

South Loop Project

Finding of No Significant Impact

Final Environmental Assessment



Kansas City, Missouri

May 12, 2025

**Federal Highway Administration
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**I-670 South Loop Project
Structural Deck over Interstate 670**

Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri
Project No. 611200

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined the selected alternatives (identified as the Preferred Alternatives in the Environmental Assessment (EA)) will not have any significant impact on the human environment. This finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is based on the EA referenced above and subsequent agency and public involvement summarized in the attached supporting documentation. This information has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, the alternatives considered, the environmental issues, and the impacts of the proposed project and includes appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining an environmental impact statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached supporting documentation and the EA.

May 28, 2025

Date of Approval

Scott Stottlemeyer

NAME

Programs Team Leader

TITLE

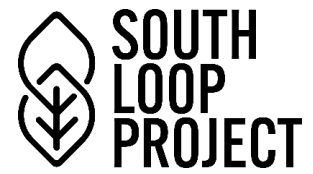


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Finding of No Significant Impact

23 CFR 771.121
City of Kansas City
Missouri Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FHWA Division	Project No.	Project Name Environmental Document Type
Missouri	611200	Kansas City I-670 South Loop Project Environmental Assessment

Decision

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Missouri Division, approved the Kansas City I-670 South Loop Project Environmental Assessment (EA) on January 22, 2025, for Kansas City Port Authority Job Number 611200. Notice of the EA's availability was sent to agencies and the document was made available for public review on January 23, 2025. The EA was available at two locations (Kansas City, MO City Hall and Lee's Summit, MO). It is also available electronically on the study website - kcsouthloopproject.org. The EA was updated based on new guidance from FHWA in March 2025 and was re-signed on April 14, 2025.

The final EA is provided in Errata form and as **Appendix A**. Changes have been made, where appropriate, to the EA document issued for public review on January 23, 2025, in lieu of developing a separate document. Additional information received following the publication of the EA, factual corrections or clarifications, and changes to address comments received on the EA are indicated with **yellow highlight**. No public or agency comments were received during or following the final public meeting conducted on February 13, 2025, that necessitated changes to any of the alternatives evaluated or in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Pursuant to circulation, coordination, and evaluation of the EA, a Preferred Alternative (**Appendix B**) was accepted. The Preferred Alternative is intended to solve the transportation challenges associated with the project within the South Loop Project Area.

The City of Kansas City and Project Partners have selected the Eastern Superblock as the final preferred alternative over the Western Superblock. The Eastern Superblock will close Walnut Street and replace it with a structural deck. It was selected for several reasons.

- Ability to replace the Walnut Street bridge sooner to address structural concerns
- Ability to address surface drainage concerns on Truman Road
- Ability to address vertical clearance concerns on I-670
- Public Support
- Ability to address similar traffic and cultural impacts

The Walnut Street bridge is nearing the end of its useful structural life and will require replacement as part of this project. The Walnut Street bridge was constructed in 1961 and is in fair condition, whereas the Baltimore Street bridge was constructed in 2021 and is in good condition. Leaving Walnut Street open to vehicular traffic presented challenges to managing surface drainage along Truman Road due to

the increased structure depths and increasing the vertical clearance over I-670 to a minimum of at least 15'-6" as prescribed by MoDOT. Closing Walnut Street to convert to a structural deck allowed for a thinner structural depth that could accommodate the minimum requested vertical clearance on I-670 and did not create potential flooding issues for the adjacent properties along Truman Road. Trying to correct for these issues at Walnut would have added millions of dollars to the project cost. Leaving Baltimore open to vehicular traffic did not have the same issues.

In addition, public comments received during the public comment period for the EA were overwhelming supportive of the Eastern Superblock over the Western Superblock. Support ranged from its ability to better serve the public interest and how it connects to the rest of the community.

Detailed traffic analysis concluded that both the Eastern and Western Superblock alternatives provided acceptable traffic operations throughout the study area. Additionally, neither alternative resulted in greater impacts to the community or natural resources.

For these reasons, the City of Kansas City and the Project Partners chose to proceed with the Eastern Superblock as the final preferred alternative.

The Preferred Alternative was identified through public and agency involvement along with assessment of socioeconomic and environmental consequences. The final Public Meeting was held in accordance with established MoDOT procedures. MoDOT has considered possible social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed improvements.

Upon further review by FHWA and MoDOT, the following additions and corrections to the EA have been made and are included in the Final EA and this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Public and Agency Reviews & Comments on the EA

An open house public meeting was held February 13, 2025, at the Kirk Family YMCA in Kansas City, MO (222 W 11th Street, Kansas City, MO) from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This occurred during the public comment period that ran from January 23 to February 23, 2025, with opportunities to view the EA on the study's website. This was the fourth public meeting for the project and offered an opportunity for citizens to learn more about the project and provide oral and written comments on the study following the completion of the EA. A summary of the final public meeting is included in **Appendix C**. Comments were also received online. The EA document, public meeting displays, and opportunity to comment were available online at the study's website - kcsouthloopproject.org.

The public was encouraged to submit written comments during the public meeting using comment cards. An opportunity for a public hearing during the public meeting was provided and documented; however, no comments were received requesting that a hearing be provided. Information was also provided to obtain online access to a survey platform to submit comments during the remaining comment period from February 13 through February 22, 2025. In total during the public comment period 28 comments were received from citizens and community organizations. A total of 17 comments were received during the public meeting. There were no comments received from participating agencies. Responses were received from the Shawnee Tribe and the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska. Copies of the actual comments are provided in **Appendix D**.

Public Comment Categories (See Appendix D for actual comments)

Comment Category and Description	Comment Number
Design – involvement, intersections, prioritization, noise protection, open space uses, alternative preferences [16-Eastern, 3-Western, 0-No Build, 2-Other, 1-Either]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Access – Pedestrian and bicycle access, sidewalks and street crossings, access to parking garages, accessible to students	2, 4, 11, 24
Safety – Pedestrian safety, tunnel risks, night safety, staffing	4, 21, 22, 25
Transportation – Streetcar operations	26

Public Comments and Responses

Design – Most comments received were related to design including: public service interest in the planning and design, prioritizing people over vehicles, and many alternative preferences. Commenters alternative preferences were:

- Eastern Superblock Alternative – 16 comments
- Western Superblock Alternative – 3 comments
- No-Build Alternative – 1 comment
- Other Build Alternative(s) – 2 comments
- Either Preferred Alternative – 1 comment

Commentors requested road diets on Main and Baltimore Streets, vendor space, a park for all, no impact to the KC Streetcar, elevated trees and shrubs, an ice-skating rink, developing an event traffic management plan, and maintaining direct pedestrian access at each intersection.

Response – The final configuration and details of the South Loop Project, including final selection of the Preferred Alternative, will be determined during final design.

Access – Access issues were raised regarding pedestrian travel to the park and across the park sections. Three commentors expressed the need for crosswalks and safe pedestrian access to the park at all times. One commenter noted the desire for the park to be easily accessible for nearby students within the area. Another commenter noted the desire for Grand Boulevard to remain open at all times of the year, even during events, to accommodate for traffic relief in the area.

Response – New crosswalks and other modes of pedestrian access will be implemented to allow for safe pedestrian access across the project. More specifically, pedestrian accommodations at intersections along Truman Road in both directions will be maintained in their current state. Intersections at Baltimore Avenue and Walnut Street will be converted from signalized to stop controlled, maintaining pedestrian accommodations under both Preferred Alternatives. Either Preferred Alternative would be designed to accommodate paved shared-use paths and sidewalks over I-670. These paths would also connect with current bicycle and pedestrian networks in the vicinity of the project study area. All pedestrian access to the park and across I-670 will be ADA compliant.

Safety – Comments regarding safety included the assurance of safety to pedestrians wishing to access the park and safety overnight and within the tunnel.

Response – Safe pedestrian access will be implemented across the project study area in the form of crosswalks, paved shared-use paths, and sidewalks. In addition, the park will be closed to use overnight and while access will still be available, monitoring of the park will occur overnight. Tunnel safety is a main component in the design of tunnels. The safety study completed for the project showed a similar safety performance to the current I-670.

Transportation – A comment on transportation was regarding the transit system and ensuring the KC Streetcar would be unimpeded.

Response – Both Preferred Alternatives do not impact Main Street or the KC Streetcar. Continued coordination with KC Streetcar will occur through construction and post construction.

Changes to the EA

This section identifies the changes from the Draft EA due to public and agency comments:

1. Figure 1-3 was updated with the most recent Greenline plan.
2. Page 80, Section 4.1.5 Public Meeting #4 – This section was updated to reflect the results of Public Meeting #4 which occurred on February 13, 2025. The updated section was updated as follows:

“A fourth public information meeting, the option for a Public Hearing was offered for anyone requesting (no requests were received), included information related to the alternatives screening and selection, potential impacts of the Preferred Alternatives, and other pertinent schedule, cost, and construction information. The public was provided multiple opportunities to comment on the proposed project and its environmental effects. This meeting occurred on February 13, 2025, during the 30-day public comment period which ran from January 23 to February 23, 2025, following FHWA approval of this EA. Over 65 people attended the public meeting and 17 people completed general comment cards. In total during the public comment period 28 comments were received from citizens and community organizations. Public Meeting #4 was held from 5-7 p.m. at The Kirk Family YMCA located at 222 W. 11th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105. Project team members were available to answer questions and/or provide additional information.

People attending the fourth public meeting 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:

- Will new crosswalks, pedestrian over/underpasses, or other pedestrian options be added to allow safe travel between park sections separated by bridges over I-670 (ie on Baltimore, Grand, Main, etc.)?
 - I favor closing Baltimore rather than Walnut.
 - Prefer Western superblock in order to keep Walnut bridge open. Would be better for T Mobile events.
 - I feel like having the superblock closer to the sprint center will be great for large events! I can't wait to see the completed project.”
3. Page 85, Section 4.4.4 Agency List – Table 4-1, a “Y” was added to the Response Received column for the Shawnee Tribe to indicate the response that was received from the Agency.
 4. Appendix A – The preliminary construction plan figures were inadvertently labeled incorrectly, the labels were fixed on each image.

Commitments

The following is a compiled list of project commitments. They are based on the proposed action as disclosed and evaluated in the EA and subsequently selected with this FONSI documentation. The following list of commitments identifies the party responsible for implementation of each commitment. MoDOT and the Project Partners (KCMO, Port KC, Downtown Council) will implement all project and regulatory commitments. If the project scope and limits change at any time, FHWA, MoDOT, and the Project Partners will evaluate the NEPA analysis conducted to date to verify it is still valid. Changes to the commitments cannot occur without FHWA approval.

- 1) The Project Partners will ensure the lateral width of I-670 will not be impacted and, therefore, capacity will not be negatively affected within the project study area.
- 2) The Project Partners will ensure a minimum of 15'6" vertical clearance will be met and included in the final design documentation.
- 3) The City of Kansas City and the Project Partners will obtain design exceptions from FHWA for any design elements not meeting technical requirements prior to completion of final design of the project.
- 4) The Project Partners will design and implement pedestrian access to the park and across I-670 to be ADA compliant. Additionally, sidewalks and trail facilities will provide ADA connections across the park facility.
- 5) **I-670 Tunnel (Section 2.6.1)** - The contractor in coordination with the City of Kansas City and MoDOT will develop a tunnel safety concept for each construction phase of the project to maintain an adequate level of safety during the entire construction process. Additional traffic management measures will be completed to minimize risks through the tunnel. Tunnel systems would be successively installed, commissioned, and tested in segments.
- 6) **Property Governance (Section 2.2.2)** – The City of Kansas City will obtain a ROW Permit from MoDOT ([Permits | Missouri Department of Transportation \(modot.org\)](#)), which has been coordinated with FHWA, before construction begins.
- 7) **Property Governance (Section 2.6.2) and Parks, Recreation and Section 4(f) Resources (Section 3.5)** - The City of Kansas City will enter into an Airspace Agreement with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission to occupy the new property created above MoDOT ROW prior to beginning construction. This agreement will be revocable and terminable, with specific conditions for use. This agreement shall also satisfy provisions under 23 CFR 774.11(i) to establish the property for future transportation improvements. In doing so impacts from the future transportation use are not considered a Section 4(f) impact.
- 8) **Property Governance (Section 2.6.2)** - The City of Kansas City will enter into an agreement with a yet to be formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity prior to the completion of construction and opening of the park. This agreement will outline how the property above I-670 will be operated, maintained, programmed, and funded.
- 9) **Environmental Analysis (Section 3.0)** - The Project Partners and MoDOT commit to re-evaluating potential project impacts should the scope of improvements, project limits, existing conditions, or regulations pertaining to some aspect of the project change during design or construction.
- 10) **Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Section 3.3)** - The City of Kansas City's City Council will develop a community benefits agreement with the Project Partners of the South

Loop Project prior to construction to outline programs and support mechanisms during and after construction that will benefit areas and populations within and beyond the project study area.

- 11) **Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Section 3.3)** - MoDOT will ensure a TMP is included in the construction contract to respond to temporary disruptions in travel patterns and travel time. Once developed, the Project Partners in coordination with MoDOT will assess the impacts of the TMP within the framework of NEPA. If the TMP could result in impacts that were not previously reviewed under NEPA—such as new or additional road closures, access changes, or other circumstances that could cause new or modified impacts to resources, MoDOT’s environmental section will review these impacts prior to implementing the TMP.
- 12) **Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Section 3.3)** - The City of Kansas City will provide information to non-English proficient populations during final design and construction in the following ways:
 - The project website will be available in seven languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Chinese (Simplified), Korean, and Vietnamese;
 - All public meetings will include an option to request an interpreter; and
 - All content publicly provided will be noted as available in alternative languages upon request.
- 13) **Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Section 3.3)** - The City of Kansas City will continue outreach to various neighborhood, civic, and other organizations as requested and as necessary during final design and construction.
- 14) **Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Section 3.3)** - The Contractor, in coordination with the City of Kansas City and Transit Agencies, will develop a plan prior to construction to reroute transit services during construction as necessary to maintain connections to community resources and employers.
- 15) **Parks, Recreation, and Section 4(f) Resources (Section 3.4)** - The City of Kansas City and the Two Light Luxury Apartments HOA will review the lease agreement to determine future actions related to the dog park (non-4(f) resource) prior to its closure for construction activities.
- 16) **Right of Way and Displacements (Section 3.6)** - The City of Kansas City will compensate property owners that will incur temporary construction impacts as determined by City of Kansas City, MoDOT, and FHWA guidelines and processes for acquisitions in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended by the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1987 and 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 24. Relocation assistance will be made available to all persons and businesses to be relocated without discrimination.
- 17) **Cultural Resources (Section 3.8)** - The Contractor and the City of Kansas City will implement the provisions of the Archaeological Testing Plan and all other provisions as outlined in the Programmatic Agreement, intended to refine the archaeological assessment as identified in the EA and Section 106 Memo.
- 18) **Cultural Resources (Section 3.8)** - The City of Kansas City, MoDOT, and FHWA will continue consultation and coordination with those Tribal Nations that have expressed interest in the project as it progresses to construction.
- 19) **Cultural Resources (Section 3.8)** - In the event that a previously unevaluated cultural resource is discovered during construction, all construction and excavation activities will

cease immediately within the area. The Contractor will secure the area, the material will be left in place with no further disturbance, and MoDOT, the Missouri SHPO, FHWA, and Tribal Nations, as appropriate will be contacted immediately.

- 20) **Construction (Section 3.9)** - The Contractor shall ensure that emergency response vehicles have access throughout the corridor during construction. Any detours will be temporary in nature and limited in duration to the period of time required to construct project improvements. These detours will be coordinated with emergency services prior to their implementation.
- 21) **Construction (Section 3.9)** - The Contractors on the project will be required to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal air pollution regulations during construction. Additionally, the Contractor and the City of Kansas City will ensure local and regional access to existing rural and urban areas and facilities are maintained during construction.
- 22) **Construction (Section 3.9)** - The Contractor and the City of Kansas City will ensure measures are taken to reduce fugitive dust and other emissions generated during construction. Emissions from construction equipment would be controlled in accordance with emission standards prescribed under state and federal regulations. Materials resulting from construction operations would be removed from the project and disposed of by the contractor. Additionally, burning of construction debris will be prohibited and requirements to properly dispose of all such material off site will be included.
- 23) **Surface Waters and Water Quality (Section 3.12)** - The Contractor will submit an NOI to obtain a NPDES stormwater construction permit and develop a SWPPP prior to the beginning of construction. The Contractor will be responsible for the monitoring of the BMPs and updating the SWPPP as necessary during project construction. The contractor will also follow BMPs to reduce impacts to groundwater during construction and will also follow recommendations set forth in the TMDLs for the Missouri River. The contractor will also obtain a Site Disturbance Permit from the City of Kansas City per City Code Section 63-25 and prepare an Erosion Control and Sediment Control Plan per Section 63-30 prior to construction.
- 24) **Surface Waters and Water Quality (Section 3.12)** – The City of Kansas City, in coordination with MoDOT, will create a stormwater management system during final design to control temporary runoff during construction.
- 25) **Endangered Species (Section 3.15)** - The Contractor will be responsible for adhering to the MBTA. If migratory birds are found to be nesting on the Walnut Street Bridge (#A0819) or the Baltimore Avenue bridge (#A0817), or if Peregrine Falcons are occupying the nest box, then a protective Job Special Provision (JSP) will be put in place to avoid conflict with the MBTA and follow up with the MDC will be initiated.
- 26) **Geology and Soils (Section 3.16)** - The Contractor and City of Kansas City will perform Geotechnical investigations in later design phases to determine precise bedrock and structural loading requirements.
- 27) **Hazardous Materials (Section 3.19)** - The Contractor will monitor the construction site for hazardous materials during construction. If hazardous materials are encountered during construction, the contractor will cease work at the suspect site immediately. The contractor will contact the appropriate environmental agency, in this case MoDNR, to discuss options for remediation. The MoDNR, EPA, the City of Kansas City, and the contractor will develop a plan for sampling, remediation, and continuation of project construction. Hazardous materials consulting, analytical, and remediation services will be obtained if necessary.

- 28) **Utilities (Section 3.21)** - The City of Kansas City and Contractor during final design and construction will coordinate with utility companies to minimize the impact of necessary utility relocations. The responsible party for any relocations will obtain the necessary clearances should they occur outside of the project study area. All design work, maintenance, and relocation efforts, of underground and above-ground electric lines throughout the project study area shall be designed based on current practices of the power company, the requirements of the electrical code of the local agency having jurisdiction, and the NESC.
- 29) **I-670 Tunnel Considerations (Section 3.22)** - The Contractor and the City of Kansas City will adhere to applicable NFPA 502 Standards for Road Tunnels, Bridges, and Other Limited Access Highways as well as all applicable MoDOT and FHWA regulations for the design and construction of the project. The local jurisdictional fire chief will review and approve the final design of the proposed tunnel.
- 30) If there are changes in the project scope, project limits, existing conditions, pertinent regulations, or environmental commitments, MoDOT will re-evaluate potential impacts prior to implementation. Environmental commitments will not change without prior written approval from FHWA.

Required Permits

The following permits and approvals will be required for construction of either Preferred Alternative:

- MoDOT Right of Way Permit
- Airspace Agreement with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission
- NPDES Stormwater Construction Permit
- Site Disturbance Permit, City of Kansas City
- Missouri Land Disturbance Permit, Jackson County

Appendices

Appendix A	Final Environmental Assessment
Appendix B	Preferred Alternative
Appendix C	Final Public Meeting Summary
Appendix D	Public Comments Received