

May 29, 2015

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Shay Schindler
East-West Gateway Council of Governments
One Memorial Dr., Ste 1600
St. Louis, MO 63102

Dear Ms. Schindler,

Below are Trailnet's comments regarding East-West Gateway's *Connected2045* long-range transportation plan.

Trailnet, as the region's leading advocate for those who bike and walk, has been a partner in regional planning with EWG for many years. We commend EWG staff for all their efforts in the development of this preliminary draft.

Plan Pros

There are a number of features in the Connected 2045 draft that we support, including:

1. The inclusion of performance measures connected to ten guiding principles;
2. Addressing bicycle and pedestrian needs in a much more thorough way than they have been before, including a short list of projects;
3. A substantial portion of all funds are committed to maintaining transit service;
4. The performance measures and indicators create a solid basis for tracking progress in the region. (The H+T Costs, for example, looks at the cost of both housing and transportation, and shows how our land-use patterns can impact a family's budget);
5. The plan acknowledges we should reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by listing it as a performance measure in the Transportation Alternatives section;
6. The plan is concise and easy to navigate.

Plan Cons

We feel the below is missing from the *Connected2045* draft:

1. Transportation funds expressly directed to bicycle and pedestrian projects. We have seen the results in other cities across the country that demonstrate if we steadily build it, they will come.
2. Greater emphasis on, and a greater share of transportation dollars going to the vibrant core of this region, the City of St. Louis. The St. Louis region is the economic engine of the state and the City of St. Louis plays no small role. The City of St. Louis was built as a walkable city that still has a density of institutions, destinations, and residences not found in other parts of the East-West Gateway region. These characteristics uniquely position the City for public transit, bikeway, and pedestrian improvements and connections that can catalyze significant economic development for the entire region. Based on the projected funding in the Plan, the City's federal transportation project spending will be under 10% of total regional spending for new projects, excluding regional maintenance funds and transit operation, for the 20-year period from 2025 - 2045. We are concerned and surprised about what looks like an extended drought in federal transportation funds for the City.

3. A 21st Century Vision. The public outreach during this planning process (and for the OneSTL plan several years ago) showed there is an emerging, common-sense consensus around what people want in transportation: real choices in terms of modes, low costs for the user and taxpayer, and connected communities where children can walk or bike to school. Yet the Connected 2045 Plan really lacks an action-oriented vision in response to the transportation evolution well underway in the 21st century. Our peer MPO's in Nashville and Kansas City, for example, have long range plans that include transit, walking, and bicycling projects as *funded projects*. These MPO's are busy making their corridors more attractive to current and future residents and businesses.

Transportation Outlook 2040, the Kansas City region's current RTP, envisions a transportation system that meets the needs of all users and offers broad mobility choices. The plan states, "Today, perhaps more than ever, Americans are looking for solutions that will improve their health, preserve the environment, and save valuable resources. For many, active transportation is the missing piece in our transportation system."

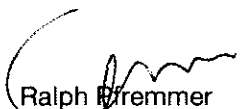
There should be a bold vision for active transportation, specifics on spending, and defined expectations as to how it will benefit the region.

4. A description of exactly which types of freight movement will be increased in the future, data showing the new jobs they will create, and how much of the freight will be processed in our region.
5. Data showing that low congestion leads to higher economic performance. The ranking of the most congested cities shows this factor is clearly not hindering economic development.

Conclusion

A well-developed transportation system, with a diversity of efficient transportation choices is the bedrock of a successful region. The draft Connected 2045 Plan needs to set the vision for creating such a system in the 21st Century. This vision must include prioritizing active transportation choices by allocating the necessary funding for their creation. Though the Plan addresses the importance of active transportation it does not prioritize new public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure with funding commitments. *As currently written*, the draft Connected 2045 Plan is not an adequate roadmap for assuring St. Louis' regional and global competitiveness and should not be approved. We welcome the opportunity to partner with EWG moving forward.

Sincerely,



Ralph Bremmer
Executive Director