EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

2006 Annual Report

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To Our Colleagues

East-West Gateway began the year by changing the makeup of our Board of Directors for the first time in nearly 40 years. The Board has been expanded to 24 members and now includes more participation from suburban communities and from municipalities across the region.

The changing Board of Directors is an acknowledgment of the changes that have taken place in the region over the last four decades. Our suburban areas have grown from bedroom communities and now have an important place in the economic and cultural life of our region. Municipalities play an increasing role in regional affairs. The Board now more fully reflects the geographic and political diversity of the region.

With the changes in membership, East-West Gateway continued to adhere to some important basic principles. Board membership continues to be equally divided between Missouri and Illinois.

East-West Gateway, more than any other organization, represents a partnership between our two states. Also, no one jurisdiction has more than four votes, so that each of us must reach across jurisdictional boundaries to achieve agreement on important issues. We often say that we need to think and act as a region. Given the composition and structure of the new Board, we have no choice but to do so.

While our new Board acknowledges the growth of suburban jurisdictions, our region's core communities retain their prominent role in the organization. The strong political leadership and rebounding economic strength of our core communities is an asset for the region and to the organization. We are an organization that recognizes that we must meet the needs of growing suburban areas while reinforcing and sustaining the vitality of our core. More than at any time in our recent history, we know that both goals are achievable.

While having more board members at the table may not seem like the most efficient way to achieve consensus on tough issues, it may be the only way. Important decisions regarding public policy and tax money need to be made openly, based on authoritative information that is widely shared. Our meetings take place on the last Wednesday of every month and are open to the public. We invite you to attend.

Sincerely,

From left: Les Sterman, Francis Slay, Mark Kern and Mark Mertens.

Francis Slay	Mark Kern	Mark Mertens	Les Sterman
Chair	Vice Chair	2nd Vice Chair	Executive Director

The Year In Review

Benjamin Franklin's remark to John Hancock 230 years ago on Independence Day is no less true in St. Louis today than it was in Philadelphia in 1776. "We must all hang together," Franklin said, "Or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

Franklin was talking about the risks of revolution. In the case of St. Louis, the admonition refers more to the risks of inertia. If local governments don't "hang together" by acting in the region's best interest, then they likely will "hang separately" as they strain to provide essential public services.

Many of our municipalities have negative operating margins—their expenses outstrip their revenues. In the last decade, about 15 percent of municipalities in the area had declining revenue when adjusted for inflation. About 20 percent had declining expenditures.

The two principle sources of local revenue—sales tax and utility gross receipts—are in political jeopardy. Growing internet sales, gaming, tax increment financing and federal cutbacks have an impact on our region. The fiscal gap between wealthy communities and those with limited resources is growing, as is the ranks of fiscally challenged municipalities.

Franklin's words are relevant today because as the responsibility for providing services and maintaining public works flows downstream from federal to state to local, those smaller governmental entities need to turn to each other for support and cooperation, rather than to look for help from above.

The future of St. Louis will be shaped by its political geography—two states, eight counties, and 201 municipalities. Add to that hundreds of other special purpose districts, and the region has 868 units of local government. In the new edition of *Where We Stand* released this year, that puts St. Louis second only to Pittsburgh among peer regions for governmental multiplicity.

While those many local governments will not, and perhaps should not, go away, we have a special responsibility to work together to overcome the sometimes unintended barriers that our political boundaries create. East-West Gateway, with 41 years of planning and funding the region's transportation system, is now bringing its metropolitan skills to disaster preparedness through its administration of homeland security funding. Regionalism is no longer just a topic for polite conversation among planners, political junkies and academics. It is now a topic with "life and death" consequences.

When St. Louis is ready to "hang together" to develop realistic strategies to face the increasingly complex management, economic, and cultural challenges of the 21st century, local elected officials will have the tools and relationships, through their participation in the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, to make it happen.

MetroLink expands

MetroLink began in 1982 when East-West Gateway did the initial planning and early design work on the public transit project. It took 11 years of struggle and perseverance before a MetroLink light rail train carried its first passengers in 1993.

More than a decade later, MetroLink has evolved into a fundamental part of metropolitan life, giving tens of thousands of residents a daily alternative to using their private vehicles to commute to work, go shopping or attend a sporting event. Before the opening this year of the Cross County Extension, the existing 38-mile main line between Lambert International Airport and Shiloh, IL. at Scott Air Force Base accounted for about 1.5 million boardings a month. Metro, the area's public transit agency that built and manages MetroLink, estimates that the light rail line's ridership grew by 7.5 percent in 2005 compared to the previous year.

In August, MetroLink's Cross County Extension opened, connecting the main line with Clayton, Richmond Heights, Maplewood and a park-and-ride lot for 800 cars at the end of the line in the southwest section of the City of St. Louis near Shrewsbury at Interstate 44. Numbers for the first month of the expanded system show a 31 percent increase in MetroLink riders, raising the total to 2 million monthly boardings. (A boarding represents a passenger getting on or off the train. One person taking MetroLink to and from work would represent two boardings.)

For the Cross County Extension, East-West Gateway again was responsible for the planning and early design work for the 8-mile extension that features nine stations and two free park-and-ride lots.

We believe, just as we did back in 1982, that high quality public transit must be a part of our future as a healthy metropolitan region. That belief leads us to continue research and planning for a system that extends throughout the metropolitan area, even though we may not yet know the origin of the funding. Competition has intensified for the scarce federal dollars available for new light rail projects, with the funding breakdown usually split 50/50 between federal and local funding. In earlier rail transit projects, the federal government often paid as much as 80 percent of the costs.

Well-researched plans for expansion will be more apt to receive local and federal funding. Additionally, because local support is critical, voter approval of taxation is more likely if specific plans are in place.

A plan for a Metro South MetroLink extension, to stretch light rail service from its terminus in Shrewsbury well into South St. Louis County, was completed this year. The plan suggests a number of alternative routes, but a final decision will await a determination of future MetroLink priorities by the region's elected officials and the availability of funds to pay for construction.

The current active planning of MetroLink's future is the Northside-Southside Study for transit improvements in St. Louis city. The 18-month planning study is limited to the city limits, though if built, would provide light rail extensions from downtown through north city and south city for future connections to north and south county. More information on this study can be obtained at www.north-southstudy.org .

Great Streets Initiative

This year East-West Gateway started a process to expand the way communities think about transportation. Instead of merely viewing a transportation project as solely a way to move more cars and trucks faster, we envision using streets to trigger an economic and social benefit by centering communities around interesting, lively and attractive streets.

More than 160 planners, city managers and elected officials attended a Great Streets Symposium sponsored by East-West Gateway in October. They heard national and local experts discuss how a "Great Street" can stimulate sustainable economic activity, provide an aesthetically pleasing sense of place and still efficiently and safely move vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

To do that, local leaders need to ask what they want their transportation system to accomplish, including how better street design can connect residents with services, amenities and each other. This type of planning requires thinking beyond the curb to see how transportation decisions affect development and how streets affect nearby residents and those in surrounding communities.

Local examples of Great Streets include The Loop area in University City, Manchester Avenue in Maplewood and the South Grand area near Tower Grove Park in the City of St. Louis. In coming months, a technical workshop will be held to assist local communities to design their own "Great Streets." Communities can also compete to host a demonstration project that would receive planning support and possibly funds to be used to implement improvements.

More information on the Great Streets Initiative can be obtained at www.greatstreetsstlouis.net.

Transportation Planning

Anticipating the region's transportation needs is East-West Gateway's most widely known activity. Both in long range planning of Legacy 2030 and in the four-year Transportation Improvement Program, East-West Gateway planners review the needs and desires of the entire region, and the Board decides which projects get priority for funding.

Major road projects that depend on federal money have to meet the approval of East-West Gateway's 24-member board. In the planning process, projects are judged by how they meet regional goals in six focus areas—preservation of the existing infrastructure, safety, reducing congestion, providing access to opportunity, promoting sustainable development and efficient movement of goods.

Once the money is programmed, East-West Gateway works to see that money will be spent promptly, ensuring the timely completion of sponsored projects. Local sponsors of transportation projects that fall behind schedule risk losing their federal funding and having the funding return to the regional funding pool. In the five years since the adoption of agency policy to accelerate project completion, the backlog of unspent federal dollars has dropped to $35 million from $105 million.

Regional Arterial Management System

Transportation experts at East-West Gateway have long known that state and local governments don't have sufficient funds to expand roadway capacity to erase congestion. So to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the system in place, East-West Gateway is working to make the operation of the existing roadway system more efficient.

The basis of this approach would be to control traffic signals in an intelligent and coordinated manner, adjusting them dynamically to reflect real time traffic conditions. This would be achieved through cameras, sensors, computerized protocols or a centralized controller who would monitor traffic and maximize its flow.

This study will select 10 corridors, examining different types of treatment to see which approach works on which arterial. The longer corridors will pose special problems because they traverse multiple jurisdictions. The lessons learned from this year-long analysis of these 10 roads can then later be applied to other problem corridors.

Local Government Briefings

For its more than 1,000 subscribers, *Local Government Briefings* is a free weekly reminder of what the East-West Gateway Council of Governments does every day: connect municipalities and counties throughout the region by keeping them informed about what is going on and the new trends and events that will affect their future.

Started in 1991 as a quarterly print publication called "Briefing for Local Governments," the communiqué evolved into an email and fax must read that is sent out late Friday to those wanting to be in the know about upcoming conferences, events and job openings. Originally focused primarily on municipal and county government issues and policy, it has grown to cover a broader umbrella of governance necessary for a region to work and prosper, including the collective and collaborative work of government, education, the nonprofit sector and the business world. *Local Government Briefings* encourages its readers to submit items for consideration. To subscribe or submit an item, contact us at garyp@ewgateway.org or call 314-421-4220 in Missouri or 618-274-2750, ext. 261

St. Louis Area Regional Response System STARRS

Next to transportation, nothing binds a metropolitan area together as much as a concern for public safety and health. To monitor those needs and prepare for area-wide emergencies, East-West Gateway is home to the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS).

STARRS, born in the aftermath of the World Trade Center tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, takes a broad regional approach to prepare for all natural and man-made disasters. A board of directors made up of representatives from the public safety, emergency response, public health and medical fields addresses planning for a regional emergency response and evaluates capital and training needs. STARRS purchases equipment and training through East-West Gateway, which acts as the fiscal agent for the organization.

The funding for STARRS comes from several federal programs including the federal Homeland Security Department's Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), which provides resources for the unique equipment, training, planning and exercise needs of select high-threat urban areas.

Despite an overall drop in those UASI grants nationally in 2006 to $733 million from $855 million, STARRS received $9.2 million for fiscal year 2006, a 31 percent increase in funding from $7 million in 2005. This increase reflects the potential threats in the area as well as the progress that we are making in regional coordination of our funding requests. Through the last three fiscal years, STARRS has received a yearly average of $9.1 million in UASI funds.

STARRS has assessed the St. Louis area's greatest risk statistically to be from natural disasters, with an earthquake having the greatest catastrophic potential, followed by pandemic flu and a toxic chemical release. Those disasters are followed by possible terror-related events such as an aerosol biological agent, an improvised explosive device, and a radiological "dirty" bomb.

Any one of these events can happen at any time, so setting priorities is a matter of assessing risk probabilities.

Although STARRS is primarily a planning organization, it operates a medical communications center called MedComm which links hospitals, emergency medical services and public health departments. In July, MedComm was activated when a series of thunderstorms knocked out electrical power to about a third of the region. MedComm's work was crucial in maintaining contact among hospitals, nursing homes and emergency medical personnel and coordinating evacuation of about 2,000 patients from nursing homes.

Where We Stand

Where We Stand was published in 1992 to show how St. Louis fared against our metropolitan competitors. This strategic regional assessment was intended to provide a reliable, quantitative measurement of the metropolitan area's health. The current *Where We Stand*, the fifth edition, remains a source of timely data intended to spur productive public policy discussions.

Like the previous edition in 2002, this edition of *Where We Stand* compares St. Louis with 34 other similar metropolitan areas. The comparisons, showing our regional standing based on verifiable data, can be tracked over time through the five editions over the last 14 years. This edition includes excerpts of interpretive commentary from area experts on the state of the region. The full text of those commentaries will be published as a separate document.

More than 3,000 copies of the 2002 edition were distributed. The intent of *Where We Stand* is to provide a dependable measure of our region's health using a wide a range of social, economic and political standards so that area residents and leaders can focus their efforts where they are most needed.

East-West Gateway Online

Since every aspect of East-West Gateway's work is available online at www.ewgateway.org, it's no wonder than in the first 10 months of 2006, the website received close to 150,000 visits, averaging close to 500 visits per day.

The most popular parts of the website are the list of job openings, transportation news, the Data Center and the regional maps in the Geographic Information System (GIS) area. A "Map of the Month" feature from the GIS staff at East-West Gateway was started this year. A search function also provides access to a variety of documents and publications, such as the *Public Officials Directory, Where We Stand* and *St. Louis Trends*, which contains statistical information from the 2000 census.

Announcements, the dates of upcoming public meetings, and the agenda and attachments for the monthly board meetings are available online. Maintaining this large and comprehensive website is one part of our agency strategy to engage citizens and public officials in our work.

Gateway Blueprint

The Gateway Blueprint projects the future impacts of development in the St. Louis region through computer modeling. Also called the Land Use Evolution and Impact Model, it predicts how transportation and other development decisions affect the financial, environmental, social and political realities of a region.

This year Jefferson County officials invited East-West Gateway to give an update on what the Gateway Blueprint model could tell them about the effects of different types of development. Workshops were held and the information gathered from officials was used in the computer modeling process to see the likely results of different development possibilities.

As the Gateway Blueprint is enhanced and improved, it will be integrated into East-West Gateway's long-range transportation planning activities.

Researchers at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana devised the computer model. In the next year, expect to see a web application of the Blueprint available on our website. This will enable local planners and others to have access to the same tool that we use on a regional level to predict land use and economic changes.

Local Government Partnership

This joint venture leverages resources to provide technical assistance, training and information to local government officials. The Local Government Management and Leadership Partnership is a cooperative effort of East-West Gateway, the University of Missouri-St. Louis Public Policy Administration Program, the University of Missouri Extension and the University of Missouri Public Policy Research Center.

The program provides technical assistance to municipalities on administrative and policy matters. The partnership produces East-West Gateway's annual Public Officials Directory and administers the awarding of the Outstanding Local Government Achievement Awards.

GIS

One of the many services offered to local governments is access to the resources of East-West Gateway's Geographic Information Systems. Local officials make frequent requests for maps and images that either show changes in the area or illuminate regional trends and issues. The GIS "Map of the Month" is available at www.ewgateway.org.

Concerns for the Environment

Two conferences this year highlighted East-West Gateway's efforts to monitor and improve the area's air, water and land quality. They were part of the planning department's continuing efforts to safeguard the region's environment.

A conference on low impact development highlighted ways to increase economic activity while minimizing potential negative effects on the environment from changes in storm water runoff and from other unintended detrimental side effects. By using low impact development techniques, planners, developers and public officials learned how to boost local economies and find affordable, fundamental ways to meet environmental and regulatory needs.

The Earth Day Symposium featured former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbit as its keynote speaker. The symposium focused on the need for productive partnerships between federal and local authorities for land use planning as they try to strike a balance between economic development and conservation.

Legislators agreed to changes in the auto emission inspection program in Missouri after East-West Gateway convened a work group to come up with a compromise that both met federal environmental requirements and was more user friendly to drivers.

The monthly Air Quality Advisory Committee meetings provide a forum for bi-state collaboration to attain federal air quality standards by 2010. In addition to other methods already in place to meet that federal deadline, alternative fuels are being considered at as an air quality improvement strategy.

East-West Gateway was the host for a meeting on flood control efforts on the Mississippi River that included the commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and other local officials had the chance at the meeting to hear what is being done about the area's aging flood control gates and levees.

Transportation Safety Initiative

In its continuing effort to promote safety on the region's roadways, East-West Gateway last year began its Transportation Safety Initiative. Part of that campaign was the marking of five "Travel Safe Zones" throughout the Missouri portion of the region.

Since driver behavior is responsible for the vast majority of injuries and fatalities on the roadways, those unsafe behaviors are the principal emphasis of the agency's safety campaign.

Of the five designated zones, the Travel Safe Zone in Jefferson County showed the most results. In the first eight months of the program starting in February, there have been no fatal crashes in the 8.5 mile segment of roadway. In the last five years, 28 people died in crashes on that part of I-55. Through May, compared to similar time the previous year at the same location, there has been a 63 percent decrease in crashes resulting in injury. This record of success is largely a result of more aggressive law enforcement. More than 400 drivers received tickets on Interstate 55 between Highway Z in Pevely and Highway 67 south of Festus, no doubt leading to more attentive drivers in the area.

Another aspect of transportation safety, this one focused on pedestrians, was addressed in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. Increased enforcement resulted in the ticketing of drivers who failed to yield to pedestrians after they had entered the crosswalk.

Statement of Resources and Expenditures

EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

	2005* (audited)	2006 (estimated)
Resources:		
Federal grants	$13,609,497	$19,681,250
State appropriations and grants	36,190	141,490
Transportation Development Tax Credit	2,552,000	0
Local contributions:		
Cash—per capita	310,367	310,367
Transportation Project Assessment Fee	335,089	223,621
Cash—other	550,831	58,356
In-kind services	888,668	714,426
Miscellaneous Income	112,090	122,540
TOTAL RESOURCES	**$18,394,732**	**$21,252,050**
Expenditures:		
Salaries, benefits	$3,510,816	$3,606,190
Public agencies, planning consultants	5,057,696	6,730,320
In-kind services	888,668	707,270
Grant funded equipment	5,361,136	11,137,860
Operating expenses, staff development and travel	737,204	765,035
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$15,555,520**	**$22,946,675**
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	**$2,839,212**	**-$1,694,625**

* *Full financial statement available upon request*

Committees

Transportation Safety Advisory Committee

Beulah Brandon
Charles Campbell
Billy Collier
Kenneth E. Dale
Shelley DeVine
Dan Feinberg
Bert L. Gates
Vi Gibson
Maria Kilmer
Angela Lanham
Joe Lewis, Jr.
Sue Orten
Vicki Pannebecker
Angelina Rhodes
Beverly Roche
Frank A. Roland, Jr.
Antonio Settles
Conrad Smith
Sharon Smith
Naomi Soule
Mike Sparks
Michele Struttmann

Transportation Planning Committee

Tracy Beidleman
Les Nunes
Sandra Bohler
Darrell Cates
Tim Fischesser
Chip Gray
Larry Grither
John Greifzu
Brandyn Jones
Jerry J. Kane
Kathy Klevorn
William A. Koehrer
Mary Lamie
Delores Lysakowski
Marjorie Melton
S. Michael Murray
Carl E. Officer
Ronald A. Polka
Gary F. Stahlhut
Susan A. Stauder
Stephanie Leon Streeter
Craig E. Tajkowski
Kevin Terveer
Gregg Wilhelm
Richard Wilson

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Gerry Biedenstein
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Sarah Coyle
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Kerri Yap

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Michael Duvall
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Tim Fischesser
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Michael Henderson
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Gina Nicholson
Michael Right
Phillip Saller
Steven Schneider
Kathleen Logan Smith
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David Sykuta
Patrick Vaile
Michael Zeltmann
Mike Zlatic

Water Resources Advisory Committee

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Diana Allen
Kathy Andria
Kathy Arnett
Stacia Bax
David Berger
Tracy Boaz
Gerry Boehm
Nancy Bowser
Bradley Brown
Robert Broz
Laura Cohen
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Renee Cook
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