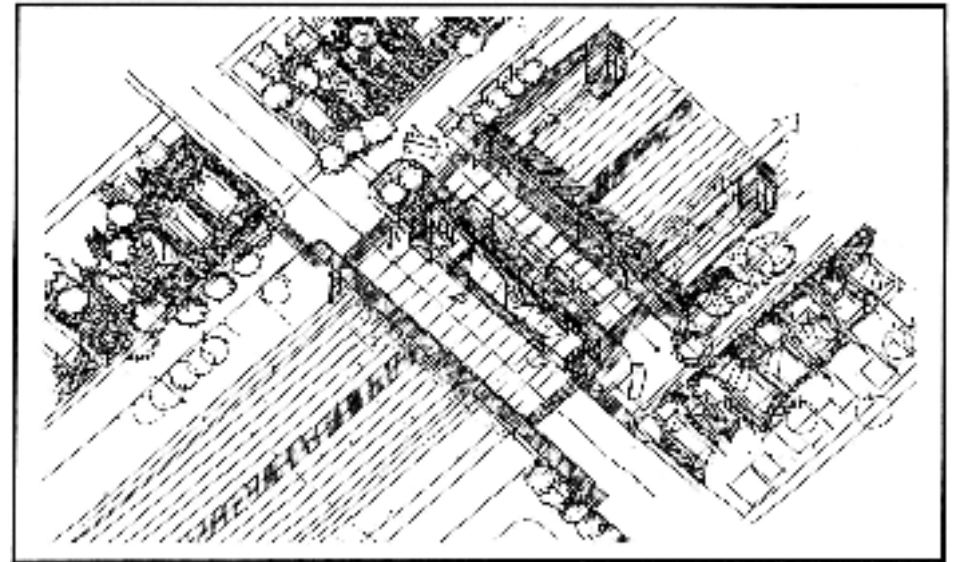
**Electric** bus line stations retrofitted on wide existing urban streets can address safety concerns through design. This station is located in an area of activity. It reads well. A well defined island between lanes of traffic, its large canopy, pedestrian scaled lighting, and signs make it a presence on the street. Crosswalks and the bus lanes are well marked with paving patterns. (readability, ownership, activity/land use, mobility, visibility)





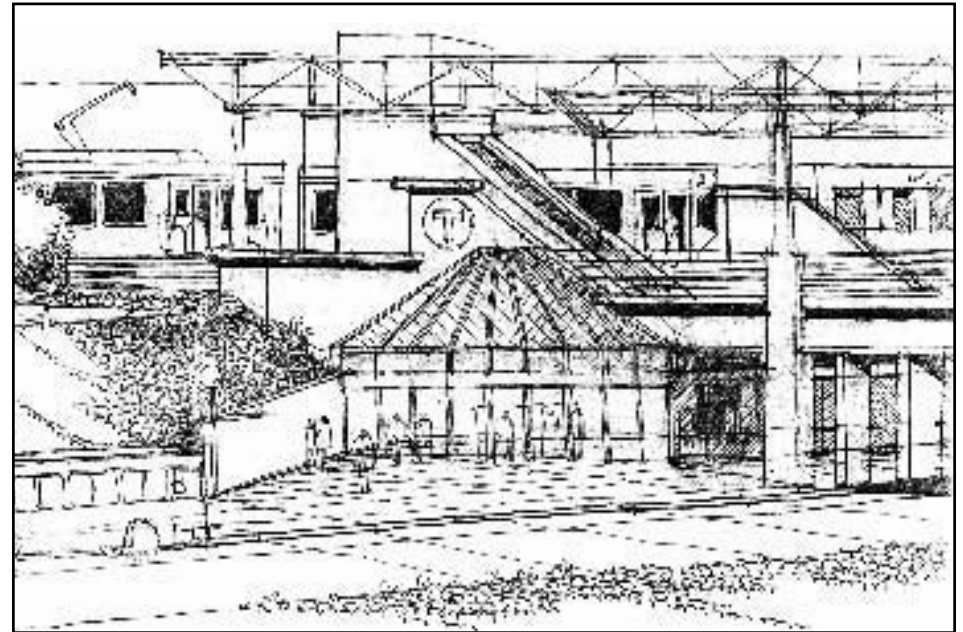
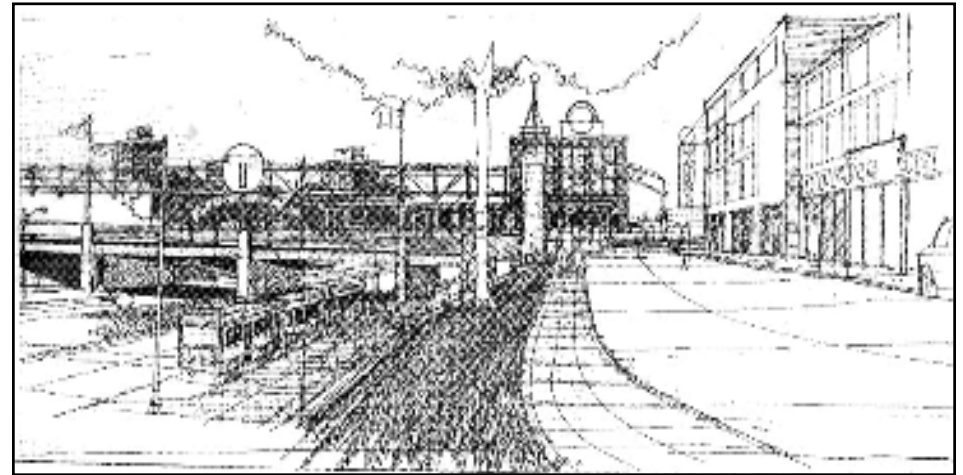
## STOPS & STATIONS

**Neighborhood** bus hubs on freeway bridges that allow transfer from neighborhood lines above to those bus lines on the freeway below in the freeway trench are safety challenges. Access to the station below needs to be controlled, well lighted, and monitored by a video camera system. Because freeway bridges are usually unoccupied no persons' lands, the neighborhood station should be designed to connect the neighborhoods on each side of the freeway to each other. Paving, lighting, and plantings can help create an inviting pedestrian realm across the bridge. (ownership, mobility, readability, visibility)



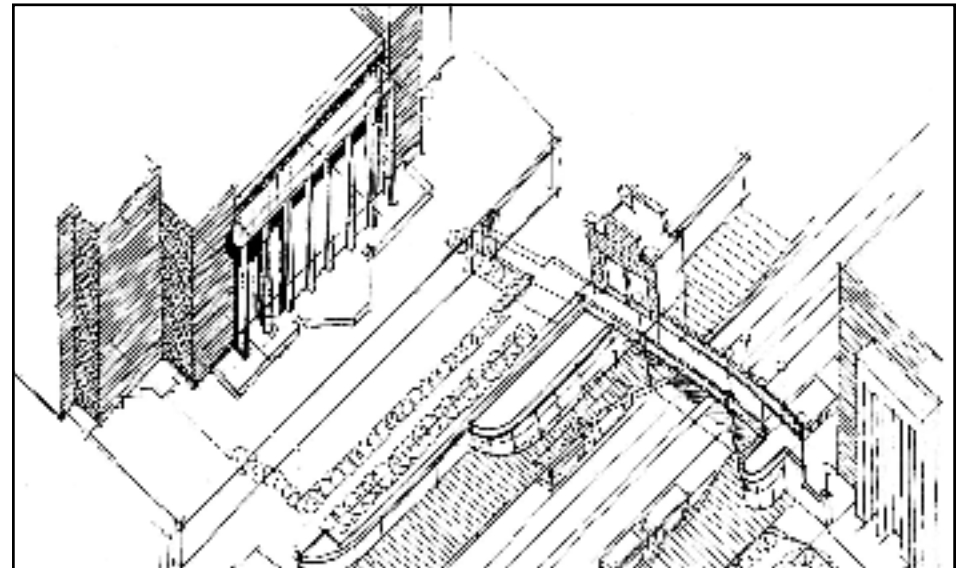
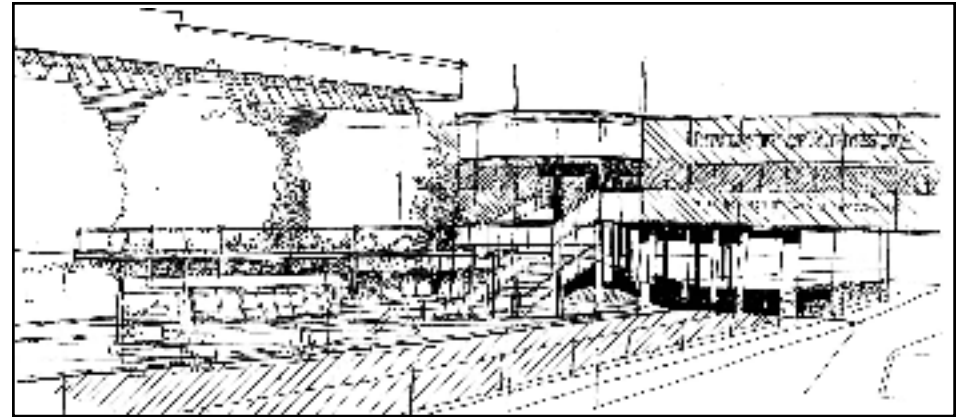
## STOPS & STATIONS

**When** a LRT station is on an overpass over a busy street with a bus line, there are opportunities to provide an efficient transfer between both systems. However, there is a danger that the station could be an intimidating, isolated place unless it is conceived of as not just a station but as a part of a larger active, integrated environment that is welcoming to users. This design incorporates buildings and pedestrian spaces that support and overlook the station area. (activity/ land use, visibility, readability)



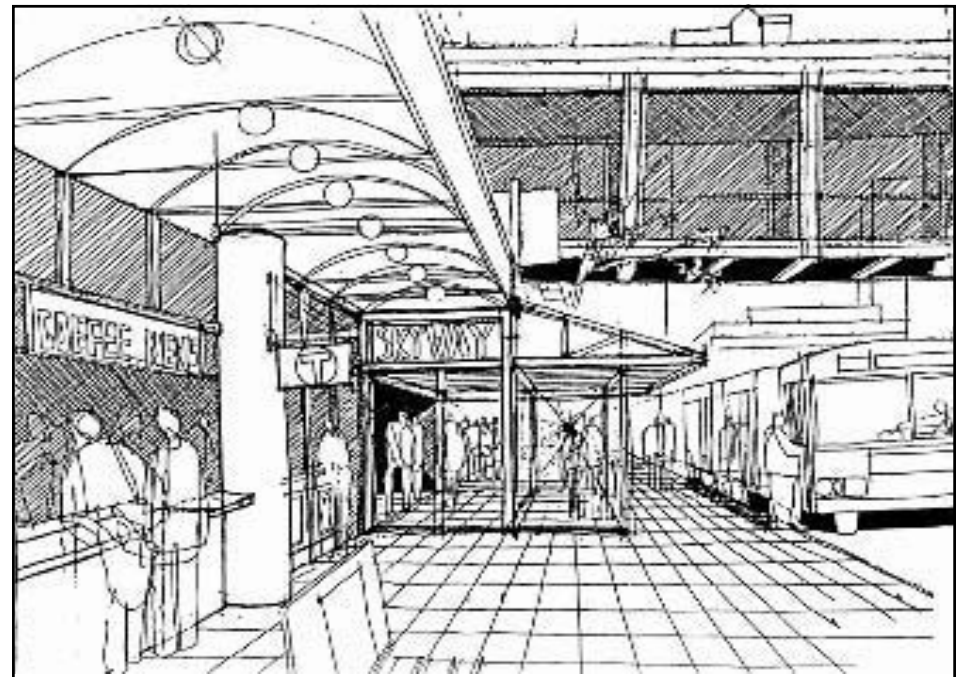
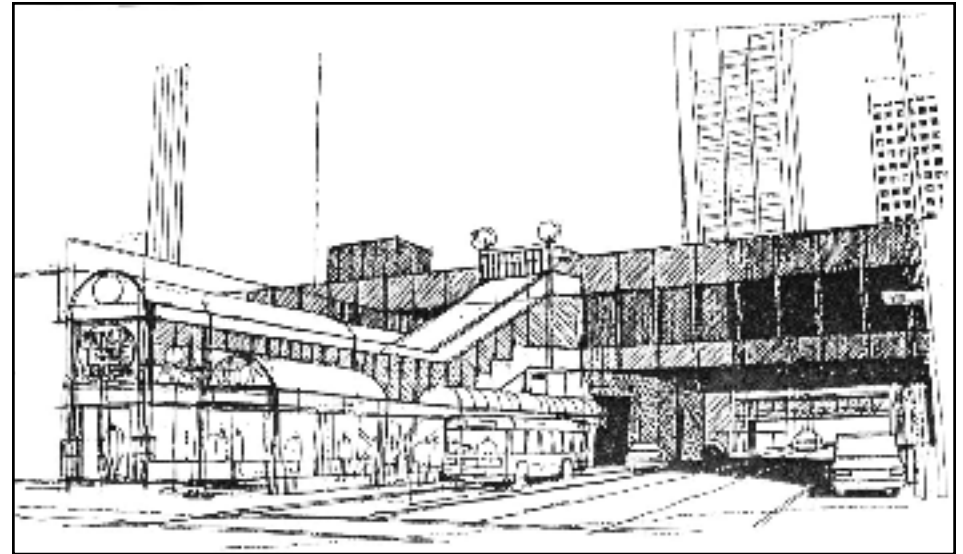
# STOPS & STATIONS

**Safe** transit stops integrate existing pedestrian systems into the station design. In these designs the pedestrian bridge and the skyway are both part of the transit stop area. (ownership, activity/land use, readability)



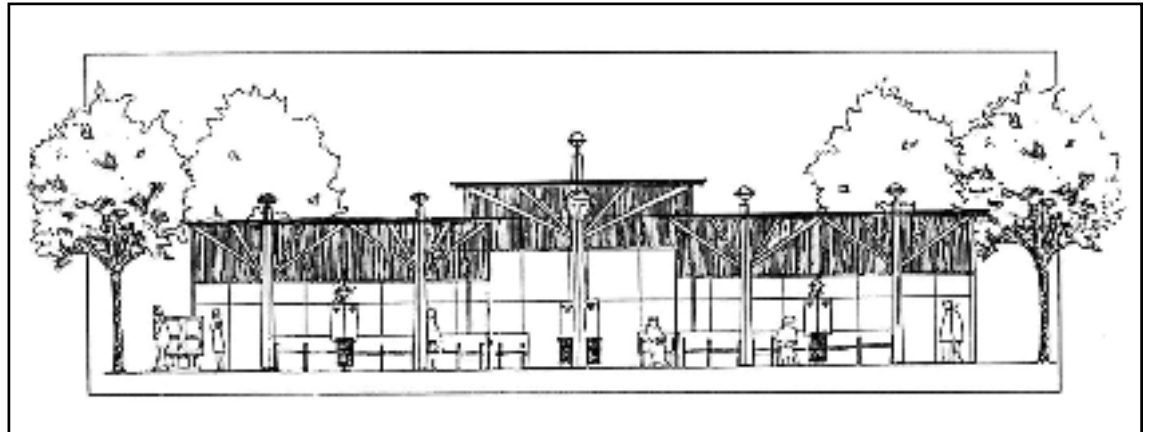
## STOPS & STATIONS

**Transit** stops should be integrated into existing downtown skyway systems and be designed with them when the skyway system is extended.  
(ownership, activity/ land use)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Bus** stations should be designed as comfortable, memorable places. The bus station shown above is at a large enclosed suburban shopping mall. It is just an aggregation of generic bus shelters used in throughout the metro area. It is not related to the center and it is located at its least prestigious and visible entry. The redesign of the station below creates a signature for the station that relates to the shopping center. (ownership)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**These** transit stations are located in busy locations that provide “eyes on the station” and are large enough to minimize crowding. However, raised platforms stations are more intimidating than those at grade. (mobility)



## STOPS & STATIONS

**Amenities** and safety-enhancing details are important design features of transit stops and stations. The white paving and the lights that are embedded in it clearly mark the edge of the waiting platform. The translucent roofs make this shelter a more pleasant place to wait. The telephone and the bicycle lockers accommodate transit users' needs. All of these features inspire user confidence. (readability)

