

CONNECTING SWOPE

SWOPE PROSPECT CONNECTIVITY STUDY



SUMMER 2018

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01:



HOW DID WE GET HERE?



1.1

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Connecting Swope is a plan for the area bounded by Swope Parkway to the North, Paseo to the west, Swope Parkway/Cleveland Avenue to the east, and 85th Street to the south. The neighborhoods within this area, such as Town Fork Creek and Blue Hills, have over 100 years of community development and history. This community context provides an essential baseline understanding of the goals and recommendations of this plan.

The Swope Area has roots in the City Beautiful movement of the late 1800s, which emphasized parkways and access to green space for city dwellers. Swope Park was named after Thomas Hunton Swope, a philanthropist who donated large swaths of land to create the public park in 1896. When Swope Park was

created, the surrounding area was quite rural, though the park became a popular destination for Kansas City residents.

Over time, areas around Swope Park slowly developed as wealthy residents built large estates away from the city center. The pace of residential development extending south of Meyer Boulevard quickened at the end of World War II, as prime real estate was developed into the neighborhood boundaries we know today. Businesses sprouted along Troost Avenue and Prospect Avenue to support the neighborhoods, while streetcars provided access to the city center, much like the MAX BRT lines today. Like Swope Park before it, Fairyland Park was an amusement park at Prospect and 75th Street that also became a regional destination.

This wave of population growth in Kansas City, as in other urban centers, was driven by the booming middle class that emerged at the end of World War II. Data from the 1960 census shows most tracts in the study area were nearly entirely composed of Caucasian families. By 1970, the community showed signs of integration, particularly north of 59th Street, where Caucasian families accounted for a third of the community in most tracts, joined by an influx of African-American families. By 1980, demographics had flipped, with African American families accounting for 85% or more of the population in most tracts of the study area.

These demographic trends were accompanied with other key changes in Kansas City and urban



LEFT: Exterior view of Swope School, named for Thomas H. Swope. MIDDLE: Exterior view of the Swope Park Christian Church located at 62nd Street and Swope Parkway. RIGHT: Exterior view of a house near Swope Park. IMAGE CREDIT: Kansas City Public Library.

FAIRYLAND

Fairyland Park opened in 1923 on 80 acres of farmland at Prospect and 75th Street.

communities across the country:

- An influx of African-American families following the Civil Rights movement of the 60's.
- Disinvestment in urban neighborhoods as redlining and blockbusting practices resulted in aging infrastructure, high vacancy/foreclosure rates, and few amenities.
- Highways encouraged suburban development and middle class migration at the cost of neighborhoods they were built through, dividing communities and negatively impacting home values.

The impact of all these changes continue to be visible today in the Swope Area, with no symbol being more obvious than the bisection of the community by Highway 71.



IMAGE CREDIT: Kansas City Public Library



LEFT: Exterior view of City Ice Company of Kansas City refrigerated route supply station, also called Swope Park Station, located at 67th Street and Myrtle Avenue. RIGHT: Thomas H. Swope Memorial located in Swope Park. IMAGE CREDIT: Kansas City Public Library.

1.2

NATIONAL HIGHWAY POLICIES & OUTCOMES

Almost every city in America built highways through historically African-American areas in the 1960s. After World War II the federal government passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, which authorized the construction of 41,000 miles of the interstate highway system connecting urban areas and defense assets across the country. Originally, the \$25 billion program was intended to be complete in ten years, but construction continued until the early 1990s.

The Federal government delegated authority for planning and building the interstate highway system to the states. In most states, highways were designed to connect one downtown area to the next, to provide access to jobs and services across a region. The result, however, was that highways were designed to cut through established urban neighborhoods to get cars in and out of downtown as quickly as possible.

State highway planners often chose to align highways along the least expensive tracts of land. Some justified their reasoning by terming them urban renewal and blight removal projects. This practice continued until the late 1970s

when community groups around the country began to organize in opposition to planned highway projects.



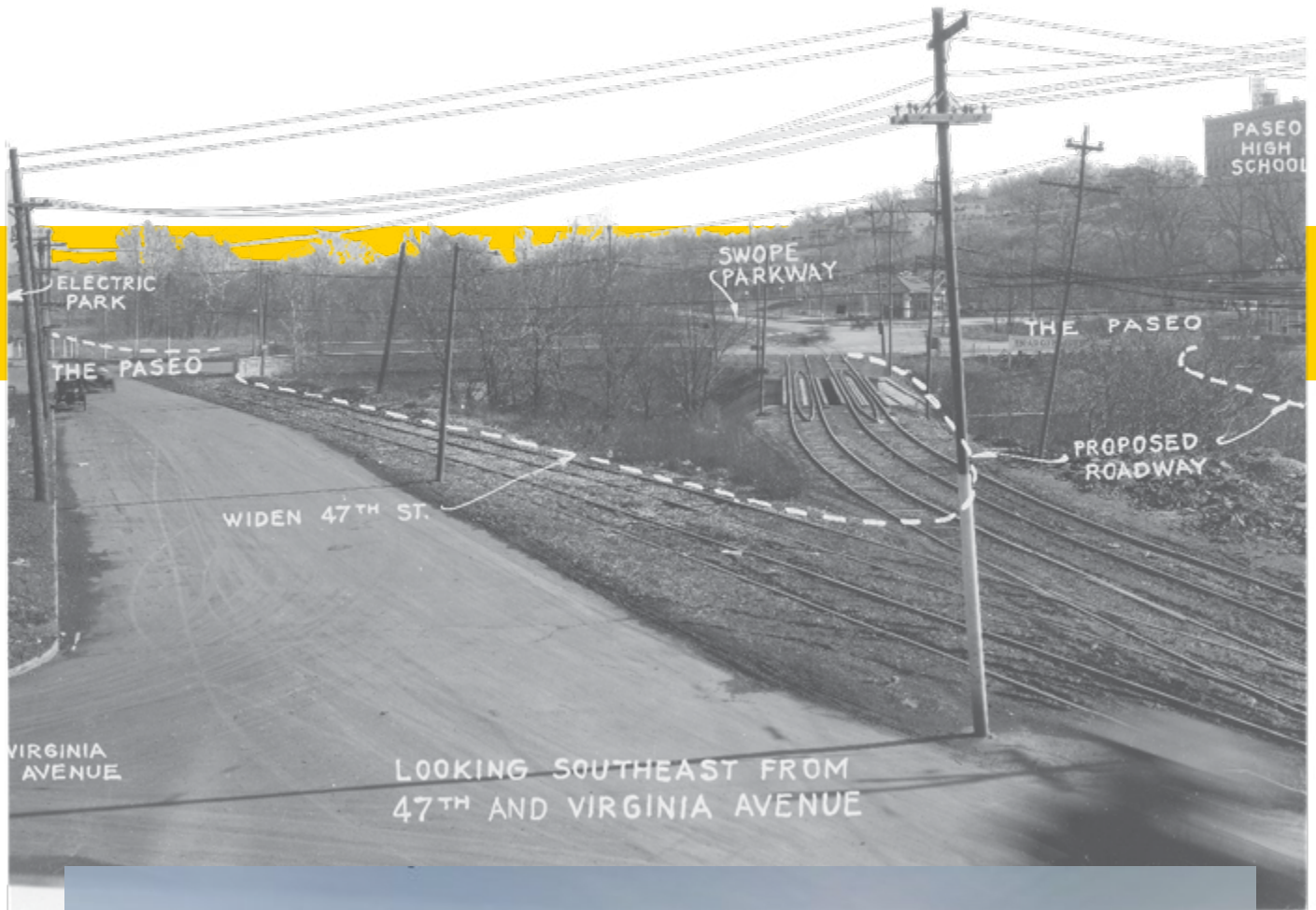
TOP: President Dwight Eisenhower signing the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.
IMAGE CREDIT: Dwight Eisenhower Library.

Who is Bruce R Watkins?

Highway 71 is named in honor of Bruce R. Watkins, a political and social activist. He made significant contributions to Kansas City, serving as the City's first African-American city council member and Jackson County Circuit Court Clerk.



IMAGE CREDIT: Kansas City Public Library



TOP: View looking southeast from 47th Street and Virginia Avenue Street showing Paseo High School, Swope Parkway, and Paseo Boulevard. IMAGE CREDIT: Kansas City Public Library. BOTTOM: Current view of 47th Street and Virginia Avenue. IMAGE CREDIT: Google Street View.

1.3 US 71 CONSTRUCTION & HISTORY

A highway link between Downtown Kansas City towards the southeast was first explored in the 1950s by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). The alignment for what would become Highway 71 was finalized in 1964 and MoDOT began purchasing land for the highway while engineering continued. The Uniform Relocation Act was passed by Congress in 1970, creating standards for land acquisition resulting in displacement; this slowed, but did not stop MoDOT's pace of buying land for Highway 71.

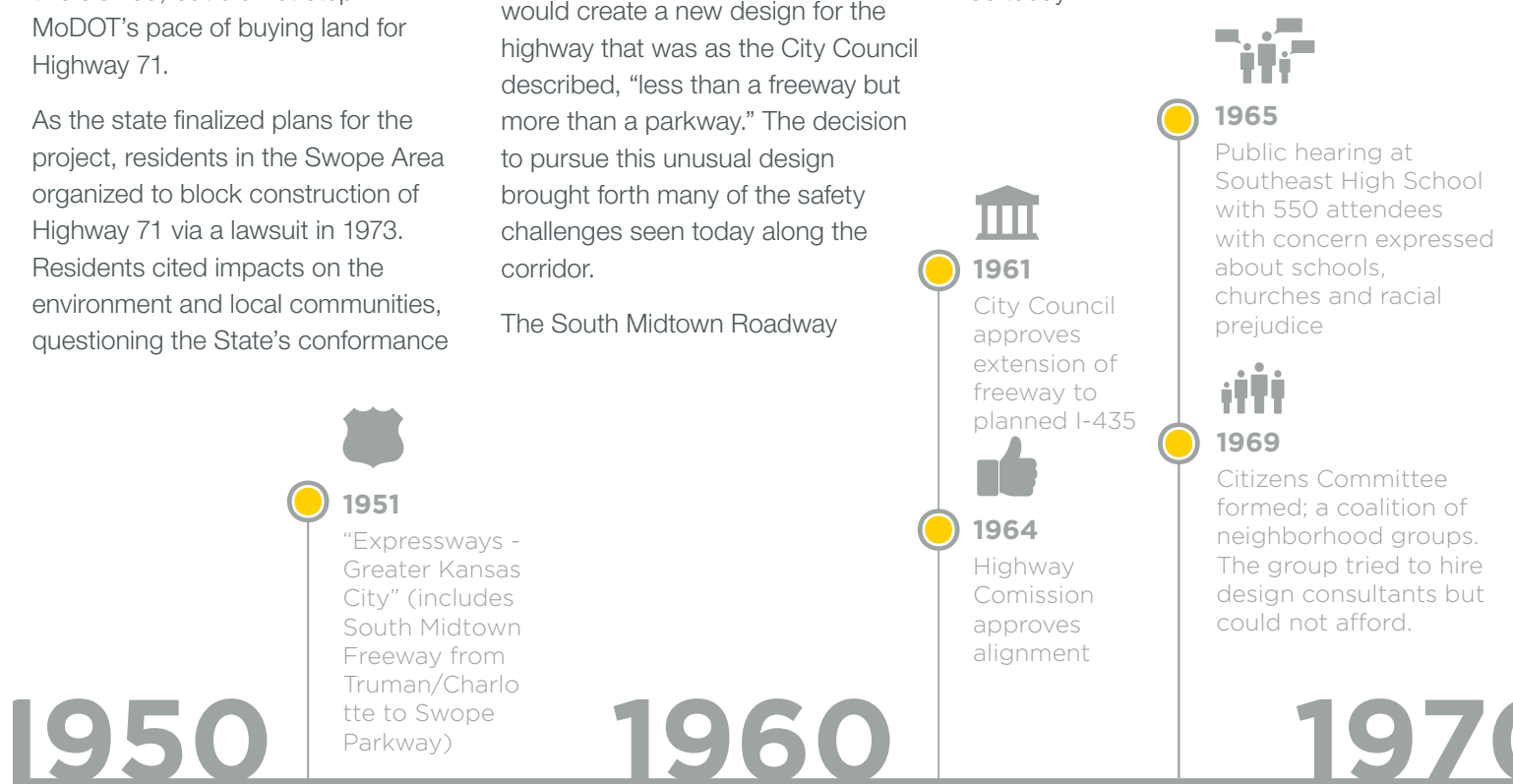
As the state finalized plans for the project, residents in the Swope Area organized to block construction of Highway 71 via a lawsuit in 1973. Residents cited impacts on the environment and local communities, questioning the State's conformance

with the Uniform Relocation Act as it relates to the hardships disproportionately impacting African-American households along the proposed corridor. In total, about 1,745 families, who were mostly African-American, were vacated from their homes from 1968 to 1978 to allow for construction.

After over a decade of litigation, the lawsuit was settled in 1985. The parties agreed to a new South Midtown Roadway Restudy, which would create a new design for the highway that was as the City Council described, "less than a freeway but more than a parkway." The decision to pursue this unusual design brought forth many of the safety challenges seen today along the corridor.

The South Midtown Roadway

Restudy included community workshops where residents expressed a desire for "numerous opportunities for access across the roadway" and highlighted their concerns with connectivity since the projects inception. The 1985 HNTB study includes detailed summaries of all its community workshop comments, and it is clear that most of the feedback from within the community to address needs for connectivity in the area are the same as today.





The Mamie Hughes Bridge

The overpass where Meyer Boulevard crosses Highway 71 is named the Mamie Hughes Bridge. Ms. Hughes was a charter member of the Jackson County Legislature, serving until 1978, and she advocated and volunteered for projects throughout the Kansas City area that helped break down racial and gender discrimination. Hughes acted as ombudswoman during planning and construction of the highway.



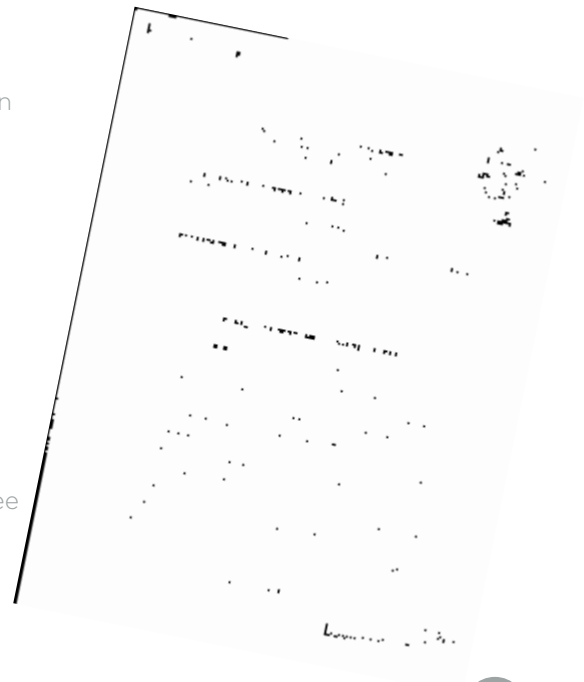
1984

South Midtown
Roadway
Restudy



1985

Consent decree



1973

Community
groups file suit
for injustice



1974

R/W Acquisition



1991

Congress (in
ISTEA*)
named it a
high-priority
corridor
(possibly to
be I-49)

1980 1990

*ISTEA = Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

02:



PROJECT OVERVIEW



2.1

PROJECT GOALS

The goals of the Connecting Swope study were to:

1

Identify barriers and gaps in connectivity for vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists

2

Ensure access to the Prospect MAX bus rapid transit (BRT) stations

3

Improve the safety, comfort, and ease of crossing U.S. 71 Highway

The Connecting Swope plan was developed with representatives from:



City of Kansas City
Planning Department



Kansas City Planning
Transportation Authority



Missouri Department of
Transportation



Mid-America Regional
Council

The project was led by KCATA and was developed in close coordination with the Prospect MAX BRT project as well as the Kansas City Troost/Prospect Right-of-Way Enhancements study. Funding for the Connecting Swope plan was provided by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Planning Sustainable Places program, MoDOT and KCMO.

2.2 PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process, kicked off in June 2017 and completed in August 2018, was organized into four phases.



1. Discovery

Data, best practices, and contextual research were used to develop a baseline of existing conditions



2. Desire

Interviews, neighborhood presentations, and surveys revealed community desires, opportunities, and needs



3. Decisions

A broad range of multimodal options were evaluated based on community goals



4. Deliverables

The plan outlines short-term actions needed to immediately improve safety in the community and a longer-term vision over the next few years

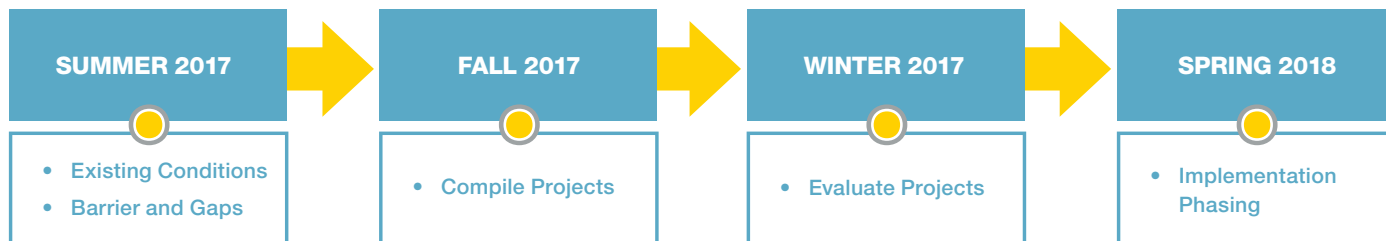


LEFT: Presentation board from Troost/Prospect Right-of-Way Enhancements Study shared during community outreach efforts.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Critical to the success of the Connecting Swope project was a process that sparked an ongoing dialogue between public officials, stakeholder organizations and institutions, and residents and businesses about the future of the community. The structure intentionally placed the technical analysis and scenario development alongside a public exchange of ideas.

This planning effort was grounded and guided by the voices of the public. A robust public engagement plan was developed to ensure there were several opportunities for community members to provide input on how they interact with the roadway network, and to inform the preferred projects for implementation. Information about engagement opportunities were distributed through the City's and KCATA's communication channels, including social media, city website, Route 71 Prospect buses, and other media opportunities.





Participants in the in-person open house were able to view potential project ideas and provide feedback to the project team on what they liked and did not like about the concepts.

Three public meetings held at key points of the planning effort addressed the following topics:

Study Introduction

This Prospect MAX Advisory Committee Meeting hosted at KCATA on October 18, 2017, served as an opportunity for the project team to meet active members of the community and establish a working relationship to ensure an efficient and effective process. Discussion was focused on contextualizing this plan amongst other recent planning efforts.

Connectivity Feedback

The second meeting was an opportunity for the project team to share the initial findings of the Existing Conditions Report with the public. Though data provides a broad understanding of the transportation challenges in the area, input from the public was essential for confirming these findings, and directing attention to issues that may not have been seen in the data. This meeting was hosted at Alphapoint directly adjacent to Highway 71 on February 1, 2018.

Final Recommendations

A meeting was held on July 17, 2018 at the Southeast Community Center to review this plan's recommended actions. This meeting included a review of the prioritization metrics used to select between potential project approaches, and to develop an implementation strategy.

03:



EXISTING CONDITIONS



3.1

EXISTING NETWORKS

This chapter provides a condensed version of the Existing Conditions Report developed to inform the planning process.

While many destinations considered for connectivity are found within the immediate periphery of the study area, the right-of-way assigned to Highway 71 splits the predominantly residential area in two. This barrier has resulted in limited connectivity and accessibility for people living on either side of Highway 71 for decades. This section reviews the challenges and opportunities within the existing roadway network to inform how to improve connectivity within the study area. The figure to the right highlights the study area and key community destinations to provide local context for this effort.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Street Network

The effective street network map refers to sections of the street network that create a well-connected grid, typical of historic

urban communities. Many of the streets within the Swope Area are identified as being part of an effective network due to a high density of intersections, and smaller block sizes. Such network design facilitates connectivity for multiple modes.

The street grid breaks down where hospitals or other large campus developments exist. Highway 71 creates the most significant limitations to the network, with limited crossing opportunities to connect communities on either side.

Bicycle Network

There are limited bicycle facilities in the area. Only one buffered bicycle lane east of the study area leading into Swope Park exists, as well as few shared facilities within Swope Park itself. There are bicycle routes marked within the study area, primarily along Paseo, Meyer Boulevard, and Swope Parkway. However, this network of bicycle routes marked by posted signs, many on well-travelled roads, create an uninviting environment for bicycling.

Upcoming projects such as a proposed Bike KC Plan, and proposed bicycle lanes along Paseo may bring improvements.

STREET NETWORK & EXISTING CONNECTIONS



Pedestrian Network

In August 2017, the City established a program to systematically evaluate, repair, and replace sidewalks over the next 20 years using a quantitative prioritization analysis to prioritize reinvestment. Within the study area, many gaps were identified as medium to low priorities, with the exception of high priority segments along Meyer Boulevard and 63rd Street.

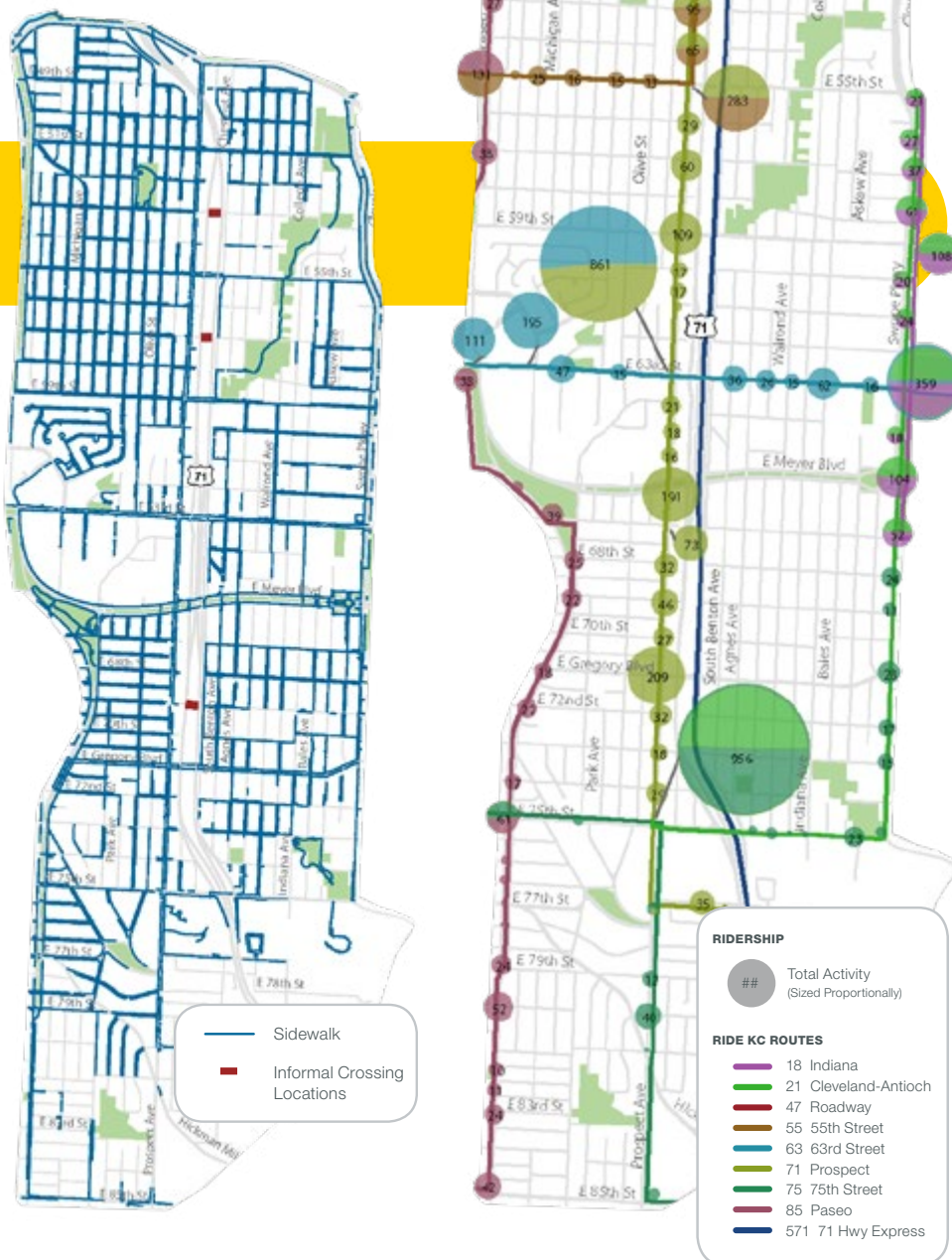
The study area has a relatively well-connected network of sidewalks. Gaps in the network are identified primarily to the east of Highway 71. The main concern identified was the limited opportunities to cross Highway 71. With distances between crossings ranging from 1,800 to 3,400 feet, informal crossing locations have been utilized by community members, creating dangerous situations for pedestrians, and representing the need for improved connectivity across the highway.

Transit Network

The study area is served by twelve RikeKC routes. The highest transit activity in the study area occurs along Prospect Avenue, where residents/visitors utilize Route 71 to travel north/south along the corridor. The high volume stops also provided additional insight as to where high levels of pedestrian activity may be occurring, and thus informed locations that safety and connectivity improvements may be most valuable.

AVERAGE WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP

NETWORK OF SIDEWALKS



3.2

SAFETY & TRAFFIC VOLUMES

SAFETY & CHALLENGES

Pedestrian & Bicyclist Involved Collisions in Study Area

Between 2012 and 2016, 86 collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists within the study area; 61 collisions involved pedestrians, and 25 involved bicyclists. Nearly 41% of these collisions occurred along streets intersecting Highway 71, highlighting the challenges of travelling along corridors to cross the highway. The crossings between 63rd Street and Gregory Boulevard have been identified as the most dangerous locations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In collisions involving pedestrians, six (10%) resulted in a, “disabling injury,” and another six resulted in a fatality. Half of the collisions resulting in a disabling injury occurred along Highway 71, or on an east/west arterial crossing Highway 71. Of six pedestrian involved fatalities, four occurred along Highway 71, and one on an arterial crossing the Highway,

highlighting the safety concerns of crossing the corridor without proper options.

Similarly, of collisions involving bicyclists, three (12%) resulted in a disabling injury and two (8%) were fatal. One of three collisions resulting in a disabling injury occurred on an east/west arterial crossing Highway 71, and one of two fatalities occurred along Highway 71, approximately 800 feet south of 77th Street.

For comparison, risk of fatality in auto only collisions is significantly less. Of 4,125 vehicle only collisions in the study area, only 19 (0.5%) were fatal (six occurring along Highway 71). This means that pedestrians are 20 times more likely than drivers to be involved in a fatal collision in the study area. This is one of the most poignant findings highlighting the need to improve connectivity and safety for non-auto modes.

PEDESTRIANS & BICYCLIST INVOLVED COLLISIONS



The Effect of
Vehicle Speed
on Pedestrian
Injuries and
Fatalities



15%

chance of pedestrian
fatality or severe injury



50%

chance of pedestrian
fatality or severe injury



80%

chance of pedestrian
fatality or severe injury

SPEED LIMITS

TRAFFIC VOLUMES OF MAJOR ARTERIALS



STREET CONDITIONS

Traveling Speed

Due to the dominance of residential land uses in the study area, most streets have speed limits set to 25 miles per hour (mph). All arterials crossing Highway 71 or running parallel north-south are set to 35 mph, which is relatively low compared to arterials in other communities. Highway 71 speeds are set primarily to 40-45 mph when travelling along residential communities, though signage postings are for 55 mph in the southern segment of the highway within the study area. As such, arterials and Highway 71 crossings are the most difficult areas for pedestrians to travel.

Traffic Volumes

Typical traffic volumes also create a barrier to comfort for pedestrians and other non-auto modes without the proper design. With the exception of E 63rd, West of Highway 71, arterials within the study area see less than 10,000 vehicle trips per day. While volumes are not particularly high, the design of these arterials fosters high speeds, creating safety concerns for roadway users.

3.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

The project team organized nine individual one-on-one interviews with key community stakeholders, including local business owners, faith-based groups, and other community organizations. From these targeted discussions, the project team was able to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and concerns that face residents and businesses in the area.

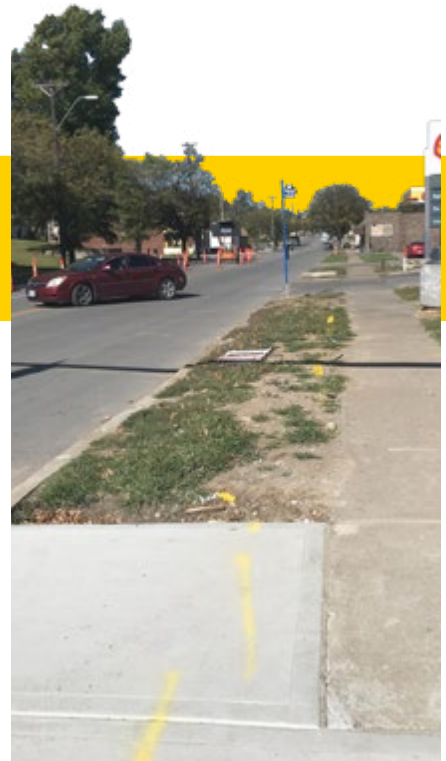
Common concerns include:



Crossing Highway 71 is dangerous for pedestrians even at signalized intersections

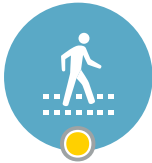


Missing and badly maintained sidewalks; debris



Cleanliness of Highway 71 medians, frontage roads, and sidewalks

People want to see:



Sidewalk Improvements



Economic Development



Covered shelters, benches, pads at Ride KC stops



Time increased for pedestrians crossing on traffic lights



Pedestrian bridges over Highway 71

RESIDENT & BUSINESS SURVEY

To gain insight on how local residents and business owners felt about transportation in their community, the planning effort included the “Connecting Swope Resident and Business Survey.” The survey aimed to identify the barriers to connectivity faced by people walking, biking, and riding transit in the study area to inform recommendations for the future. A total of 95 responses were collected between October 16, 2017 and December 11, 2017. Key findings included:

- Of the nearly 100 survey respondents, the majority drive alone to get around
- But more than 30% walk, bike, or take transit regularly
- People walk for exercise, to run errands, & visit friends
- But safety (from traffic and crime) and the lack of pedestrian facilities are a barrier
- Residents preferred buffered and protected bicycle facilities to standard bike lanes
- While most residents own a smartphone, most have never used ride-hailing services such as Uber or Lyft.



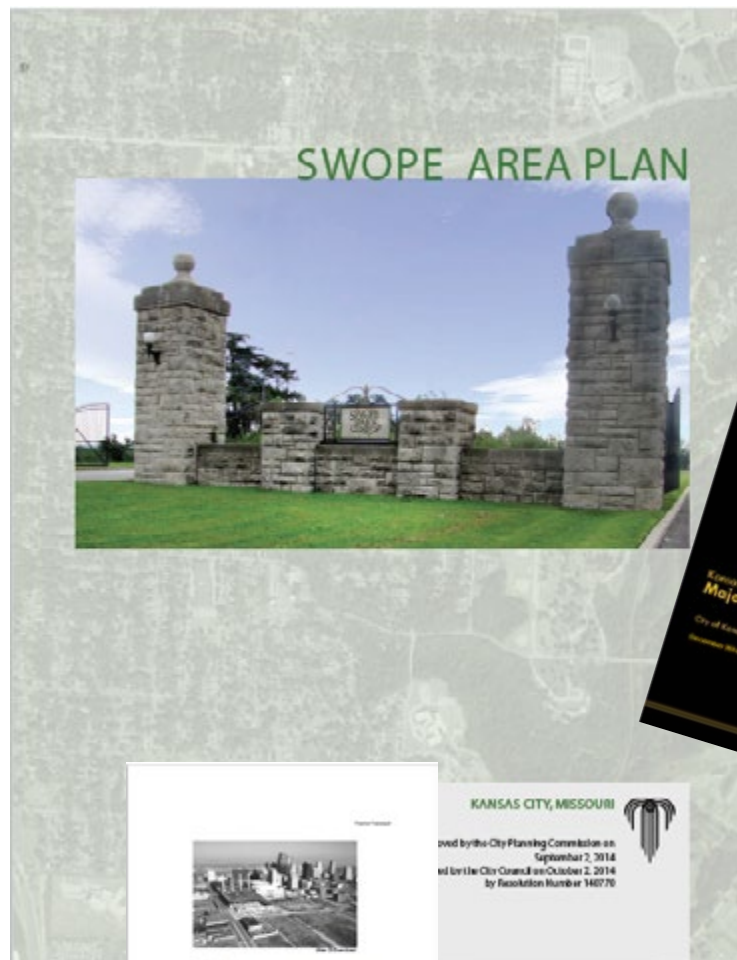
Survey was accessible from Connecting Swope webpage.

3.4

PLANNING CONTEXT & SWOPE AREA PLAN VISION

The planning process included a review of existing plans and policies in place for the Swope Area to help establish a foundation for understanding the local policy context and the community's goals, values, and vision. Plans and policy documents ranged from the neighborhood to state levels, including:

- Kansas City Swope Area Plan (2014)
- Kansas City FOCUS Comprehensive Plan (1997)
- Kansas City Major Street Plan (2016)
- Kansas City TOD Policy Document (2017)
- KCATA Prospect MAX Planning Assessment Study (2014)
- MARC Smart Moves 3.0 Transit Plan (2017)
- MARC Transportation Outlook 2040
- MARC Complete Streets Handbook (2012)
- MoDOT Practical Design (2006)



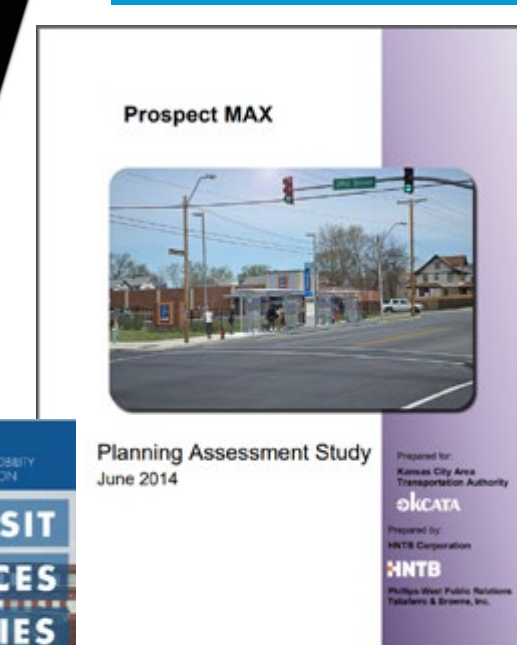
KEY FINDINGS

Visions and Goals

All of the plans for the Swope Area share a vision for a transportation network that is connected, multimodal, and supports economic growth. The Swope Area Plan incorporates all these elements into a succinct goal statement:

Create an interconnected multimodal transportation system in the Swope Area that integrates with land use patterns, connects neighborhoods and businesses, and increases transportation choice.

This statement refines the goals outlined in the FOCUS plan, which calls for the strengthening and resurgence of the urban core, knit together by a connected, multimodal street grid and key service corridors. Subsequent plans have continued to reflect this goal, and this plan is no different as it continues to make strides in creating a more connected Swope Area.



OPPORTUNITIES

To realize this vision, nearly all of the plans tie transportation investments to the mobility and economic needs of Kansas City. MARC's Transportation Outlook 2040 estimates the region will grow by more than 30% in the future, adding 600,000 residents and 320,000 jobs in the next 30 years. The FOCUS citywide plan notes that increasing safe and convenient options for multimodal travel will increase access for employers and employees. At the neighborhood scale, the Swope Area Plan has a focus on connecting activity centers and regional destinations.

At the same time, the plans also contain a desire for sustainable development that reflects the community character that makes Kansas City and its neighborhoods unique.

For example, many of the plans mention enhancing

mobility through transit and placemaking and reducing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel. However, there was also a focus on being strategic about investments by prioritizing key corridors along with critical transit service routes. Highway 71, for example, was called out as a high priority commuter corridor in several documents; Prospect Avenue was also deemed a key service corridor in some of the plans.

Multiple plans acknowledged connectivity and environmental justice barriers throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area, such as rivers, railroads, and highways. These physical and environmental barriers were highlighted as impediments to connecting neighborhoods of color with opportunities. The Prospect MAX Planning Assessment Study acknowledges the trend of historic outmigration from the urban core into newer suburban

developments, citing population decline, segregation, disinvestment, crime, vacant land, and deteriorating physical conditions as key factors the project will seek to address.

The nexus between transportation and development was noted in several plans, some of which highlighted locations within the Swope Area to target with development guidelines. The City of Kansas City Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy creates design guidelines for compact and mixed-use development, which enhances walkability near transit stations and stops. The urban neighborhood guidelines would seem most appropriate for the Prospect MAX station areas. The Major Street Plan provides design recommendations for the streets in Kansas City, classifying Prospect Ave as a "Local Link" (these streets



TOP: Prospect Avenue MAX stations will feature interactive kiosks with real-time bus arrival information. RIGHT: Prospect MAX bus. IMAGE CREDIT: Transit Action Network.

are meant to carry moderate levels of traffic and encourage walkability and multimodal transportation) that connects neighborhoods and services, serving primarily residential areas and accommodating bicycle, foot, and auto traffic.

Finally, the Swope Area Plan recognized the need for additional pedestrian connections across Highway 71 spaced ideally every quarter mile or more frequently across the highway. MoDOT has a Complete Streets policy and the MoDOT Practical Design handbook provides considerations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to be added on major arterial streets. These include having local policies and plans in place (such as the recently adopted KCMO Complete Streets Policy), a local funding sponsor to pay for the facilities, there is demonstrated public support, and the proposed project would address a barrier, man-made or natural.

PROJECTS:

Two projects were featured in several plans as opportunities to change the transportation landscape in the Swope Area:

Highway 71 Transit Study

An alternatives analysis for enhanced transit service along Highway 71 was integrated into Smart Moves 3.0. Service options were evaluated not only along Highway 71, but also on how it might integrate with MAX BRT, the Streetcar, and other transit. Alternatives may integrate into the Downtown Streetcar project along with Prospect Avenue and adjacent railroads. The study determined that while ridership was fairly strong along the arterial (5,500 passenger trips per week), budget limitations had reduced service over the years, limiting its potential for increased ridership and economic vibrancy. This study identified Prospect MAX as the locally preferred alternative.

MAX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Already operating along Main Street and Troost Avenue, MAX BRT will soon operate along Prospect Avenue. Goals for the project include faster, more reliable, and more cost effective transit service, new business and economic development along the Prospect Corridor, and improved passenger amenities to spur ridership. In addition to rapid bus service, Prospect is also set to receive streetscape improvements, multi-modal infrastructure (including more pedestrian crossings), and opportunities for denser land uses at key intersections (such as Prospect Avenue and 63rd Street).





04: BEST PRACTICES



4.1

MANAGING MOBILITY TRADE-OFFS

Given that the Highway 71 corridor was built through one community to allow drivers from other communities to pass through, its design was always going to involve tradeoffs. One of the questions in this effort is how we can most effectively create balance in those tradeoffs. To help with this, it may be useful to consider how other communities balance commuters' desire for fast commutes with local needs for access and safety.

Certain tradeoffs are anticipated and nearly always faced in the planning process. The competing interests of people from different communities and users of different travel modes

are affected by limited funding and limited right-of-way. If money and space were of no concern, we could easily solve most any problem. How much right-of-way is dedicated to people walking, driving, bicycling, and taking transit can drive a project's cost and design, and be central to public discourse. Put another way, tradeoffs between traffic congestion, neighborhood access and safety, transit operations, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian circulation will require resolution that is both technical and values based.

Cities and transportation agencies are usually responsible for analyzing tradeoffs between various design

alternatives and clearly describing and illustrating how those tradeoffs affect other community outcomes and street design requirements. Street redesign projects are likely to result in both benefits and impacts – “winners and losers” – and as a result can be controversial. For this reason, it is essential that designers of such projects undertake a process to engage with members of the community, clarify tradeoffs, and define the community's priorities. These priorities should be defined in terms of both broad community objectives incorporated into the community's vision for itself, and specifically-focused transportation concerns.

Important elements to consider in balancing priorities:



Is there a mode that should be particularly emphasized for that street?



What are the physical constraints; is the right-of-way limited, are there mature trees to save, etc.?



What is the context of the roadway or corridor; is it in a more urban area or suburban area?



What are the constraints on the project; are there budgetary constraints, etc.?



What input has the community provided?

The most successful projects answer the questions on the previous page by reaching out inclusively in their analyses. Such an approach includes:



Understanding the Whole Context

Well-designed streets match the context of the area they serve. Physical characteristics such as the existing street network, and the locations of origins and destinations. In contexts that are or may be transitioning (for example from basically suburban to basically urban) streets should be designed to be consistent with the future context.



Engaging Relevant Disciplines

Correctly diagnosing what an area's context is or should be is better done with the participation of people with varying expertise. The differing perspectives of engineers, urban designers, and planners can help in making the best identification of context.



Engaging Affected Stakeholders

In addition to multi-disciplinary professional participation, collaboration with members of the community is a key part of making the right diagnosis. Not only do people know their own communities, but early participation in the design process can help build support for the ultimate solutions.



Establishing Collaborative Communication

Collaboratively developed solutions are often better supported than ideas created in isolation that have to be explained and defended. This collaboration should begin early and carry on through the process.



Beginning with an Open Mind and a Blank Sheet

While in some instances (such as critical safety issues) there is an immediate need and a clear solution to be implemented, more often street projects involve tradeoffs and opportunities that can be better resolved by groups engaged in a creative process.



Developing Consensus on Goals and Targets

Clearly documenting desired outcomes can help to resolve tradeoffs throughout the process. For example, by introducing the critically important notion of selecting an appropriate target speed by determining what would be the desired speed under low volume/ low activity conditions (e.g., 95th or even higher percentile speed during low vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle volume periods when driver intuition in response to physical clues influences speed).

These process principles are simply stated, but difficult to manage in practice. Even experienced professionals can have a tough time adopting and successfully applying these steps. Yet they are often the differentiator between consensus outcomes and contextual solutions vs. contentious outcomes and mismatched projects.

4.2

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY

Mixing people biking, walking, and taking transit safely with those driving is a fundamental challenge. Each mode of transportation has its own design needs based on both their physical operation and how they experience a street. For example, making a right turn while driving a truck has operational requirements different from making a right turn while riding a bicycle. The experience of traveling a corridor at three miles per hour on foot is very different from traveling at 50 mph in a car. Underlying most of these tradeoffs is the fact that fast moving cars pose a real and perceived danger to people walking and biking, in particular. These factors can inform design decisions and tradeoffs as discussed to the right.



People Walking

Walking is the most basic form of transportation. For people to be attracted to walking it must be safe, useful, comfortable, accessible, and interesting. At the most basic level, walking is facilitated by sidewalks along the street and frequent, safe places to cross the street. Sidewalks and crossings alone, however, may not be sufficient to encourage walking trips by choice. Since pedestrians travel slowly (at about three miles per hour) shorter trips are easier to complete by walking. One of the factors that makes the Highway 71 corridor such a barrier for the community is that the infrequent pedestrian crossings necessitate very long walks that most people are unwilling to undertake.

In addition to physical distance, how the walking environment feels can influence comfort and willingness to walk. Visual interest, created through street-fronting buildings and community design, make walking more pleasant. Public art and seating encourage people to enjoy their community and also enhance the street with a sense of place. Buffers between sidewalks and vehicle lanes can make the walking space feel more comfortable by providing separation between pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffic. This buffer could be designed as paving, grass, landscaping, seating, or other variations. Frequent pedestrian street crossings add to the directness of the walk and cut down the time needed to get from place to place. To the degree possible, pedestrian crossings should be aligned with the most direct path between demand generators.

Along with bicyclists, people on foot and using mobility devices such as wheelchairs and walkers, are the most exposed and vulnerable users of the street. The chance of severe injury or fatality is 50% when struck by a vehicle traveling 30 mph. Minimizing the speed differential between users at conflict points is a key focus of multimodal thoroughfares. These conflict points, or intersections, must minimize crossing distance to reduce exposure to vehicle traffic.



Multimodal Broadway in
Seattle Washington. IMAGE
CREDIT: Adam Coppala.



People Bicycling

Bicycling is an increasingly common form of transportation. The National Household Travel Survey showed that the number of trips made by bicycle in the U.S. more than doubled from 1.7 billion in 2001 to 4 billion in 2009. Along with people walking, those biking are exposed and vulnerable users of the street who need to be accommodated with safe and comfortable facilities. Bicyclists are not all the same and what is required to make them feel safe and comfortable will vary. For example, some bicyclists travel much slower than vehicles, while others travel at higher speeds. On average, bicyclist speeds range from 12 to 20 mph. Some experienced bicyclists (a very small percentage of the total potential bicycling population) are comfortable sharing a lane with cars. For the rest of the population, the type of bicycle facilities that feel safe and comfortable vary based on a combination of motorist speed, traffic volume, roadway width, presence of parking, and other design elements. Using traffic volume thresholds to recommend a specific type of bicycle facility is a good starting point; guidance can be found in the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide. Bicycle facilities physically separated from motor vehicle traffic are effective in attracting people of all ages and abilities, who may not feel comfortable bicycling with vehicle traffic.

Secure bicycle parking helps make sure people biking feel confident that they have a place to park at the end of the ride. Trip-end storage facilities may be provided in the form of bicycle racks, bicycle lockers, or within buildings. Mobility hubs can also be a place to provide safe bike storage along with information and options for transportation connections.

People Taking Transit

Transit is an important element of travel in the study area, providing an option to move large volumes of people per vehicle. Designing for transit means thinking about both transit customers and transit vehicles. Bus stops are pedestrian generators and require safe crossings, as the bus passenger must cross the street on one direction of the trip. An often overlooked need at bus stops is lighting; passengers riding in the early morning or evenings need lighting to increase security as well as make passengers visible to other street users.

In terms of transit vehicles, standard buses are 8.5 feet wide (9.5 feet with side mirrors). The minimum inside turning radius for a bus is 21 to 26 feet and the minimum outer radius is 42 feet. The standard coach is 40 feet long. Articulated buses, not currently in operation in Kansas City, are 60 feet long, although they have a smaller turning radius.

TOOLS FOR ACHIEVING BALANCE

Safe Intersections

Pedestrian crossings at intersections present a number of challenges, including:

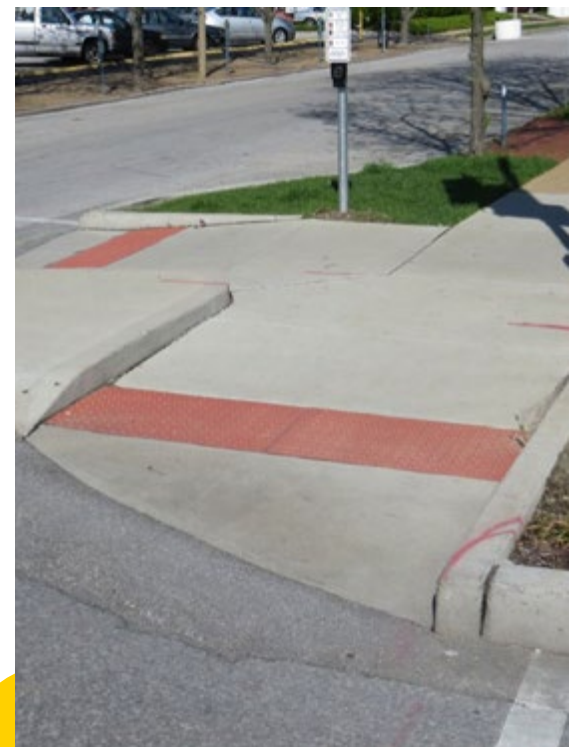
- Existing crosswalks are often located more than ¼ mile apart, and are generally located only at signalized intersections.
- Block spacing is shorter than signal spacing. Since blocks are natural crossing points, people cross between signals. Although in most states, every intersection is legally a crosswalk, whether marked or not, not all motorists are aware of this law.
- In many cases there are no marked crossings at trip generators like bus stops and shopping malls.
- There will likely be resistance to adding marked crosswalks due to concerns of automobile traffic flow, installation cost, liability, and maintenance.
- There may be resistance to adding traffic-controlled crosswalks due to concerns over meeting MUTCD warrants.

Treatments may vary but must be determined by considering vehicle speed, volume, and roadway configurations. Narrow streets with a low traffic volume may not need any formal crosswalks; unmarked, uncontrolled crosswalks may feel safe for all users. Wide, high-speed, and high-volume roads may require more involved treatments to minimize conflicts between people walking and driving. There are also warrants for the location of pedestrian signals (which could be pedestrian-specific, such as flashing beacons, or full signals). These factors include pedestrian volumes, crash history, school location, and proximity to closest traffic control (no closer than 300 feet).

Where a ramp to or from Highway 71 meets a street, there is potential for conflict between people driving, those walking or biking, and other roadway users. The design of highway ramps means that motorists are often traveling at speeds that are higher than desired on a local street. Many entrance and exit ramps are designed to facilitate merging at higher speeds, negatively affecting the peripheral view of a motorist. These factors, while efficient for moving vehicles, create serious conflict points between motorists and vulnerable users on the road.

To reduce speed and increase visibility, pedestrian crossings can be squared off at highway ramps. Other solutions to facilitate a safer junction between a highway ramp and street include:

- Assuring the ramp meets the street at a right angle
- Placing crosswalks perpendicular to the ramp
- Assure traffic calming characteristics on exit ramp, such as tight intersection radii



Removal of a Driving Lane to Accommodate People Biking or Walking

One commonly applied treatment for creating balance between travel modes is the implementation of road diets, which reduce the number of travel lanes in order to accommodate bicycle infrastructure, or pedestrian amenities. These “diets” typically reduce travel lanes from 4 to 3 lanes, resulting in a two-way left turn lane along the center, and single traffic lanes in each direction. This is an approach that has already been applied in the study area along the eastern segment of 87th Street. This arrangement leads to slower vehicular speeds, creating a safer environment for people walking and biking, and allows space for non-motorized transportation infrastructure. Initially, the thought of slower traffic evokes negative connotations, however, in many cases, such a streetscape treatment may increase vehicle capacity by eliminating unpredictable driver behavior that comes with shared traffic/left turn lanes.

Narrowing Travel Lanes

10 or 11 foot travel lanes are acceptable for most city streets. At a posted speed of 35 mph or less, there is no documented difference in the safety of ten-foot travel lanes and twelve-foot travel lanes.

Non-Physical Changes For Better Modal Balance

In addition to physical retrofits, city staff can modify existing maintenance and operations programs to provide for active, balanced, and complete streets:

- Adjust signal timing for slower speeds, can ensure comfortable crossing times, and make walking safer and more convenient. In areas with aging populations, crossing times may need to be lengthened.
- Reduce signal cycles to 60 seconds, assuring that walk signals come up more often.

- Signal timing along corridors should encourage a safe driving speed that will promote active, balanced, and complete streets (e.g., timing signals for 20 or 25 mph driving).
- Work with cities, schools, and local advocacy groups to support Safe Routes to School Programs.

Many of these changes can be made through spot improvement programs. Many are relatively inexpensive. It is not necessary to wait for a full reconstruction project to create an active, balanced, and complete street. More substantial retrofits may require reconstruction. A planned resurfacing project is an excellent time to retrofit the corridor to improve aesthetics, comfort, convenience, economic value, and safety.

4.3

INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

It is always important that transportation serve the overall needs of a community. The Kansas City Swope Area Plan outlines key principles for economic development, including livability, connectivity, thriving, and sustainability. The goals include:

- High-quality, sustainably-built development
- Nodal development that preserves residential character
- Attention to the large number of vacant lots
- Provide adequate jobs for local residents and accessibility to those jobs

These goals were identified from prior area plans (Swope Area Plan, FOCUS Comprehensive Plan, etc.) as well as discussions with Kansas City's Director of Economic Development and the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City. Specific recommended approaches include:

- Allow for increased density around transit nodes
- Package available incentives for developers proposing dense projects that meet area design guidelines
- Create resources to streamline vacant land acquisition
- Leverage existing programs and institutions to create workforce training opportunities
- Establish a community improvement or special services district

These goals and opportunities come together substantially for a couple of nodes in the area:

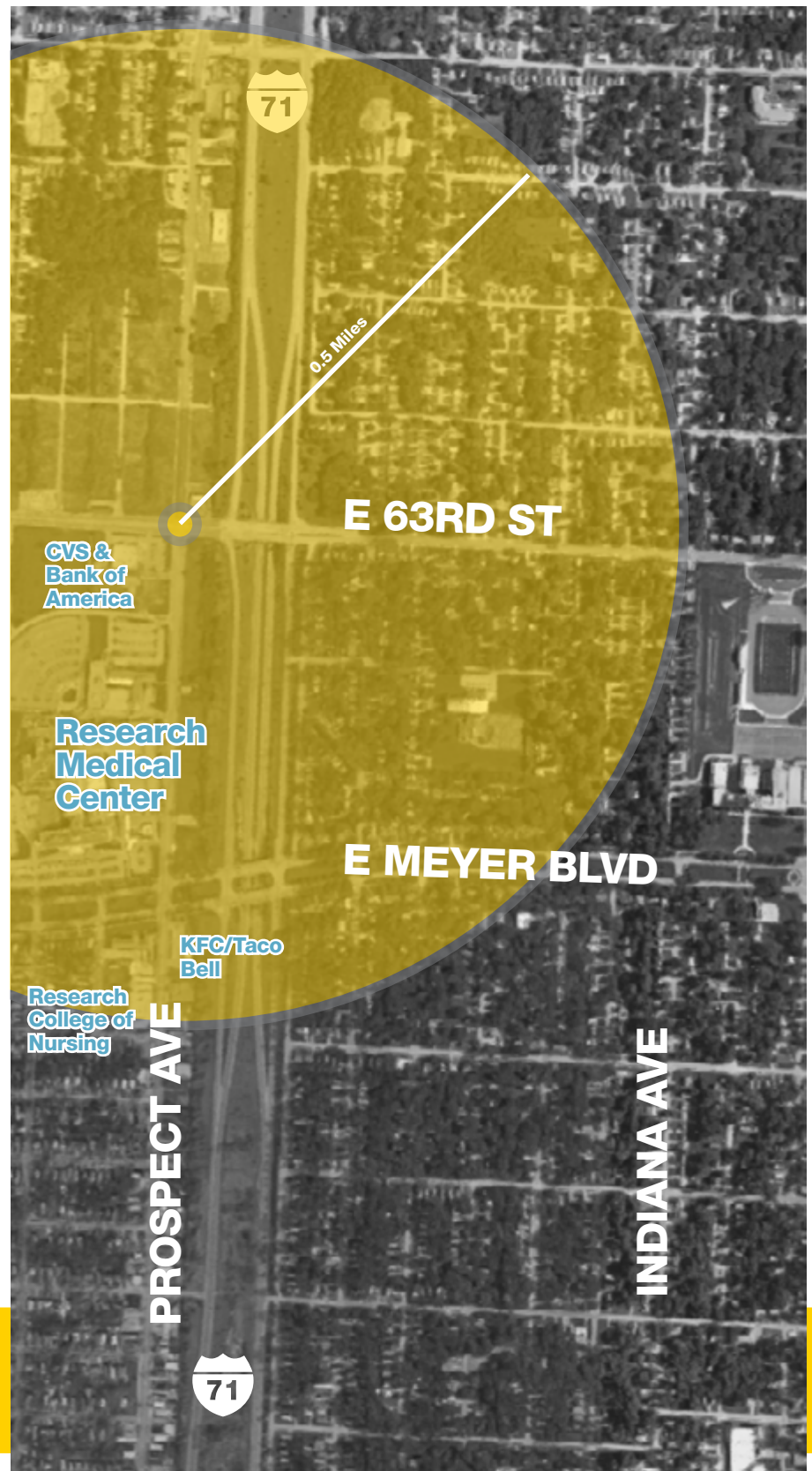
63rd and Prospect Node

This intersection has numerous assets including the Research Medical Center, an unprogrammed park (Daniel Morgan Boone Park), and ownership by the City of significant nearby properties. Housing is important to connect Swope residents to jobs and is particularly well-suited at this location. Workforce housing would support the Medical Center as well as connecting residents to jobs via the Prospect MAX. There are several tools that could be used to spur these changes including a TOD Workforce Housing Fund or low interest sub-loans to TOD developers.

Meyer and Prospect Node

At the southern boundary of the Research Medical Center, the roads around the campus create a physical barrier from the surrounding community.

- **RECOMMENDATION:**
Residents in the Swope Area have emphasized the importance of connecting the community with more employment opportunities. Some of the parcels around this intersection will not likely attract market rate uses because of their smaller, irregular size. Therefore, we recommend integrating more community-based uses that build stronger connection between the existing anchor institution and the surrounding community.
- **TOOL:** Create a workforce development training center that strengthens partnerships between existing social services and workforce training programs and the Research Medical Center. A program that pools existing resources and connects organizations with overlapping missions and goals would connect local residents to work and training opportunities within the community.



DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The following programs are offered through the Kansas City Economic Development Council and could be leveraged in target areas in the Swope Area:

 **Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** allows recovery of eligible development/construction costs through capturing a portion of the increment of increasing property-tax revenue. 100% of property taxes and 50% of economic activity taxes are captured for up to 23 years for a standard TIF. TIF has been used to varying degrees of success across the Swope Area.

 **Planned Industrial Expansion Area (PIEA):** Available to the Kansas City Economic Development Council for encouraging new job creation through tax abatement, the power of eminent domain, and bond financing for land acquisition, construction, and equipment in designated redevelopment areas.

 **Urban Renewal/Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA):** The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA) may issue a property tax abatement to assist in the removal of blight and blighting conditions within urban renewal areas.

 Chapter 353 authorizes the creation of **urban redevelopment corporations** for the purpose of redeveloping blighted areas. The urban redevelopment corporation must prepare and submit to the City a development plan for redeveloping an area within the City that is determined to be blighted. If the area is determined to be blighted and the development plan is approved by the City, the urban redevelopment corporation, upon acquisition of the property title, may receive ad valorem tax abatement for 100% of the value of the improvements to the property for a period of ten years and for 50% for the following 15 years.

JOB CREATION TOOLS

 **Enterprise Zone:** designed to attract new businesses and encourage existing businesses to expand or modernize their operations within an area. Individual business eligibility will be determined based on the creation of sustainable jobs in a targeted industry or demonstrated impact on local industry cluster development.

 **EDC Loan Corporation Revolving Loan Fund:** The EDC Revolving Loan Fund is an alternative for small businesses located within the city limits of Kansas City, Missouri, spending less than \$500,000 for fixed assets.

 **Missouri Business Use Incentives for Large-Scale Development (BUILD):** An eligible industry in manufacturing, processing, assembly, research and development, agricultural processing or services in interstate commerce must invest a minimum of dollar amount in an economic development project; and create a minimum number of new jobs to be eligible.

STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The Kansas City TOD Policy describes existing community improvement districts and federal programs that could potentially be leveraged in the Swope Area:

- **Community Improvement Districts** such as the Downtown Community Improvement District (Central Business District), River Market Community Improvement District (River Market), and Jazz District Community Improvement District (Jazz District) aim to strengthen the network of businesses and community based organizations within their jurisdiction.
- **Section 108 Loan Program** offers loans through local and state governments to provide communities funds for economic development, housing rehabilitation, and other physical development projects. These loans are meant to attract private economic activity and bring in private investment to neighborhoods in need of economic revitalization.
- **The Commercial Façade Rebate Program**, funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant program, aims to improve the aesthetic and commercial attractiveness in city designated commercial revitalization areas.



TOP: Community Improvement Districts such as the Crossroads are characterized by a mix of uses with capacity for infill development. IMAGE CREDIT: KC TOD Policy.



05: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



5.1

PROJECT MENU

Recognizing the tremendous opportunities and challenges to connectivity and access in the Swope Area, the Connecting Swope project team considered a wide variety of options to address the issues identified in the existing conditions analysis. Potential project ideas were gathered from the public input, best practices in other cities, and national design guides. A range of project types and safety improvement locations were identified to improve safety and accessibility in the Swope Area, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit crossing Highway 71.

From this research, a set of project types emerged in four broad categories to reconnect the neighborhood, provide access to jobs and services, and support inclusive economic development.



Infrastructure

Physical changes to existing streets or new streets or pedestrian crossings



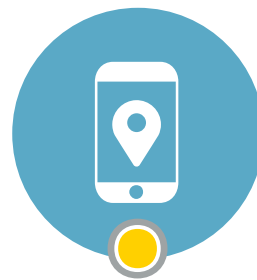
Operations

Improving the efficiency and safety of all users of the street through signal timing, transit service improvements, or maintenance and repair schedules



Education

Encouragement and training for all users of the street on safety, youth safety campaigns, Safe Routes to School programs, and open streets events

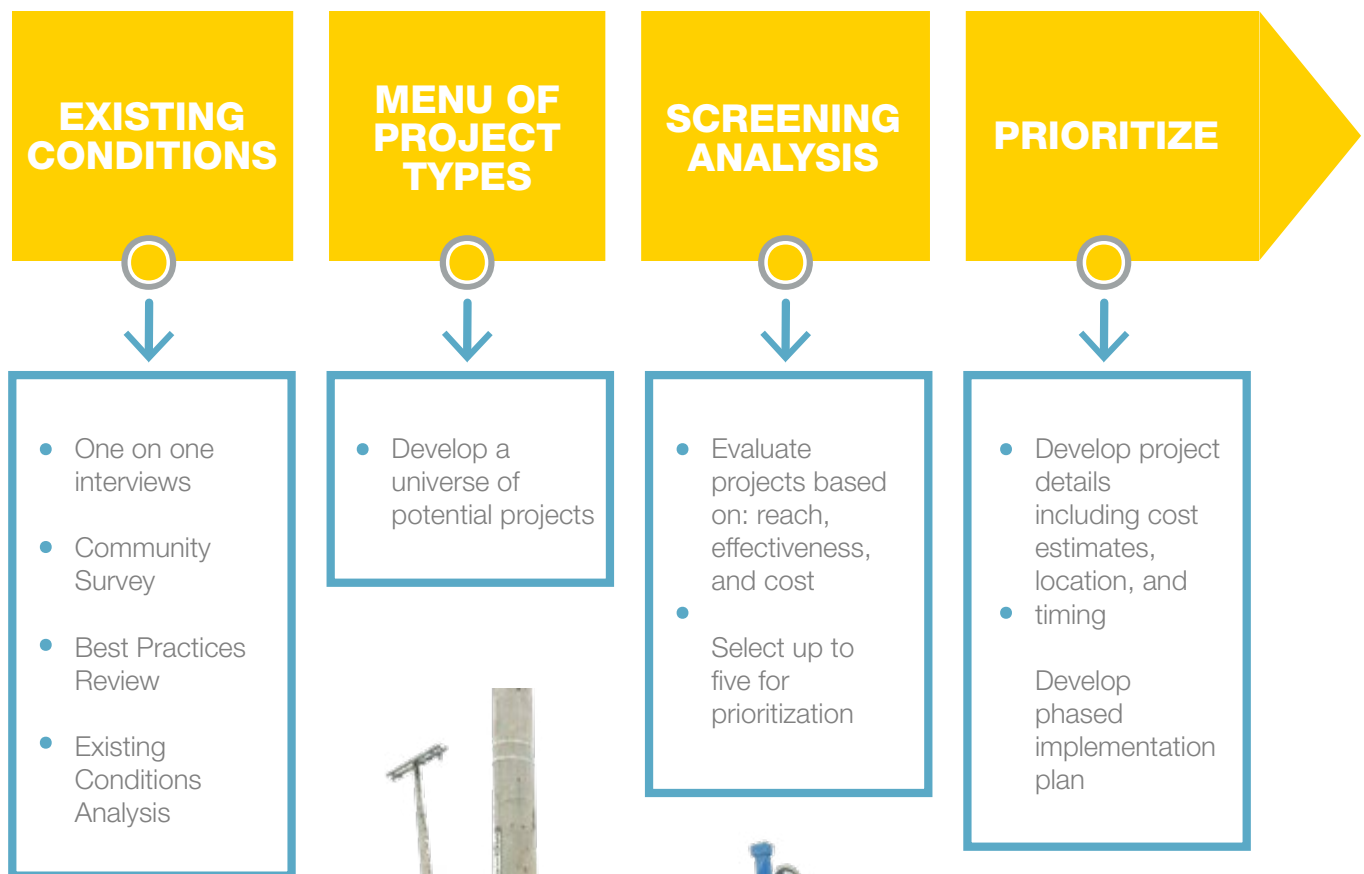


Technology

Increasing access to information, shared mobility services, and ride-hailing

Within these broad categories, projects ranged from short-term, lower-cost improvements to more expansive and expensive solutions. To evaluate the feasibility and desirability of different solutions, the project team received input from the community through a public meeting and a visual preference survey and conducted a technical screening. Both methods were used to assess how well each potential project met the community's goal of creating an interconnected multimodal transportation system in the Swope Area that integrates with land use patterns, connects neighborhoods and businesses, and increases transportation choice.

PROJECT SCREENING & EVALUATION



5.2

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

Initial community feedback on the potential projects was gathered through an online and an in-person open house.

The in-person Connecting Swope open house was held at Alphapointe, the evening of February 1, 2018, as a joint meeting with the Prospect Right-of-Way Enhancements Study. KMBC Channel 9 and KSHB Channel 41 reported on the meeting, and 34 people attended.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key takeaways from the presentation discussion as well as one-on-one conversations were:

Creating more pedestrian crossing opportunities across Highway 71 is a priority

Alternatives to at-grade crossings are preferred; pedestrian overpasses are preferred rather than underpasses due to safety issues and perceptions of crime

Regardless of the infrastructure project, adequate lighting is needed for safety

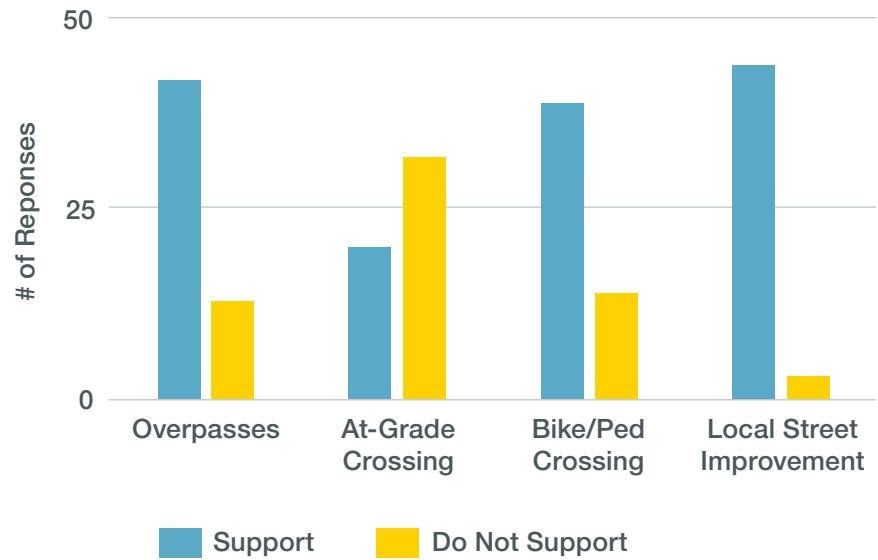
Projects should be visually pleasing; aesthetics and beautification were common sentiments expressed

Crossings at 59th, 55th, 69th Streets and Gregory are priority

Bike facilities should be included on any new crossings if constructed

In addition to the in-person public meeting, the community was invited to participate in an online open house to review the same materials on potential projects as the in-person meeting. The online open house was accessible for two months, from February 1 to March 30, 2018, and captured feedback on what people liked and did not like about the potential strategies. While some people included both positive and negative comments, participants generally preferred overpasses to at-grade intersections 2 to 1 on Highway 71. The vast majority of survey comments were in favor of local street improvements as well as pedestrian and bicycle overpasses rather than underpass tunnels.

Summary of Online Feedback



ONLINE OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

Online comments reflected thoughts regarding upgrading existing at-grade intersections to overpasses, adding new overpasses, adding additional at-grade street crossings of the Highway, building a bicycle and pedestrian overpass or underpass, and improving local streets within the Swope Area.

Many people preferred the overpass option to the underpass concept and comments on improvements to local streets were generally positive.

There should be no time where a pedestrian would encounter highway traffic even at a stop light. There should be bridges or other ways of traveling from one side to the other.

Sure, overpasses are most expensive, but they're the safest options for pedestrians and would make it quicker for cars.

Highway 71 is a headache to drive on. It is the most direct route between my home and work, but with the stoplights it can take me up to 45 minutes to get to and from work depending on how many cars are on the road. The other issue is how the current design fails to improve neighborhood connectivity.

If you build new overpasses it would be great if the design of the bridges would be like the other bridges that exist. This would keep with the continuity on the look of the area and would not make the new overpasses stand out from the rest which I feel would not look good.

Don't like underpass option as it is too isolated/dark.

Definitely like the at-grade crossing better than the overpass, it is more human scale.

Designated on-street parking next to the curb and inside the bike path would be a HUGE improvement!

I like that the overpass or underpass increases connections to the urban fabric, restitching the neighborhoods and area, but safety will be a big factor in this scenario.

A bicycle and pedestrian overpass or underpass seems like the most safe and cost efficient.

Table Summarizing Feedback Received on Strategy Concepts

TYPE	#	STRATEGY	FEEDBACK SUMMARY
 Infrastructure	I1	New at-grade street crossings	 No, do not add additional at-grade crossings
	I2	New street overpasses	 Yes, include facilities for people walking and bicycling on overpasses
	I3	New bicycle and pedestrian over- or under-passes (no cars)	 Yes, include especially as a short term solution
	I4	Expand bikeshare to the Swope Area with a subsidy/free membership for low-income households	 Yes, include recommendations for locations that facilitate crossings and are located near bicycle facilities
	I5	Install sidewalks where there are gaps in the pedestrian network	 Yes, include a methodology that prioritizes locations near crossings, schools, and community facilities
 Operations	O1	Install high-visibility crosswalks, including painted and decorative crosswalks	 Yes, include a methodology that prioritizes locations
	O2	Sidewalk repairs and debris removal	 Yes, include a methodology that indicates high priority locations for debris removal
	O3	Signal timing to minimize delay for pedestrians	 No, signals are already timed and optimized
 Technology	T1	Mobility hubs with travel time information and mobility information	 Yes, recommend locations on the eastside alongside bikeshare stations
	T2	Subsidize ridehailing by partnering with TNC providers to subsidize fares	 No, TNC adoption rates are too low
 Education	E1	Install wayfinding signage throughout the Swope Area in key locations	 Yes, include in conjunction with mobility hubs on key crossing routes
	E2	Expand school safety education programs	 Yes, work with schools and launch in conjunction with infrastructure upgrades
	E3	Host community open streets events to promote walking and bicycling	 Yes, time them with the launch of community infrastructure upgrades

5.3

TECHNICAL SCREENING EVALUATION

The public feedback was coupled with a technical screening, using a simple cost to benefit analysis approach. The purpose of the screening was to evaluate the feasibility and benefits of the potential projects to determine how well they met the community's goals. The screening considered the following variables for each type of project:



Costs

Including capital, operations, and maintenance costs; implementation difficulty; and level of effort



Reach

An estimate of how it will improve community mobility, economic development, and quality of life



Effectiveness

An assessment of how the project could improve safety for people crossing Highway 71, and impact drivers

These variables were combined with basic information about the project, related strategies and implementation partners to develop a project profile sheet for each potential option. The project screening summary table shows the evaluation results of each of the 13 projects.



Project Screening Summary Table

TYPE	#	STRATEGY	COST	REACH	EFFECTIVENESS
			General cost estimate / implementation difficulty / level of effort	Quality of Life, who is impacted? Does it support economic development? Access to jobs?	Safety & Connectivity
 Infrastructure	I1	New at-grade street crossings	\$\$\$\$\$	●●○○	●●○○
	I2	New street overpasses	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●●●
	I3	New bicycle and pedestrian over- or under-passes (no cars)	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●●○
	I4	Expand bikeshare to the Swope Area with a subsidy/free membership for low-income households	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●●○
	I5	Install sidewalks where there are gaps in the pedestrian network	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●●●
 Operations	O1	Install high-visibility crosswalks, including painted and decorative crosswalks	\$\$\$\$\$	●○○○	●●○○
	O2	Sidewalk repairs and debris removal	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●●●
	O3	Signal timing to minimize delay for pedestrians	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●○	●●○○
 Technology	T1	Mobility hubs with travel time information and mobility information	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●●	●●●●
	T2	Subsidize ridehailing by partnering with TNC providers to subsidize fares	\$\$\$\$\$	●●○○	●●○○
 Education	E1	Install wayfinding signage throughout the Swope Area in key locations	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●●	●●●●
	E2	Expand school safety education programs	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●●	●●●●
	E3	Host community open streets events to promote walking and bicycling	\$\$\$\$\$	●●●●	●●●●

\$\$\$\$ = <\$100,000 \$\$\$\$ = \$100,000-\$500,000 \$\$\$\$ = \$500,000-\$1,000,000 \$\$\$\$ = >\$1,000,000

●○○○ = Good ●●○○ = Better ●●●○ = Significant Improvement ●●●● = Best



06:

HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

Concepts, project ideas, and locations where improvements are needed to improve safety and connectivity were generated through the existing conditions analysis and evaluated through the public input and technical screening. This chapter identifies the critical short-term improvements and recommended longer-term vision for the Swope Area. Implementation steps and expected outcomes are detailed for the recommendations

6.1

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

IMPROVE INTERSECTION SAFETY ON HIGHWAY 71

The design of Highway 71 included three locations where cross streets intersect the highway at a traffic signal. People traveling east or west on 55th Street, 59th Street, or Gregory Boulevard are able to cross the highway at these intersections. This unique, original design was intended to be less than a freeway and more than a parkway, but drivers often are not expecting the traffic signals. For people driving, walking, or bicycling across Highway 71 at these three at-grade intersections, safety is a top concern.

Improving intersection safety at these three Highway 71 intersections is a short-term project that will improve driver's awareness of the intersections and safety for people traveling on the cross streets.

Intersection improvements could include:

- Upgrading crosswalks to high-visibility striping and maintaining the painting
- Installing leading pedestrian interval phasing to provide people walking with a head start over vehicles turning at the intersections
- Enhancing streetscaping and reducing corner turn radii to improve pedestrian safety features at crossing locations
- Build out bicycle facilities in the Swope Area, with an emphasis on safe crossing locations
- Revisiting the signal timing at the intersections on Highway 71 and Prospect to minimize impacts for drivers and to provide additional safety for people crossing the highway to access Prospect MAX.
- Consider allowing public art in the parkway space between US-71's separated north- and southbound segments.
- Install wayfinding signage throughout the Swope Area so people know where crossing locations and transit are located.





PAINTED CROSSWALK
ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN RAMP
NEW CURB AND GUTTER
5' DETACHED SIDEWALK

Intersection of E 63rd Street and Highway 71. Improvements will include sidewalks, ADA ramps, stop sign, and marked crosswalks.



MOBILITY HUB & BIKESHARE EXPANSION

A mobility hub is a location where people can access information and mobility services, such as public Wi-Fi, transit pass vending machines, and smart kiosks. They also include wayfinding information with descriptions of the surrounding area, which can be especially helpful for people who are visually impaired. In many cities, mobility hubs also include access to shared mobility services, such as car share and bike share. A mobility hub is planned as part of the Prospect MAX BRT project at the route terminus at Prospect and 75th Street.

The Connecting Swope project identified the need for additional mobility hubs, co-located with bike share stations at locations to the east of Highway 71. Mobility hubs would complement the Prospect MAX BRT and other short-term projects like bicycle and pedestrian bridges by providing residents with a quick and easy way to access maps, information, and bikes. Information at the hub would tell people riding transit when their next bus is expected arrive. Mobility hubs with bike share expansion, and other mobility options such as scooters, will provide residents and visitors with additional mobility options to access Prospect MAX BRT and nearby shops, parks, and services, including transit.



Cottage Grove Station Mobility Hub Chicago, IL



CASE STUDY 1:

Chicago's Cottage Grove Station in Woodlawn, and Ashland/63rd Station in West Englewood are two examples of neighborhood mobility hubs. Located on the city's south side, each station is anchored by rail transit, bus routes, as well as a Divvy bike share station.

CASE STUDY 2:

Philadelphia's Indego Bikeshare system features a cash payment option to allow people who do not have a credit or bankcard to use the system. In addition, the system offers discounted \$5 monthly passes to ACCESS/EBT cardholders and has strategically expanded into low-income neighborhoods.

Indego Bike Share Philadelphia, PA



ADDRESS KEY SIDEWALK GAPS TO ACCESS PROSPECT MAX

When construction of Prospect MAX is complete, people living near Highway 71 will have an improved mobility option and a faster way to get downtown. However, accessing the upgraded transit service will require those living on the east side of Highway 71 to walk or bicycle across to get to the station stops. While many of the streets in the Swope Area have sidewalks on one or both sides of the street, many do not, including those needed to get across Highway 71.

A high priority for the City of Kansas City is installing new sidewalks throughout the city, following the creation of a new systematic sidewalk program in August 2017. The City created a program to systematically evaluate, repair, and replace sidewalks with the goal of making it through two citywide inspection cycles over the 20-year life of the infrastructure bond program. The system for prioritizing projects heavily weights areas near schools, libraries, community centers, and transit.

With the upgraded transit services available in the coming years, areas around Swope should be prioritized for sidewalks where gaps exist in the current network. Priority locations should be streets that currently connect across Highway 71 or those that connect to a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge. To ensure safety and connectivity for people walking and bicycling, sidewalk gaps in these areas should be addressed.



GO KC Programs aims to repair and replace sidewalks citywide. IMAGE CREDIT: KCMO

Spot Repair Sidewalk Program

Before the passage of the April 4th General Obligation Bonds, the spot repair sidewalk program was paid for by assessments on property owners. In fairness to those who will pay the new tax, the City forgave the outstanding assessments before the April 4th vote. The city's systematic sidewalk inspection process began with construction of a shovel-ready backlog of spot repairs.

GO KC Sidewalk Program

New Systematic Sidewalk Inspection Program

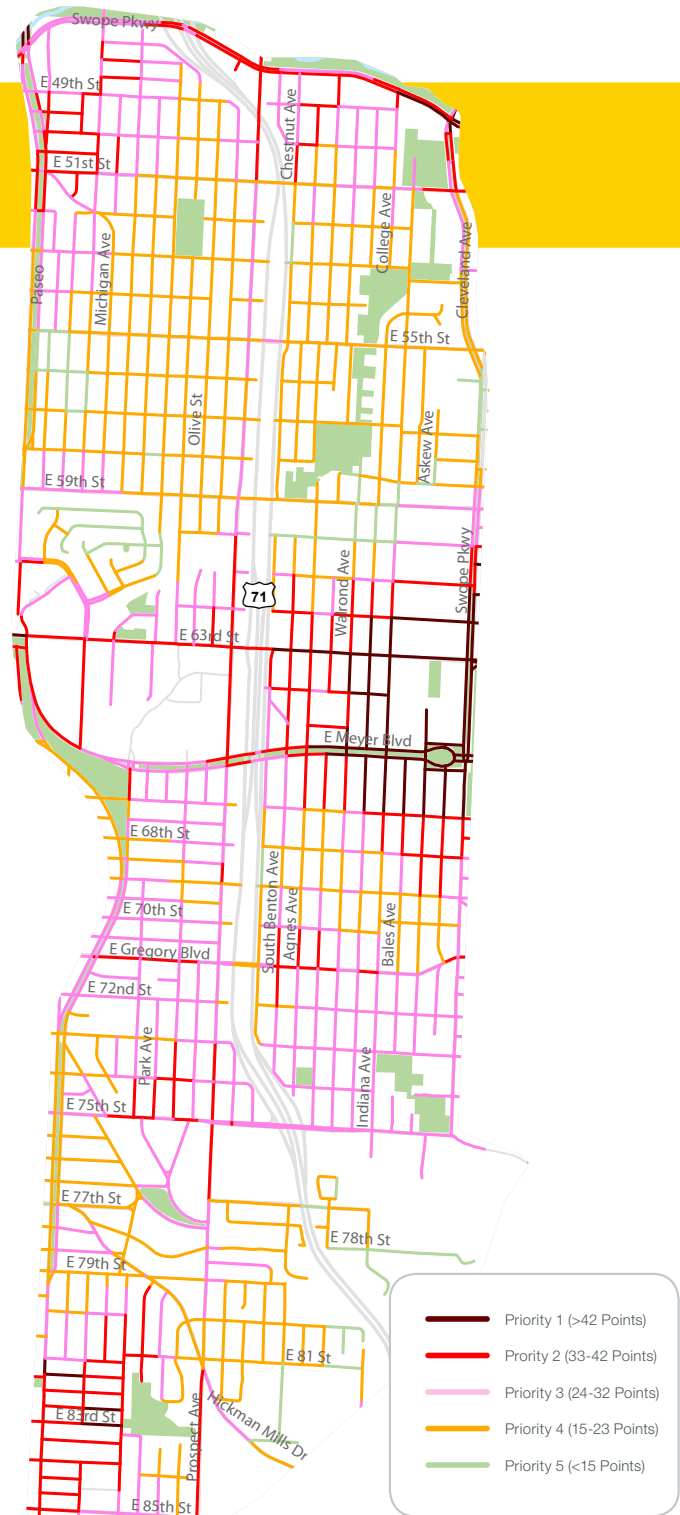
The systematic inspection will create priority lists for inspection based on a data-driven points system. The program assigns points based on proximity to locations and other household factors.



Systematic Inspection Prioritization Point System

- Schools, Libraries and Community Centers **(8 points)**
- Hospitals and Safety Net Providers **(8 points)**
- Median Household Income **(3, 5, 8 points)**
- Transit Stops **(3, 5, 8 points)**
- Parks **(5 points)**
- Grocery Stores/Markets **(5 points)**
- Arterial Streets **(5 points)**
- Vehicle Access **(3, 4, 5 points)**
- Population Density **(1-5 points)**
- Employment Density **(1-3 points)**
- Transportation Terminals **(1 point)**

2017 SIDEWALK DEMAND ANALYSIS



WAYFINDING & PLACEMAKING

New transportation infrastructure, parks, and open space will create new opportunities for people living in and visiting the Swope Area to experience the neighborhood. Installing flags, banners, and signs, as well as artistic elements in street design can create a visual identity for the Swope Area and help people navigate.

Placemaking is a term for small infrastructure improvements that contribute to the identity of a neighborhood or street. Streets can be great opportunities for placemaking as they typically represent the largest area of public space a community has. Placemaking emphasizes designing streets for people, not just transportation. Examples of placemaking that could be used in the Swope Area include installing street furniture (e.g., tree grates, bollards, light poles, etc.) along key corridors and developing custom logos that emphasize the area.

Wayfinding is a particularly effective type of placemaking. The term refers to all the ways people orient themselves in an area and understand what is around them. Wayfinding works best when signs are located at decision points, such as intersections, crosswalks, or at key locations in the corridor or neighborhood. Wayfinding is ideally designed at a scale for pedestrians, rather than conventional signage designed to speak to automobile traffic. While conventional wayfinding signage, such as street signs, provides clear information, wayfinding can also be used to brand an area as a vibrant, livable community.

Examples of wayfinding opportunities in the Swope Area include:

- Pedestrian-oriented “distance to” signage
- Banners on light poles with street, neighborhood, or district names, etc.
- Decorative or pendant lighting
- Special pavement patterns and designs that relate to the characteristics of a location, including decorative crosswalks

Denver Community Streets Project Denver, CO



Walk Your City Signs Grand Rapids, MI



ogram



CASE STUDY 1:

The Denver Community Streets Program assists neighborhoods and community based organizations through the process of designing and permitting street placemaking projects. The program has focused on artistic crosswalks, intersection murals, and pop-up events. Design, installation, and maintenance of all street art are the responsibility of the applicants.



CASE STUDY 2:

The City of Grand Rapids uses decision wayfinding signs to guide people to popular destinations, shopping, recreation, and public parking locations. Signs feature city-based branding and arrows pointing to nearby points of interest.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

For people walking or bicycling, traveling up to a half mile out of their direction of travel to cross Highway 71 can be a significant barrier to access. With distances between cross streets ranging from 1,800 to 3,400 feet, informal crossing locations are being used to cut through the median and cross the highway. With vehicle speeds of 45 mph on Highway 71, these informal crossings create dangerous situations for pedestrians.

In the long term, it is hoped that the community will coalesce around a stitched-together network of multimodal connections (see Section 6.2). For such a vision to become reality, however, it will take time. A potential interim solution to providing connectivity in advance of a full restitching of the transportation network could include bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossings that physically separate people walking and bicycling from busy vehicle traffic on Highway 71. The bridges can be designed with ample lighting and ramps to ensure safety and access. Before such a solution is acted on, extensive community outreach would be conducted to design the bridges to best serve the communities.

While constructing new bicycle and pedestrian crossings provides a lower cost and shorter term alternative to full street overpasses or additional at-grade intersection crossings, the funds for these interim improvements would need to be identified. However, because costs are lower, bicycle and pedestrian bridges can potentially be interspersed with existing crossing locations to provide safe crossings up to every quarter mile.



Depot Avenue Trail Pedestrian Bridge Gainesville, FL



Lafayette Park Bridge Detroit, MI



CASE STUDY 1:

The Depot Avenue Trail pedestrian bridge in Gainesville, Florida, was designed with artistic components to provide a more comfortable crossing experience. Aesthetic and architecture play a key role in the use of a space, whether as a destination or as a pathway.

CASE STUDY 2:

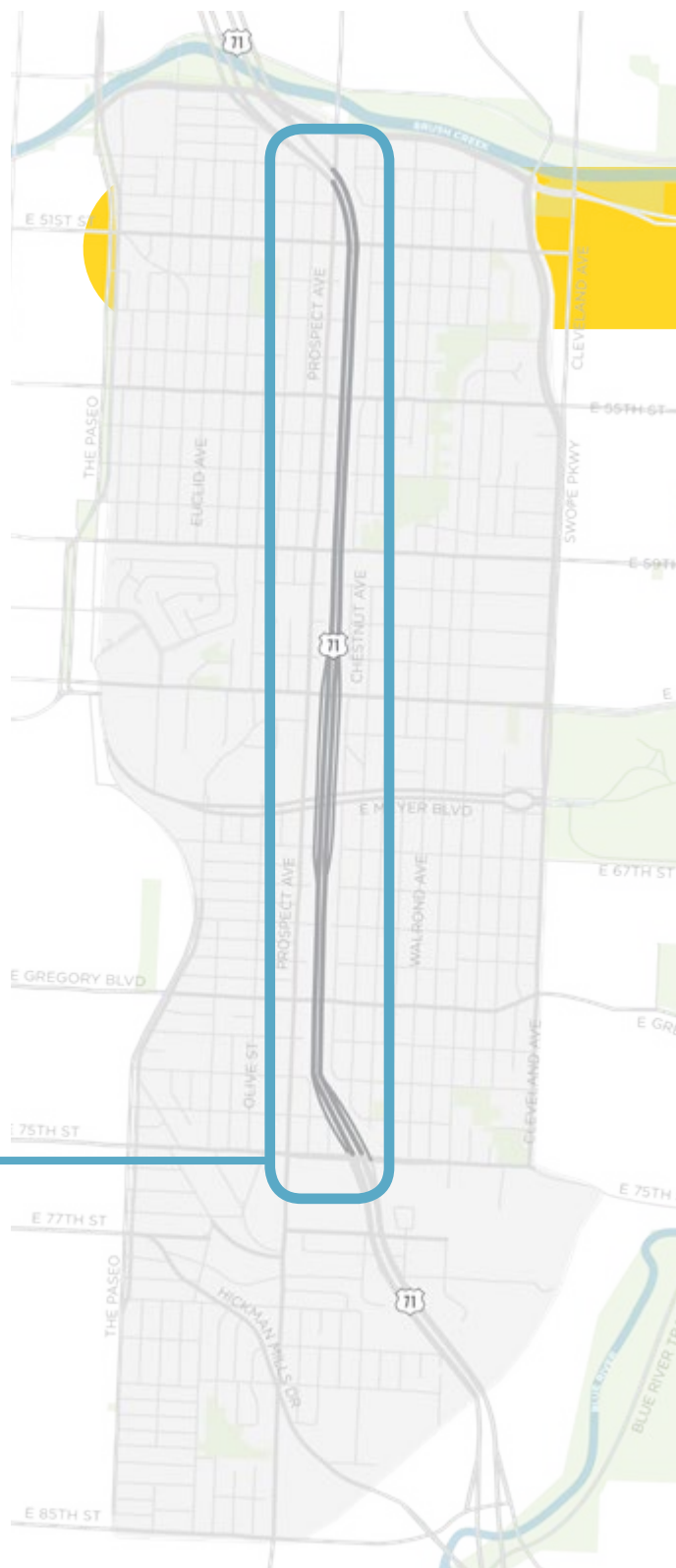
A pedestrian bridge connecting Eastern Market and Lafayette Park in Detroit, MI is one of only four crossings of Interstate 75 between the two neighborhoods. An informal market operates on the pedestrian bridge, creating opportunities for community placemaking and benefits to small businesses.

6.2 LONGER-TERM VISION

RESTITCHING THE GRID

Construction of Highway 71 cut through the neighborhood and separated the Swope Area to the east and west. With limited crossing locations, it is difficult for people living on one side of the highway to access services, amenities, and transportation options on the other side. With neighborhood retail, small businesses, the medical center, and soon bus rapid transit, Prospect Avenue is expected to continue to be a key destination for people in the area.

Over the longer term, reconnecting the neighborhoods on the east and west side of the highway can best be accomplished by constructing new overpass bridges and upgrading the existing intersections on Highway 71 to overpasses. This is a longer-term project that would need to be accomplished over several years due to its scale and the number of project components.



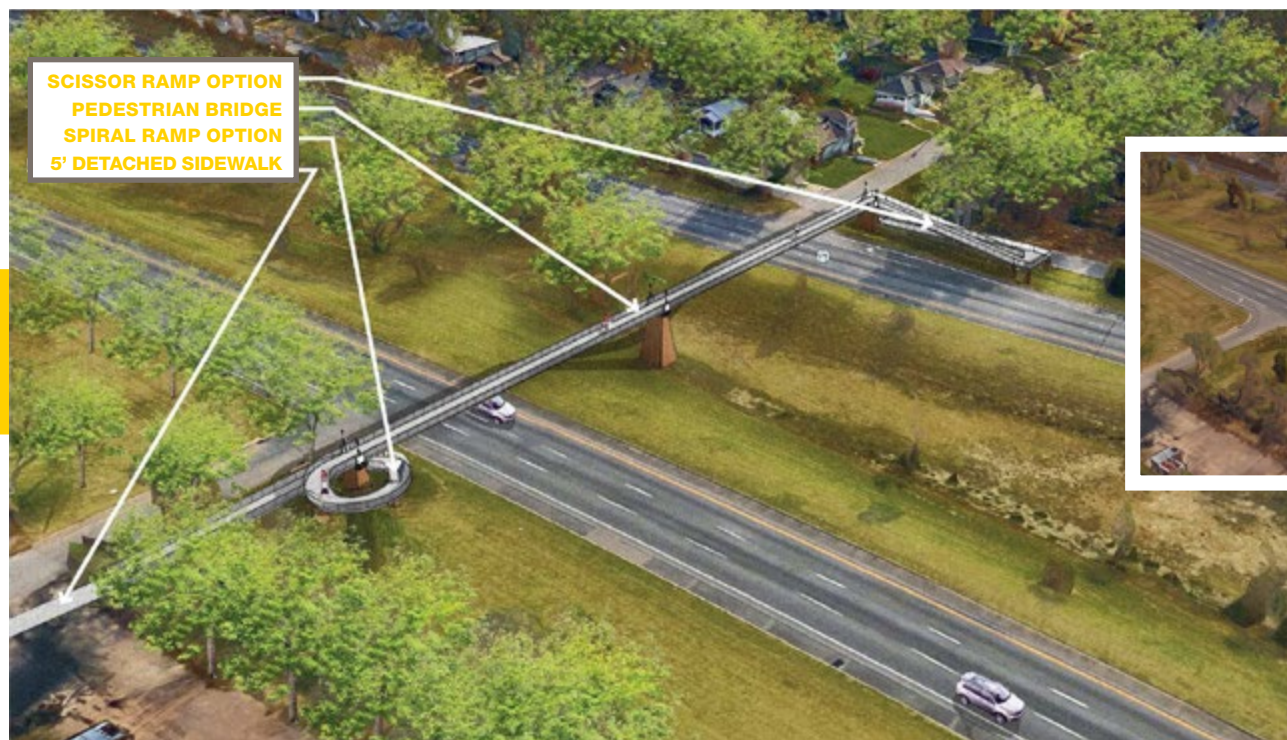


SHIFTED TRAVEL LANES

One of the most significant project components is shifting the north- and south-bound travel lanes together to reduce the size of the median. This would provide a number of benefits to the community. It would reduce the distance people would need to cross the highway on a bridge, improving the crossing experience for people walking and bicycling. Shorter bridge overpasses would also reduce the cost of the project by reducing the length of the bridges that need to be constructed. Finally, the shifted travel lanes on Highway 71 could improve traffic flow for commuters.



TOP Highway 71 view north of
E Meyer Street BOTTOM Highway
71 view south of E Meyer Street



OVERPASSES

Constructing new overpass bridges where there are currently not crossing locations, would be the priority, before upgrading the existing intersection locations. The overpass bridges would be designed to provide a safe and comfortable experience for people walking and bicycling while also providing another opportunity for people driving to travel east/west. The bridges should include ample sidewalks of at least six feet wide, along with landscaping components including trees to provide shade and increase the seamless connectivity over the highway. Crosswalks and curb ramps would be required for all access.





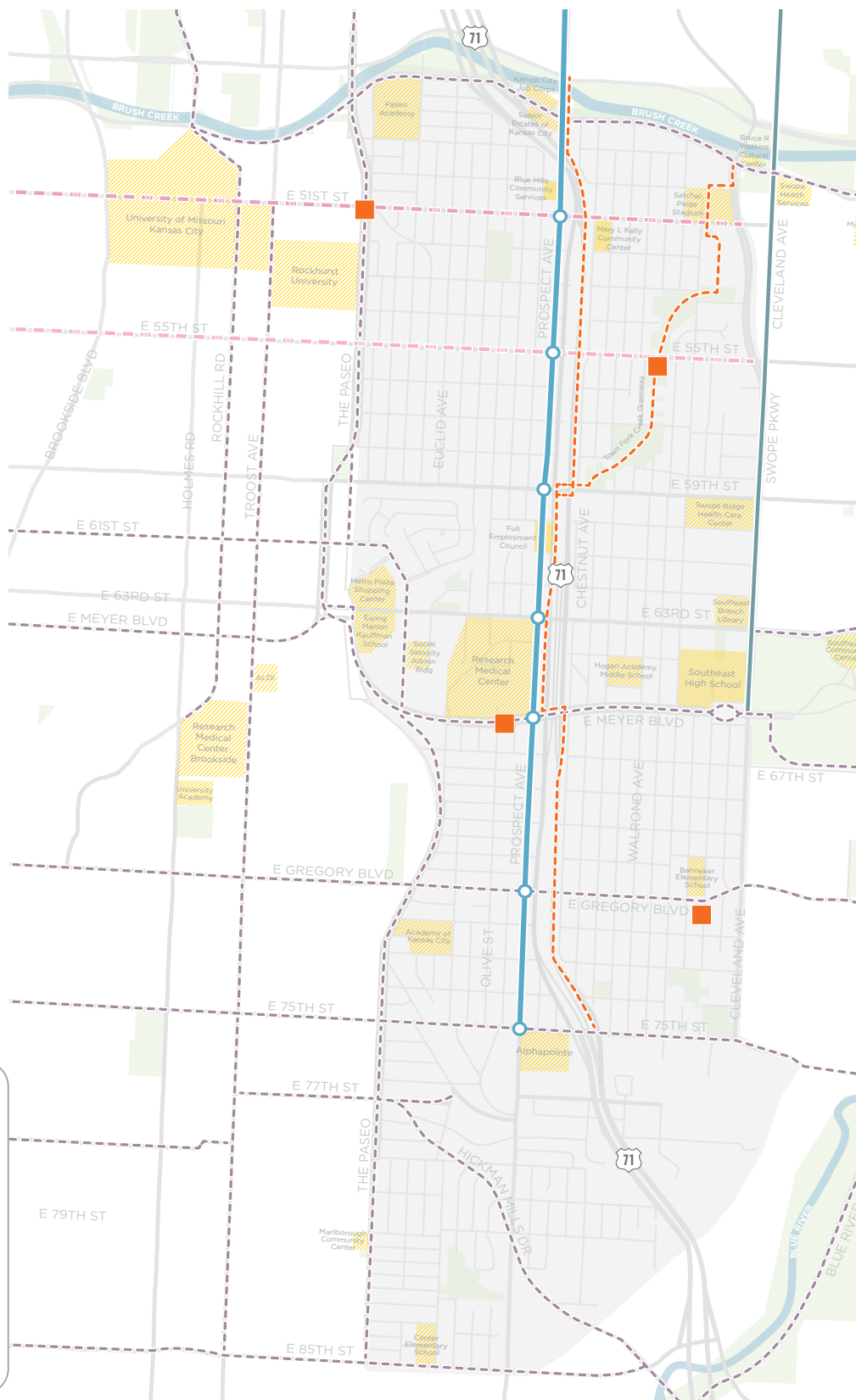
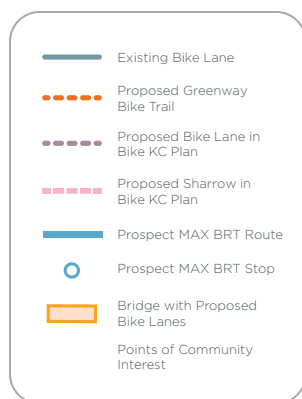
PARKS AND TRAILS

With the size of the highway reduced, the land that was underutilized in the highway median can be repurposed to act as a buffer between the highway and the neighborhoods. This space can accommodate parks, playgrounds, and a multipurpose trail that could be used to provide even greater connectivity within the community.

TOP LEFT View of Highway 71 and 69th Street with proposed bike ped overpass bridge. TOP RIGHT Rendering of park and trail system along Highway 71. BOTTOM Rendered bridge with bike lane.

BIKE NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

The Swope Area benefits from close proximity to a number of trails, open space, and parks. However, there are no on-street bicycle facilities or off-street trails connecting Swope Area residents to these amenities. The City Planning & Development Department's Long Range Planning and Preservation staff, along with multiple city departments, partner organizations, and community members are currently working on a bicycle plan for the city. The Bike KC plan prioritizes bicycle routes that are safe and comfortable for bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Connections in the Swope Area are intended to connect residential areas to nearby parks and open space, as well as transit stops and employment areas.





TOP High visibility color painted bike lane along Highway 71 will provide better connections and access to other destinations within the Swope Area. BOTTOM View of bridge with bike lanes.

LOCAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS (SIDEWALKS)

On either side of Highway 71, the Swope Area benefits from a dense street grid connecting residents to nearby destinations, including schools, shopping, and transit stops. However, residential neighborhoods in the Swope Area were built over many years; some areas have sidewalks while others have them only on one side of the street or do not have them at all. Further, some of the existing sidewalks are not in good condition and many intersections need crosswalks and curb ramps. Ensuring all residents have access to safe and comfortable places to walk is a critical component to improving connectivity.

Installing new sidewalks and high-visibility crosswalks along with repairing those that are not in good condition is a relatively easy and low-cost way to inform residents where it is safest to cross the street, and let drivers know where to expect pedestrians. The more that gaps are filled, particularly in conjunction with sidewalk repairs, the more that community members will find walking to be a safe and convenient means of getting where they need to go.





TOP Intersection of E 53rd Street and Agnes Ave. Improvements will include sidewalks, ADA ramps, stop sign, bike share station, and marked crosswalks.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Middle Blue River Green Infrastructure Project in the Marlborough neighborhood is an award-winning example of how green infrastructure can benefit the residents of the Swope Area. Benefits and outcomes include traffic-calming measures to improve neighborhood safety; street repairs; collection and storage of stormwater runoff; stormwater infiltration that recharges groundwater resources; decreased neighborhood flooding and backups; reduced stormwater entering the collection system; improvements to parks, and existing sewer pipes; and use of rain barrels, personal rain gardens, pervious pavement, and other best management practices.

Green infrastructure can be integrated into projects throughout the Swope Area, particularly in conjunction with the Town Fork Greenway project.

Opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure include:

- Permeable pavers and porous sidewalk pavement
- Curb extension rain gardens
- Bioretention rain gardens





TOP LEFT Bioswales and planter boxes woven into street design in Chicago, Illinois. TOP RIGHT Green infrastructure is seamlessly integrated into transportation facility design in Seattle, Washington. BOTTOM LEFT Planter boxes used along sidewalks in Portland, Oregon. BOTTOM RIGHT Example of stormwater infrastructure found in Marlborough neighborhood of Kansas City. IMAGE CREDIT: US Environmental Protection Agency.

OUTCOMES

The recommendations in the Connecting Swope plan are designed to meet the community's goals, improve safety and connectivity in the Swope Area, and continue to facilitate mobility for people in Kansas City and the region. The short-term recommendations focus on immediate improvements to safety in the Swope Area, both crossing Highway 71 and within the surrounding neighborhood streets. In the longer-term, the vision is to reduce the amount of land used for the highway and transform the space that was used for an unutilized median into a true community asset. By using this part of the Highway 71 right-of-way to create parks, recreation areas, and open space, these recommendations will give some of the land used for the highway back to the residents of the neighborhood to use.

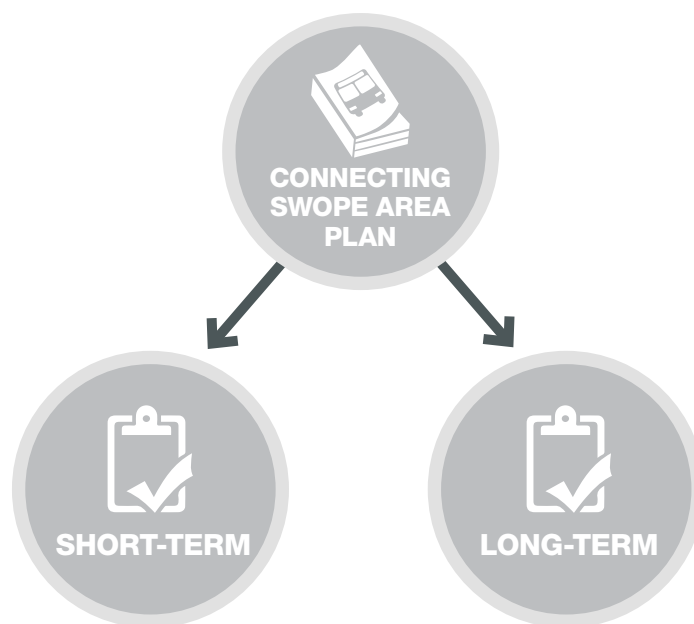
Cost Estimate: \$50-235 million
depending on level of implementation





The Connecting Swope plan is divided into shorter and longer-term implementation phases. This was done in recognition that there is an immediate need to improve the safety of Highway 71 at-grade intersection crossings. The Swope Area cannot wait for the longer-term vision to be put in place when there are short-term improvements that can improve the safety of the highway now.

This phased approach is also necessary as the residents of the Swope Area have a long and painful history working with the local, regional, and state government through the planning, design, and construction of the highway. Working with the community on the design and implementation of the recommendations is critical to rebuilding trust with residents and businesses in the Swope Area.



The Connecting Swope Area Plan is divided into two phases: short-term and long-term, both discussed in the next chapter.



07: IMPLEMENTATION

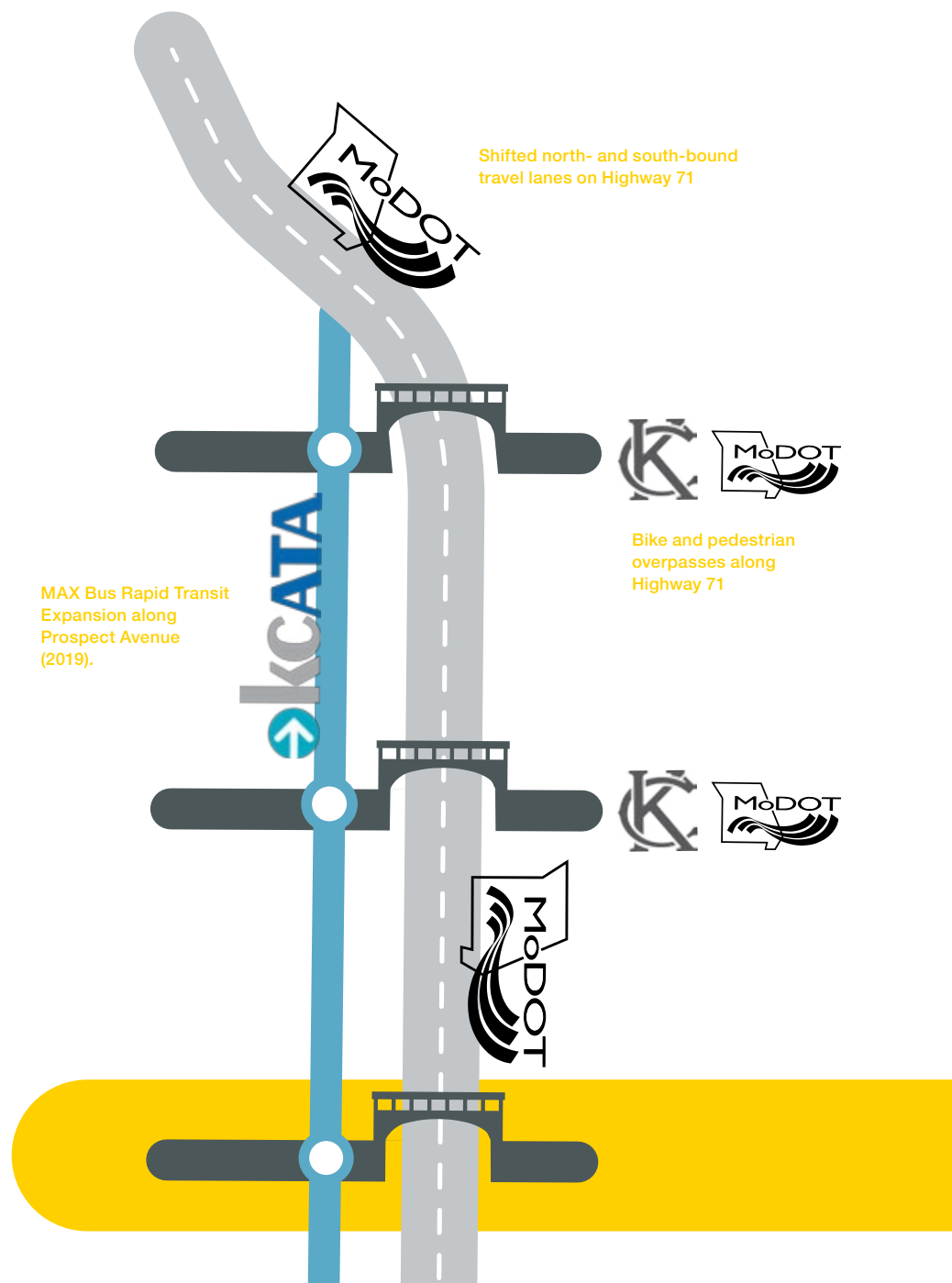


7.1

COMMUNITY-BASED IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the recommendations in the Connecting Swope plan will require close collaboration between community members and local, regional, and state government funding partners. The chapter outlines key elements of the implementation strategy and highlights the need for a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process of working alongside the community.

While the The Connecting Swope transportation plan included a community process, more work is required before projects processed. A more robust community dialog should be undertaken to consider the ideas included here or other ideas that emerge from that process. The decisions arrived at through that future process should be used to guide future transportation decisions and investments in the corridor.



Over time the recommendations from the plan those community efforts should be incorporated into other planning efforts documents and programs, and used to guide funding decisions. Funding is clearly no small part of the remaining discussions and partners in implementation of these recommendations include the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), the City of Kansas City, the Mid-America Regional Council, and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority..

The recommendations must be developed in partnership with community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, and

community members. Creation of a Community Task Force or advisory committee should be considered in order to provide a clear means of communication between the funding partners and the people who live in the community.

Regular updates to the broader Swope Area community and larger Kansas City region should be provided regularly. These status updates could take the form of a community open house meeting with a similar format to the 'Progress on Prospect' event in 2017. The purpose of the meeting would be to update community members on implementation

status of the Connecting Swope recommendations, seek input on design and phasing considerations, and identify any complementary or supportive policies or programs needed. Ensuring a two-way flow of communication regularly throughout the implementation process will ensure the recommendations meet the goals of the Swope Area.



7.2

SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

The recommendations in the Connecting Swope plan provide specific projects and improvements needed to improve safety and connectivity in the area. These project recommendations would be strengthened by the following complementary policies and programs that could be adopted and implemented by the City of Kansas City.

VISION ZERO PROGRAM

Vision Zero is an approach to eliminate all traffic fatalities and reduce severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. First implemented in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero has proved successful across Europe, and now many cities in the United States are adopting Vision Zero policies. Vision Zero policies often include programs that provide data analysis to target safety improvements where crashes happen the most, updated street design guidelines intended to lessen the severity of crashes, and cross-disciplinary collaboration among local traffic planners and engineers, policymakers, and public health professionals. Vision Zero recognizes that people will sometimes make mistakes, so the road system and related policies should be designed to ensure those inevitable mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Swope Area benefits from a number of schools, recreation centers, and parks. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs fund infrastructure improvements and educational programming to make it safer for children to walk and bicycle to and from school.

MARC assists with local SRTS efforts by providing training and technical assistances in four proven approaches to create a safe and welcoming environment for children to walk or bicycle to school.

In Kansas City, BikeWalkKC creates a local opportunity, as the organization organizes extensive SRTS programs with local schools.

ENCOURAGEMENT uses events and contests to persuade students to try walking and biking.

EDUCATION incorporates a curriculum that teaches students about the benefits of walking and biking for their personal health and the well-being of the environment. Important safety skills are also covered.

ENGINEERING focuses on making changes to the walking and biking environment surrounding schools and neighborhoods. This focuses on reducing speeds and creating safe crossings and facilities for walking or biking.

ENFORCEMENT uses laws to educate and ensure the safety of children.

EVALUATION assesses ongoing programs and improvements to help gauge impacts and guide improvements.

EQUITY ensures that programs bring benefits to all demographic groups.



BikeWalkKC is a nationally-recognized leader in helping to get more kids walking and biking in Kansas City, offering services, programs, resources, and consulting for parents, communities, and schools. Opportunities in the Swope Area could include organizing a walking school bus with neighbors, requesting a crosswalk across a busy street, adding bike racks at schools, and hosting a walk to school day.



OPEN STREETS PROGRAM

Encouraging people to get outside and walk or bicycle can be a great way to introduce people to different ways of getting around their community. Open streets events, also known as ciclovías, close down major community thoroughfares for a day, opening the street for people to walk, bike, roller blade, and explore their neighborhood. These events help build a sense of community and neighborhood pride and can be targeted economic development tools that coincide with holidays, festivals, or the construction of a community improvement. For example, an open streets event in conjunction with the opening of a new or improved Highway 71 crossing could be a great way to celebrate implementation of the Connecting Swope plan.

CicLAvia event temporarily closes a main boulevard in Los Angeles, California to promote active transportation. IMAGE CREDIT: CicLAvia Los Angeles

7.3

UPDATING THE PLAN

The recommendations in this transportation plan should be reviewed at regular intervals, as underlying conditions or goals change in the community. In considering when to update the plan, the City and partner agencies may wish to coordinate timing with a future update to the comprehensive plan, to best align land use and transportation changes and goals. A plan must evolve over time to be effective, so this plan should be used to the extent it is accurate in assessing the area's transportation needs.





