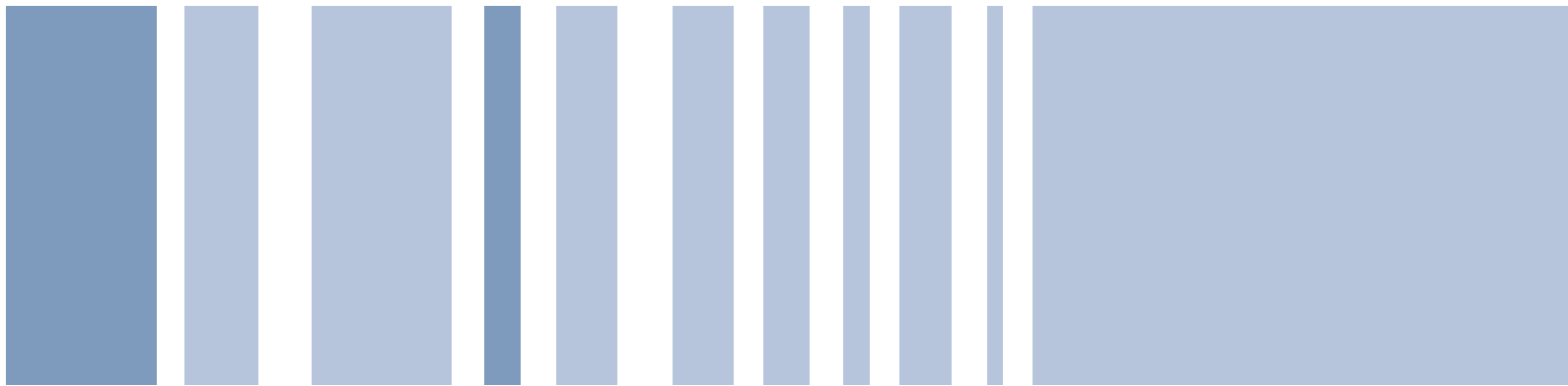




THE LONG JOURNEY TO WORK:

HOW DO WE CONNECT PEOPLE AND JOBS?

JANUARY 2002



The four vignettes featured in this document are based on actual experiences of individuals in this region. We have created names and used models to communicate the stories in order to protect their privacy.

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- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome and thank you for joining RegionWise as a participant in our public policy discussions. Many of the issues facing the St. Louis region today are in need of serious public examination and discussion. But discussion simply for discussion's sake is not the end goal. There are issues facing our region that require immediate, concerted, directed action. From regionwide public discourse, action plans must be formulated, adopted, and then implemented.

By participating in this public discussion you have taken the first step toward participating in the renewal of our great region. Although St. Louis has a long and illustrious history, we also have lived through eras of great division and fragmentation. By joining together in partnership with individuals, organizations, and businesses to address our regional issues, we can overcome our differences, identify common causes and concerns, and influence public policy.

This discussion guide contributes to the public discourse by presenting several alternative policy choices, their consequences, and necessary tradeoffs. It fosters discussion about values and convictions, encourages people to see issues from different perspectives, and then encourages them to move toward shared, stable, well-informed public judgments.

So again, I say, "Welcome."

Sincerely,



Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, FSM

Chair of the Governing Board, RegionWise

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE LONG JOURNEY TO WORK:

INTRODUCTION..... PAGE 03

As the St. Louis area enters the twenty-first century, there are many challenges we face as citizens and as a region. A growing issue of concern is the increasing mismatch between where the jobs are being created and where the workers needed for those jobs live. The region continues to spread out, and employment bases have shifted away from the urban core and into the suburbs. The population group most affected by the changing landscape is low- and semi-skilled workers who have remained in the urban core, far from the

jobs they need and without the transportation to make the commute. The disconnect between where the jobs are located and where the workers live creates problems not only for low-skilled, low-income workers, but also for employers trying to hire the workers they need, and for the region as a whole as we struggle to create and maintain a stable workforce and economic competitiveness.

This discussion guide is designed to promote public deliberation that can help us find common ground for action on the

issue of spatial mismatch. It provides an overview of the issue and outlines four different approaches. Each approach speaks for one set of priorities and views, and advocates a unique way of dealing with the problem.

APPROACH ONE: MAKING MASS TRANSPORTATION WORK PAGE 11

In this view, the best option for improving the ability of low-income workers to get to the growing jobs in the suburbs is to strengthen and improve our mass transportation system. That means we need to ensure that the transit system meets the needs of workers and employers today through efficient operation, new routes, and flexible shifts. And in order to make the system work, we need to find and commit the resources necessary to adequately fund a transit system in the St. Louis region.

APPROACH TWO: MOVING PEOPLE AND JOBS CLOSER TOGETHER... PAGE 17

This approach encourages us to look at the causes and not the symptoms. The reason why low-income workers cannot get to jobs is because most of the jobs have moved out to the suburbs and away from the workforce. We should not focus on moving people to jobs out in the suburbs, but instead, on moving jobs and people closer together. This means more reinvestment in the city and inner-ring suburbs, and more responsibility for suburban communities in providing access to affordable housing and mass transportation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW DO WE CONNECT PEOPLE AND JOBS?

APPROACH THREE: BOOSTING PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE PAGE 23

Not every problem in this region can or should be solved by government. The private sector needs to step up to the plate. This approach encourages businesses to consider access to affordable housing and mass transportation in business location decisions. If businesses choose to locate in the suburbs away from the workforce and the transportation system, they should assume responsibility for getting people to work. Approach Three advocates private sector efforts to provide alternative transportation, along with community strategies that provide workers with access to private vehicles and assistance with job training.

APPROACH FOUR: CONFRONTING WHAT DIVIDES US PAGE 29

This view reminds us that any approach to the problem requires public will and a sense of cooperation, and currently that doesn't exist in the St. Louis region. Our region is divided in many ways, including by race and income. Before we can garner support for any strategies we must build a greater sense of community and regional interdependence. This approach advocates improving the image of mass transportation, expanding economic opportunities and access to services for underserved populations, and promoting education, dialogue, and discussion throughout the region.

COMPARING APPROACHES PAGE 35

NOTES PAGE 37

THE LONG JOURNEY TO WORK:

HOW DO WE CONNECT PEOPLE AND JOBS?

“The entry-level jobs needed by low-skilled residents of poor urban neighborhoods abound—but in the suburbs, out of reach.”

—Brookings Institution, 2000

There was a time in the region’s history when most businesses and workers were part of the same community. Workers at companies like Anheuser-Busch lived nearby—on Pestalozzi, Sydney, or Lemp Streets—and walked to work, while their children walked to neighborhood schools.

Today, it is a much different story. It is an everyday occurrence for families to have two wage earners making daily commutes from Granite City, Edwardsville, Festus, or St. Peters in to the City of St. Louis or St. Louis County. A large number of people in the St. Louis metropolitan area no longer live in or near the communities where they work.



WHAT CHANGED?

Three trends have developed over the last 50 years that have moved employers far away from the urban core and that have created a disconnect between the location of employer and employee.

- **Public Policy**—The first trend developed out of public policies that supported the creation of new interstate highways and made it easier for families to buy new homes in the growing suburbs ringing the city center. Once families began leaving the city and migrating to outlying areas, many remaining families decided to make the move to escape what they perceived as negative changes in their city neighborhoods.

- **Increasing Household Income**—The second trend, rising household incomes, provided the resources for families to own two or more cars along with the house in the suburbs. This made it easier for families to live in the suburbs and commute to work on the new highways.

- **A Changing Economy**—The third trend was a rapidly changing economy. The shift from heavy industry to a knowledge-based service economy no longer required employers to be near a river or a railroad to deliver large quantities of raw materials. In a knowledge and service economy, employers can and do locate virtually anywhere they want. Today, employers operate more from office and warehouse space than from manufacturing space. And, because of cheaper costs and the convenience of interstate highways, employers increasingly choose locations that are on the far outer ring of urban centers.

People and jobs have spread themselves out throughout the region.

PEOPLE OF THE REGION

By 6:00 a.m., when her 35-minute trip to Chesterfield Valley finally begins, Elena Rodriguez has been awake for nearly two hours. She rises at 4:00 a.m. to catch a bus near her home. The bus takes her to a Metro-Link train that she rides to the Forest Park station. At that point, she catches a van to a \$7.00/hour job near the Spirit of St. Louis Airport.

Elena's story is shared by thousands of metropolitan St. Louis residents who travel the long journey to work.

But not everybody has moved as a result of the change.

Perhaps most affected by the changing landscape are unskilled and low-skilled workers who are often now forced to do a reverse commute. These workers, most of whom are low-income, head from their homes in the city or inner-ring suburbs to the outlying areas to get to their jobs.

They do not choose this commute because they enjoy the distance between their jobs and their homes. They accept it because there are no jobs to be had near where they can afford to live.

Conversely, employers that are located in the far suburbs find it difficult to fill positions requiring unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Those who study this growing divergence between where people work and where they live have coined the phrase “**spatial mismatch.**” In plain English, that means that employers who are looking to hire unskilled or semi-skilled workers are far from potential employees in the city or inner-ring suburbs. It is a growing problem with serious economic implications for the entire region. It is also a problem that other metropolitan areas have faced – with a few finding solutions, and others left searching for answers.

Elena Rodriguez's situation (see sidebar) illustrates the spatial mismatch issue faced by our region. Without access to an automobile, more than half of the job market is off-limits to many of our citizens, including many workers with disabilities, older workers, and those rejoining the workforce as a result of welfare reform. Even when jobs are seemingly not that distant, commutes by mass transportation

are often as much as two hours. For people with child-care responsibilities, this is not only a hardship, but it adversely affects outcomes for children. Only about 10% of all entry-level jobs in high-growth areas are reachable within an hour by the transit system from the central city.

Making that long journey to work is a challenge for many. According to one St. Louis County bus rider, “**This is my livelihood. This is how I'm going to make it. But every move I make, I have to think about where the bus is going.**”

This long journey is taking a toll not only on individuals and families, but also on the economic well-being of our entire region.

THE IMPACT ON THE REGION AND ITS CITIZENS

The St. Louis metropolitan area prides itself on creating its own communities within a community, in expanding our region to accommodate people's desires to live where and how they want. However, the impact these decisions have had on our region and our lifestyles is not so desirable.

“Today, the name of the game in economic development is a sustainable workforce.”

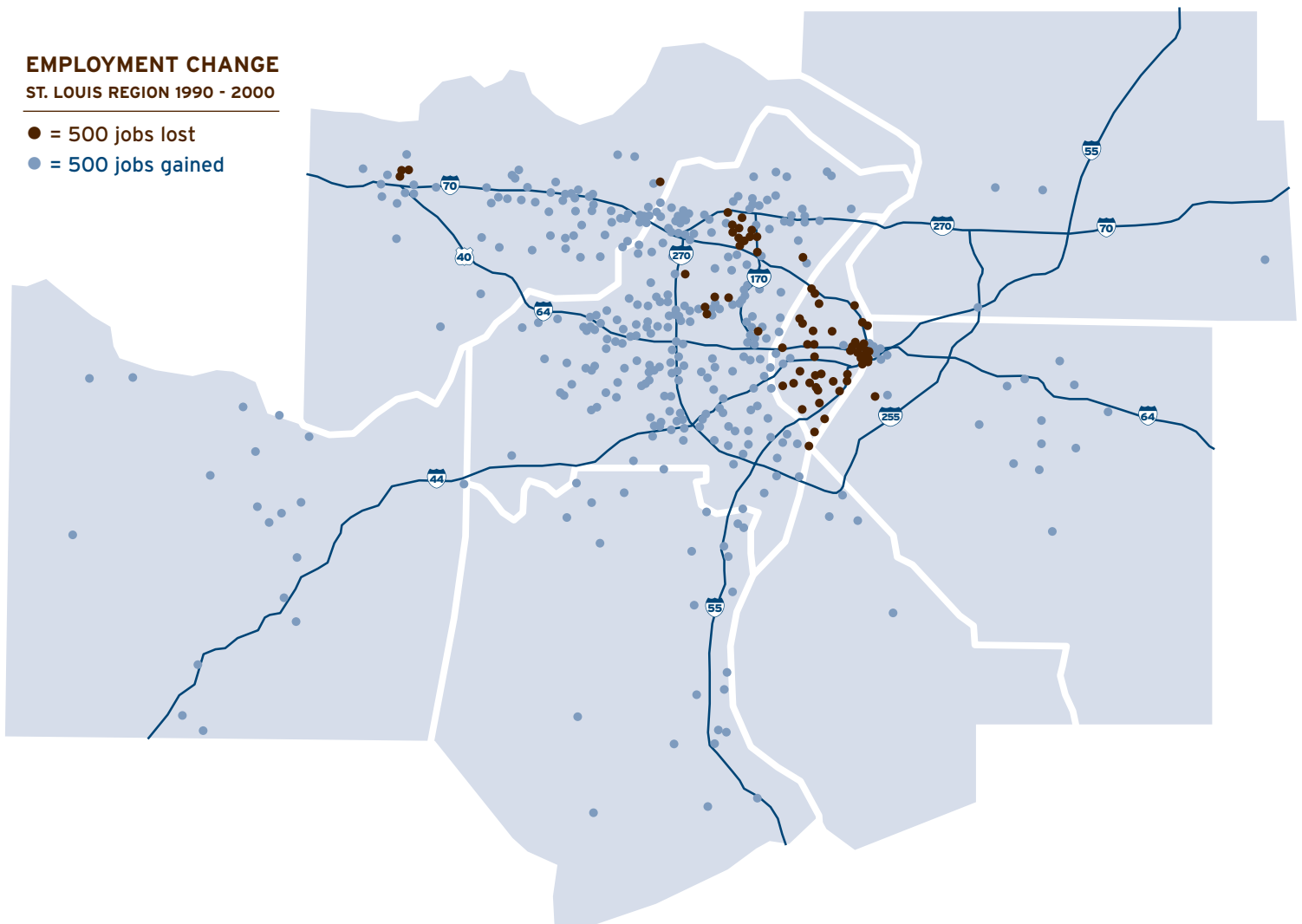
–Richard Fleming, Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA),
KETC Production: Caution! Expect Delays Next 20 Years, 2001

“There is a definite schism in America and it’s race and it’s income—both contribute to the transportation problem.”

—St. Louis City resident

EMPLOYMENT CHANGE
ST. LOUIS REGION 1990 - 2000

- = 500 jobs lost
- = 500 jobs gained



Some of the consequences we now face as a region:

- **Concentrated unemployment in the inner city and inner-ring suburbs** is as much as two to three times that in the far suburbs. Concentrated unemployment and poverty result in poor health, increased crime, and serious challenges for the educational system.
- **Growing public expenditures** for highways and infrastructure. As the region expands geographically, the gap between our needs and our resources keeps getting larger and larger.
- **Lack of access to an adequate workforce** causes many employers in the suburbs to struggle to maintain their workforce. The competitiveness of the region is threatened.
- **Greater disparity and segregation** results as our region becomes more and more separated by race and income.

These conditions have left most inner-city neighborhoods with a surplus of workers while many employers in subur-

ban neighborhoods cannot find enough workers to fill openings. Unemployment rates are high in the city and inner-ring suburbs, but the opportunities for jobs are limited by the transportation options available. Some argue that businesses looking to locate in a region with accessible workers don't look here - they look elsewhere.

While the economic impact on the St. Louis region has been significant, some argue that the social and lifestyle impact has been even greater. Long commutes have cost workers in terms of lost time with family and social isolation. Others point to the widening of the disparity and segregation of income levels and race in the region, citing this as the largest impact of spatial mismatch. Racism is invoked as a central problem, as lingering prejudice inhibits opportunities for workers to live close to their jobs. Metro area residents love their automobiles and, some say under their breath, white suburbanites don't want African American St. Louisans to have an easier time getting to the suburbs.

People and jobs have spread themselves out throughout the region. Those who have the means can afford to find homes in the suburbs and make the commute



to wherever their work may be. For those without the means—low and moderate income, disabled, and elderly—more than half the job market is off-limits. These workers depend upon mass transportation. According to one transit consumer, it's like juggling glass balls—if one movement is just a little bit off, if one bus is just a little late, everything crashes down.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

There is no easy answer to this question. The three trends outlined above certainly are the primary contributors to spatial mismatch. Public policies, increased household income, and a changing economy as well as population changes and new technologies in the workplace have all contributed to the disconnect between jobs and workers across the region.

MOVING OUT—FROM THE CITY TO THE SUBURBS AND BEYOND

The phrase “head west, young man” and, for that matter, head east and south, has rung true for our region over the last few decades. The St. Louis metropolitan community has seen its population move away from the urban center, the City of

According to one transit consumer, it's like juggling glass balls—if one movement is just a little bit off, if one bus is just a little late, everything crashes down.

St. Louis, and head west, south, and east toward St. Charles, Jefferson, and Madison counties.

As household income went up with two full-time wage earners, as the number of dependents they had to support decreased, as careers advanced, and as perceptions of living in city neighborhoods changed, a single-family home in the suburbs became the housing of choice for many. The average size of new construction homes in counties surrounding St. Louis has doubled in square feet and increased by as much as \$100,000 over the last 50 years. The increase in affluence and the desire to focus much of that money in a housing purchase has segmented a region like St. Louis into various submarkets, with large expanses of land that are filled with housing, all in the same price range.

At the same time that income and tastes were changing, federal government policy was changing as well. Federal policy accelerated the movement to suburbs in three ways:

- Standardizing low down payment, long-term, fixed-rate mortgages to make it easier to buy a larger, newer house.
- Targeting federally guaranteed loans to housing on the suburban fringe, and refusing to insure mortgages on older houses in most urban neighborhoods. The FHA original underwriting criteria also cautioned lenders against integrating races in these new neighborhoods, preventing African Americans from participating in new housing choices.
- Committing tremendous resources to build an interstate highway system, drawing people and businesses out of the city. While the federal government picked up the tab for the highways, their construction had the unanticipated impact of devastating many urban neighborhoods.

These policies made it easier for some—but certainly not all—people to get a loan to buy a house, and to buy that

house in the far suburbs because there was a highway to connect them to their job.

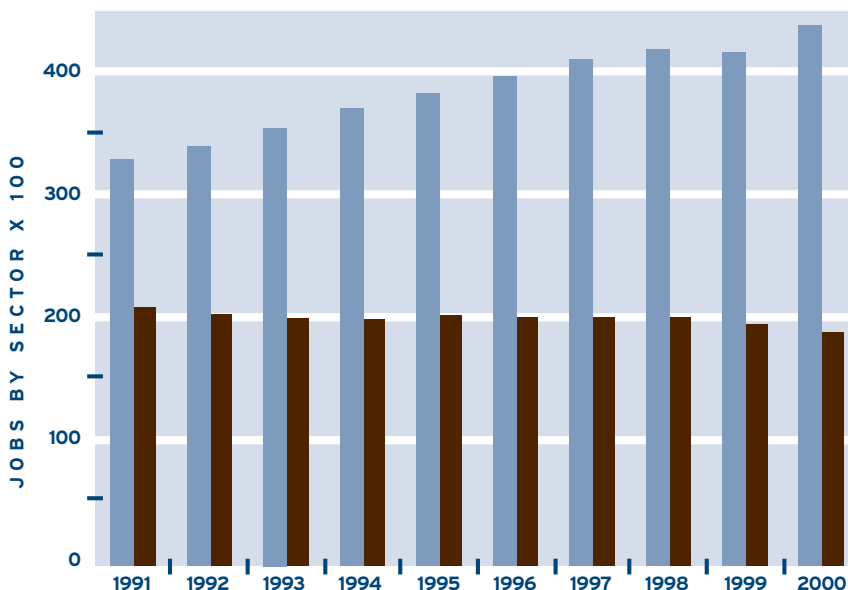
THEN JOBS FOLLOWED...

As the people left the city for the suburbs, so did the jobs. Our region, once known for producing shoes and steel, has shifted toward service industries. From 1990 to 1997 more than 28,000 jobs in manufacturing were eliminated and more than 104,000 new jobs in the service industry were created. Today the service industry accounts for approximately 65% of business establishments and 55% of the payroll in the region.

Automobile, airplane, and steel manufacturing no longer are the major employers of the region. Service industries

JOBS IN MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE
INDUSTRY TOTALS - ST. LOUIS MSA

■ = Service
■ = Manufacturing



East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, August 2, 2001

such as Schnucks Markets, BJC, and McDonald's Restaurants have taken over as our largest employers.

And as the dominant industries in St. Louis changed from manufacturing to service, the location of the jobs changed as well. From 1966 to 1996, some neighborhoods in the north and east sectors of the city lost 20% to 60% of the jobs in their community, while the surrounding counties all experienced significant increases. According to East-West

Gateway Coordinating Council's Place of Work Employment figures, Monroe County experienced an increase of 58% in its employment base between 1990 and 2000, while St. Clair County saw an increase of 23% in the number of jobs in their community. The Missouri Counties of St. Charles and Jefferson increased 46% and 33%, respectively, in the ten-year period. New employment centers are now found in clusters: in the West Port and Earth City areas, Gateway Commerce



Park in Edwardsville, and around Monsanto and the Chesterfield Valley.

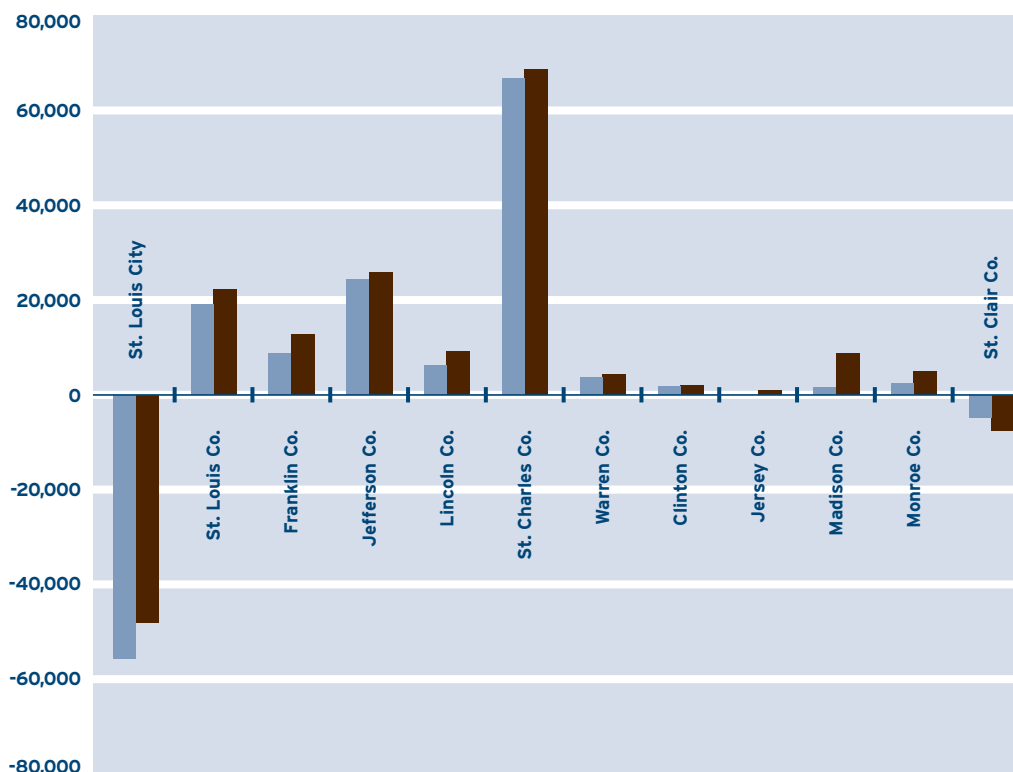
The employment opportunities at service and technology firms don't all require the same level of skills and don't all pay the same level of wages. These firms all have positions for low-wage support staff and their office buildings need to be cleaned and maintained at night. Grocery stores and restaurants that serve the neighborhoods of the dual-income households that live in areas of exclusive housing

"The people in this community don't want to work the entry-level jobs."

-Joan Schmelig, Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce,
KETC Production: Caution! Expect Delays Next 20 Years, 2001

POPULATION CHANGE
ST. LOUIS REGION,
1980-2000

■ = 1980-1990
■ = 1990-2000



need clerks and dishwashers. The problem these employers face is that they are located miles away from the people who could fill these positions—and who need these positions.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

Experts say there are three approaches to the problem of spatial mismatch: (1) move workers to and from their jobs; (2) move jobs into cities closer to the workforce; or (3) move workers to the suburbs. But these seemingly simple approaches are complicated in the St. Louis region, given limited financial resources, complex funding formulas, the continuous spreading-out of the population, and racial and income disparities. There are no easy answers or quick fixes.

Some of the difficult questions this issue raises, regardless of policy options considered, include the following:



- **How can we balance the needs of those who have cars and the means to travel with those who do not have cars?** Given that most people in the region drive a car, the perspective of those few who rely on mass transportation is rarely heard.

- **How can we develop a sense of regionalism and support economic development?** In the past, economic growth has resulted in more separation and segregation throughout the region. How do we overcome this for the future?

- **What role should government play?** Some say that governmental policies have been one of the causes of spatial mismatch and that getting to work is best left to individuals and industry—while others insist that only through governmental involvement and smart growth policies can we reverse the current trend.

FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The following chapters in this discussion guide describe the problems arising from spatial mismatch, as well as provide an account of the specific challenges as told by the people in our community who must deal with this issue every day. Each chapter presents a different approach to

Service industries such as Schnucks Markets, BJC, and McDonald's Restaurants have taken over as our largest employers.

the problem, including distinct viewpoints on what the main issues are and how we should deal with them. Each of the four perspectives also represents a set of values and offers public policy proposals to support that perspective. Some elements of the approaches are easily mixed and matched, while others are not, and, although each approach has similar goals, they ultimately take the region in different directions.

Through your reading and especially through your discussions with others, you will likely find yourself supporting some pieces of each approach, and discarding others. It is our hope that as citizens, neighbors, business people, employees, and policy makers, we will come together for an open dialogue, and that as a region, we may come to a greater awareness of the magnitude of this issue. It is only in understanding and discussing the problem that we begin to move toward a lasting resolution.

“While many of us regard ourselves as powerless, the fact is that all of us have some sphere of influence in which we can work for change, even if it is just in our own network of family and friends.”

—Beverly Daniel Tatum, 1998

APPROACH ONE: MAKING MASS TRANSPORTATION WORK

Approach One says that the best option to improve the ability of low-income workers to get to the growing jobs in the suburbs is to strengthen and improve our mass transportation system. That means we need to ensure that the transit system meets the needs of workers and employers today, through efficient operation, new routes and flexible shifts. And in order to make the system work, we need to find and commit the resources necessary to adequately fund mass transportation in the St. Louis region.

APPROACH TWO: MOVING PEOPLE AND JOBS CLOSER TOGETHER

Approach Two encourages us to look at the causes and not the symptoms. The reason why low-income workers cannot get to jobs is because most of the jobs have moved out to the suburbs, away from the workforce. We should not focus on moving people out to the jobs, but instead, on moving jobs and people closer together. This means more reinvestment in the city and inner-ring suburbs, and more responsibility for suburban communities in providing access to affordable housing and mass transportation.

APPROACH THREE: BOOSTING PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE

Approach Three says that not everything can or should be solved by government, and that the private sector needs to step up to the plate to address the problem. Businesses can start by considering access to affordable housing and mass transportation in business location decisions. If businesses choose to locate in the suburbs away from the workforce and the mass transit system, they need to assume responsibility for getting people to work. Approach Three advocates private sector efforts to provide alternative transportation, along with community strategies that provide workers with access to private vehicles and assistance with job development.

APPROACH FOUR: CONFRONTING WHAT DIVIDES US

Approach Four reminds us that any approach to the problem requires public will and a sense of cooperation, and currently that doesn't exist in the St. Louis region. Our region is divided in many ways, including by race and income. Before we can garner support for any strategies, we must build a greater sense of community and regional interdependence. This approach advocates improving the image of the transit system, expanding economic opportunities and access to services for underserved populations, and promoting education, dialogue, and discussion throughout the region.



ELENA RODRIGUEZ, CLERK

MAKING MASS TRANSPORTATION WORK

PEOPLE OF THE REGION

Remember Elena Rodriguez?

She's the one that rises at 4:00 a.m. to catch a bus near her home. The bus takes her to a MetroLink train that she rides to the Forest Park station. At that point, she catches a van to a \$7.00/hour job near the Spirit of St. Louis Airport.

Elena considers herself lucky. Because the transit system either doesn't run to where the jobs are located or the schedules don't match the time they have to be there, many of Elena's friends and neighbors can't get or find it difficult to keep jobs. Others she knows have been able to find work with unreliable transportation.

"I used to take the Page bus on Washington and Grand. Now, I have to walk five blocks to catch the Delmar." The transit systems that serve outlying areas often run late and recently some services have been discontinued.

"It doesn't take Einstein to figure out that we do not have one of the nation's finest bus systems."

—Greg Freeman, St. Louis Post Dispatch Columnist,
STL Today-News (stltoday.com), August 15, 2001

Great cities have great public transit systems. These systems are essential ingredients in thriving communities. Washington, D.C., has its Metro light rail system, Minneapolis has its extensive Metro Transit bus system, and Atlanta has MARTA, its comprehensive system of buses and light rail. Mass transportation is the linchpin in a sustainable community. In fact, access to great transportation systems was the foundation upon which St. Louis was built. The pony express, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, and the great trails that connected our region to the rest of America played essential roles in our development. We were, and still are, "the gateway to the West."

Today, it is time again to put the focus back on our transportation infrastructure.

We have built a remarkable system of highways and interchanges over the last 50 years, enabling the St. Louis metropolitan population to move and commute all over the region. Our highways have provided an impetus for growth and development—for those fortunate enough to have private transportation. We have done less – much less – in supporting mass transportation for those without private cars or for those who prefer to share the ride to benefit the environment.

Since it was created in 1949, the Bi-State Development Agency’s mission has been to “promote regional economic development through excellence in transportation.” Bi-State leaders understand that mission and its impact on the region’s workforce. Its 2000 Annual Report underscores the point: “The ability to move workers from neighborhoods to jobs and activity centers throughout the metropolitan area is pivotal to how far our region goes with today’s economic prosperity.”

There’s only one problem. It’s not working.

The jobs are continuing to move further and further away from the needed labor force. Our transit system is working hard to make connections, but the distance and the costs in terms of time and dollars is proving overwhelming.

Only about 10% of all entry-level jobs in high-growth areas are reachable within an hour by mass transportation from the central city.

FIX AND EXPAND MASS TRANSPORTATION

Those who support Approach One say the problem with where we are today is not that we need to move jobs closer to

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Supporters of Approach One generally favor the following measures:

- Improve the quality of public transportation service—on time, affordable fares, courteous staff.
- Expand bus service and MetroLink to serve a larger part of the region to improve access to jobs.
- Explore and pursue transportation funding solutions such as sales tax increases, gas tax, or other methods.
- Create a regional transportation authority to set priorities and pursue funding for the whole region.
- Educate the public about the transportation needs and opportunities of the region to strengthen public support for additional funding and regional planning.

workers or slow down suburban expansion. Indeed, it would be against our pioneering spirit to do so. The problem is that we don’t have buses and trains that go where people want to go. The growing need, and the growing source of tax revenue, is clearly in the suburbs, and that’s where the bus routes have to go. To meet these needs it is essential that we fix and expand our current system.

The lack of an adequate public transit system disproportionately affects lower income households. A national transporta-

tion survey estimates that the majority of households without a vehicle are predominantly in the low-income categories—65% of households without a vehicle are in the lowest income tier. For the households that cannot afford a private vehicle, mass transportation is an essential part of everyday life—especially in our region where city manufacturing jobs have largely disappeared and been replaced with low- and semi-skilled jobs that have moved to the suburbs—often out of reach.

“Things could change considerably for the St. Louis area if the top leaders of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Jefferson County, and Lincoln County would take the time to come together and organize a regional plan for growth... If they came together on the goal of developing light rail and a comprehensive bus system and united behind these goals in Jefferson City, it would make a difference.” –Quincy Troupe, Missouri State Representative, STL Today-News (stltoday.com), August 15, 2001

Approach One supporters advocate improving the quality of our current system—buses and trains that run on time, fares at an affordable level, and courteous staff—and expanding both bus and MetroLink routes to address this issue of spatial mismatch. For some this means bringing MetroLink to North St. Louis, for others it means getting regular bus service to the outlying suburbs and eventually getting MetroLink to connect to West St. Louis County and St. Charles County.

But this is a tricky time to talk about improving services. The Bi-State Development Agency recently announced cuts in services to overcome a \$7.8 million shortfall for the fiscal year. Service cutbacks have included shortening some routes, reducing night and weekend service, and running fewer buses on a given route. At a time when we need more public transportation to get workers to the growing number of jobs in the suburbs, we get less. Routes that travel further out cost more than routes that move shorter distances. To make the system work, we are going to have to put more money into it.

NEEDED: RELIABLE, PREDICTABLE SOURCE OF REVENUES

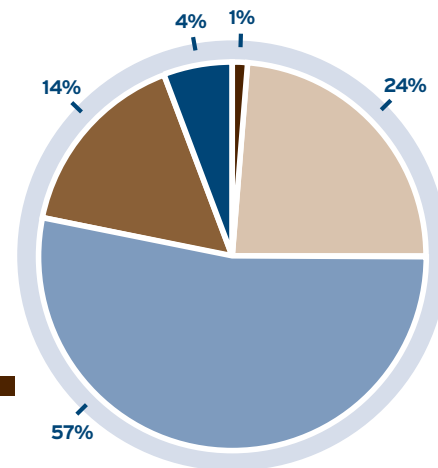
In order to build this regional public transportation system, Approach One says we need adequate funding. Last year Bi-State called in transit consultants Booz Allen & Hamilton to review the finances of the system. One finding sent a strong warning: “Among transit agencies included in the National Transit Database, 46% have at least one source of funding dedicated solely to transit operations. Bi-State has no source of funding dedicated to transit operation.”

A majority of Bi-State’s operating

**BI-STATE OPERATING BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2000**

- Operating Revenue
- Federal Operating Assistance
- Interest Income
- Other Income (Expense)
- State and Local Operating Assistance

Bi-State Development Agency



“Among transit agencies included in the National Transit Database, 46% have at least one source of funding dedicated solely to transit operations. Bi-State has no source of funding dedicated to transit operation.”

—Booz, Allen, and Hamilton Report for Bi-State Development Agency

budget comes from state and local funding through a designated sales tax collected in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County in Missouri, a Missouri motor fuel tax, and from contracts with Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois. The Illinois counties pay for services rendered, so their funding is more stable and predictable. But sales tax revenues collected in Missouri vary from year to year, dependent on any change in the local economy. In addition, tax revenues collected are spent at the discretion of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County. The city usually transfers all tax proceeds to Bi-State; St. Louis County typically transfers half of the revenues to Bi-State with the remainder spent on county roads and highways. According to a recent edi-

torial in the St. Louis Business Journal, “The way the financing system operates makes budgeting the bus system an operational nightmare because Bi-State doesn’t know how much money is available at the beginning of every year.”

Approach One supporters advocate more state and local resources to be allocated toward our regional public transit system and more attention from politicians on securing additional new funding to support expansion projects. But how do we find those additional resources? First, say Approach One advocates, we should look at how we currently spend transportation funds in this region and how those decisions are made.

Many argue that the priority in the St. Louis region has been on building new

“We want good air quality but we are planning to widen Highway 40 and build more bridges while we have a nearly bankrupt mass transit system.”

—Robert Archibald, Missouri Historical Society, address to Four-State American Planning Association, October 31, 2001

roads and improving existing ones. Highway construction costs have skyrocketed and take up a growing chunk of the state and regional budgets. Currently funded corridor projects in the region come to a total of \$410 million—three times the annual operating budget of Bi-State. More and better roads—that’s where the focus is on transportation expenditures.

Even at the local level, county governments don’t give much priority to public transit systems, according to Citizens For Modern Transit, a transit advocacy group. More of the tax revenue collected in St. Louis County for public transit goes to build roads than goes to Bi-State. Even after citizens passed Proposition M, a half-cent sales tax for mass transit, St. Louis County’s contribution to Bi-State has not increased. Since the 1970’s transportation costs have risen sharply, with most of the increase being spent on roads and highways. In response, some county officials

argue that they pay more than their fair share to Bi-State, especially since most of the riders are not county residents. Approach One advocates are quick to point out that contributing to the Bi-State budget is an investment for St. Louis County that supports their plans for economic development. If new developments are to thrive they will need workers, and without mass transit they won’t get them.

PRIORITIZE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES REGIONALLY

Of course we need good highways and bridges. Approach One supporters don’t dispute that. But aren’t there better ways to prioritize projects? Approach One supporters argue that efficient regional transportation supports economic devel-

opment, and enables equal access to jobs. As an added benefit, it reduces air pollution, related respiratory disease, and subsequent health and economic costs for all of us – not just those dependent upon the system. The economic future of the region depends on just such a system. Without regional coordination, our efforts are a mixed bag.

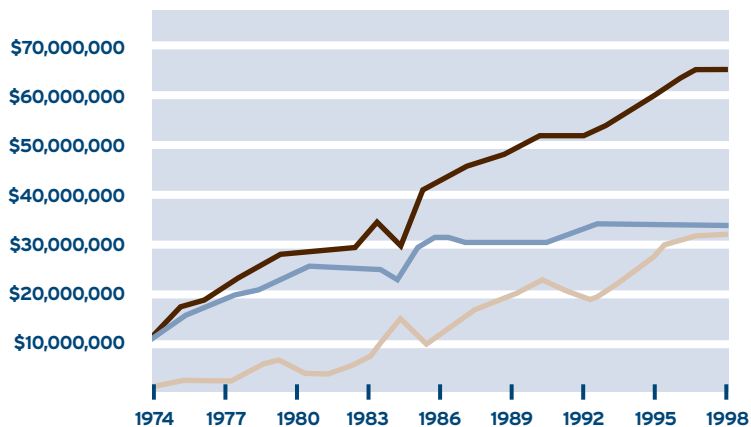
In Illinois the St. Clair County Transit District passed a half-cent sales tax in November 1993 that, in addition to Illinois state funds and federal funds, aided in the development of the St. Clair County MetroLink extension that opened in May 2001. Since the extension opened, ridership has exceeded expectations. Transportation District consultants estimate that the economic impact of the MetroLink extension is approaching \$100 million.

In Missouri, local leaders argue that the St. Louis region is not getting its share. The state legislature has passed increases in gas taxes to fund road improvement plans but has failed to pass gas tax increases to fund mass transit.

How decisions get made in our region,

TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES
ST. LOUIS COUNTY

— Total — Transit — Roads



say Approach One supporters, is part of the problem. The Bi-State Development Agency covers a few but not all of the counties in the region. Madison and St. Clair Counties each have transit authorities. The East-West Gateway Coordinating Council operates with a board comprised of local government officials from most of the region and makes decisions on federally funded transportation projects. There are two state legislatures that regulate where state transportation funds are spent. There are too many entities to coordinate and set priorities. Is anyone really focusing on the region as a whole? To effectively address regional spatial mismatch and

economic growth and development, we need a legitimate regional transit authority that can set priorities for the whole region, with the power to find appropriate funding. Approach One advocates say we need to stop arguing about who is or isn't paying their share and learn to work together for the benefit of the whole region. The bottom line is that our regional transit system isn't adequately funded—workers can't get to the jobs they need and employers can't attract the workers they require. If workers are unemployed and jobs go unfilled, the regional economy will not work. And if mass transportation doesn't work, the St. Louis region doesn't work.

FOR FURTHER READING

- www.ewgateway.org is the web site for the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council and includes a variety of reports and data on transportation in the St. Louis region.
- www.cmt-stl.org is the web site for Citizens For Modern Transit and features additional reports and commentary.
- www.bi-state.org is the web site for the Bi-State Development Agency and includes budget and planning information.

IN SUPPORT

- People have a right to be able to access jobs to support themselves.
- Many entry-level jobs needed by low-skilled residents in our urban core neighborhoods are located in the suburbs, out of reach.
- Mass transportation is the most effective strategy to address the spatial mismatch in our region.
- Mass transportation is an important part of any community—great public transit makes for a great city.
- We need a regional body to establish regional priorities. Without it, it is difficult to advocate for state and federal funds.
- Increases in highway and road improvement spending have only moved jobs further away and taken up a significant portion of transportation funding. We need to put the focus back on public transit.
- Expanding our public transit system also improves the air quality for our region—something that benefits everyone.

IN OPPOSITION

- This is not a problem that can be solved with more money. The budget crisis in state governments has shown us that there are no deep pockets to support a growing mass transit system.
- The problem of spatial mismatch is overstated. Other metropolitan areas have similar disparities in unemployment rates. People need job training, not bus rides.
- Labor supply problems are best solved through the free market. Business should be addressing this problem, not government.
- This approach to getting adequate funding is unrealistic—pro-highway supporters far outweigh public transit supporters in the state legislatures.
- There is no public demand for more transit—the system is inefficient and wasteful of resources.
- There are not enough riders to justify expanding the system. The lack of ridership on the Chesterfield Connector is evidence.
- This approach calls for little to no planning and accountability.



HU JUN. CHEF

MOVING PEOPLE AND JOBS CLOSER TOGETHER

PEOPLE OF THE REGION

Hu Jun lives in Jennings, an inner-ring suburb in St. Louis County. When Hu first moved to Jennings, he was hopeful that now that he had found an affordable place to live, he would also be able to find work and begin to get ahead. But while the housing is there, most of the jobs have gone—moving west—where there is little affordable housing.

In a region where projects like the \$600 million Page Avenue Extension are being funded to lessen traffic congestion for middle-class commuters living in the suburbs, residents like Hu can't make the connection between a decent job and a nearby place to live.

“We have built over the last 50 years a remarkable system of highways and interchanges... and yet, we sometimes wonder just how far the roads have really taken us—and what lies ahead.”

—KETC Production: Caution! Expect Delays Next Twenty Years, 2001

The St. Louis region continues to spread out. Over the past three decades the region has increased in overall population by 35% but grown in utilized land by a whopping 354%. The central city has lost half its population, while the population continues to stretch out across the bi-state area. The statistics set off alarms for some: during the period between 1992 and 1999, the region grew in population by only 2.1% but saw a 26.1% increase in traffic miles.

Many across the country call it urban sprawl and call for smart-growth strategies. Some disregard the sprawl label and prefer to call it urban choice—people should be able to live and locate their businesses where they choose. But regardless of what it's called, this shift of people, jobs, and resources to the suburbs has costs. It diminishes our regional competitiveness, worsens traffic congestion, increases the costs of highways and other infrastructure, separates the rich and the poor—the haves and have nots—and abandons structures that could still be used.

It's hard to argue with those who say they should be able to live where they want. But it's also hard to ignore what's happening in the job market. The jobs, many of them low-paying service jobs, have also moved to the suburbs and outlying areas. But the workforce needed for those jobs has not. The reason many of these workers haven't moved along with others is simple: they can't afford to live there.

A large part of the region's job growth in recent years has been in suburban communities like Chesterfield in St. Louis County. As the population has grown in these areas, an expanding number of retail and service jobs have been created to meet the needs of the residents. These jobs do not pay high salaries; instead, many offer only around \$7.00 per hour. Jobs are plentiful for those willing to work at those wages—but housing options are not. Average housing prices are in the range of \$125,000–\$500,000, compared to homes in inner-ring suburbs which range from \$40,000–\$80,000. Two-bedroom apartments in suburban areas like

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Supporters of Approach Two generally favor the following measures:

- Favor existing communities rather than new developments when making public infrastructure investments.
- End public subsidies for roads and public services in new and unplanned communities.
- Create new standards for development in growth areas—to ensure jobs, housing, and transportation are accessible; pass these costs along to developers, not regionwide tax payers.
- Encourage businesses to include affordable housing and access to transit in location decisions.
- Develop a structure for regional planning to support a sustainable future.
- Provide information and education about the real costs of new development and redevelopment; promote dialogue and debate about options.

Chesterfield may rent for \$650–\$1,000 per month, compared with \$350–\$550 in St. Louis City. A growing number of people work in these communities during the day but cannot afford to live in them at night.

So folks like Hu are “between a rock and a hard place.” He, and others like

him, can't afford to live near work. He can't get a job near where he lives. And he can't afford the commute in between.

Supporters of Approach Two say the spreading out of jobs and people across the region has wreaked havoc on our economy and our ability to get from place to place. We don't need more transportation, they say. A regional mass transit system could never keep pace with this kind of sprawl. Instead, we must make better use of the space we have. We need people to be able to live closer to where they work, whether that's locating the work near where the people live, or moving the people closer to where they work.

“It was their roads that made it happen—spread us out all over the place and it's been going on so long that you can't just talk about people leaving the city for the suburbs anymore. You have to talk about people leaving the suburbs for others suburbs.”

—KETC Production: Caution! Expect Delays Next Twenty Years, 2001

TREAT CAUSES INSTEAD OF SYMPTOMS

Let's focus on the real issue, Approach Two supporters say. The reason for our spatial mismatch problem is not an inadequate transportation system. The reason for our problem is the fact that

businesses and employers have chosen to move away from the workforce. Of the 993,000 jobs in our region, 58% are more than 10 miles from downtown St. Louis.

Some say that the need for new buildings and more land—or perceptions of crime or unfriendly local government policies—have pushed businesses to the suburbs. But it's not all “push.” There has been plenty of “pull” as well. Transportation expenditures have disproportionately paid for the expansion of new roads, making the move out easier. Without government subsidies in the form of new roads and sewers, many suburban strip shopping centers and subdivisions on the fringe of the region would not be economically feasible.

As the population and businesses migrate away from the urban core, we all end up with higher costs for the expansion of infrastructure and transportation—while existing infrastructure is aging. Approach Two supporters say remove those incentives. If businesses want to locate in the far suburbs, they should pay the costs—including the transportation costs of getting people to work.

REINVEST IN OLDER COMMUNITIES

Our desire for independence, for small local governments, and for big lots, and

shiny new buildings has led us to create new communities at the expense of older ones. But watch out, warn Approach Two supporters. If we don't begin to curb sprawl, or begin to manage expansion, the St. Louis region as we know it will disappear. Blindly allowing more development in the name of prosperity will leave us with an ugly abandoned place where no one wants to live—and that's not prosperity by anyone's definition.

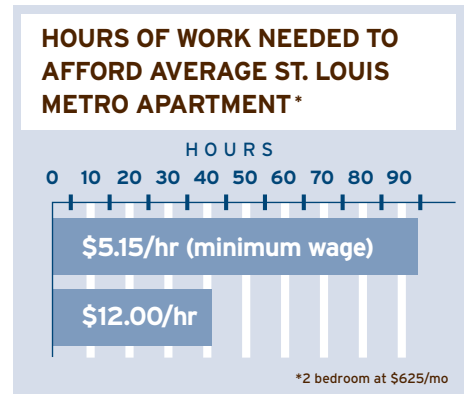
Instead, supporters of Approach Two advocate a reinvestment in the region's older communities on both sides of the river. The land is available, the infrastructure is in place, the workforce is there, and the housing is affordable. By making good use of what we already have, we can avoid many of the problems associated with the current development trends.

PLAN FOR MANAGED GROWTH—TOGETHER

Of course some businesses will still move out to the suburbs and beyond. That is our pioneering spirit. Approach Two supporters don't want to take that right away. But there should be more planning in how these developments happen and how they will support themselves and contribute to the region. Approach Two advocates “smart growth” principles:

creating a range of housing options that are affordable to all, making infrastructure development decisions fair and cost-effective, and using mixed land uses to create a variety of resources within the community.

Focusing solely on economic development without regard for planning or quality of life is a dangerous course to take, say Approach Two supporters. We need to put an end to uncontrolled, unplanned urban expansion. More specifically, smart growth principles would have new developers ensure that their plans include affordable housing and transit access as part of their business decisions. Local governments would encourage and support the development of affordable housing reasonably close to centers of employment.



National Low-Income Housing Coalition

“I don't think politically you can put in growth constraints in the St. Louis region. So, the alternative becomes how do you go about developing strategies to attract people to come to live in this community (St. Louis City).”

—Vince Schoehmel, former St. Louis Mayor, now Director of Grand Center, KWMU 90.7FM: St. Louis on the Air, “The City”, October 30, 2001

“Getting from North St. Louis to Chesterfield to a night-shift job without a car will never be easy or affordable... It will be far more effective and efficient to encourage businesses to locate in places which are accessible to the workforce, or alternatively, to create more opportunities for people to live near where they work.”

—Les Sterman, East-West Gateway Coordinating Council
Letter to the Editor, St. Louis Business Journal, June 9, 2000

These planning sentiments are backed up by a recent East-West Gateway Coordinating Council survey in which residents gave low marks to **“the job St. Louis metropolitan area is doing in managing growth.”** Overall only 2% of citizens rated the performance as excellent, 29% think it is “good,” 48% “only fair,” 15% “poor,” and 5% no opinion.

Local governments must assume some responsibility. But how do we plan as a region? Our previous attempts at regional cooperation are a mixed bag. Entities like Bi-State Development Agency, the Metropolitan Sewer District, and the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois have been able to bring together some leadership and resources among a few counties. We have had some other successes with initiatives like the Zoo-Museum District or the recent Parks and Trails initiative. Though none are formal governments, there are a growing number of regional entities—including the Regional Chamber of Commerce, FOCUS St. Louis, and East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. Who can lead us in an effort to create a plan for the sustainable future of our region? Is it a new federation of business, government, and civic interests, as recommended by a recent Regional Governance Policy Group? Approach Two says we need to figure

this out—and soon, before it’s too late. This kind of planning benefits everyone with a stake in the future: suburban commuters struggling to get to work on time, rural towns facing the loss of people, and downtowns, as well as low-skilled, low-income residents who don’t want to be left behind.

Start with dialogue and debate, say Approach Two supporters. Without a serious, healthy—and yes, sometimes contentious—discussion of options, issues, and opinions, no region can move ahead. Along with dialogue comes education. Citizens need basic information, in an understandable format, on how federal, state, and local dollars are spent, and what

it costs to support new development or redevelopment. Let us have access to the information, view the alternatives, and understand the costs and benefits.

And to bring it all together, we need strong, visionary leadership: regional leaders who will take risks and strive for the good of all, instead of worrying about their own political survival. Some say we live in a time when political leaders pay more attention to polls than doing what’s needed. Approach Two supporters say let’s change that for the St. Louis region.

“As St. Louis passes through the millennium, there is greater acceptance that the times call for more regional action and enhanced realization that neither the public nor private sector can unilaterally assume regional leadership.”

—E. Terrance Jones, *Fragmented by Design*, 2000

FOR FURTHER READING

- *Fragmented by Design: Why St. Louis Has So Many Governments*, E. Terrance Jones, 2000, Palmerston & Reed Publishing, St. Louis, MO.
- “Out of Reach 2001: America’s Growing Wage-Rent Disparity,” a report of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, www.nlihc.org.
- East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, www.ewgateway.org.
- “Caution! Expect Delays Next Twenty Years.” KETC Productions 2001.
- “Smart Growth: Myth and Fact,” a booklet developed by the Urban Land Institute. To order, www.uli.org.
- To learn more about the recommendations of the Regional Governance Policy Group, www.focus-stl.org.

IN SUPPORT

- The continual shift of jobs and people to the suburbs increases the costs of infrastructure, separates us by race and income, and abandons existing structures and communities.
- We must treat the causes, not the symptoms. Instead of providing more transportation, we must eliminate incentives that encourage businesses to locate in the suburbs.
- Current development patterns are economically inefficient and waste taxpayer dollars.
- We should concentrate public spending in older, more established communities where workers already live and have access to mass transportation.
- If businesses choose to locate in new suburbs away from the workforce, they should pay the costs.
- Plans for new developments must include affordable housing and access to mass transit to ensure access to a workforce.
- Focusing solely on local economic development is dangerous. We must plan as a region. Dialogue and education about the impacts of current growth patterns are good ways to begin planning together.

IN OPPOSITION

- From our earliest days, St. Louisans have always been an adventurous, mobile community. To say our pioneering spirit is responsible for today’s spatial mismatch is ridiculous.
- Businesses in the suburbs pay taxes. They should be entitled to necessary public services.
- Focusing on the bottom line is essential in business. Locations in the suburbs are more profitable than city or inner-ring suburb sites.
- Housing construction should be driven by market demands, not directed by businesses or local government. Restricting land for development inevitably increases the price of housing, making home ownership less attainable and still restricting where low-income workers can live.
- This choice speaks of regional planning, but what about individual community rights? It’s not fair to limit one community’s growth for the sake of another.
- We have no structure for regional planning and have never cooperated across geographic boundaries very well. Yet this choice promises that we will get it right next time.



DEWANDA HARRIS, NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR

BOOSTING PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE

PEOPLE OF THE REGION

DeWanda Harris is a nursing home administrator in West St. Louis County. One of her most important jobs is to make sure that she has adequate staff to care for the 100-plus elderly residents who live there. She spends more than two hours a day trying to recruit and retain employees who will work the 2nd and 3rd shifts for \$7-10/hour. To care for patients, she has to be able to staff shifts around the clock, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But her nursing home doesn't operate on a Bi-State bus line, and her ability to find and keep workers able to get to and from work is an ongoing struggle.

If you are a nursing home or a small business in the suburbs, paying slightly above minimum wage, and the majority of your workforce is coming from the inner-ring suburbs, you have a real problem.

"We get phone calls from people looking for work who ask, 'Where are you?' and they hang up because we're not on the bus line."

"Of the many pressing transportation issues facing the region, the one that is of most concern to the business community is the ability to move employees to and from their jobs."

—Scott Schnuck, Schnucks Markets
St. Louis Business Journal, June 2, 2000

Finding employees that can get to work on time is the biggest challenge many employers in the suburbs face. Whether it is a retail store in the mall, a small manufacturer, or a nursing home, your chances of getting a job are good—as long as you can show up.

But showing up means having the transportation to get there. And many of the businesses that need workers pay minimum wage, operate with two or three shifts, and are located away from the regular Bi-State routes. So the potential workforce—those who are looking for these types of jobs—may be interested, motivated, and willing, but may have no way to get there.

Is this a problem for those workers who need jobs? Yes. But it's also a problem for businesses across the region.

Focus group participants in East-West Gateway Coordinating Council's Access to Jobs planning process complained that the good jobs are located "out in the county" and that the public transit system does not serve the areas where many of these good jobs are located. In situations where buses do go where jobs are located, they don't get out to these areas early enough for them to work a first shift—or run late enough for them to work a 3–11 or 11–7 shift.

And employers complain as well. They have jobs to offer—positions necessary to keep their business running. They pay taxes that support mass transportation. Isn't a more responsive mass transportation system the solution?

But government and public-funded transit systems can't do it alone and live within the current revenue streams. According to Tom Irwin, former Bi-State administrator, **"If revenues are capped and they're capped for 11 or 12 years, it makes it very difficult to stretch that dollar further and further and further."**

"The business community understands the needs of the airport and has been generous and loud in its support of airport expansion. The same, clear voice must be raised for the bus system."

—St. Louis Business Journal editorial, August 4, 2000

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Supporters of Approach Three generally favor the following measures:

- Increase business support and advocacy for mass transportation funding.
- Encourage businesses to consider affordable housing and public transit access in location decisions.
- Develop employer-operated or funded operations to supplement mass transit, including shuttles and car pools.
- Expand employee benefit packages to include options for transportation, child care, etc.
- Develop partnerships between businesses and community organizations to support transportation, job training, and other needs.
- Private car ownership programs for low-income workers through innovative nonprofit organizations.

BUSINESS ADVOCATING FOR MASS TRANSIT

Many people think increasing funding for mass transportation in the region is a long shot. There isn't enough public will to successfully push the issue to the forefront. Approach Three supporters say that it may be a hard sell, but it would have a

much better chance if those who benefit from an improved transit system would get organized and show their support. Clearly riders gain benefit, but don't businesses gain also from having a system that can give them better access to much needed workers?

Approach Three says that businesses can start by providing more support for initiatives to adequately fund mass transportation in the St. Louis region. A recent St. Louis Business Journal editorial encouraged businesses to "get on board," stating that the financial stability of Bi-State is as important to the region as efforts to expand the airport. It does little good to spend resources attracting new businesses to the region when we are unable to deliver workers to jobs. Businesses can no longer look the other way or say that funding for mass transit doesn't affect them. Instead, they must become an advocate for the mass transportation system.

“In making business decisions... we will give substantial weight to whether a community has zoning, building and land use policies that allow the construction of housing which is affordable to working people; and whether a community is served by reliable and accessible mass transit, especially mass transit near work sites.”

–Chicago Metropolis 2020 Principles

While mass transportation infrastructure is the means most often mentioned in connecting inner-city residents to job-rich areas, it must also be supplemented by other strategies. Chances are slim that getting from East St. Louis to the Chesterfield Valley for a night shift by bus will ever be easy. Employer-operated or funded operations to supplement public transit must be explored.

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT LOCATION DECISIONS

Providing support for mass transportation is an important strategy—especially for those who need those services to get workers. But Approach Three supporters also encourage businesses to think about access to that public transportation—and access to the workers they need—in making future business location decisions. Businesses should also think about what kind of workforce they need, and whether that workforce can afford to live nearby or make the commute.

An example of businesses making location decisions differently can be found in Chicago. In June 2001, more than 100 Chicago area business leaders signed a unique pledge, the Metropolis Principles, to make access to affordable housing a significant factor when making a busi-

ness decision. According to one CEO, **“Too many people who work in communities during the day cannot afford to live in them at night. This mismatch between affordable housing and jobs... is a region-wide issue that needs to be addressed now, or it will damage our ability to compete with other metropolitan regions.”**

Chicago business leaders have recognized the impact of the growing mismatch between the location of job growth and the employees needed to fill those jobs. And they’re working to do something about the problem. Could that happen here? Let’s make it happen, say Approach Three supporters. We must encourage our regional business leaders to put this on their agenda—to develop a new “code

of conduct” for area businesses. It’s a win-win solution for business, for the workforce, and for the economic viability of the entire region.

BUSINESSES TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

A member survey conducted by the National Welfare to Work Partnership found that, when asked what would do the most to improve retention rates for new workers, respondents listed transportation aid as one of the factors at the top of the list. Yet there remains a mismatch between the efforts businesses know could make a difference and what they are comfortable offering. Three times as many companies offered their



Welfare to Work Partnership

In this region, 80% of the population drives to work in a private vehicle.

employees 401(k) programs than offered assistance with transportation.

Approach Three says businesses must change the way they do business. The private sector must assume a share of the responsibility for getting the workforce to the worksite. If employers choose to locate away from transit lines and labor pools, they must be part of the solution and develop their own strategies for gaining access to the labor force they need. Assisting workers with transportation is essential to attract and retain workers. It is good for business.

“There really is a shortage of that lower-level of employee that we try to attract,” says Norine Haffer of Delmar Gardens Retirement Center. Delmar Gardens negotiated with Bi-State to make sure buses stop at its facilities in Town and Country and Chesterfield. In return the retirement center buys monthly bus passes for their 25 to 50 workers to ride the bus each day. In job postings and classified ads, Delmar Gardens empha-

sizes the availability of public transportation and finds that benefit to be essential in attracting a workforce.

What else can businesses do? Options suggested by East-West Gateway’s Access to Jobs participants included van and car pools and shuttles to and from jobs. A temporary agency in University City spends as much as \$1,000 each week transporting workers to worksites, with staff sometimes driving employees themselves when there are no convenient bus routes at the right time. United Parcel Service provides a shuttle for employees from the Hanley Road MetroLink stop, and incorporates transportation as a key part of its benefit package. These businesses are making a good effort to help workers get to jobs. More businesses need to get on board.

IT’S MORE THAN TRANSPORTATION: BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In many cases, connecting workers and jobs requires more than just a ride to work. Approach Three advocates remind us of what Martin Luther King, Jr. said: **“One cannot ask people who don’t have boots to pull themselves up by the bootstraps.”** Having a job and sustaining one’s family means being able to find a job and keep it. Low-wage earners, especially low-

skilled workers with limited job options, need more than just transportation to get to work to keep their job. Just like those with more resources, they, too, need help with child care, job training, an affordable place to live, and wages that pay the rent.

Approach Three advocates say that the public, private, and nonprofit sectors need to work together to ensure that people and jobs get connected and stay connected. While transportation is important, other factors also play a key role in getting people to work.

In the St. Louis region, the Bridges to Work program has developed a three-prong strategy to connect low-income, urban-core jobseekers with good jobs in high-growth suburban areas. The project, a pilot program managed by East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, focuses on work readiness assessment and job placement, transportation, and post-placement counseling. The project also links the private sector employers and workers with a variety of organizations, including community colleges, the Urban League, churches, and community centers. Though funding is not available to provide the same level of services throughout the region, the connections and possibilities are there—if businesses and communities will take the initiative.

“One cannot ask people who don’t have boots to pull themselves up by the bootstraps.”

–Martin Luther King, Jr.

Approach Three supporters also encourage us to think beyond buses, trains, and van pools. In this region, 80% of the population drives to work in a private vehicle. Low-income workers need that option, too. In the St. Louis region, Wheels for Success works in cooperation with businesses, churches, and charitable foundations to receive and repair donated vehicles and provide them to qualified individuals. These programs are the best solution for those living far from public transit routes, including those in rural counties where there is no public transportation. Approach Three supporters say more of these programs should be

developed in the region.

We are a region with successful and strong businesses, innovative and effective community organizations, and compassionate people. Approach Three supporters say let's put these pieces together to support the entire workforce in the St. Louis region.

FOR FURTHER READING

- For information on the Jobs Initiative sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.aecf.org/jobsinitiative/index.htm.
- For information on the Bridges to Work program, www.ewgateway.org/labormkt/BtW/btw.htm.
- For information on the National Welfare to Work Partnership best practices, www.welfaretowork.org.
- For information on Chicago Metropolis 2020, visit www.chicagometropolis2020.org.

IN SUPPORT

- Businesses can no longer look the other way—or say that funding for mass transit doesn't affect them.
- Employers who choose to locate away from transit lines and labor pools must assume responsibility for transportation as part of the cost of doing business.
- Businesses must include access to affordable housing and public transportation in future location decisions to avoid making things worse.
- Transportation solutions are costly and governmental resources are limited. Innovative partnerships with businesses and private organizations are necessary to help shoulder the burden.
- Businesses should recognize that providing these benefits and putting people to work isn't charity. It's good business.
- Communities and nonprofits should also share in the responsibility of helping workers and making the economy work, and can contribute by creating programs that assist with transportation, child care, housing, or private vehicle ownership programs.

IN OPPOSITION

- Holding businesses solely responsible is unfair—these businesses pay taxes and generate much of the revenue that is footing the bill for the current mass transportation system.
- If the people and the jobs are in the suburbs, shouldn't the mass transportation system be restructured to serve that population?
- Affordable housing and mass transportation are government's business—not the private sector's.
- Pushing businesses, especially small businesses, to foot the transportation bill is risky. Some might be forced to close; others may have to pass the costs on—cutting into the paychecks of those receiving the transportation services.
- Having vans running across the region half empty at all times of day is costly, inefficient, and unlikely to improve overall conditions. Supporting systematic approaches that will adjust public transportation routes to meet the current needs is a more feasible strategy.



MICHAEL WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONFRONTING WHAT DIVIDES US

PEOPLE OF THE REGION

Michael Williams runs a community investment organization in his Northside city neighborhood. Several times a year the group offers house tours. People from around the bi-state region come to visit the neighborhood and tour the rehabbed homes. And they can't help but express their surprise—they never realized there are stable families that actually choose to live in the area. People are amazed to find families that take great care and pride in maintaining their home and neighborhood.

"The stereotype that they expect to see—when they think of people who ride the buses and live in our neighborhood—is of the criminal or less desirable elements."

"Purportedly, to have a good job in America, you must have a good education; to have a good education, you must live where one is provided; to live where one is provided, you must have a good job."

—Jack Kirkland, Associate Professor, Washington University,

Quoted in the Confluence St. Louis Task Force on Racial Polarization Report, November 7, 1989

Travel anywhere across the country and people will ask you where you live. Do you say... Florissant, Fairview Heights, Crystal City, O'Fallon, Maplewood?

Or... do you say St. Louis?

To those we meet in our travels—or those acquaintances from other parts of the country, we typically identify ourselves as St. Louisans. We associate ourselves with the Arch, with the Cardinals or the Rams, or with the Mississippi River. To the outside world, we are one region.

But at home—for many, it's a different story.

The concept of regionalism—or "being in it together"—is often a tough sell in the St. Louis metropolitan area. We are divided and fragmented in many ways, separated by state boundaries, rivers, and over 750 units of local government. But we are divided in other ways as well, beyond those related to geography, natural resources, or governmental structure.

Sometimes it is a city-suburb conflict. Often those who live in the City of St. Louis wear their city residency like a badge of honor—with an air of superiority over those who escaped for what they perceive as wealth or individual indulgence. Meanwhile, suburban residents who left the city generations ago brag of the infrequency of their visits. Travel to the city? Only for a Blues game or a play at the Fox Theatre. They hold images of the city as crime-ridden, old and dirty—and instead appreciate their new schools, convenient shopping, and houses with large back yards.

In a 1999 poll on Citizen Perspectives on Metropolitan Growth and Development conducted by East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, residents who live outside the City of St. Louis were asked, **“In your judgment, is the connection between the quality of life in the City of St. Louis and the quality of life in your local community very close, somewhat close, or not very close?”** Over half of the respondents—56%—said the connection was not very close. The higher the income, the lower sense of connection. The further one lives from the city, the less the feeling of connectedness.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Supporters of Approach Four generally favor the following measures:

- Public education and marketing campaign to improve the image of mass transportation as a service for all—not just those with low incomes.
- Expand access to education, job development, and minority business development.
- Combat residential segregation and housing discrimination; promote home ownership.
- Encourage and demand strong leadership and positive media messages that value diversity.
- Create opportunities for education, discussion, and dialogue to break down stereotypes—among our neighbors next door and across the region.

And then there’s the division over state lines. Those from the Illinois portion of the St. Louis area often feel forgotten in discussions about the region. The Illinois counties of Madison and St. Clair account for one-fifth of the region’s population, yet, when regional issues are discussed in board rooms or planning sessions, often the Illinois partners are not in the room.

There are divisions. But is it just the issue of geography? Or is it something else?

The transformation of the region’s economy has led to high unemployment

in inner-city neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs. In May 2001, the City of St. Louis had the highest unemployment rate in the region at 6.6%, compared with only 2.3% in St. Charles. Low-income areas in the region are mainly located inside the City of St. Louis, East St. Louis, and the inner-ring suburban neighborhoods. These communities also comprise the majority of the region’s minority population, with half of the city’s population being African American and a growing immigrant population.

“City politics over the years has fostered the us and them attitude, and a lot of people who very much contributed to the success of the city in the 1975-1985 period see the suburbs as the enemy. They were waging a holy war against the suburbs... Likewise, a lot of people in the suburbs have seen the city’s problems as the city’s problems, and they’re going to live their happy lives out in green pastures. That’s silly, too.”

—Richard Ward, Development Strategies, St. Louis Post Dispatch, August 10, 1997

“I think that’s one of the problems public transportation has, quite frankly. Because a large number of African Americans use public transportation, there is a sense on the part of folks in the majority community that that is something for the African American folks so let them figure it out and we don’t want to be bothered with it.”

–Tom Irwin, former executive director, Bi-State Development Agency, KETC Production: Caution! Expect Delays Next 20 Years, 2001

Those impacted by spatial mismatch and the inability to get to the growing number of jobs in the suburbs tend to be disproportionately poor and disproportionately African American. These citizens are less likely to have a car to commute to work; less likely to be able to afford a house in the far suburbs; and more likely to use mass transportation.

And whether it’s talked about openly or not, in any discussion about cities and suburbs, work and mass transportation, the issue of race is there.

Face the facts. Our region is divided by race, by income, by ethnicity.

ADDRESSING THE STEREOTYPES

Supporters of Approach Four argue that before we can even think about pursuing strategies related to any of the previous

approaches, we have to deal with the divisions among citizens in the region. Can strategies to increase funding for mass transportation have any reasonable chance for support? Can strategies to close the gap between the location of low-income workers and jobs have any hope for success? Will individuals, businesses, and communities be motivated to take initiative and assume additional responsibility? Approach Four supporters say no, not likely! Not, at least, until we learn to get past the stereotypes and negative perceptions and work together as a region.

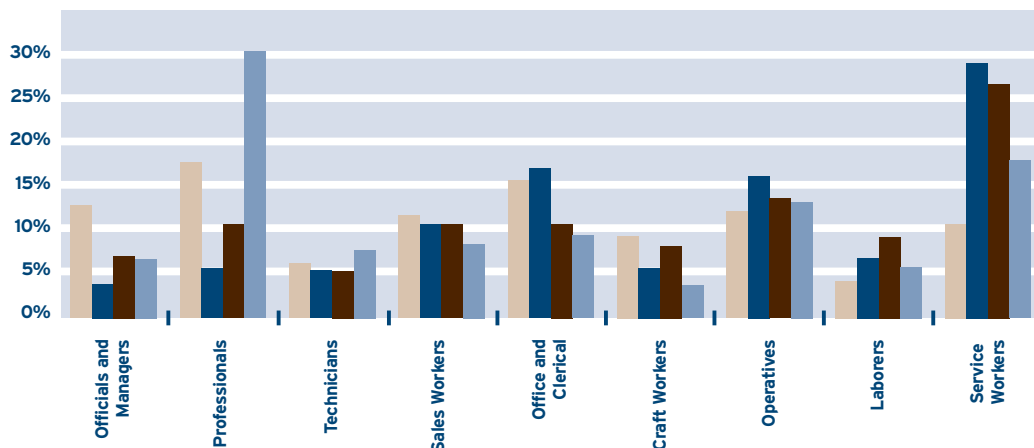
As Michael Williams’ story illustrates, stereotypes exist that influence our attitudes when we think about riders of mass transportation, when we think about who we hire in our businesses, when we think about who we want living next door.

According to Malik Ahmed, President and CEO of Better Family Life in St. Louis, **“There are a lot of stereotypes that employers have not been willing to free themselves of. The perception of the urban, inner-city, African American adult is one of being a problem.”**

And it is not just a Black and White issue. In recent years, the St. Louis region has also added a new immigrant population, with growing communities in the South Grand area in St. Louis City, communities around Lambert International Airport, Gumbo, and Fairmont. The 2000 census should confirm what many people think—approximately 100,000 refugees and immigrants from 90 countries now call the St. Louis region home. Many don’t speak English, can’t practice their chosen profession until they deal with licensing

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION BY RACE IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION

- White
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian American



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1998

“Ultimately, there’s got to be some realization that everyone in the region is bound together.”

—Richard Baron, McCormack Baron & Associates
St. Louis Post Dispatch, August 10, 1997

requirements, and may not know how to drive. As new residents move in and communities change, we are all challenged to assess our stereotypes, our openness to diversity, and our appreciation for cultural differences.

Other stereotypes impact the region in its ability to develop strategies to solve transportation and access issues. For instance, the stereotype that mass transportation is primarily for poor people, and the perception that what happens to people in other parts of the region “don’t affect us,” and the perception that it’s not our problem.

Many regional residents view Bi-State’s bus service as a social program for the poor rather than a vital asset that curbs pollution and helps our region get to work. This must be changed, say Approach Four supporters. The new MetroLink routes have paved the way to a better image for mass transit—more people ride MetroLink to baseball games and to the airport. That image—of utility, of convenience, of saving money—should be there for the system as a whole. Approach Four advocates for a regional marketing and information campaign as an important first step in strengthening support for an expanded regional transportation system that will benefit all of us, and in overcoming the negative stereotypes that persist today.

But it’s not all about marketing and sales pitches. Making us understand the value of mass transportation for the region is

important. But even if we get beyond stereotypes, the separation remains.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF SEPARATION

In East-West Gateway Coordinating Council’s 1999 *Where We Stand* report, St. Louis was compared to 34 other metropolitan areas, ranking our progress or decline in areas related to demographics, economic well-being, and quality of life. St. Louis ranked 27th out of 35 areas on the Economic Disparity Index, showing the extent to which poverty is concentrated in the City of St. Louis versus the balance of the region. And St. Louis ranked 30th on the Racial Disparity Index, showing continuing segregation and disparities between Blacks and Whites. The region is continuing to change, resulting in a growing concentration of racial separation and economic distress in core city and first-ring suburban areas.

What do we do about issues of racial separation and racial equality in the St. Louis region? A recent report on *Racial Equity in the St. Louis Region* by FOCUS St. Louis presents a comprehensive set of recommendations. Among them:

- Expanding job-training and educational opportunities for low-income populations.
- Enhancing public transportation planning.
- Combating residential segregation and housing discrimination.
- Increasing labor force development and employment opportunities for people of color.
- Expanding opportunities for minority business enterprises.
- Addressing employment discrimination at every level.
- Expanding access to health care through education and outreach.
- Expanding opportunities for home ownership and asset accumulation for people of color.
- Increasing earnings for minimum-wage positions throughout the St. Louis region.

We’ve talked about these issues before, including a 1989 *Confluence* report on diversity and race relations. Some recommendations from that report were implemented, but many were not. It’s time for some accountability. We want to monitor our progress. And while we’re at it, Approach Four proponents say we need to monitor our own attitudes. We also need clear messages from our leaders, a visible commitment from them and action to back it up. How about adopting the goal of integration as government policy, or adopting multiculturalism as a regional policy and promoting it through the arts, culture, education, etc.? It’s time to view the diversity of this region as an asset—and begin to act accordingly.

LEARNING TO COME TOGETHER AS A REGION

Approach Four supporters advocate strategies that bring us together as a

COMPARING APPROACHES

THE LONG JOURNEY TO WORK:

APPROACH ONE: Making Mass Transportation Work

To ensure that our region's workforce has access to jobs, we must do what's necessary to make our mass transportation system work, including providing adequate funding.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Improve the quality of the current system.
- Take steps to acquire additional state and local funding support.
- Create a regional transit authority to focus on priorities for the entire region.

IN SUPPORT

- People have a right to access jobs to support their families.
- Expanding public transportation is the most effective way of connecting jobs and workers.
- A regional plan would establish priorities and eliminate piecemeal efforts.

IN OPPOSITION

- Problems are not solved by throwing more money at them—money we don't have.
- Labor market problems are best solved by the private sector.
- There is not enough demand for mass transportation to justify expanding the system.

A LIKELY TRADEOFF:

We must be prepared to pay higher taxes or cut back other public programs to cover the increasing costs of expanding mass transportation.

APPROACH TWO: Moving People and Jobs Closer Together

We need to stop regional sprawl and focus investment in the urban core, along with ensuring affordable housing and access to mass transit in suburban developments.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Favor existing communities when making public infrastructure investments.
- Remove incentives and create new standards for suburban development.
- Implement policies for planning for affordable housing and access to transit in new developments.

IN SUPPORT

- Current development patterns are inefficient and waste taxpayer money; better planning is needed.
- The city and inner-ring suburbs continue to decline, existing buildings and infrastructure are underutilized, and separation by race and income grows.
- The only way to curb suburban expansion is to improve the city and inner-ring suburbs.

IN OPPOSITION

- Businesses should be able to locate wherever they want.
- Businesses pay taxes and are entitled to mass transportation services.
- Local governments, not a regional board, have the responsibility to look out for what's best for their citizens.

A LIKELY TRADEOFF:

Taking a more proactive approach to regional planning and managing growth may restrict local government control.

COMPARING APPROACHES

HOW DO WE CONNECT PEOPLE AND JOBS?

APPROACH THREE: Boosting Private Sector Initiative

Businesses should share in the responsibility for getting people to work through providing transportation and linking with community services.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Encourage businesses to advocate for increased funding of mass transit.
- Encourage businesses to include housing and transit in location decisions.
- Develop employer-funded shuttles or vanpools and other transportation employee benefits.
- Create public-private partnerships to support car ownership, job training, and employee support programs.

IN SUPPORT

- Mass transportation cannot keep up with the business expansion in the region.
- Employers must assume responsibility for transportation as a cost of doing business.
- Partnerships between business and communities can best support low-income workers.

IN OPPOSITION

- Businesses already pay taxes to support mass transportation.
- Requiring businesses to provide transportation will impact profits.
- Individual business efforts will be costly and inefficient.

A LIKELY TRADEOFF:

While this choice may solve transportation problems, it will not alleviate –and may increase–economic and racial separation if businesses continue to move further away.

APPROACH FOUR: Confronting What Divides Us

We must face the separation and disparity in our region and develop strategies to bring the region together.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Public education to improve the image of public transportation.
- Expand opportunities and access to services for underserved populations.
- Create opportunities for education, dialogue, and discussion.

IN SUPPORT

- Those most impacted by lack of access to jobs are poor and African American.
- No other strategy will work until we address negative stereotypes and perceptions.
- We must overcome racial and economic stereotypes and learn to work together.

IN OPPOSITION

- Talk is nice but won't solve the problem.
- Focusing on marketing or discussion groups takes resources away from funding mass transportation.
- We have to address our own problems in our own communities.

A LIKELY TRADEOFF:

In working to bring the region together, this choice will take the focus away from access to jobs - resulting in no plan to address spatial mismatch.

RegionWise is funded by the Danforth Foundation and housed at the United Way of Greater St. Louis. It serves the people of the St. Louis region by building a clearinghouse of regional information, measuring regional progress, and collaborating with other organizations to promote involvement in public policy discussion and action.

The St. Louis region includes the City of St. Louis and St. Louis, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles, and Warren counties in Missouri and Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

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