Wheels Around the Region

East-West Gateway Coordinating Council Annual Report 2001

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Wheels Around the Region

To Our Colleagues

The theme for our 2001 annual report is *wheels*—certainly fitting for an organization whose name has been so closely identified with major transportation projects over the last 35 years. For East-West Gateway, however, the metaphor goes well beyond individual projects. It symbolizes the way in which the transportation system as a whole joins us together as a region, the manner in which it supports economic growth, the social opportunities it creates for so many people, and the critical role it plays in our response to life-threatening circumstances. These are all part of a connected circle of public policy decisions that shape the quality of our lives.

Several years ago, East-West Gateway recognized that the transportation funds we allocate could be far more effective if we were able to align and leverage our investments toward economic, social, and environmental results. To do that we needed to really get involved in areas in which we had little familiarity but where we knew transportation had an enormous impact.

That explains why so much of this annual report describes our efforts to ensure a better prepared workforce, create more job opportunities for those with economic disadvantages, understand regional development patterns, build stronger neighborhoods and communities, protect our natural resources, and make the region more economically competitive. We have been building our capabilities in these areas for nearly a decade now, and, in doing so, we feel that we are making the wheel more whole—that is, we are completing the connection between transportation and so many of the other aspects of our lives that contribute to a better St. Louis region.

In the year ahead, as our states seek new and creative ways to fund needed transportation projects and the nation prepares for the reauthorization of the federal transportation law in 2003, St. Louis area elected officials and East-West Gateway staff will be working closely with other metropolitan planning organizations, leaders in the private sector, community interest groups, and local governments to grapple with a number of tough choices. In this process, we are among the leaders in articulating the message that transportation investments are part of a circle of regional decisions that make a greater contribution to the quality of our lives when connected.

John Baricevic, Buzz Westfall and Les Sterman

Consider this letter as an invitation for you, as citizens, as leaders in your community, as people with a real investment in the St. Louis region, to join this circle. Come to a meeting of the Board of Directors, participate on an advisory committee, register your opinions at a public meeting or focus group. Let's roll the wheels of regional progress together.

Buzz Westfall
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John Baricevic
Vice Chair

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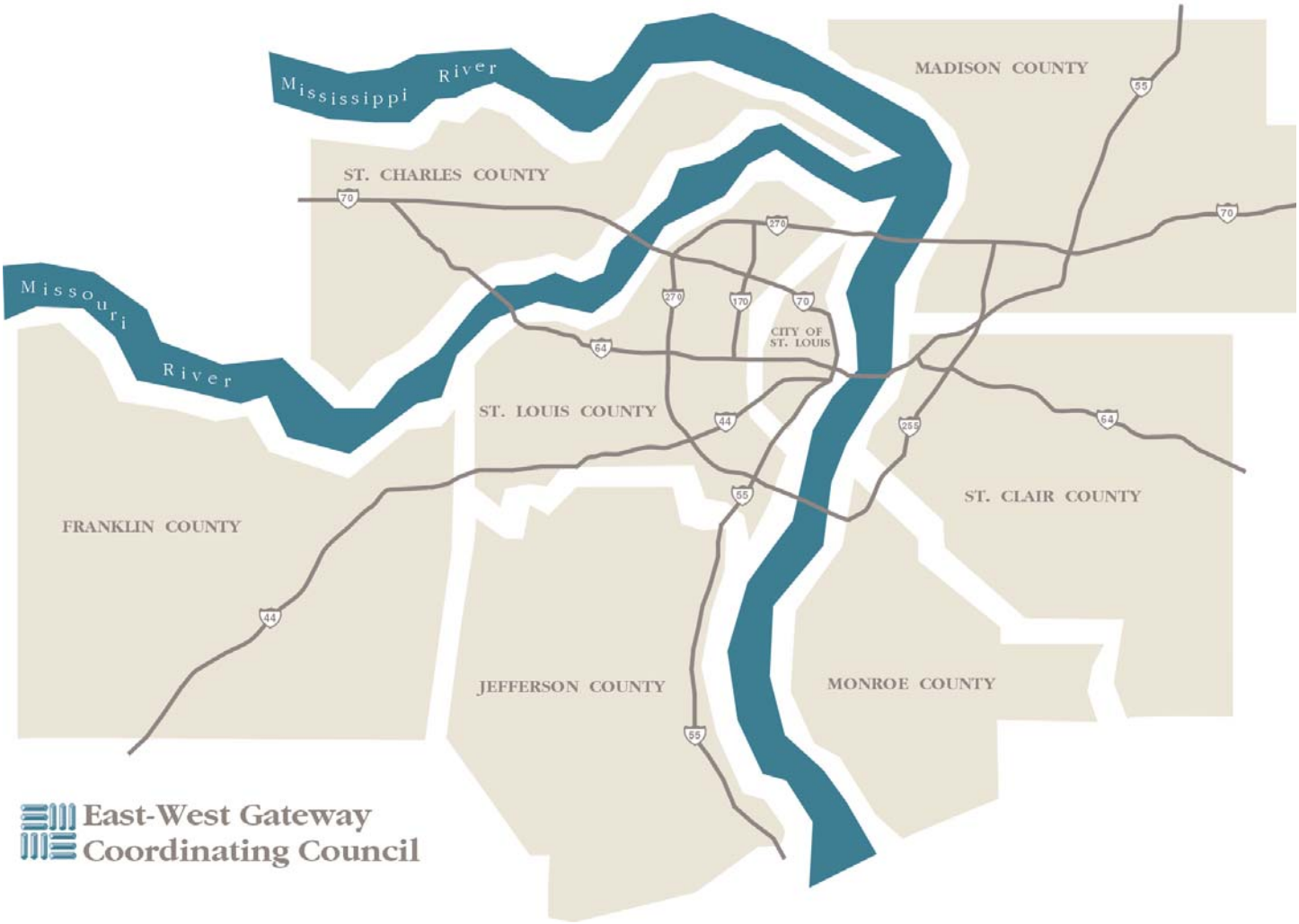
Executive Director

Gateway Region



The East-West Gateway Coordinating Council is the regional council of governments and metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state St. Louis metropolitan area. All of the region's cities, towns and counties are members of the Council.

The Council is governed by a 21-member board representing 14 of the chief elected officials of the city of St. Louis; Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri; and Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

The board also includes six regional citizens, three from Illinois and three from Missouri, and the chair of the Bi-State Development Agency.

Accomplishments

Introduction

Wheels, wheels, wheels.
Oscar Wilde once wrote, "There is not a country in the world where machinery is so lovely as in America...The symmetrical motion of the great wheels is the most beautiful rhythmic thing I have ever seen." Wilde was describing the wheels of machinery, but also the wheels of the American mind—ever industrious and innovative. And what is true for America is true for metropolitan St. Louis.

In 2001, the people of the region wheeled to work and play aboard automobiles, buses and light-rail. Big-wheeled trucks and planet-wheeled trains maintained the region's balance of trade. Wheeled forklifts helped load barges along the region's great rivers, while dependable wheels under jumbo jets and twin-engines padded daily arrivals at Lambert International, MidAmerica, Parks, Spirit of St. Louis and other regional airports.

In 2001, wheels of commerce turned in the minds of area business, education, and political leaders, driving the region toward a workforce aligned with the demands of a 21st century economy. Meanwhile, gears, pulleys and wheels of industry whizzed and whirled throughout the region's advanced manufacturing centers. And knobby-treaded wheels carried bicycle couriers down the streets of the region's urban centers and financial districts.

In 2001, tiny wheels balanced carts in hospitals, hotels and libraries around the region. Monster wheels delivered tractors to the fields and hauled the harvest home. Wooden wheels paddled boats down the Mississippi River and through the canals of Forest Park. Wheels and bells brought ice cream in the summer heat and pushed the plows that cleared the winter streets. And wheels of every shape and size trekked the growing web of bicycle and pedestrian trails weaving through city parks and river fronts.

How well the wheels of public policy carry the complex machinery of metropolitan St. Louis into the future is the principal focus of the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. It provides the theme for this, our 36th annual report to the region. Ride along as we trace this theme from the hub of public policy, along the spokes of East-West Gateway programs, to the rim of agency accomplishments.

At the Hub of Transportation

Every three years East-West Gateway leads a critically important community process to update *Transportation Redefined*, a 20-year plan for regional transportation investment. Originally accepted in 1994, *Transportation Redefined* provides the framework for transportation decisions, based upon economic, social, environmental and energy factors. The stakes are high with every update because the shape of our region and billions of dollars in public expenditures hang in the balance. Unlike long-range plans before it, *Transportation Redefined* shifted the focus of decision-makers from concrete and steel to broader quality of life considerations. All transportation projects using federal funds must be part of the long-range plan and must meet air quality goals.

The process to update *Transportation Redefined* included proactive community engagement strategies. Roundtables as diverse as the region have addressed travel safety and effectiveness, land-use and resource management, public transit and freight shipment, stimulating public dialogue about regional growth and development patterns, economic and social disparity, the high cost of traffic congestion, access to jobs, and other key issues for metropolitan St. Louis.

The board of directors will likely receive a draft of the updated *Transportation Redefined* at the January 2002 board meeting. Following approval of the draft, East-West Gateway will solicit the community's input about the transportation principles and priorities recommended for the updated plan. Approval of the final draft by the board of directors is expected in March 2002.

Follow the Spokes

Transportation needs, goals and priorities identified in *Transportation Redefined* eventually crystallize into transportation projects. These projects are rated according to an index of transportation, economic and social factors and the regional transportation priorities framed by *Transportation Redefined*. Projects with the strongest rating are selected for the short-range Transportation Improvement Program, a schedule of projects with federal, state or local funds earmarked for engineering, design and construction.

In July 2001, the board accepted the 2002-2006 Transportation Improvement Program, the most expensive TIP in East-West Gateway history. The 2002-2006 TIP funds 924 projects at a cost of $3.4 billion in federal, state and local dollars. Nearly 35 percent of the budgeted transportation funds will be spent to preserve the existing transportation system. New roads and bridges consume about 32 percent of the TIP, with the largest portion in Illinois due to the revenue-generating program Illinois First. In Missouri, major projects include significant improvements to Missouri Route 367 in North St. Louis County, U.S. Interstate 70 in St. Charles County and U.S. Interstate 55 at Missouri Route 141 in Jefferson County. In Illinois, construction of the Alton Bypass along U.S. Interstate 255 and improvements to Illinois Routes 159 and 157 are the marquee projects.

To the Rim

These planning processes are under increasing pressure from public expectations about transportation without the revenue to fulfill them. *Transportation Redefined* and the TIP are the places where difficult choices are made and issues explored.

Revising *Transportation Redefined* every three years requires updated statistics, community input, and regional cooperation. Underway in 2001 were plans for a $1.5 million overhaul of East-West Gateway's database for regional travel-demand models—software programs that allow planners to simulate and forecast travel—with two complementary surveys of individual travel patterns in metropolitan St. Louis. The surveys, to be implemented in 2002, will provide the most complete picture of regional travel since a similar comprehensive study was conducted in 1965, the year East-West Gateway was formed.

Also in 2001, East-West Gateway released the introductory issue of *The Intersection*, a bi-monthly newsletter for the exchange of transportation and accessibility ideas. Additional community engagement tools that strengthened the *Transportation Redefined* update included East-West Gateway's Web site, which featured transportation fact sheets, such as *The Four Stages of Transportation Decision-Making and Intelligent Transportation System: the Gateway Guide*. The agency's quarterly newsletter *Gateways* reported upcoming events and reviewed the results of the community roundtables. All materials are available for review at www.ewgateway.org.

Transportation policies articulated in *Transportation Redefined* received a 2001 boost from East-West Gateway's Transportation Policy Advisory Council, an outgrowth of the 1998 Initiative for a Metropolitan Community. The TPAC recommended policies to advocate for equitable state and federal funding for transportation in metropolitan St. Louis and better funding methods for alternative modes of transportation. These and other recommendations were accepted by the board of directors in February 2001.

The Transportation Corridor Improvement Group, established in 1996 as a unique collaboration between East-West Gateway, the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Bi-State Development Agency, addressed four MoDOT-sponsored major transportation investment analyses (known as MTIAs) during the year. MTIAs are used to explore, evaluate and prioritize possible solutions to transportation problems in large travel corridors throughout the region. The four 2001 MTIAs studied Missouri Route 100 in Franklin and St. Louis County, U.S. Route 50 and Missouri Route 47 in Franklin County, and Missouri Routes W/MM in Jefferson and West St. Louis County. The board of directors anticipates recommendations for the MTIAs during 2002.

The Transportation Corridor Improvement Group also began planning for the Metro-South MetroLink extension from Shrewsbury to the Butler Hill Road area in South St. Louis County. This includes designing the new route and measuring the impact on the social, economic and environmental features through the proposed corridor. The two year study is funded by a $4.3 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration and a local MetroLink tax.

With the expansion of the region's roadways unlikely to keep pace with increasing congestion, attention is turning to better management of the existing system. In 2001, commuters in metropolitan St. Louis witnessed the emergence of a multi-million dollar transportation management system called *Gateway Guide*. Developed by the Missouri Department of Transportation in conjunction with East-West Gateway, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Bi-State Development Agency, *Gateway Guide* will be visible as large electronic message boards and cameras monitoring traffic congestion. Using state-of-the-art technology, a fully operational *Gateway Guide* will alleviate metro-wide congestion, enhance the safety of the region's roads, and improve response time for area emergency vehicles.

In April, the East-West Gateway board of directors voted to accelerate the expenditure of federal funds for local transportation projects by amending the agency's 1998 policy on reasonable progress. The board acted in response to mounting difficulties for local governments to maintain design and production schedules for road and bridge projects. The unanimously accepted amendment established definitive deadlines for locally-sponsored projects backed by federal funds. The amendment proved immediately effective.

In May, East-West Gateway celebrated with the St. Clair County Transit District and the Bi-State Development Agency the expansion of MetroLink light rail into the metro east. Departing from 5th and Missouri in East St. Louis, the new service extends 18-miles to Belleville and Southwestern Illinois College.

At the Hub of Workforce Development

The St. Louis Regional Workforce Development Policy Group is a 43-member body of business, labor, education and government leaders convened by East-West Gateway and the Regional Chamber and Growth Association. The Workforce Policy Group is responsible for nurturing the development of policies and strategies to enhance the skills of the region's workforce. It is the only two-state workforce development planning effort in the nation, sanctioned by Missouri Governor Holden and Illinois Governor Ryan, with Workforce Policy Group members from both sides of the Mississippi River.

In 2001, as part of its goal to fulfill Missouri and Illinois expectations for coordinated planning, the Workforce Policy Group pursued investment strategies to attract and retain skilled workers in the rapidly growing and demanding fields of information technology and advanced manufacturing. As part of this effort, the Workforce Policy Group released *Upgrading the Regional Economy: Business, Education and IT in St. Louis*, a review of the information technology sector in metropolitan St. Louis. The report includes recommendations to enhance the relationship between regional businesses and secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. In September, more than 100 education and public policy leaders from the bi-state region came together to address these recommendations at an evening conference at Florissant Valley Community College in North St. Louis County. The stakeholders in attendance sought ways to eliminate "choke points" within the region's K-14 education system that create biases against vocational and technical education and advanced manufacturing careers.

What's more, business leaders and staff from the region's six Workforce Investment Boards met several times during 2001 to identify ways to increase business utilization of the publicly funded workforce system and to better coordinate and market their ability to serve firms and dislocated workers during the end-of-the-year economic downturn.

At the year's end, the Workforce Policy Group unveiled its official Web site. By visiting www.workforcefutures.org citizens, business leaders, educators and elected officials can follow the progress of workforce planning. A work under construction, the Web site will feature links to up-to-date employment and labor statistics, a library of relevant workforce resources and articles, and reports on seven workforce development strategies. In December, the Workforce Policy Group sponsored a Regional Workforce Development Symposium, that brought together state and local officials, business leaders, educators, labor representatives and others. Participants explored economic issues affecting the region's workforce, industry and labor-force trends, and examples of successful workforce initiatives.

Follow the Spokes

Throughout the year, the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative continued to locate meaningful career opportunities for the area's low-income job-seekers. A partnership between East-West Gateway, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and numerous state and local investors, the Jobs Initiative supported five innovative employment-related projects. During the third quarter of 2001, the Jobs Initiative celebrated its 1000th program participant.

The Jobs Initiative's Center for Health Careers, Construction Pathways, and Customer Service Academy prepared job-seekers for employment in specific industry sectors. A fourth project, WorkLink, received national recognition for its work-readiness training and holistic life-skills approach. Coordinated by Better Family Life and the St. Louis Community College, WorkLink was featured in a national welfare-to-work documentary aired at the September 2001 Annie E. Casey Showcase Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Jobs Initiative's Individual Development Account Program, a post-placement asset development project that encourages new jobholders to practice fiscal discipline, made news in 2001. Participants of IDAs set aside a portion of their income each month. Once individual savings goals have been met, IDA participants receive in-kind monetary matches from private or public sources. In 2001, the agency's IDA program had 62 active clients with seven graduates, culminating in memorable success stories. Jennifer Thompson, a single mother of four, used her IDA funds as down-payment for a home in Northwoods, Missouri. Regina Hall purchased a home in Berkeley, Missouri with her IDA savings, and Tamara Kent used IDA money to start her own business in South St. Louis.

To the Rim

Despite tightening government budgets and an economic downturn, the Jobs Initiative maintained its proactive role in the development of the metropolitan St. Louis labor market. In 2001, Jobs Initiative buzzwords were "retention" and "systems reform." To improve retention rates, WorkLink of Better Family Life and Construction Pathways both implemented cutting-edge mentor programs for workers post-placement. Mentor programs ease the transition into a work environment for the chronically-unemployed, reduce hazing and cultural barriers on work sites, and stimulate career-advancement attitudes among entry-level employees.

Since its inception in 1998, the Annie E. Casey funded Jobs Initiative has sought to change the way the labor market operates, known as "systems reform." In 2001, the Jobs Initiative shifted systems reform into high gear, adopting an agenda that includes partnerships to expand the MET Center in Wellston as an integrated center for education, skills-training and neighborhood accessibility programs. Construction Pathways worked closely with the Sheet Metal Workers Joint Apprentice and Training Program and Local #36 to implement a tutor program to help job seekers prepare for the apprenticeship entrance exam. A second round of classes began in December. Reform is evident at the Center for Health Careers, which began weaning itself from the Jobs Initiative administrative structure to become a permanent program of the SSM Health Care Network of St. Louis—the Center's primary employment partner. Also, Workforce Partners of Metro St. Louis assumed larger responsibilities with the Jobs Initiative's "Managing to Work it Out," a supervisor and front-line manager training curriculum.

Transportation is a key component of many successful programs to assist low-income job seekers. With shuttle services provided through East-West Gateway's Bridges 2000 program, would-be workers gained access to employers such as National General Insurance, the Jay Henges Corporation, GC Services, Harrah's St. Louis Casino and Hotel, Belt Service Corporation, St. Louis Auto Auction, and United Parcel Service in Earth City. During 2001, over 500 job-seekers completed Bridges 2000 orientation and screening, and nearly 300 individuals found work, along with the wheels to attend.

At the Hub of Regional Sustainability

Established in 1998 by the East-West Gateway board of directors, the Initiative for a Metropolitan Community serves to focus local government leadership in addressing public policy and regional growth and development. The Initiative reflects the agency's commitment to stable neighborhoods, vibrant communities, a strong economy, well-managed resources and a government that performs to 21st century standards.

Four regionally-representative task forces, led by members of the board, carried out the early phases of the work. Members identified 16 priority areas where local governments might act in concert to develop improvement strategies. The Initiative encouraged regional leaders and state officials to amend tax policies and tax incentive programs for more responsible investment, stimulated workforce development planning efforts (led by the Workforce Policy Group) and promoted responsible stewardship of the region's natural resources.

Follow the Spokes

In September, East-West Gateway convened the Water Resources Advisory Council with funding from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The goal of the Water Council is to recommend effective watershed management policy and practices to the board of directors and to organize citizen groups for grassroots involvement at the watershed level. At the inaugural meeting, popular topics were regional watershed management practices and appropriate flood plain use.

Also in 2001, East-West Gateway staff began to develop a comprehensive regional plan to inform land-use planning, resource management and transportation investment within the region. The two-year study will culminate in the final policy report *Blueprint: Regional Guide for Growth*. Data collection and analysis began in December 2001.

East-West Gateway's team of Geographic Information System specialists are at the heart of the Blueprint project and others supported by the Initiative for a Metropolitan Community. In 2001, the GIS professionals designed detailed watershed maps for the opening session of the Water Resources Advisory Council, began compiling coordinates for an open-space inventory of the metropolitan region, and fostered statewide partnerships with peers by joining the Missouri GIS Advisory Committee.

The GIS team also produced detailed snapshots of the region's demographics for the bi-monthly newsletter *Where We Stand Update*. Packed with regional statistics from the 2000 Census, comparisons with peer metropolitan areas, engaging maps and exacting analysis, *Where We Stand Update* remains one of East-West Gateway's most popular publications.

To the Rim

In 2001, professionals and citizens from St. Louis and East St. Louis worked with East-West Gateway staff to launch the Community Environment Resource Program. Funded with a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, CERP is a joint effort between East-West Gateway, St. Louis Development Corporation and the Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center of East St. Louis to collect and share vital environmental information about area health risks.

CERP published five issues of its namesake newsletter during the year, with topics ranging from arsenic and local water quality to lead contamination and clean-up to the Missouri River Corridor Brownfields Showcase Initiative—a redevelopment campaign to address abandoned sites in St. Louis city and East St. Louis. The newsletters reached over 400 area homes through direct mailing, and received wider circulation through regional libraries, grocery stores and neighborhood association meetings.

In April, area water enthusiasts joined East-West Gateway staffers for a tour of the Mississippi River and its confluence with the Missouri River. Touring aboard an open-deck barge manned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and powered by the 671-horsepower Mississippi Valley Pathfinder tugboat, participants viewed sites of significant river ecology and concluded with a dramatic vista of downtown St. Louis and the historic Eads Bridge. The barge tour, co-sponsored by the Midwest Area River Coalition 2000 (MARC 2000) and Confluence Greenway, prepared participants for the water symposium *Our Water Our Rivers* hosted by the Missouri Botanical Garden, and coordinated by St. Louis Earth Day and East-West Gateway.

Thanks to the implementation of a number of control measures, the St. Louis region is on track to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ozone standard. During the 2001 St. Louis summer, our air only exceeded harmful ozone levels twice, ranking among the cleanest in recent history. The success can be attributed to emission reductions brought about by an enhanced motor vehicle inspection program, transit and ride-sharing improvements, the use of reformulated gasoline and industrial controls. East-West Gateway coordinated the Ozone Data Sharing Project, which documents the region's air quality, from 16 monitors jointly operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection

Agency, St. Louis County Air Pollution Control Program and the city of St. Louis Air Pollution Control Program.

In 2001, East-West Gateway's *Local Government Briefings* maintained its weekly circulation, reaching more than 800 government and non-profit leaders and neighborhood associations. The e-mail newsletter includes information on workshops and other events in addition to links to studies and areas of interest for policy analysts, planners and government officials.

In 2001, East-West Gateway's Local Government Management and Leadership Partnership, a collaboration with the University of Missouri-St. Louis & University Outreach and Extension actively pursued its goal is to make local governments lead more effectively. The Center provided technical assistance to over a dozen cities in the region, focusing on revitalization, grant writing, and economic development strategies. The Center also sponsored numerous workshops through the Meetings with the Mayors program and a graduate-level public policy course conducted at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Additionally, the Center assembled the 2001 Public Officials Directory.

In June, final reports from the previous year's Community Improvement Challenge Grants reached East-West Gateway. Community Improvement Challenge Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to community-sponsored planning projects that promise to address transportation issues and enhance the quality of life for local communities. The 2000 grants supported the following:

✓ Better Family Life Inc. of St. Louis successfully applied the Real Accessibility Index, an accessibility and mobility research tool developed by the University of Virginia. Better Family Life's research methodology empowered neighborhood leaders and residents of St. Louis city's Greater West End neighborhoods with a realistic plan of action for accessibility improvements.

✓ The Department of Human Services of St. Louis County convened an Alternative Transportation Symposium, bringing diverse community agencies together to generate new approaches for transportation services for older adults in the County.

✓ Leaders from Lake St. Louis in St. Charles County promoted sustainable development with a March 2001 workshop to encourage residents to "think outside the planning box" about regional growth and also to assist municipalities in St. Charles County with innovative development techniques. Approximately 125 area residents attended the workshop, which featured Dan Burden, director of Walkable Communities Inc., and Michael Lauer, AICP, an expert on solving complex problems faced by rapidly growing areas.

✓ Planners from Brentwood, Maplewood, Rock Hill, Glendale, Warson Woods and Kirkwood collaborated to identify unique districts within a seven-mile stretch of Manchester Road. The group recommended streetscape and accessibility upgrades.

✓ Mid-County Partners for Progress (of St. Louis County) and the HOK Planning Group produced the Mid-County Streetscape Plan to maintain the character of each community while improving travel along major thoroughfares. Residents, business leaders, and representatives of non-profit and faith-based organizations from 20 St. Louis County municipalities collaborated. Steetscape and accessibility studies provide a solid foundation for municipalities that seek transportation enhancement and surface project funds.

Financial Report

	2000 AUDITED	2001 ESTIMATED
RESOURCES:		
Federal Grants	$3,145,827	$3,740,910
State Appropriations & Grants	995,948	879,480
Local Contributions		
Cash—Per Capita	286,754	297,953
Cash—Other	2,488,690	875,750
In-kind Services	252,705	453,846
Miscellaneous Income	70,310	43,292
TOTAL RESOURCES	**$7,240,234**	**$6,291,231**
EXPENDITURES:		
Salaries, Benefits	$2,679,805	$3,128,160
Public Agencies, Planning Consultants	3,566,294	2,077,256
In-kind Services	252,705	453,846
Operating Expenses, Staff Development & Travel	701,647	612,285
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$7,200,451**	**$6,271,547**

The Regional Workforce Development Policy Group

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