Engagement Strategies
for the
Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Extension Community Engagement Process

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Prepared for
East-West Gateway Coordinating Council
In association with
Bi-State Development Agency
Missouri Department of Transportation

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1. Background

The proposals and recommended strategies included in this paper will become the foundation of the community engagement process for the Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Segment I Extension Conceptual Design and Environmental Analysis.

Recommendations concerning the roles and responsibilities of key participants in the study, the sequence of engagement activities and the establishment and composition of a Community Working Group are included.

2. Process Roles & Responsibilities

To participate effectively in a public engagement process, stakeholders need a clear idea of the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and organizations involved. A description of the roles and responsibilities of the public agencies involved in The Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Segment I Extension Conceptual Design and Environmental Analysis are described below. A description of the roles and responsibilities of a proposed Community Working Group is also provided.

A. East-West Gateway Coordinating Council Board of Directors

The EWGCC Board of Directors (the Council), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, holds primary responsibility for the completion of a conceptual design for the Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Segment 1 Extension. In collaboration with the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, the St. Louis County Municipal League, Bi-State Development Agency, and the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Council will direct this stage of planning for the extension and, at the end of the conceptual design and environmental analysis processes, its Board of Directors will approve a conceptual design for the extension. It is anticipated that the project will be financed with local funds, so a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared, but a similar level of analysis will be carried-out. When a design is approved by the Council, Bi-State will take responsibility for the final stages of the process final design,

construction, and operations.

B. MetroLink Policy Committee

As recommended in the *Cross-County MetroLink Segment I Business Plan*, the MetroLink Policy Committee will be the institutional constant through the project, providing a single point of accountability for project budgets and decision-making through the entire Cross-County Extension planning and design processes from conceptual design through preliminary engineering and construction. During the Conceptual Design Study, the Policy Committee will act as a subcommittee of the Council. When a conceptual design is approved and the project is turned over to Bi-State, the Policy Committee will then become a Policy and Management Oversight Committee, a committee reporting to the Bi-State Board.

The Policy Committee is composed of the St. Louis County Executive, the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, the Chairman of Bi-State, the Chairman of EWGCC, and a representative of the County Municipal League. These representatives were chosen to ensure that stakeholder concerns are adequately represented. For this reason, the Policy Committee will play a vital role during the community engagement process, ensuring the interests of various constituencies are represented in the design process.

C. MetroLink Management Committee

A Management Committee, composed of senior staff from the offices of the St. Louis County Executive, the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, the Chairman of Bi-State, the Chairman of EWGCC, and a representative of the County Municipal League will consider operational issues concerning the conduct of the design and engagement process. The Management Committee is not a decision-making body and will not be making recommendations concerning final policy decisions . The group will provide guidance to the agency staff and the consultant team during the process, monitoring the TCIG's and Consultant Team s progress, assisting in the design and management of the public engagement process, and reviewing technical reports, analyses and design proposals.

D. Transportation Corridor Improvement Group

The Transportation Corridor Improvement Group (TCIG) is a multi-agency staff group located at EWGCC. The group is comprised of staff members from EWGCC, Missouri Department of

Transportation (MoDOT) and Bi-State, who have agreed to cooperate in carrying out planning for major transportation investments. The TCIG is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cross-County Conceptual Design Study, directing and coordinating the work of the Consultant Team.

E. Cross-County Consultant Team

The Cross-County Consultant Team is composed of the Engagement Consultants and the Design Consultants. The Engagement Consultants are led by Mary Means and Associates, Incorporated (MMA), an Alexandria, VA community planning and public involvement firm, who will prepare and manage the engagement process for the Cross-County project. MMA, known for their ability to design and manage effective public planning processes, heads a team that includes Vector Communications, a St. Louis public involvement and media relations firm, and Urban Strategies Incorporated, a planning, architecture, and urban design firm.

The Design Consultants are led by Parsons Transportation Group (PTG), a transportation planning and engineering firm based in Chicago. To support their work, PTG has assembled a team of experts from a range of disciplines. A list of firms and general project responsibilities follows:

Parsons Transportation Group	*Design, Civil & Transit Engineering*
EDAW, Inc.	*Urban Design*
HBA/Parsons Eng Science	*Environmental Analysis*
Harry Weese Associates	*Urban Design & Transit Architecture Manager*
David Mason & Assoc., Inc.	*Site Civil Design*
Horner & Shifrin, Inc.	*Structural Concepts*
Austin Tao & Assoc., Inc.	*Landscape Architecture*
Trivers Associates	*Historic Preservation*
ST&T Associates	*Public Art*
Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal	*Environmental Counsel*
KPMG	*Financial Capacity Analysis*

F. Community Working Group

It is proposed that a Community Working Group be formed to ensure that localities, organizations, and

individuals with a central stake in the outcome of the design process have a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about the project. As a structure with continuity and balance, the Community Working Group will provide a platform for the discussion of issues and testing of alternatives.

As a key component of the community engagement process, the Community Working Group will provide structured opportunities for exploration and evaluation of alternatives and impacts and necessary opportunities for discussion among stakeholders from different communities along the proposed alignment. As a relatively small group with direct access to the Consultant Team and TCIG, the group will have opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the issues, costs, and benefits of various proposals and to communicate ideas and concerns directly to those managing and designing the project.

The committee will have approximately 25 members representing key stakeholder groups. It will meet approximately 8 times during the study process.

2. Sequence of Engagement Activities

A. Engagement Activity Phases

The preliminary sequence of engagement activities that follows summarizes a proposed flow of public events and activities for the Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Segment I Extension Conceptual Design and Environmental Analysis. The preliminary sequence of engagement activities is designed to mesh with the activities of the Design Consultant, Parson Transportation Group (PTG). MMA will work to ensure that the engagement and design processes are seamlessly integrated.

The sequence of activities is organized around public engagement events in the four phases of the study:

Phase One: Preparing & Screening Design Concepts
Phase Two: Preparing & Evaluating Design Alternatives

- Phase Three: Selecting & Refining a Preferred Alternative
- Phase Four: Final Decision-making.

The Cross-County Conceptual Design process is being designed to ensure high levels of public involvement. Through such avenues as public workshops, community issue forums, and community planning and design workshops, stakeholders will have opportunities to learn about the project, review technical documents and analyses, participate in the definition and review of design concepts, and share ideas and concerns with each other, the study team, and the region s public officials. Project newsletters, press announcements, advertisements as well as a project web site and hotline will be established to keep interested parties informed. In addition, Consultant Team members will be available throughout the study to present information to community groups and organizations.

Activities during the first phases of the study follow a similar sequence. Each phase begins with the distribution of a newsletter announcing public meetings and summarizing the work of the Design Consultants. The Community Working Group will meet to review the products of the Design Consultants approximately 2 weeks after the newsletter is distributed. Public Forums and Issue Workshops will be held four to six weeks following the newsletter distribution. After the public meetings, the Community Working Group will meet to review public input and offer suggestions to the TCIG, the MetroLink Management Committee and the Design Consultants. At the conclusion of the engagement cycle, the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council will meet to review the study s progress and provide direction to the TCIG, the MetroLink Management Committee and the Design Consultants. The general sequence is illustrated in Figure 2.

The preliminary sequence of engagement activities will be reviewed with the Transportation Corridor Improvement Group (TCIG), the MetroLink Management Committee and presented to groups of key stakeholders. The sequence will be revised consistent with comments received during this review process and presented the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council in late July 1998.

B. Sequence of Activities

Engagement Planning

Presentation to the TCIG and the MetroLink Management Committee

The preliminary sequence of engagement activities and schedule will be presented to the TCIG and the

MetroLink Management Committee.

Engagement Plan Work

The preliminary sequence of engagement activities and schedule will be reviewed with key stakeholders in two work sessions.

Community Working Group Invitation Letters Mailed-Out

Following approval of the engagement sequence and Community Working Group proposal by the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council, Working Group members will be appointed.

Brochure Out

The project brochure, providing information explaining the engagement sequence and outlining what lies ahead, will be mailed.

Completion of Situation Assessment & Engagement Plan

Drafts of the Situation Assessment & Engagement Plan will be prepared for review by the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council.

Phase One: Preparing Standards & Screening Concepts

Community Working Group Meeting One

The Working Group will establish operating procedures, review the engagement and communications plans, and discuss broad community issues and ideas.

First Newsletter & Web Page

The first issue of the project newsletter will contain the draft evaluation criteria and information regarding basic design concepts. The schedule of public meetings and workshops will be published as well as information regarding the availability of the first round of technical documents.

Technical Information Available

Draft Standards and Policies Memoranda

Draft Evaluation Methods and Criteria Memoranda

Preliminary Design Concept Paper

Community Working Group Meeting Two

Working Group members will review the content of the first round of technical documents, focusing on the proposed evaluation criteria and methods. The preliminary design concept paper will also be reviewed, as will the agenda for the first public workshop and the community issue forums.

Public Forum One

The first forum will focus on the criteria, standards and design concepts developed by the Design Consultants. This first forum is conceived as a listening and learning event, and will be designed to offer opportunities for the Consultant Team and TCIG to share the results of their preliminary analysis with the public and to listen informally to a wide range of community concerns. A large meeting room will be organized around exhibits offering information regarding MetroLink s proposed extension. Participants will have an opportunity to meet one-on-one with consultant team members and staff, ask questions, share concerns and ideas, and offer verbal and written comments on the material presented. Participants will also have an opportunity to learn more about the balance of the engagement process.

Agency and Technical Meeting

An information briefing will be conducted with representatives of various local, state and federal agencies to introduce the project and request relevant background information.

Community Issues Workshops

Up to three workshops, organized by geographic area City of St. Louis to Clayton, Downtown Clayton, and South of Clayton to Maplewood will be held. These workshops will provide forums for residents, property owners, and other interested parties to share their concerns and questions regarding the proposed extension s potential affects on their communities.

Community Working Group Meeting Three

This will be a debriefing session which focuses on the comments received at the Public Workshop and the Community Issue Workshops. The Community Working Group will discuss the merits and various concepts.

MetroLink Policy Committee and Council Briefing

Phase Two: Preparing & Evaluating Design Alternatives

Briefings for Community Leaders

Briefings will be held to provide progress reports to elected officials.

Newsletter Two

The second issue of the newsletter will focus on the presentation of the design alternatives developed by the Design Consultant. This issue will also announce times and locations for the next round of public meetings.

Design and Operations Alternatives Report

The next round of technical reports, including reports on the design alternatives and operation options, will be complete and available for public review.

Community Working Group Meeting Four

The Working Group will discuss various design alternatives and review the agenda for the next round of public meetings.

MetroLink Policy Committee and Council Briefing

Public Forum Two

The design alternatives and operation options prepared by the Design Consultants based on information gained from previous stages of the engagement process will be presented for discussion and comment. The format will be similar to that of Public Forum One.

Community Issue Workshops

Up to three workshops will be held to provide opportunities for the exploration of issues affecting communities along the proposed extension. Station area location and design, impact mitigation, and neighborhood preservation are among the likely topics of these sessions.

Community Working Group Meeting Five

This will be a debriefing session that focuses on the comments received at the Public Workshop and Community Issue Workshops. The Design Consultants will review alternative evaluation methodologies.

MetroLink Policy Committee and Council Briefing

Phase Three: Selecting & Refining a Preferred Alternative

Key Leader Briefings

Briefings will be held to provide progress reports to elected officials.

Newsletter Three

This newsletter will report on the results of the Design Consultant s evaluation of alternatives and include a detailed description of the most promising alternative. The newsletter will also announce the availability of technical documents and the times and locations of the final workshop and public hearing.

Draft Evaluation Report and Preliminary Report on a Preferred Alternative Available

The next round of technical reports, including reports on the evaluation and a preliminary preferred alternative, will be complete and available for public review.

Community Working Group Meeting Six

The focus of this meeting will be a review of the results of the Design Consultants alternatives evaluation and selection process. The consultant s analysis and the merits of the selected alternative will be reviewed.

MetroLink Policy Committee and Council Briefing

The results of the Design Consultants alternatives evaluation and selection process will be presented to the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council.

Public Comment Period Opens

To ensure sufficient opportunities for public comment, a final comment period will be announced. While comments will be taken throughout the study, this announcement will serve as a reminder to those holding their comments until the end of the process. Comments will be solicited through advertisements, press announcements and advisories, and by other means.

Public Forum Three

This final public forum will provide an opportunity for interested parties to review a draft preferred alternative and provide additional comments to the TCIG, the Management Committee and the Consultant Team in advance of the final public forum.

Community Working Group Meeting Seven

This will be a debriefing session which focuses on the comments received at the Public Workshop.

MetroLink Policy Committee and Council Briefing

A progress report on the technical analysis and community engagement process will be presented to the Council.

MetroLink Policy Committee Forum on the Preferred Alternative

The MetroLink Policy Committee will host a final public forum in a traditional hearing format on a draft preferred alternative. Interested parties will have an opportunity to enter comments on the verbal or written comments

Public Comment Period Closes

Phase Four: Project Decision-making

Final Design Report Completed & Presented to the MetroLink Policy Committee

The Design Consultants will complete and present the Final Preferred Alternative Report in a meeting with the MetroLink Policy Committee. Copies of the report will be mailed or delivered to the Community Working Group and made available to interested parties.

MetroLink Policy Committee Final Review

The Policy Committee will meet, review the material listed below and prepare a recommendation for consideration by the Council.

Final Preferred Alternative Report (prepared by Design Consultants and reviewed by TCIG and the MetroLink Management Committee)

Resolutions from Localities

Position Papers from Local Interest Groups

Community Engagement Report and Report on the deliberations of the Community Working Group (prepared by MMA and reviewed by the TCIG and the MetroLink Management Committee)

East West Gateway Coordinating Council Decision

The Council will make its final decision regarding a preferred conceptual design for Segment I of the Cross-County MetroLink extension.

3. Community Working Group Proposal

A. Connecting Communities with Decisions

A clearly articulated decision-making process provides the foundation for effective public involvement. To support a public decision, people need to respect the decision-making process and feel they've been provided sufficient opportunities to participate.

Active stakeholders those with the most direct stake in an outcome need a clear sense that they will be provided useful information and that their ideas and concerns will be heard by decision-makers. While they understand they may not get exactly what they're after, they need assurances they'll be afforded:

timely access to useful information;
numerous opportunities to share ideas and concerns with consultants, decision-makers, and fellow stakeholders; and
opportunities to review and comment on recommendations and proposals before action is taken.

Less active stakeholders and those interested but with a more indirect stake in an outcome also require avenues to participate and affect decisions. They may not have the interest or time to participate fully in the process, but will judge the fairness of decisions on the extent and quality of participation offered to their more involved neighbors and local opinion leaders.

Community working groups can provide an effective tool to bridge the gap that may exist between communities (stakeholders and the general public) and technicians, staff, and decision-makers. Given the amount of public concern about past planning processes for Cross-County, stronger connections need to be made between the public engagement and decision-making processes. A Working Group, if carefully constituted and managed, can provide this necessary link. Structured opportunities for exploration and evaluation of alternatives and impacts will lead to a deeper understanding of the issues and choices, as well as provide necessary opportunities for discussion among stakeholders from different communities along the

proposed alignment.

B. Establishing the Working Group

Purpose

It is proposed that a Community Working Group be created to work with the TCIG and Consultant Team through the conceptual design and environmental analysis process for the Cross-County extension. As presently conceived, the committee will have approximately two dozen members representing key stakeholder groups and meet approximately eight times during the study process.

The Community Working Group will provide a formal structure for the exchange of information regarding technical and community issues surrounding the design of the Cross-County Extension. Major infrastructure projects are very complex, and it takes time to develop an understanding of these complexities among key stakeholders. As a platform with continuity and balance, the Community Working Group offers a place where ideas and issues can be explored and tested before the MetroLink Policy Committee s recommendations are developed and forwarded to the region's policy makers.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Community Working Group is designed primarily as 1) a forum for the exchange of information and ideas and 2) a key place where links are made between stakeholders, the TCIG and Consultant Team, and regional decision-makers. Decision-making and consensus-building are not among the group's responsibilities. While the level of consensus concerning various proposals will be tested through the Group, Group members will not be asked to advocate or negotiate on behalf of particular constituencies. Members will be asked to represent their particular interests, while keeping in mind the importance of striking a balance between regional and local interests.

A summary of the Working Group s deliberations will be prepared by the Engagement Consultants as part of their summary of the community engagement process. The report, along with the TCIG and Design Consultant recommendations, comments from the Final Public Hearing, and resolutions of localities and organizations, will be forwarded to the MetroLink Policy Committee and the Council. While the Council is mindful of the importance of the Community Working Group's deliberations, their deliberations are only

one of several factors the Council will take into consideration as it makes a final decision.

Process Roles

serve as a forum for the discussion of issues and the exchange of ideas;
serve as a sounding board for the Consultant Team and the TCIG;
articulate the diverse perspectives of the communities most physically affected as well as the broader regional perspective;
assist the Consultant Team and the TCIG in developing and evaluating alternatives; and
serve as a communication link between the process and various community organizations and constituencies.

Operating Procedures

All meetings of the Community Working Group will be facilitated and will be open to the public. At its initial meeting, the Community Working Group will decide upon a number of important procedural issues to guide its work throughout the process. While the group is not being asked to make recommendations or work towards consensus, ground rules to guide the interactions among its members and between members of the group and the TCIG and Consultant Team must be established. A draft of the operating procedures will be prepared by MMA and made available for discussion and adoption at the first meeting.

C. Appointment

The Cross-County Corridor is an important link in the regional transportation system and it will become a significant feature in the neighborhoods and communities through which it passes. Balancing these two perspectives is an important consideration. It is also critical that the Community Working Group:

balances the interests of different localities and neighborhoods;
ensures that the voices of system users, funders, residents, businesses and major institutions are represented in deliberations;
includes regional perspectives; and
represents the interests of the region's preservation and urban design communities.

For localities along the proposed alignment, the Council will ask chief elected officials to appoint representative citizens. For organizations and institutions, a letter of invitation will be sent requesting the appointment of a representative. Appointing bodies will be asked to exercise care in selecting appropriate persons, ideally sending to the Community Working Group individuals with knowledge of past planning processes and a demonstrated ability to balance specific concerns with larger community perspectives.

D. Composition

Appointment by Localities (17)

Number of representatives based on desire to represent neighborhoods, business interests, institutions, system users and tax payers as well as provide a balance of local and regional perspectives. Municipal appointments to be made by relevant Mayors, or in the case of St. Louis County, by the County Executive.

City of St. Louis (4)
St. Louis County (4)
University City (2)
Clayton (2)
Richmond Heights (1)
Brentwood (1)
Maplewood (2)
Shrewsbury (1)

Appointment by Organization or Institution (8)

Washington University (1)
Citizens for Modern Transit (1)
Historic Neighborhood Association (1)
Forest Park Advisory Board (1)
Clayton Chamber of Commerce (1)
Landmarks Association of St. Louis (1)
American Institute of Architects (St. Louis Chapter) (1)
Regional Commerce and Growth Association (1)
Appointment by EWGCC Chairman (2)

Up to two (2) additional appointments may be made at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council s Board of Directors if after the above appointments have been made it is evident that important sectors of the public are under-represented.

Project Staff Participants

TCIG Staff: MoDOT, EWGCC & BSDA Representatives
Design Consultants: Parsons Transportation Group
Engagement Consultants: MMA (Working Group Meeting Management & Facilitation)