



Reconnecting the
EAST SIDE

Reconnecting the East Side Community Advisory Group Meeting #2

Mapping Your Vision

Thursday, July 17, 2025, from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m.

THANK YOU TO OUR HOST!

Mary Williams-Neal Community Center

3801 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64130





Community Advisory Group Goals

- Shepherding the Reconnecting the East Side project
- Helping gain community consensus related to how best to improve US-71
- Addressing the **1985 Federal Consent Decree**



Introductions

Name

Organization

In a single word or phrase, what does
reimagining US-71 mean to you?

Today's Agenda

- **Presentation**
 - Project Background
 - Study Process and Community Engagement
 - Project Purpose and Need
- **Mapping your vision (Design Activity)**
- **Evaluation criteria**
- **Next steps**



The poster features the Kansas City logo and the title 'Reconnecting the EAST SIDE' with the subtitle 'Prioritizing Safety and Connection'. Below this are four icons: an information 'i' icon, a speech bubble icon, a calendar icon, and an email '@' icon. The phrase 'LET'S REIMAGINE US-71' is written in a red, hand-drawn style. The background of the poster shows a blue-tinted image of people in a community meeting.

Visit the project website to learn more and submit feedback:
ReconnectEastSide.com

Reconnecting the East Side is not just about physical connections. It is also about economic, social, residential, civic, and spiritual reconnection from the past to the future.



Reconnecting the East Side | 1



Background

US-71 History

Project Study Area

US-71 History

- **1950s-2001:** Planning, Design & Construction
- **1985 Consent Decree:** Outcome of community-led opposition to the construction of US-71.

“Facility desired in the South Midtown Corridor as something less than a freeway but more than a parkway.”

Historic Impacts

- Displacement of residents
- Loss of economic activity
- Disinvestment in community

On-going Impacts

- Pollution (air, noise, light)
- Negative effects on health
- Physical barrier dividing neighborhood
- Transportation safety and mobility challenges
- Lack of economic development



The Project Study Area

Providing safe transportation improvements for the community, the Reconnecting the East Side project aims to address some of the long-standing issues created when US-71 Highway construction divided neighborhoods

Project Boundaries:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. on the north
- 85th Street on the south
- Paseo Boulevard on the west
- Swope Parkway on the east





CAG Input is Essential

- Study process
- Overview of community comments
- Draft Purpose and Need Statement

The Process

Phase 1 – Planning Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

- Planning
- Purpose and Need
- Initial alternatives
- Refined alternatives

Phase 2 – Federal Consent Decree

- Updates on the Federal Consent Decree process

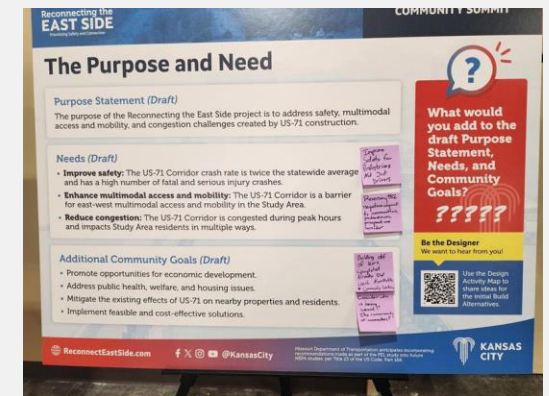
Phase 3 – NEPA and Early Design*

- Further refined alternatives

**Phase 3 may commence if the Federal Consent Decree is amended*

Community Summit #2

June 24, 2025 | Blue Parkway Sun Fresh | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.





Draft Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Reconnecting the East Side project is to address safety, multimodal access and mobility, and congestion challenges created by US-71 construction.

Draft Needs

- **Improve safety:** The US-71 Corridor crash rate is twice the statewide average and has a high number of fatal and serious injury crashes.
- **Enhance multimodal access and mobility:** The US-71 Corridor is a barrier for east-west multimodal access and mobility in the Study Area.
- **Reduce congestion:** The US-71 Corridor is congested during peak hours and impacts Study Area residents in multiple ways.

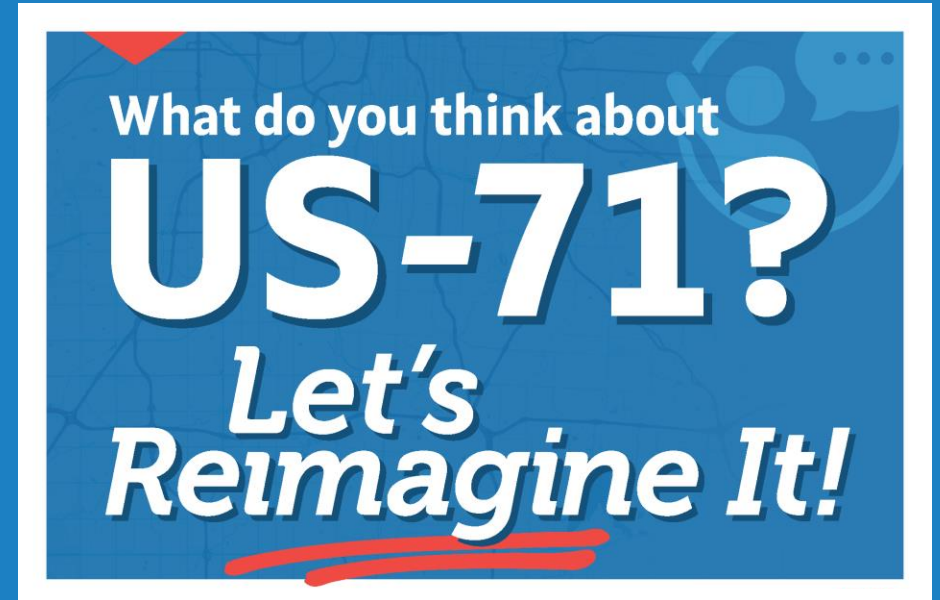
Additional Community Goals

- Promote opportunities for economic development.
- Address public health, welfare, and housing issues.
- Mitigate the existing effects of US-71 Highway on nearby properties and residents.
- Implement feasible and cost-effective solutions.



Mapping Your Vision

- Initial alternatives
- Your designs for a reimagined US-71





Reconnecting the
EAST SIDE

Public Works Department

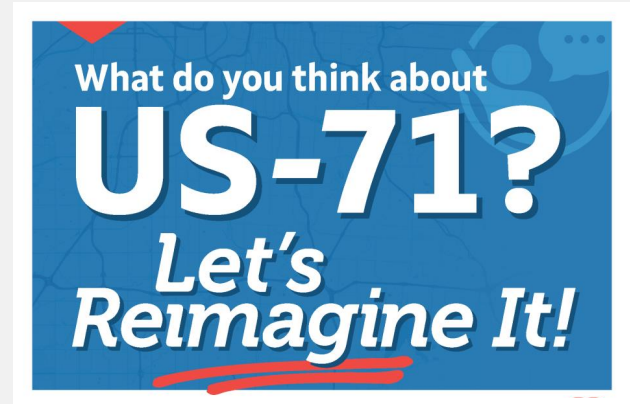
No-Build Alternative

Focus and Programming

- Address maintenance and safety issues as a series of improvements funded via the City and/or MoDOT's capital improvement budgets

Improvements

- Brush cleanup
- Trash pick up
- Pothole fixes
- Sign improvements
- Roadway striping
- Streetlighting
- Signal timing
- Guardrails





Build Alternatives

Focus and Programming

- Address the Purpose and Need
- Respond to additional community goals
- Provide transportation improvements for pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists, those using mobility devices, and motorists
- Improve east-west connectivity and north-south adjacent routes
- Identify opportunities for land development and green space
- Enhance streetscaping
- Elevate public health and education
- Other (TBD)

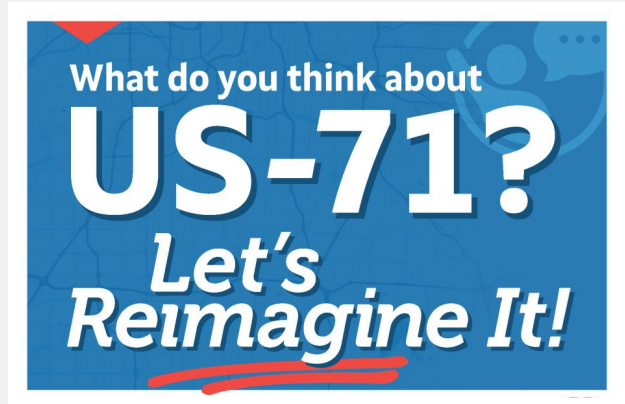


Reconnecting the
EAST SIDE

Public Works Department

Build Alternatives

Ideas from the Community



Change US-71 to a Parkway



Add Bridges / Overpasses



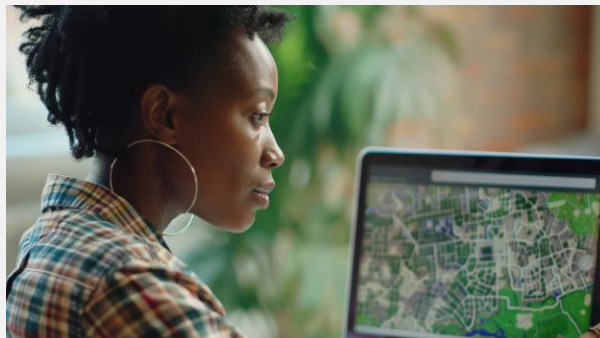
Make Pedestrians Safer



Add Transit Options



Add Splash Park



Change How Land is Used



Add Housing



Add Services and Stores

Build Alternatives:

Game Pieces for Design Activity



Viaducts



Overpasses



Underpasses

Build Alternatives:

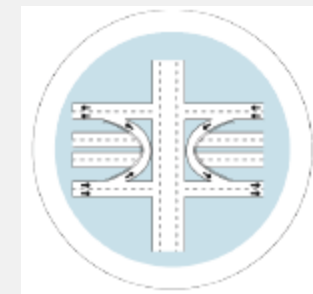
Game Pieces for Design Activity



Interchanges



Frontage
Roads



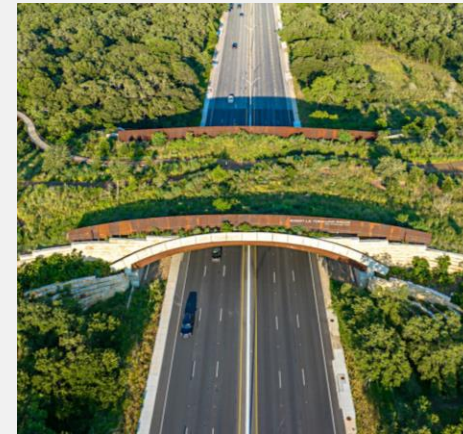
Texas
Turnarounds

Build Alternatives:

Game Pieces for Design Activity



Traffic light removal /
additions



Caps, Lids,
Land Bridges



Traffic calming,
e.g. speed humps



Parkway /
Boulevard

Build Alternatives:

Game Pieces for Design Activity



Lighting



Transit,
e.g. bus, rail



Art



Build Alternatives:

Game Pieces for Design Activity



Parks / Open Space



Other, e.g.
stormwater
management



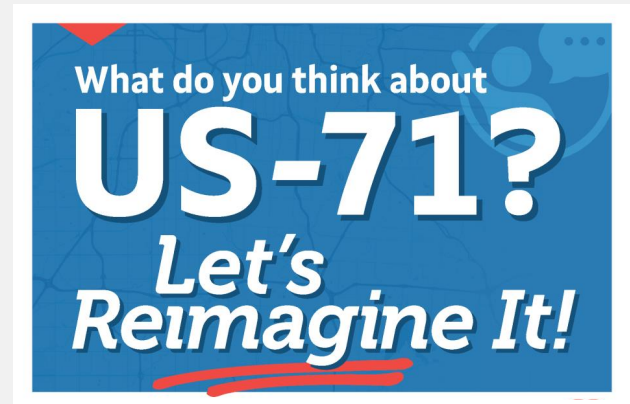
Land Development



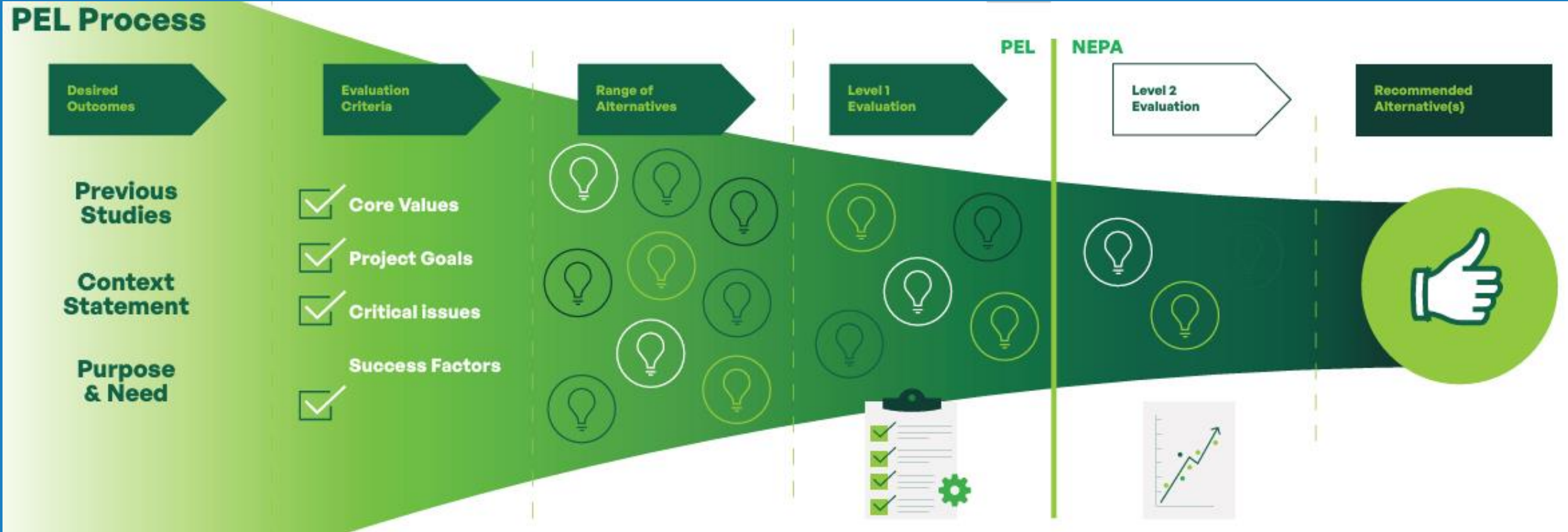


Design Activity and Report Back

- If you could REIMAGINE US-71, what would you do with it?
- What SPECIFIC improvements or changes would you make? Where?
 - *Examples might involve improvements for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, mobility device users, transit riders, safety, land use, green space, housing, economic development, public health, education, and/or other issues.*
- HOW do you envision the work being done? WHO is involved with it?



Evaluation of alternatives





Which criteria are
MOST IMPORTANT
to you? Why?

Draft Evaluation Criteria

Purpose and Need related

- Reduce crash rates and fatal and serious injury crashes
- Improve connections and mobility across US-71
- Improve US-71 traffic level of service, reduce delay

Community goal related

- Creation of land/property for development (opportunities for community & housing development)
- Proximity of roadway to existing housing (noise and air impacts)
- Solutions can be reasonably funded and implemented



Which criteria are
MOST IMPORTANT
to you? Why?

Draft Evaluation Criteria

Engineering related

- Cost
- Can improvements be phased
- Constructability
- System-wide impacts

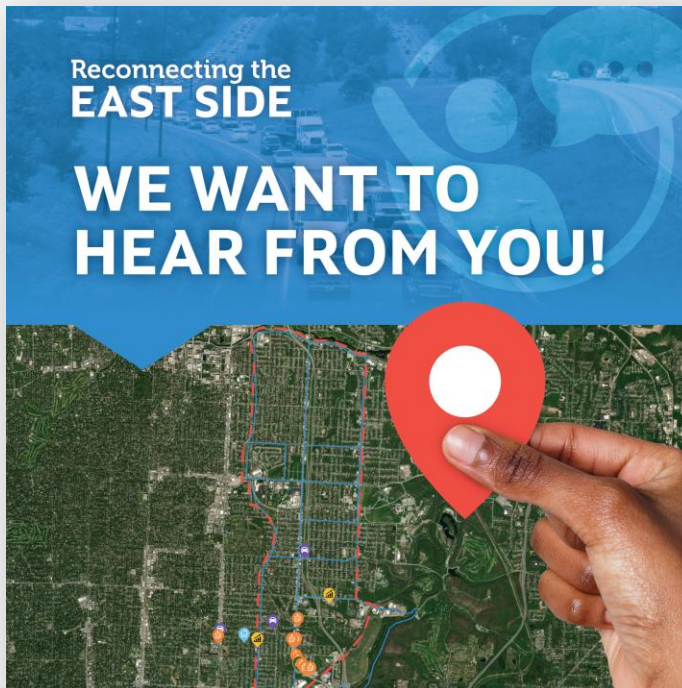
Environmental related

- Natural resource impacts (wetlands, floodplains, natural habitat)
- Social-economic resource impacts (community, community resources, businesses)
- Parks, recreation, trail impacts
- Historic resource impacts



Next Steps

Now through SEPT 2025



Final Purpose and Need Statement



Project Ambassador Coordination



Technical Advisory Group Meetings (summer 2025)



Listening Sessions with Neighborhoods and Others (on-going)



Community Summit #3 – Initial Alternatives
(SEPT 16 at 5:30 p.m. at Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center)



Reconnecting the
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Public Works Department

www.ReconnectEastSide.com



Reconnecting the **EAST SIDE**

Prioritizing Safety and Connection



Learn More



Get Involved



Events



Subscribe



Contact Us

We are envisioning a safer, more equitable, accessible, and connected future, together.

Reconnecting the East Side is not just a physical reconnect, but economic, social, residential, civic, and spirituality reconnection – not from one side of the highway to the other, but from the past to the future.

Join Us!

Reconnecting the
EAST SIDE
Reconnecting Kansas and Communities
Share valuable stories and identify needs.

**Family Friendly
COMMUNITY
SUMMIT #1**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 22
10:00 A.M. – NOON**
Southeast High School
3500 E. Meyer Boulevard
Kansas City, MO 64132

Design Activity Map

Mapping Your Vision for US-71

This Design Activity Map is your canvas to share ideas for the Initial Build Alternatives.

Open

Add markers to the Design Activity Map below that represent your vision of a reimagined US-71 Corridor. Suggested improvements can include overpasses/underpasses, economic development, parks/recreation, trails, art, transit, and others.

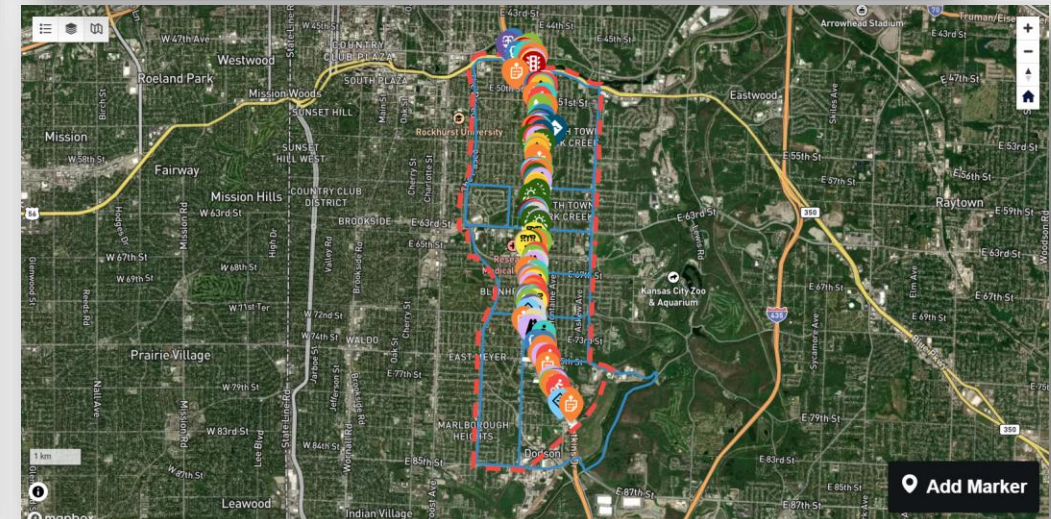
Zoom in and navigate to a spot you would like to indicate where you would like to share your improvements.

Click 'Add Marker' to drop your marker in the correct category to indicate where you would like to share your ideas.

Click the Information (i) icon just below to learn more about the marker categories.

Click the Question Mark (?) icon just below to learn more about how to interact with this Design Activity Map.

222 contributions so far

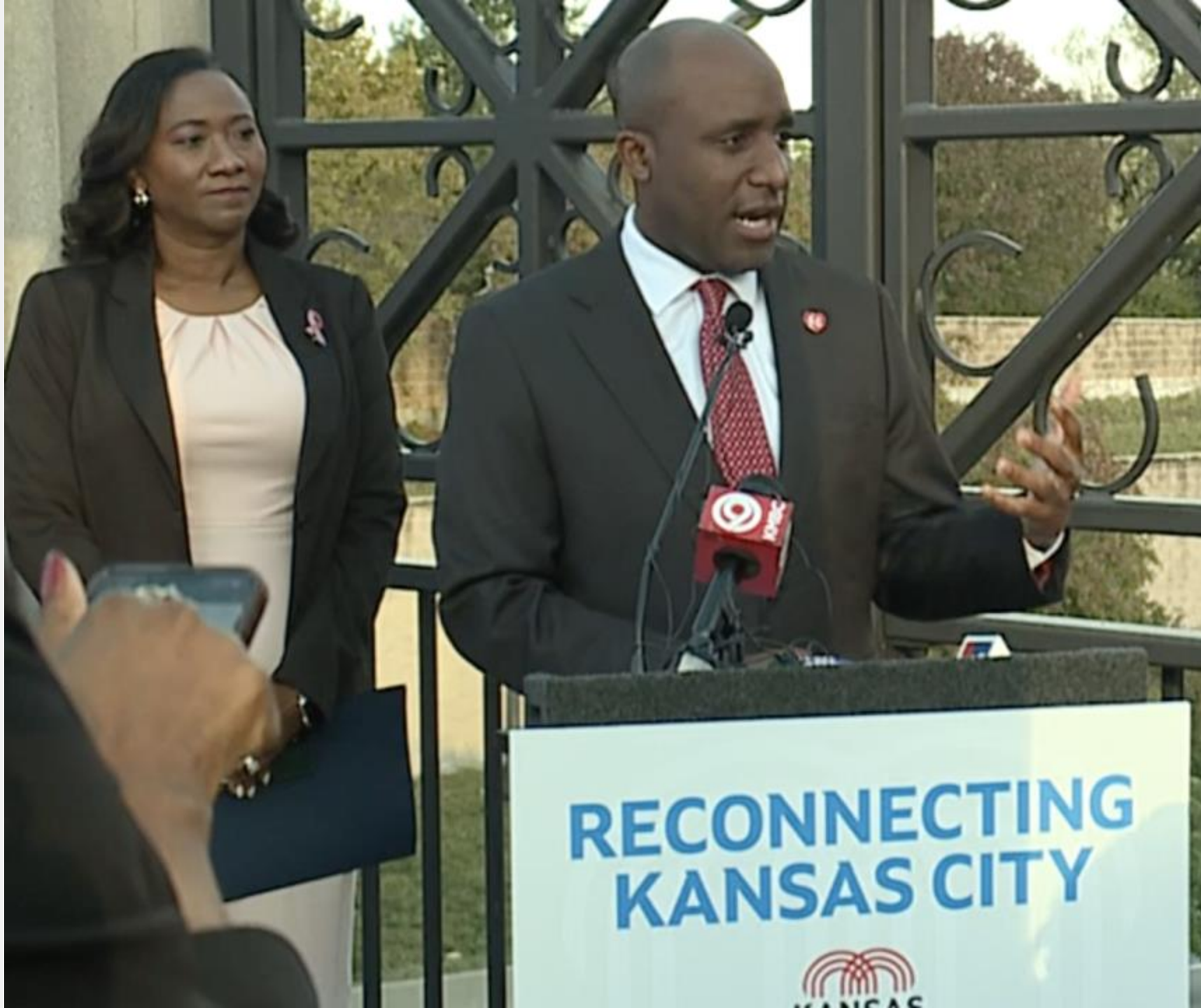


THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY!



Reconnecting the **EAST SIDE**

Missouri Department of Transportation anticipates incorporating recommendations made as part of the PEL study into future NEPA studies, per Title 23 of the US Code, Part 168.



“While it is very hard to give people houses back, like those in my family who lost them ages ago, it is hard to rebuild neighborhoods and communities that were strong, vibrant, and have been vital to our community. We see this as an important next step.”

*Kansas City
Mayor Quinton Lucas*

Funding

The first two phases of the Reconnecting the East Side project are funded by a **\$5 million** federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant, with an additional **\$2.5 million from Kansas City**.



**U.S. Representative
Emanuel Cleaver, II**
Missouri's Fifth Congressional
District

3rd and 5th District City Councilmembers



Melissa Robinson
3rd District



Rayna Parks-Shaw
Mayor Pro-Tem
5th District



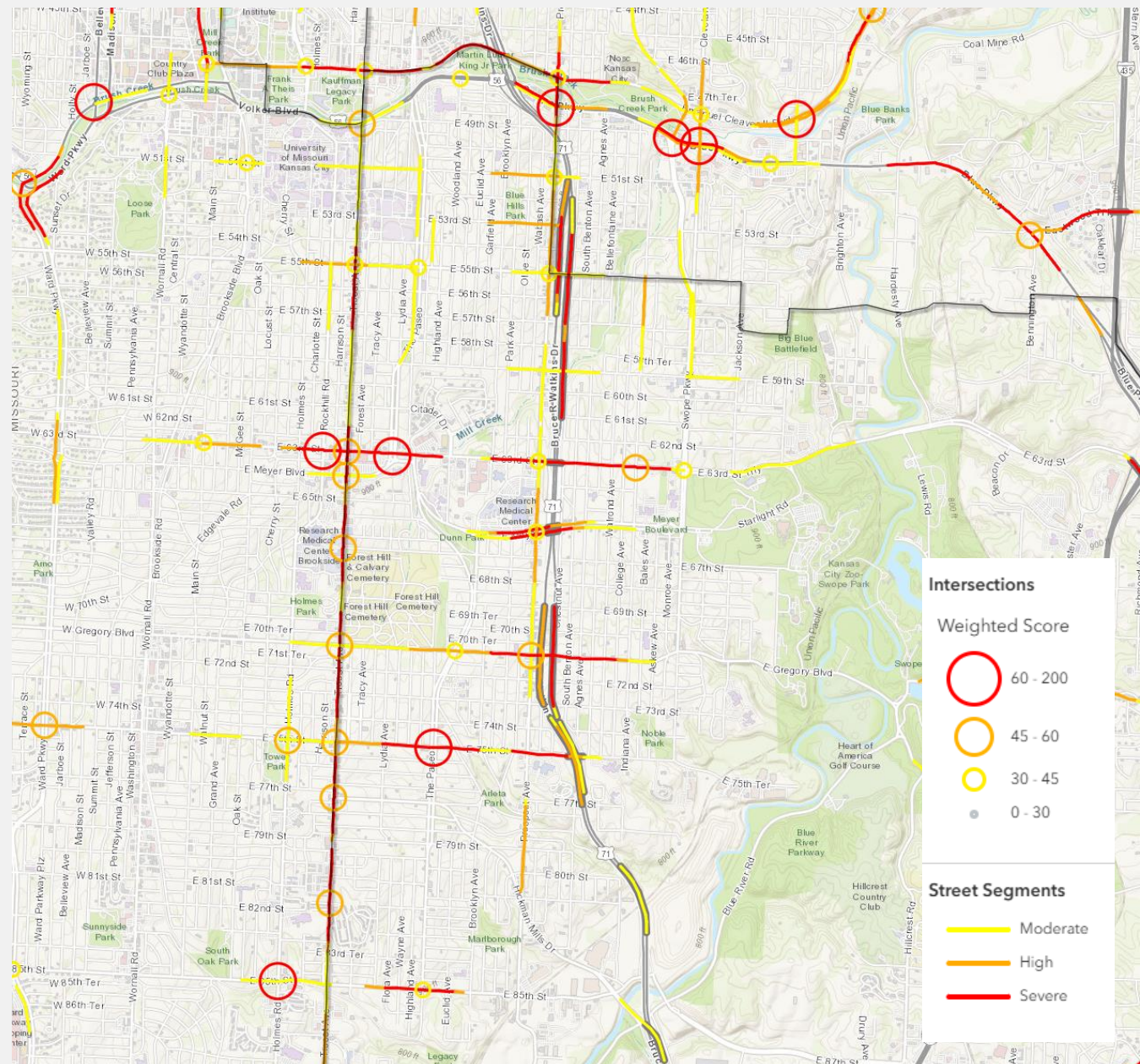
Melissa Patterson Hazley
3rd District at Large



Darrell Curls
5th District at Large

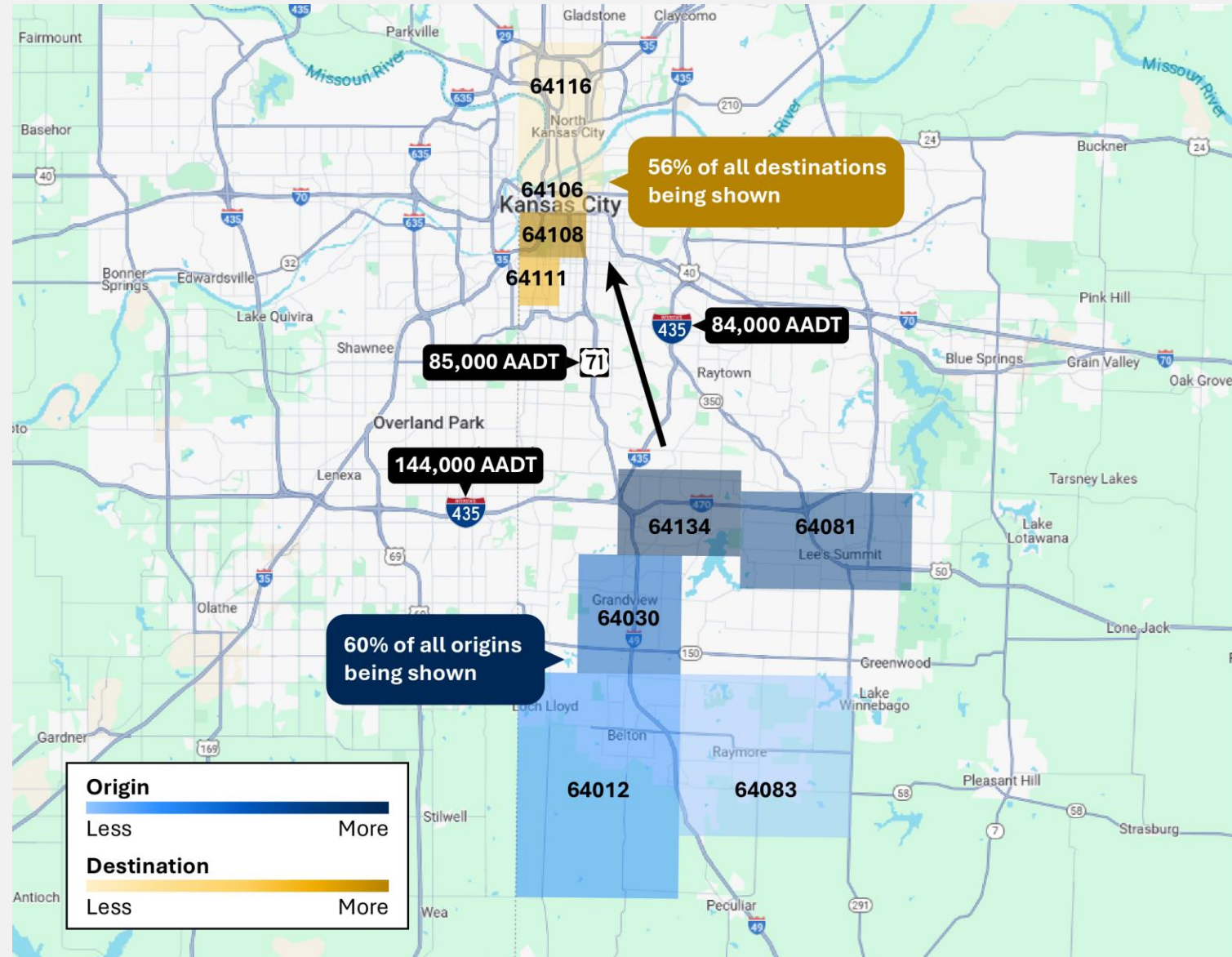
High Crash Rates and Congestion

- **High and severe crash rate levels** on Kansas City High-Injury Network
- **US-71 crash rate is double** the rate of similar expressways in Missouri
- **Moderately and Severely Congested** during the peak periods



Traffic – US-71 Origins and Destinations

- 60% of traffic travels from southern suburbs (Lee's Summit, Grandview, and Belton) to Downtown KC.
- US-71 carries 85,000 vehicles per day each direction
- Same volume as I-435



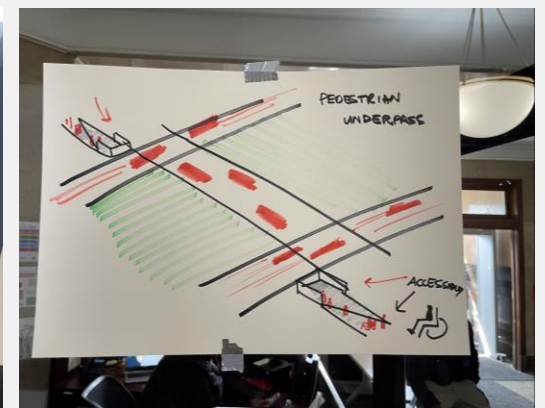
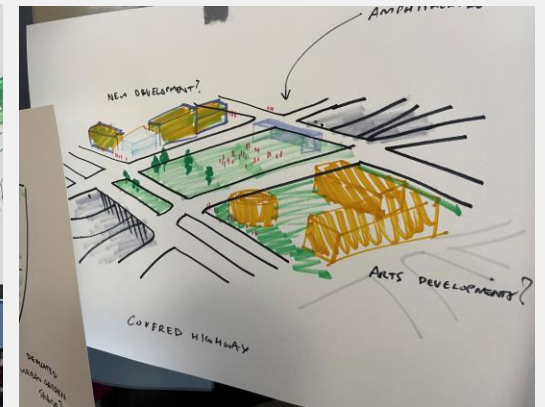
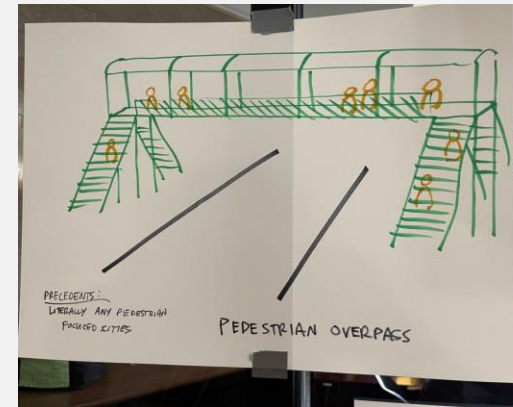
Community Discussions: Purpose and Need

- What **NEEDS OR ISSUES** are most important to address? Where?
- What **POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES** are key? Where?
 - Examples might involve transportation safety and mobility, land use, green space, housing, economic development, public health, education and/or other topics



Community Discussion: Key Goals + Accomplishments

- What's the most important thing for the Reconnecting the East Side project to **accomplish** for the community in the **short** term? In the **long** term?



Ideas from Community Summit 1 (March 22)

Community Summit #2

June 24, 2025 | Blue Parkway Sun Fresh | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- 60+ people signed in
- Be the Designer activity
- Written comments included:
 - Affordable housing
 - Pedestrian safety and green space
 - Job training for surrounding residents to work on the project
 - Change to Paseo-like parkway with multi-modal options
 - Bus and bike lanes
 - Noise reduction, speed bumps
 - Transit (rail)



Community Summit #2

June 24, 2025 | Blue Parkway Sun Fresh | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- Additional comments included:
 - Remove all stop lights and just have overpasses
 - Create biking and walking trails
 - Develop the space between highway for a sport complex, farmers market or a park
 - Wayfinding signs for business off of the highway
 - Increase lighting for safety



Listening Sessions, Pop-up and Online Engagement

