



Reconnecting the
EAST SIDE

Reconnecting the East Side Community Summit #3

Refine the Vision for US-71

Tuesday, September 16, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

THANK YOU TO OUR HOST!

Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center
3700 Blue Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64130





Introductions

The Project Funding

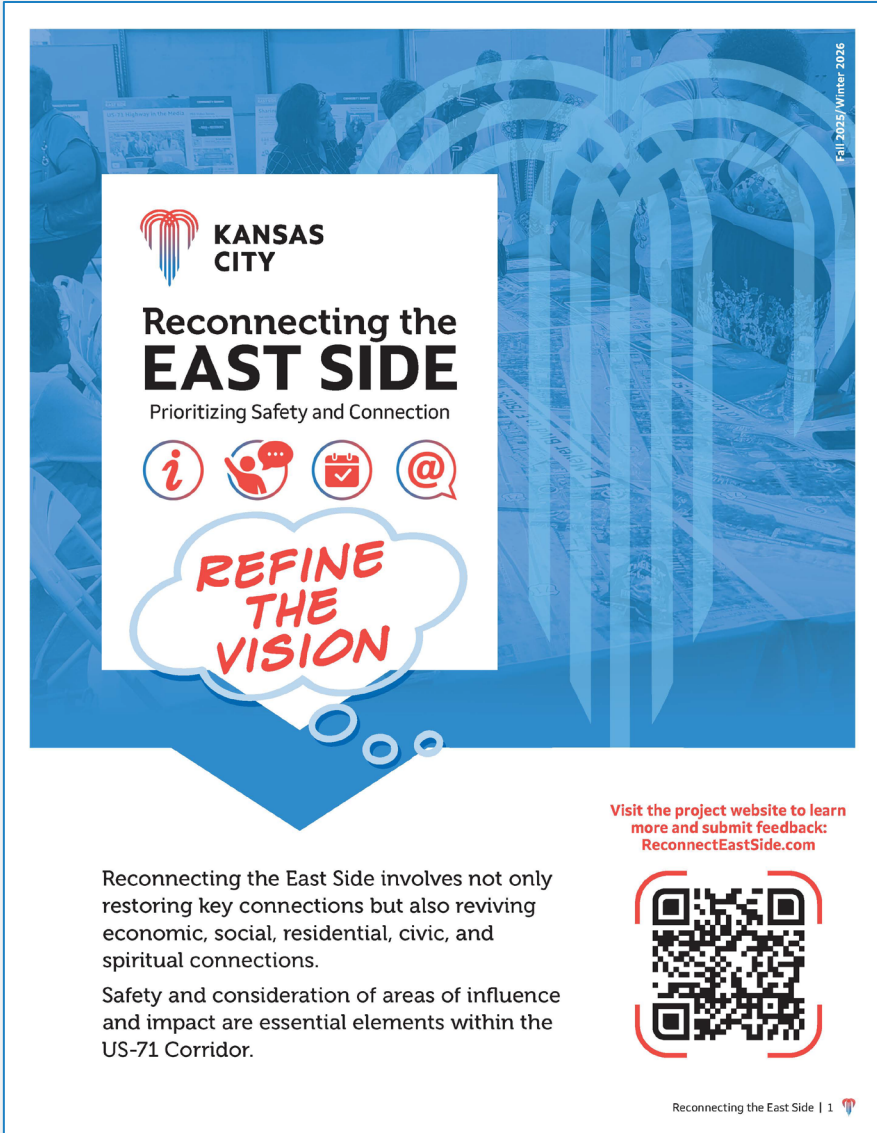
The first two phases of the Reconnecting the East Side project are funded by a **\$5 million** federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant, with an additional **\$2.5 million from Kansas City**.



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

Today's Agenda

- **Presentation**
 - Background
 - Draft Project Purpose and Needs
 - Additional Community Goals
 - Visions to Consider
- **Review and Evaluation Activity**
- **Next Steps**



The poster features a blue background with a large, stylized white archway graphic. In the center, a white box contains the Kansas City logo, the project title 'Reconnecting the EAST SIDE', the subtitle 'Prioritizing Safety and Connection', and four icons: an information 'i' icon, a speech bubble icon, a calendar icon, and an '@' email icon. Below these icons is a red speech bubble with the text 'REFINE THE VISION'. At the bottom right, there is a QR code and a text box with project details and a website link.

KANSAS CITY

Reconnecting the EAST SIDE

Prioritizing Safety and Connection

REFINE THE VISION

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

Reconnecting the East Side involves not only restoring key connections but also reviving economic, social, residential, civic, and spiritual connections.

Safety and consideration of areas of influence and impact are essential elements within the US-71 Corridor.

Reconnecting the East Side | 1



What is the Project?

Reconnecting the East Side addresses challenges created when US-71 was constructed.

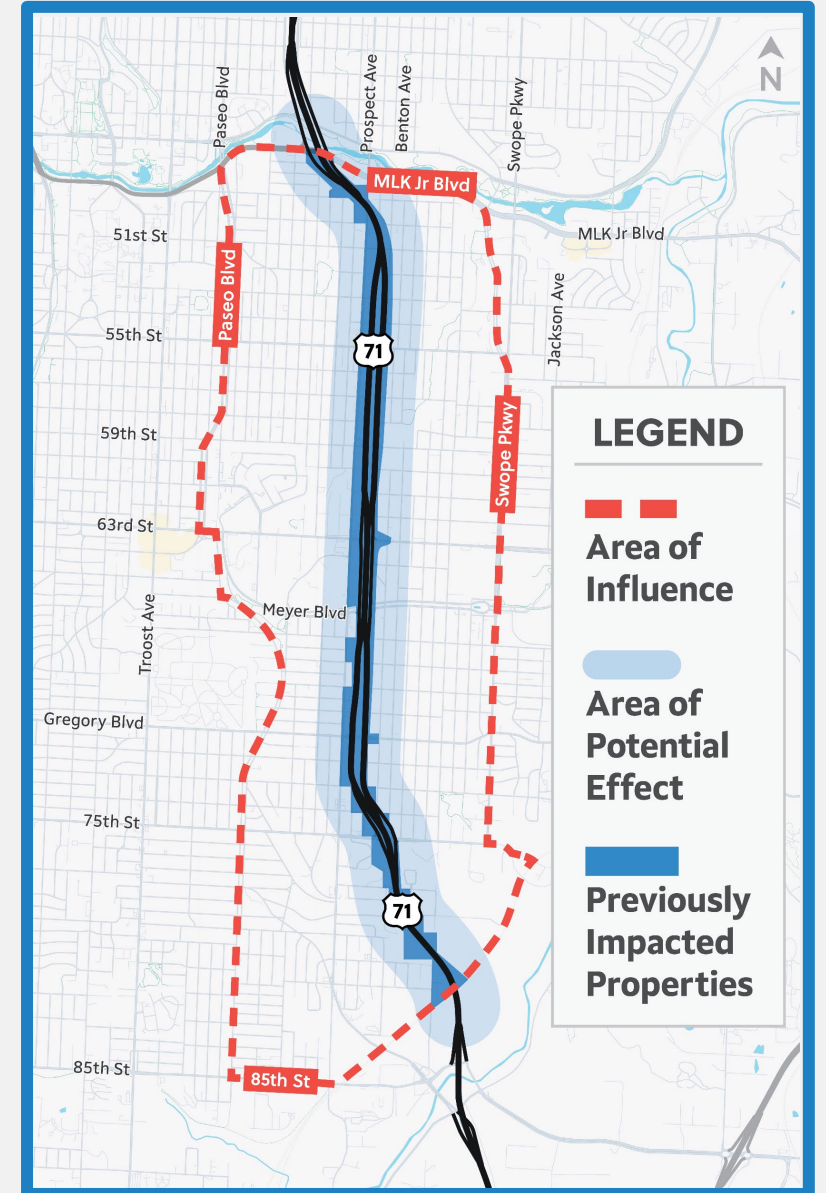
- Community engagement
- Development of a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, which includes a thorough analysis of the corridor and development of potential solutions with community input

The focus of this project is to chart a course toward a safer, more connected, and accessible community.

Study Area

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





The Process

Phase 1 – Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

- Planning
- Purpose and Need
- Initial Alternatives
- Refined Alternatives

Phase 2 – Federal Consent Decree

- Federal Consent Decree process

Phase 3 – NEPA and Conceptual Design*

- Further refined alternatives

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



Project Partners

Collaborating with the East Side Community, Project Ambassadors, Community Advisory Group, and Technical Advisory Group, the project team is ensuring technical expertise and community priorities are integrated into the project's development and implementation.



Purpose and Need (DRAFT)

Purpose of the Project

Project Needs

Additional Community Goals



Purpose of the Project *(DRAFT)*

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

Project Needs (*DRAFT*)

- **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 *(DRAFT)*

- Address the existing effects of US-71 Highway on nearby properties and residents.
 - Promote opportunities for economic development and affordable housing that builds on existing efforts and makes US-71 a neighborhood amenity and regional destination.
 - Address public health issues.
- Implement feasible and cost-effective solutions.
- Develop stronger partnership with the local community so that corridor improvements reflect community priorities.



Visions to Consider

- Your Initial Alternatives for a reimagined US-71
- Mapping and analysis

No-Build Alternative

(Community Summit #2)

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 Alternative

(Community Summit #2)

- 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?





Build Alternatives Explored at Meetings and Online

(June – August 2025)

- ReconnectEastSide.com
- Community Summit 2
- Neighborhood listening sessions, e.g., at 3rd and 5th District Meetings
- Creative Day Arts
- Zoo Mobile Animal Safari – Southeast Branch of the Kansas City Public Library
- City Hall (rotunda)
- Juneteenth Heritage Festival
- Blue Hills Park Resource Fair
- Water Services Department (lobby)
- Club KC Night Swim
- Citadel Neighborhood Community Resource and Connectivity Ice Cream Social
- Club KC Mayor Night Hoops
- Operation Backpack (Swope Park)
- Concerned Clergy
- KC 360
- Tri-Blenheim Health and Wellness Fair
- Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Community Resource Fair
- 816 Day and All That Jazz
- Key Coalition Neighborhood Family Fun Day

Three Visions for US-71

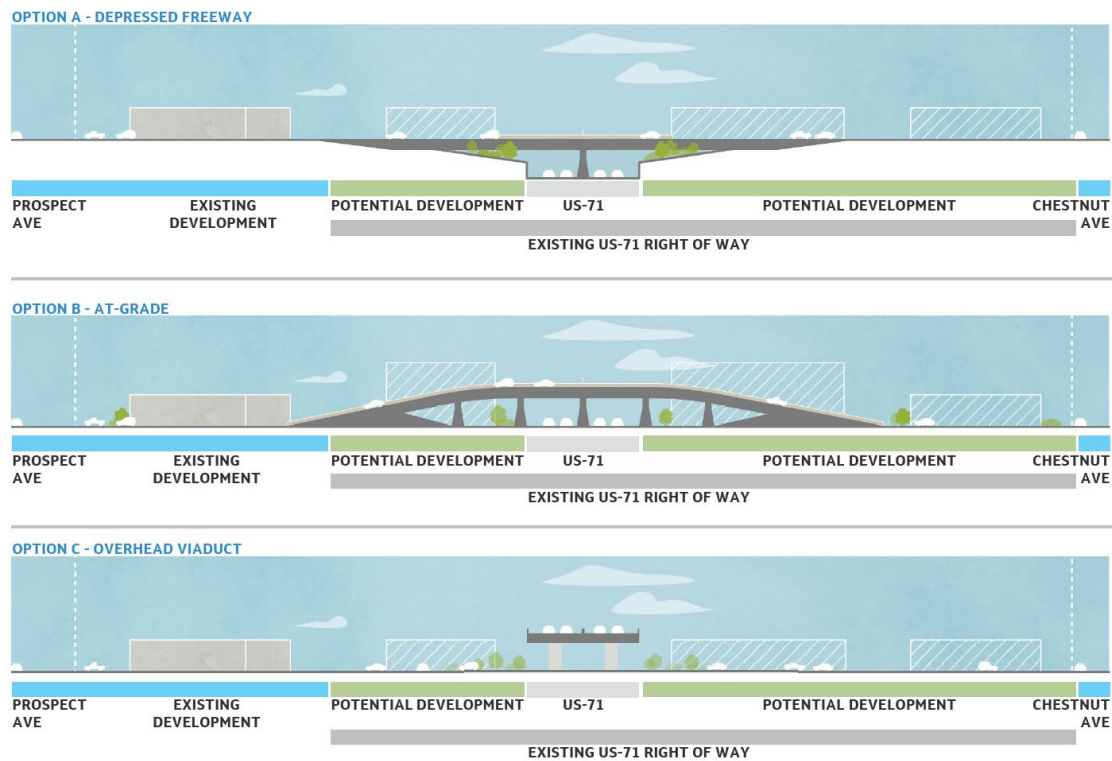
- **Freeway:** Turning US-71 into a traditional freeway with overpasses, interchanges, fewer traffic signals, and more.
- **Parkway/Boulevard:** Transforming US-71 into a parkway/boulevard with traffic signals, bridges, and other improvements.
- **Return-to-Grid:** Taking away US-71 completely and reconstructing the neighborhoods' original street network.

Three Visions for US-71

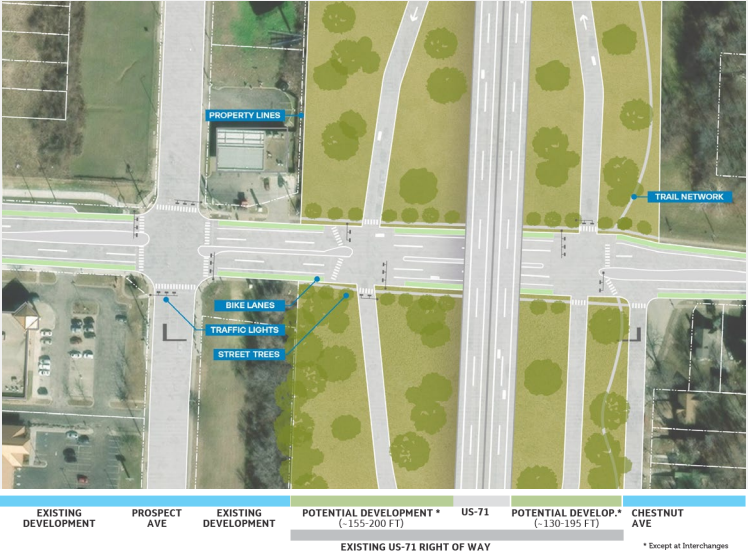
Alternatives include enhancements such as pedestrian, bicycle, transit infrastructure, lighting, art, recreational features, overpasses, underpasses, and/or land bridges, as well as the development of attainable housing and locally-owned businesses, that serve the needs of East Side neighborhoods.



Freeway Alternatives



Closer Look



Neighborhood Connectivity



Underpass Campbell City, MO



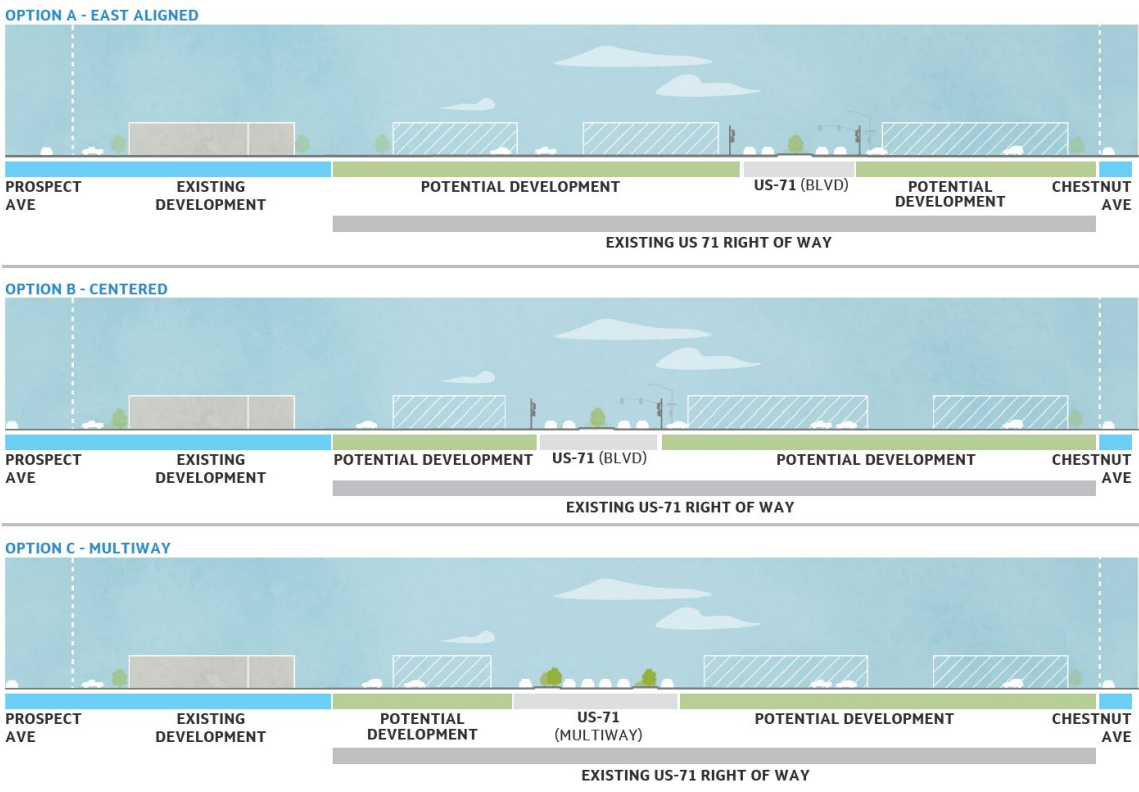
Depressed Highway I-670, Kansas City



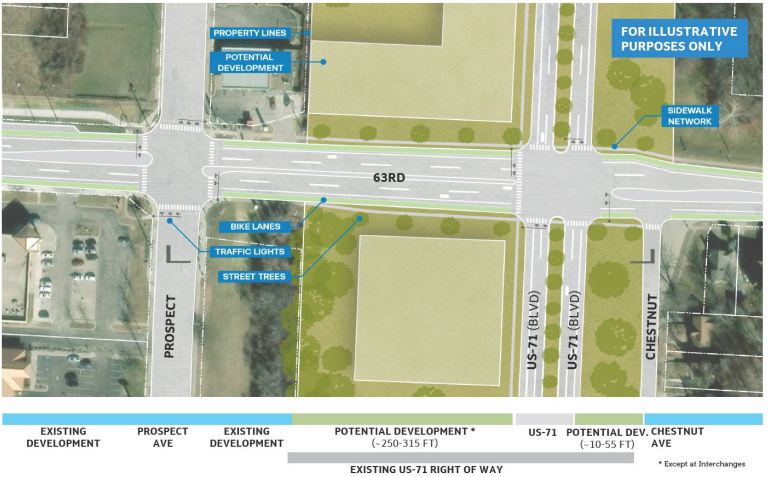
Land Bridge Klyde Warren Park, Dallas



Parkway/Boulevard Alternatives



Closer Look



Neighborhood Connectivity



Ward Parkway Kansas City



Drexel Blvd. Chicago



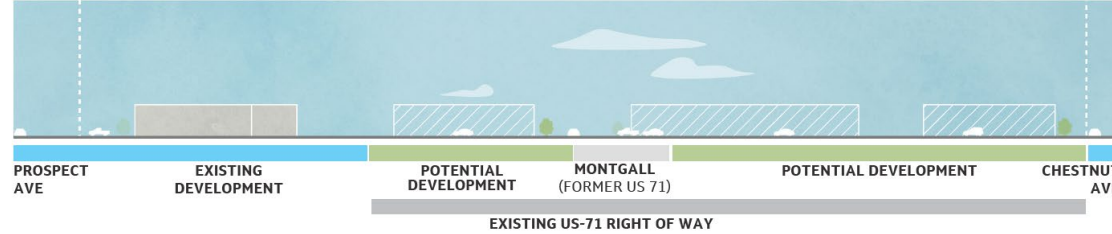
Octavia Blvd. San Francisco



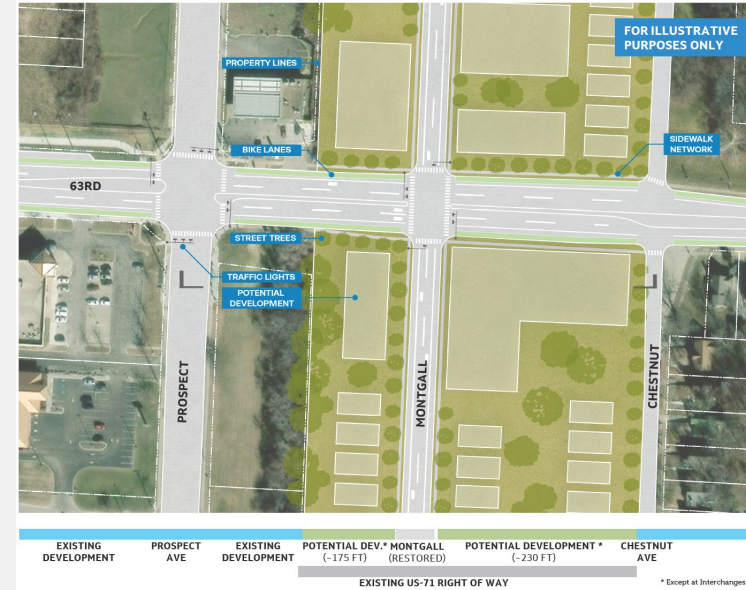


Return-to-Grid Alternatives

OPTION A - RETURN TO GRID



Closer Look



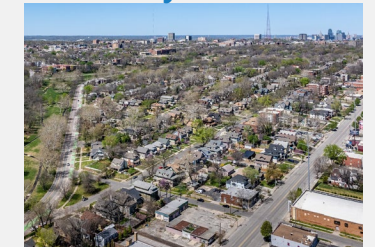
Neighborhood Connectivity



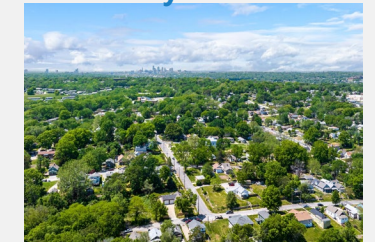
Blue Hills
Kansas City



South Hyde Park
Kansas City

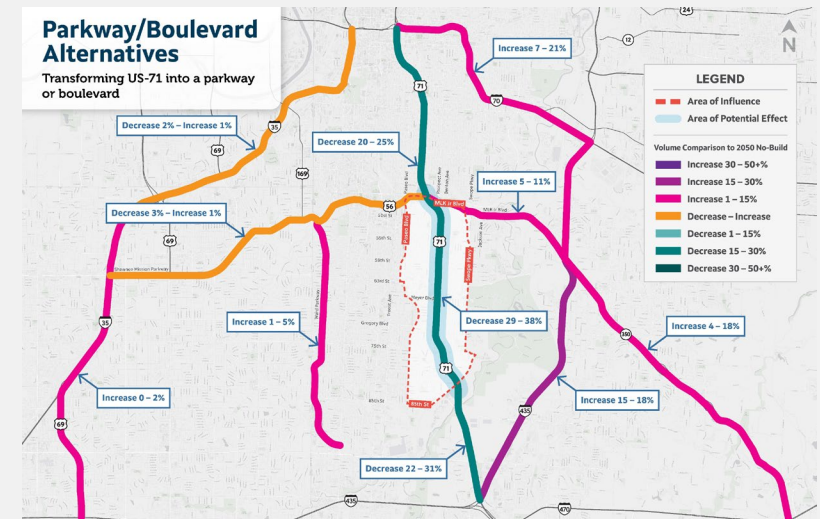
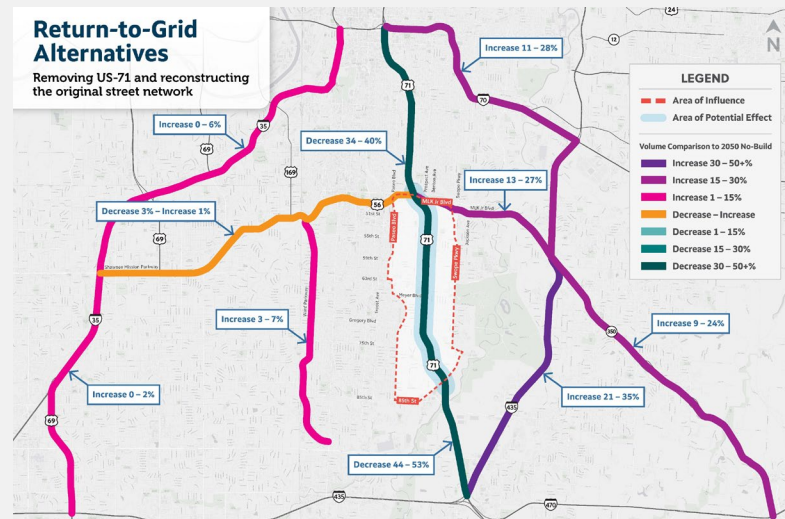
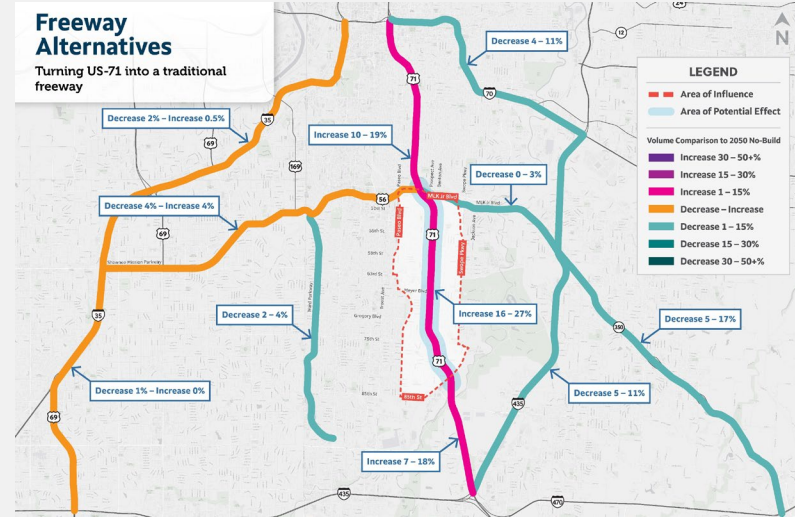


East Blue Valley
Kansas City



Regional Traffic Diversions

How will traffic patterns change with each alternative?



Potential Interim Improvements

- Short-term safety improvements include improved signal timings for pedestrians, brush clearing to improve visibility, advanced warning signing, improved overhead lighting, or high contract pavement markings.
- Potential removal of existing right-in, right-out intersections of 53rd, 57th, 60th and 69th.
- Pedestrian overpasses at high-volume pedestrian crossings.
- Improvements at High Crash Locations (Meyer to 75th)

REMOVAL OF RIGHT-IN / RIGHT-OUT



PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS EXAMPLE



BLVD/PKWY BETWEEN 75TH + MEYER





Evaluation Criteria

- Derived from Draft Purpose and Need & Additional Community Goals
- Also includes Engineering and Environmental Factors



Evaluation Criteria *(DRAFT)*

- **Project Needs**

- Safety
- East-West Multimodal Access and Connectivity
- Corridor Congestion

- **Community Goals**

- Economic Revitalization
- Public Health



Which are MOST
IMPORTANT
to you?

Evaluation Criteria (*DRAFT*)

- **Environmental**

- Social Environment
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment

- **Engineering**

- Constructability and Design Complexity
- Estimated Construction and Associated Costs
- System Resiliency and Maintenance
- Systemwide Network Impacts



Which are MOST
IMPORTANT
to you?



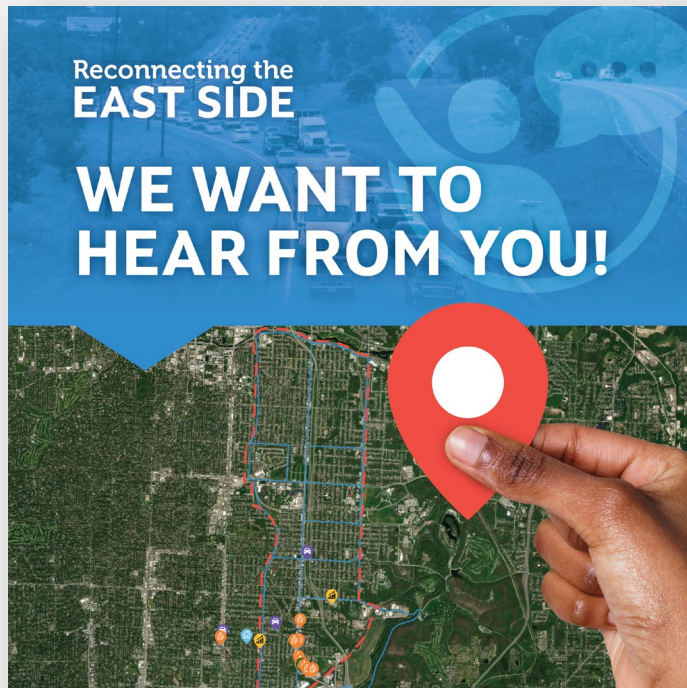
Review and Evaluation Activity

Small groups



Next Steps

Now through Winter 2026



Refined Alternatives



Project Ambassador Coordination



Community + Technical Advisory Group Meetings (fall 2025)



Listening Sessions with Neighborhoods and Others (on-going)



Community Summit #4 – Refined Alternatives
(Winter 2026)



Phase 2 Next Steps

Implementing a preferred alternative for US-71 requires modifying or dissolving the **1985 Federal Consent Decree**. We cannot do it without you!

PHASE 2

Addressing Consent Decree

Oct '25 - Dec '26

UPDATES

- » Federal Consent Decree Process



www.ReconnectEastSide.com



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**Refine the Vision
of US-71**



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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 spiritual reconnection – not from one side of the highway to the other, but from the past to the future.

Focused on providing safe transportation improvements for the community, the Reconnecting the East Side project also aims to address some of the long-standing issues created when US-71 Highway construction divided neighborhoods, from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the north to 85th Street on the south and from Paseo Boulevard on the west and Swope Parkway on the east.

Led by Kansas City, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), this project is about more than roads – it is about physically restoring the heart of the East Side, by listening to its residents, identifying early action projects, and framing a long-term vision that can be implemented over the coming years.

Save the Date

Family Friendly
COMMUNITY SUMMIT #3!

Refine the Vision

Review initial alternatives and refine the visions for Reconnecting the East Side.

Refine the Vision Here!

Reconnecting the East Side Engagement Map

This Engagement Map allows East Side audiences to share their issues and feedback about land use, green space, housing, economic development, public health, education, traffic safety, transit, and other issues. This information will help to inform the ongoing work of the Reconnecting the East Side project.

Zoom in and navigate to a spot on the map you would like to indicate where you would like to share your issue or feedback. Click 'Add Marker' to drop your marker in the correct category to indicate where you would like to share your issue or idea. You can also upload photos.

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

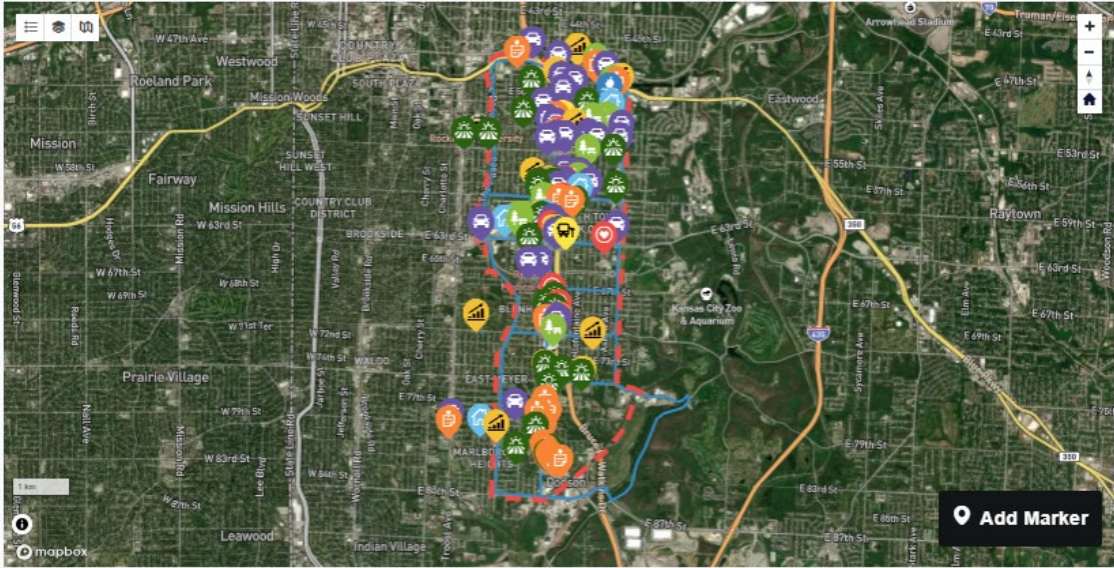
Click the Question Mark (?) icon just below to learn more about how to interact with this Engagement Map.

148 contributions so far



Enter an address





Add Marker

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.