



Detroit Transit Center

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings into new transit center and public plaza

The City of Detroit identified a need for a fully operational Transit and Transfer station on the site of the historic former Michigan State Fair Grounds in Detroit, MI. The adaptive reuse of the 1926 Dairy Cattle building brings modern transit options to an area in desperate need of mobility. Spanning 52,000 square feet with an additional 1,500 square feet preserved from the 1924 Coliseum building portico, the transit hub will serve a higher density of commercial development in the area while serving as an important reminder of the historic state fairgrounds.

As the preservation architect, NORR is restoring the majority of the original cattle barn building while preparing the building for modern transit by implementing the program requirements for the DDOT (Detroit Department of Transit) and the SmartBus transit system. The building enclosure at the rider pick-up locations where the buses transverse will provide a more comfortable semi-enclosed area to protect commuters from harsh climate conditions and enhance safety while providing a unique historical experience of the former State Fairgrounds. Services and amenities will also be updated, including a waiting area, 24-hour bathrooms, retail space, bicycle storage, a police station and an interactive historical display.

NORR's design intent for the Cattle Barn included the goal to retain the historic fabric of the former exhibition building while integrating transit operations, safety and technology into the nearly 100-year-old building. Significant features such as stucco cladding, exposed structure, large facade openings and upper clearstory windows will be maintained and restored as part of the preservation efforts. The existing vaulted center bay with exposed structure and roof structure will be kept exposed as it was originally designed.

NORR is working with design partners DLZ to deliver a unique local transit solution in a former agricultural exhibition hall on a monumental scale. The adaptive reuse of the Dairy Cattle building contributes to a sustainable future by lowering our carbon footprint and improving the overall cost lifecycle of the existing structure. Bicycle and scooter parking, public green space, retail opportunities and an event stage will help bring this historical site into the future.

CLIENT	Detroit Building Authority
PORTFOLIO	Transportation
CATEGORY	Multi-modal Hubs
SIZE	56,831 SF (5,280 SM)
LOCATION	Detroit, MI, US
DATE	2024
SERVICES	Architecture Interior Design

NORR

Transportation

NORR's Transportation Studio develops aviation, transit and multimodal hub solutions for clients around the world. We understand the needs of government and private operators to maintain, upgrade and provide new transportation services and supporting infrastructure. Our design solutions are purpose-driven to build better, more efficient and environmentally friendly transportation nodes that incorporate flexibility for future system expansion.

Integrated Designs for Aviation

We have proven experience in all aspects of airport design, engineering and operations, from curbside to airside. Our dedicated global team has designed and managed complex projects for the transportation industry, including terminal buildings, parkades, maintenance and training hangars, de-icing facilities, runways, taxiways, aprons and satellite space hubs. Our design work extends to master planning, interior reconfigurations, lounges and retail buildouts. We've been involved in multiple prestigious projects located worldwide, beginning in 1964 with Canada's largest airport, Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Managing the Complexity of Transit Projects

Public transit, including subway and light rail transit, is vital to a healthy sustainable city. At NORR, we work collaboratively with all levels of government and private operators to provide planning and programs that increase capacity, eliminate spatial and technical limitations on balance with financial realities. We have

developed a framework for detailed project phasing and staging strategies, for design implementation through to construction that has the least impact on the system and traffic flow.

Multimodal Transit Hubs

All levels of government are looking to move people and goods through multimodal transit hubs providing more options, enhanced service and increased efficiencies. We continue to be at the forefront of planning, designing and implementing projects that include regional transit, railway and ferry terminals, as well as border crossings. Our experience goes far beyond design and engineering. Today, the reduction of carbon emissions, elimination of noise pollution and resolution of other environmental issues are all integral aspects of our work.

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