“Cities are fantastically dynamic places, and this is strikingly true of their successful parts, which offer a fertile ground of the plans of thousands of people.”

- Jane Jacobs,
The Death and Life of Great American Cities, (The Modern Library), 20
A full grasp of the background, purpose, process, and context is essential in guiding the planning and design efforts for a complex project like the West Florissant Avenue Great Streets Demonstration Project. From the start, to help maintain focus on the most important needs and principles, the project embraced as its guide and sought to achieve in full the eight principles of the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative, which include:

1. Great Streets are great places
2. Great Streets integrate land use and transportation planning
3. Great Streets accommodate all users and all modes
4. Great Streets are economically vibrant
5. Great Streets are environmentally responsible
6. Great Streets rely on current thinking
7. Great Streets are measurable
8. Great Streets develop collaboratively
1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.1.1 WEST FLORISSANT AVENUE GREAT STREETS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

West Florissant Avenue, in North St. Louis County, has long been a street that serves motorized vehicles well. In recent years there has been increasing need to do more than that – local communities along this corridor need also to be able to walk, bus, and bike, and many see the corridor as their only central place for shopping, meeting neighbors, and economic development.

Support for the West Florissant Avenue Great Streets Project (“the Project”) evolved out of joint efforts by Ferguson, Dellwood, and St. Louis County, who then applied to the East-West Gateway Great Streets Initiative.

The Master Plan builds on the West Florissant Avenue Corridor Plan, developed in 2011-2012 and produced in cooperation with five cities along the corridor providing more detailed analysis, design concepts, policy language, and implementation strategies.

1.1.2 ST. LOUIS GREAT STREETS INITIATIVE

The East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWGCOG) launched the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative (Initiative) in 2006 to encourage communities to reconsider the roles of streets and provide planning assistance. The Initiative’s projects show that not only can streets move cars and trucks, they have the potential to strengthen communities through enhanced connectivity, multi-modal access, bolstered economic development, and increased aesthetic appeal. The Initiative is supporting several demonstration projects in the St. Louis area, which are in various stages of planning, design, and construction. It embraces eight principles for re-imagining our streets, and the West Florissant Avenue project strives to address them all:

1. **Great Streets are great places**: Public streets are public spaces and in revitalizing neighborhoods the quality of the public space is paramount. An improved sense of place improves the viability of any community.

2. **Great Streets integrate land use and transportation planning**: Defining desired land use is a first priority, followed by the design and engineering of a transportation system that supports this vision.
3. **Great Streets accommodate all users and all modes**: The plan’s vision for West Florissant provides significant new facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, and those who are traveling to the neighborhood as well as through and within.

4. **Great Streets are economically vibrant**: The plan’s economic and land use strategies are rooted in economic market analysis and reflect what can realistically happen in the next 25 years, with leadership and regulation.

5. **Great Streets are environmentally responsible**: Strategies for environmental responsibility are incorporated in almost every element of the conceptual design.

6. **Great Streets rely on current thinking**: Great streets from around the world have informed this plan, and we have incorporated a “Toolkit” that introduces the reader to these best practices.

7. **Great Streets are measurable**: Performance measures are used to evaluate options and designs as well as to measure the performance of what has been implemented over time.

8. **Great Streets develop collaboratively**: This plan has combined local vision with technical expertise, founded on Great Streets principles.

### 1.1.3 PROJECT AREA

The West Florissant Avenue Great Streets Project area is located in North St. Louis County, within the cities of Ferguson and Dellwood (Map 1.1). The Project area extends for approximately 2.6 miles, beginning at I-270 in the north and continuing to the East-West rail line at Emerson Electric headquarters and Buzz Westfall Plaza in the south (Maps 1.2 and 1.3; note change in map orientation). The Project area includes parcels that front the corridor, plus additional parcels along the key intersecting streets of Pershall Road and Chambers Road. The street corridor itself is owned and maintained by St. Louis County.

The Project area parcels are about evenly divided between the cities of Ferguson and Dellwood; a few parcels also fall within Jennings city limits at the southeast end of the corridor. Several key landmarks and retail centers are located within or near the Project area. Dellwood City Hall is near the intersection of West Florissant Avenue and Chambers Road. The Project area also includes Dellwood Park and Dellwood Recreation Center. St. Louis Community College Florissant Valley Campus is just outside the northwest end. In addition to these landmarks, there are 160 acres of open space or park within one mile of the Project area, including open space associated with Maline Creek. A major shopping center is at the northern end of the corridor, with access to I-270. Just outside the southern end of the Project area, Buzz Westfall Plaza is another major retail center.

The West Florissant Avenue corridor has been designed primarily to serve motorized vehicles, which is reinforced by the direct access to and from I-270 the road provides. The corridor is served by Metro Transit bus route #74, one of the most heavily-used lines in the system, and a future transit center is planned for Pershall Road in the northeast part of the Project area; its estimated completion date is in 2015. While sidewalks are present, many other pedestrian amenities are not, and the corridor is not pedestrian-friendly. The corridor currently does not have designated bicycle facilities, and is little used by bicyclists.

As communities take an increasingly holistic view of streets and incorporate more of these Great Streets principles, our streets will serve multiple functions and become better places.
CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND PLANNING PROCESS

MAP 1.1. REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

Great Streets Initiative
West Florissant Avenue Demonstration Project

Project Sponsors:
East West Gateway I Cities of Ferguson and Dellwood I St. Louis County

Regional Context
Map 1.1

11.26.2013
Data Source: St. Louis County GIS
CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND PLANNING PROCESS

MAP 1.2. WEST FLORISSANT AVENUE PLANNING AREA

Great Streets Initiative
West Florissant Avenue Demonstration Project

Project Sponsors:
East West Gateway | Cities of Ferguson and Dellwood | St. Louis County

Planning Area
Map 1.2

11.26.2013
Data Source: St. Louis County GIS
MAP 1.3. WEST FLORISSANT CORRIDOR AERIAL VIEW
1.2 PLANNING PROCESS AND CONTEXT

1.2.1 PROCESS AND OUTREACH

This Master Plan comes from a phased planning process based on strong community and stakeholder engagement (Figure 1.1). The first phase of work focused on background analysis, drawing from studies and information already available, and supplementing this work with interviews, additional field observations, research, and analysis to fully understand the existing conditions in the Project area. The second phase of work explored alternative scenarios for land use and transportation, and led to a preferred alternative to be developed further. The final phase involved refining the preferred alternative and preparing the draft and final Master Plan documents. The Project benefited from multi-faceted outreach efforts through all planning phases. The full Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan is included as Appendix One.

To help guide the process, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was consulted in meetings throughout the Project, and a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) served an advisory role and was convened in four facilitated meetings. The general public was invited to participate in four community workshops to help identify a vision, provide input on improvement concepts, and review Master Plan contents. Two capacity-building workshops were held with agency personnel who would be involved in designing, approving, operating, or maintaining the roadway, as well as partners. Finally, the planning process was informed by two rounds of interviews with institutional, civic, and business stakeholders; additional interviews were helped throughout the project as needed. This direct engagement was supplemented with a dedicated project website that provided meeting information, a document library, and opportunities to participate in a survey and provide comments on a map.

Community outreach included facilitated discussions (top), hands-on workshops (center), and a website (bottom).
CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND PLANNING PROCESS

EAST-WEST GATEWAY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  Cities of Ferguson and Dellwood, St. Louis County
west florissant avenue corridor demonstration project
great streets initiative

Figure 1.1 Process schedule for plan development and community engagement
1.2.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

Several recent planning studies that are relevant to the Project were examined during the first phase of work. Details about each study can be found in the Final Existing Conditions Report (see Appendices). These studies include the following:

1. The West Florissant Avenue Corridor Plan (Draft August 2012; Cities of Country Club Hills, Dellwood, Ferguson, Flordell Hills, and Jennings) was a first step in planning for revitalization of West Florissant Avenue.

2. The I-270 North Corridor Study (Final Report October 2012; MoDOT) evaluates the problems, needs, and opportunities along the I-270 mainline, Dunn Road and Pershall Road, and connecting arterials. It includes the interchange with West Florissant Avenue. An environmental study is now underway and due to be completed in the fall of 2014.

3. The Draft Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan (October 2011; City of Ferguson) focuses on improving pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented commercial and residential areas and connecting neighborhoods to downtown.

4. The Maline Greenway Concept Plan (Fall 2011; Great Rivers Greenway) envisions the Maline Greenway as the east-west link between the Confluence Greenway and the St. Vincent Greenway in north St. Louis County.

5. The Gateway Bike Plan: Regional Routes to Sustainability (August 2011; Great Rivers Greenway) is a framework for the Regional Bicycle Network over the next 20 years.


7. The Northside Study Final Report: Planning Transit Improvements for St. Louis City (October 2008; EWG, St. Louis Metro, and MoDOT) will result in light-rail transit (LRT) options to be advanced through the regional project development process.

8. Building a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development: Ferguson and Environs Round 3 - Community Meeting Summary (November 2012; St. Louis Regional Sustainable Communities) integrates land use, transportation, housing, environmental assets, and economic development

9. The West Florissant Avenue Great Streets Master Plan acknowledges this precedent work and has been developed for consistency with applicable goals and recommendations of these recent studies.
1.3 MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

This Master Plan briefly summarizes the plan’s development process, background information, and existing conditions; it emphasizes the recommended planning principles, design concepts, and implementation. This document is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Planning Process** — explains the Plan’s background and purpose, identifies the regional and local context, and outlines the organization of the Master Plan document.
- **Chapter 2: Existing Conditions** — summarizes the existing conditions analysis, and identifies the corridor’s major assets, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Chapter 3: Summary of Alternatives Analysis** — reviews the alternative concepts considered in the project and the rationale by which a preferred concept was selected.
- **Chapter 4: Vision Framework** — articulates a vision for the corridor and outlines principles that guide corridor design concepts.
- **Chapter 5: Concept Plan** — describes the concept plan for the corridor by identifying districts, nodes, and development opportunities, and outlining critical design parameters that will guide the character of the corridor’s public realm.
- **Chapter 6: Design Toolbox** — presents a suite of urban design best practices and guidelines to guide future development and implementation.
- **Chapter 7: Implementation Plan** — presents recommendations for Master Plan implementation, including a list of high priority improvements, prospective financing tools, and funding strategies to best move the project forward.
- **Appendix** — includes detailed studies, data, and content as appropriate.