

4.0 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

The South Loop Project is focused on constructing a structural deck over a four-block below-grade section of I-670 in downtown KCMO. The project intends to reconnect two physically separated economic and cultural districts, the CBD and the adjacent Crossroads Arts District, and enhance multimodal connections for residents of adjacent neighborhoods and the broader community. Public engagement had various levels of involvement within every phase of the project. A Public Involvement Plan was developed in the first phase to engage and communicate with stakeholders, outline the objectives, and define the tools to be used. Activities took place throughout the project to accomplish the following goals at key milestones, including:

- Engage new and re-engage previous stakeholders to inform them of the current project status and future plans;
- Elicit feedback about desired park amenities, usage, and features; and
- Confirm the project vision and purpose and need.

A scoping and coordination process was initiated that involved appropriate federal, state, and local agencies, as well as stakeholders and the public. This continued throughout the study to engage the local and regional community, obtain public input, and keep the public informed. Coordination meetings were held as needed with affected/concerned local, state, and federal governmental entities. Public meetings were held to gather input and share findings on the EA. The EA will be made available for public and agency review and comment prior to the final public hearing. Materials utilized and obtained as a result of the public involvement process are included in **Appendix E**.

4.1 Public Meetings

As part of the NEPA process, Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO conducted community outreach to establish the overall vision for the South Loop Project. Four public meetings were conducted to provide opportunities for the public to view project progress and provide input.

4.1.1 Public Meeting #1

The first public meeting was held from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at the Kirk Family YMCA in KCMO. Over 200 people attended the first in-person, open house public meeting, with 36 completing feedback forms. The purpose of the first public meeting was to present a project overview, the NEPA process, and the Purpose and Need; present a variety of project topics and site analysis data; elicit feedback through an interactive dot exercise to weigh in on the park vision, as well as potential features and amenities, and provide an opportunity for attendees to leave open-ended comments; and launch a survey for those who were unable to attend online.

Project team members were available to talk through informational boards and facilitate two public engagement activities, giving the public the opportunity to learn about the project and provide input or ask questions. Attendees were able to participate in two dot activities at the in-person meeting. The first dot activity was focused on participants placing a dot on their preferred vision for the park and the second dot activity was to place five dots on their top park amenity preferences among 20 options offered. For those who could not attend the first public meeting in person, an online survey with the same meeting activities was made available from March 7-21,

2023. In total, between the in-person and the online survey, over 1,600 responses were received.

After the in-person meeting, pictures of the meeting, an online comment form, and survey results were posted online at <https://kcsouthloopproject.org>. This provided an opportunity for those who were unable to attend the in-person meeting to review the information and submit comments.

Promotion for the first public meeting occurred in a number of different ways. Printed postcards were mailed to 6,605 residents and businesses zip-code targeted within the CBD and the Crossroads Arts District areas. Postcard invitations were also delivered in stacks at 26 locations and adjacent businesses to the project study area, shared with the DTC for distribution at committee meetings, shared with attendees at Update Meeting #1, and distributed on Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) buses. Paid social media campaigns were also conducted through the DTC's Facebook and Instagram accounts and media alerts and a news release was distributed by KCMO to media outlets. Three dedicated emails were sent through MailChimp; a total of 741 emails were sent out in February and March of 2023. A promotional toolkit that included content and digital graphics was emailed to the project team, three Project Partners, City Council members and their aides, Update Meeting members, and approximately 170 key target audiences to help distribute information about the public meeting and the survey to their constituents through their respective communication channels. The promotional toolkit included email/newsletter content, a statement and contact information for reasonable accommodation requests, two digital graphics for social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, email, websites, and customizable social media posts. A second promotional toolkit was created for the survey and included email/newsletter content, two digital graphics for social media channels, and customizable social media posts.

4.1.2 Public Meeting #2

The second public meeting was held from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at The Gallery event space in KCMO. Over 130 community members attended the meeting in-person with 86 feedback forms being completed. The purpose of the meeting was to present the initial park concepts, and elicit feedback to weigh in on them, and ways in which the park can be inviting and inclusive, with an opportunity for attendees to submit open-ended comments. The presentation was recorded, and an online survey launched, to offer an alternate method of participation for those who were unable to attend. Those who attended were given the opportunity to learn about the overall project and timeline, discuss potential outcomes, and ask questions. Project information was available on informational display boards, and the project team landscape architects gave a formal presentation. Project team members were available to answer questions or provide additional information. In addition to the in-person public meeting, a virtual online survey was offered to the public to access the same project information at their convenience. The online survey was available from April 11-15, 2023. The survey received over 1,000 responses and comments.

To advertise the second public meeting, Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO used the same methods of communication that were used to promote the first public meeting. Postcard invitations were sent to 6,625 residents and businesses zip-code targeted within the CBD and Crossroads Arts District and were also shared with attendees of Update Meeting #2. Paid social media campaigns were used through the DTC's Facebook and Instagram and a media alert and a news release was distributed by KCMO to media outlets. Three dedicated emails created through MailChimp sent out 2,886 emails during April of 2023. Similar to the first public meeting, a promotional toolkit consisting of content and digital graphics was emailed to the project team, three Project Partners,

City Council members and their aides, Update Meeting members, and 170 key target audiences to distribute information. The toolkit again included email/newsletter content, a statement and contact information for reasonable accommodation requests, two digital graphics for social media channels, and customizable social media posts. The toolkit used for the survey was made up of email/newsletter content, two digital graphics for social media channels, and customizable social media posts.

4.1.2 Public Meetings #1 and #2 Comments and Concerns

People attending the first and second public information meetings in-person and online provided their thoughts and input through feedback forms. Responses indicated participants were overall supportive of building a structural deck over the below-grade section of I-670 in downtown Kansas City. Some additional comments and concerns included:

- Thank you for including the community in this event- to get input on the urban park.
- Space was small, didn't allow much for people to gather and discuss for an extended period of time.
- If any intersecting streets/bridges are being considered to be closed and used as park space, I would like to see Walnut bridge be closed.
- I feel there is enough land/space to facilitate the creation of a park with the following aspects: civic/cultural events space, community front yard for downtown, and a green refuge in the city.
- We are opposed to any/all non-critical improvements which require taxpayer monies when all of KCMO is not included in the process or finished project.

4.1.3 Public Meeting #3

Over 160 people attended the third in-person public meeting and 37 completed general comment cards at the meeting. Public Meeting #3 was held from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at The Gallery event space located at 61 E 14th Street., Kansas City, MO 64105. After the meeting, a video recording of the presentation was uploaded to YouTube and posted on the project website.

The purpose of this public meeting was to present the latest park design concept and to gather feedback and reactions to the updated design. Those who attended were given the opportunity to learn about the overall project and project timeline, discuss potential outcomes, and ask questions. Project information was available on informational display boards, and the project team landscape architects gave a formal presentation. Project team members were available to answer questions and/or provide additional information.

To advertise the third public meeting, Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO used the same methods of communication that were used to promote the first two public meetings. Postcard invitations were sent to 6,919 residents and businesses zip-code targeted within the CBD and Crossroads Arts District and were also shared with attendees of latest Update Meeting. Paid social media campaigns were used through the DTC's Facebook and Instagram and a media alert and a news release was distributed by KCMO to media outlets. Three dedicated emails created through MailChimp were sent out. Similar to the first two public meetings, a promotional toolkit consisting of content and digital graphics was emailed to the project team, three Project Partners, City Council members and their aides, Update Meeting members, and 170 key target audiences to distribute information. The toolkit again included email/newsletter content, a statement and

contact information for reasonable accommodation requests, two digital graphics for social media channels, and customizable social media posts. The toolkit used for the survey was made up of email/newsletter content, two digital graphics for social media channels, and customizable social media posts.

4.1.4 Public Meeting #3 Comments and Concerns

People attending the third public information meetings in-person and online provided their thoughts and input through feedback forms. Responses indicated participants were overall supportive of building a structural deck over the below-grade section of I-670 in downtown Kansas City. Some additional comments and concerns included:

- The park development looks great. We are sad to see that the streets are cutting through the public space. Bridges seem like a good compromise to maintain pedestrian flow & motor traffic.
- What about the rumble of the traffic underneath?
- Please don't jeopardize streetcar operations. Need to invest in network solutions to prevent Main from being overwhelmed. Need better connection between park and Truman N/S.
- Love the designs - can't wait for this project to begin.

4.1.5 Public Meeting #4 and Public Hearing

A fourth public information meeting, intended to serve also as a public hearing, will include information related to the alternatives screening and selection, potential impacts of the Preferred Alternatives, and other pertinent schedule, cost, and construction information. The public will be provided multiple opportunities to comment on the proposed project and its environmental effects. This meeting is expected to occur during the 30-day public comment period, following FHWA approval of this EA.

4.1.6 Substantive Comments

Substantive comments received were related to the operations of the streetcar due to the potential closure of Walnut Street and the reconfiguration of Truman Road. These were addressed through an additional traffic analysis which provided multiple potential mitigation measures. These measures were found to be beyond the scope of this project and there was no change to the project as a result of the additional analysis.

4.2 Stakeholder Outreach

The project team met in-person with residents and businesses located within and adjacent to the project study area and in the broader Kansas City community at multiple times and locations. These meetings and events were intended to provide an overview of the study and gather feedback from the residents and businesses such as how they use their property, concerns they have in the area, and improvements they would like to see. Meetings and events the project team attended, met with residents and businesses, or gave presentation to the community have included:

- The Downtown Kansas City 2023 Annual Luncheon, April 14, 2023

- Crossroads Community Association Infrastructure Committee, April 17, 2023
- NFL Red Zone Draft Event, April 28, 2023
- Kansas City Downtown Council Meeting, May 4, 2023
- Guadalupe Center Cinco de Mayo Celebration, May 5, 2023
- MARC Committee, May 11, 2023
- River Market Community Association, May 11, 2023
- 6th Council District Monthly Meeting, May 12, 2023
- Downtown Neighborhood Association, May 23, 2023
- Crossroads Community Association First Friday Event, June 2, 2023
- 5th Council District Monthly Meeting, June 5, 2023
- Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce Legislative Task Force, June 9, 2023
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Coffee with Carlos, June 15, 2023
- Westside Neighborhood Association, June 15, 2023
- Historic East Neighborhood Coalition, June 16, 2023
- Juneteenth Festival, June 17, 2023
- Mattie Rhodes Center Tamale Fest, June 24, 2023
- Kansas City Public Library – Central Branch, July 19, 2023
- City Farmers Market, July 22, 2023
- Paseo West Neighborhood Association, July 26, 2023

4.3 Public Surveys

Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO conducted a public online survey from March 7-21, 2023, to gather information about what the public's top park amenity preferences were and what they felt the South Loop Project in Kansas City should be. Over the two-week period, the survey received 1,633 responses total, 1,458 being online responses and 175 being in-person responses. A second survey was conducted from April 11-15, 2023. The second survey focused on allowing participants to share their preference on the design concepts, how they would access the park (transit and mobility options), and how the team could make this project more inviting and inclusive. The second survey received over 1,003 responses total, 917 online responses and 86 in-person responses. **Exhibit 4-1** and **Exhibit 4-2** display the approximate number of survey respondents per zip code near the project study area.

Both surveys were distributed in multiple ways. Hard copies of the survey were available for those who attended the public meetings in-person with a QR code linked directly to the survey for printed materials. In addition to hard copies, electronic surveys were available for those who were not able to obtain hard copies of the survey. Hard copies and electronic copies of the survey were distributed through multiple forms of communication, such as postcard mailers, email blasts, newsletters, websites, graphics, and social media posts.

The first survey revealed the most popular responses for what the South Loop Project should be were:

- The community front yard for downtown (109)
- A green refuge in the city (34)
- The place for civic & cultural events (32)

Respondents from the first survey also indicated the five most popular preferences for park

features and amenities were:

- Event lawn (524)
- Interactive public art (486)
- Passive space (483)
- Shady courts (432)
- Park restrooms (415)

As a result of the feedback collected after the second public meeting and the survey, a third preliminary design concept was developed to show all streets open to through traffic within the project study area. The second survey also revealed the top transit and mobility options that would be used to access the park in order were:

- Walking (338)
- Public transit (bus, streetcar) (322)
- Car (229)
- Bike (153)
- Other (17)

4.4 Agency Coordination

4.4.1. Agency Early Coordination Package

Port KC, DTC, and KCMO, in coordination with MoDOT, prepared an initial early coordination packet for distribution to local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, officials, and organizations identified in **Table 4-1**. That packet was sent to agencies on May 12, 2023. The packet included a letter inviting the agency to coordinate on the EA, a description detailing the project and its process, a project study area map, the purpose and need statement, and a copy of the Agency Coordination Plan. The early coordination packet was meant to fulfill the scoping activities point of collaboration. **Appendix F** of the EA contains copies of response letters received during the initial coordination process.

4.4.2. Agency Alternatives Screening Package

A second agency coordination packet, the alternatives screening packet, was distributed to local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, officials and organizations identified in **Table 4-1**. The alternatives screening packet included information related to the development of build alternatives, screening criteria, and evaluation of the alternatives. This packet was sent to agencies in October 2023. Agencies did not identify any concerns or issues with the alternatives screening process for the project.

4.4.3. Cooperating and Participating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are those governmental agencies specifically requested by the lead agency to participate during the environmental evaluation process for the project. Cooperating agencies are federal agencies that have jurisdiction by law regarding aspects of the proposed project or special expertise pertaining to the project. Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO, in coordination with MoDOT and FHWA, determined that there will be no cooperating agencies for this project. If there becomes a need to request any agencies to serve as a cooperating agency, Port KC, the DTC, and KCMO, in

consultation with MoDOT and FHWA, will issue that agency an invitation.

Participating agencies are federal and non-federal governmental agencies that may have an interest in the project because of their jurisdictional authority, special expertise, and/or statewide interest. All federal, state, regional, and local government agencies that may have an interest in the project were invited to serve as participating agencies. Non-governmental organizations and private entities cannot serve as participating agencies.

4.4.4. Agency List

Table 4-1 shows the lead and participating agencies for the project. This table displays those agencies that have responded.

Table 4-1: List of Lead and Participating Agencies

Agency	Role	Response Received	Responsibility
Port Authority of Kansas City, Missouri (Port KC)	Local Lead Agency	NA	Manage environmental review process; prepare and approve EA evaluation; provide opportunities for public and agency involvement
Downtown Council of Kansas City, Missouri (DTC)	Local Lead Agency	NA	Manage environmental review process; prepare and approve EA evaluation; provide opportunities for public and agency involvement
City of Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO)	Local Lead Agency	NA	Manage environmental review process; prepare and approve EA evaluation; provide opportunities for public and agency involvement
Missouri Dept. of Transportation (MoDOT)	State Lead Agency	NA	Manage environmental review process; prepare and approve EA; provide opportunities for public and agency involvement
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Federal Lead Agency		Approval of NEPA
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Northwestern Division, Kansas City District	Participating Agency		Consultation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Participating Agency	Y (IPaC)	Consultation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Participating Agency	Y	Consultation
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Participating Agency		Consultation

Agency	Role	Response Received	Responsibility
U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Region (NPS)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Region 7	Participating Agency		Consultation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR)	Participating Agency	Y	Consultation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) - SHPO	Participating Agency		Consultation
State Emergency Management Agency Missouri (SEMA)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Missouri Office of Administration	Participating Agency	Y	Consultation
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)	Participating Agency	Y	Consultation
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	Participating Agency	Y	Consultation
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kaw Nation of Oklahoma	Participating Agency		Consultation
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating Agency		Consultation
The Osage Nation	Participating Agency		Consultation
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska	Participating Agency		Consultation
Ponca Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	Participating Agency		Consultation
Sac and Fox Tribe of the Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska	Participating Agency		Consultation
Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa	Participating Agency		Consultation
Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma	Participating Agency		Consultation
Shawnee Tribe	Participating Agency		Consultation
Wyandotte Nation	Participating Agency		Consultation
Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City (EDCKC)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kansas City Planning and Development Department	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kansas City Public Works Department	Participating Agency		Consultation
Crossroads Community Association of Kansas City (CCA)	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kansas City Downtown Neighborhood Association	Participating Agency		Consultation
Kansas City Streetcar Authority	Participating Agency		Consultation
Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)	Participating Agency		Consultation
RideKC/Kansas City Area Transportation Authority	Participating Agency		Consultation
Downtown Kansas City Community Improvement District	Participating Agency		Consultation
Jackson County, Missouri	Participating Agency		Consultation

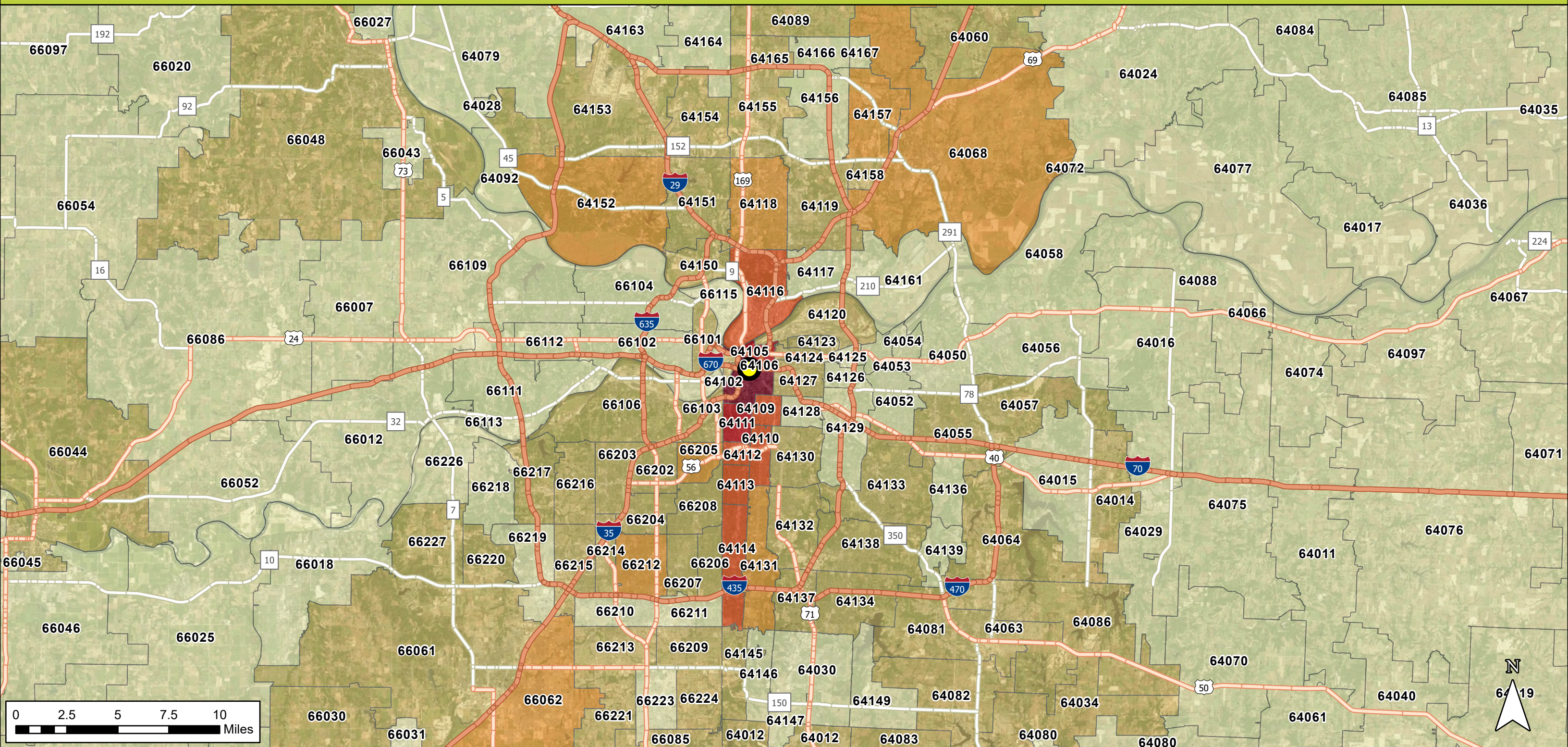
4.4.5. Tribal Coordination

Tribes that indicated cultural or religious interests in projects located in Jackson County, Missouri were contacted by email from FHWA on April 14, 2023. The Tribes received the same informational coordination packet sent to local, state, and federal agencies with an invitation to coordinate and consult on the project. Coordination packets were sent to the following Tribes:







- Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska;
- Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma;
- Kaw Indian Nation of Oklahoma;
- Miami Tribe of Oklahoma;
- Osage Nation;
- Ponca Tribe of Nebraska;
- Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma;
- Sac and Fox Nation of the Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska;
- Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa;
- Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma;
- Shawnee Tribe; and
- Wyandotte Nation.

Coordination responses, and the Study Team responses to requests for additional information are available in **Appendix F**.

Exhibit 4-2: Survey #2 Responses by Zip Code

 NEPA Project Area

Survey #2 Respondents

-  No responses (87)
 1 - 5 (58)
 6 - 10 (8)
 11 - 25 (6)
 26 - 50 (2)
 51 - 110 (2)

