



THE LATEST HEARD 'ROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Ever wonder what others think of the Gateway Connector? Stop158: Citizens for Smart Growth does. And, we encourage everyone who visits our website to share their thoughts. Here are some of their comments:

Why are we still thinking more highways when the future demands different approaches?

As a new resident of Glen Carbon /Madison County who routinely travels SR158 to Scott AFB I find the idea of building this un-necessary outer beltway a phenomenal waste of taxpayer dollars.

I do not feel this project is justified despite the finding of the feasibility study. Feasibility studies are subjective and are proven they can be skewed to fit any conclusion the group requesting the study wants it to portray. A good example is the MidAmerica Airport boondoggle.

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Math 101 How much common cents are in a \$1 billion connector?



THIS STAR SHOULD FALL!

By Kathy Andria & Richard Ellerbrake

Described variously as "TIF on steroids" or "Worst Bill Ever," SB 1909 - the STAR Bonds Financing Act - gives money to private developers at Illinois state taxpayers' expense to develop in the 100-year floodplain because "such sites are more likely to remain underutilized and undeveloped." --Sierra Club

Stop158 says our local communities, the preservation of green space, the protection of flood plains, containment of sprawl, and good sense should be enough to help this bill become a falling STAR.

STOP158 says Governor Quinn should VETO the STAR Bonds Financing Act, SB 1909. (If he does nothing, it becomes law.)

Help this STAR fall by calling the Governor's office (217-782-0244) (TTY 888-261-3336) or go to his website http://www.illinois.gov/GOV/contactthegovernor.cfm and leave a message...Ask the governor to VETO the STAR bonds bill, SB 1909.

Holland Construction Company has proposed a 900- acre, one billion dollar "mega-retail and entertainment development" in Glen Carbon to be financed by STAR bonds. The bonds would be repaid over many years using sales tax dollars.

Holland projects thousands of jobs and huge revenue. It gave these and other assumptions to two people in the SIUE School of Business, who then created a report to justify the project.

But the State of Illinois, already broke, estimates each STAR bonds project would cost the state at least \$15 million per year in lost revenue. Losing also would be local taxing districts, which rely on sales tax from Metro-East shoppers.

The St. Clair County Board and elected officials from about a dozen local municipalities are against this project. It is opposed by the Southwestern Illinois Council of Mayors and the Illinois Municipal League. They believe it would divert business from their communities. Many already see stores hurting or closing for lack of sales.

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MORE COMMENTS FROM NEIGHBORS.

We need to invest in public transportation, not adding roads, more sprawl, and more pollution!

I drive Troy-Scott road to I-64 during rush hour traffic and there are no traffic jams. This is the biggest waste of money ever! Why don't you fix the roads and bridges we have instead of creating new projects that aren't needed? A new highway would be a waste of money and beautiful farm land.

I find it a total waste of money to research if a road is needed when 1. everyone that lives in the area knows it isn't and 2. the money could be spent on existing roads & bridges in need of repair. Do not encourage the destruction of our farm land. It is not renewable!

This area does not need more farmland to disappear. We also do not need more subdivisions or strip malls that will either remain empty or close after a year of being open.

I am sick of things that are going to raise our already out of control taxes!

Act now to begin repairs to our sorry state that can fund highways to nowhere but can't meet the needs of the disabled; a state where decisions are based on shakedowns and not sound reasoning

This proposed highway is a waste of tax payer money. It "mirrors" I-255. We don't need another 5 lane highway 7 miles to the east of what we already have. Why are the rural ways of life less important?

A complete list of comments can be viewed at www.stop158.org. ●



**A VISIT WITH
MAYOR GARY
GRAHAM,
CITY OF
O'FALLON**

Pictured above (l to r) Thomas Joseph, Richard Ellerbrake, Mayor Gary Graham, Richard Skillings during a visit in June to discuss the impact of the Gateway Connector on the city of O'Fallon. Mayor Graham has not taken a position on the Gateway Connector. He has spoken out against STAR bonds legislation and the UTC development in Glen Carbon. ●

WHAT IS STOP158: CITIZENS FOR SMART GROWTH

Stop158: Citizens for Smart Growth is a movement of citizens who share and promote a positive vision for their communities. For many reasons, as shown on the website www.Stop158.org we oppose an outer-belt, interstate-type highway from Troy to Columbia, which IDOT calls the **Gateway Connector**.

Allies united in opposition to the Gateway Connector include:

- American Bottom Conservancy
- Citizens Against the Sprawlway
- EcoHawk Foundation
- OurTaxMoney
- Sierra Club
- United Congregations of Metro East 47+ Coalition

As an all volunteer grassroots organization STOP158 depends on your donations of time and money. Please take time today to make a contribution of \$5 or more. Checks can be mailed to PO Box 330, Troy, IL 62294 or donations can be made securely on-line at the website www.Stop158.org. ●

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

STOP158: Citizens for Smart Growth is seeking contact information for other grassroots organizations in the area of Monroe, Madison or St. Clair counties. Our goal is to find organizations that have similar interests and challenges and to share ideas. If you know of a group or are a member of a grassroots group, please let us know by calling 618-632-3158 or send an email to smartgrowth@stop158.org. ●

LOGIC: *Where do quality of life and the Connector intersect?*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

STOP 158 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Place 866 Old Enterprise Farms, Lebanon, IL 62254
Regular meetings of the steering committee generally occur on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month, from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meetings are open to all interested parties. Please call to confirm meeting time and reserve your seat: 618-632-3158.

SIGN PAINTING

STOP158 has frequent sign painting parties. Volunteer opportunities: 1) help with the painting and 2) post a sign in your yard. Visibility significantly help our efforts. Can you post a sign on your property? What size do you like? Your choice of wording.

For the calendar of the **East-West Gateway Council of Governments** visit www.ewgateway.org.

Contribute today at www.Stop158.org



Write a letter to your elected officials and tell them we should not spend tax dollars on the Gateway Connector. We should fix the roads we have.

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FALLING STAR

When asked about this project, the St. Louis area's premier economic analyst, Julie Nieman said that there isn't a demand for more shopping...[developers] are just shifting shoppers from one place to the next...developers never seem to learn...that [such a development] fizzles out. But, they always get a bunch of taxpayer dollars, before the projects fail.

Among the strongest independent voices are those of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments. They report that local governments have spent \$2.5 billion of taxpayer money to lure new business and stimulate economic activity, but the efforts failed, the anticipated increase in tax money never materialized, and the original money never was returned to the public coffers.

Please contact Governor Quinn and express your opinion. At stake are the strength of your local communities, your schools, and many of the things that make up your quality of life. Call 217-782-0244 or write now, before it's too late.



McKEEHAN WELCOMES STOP158

On May 26, **Patrick McKeehan**, Executive Director at Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, welcomed Stop158 members Richard Ellerbrake, Marty Ganz, and Dick Skillings. McKeehan has been in the top position 2 ½ years. While McKeehan expressed a desire for more development in the flood plain, Stop158 believes in redevelopment of our core cities, not more sprawling, fringe development. McKeehan also stated his belief that education is key to development in the metro-east i.e., training and development, developing workers with skills that employers want. This helps meet the overall mission of the Leadership Council which is to attract, retain and expand business.

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”

Benjamin Franklin

STUDY FINDS SIDEWALKS AND AMENITIES KEY TO WALKING AND FITNESS

People who live within walking distance of amenities like stores, transit stops, and parks are twice as likely to get enough exercise to help them stay healthy as those who don't, according to a new study conducted by researchers at San Diego State University.

As reported in a *gantdaily.com* article, researchers say that people who live in cities and are able to walk or jog have more chance of getting a sufficient amount of exercise (at least 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity at least five days a week). Researchers found a strong correlation between sidewalks and exercise. For more information type this url address into your web browser:

<http://www.gantdaily.com/news/71/ARTICLE/49260/2009-04-20.html>

Sources: *planetizen.com* and *gantdaily.com*,
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Contributions to support
and this newsletter can be mailed to:

STOP158
PO Box 330
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Or visit our web site www.stop158.org and
contribute securely on line. ●



RIDERSHIP INCREASES FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT

The economic downturn and record-high gas prices have been a boon to public transit. Americans took 10.7 billion trips last year on the nation's trains, buses and subways-the highest level of ridership in 52 years, according to the American Public Transportation Association. But while the rate stayed high even as gas prices dropped, rising unemployment could mean fewer commuters in 2009. ●

HISTORY 335 *When did I-255 become so congested?*

PUT
STAMP
HERE