



Connected 2050 Guiding Principles Documentation Memo

**East-West Gateway Council of Governments
Long-Range Transportation Plan Update**

November 2022



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PROCESS FOR UPDATING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For more than a decade, the East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) utilized a set of ten Guiding Principles as a basis for its long-range and short-range planning. Originally developed as part of the Renewing the Region (RTR) initiative in 2009, the Guiding Principles identified key outcomes for the transportation system and were used to make the connection between transportation and broader societal goals. These principles were used in the *Connected2040* and *Connected2045* long-range transportation plan and lay a foundation for a performance-based approach to planning to support investment and policy decision-making.

Since much has changed over the past decade, EWG recognized that it is important to realign the principles, so they best reflect the region's current vision and priorities. As part of the development of *Connected 2050*, EWG undertook an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process to gather input from residents, regional leaders, and other transportation stakeholders to develop a revised set of Guiding Principles.

This memo documents the process and methodology used to develop the updated Guiding Principles, beginning in February 2022. Figure 1 highlights key elements of the approach, starting with foundational research, public and stakeholder engagement to understand regional priorities, and work with the EWG Board to draft potential Guiding Principles, followed by an extensive process of gathering feedback on the draft Principles. The EWG Board of Directors approved the revised Guiding Principles on October 26, 2022.

Figure 1: Overview of Process for Developing the Updated Guiding Principles, 2022

February – March

- Conducted foundational research
- Presented findings to EWG Board of Directors

April

- Conducted a census-weighted statistical survey to understand the public's concerns and priorities related to transportation

May–June

- Conducted in-person public outreach at 18 community events across the St. Louis region
- Conducted interviews with stakeholders to solicit input on the Guiding Principles
- Conducted an online survey to educate the public about the LRTP Update process and to gather information from people about their transportation priorities and aspirations
- Conducted a work session with the EWG Board to consider potential Guiding Principles

July–August

- To gather feedback on the draft Guiding Principles:
 - Held open house public meetings
 - Conducted two resident focus groups
 - Held a "virtual open house" on-line

September–October

- Shared updated Guiding Principles with EWG Board of Directors and the Equity Advisory Group
- Finalized Guiding Principles based on feedback

FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

As part of the process to develop *Connected 2050*, EWG staff started with foundational research reviewing the existing Guiding Principles and associated performance measures. EWG's consultants, ICF and Added Dimension, developed two technical memos as a basis for the update process.

Memo 1 – Review of Existing Principles – The first memo focused on the existing ten Guiding Principles, and involved:

- Exploring potential overlaps and linkages between EWG's existing guiding principles as a basis to consider potentially consolidating or adjusting the principles.
- Reviewing the goals established by Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), significant regional plans (such as OneSTL), federal transportation legislation (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), and goals and principles established by peer Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

Memo 2 – Identification of Potential Principles and Performance Measures – The second memo explored the array of current issues that might be considered as part of the update process. This work involved:

- Researching long-range transportation plans from 12 regions to assess how EWG's Guiding Principles compare to peer regions.
- Identifying potential new or revised Guiding Principles for EWG, stakeholders, and the St. Louis community to consider. Themes suggested for consideration included resiliency, accessibility, affordability, efficient system management and operations, health, supporting active transportation, environmental sustainability and/or climate change mitigation, community connectivity/livability, collaboration, and equity.

The memos were posted on the *Connected2050* website, and highlights from the research were shared with the EWG Board of Directors in March 2022.

GATHERING INPUT FROM THE PUBLIC + STAKEHOLDERS

Following this foundational research, EWG conducted comprehensive public outreach and engagement to solicit input on the priorities of residents and stakeholders in the St. Louis Region. The first phase of outreach from April to June 2022 focused on interacting with members of the public and stakeholders, with the goal of identifying transportation challenges and issues to consider in developing new Guiding Principles.

This information gathering phase involved a wide array of activities, including:

Census-weighted Statistical Survey – A regional panel survey using a Census-balanced sample of adult residents in the St. Louis region was conducted to understand perspectives from residents throughout the region. The survey provided a mechanism to gather information on priorities and perspectives from a representative sample of residents to reflect the overall views of residents across the region.

Online Survey – An online survey was developed and shared via the *Connected 2050* website, social media posts, and community outreach. Anyone in the region who was interested could take the survey to provide input on their priorities for the region.

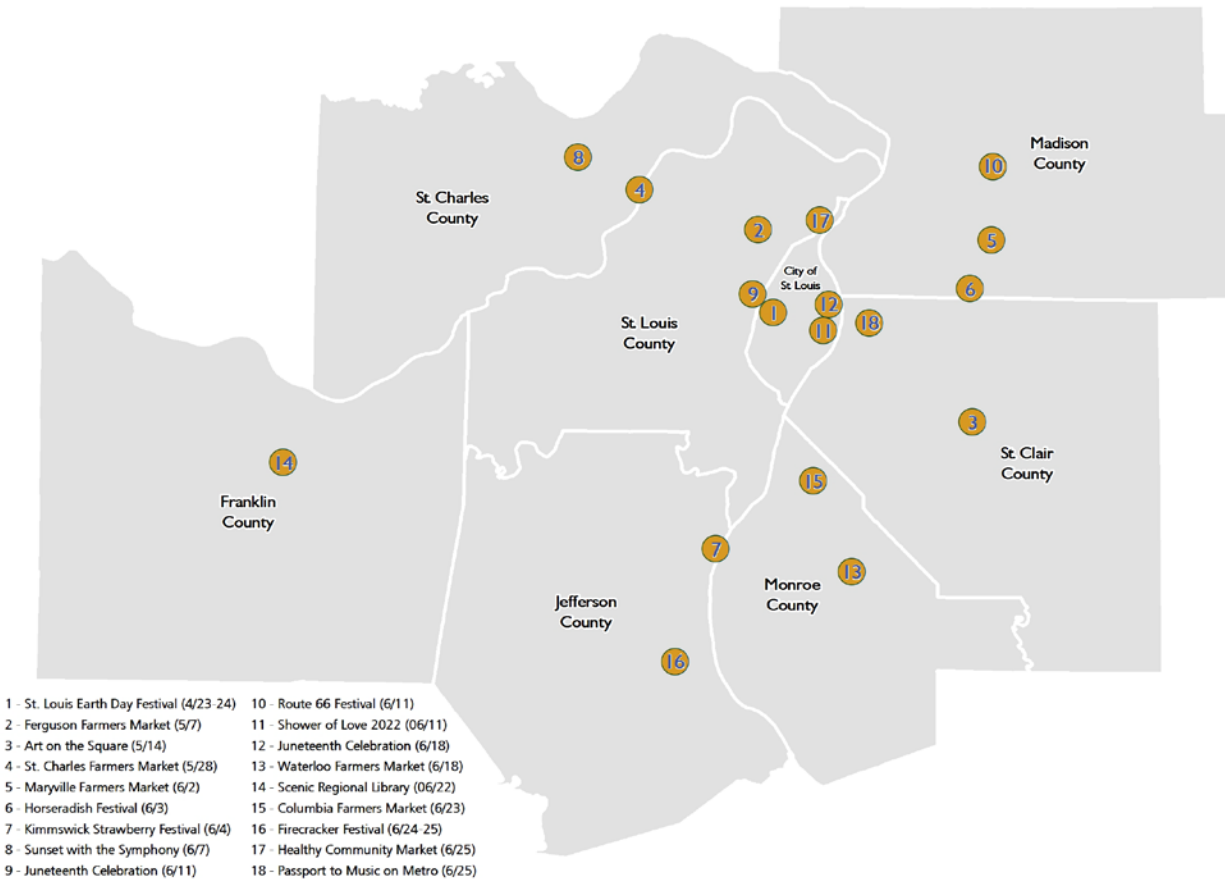
Equity Advisory Group – An advisory group was established to bring together individuals representing a diverse array of interests, including representatives from local governments and civic and community organizations. Input on the Guiding Principles was gathered from this group, and they were encouraged to share information with other stakeholders.

Community Events – Events were held in all eight EWG jurisdictions, and included outreach at farmer's markets in Ferguson, Maryville, Waterloo, and Columbia, and community events, such as Art on the Square in Belleville, the Juneteenth Celebration in Delmar Loop, the Kimmswick Strawberry Festival, and the Firecracker Festival in Jefferson County (Figure 2).

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups – Individual interviews and small group meetings were held with stakeholders throughout the region, representing community colleges, universities, Chambers of Commerce and business organizations, freight stakeholders, social justice organizations, agencies supporting older adults and persons with disabilities, and other organizations. In addition, focus group discussions were held with staff from the Missouri Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation, Metro and other transit agencies in the region.

Community Meeting Toolkit – A toolkit consisting of a presentation and discussion guide was developed and shared on the *Connected2050* website and with stakeholder organizations so that they could hold their own community meetings and share findings.

Figure 2: Connected 2050 Community Outreach Events, Spring 2022



BOARD WORKSHOP + DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES

To better understand the concerns and desires of the EWG Board and elected officials related to the Guiding Principles, the project team conducted a two-hour work session with the EWG Board on June 29, 2022. During this work session, the EWG staff and *Connected 2050* consultant team presented a summary of findings from the public engagement conducted during the spring of 2022, along with examples of guiding principles by MPOs across the country.

Working in breakout groups and full-group discussions, Board members evaluated three suggested options for updating the guiding principles in response to the array of input from the public and stakeholder:

- Limit to a few core overarching principles (3-5 principles)
- Build on the current approach (about 10 principles); or
- Use a new framework to structure principles-based types of outcomes that they address.

Highlights from the Board discussion include the following direction regarding the Guiding Principles:

- Simpler is better. Make the principles fewer or organize them in a way that makes them simpler to understand.
- Seek a hierarchy and/ or method to prioritize principles, especially when using them to prioritize projects. Specifically, safety (reducing both crashes and crime) and economic prosperity are critical and should be weighted highly.
- Include Process principles (Option 3) – there was general agreement that it is important to state the process clearly to give confidence in the plan. Make sure the process principles are clearly defined and actionable.
- Use stronger, less passive words.
- Consider developing a scorecard to help clarify principles and track progress

Based on the direction provided by the EWG Board in June, the project team developed a proposed set of regional Guiding Principles for public review, using the structure of four key principles organized under the three themes of: our communities and region, our transportation system, and our process.

GATHERING FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Following the workshop with the EWG Board of Directors, the project team conducted additional public outreach in July and August to receive feedback on the draft Guiding Principles. This outreach included the following activities:

In-Person Open Houses – Five in-person open house meetings were held, conducted at the following locations:

- Jefferson County (Arnold Rec Center), July 12, 2022
- St. Clair County (SIUE East St. Louis campus), July 20, 2022
- St. Charles County (Charles Spencer Library), July 26, 2022
- St. Louis County/City (The Heights Community Center), July 27, 2022
- Franklin County (Pacific City Hall), August 3, 2022

Resident Focus Groups – The project team conducted two focus groups with residents from the St. Louis region on July 27, 2022, and August 17, 2022. Ten residents participated in the focus groups, representing the following jurisdictions: City of St. Louis, Franklin County, Jefferson County, St. Charles County, St. Clair County, and St. Louis County. Collectively, the groups included five women and five men; eight White residents, one Black resident, and one Asian-American resident; one University student; a range of age groups from people in their 20s to people in their 60s or 70s; and a range of people who were in school, were working full time, were homemakers, and were retired. Priority concerns and themes shared during the focus groups were related to the following themes: roadway safety for all users, revitalizing the metro core, redeveloping communities, investing in public transit, maintaining Interstate highways, activating the Mississippi riverfront, and supporting the regional economy.

Virtual Open House – A “Virtual Open House” website was developed for participants throughout the region to provide online feedback on the draft Guiding Principles. The “Virtual Open House” website was active from August 1 to August 31, 2022 (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The virtual open house included sections on the following elements: Connected 2050 Overview, the LRTP process, LRTP Survey, Guiding Principles, Equity Investment Analysis, and Feedback and Resources. Social media was used to promote the “Virtual Open House” and attract visitors unfamiliar with the LRTP. The “Virtual Open House” received approximately 2,400 website views and received dozens of comments related to the Guiding Principles.

Figure 3: Screenshot from the Virtual Open House



Figure 4: Screenshot from the Virtual Open House



The LRTP process:

- Establishes the long-term vision and priorities for the St. Louis region's transportation system, including highways, bridges, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- The LRTP is a Federally required process that must be updated every four years. The LRTP serves as the framework for regional transportation decision-making and investments, and balances technical needs, budgetary constraints, and public desires.
- Aligns with Federal transportation priorities identified in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

FINALIZING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Public feedback on the Guiding Principles included diverse viewpoints on some specific principles and what they mean, but overall, there was strong overall positive feedback that the proposed Guiding Principles represent resident’s values and priorities for the region. Specific comments and concerns were addressed through minor adjustments to the Guiding Principles’ definitions and iconography. The Guiding Principles were revised based on the feedback received from the engagement conducted in July and August, including comments from members of the public and stakeholders.

The project team presented the revised Guiding Principles to the EWG Board of Directors and the Equity Advisory Group in September 2022, along with an overview of the Equity Investment Analysis. Based on feedback from the EWG Board, the definition for several Guiding Principles were modified, such as emphasizing the significance of freight to the region. The EWG Board of Directors approved the revised Guiding Principles on October 26, 2022. The approved Guiding Principles and their corresponding definitions are summarized in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Figure 5: Approved Connected 2050 Guiding Principles



Figure 6: Approved Connected 2050 Guiding Principle Definitions

Our Communities and System	
Economic Vitality	Maximize the region’s economic competitiveness in key industries including freight and support growth in quality jobs.
Thriving Neighborhoods and Communities	Foster safe, healthy, and attractive places where people love to live, work, and play.
A Vibrant Downtown and Central Core	Enhance the attractiveness of downtown St. Louis and the central core to strengthen the region.
A Healthy and Sustainable Environment	Ensure clean air and waterways and reduce emissions contributing to climate change to support the health and well-being of our communities.
Our Transportation System	
Safe and Secure	Provide safe and secure travel for all people, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists.
Choices and Access for All	Improve public transportation, bicycling and walking, and other alternatives to driving to help people of all ages, abilities, and population groups access opportunities.
Seamless, Efficient, and Reliable	Enhance connectivity, manage congestion, and improve travel time reliability to support efficient personal travel and freight movement.
Well-Maintained and Resilient	Ensure that the transportation system is clean, maintained in a state of good repair, and resilient to extreme weather and other disruptions.
Our Process	
Collaborative	Work together across jurisdictions and communities to support the region’s overall economy, environment, and quality of life.
Equitable	Ensure the transportation system is working for everyone in the region, and all voices are heard, including populations that are traditionally underserved.
Innovative	Bring leading-edge ideas, technologies, and approaches to address transportation challenges and position the region for growth.
Performance-Based	Use data-driven approaches to support wise investment decisions that maximize stewardship of limited financial resources.