

## Fair Saint Louis Releases Transportation Plan for Forest Park Location

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ST. LOUIS, MO, JUNE 3, 2014 . . . After months of collaboration with St. Louis Metropolitan Police, MoDOT, the city's Streets Department, Parks Department, Metro transit and others, officials of Fair Saint Louis (FSL) today released their transportation plan to get fairgoers to and from Forest Park for the Independence Day celebration July 3, 4, and 5.

"Safety is our first priority, convenience our second," said Bob Ciapciak, the Fair's general chairman. "We will have plenty of ways to get to the park, including walking, cycling, mass transit, park-and-ride shuttles, and we will have more than enough parking for people who want to drive. Fairgoers can expect the usual great time at 'America's Biggest Birthday Party.'"



Fair St. Louis has shifted from the Arch grounds to Forest Park, both because of the ongoing CityArchRiver construction, and because this is the City's 250th anniversary. Because it is a new venue, FSL went to the expense of hiring a traffic consultant to work with local experts and officials to create a plan for safety and convenience.

The plan, detailed on the Fair Saint Louis website ([www.fairsaintlouis.org](http://www.fairsaintlouis.org)), will give people specific, easy-to-use advice on how to get to the park from their specific location. While FSL is

encouraging people to use alternative modes of transportation, the plan does include 22,000 dedicated parking spots in and near Forest Park, more than enough to accommodate everyone even if there are record crowds.

"With plenty of parking, some people will choose to drive into the park, others will park nearby and walk in, while others will park a little further away and take a shuttle in," Ciapciak said. "One of the easiest ways to get to the fair will be by MetroLink, which will have additional trains running to accommodate fairgoers."

Working with Bob Simmons, a transportation consultant with a track record for developing successful transportation plans for various large scale events across the country, including Pope John Paul's visit to St. Louis in 1999, FSL officials met with city and county political leaders, neighborhood associations and nearby businesses to ensure that the plan would allow a large number of people to attend the fair while minimizing disruption in and around the park.

"Fairgoers will have a number of options to get to and from Forest Park," said Simmons. "We have identified sufficient parking spaces, and we have vetted our plans with all appropriate city agencies. I am confident that people will have no trouble getting to the fair if they take just a little bit of time to plan their trip. Our website will make that very easy."

The detailed plan includes links to MetroLink, which will be a great option with two stations in about the same close proximity to the entrance to the fair: the Forest Park-DeBaliviere MetroLink Station and the Skinker MetroLink Station. Fairgoers can park at any one of 20 free Park-Ride lots at MetroLink stations along the alignment and ride MetroLink to one of these two stations to easily get to the Fair. The Brentwood I-64 MetroLink Station parking garage alone has hundreds of free parking spaces which can be utilized by fairgoers. Metro will encourage fairgoers who take a Red Line train to exit the train at the Forest Park-DeBaliviere MetroLink Station and to return to that station after the fair closes. Fairgoers who travel to the fair on a Blue Line train will be encouraged to exit at the Skinker MetroLink Station and to return to that station after the fireworks display.

The plan also includes the location of bike valets in the park for those who may want to ride their bike to the festivities, as well as the recommended driving routes to be used to access the Fair from all different parts of the St. Louis region. Detailed maps show the various parking options available for each route.

"From the outset, our community partners made it clear that the plan needed to meet specific goals to keep people safe, avoid gridlock, and give fairgoers a variety of route and parking options," noted Ciapciak. "We're pleased to report that the final plan addresses each of those criteria and will help to keep traffic moving around the park during the weekend of the Fair."

The specific goals included:

- \* No pedestrians mingling with vehicular traffic in the park;
- \* No shuttles and cars on the same roads inside the park;
- \* The capacity to accommodate a record large crowd;
- \* Clearing of the park by midnight each night.

Meeting all of those criteria required that the Fair have:

1. A hard closing at 10:30 pm in order to clear the park and surrounding areas in 90 minutes;
2. No street parking in or immediately surrounding the park to keep people safe and keep traffic moving;

3. More parking on lots inside the park to help offset the elimination of on-street parking;
4. A robust shuttle system, and
5. An 'In Park' fee-based system to help offset the costs of meeting the criteria.

"Moving the event will allow you to enjoy both Forest Park and the Fair itself in a way that you have never experienced before," said Mayor Francis Slay. "But, moving it to the park has been in some ways like starting an event from scratch. So, I am pleased the leadership of the Fair has created a transportation plan to help everyone get into and out of the park safely and conveniently. The easiest way to get to the Fair will be by Metrolink, bike, or with your own two feet. But, if you want to drive, that will work too."

For those who must drive to the Fair, organizers have collaborated with a range of partners, including Forest Park Community College, Washington University, St. Louis University, Metro and local lot owners to provide ample parking spaces, and additional spaces continue to be added to the mix. Maps for each of the recommended routes for accessing the Fair include the parking that will be accessible along that route and will note whether the lot is free, a reduced fare lot (\$) where spots will be available for varying rates based on their distance from the Park, or one of the premium lots (\$\$) within or adjacent to the park, which will cost \$30 per car. The only exception is for the Zoo Parking Lot, which will set its own parking rates. Parking lot attendants and local police will be on site at the end of the Fair each day to direct traffic out of the lots and back to the primary route used to access that parking area.

Additional Park & Ride lots will provide even more options for fairgoers, and detailed information on those and the plans for the shuttles that will serve those lots will be added to the website in the next several days.

"We also have had several meetings over the past several months with members of the board of aldermen who represent the residents of the communities adjacent to Forest Park," said Parker Condie Jr., chairman of the Fair St. Louis Foundation. "We appreciate their input and want to reinforce that the plan has been developed to minimize the impact on local neighborhoods. Area residents will find additional helpful information, including details on local road closures, on the Park Neighbors section of the website."

"We're confident that all the elements are in place to accommodate fairgoers and we encourage people to begin making their plans to join us in Forest Park." added Ciapciak. "A safe Fair is everyone's responsibility and by planning ahead and following the recommendations provided, fairgoers can help to minimize traffic congestion around Forest Park and help facilitate a smoother ride for all fairgoers."

One final addition planned for the website is an easy option for fairgoers to access real-time information on changing conditions with traffic and parking during the three days of Fair Saint Louis. Fairgoers are advised to check back at [www.fairsaintlouis.org](http://www.fairsaintlouis.org) in the days leading up to the Fair to access and bookmark this live updates page of the website. During the Fair, that page will be used to share details on which parking lots have spots available, any road closures or traffic incidents that may impact travel and other helpful information. A phone number will also be available to people to text to have this information sent directly to their phone during the Fair.

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