

1

PROJECT BACKGROUND

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Introduction

Manchester Road, once known as historic Route 66 and now designated as Missouri Route 100, emerged as one of the leading retail corridors serving the suburban West County area of the St. Louis region between the 1960s and 1980s. Today it represents the “Main Street” of the five communities of Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester. In recent years, the corridor has lost some of its prominence as newer and larger shopping areas in the West County area have emerged. The five communities launched efforts for the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan in order to find ways to reinvigorate and improve their Main Street in the coming decades. The specific study area for this project stretches from Route 141 to Route 109. Between Route 141 and Westglen Farms Drive, the road is commonly referred to as Manchester Road. Between Westglen Farms Drive and Route 109, it is referred to as Route 100.

In 2009, Manchester Road was selected as one of four Great Streets Initiative planning projects in the St. Louis region by East/West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG). Since 2005 EWG has been helping communities in the St. Louis region expand the way they think about and plan streets. The initiative has encouraged local civic and government leaders to think beyond the boundaries of right of ways and to consider how transportation decisions include the total built environment.

East West Gateway and the five communities in West County recognize the importance of planning for streets as community resources, and the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative intends to make corridors such as Manchester Road more than simple conduits for automobile traffic. Great Streets in the St. Louis region will emphasize all modes of travel, including walking and bicycling. Great Streets will address and reconsider the auto-centric approach that has dominated roadway design in the region over the last several decades in order to transform streets into great community resources.

Considering how street design and corridor planning processes affect the pedestrian realm and abutting land uses is central to the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative. Effectively planning for all modes of travel requires the careful creation of an environment that suits walking, bicycling, and transit, and it requires planning for speeds that allow for mobility and commerce while providing safe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists. Importantly, planning for corridors such as Manchester Road should also consider the economic health of adjacent land uses and help plan for potential development and redevelopment that enhances the economies of local communities.

The five communities along Manchester Road sought to establish the corridor as a Great Street for the following reasons.

- **Great Streets are representative of their places.** A Great Street reflects the neighborhood through which it passes and has a scale and design appropriate to the character of the abutting properties and land uses.
- **Great Streets allow people to walk comfortably and safely.** The pedestrian environment along and near a Great Street corridor is well-designed and well-furnished. The relationship between the street and adjacent buildings is conducive to all modes of transport and inviting to people.
- **Great Streets contribute to the economic vitality of the local community.** Great Streets facilitate the promotion of commerce and the overall economic health of a given town and serve as destinations, not just as transportation facilities. They provide good commercial addresses and provide locational value to businesses that help to power local economies.

- **Great Streets are functionally complete.** Great Streets support mobility and safe and convenient travel for all of the ground transportation modes: walking, bicycling, personal motor vehicles and public transportation.
- **Great Streets facilitate placemaking.** Great Streets incorporate places that are memorable and interesting. These may include plazas, pocket parks, attractive intersections and corners, or simply improved sidewalks that foster a more active street life.
- **Great Streets are “green”.** Great Streets provide an attractive and refreshing environment by working with natural systems. They incorporate environmentally sensitive design standards and other “green” development techniques, including the generous provision of street trees and other plantings and the application of modern stormwater management practices.

The overall intent of the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan is to outline a roadmap for short-term and long-term land use changes and transportation and associated public improvements to the corridor. The recommendations of the planning effort will inform capital improvement program requests from each of the five communities, will guide future transportation projects executed by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the five communities, and will guide local officials in future land use planning and the entitlement of redevelopment projects along the corridor.

Project Organization

East West Gateway worked with the five communities along the Manchester Road corridor and the consultant team, led by Design Workshop of Denver, Colorado, to organize and execute the master planning process for the corridor in 2009 and 2010. As part of this process, a series of committees guided the consultant team as it worked to complete preliminary and final recommendations for the Manchester Road Great Streets Plan.

Steering Committee: This group included city staff from Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester, as well as representatives from East-West Gateway Council of Governments, MoDOT staff, the president of West St. Louis County Chamber of Commerce, and a representative of the Manchester Road Executive Committee – a separate organization comprised of business and community leaders that has met since 2007 to discuss and advocate for the revitalization of the Manchester Road corridor. Design Workshop met with the Steering Committee on a weekly basis between September 2009 and June 2010 and conducted a number of separate work sessions with the group at various points during the project to review draft plans and recommendations for the corridor. The Steering Committee representatives served as liaisons between the project team, elected officials, city staff, and the residents and businesses along and near the corridor concerning the ongoing planning effort.

Mayors and City Administrators / City Managers Group: The mayors from Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester, along with city administrators or city managers from each municipality, met with the consultant team and East West Gateway on seven occasions between Fall 2009 and Summer 2010 to review the evolving plans and recommendations for the Manchester Road corridor and offer input. The meetings with mayors, city managers and city administrators, in particular, focused on developing implementation strategies concerning funding, phasing, governance, and ongoing administration of the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan.

Technical Committees: The consultant team met with a series of Technical Committees (Utilities and Drainage, Parks and Open Space, and Transportation and Parking) during the Manchester Road project in order to understand the issues confronting the corridor from the perspective of regulatory agencies and departments at the municipality, county, and regional levels. The Technical Committees reviewed preliminary and final plans for the corridor to provide feedback as the master plan moved toward completion.

MoDOT Working Group: Because the Manchester Road corridor doubles as Missouri Route 100 (and serves as part of the state’s transportation network), the Missouri Department of Transportation will continue to have jurisdiction over the road in the future and will have final authority over improvements and roadway operations conducted within the right of way. The consultant team and East-West Gateway met in person with a MoDOT working group from the St. Louis district on a monthly basis throughout the master planning process to review preliminary ideas concerning access management, transit, and overall design of Manchester Road and to review preliminary and final concepts for the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan.

Relationship Between the Five Communities, St. Louis County, and MoDOT: The five communities of Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester have worked together to inform the recommendations contained in the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan. Because Manchester Road functions as Missouri Route 100, the Missouri Department of Transportation must approve the design of any improvements to areas within the right of way of Manchester Road. The consultant team and the five communities have coordinated with MoDOT throughout the planning process to ensure that MoDOT’s technical experts have contributed to the final recommendations of the plan, but MoDOT will need to officially approve the construction plans for public improvements within the right of way going forward. In addition, while all of the corridor study area falls within the municipal boundaries of the five communities, some of the north-south streets that intersect Manchester Road along the corridor are controlled by St. Louis County Highways and Traffic. The five communities and MoDOT will need to coordinate with St. Louis County officials regarding the final design of improvements to these north-south streets intersecting Manchester Road in the future.

Goals / Client Critical Success Factors

The Design Workshop consultant team identified and confirmed the following Critical Success Factors for the Manchester Road project with the Steering Committee. These factors reflect the results that should occur for the communities to consider the planning project a success.

- The master plan must ensure the strength of the businesses along the corridor and improve the economic position of the five communities through realistic solutions.
- The Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan must create a pedestrian environment of higher aesthetic quality and move traffic efficiently and safely through a well-planned access management strategy.
- The planning process must incorporate significant community outreach and the buy-in of participants.
- The master plan must be implementable and have political and community support. The Great Streets project must actually make something happen.
- The Manchester Road master plan must serve as a model of a “Great Street” and an example of how to revitalize suburban retail corridors.

How the Master Plan Will Be Used

The five communities of Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester, along with MoDOT, will use this master plan document as a guide for improvements to the Manchester Road corridor over the next few decades. The recommendations contained in this master plan will help direct land use and zoning decisions and the redevelopment strategies of local governments and private sector developers along the corridor. Recommendations concerning public improvements, including streetscape improvements, changes to streets, landscape improvements, lighting, and related enhancements, will guide the short-term and long-term planning of the communities with regards to capital improvement projects.

The five communities may use this document as a supplement or as the basis for amendments to their comprehensive land use plans and for changes to zoning classifications along the corridor. They may also use the recommendations of this study to alter and potentially streamline and coordinate their regulations pertaining to zoning, parking, lighting, signage, landscaping, and drainage and grading. The master plan may also influence updates and changes to planning documents for this portion of St. Louis County developed by MoDOT, Metro, and the St. Louis County government. It may influence intergovernmental agreements executed between the five communities concerning ongoing planning efforts along the corridor and influence the documents and execution of any corridor-wide redevelopment entities formed to coordinate improvements along the corridor going forward.

While the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan does not involve the completion of construction drawings for future improvements or funding for actual construction of improvements, this plan contains sufficient detail to guide future planning and design over the next few decades.

Project Timeline and Public Outreach Process

The involvement of five different municipalities along the Manchester Road corridor, the significant length of the corridor study area, and the need to maintain a shared sense of planning for the corridor in the greater West County community heightened the need to execute comprehensive, transparent, and well-conceived public outreach efforts. The consultant team worked during the planning process to reach a broad range of participants and to create a consensus concerning the design for the corridor that will help the five communities move forward with implementation and construction over time. During the fall, winter, and spring of 2009 – 2010 the consultant team and East West Gateway met regularly with property owners, business owners, community organizations, elected officials, neighborhood representatives, city staff from the five communities, various government agencies, and the general public to advance the recommended design and revitalization strategies for Manchester Road. The team organized a set of public meetings, focus groups, individual meetings, media communication, and the latest in online technologies to engage, educate, and solicit continual feedback from the larger community and to address specific issues impacting various stakeholder groups. In addition to the series of public meetings outlined below, the consultant team worked with local media outlets (including newspaper, radio, and TV) to publicize the Manchester Road planning effort. It also worked with East West Gateway Council of Governments to maintain a website for the project as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts in order to publicize the planning effort and solicit continued input from the public throughout the process.

October 2009 – Initial Stakeholder Outreach: The consultant team met individually with mayors from each community, various city council members from the five municipalities, members of the Planning and Zoning commissions, and city administrators in order to understand the key issues facing the corridor, their key goals for the project, problems to avoid, and overall ideas for the project and the improvement of the corridor.

November 2009 – Initial Public Vision Sessions: The consultant team conducted an initial round of five public meetings to gain input from the public concerning overall goals and direction for the Manchester Road planning project and to review the results of initial data gathering conducted by the team during Fall 2009.

December 2009 - Second Public Vision Session and the “Chip Game”: At a second round of five public meetings, the consultant team reviewed input from the public at the November 2009 vision sessions and presented information and questions concerning a series of potential access management and traffic strategies for the Manchester Road corridor. The consultants reviewed the results of a



Initial Visioning Session at Morgan Selvidge Middle School in Ballwin, November 19, 2009



The public provided real-time input to the consultant team through keypad polling at each public meeting.

market study and development forecast for the 2010 – 2040 period for the Manchester Road corridor. Participants then played the “Chip Game”, an exercise in which members of the public worked together to designate where particular land uses should be located along the Manchester Road corridor in 2030.

February 2010 - Review of Alternative Concepts: The consultant team reviewed input provided at the December 2009 public meetings, including the results of the Chip Game, and presented and solicited feedback concerning a series of alternative concepts for future land uses and transportation solutions for the corridor at a series of three public meetings.



Community members playing the “Chip Game” in Ellisville, December 2009.

March 2010 - Presentation of Preferred Master Plan: The consultant team presented and solicited feedback concerning the preferred master plan for the corridor, including transportation and land use recommendations, at a series of three public meetings.

May 2010 - Presentation of Final Manchester Road Great Streets Plan: At a final round of three public meetings, the consultant team presented and solicited feedback concerning the final master plan exhibits for the corridor, which were developed based upon public input provided at the March 2010 round of public meetings. This round of meetings in particular focused on implementation issues and solicited feedback concerning whether and how the five communities should adopt the plan and move forward with subsequent rounds of planning.

June 2010 – Presentation of Draft Manchester Road Corridor Plan document: Design Workshop presented a draft version of the planning document resulting from the Great Streets effort to the Steering Committee and the mayors of Wildwood, Ellisville, Ballwin, Winchester, and Manchester for review and comment.

January 2011 – Submittal of Final Planning Documents: The consultant team presented the final version of all of the Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan documents and exhibits to the five communities and to East West Gateway Council of Governments, representing the culmination of the master planning process.

The appendix document contains more detailed information concerning the public outreach process, including a record of the results of all in-person and online polling questions posed to the public concerning the planning process.

