



**EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments**

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

**AGENDA
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, November 8, 2022
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
East-West Gateway Board Room and Virtual**

The East-West Gateway Offices are now open to the public. You are welcome to attend this meeting in person or virtually on the GoToMeeting platform.

You can listen, talk, and/or view the meeting via:

Computer - <https://meet.goto.com/726640781>

Access code: 726-640-781

Or Phone - [+1 \(872\) 240-3212](tel:+18722403212)

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Carol Lawrence, Chair, East-West Gateway Council of Governments
2. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. MS4 Plan Effectiveness Evaluation Report**
 - Roland Biehl, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District
 - B. Kiefer Creek Septic Feasibility Study**
 - Jennifer Vuitel, East-West Gateway Council of Governments
 - C. Connected 2050, Long Range Transportation Plan Update**
 - James Fister, East-West Gateway Council of Governments
3. **OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

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Non-voting Members

Holly Bieneman
Illinois Department of Transportation

Vacant
Illinois Department of Commerce
and Economic Opportunity

Patrick McKenna
Missouri Department of Transportation

Taulby Roach
Bi-State Development

Aaron Willard
Missouri Office of Administration

Executive Director

James M. Wild

Gateway Tower
One Memorial Drive, Suite 1600
St. Louis, MO 63102-2451

314-421-4220
618-274-2750
Fax 314-231-6120

webmaster@ewgateway.org
www.ewgateway.org

Minutes

Regional Water Resources Advisory Committee

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual and In Person Meeting - East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Attendees:

Carol Lawrence – East-West Gateway Council of Governments
Josh Ward – Missouri Department of Conservation
Danelle Haake – National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
Gary Moore – Washington University
Traci Lichtenberg – Missouri American Water
Robert Stout – MITCO and Land Learning Foundation
Tom Schweiss – Great Rivers Greenway
Todd Miller – Missouri Department of Transportation
Bonnie Harper – Open Space Council
Blake Moore – Missouri Department of Transportation
Rachel Rimmerman – St. Louis University
Rachel Bartels – Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper
Charles Miller
Jo Schaper – MRRA
Kaleena Menke
John McEnery – McEnery Water Resources
Elizabeth Diaz
Gary Moore – Washington University
John Grimm
Joshua Wilson – Blue2Blue Conservation

If you attended this meeting, please let us know and we will update the minutes.

Staff:

Mary Grace Lewandowski Aaron Young James Fister Maureen McCarthy

1. CALL TO ORDER

The virtual meeting of the Regional Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRC) was called to order by Chair Carol Lawrence, East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG). Those attending introduces themselves.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. **Connected 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Update**

- James Fister, East-West Gateway Council of Governments

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) process establishes the 20 year vision and priorities for the St. Louis region's transportation system, including highways, bridges, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian routes. The process is federally required and the plan has to be updated every four years. The LRTP serves as the framework for regional transportation decision making and investments as well as balances technical needs, budgetary constraints, and public desires. Connected 2045 was adopted in 2019 and established a set of performance measures that track progress toward achieving the region's transportation goals. Connected 2050 aims to build and maintain a thriving quality of life for years to come, and covers the following topics; policies that impact the region; how the transportation system is serving residents; the equity of investments in the transportation system; how projects are evaluated and selected; and the impact on air quality in the region.

During the month of July EWG is working to update the guiding principles and continuing with the equity analysis and system performance tracking. From the end of July and into the fall is when the project solicitation will take place. Towards the end of 2022 is when the air quality conformity determination analysis will happen. EWG has hired a consultant to assist with the update of the guiding principles, the equity investment analysis, and community engagement. The draft Connected 2050 will be ready in March 2023.

East-West Gateway conducted a survey to obtain resident feedback on the best ways to improve the St. Louis region's transportation system. The results of the survey revealed that when it comes to transportation barriers, safety and delays are the top concerns. Out of all of the respondents 41 percent said they do not feel safe using public transportation and 33 percent said that traffic congestion and delays make it difficult to get to places on time. The survey also asked for feedback on what are the important and most important factors to focus on for community development. The respondents put the most emphasis on improving transportation connections to health care, education, and grocery stores. The next most important focus was making neighborhoods and communities more walkable and bikeable. Since our transportation system is intermodal we are not just looking at how cars move around the region, but also general mobility and how people get around the region. The survey respondents said that making it easier and safer for people to walk and bike places was a top priority for them. When asked about important focuses for transportation infrastructure in the region the highest percentage of people selected improving maintenance of highways, roads, and bridges.

Another aspect of community engagement for Connected 2050 has been stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions. EWG has been meeting with specific groups of people such as elected officials, religious leaders, county department staff, and employees of educational institutions. The purpose of the interviews and focus groups was to determine how the transportation system is or is not meeting their needs and to help establish what the new guiding principles of the plan will be.

There is currently a proposed set of guiding principles and EWG is collecting feedback on those at the moment. The biggest change to the guiding principles is grouping them into three categories: Our Communities and Region; Our Transportation System; and Our Process (how will do transportation work). The Communities and Regions section is more about people. The four principles in this category are economic vitality, thriving neighborhoods and communities, a vibrant downtown and central core, and a healthy and sustainable environment. The four guiding principles for the Our Transportation System category are: safe and secure; choices and access for all; seamless, efficient, and reliable; and well-maintained and resilient. Lastly, the principles for the Our Process category are collaborative, equitable, innovative, and performance based. EWG is seeking feedback and the opportunity to answer any questions about the new guiding principles. Ms. Lewandowski, EWG, asked where stormwater management on roadways would fit within the new guiding principles. Mr. Fister, EWG, responded that stormwater management would fit within the Our Transportation System category under the seamless, efficient, and reliable and the well-maintained and resilient principles. Resiliency has a new emphasis in transportation planning.

There are several open houses scheduled in the coming weeks and all of the information for those as well as more information about Connected 2050 can be found on the EWG website.

B. St. Louis Trash Free Project

- Rachel Bartels, Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper
- Josh Wilson, Blue2Blue Conservation

Blue2Blue Conservation began when Mr. Wilson and his wife took a sabbatical and lived on a sailboat for a year and a half. This provided them with the unique experience of visiting deserted islands as well as beaches owned by resorts. It was eye opening to find that no matter where they went there was not a single place that did not have trash everywhere. Items they would find on every beach included Styrofoam, fishing line, fishing nets, plastic bottles, oil drums, plastic bags, and plastic bits. Their goal became making wherever they went cleaner, whether underwater or on a beach they would always collect some trash. Once they returned to St. Louis they started Blue2Blue Conservation with the motto of educate, clean, restore. The goal is to educate younger generations on the effect pollution has on our ecosystem and to build empathy toward nature by show-casing outdoor activities. They also want to clean the waterways by engaging the community and creating a person experience with nature and seeing the problem firsthand. Finally, they want to restore a balance between the natural ecosystem and society, allowing both to thrive without one disturbing the other.

Ms. Bartels of Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper approached Mr. Wilson to collaborate on a project called Trash Free STL. The project would focus on installing different types of trash traps around St. Louis to determine what effect they would have. Trash traps are any device built or grown to snag, capture, entangle, or hold man-made pollution. Since 80 percent of ocean pollution originates inland, trapping and removing litter from our cities' waterways is the first step to maintaining healthy rivers, oceans, and communities. Funding for this pilot project came from EPA Region 7's Trash Free Waters Program which was passed through Wichita State University's Finance Center. Trash Free STL was a year-long which oversaw the installation and

maintenance of three different types of trash traps. The project ended in May 2022. Currently the partnership is in the process of analyzing the data collected during the project.

The first trap, the Trash Trout, was located in Heman Park in University City, the second trap called the B2Beaver was located in Deer Creek, and the third trap called Liter Glitter (Osprey) was located in Mackenzie Creek, near Tower Tee in south St. Louis County. These locations were chosen for their good visibility and accessibility. The Trash Trout trap was a cage style trap with two booms on either side and was designed for smaller creeks and streams. It had a good rate of litter collection, but also collected a lot of natural debris. This was the most expensive trap with a cost between \$2,500 and \$3,500. The location of the second trap in Mackenzie Creek was chosen for the same reasons as the first trap, but it also was located right next to the River Des Peres Greenway. It was a boom style trap that was easy to install and cost about \$1,500. It had a medium rate of trash capture and did not get bogged down with debris. The last trap was the B2Beaver which was designed by Mr. Wilson. It was constructed with landscape tubing and floats and was the cheapest trap at \$1,000. It is easy to install, had a medium rate of trash capture, does not get bogged down with debris, and is easy to move. A major benefit of putting the traps in places where community members could see them was making people more mindful of plastic pollution and even inspiring some to go out and pick up trash on their own time. While the traps did collect trash they are not the most efficient way to clean up the waterways. In two weeks the B2Beaver trap can capture 15 five gallon buckets of trash but Mr. Wilson found that he could pick of the same amount of trash within an hour by walking the creeks and collecting trash before it ends up in the water.

During the yearlong project in Heman Park there were 198 pounds of trash collected which equaled 330 gallons of trash collected by the trap. In Mackenzie Creek 54 pounds of trash was collected which equaled 90 gallons. The trap in Deer Creek collected 132 pounds of trash which equaled 220 gallons. Most of the trash was from fresh street runoff. The types of trash collected included plastic bottles, polystyrene chunks, packaging bits, cigarette butts, mini liquor bottles, microplastics, sports balls, and fountain drink cups. Unexpectedly, microplastics were found to be very prolific in the creeks and is very problematic. For data purposes all of the pieces of trash collected were recorded including any brands that could be identified on the trash.

Blue2Blue Conservation organizes monthly community cleanups. In 2020 the monthly cleanups with local volunteers removed 1,350 pounds of litter and pollutants from our waterways. During the cleanups there are educational discussions that focus on solutions to the litter problem. It is important to keep in mind that the solution to pollution is not dilution. Simple ways of reducing plastic pollution are installing storm sewer grates, cleaning the streets more often, planting native plants in yards instead of grass, and planting more trees. More complicated solutions include advocating for corporate responsibility, responsible engineering, political backing, and the monetization of the solution. A major aspect of the lessons taught by Blue2Blue is empathy for nature. Empathy is created by immersion in nature and education for the environment.

Mr. Wilson led the cleaning of the trash traps while Ms. Bartels focused on the permitting process in the year before the project began. It was a bit of an ordeal getting the traps installed here because it had never been done before. The permitting process involved the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, and the individual

cities where the traps were located. Now that the one-year project has ended they are collaborating with Wichita State University to produce a how-to manual for other communities who want to use trash traps. The manual will include information on funding, permitting, and the types of traps that can be used. Due to the amount of time and money associated with the maintenance of trash traps there are no current plans to continue utilizing the traps in the St. Louis area.

Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper has a microplastic monitoring program and they recently received three years of funding to test surface and drinking water for microplastics and nano plastics which are much smaller than microplastics. Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper is partnering with a lab at the University of Illinois to do chemical analysis. This grant is for testing in St. Louis City and St. Louis County, but as an organization there is a statewide microplastics monitoring program.

3. OTHERBUSINESS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

In June 2022 the Missouri Coronavirus Sewershed Surveillance Project team was awarded a Pinnacle Award at Governor Parson's Awards for Quality and Productivity ceremony.

On July 26th to the 28th is the International Erosion Control Association (IECA) Great Connections Conference is underway in Chesterfield, MO.

August 19th is the deadline to submit to EWG applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program funding.

August 27th - 28th is the Operation Clean Stream led by the Open Space Council. More information can be found on the Open Space Council website.

September 9th – 10th is the River Soundings Conference hosted by Greenway Network at Klondike Park Conference Center near Augusta, MO.

September 13th -15th is the MRCTI Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO.

September 17th – 18th is the Mississippi River Earth Tones Festival in Alton, IL which is sponsored by Alton Main Street and the Paisa Palisades Sierra Club Chapter.

September 29th is the Meramec River Recreation Association meeting at the Wildwood Administrative Center.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Water Resources Advisory Committee will be in 2the fall.