



Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Package | Memo

To: Representative Troy Waymaster, Chair, Build Kansas Advisory Committee
Chardae Caine, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Shauna Wake, Office of the Kansas State Treasurer

From: Matthew A. Volz, PE, Executive Director, Kansas Infrastructure Hub

RE: Build Kansas Fund Application #2024-055-NoEDD

Date: August 21, 2024

This Build Kansas Fund application package was amended to reflect a change in the local contribution amounts and a change in the total project cost. Please use these amounts going forward.

Attached, please find an application made to the Build Kansas Fund by the City of Topeka. The application packet includes the following items:

- Coversheet – provides a high-level overview of the application including a unique identification number, page 1 of 29 of the Build Kansas Fund Application Package.
- Build Kansas Fund Application – includes information submitted with the Build Kansas Fund Application, pages 2-9. Page 9 provides the table of funding sources.
- Attachments – project plan, pages 10-29.

Project Overview

The City of Topeka seeks funding from the US Department of Transportation for funding available through the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) to address seven projects outlined in the recent Bikeways Phase V circulation study to create better access in the downtown core.

This opportunity is a discretionary BIL program with a local match requirement of 20% of the total project cost. The entity is requesting \$2,984,502.90 from the Build Kansas Fund and contributing \$157,079.10 in local match. This request has the potential to unlock \$12,566,327.00 in federal funds.

The federal deadline was July 17, 2024, and this Build Kansas Fund application was received on June 5, 2024.

Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee Recommendation

The Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee reviewed this application on June 12, 2024, following a successful completeness check. The Steering Committee recommended approval of Build Kansas Funding to the Build Kansas Advisory Committee. On July 16, 2024, the Build Kansas Fund Advisory Committee contingently approved this application, pending a local contribution by the City towards the total project cost. The City resubmitted their application on July 22, 2024 with a local match included. The Hub shared this update with the committee on August 21, 2024 to confirm acceptance.

Amended 8/21/2024

Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Package | Coversheet



Build Kansas Fund Application Number	2024-055-NoEDD
Applicant Name	City of Topeka, Kansas
Project Name	Topeka Bikeways: Phase V
Entity Type	Local Government
Economic Development District (EDD) Planning Commission	NoEDD
Infrastructure Sector(s)	Transportation
BIL Program	Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
BIL Program Type	Discretionary
BIL Application Deadline	07/17/2024
Build Kansas Fund Request	\$2,984,502.90
Technical Assistance Received	General Yes
	BIL Application No
	Build Kansas Fund Application Yes
	Other (Brief Description): Provided general and BKF application support
Application Notes	Build Kansas Fund contribution of \$2,984,502.90 will unlock \$12,566,327.00 in federal BIL funding, with a local contribution of \$157,079.10.

Steering Committee Funding Recommendation	6/12/2024 Recommend
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Advisory Committee Funding Recommendation	7/16/2024 Contingently Approved
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Advisory Committee Funding Recommendation	8/21/2024 Approved
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Completeness Review Data

Date Build Kansas Application Received:	7/22/24 (Amended); 6/5/24 (Original)
Date Of Completeness Check:	7/23/24 (Amended); 6/7/2024 (Original)
Date Forwarded to Steering Committee:	6/10/2024

Title	City of Topeka, Kansas	06/05/2024
	by Alleigh Weems in Build Kansas Fund Application	id. 46707967
	apweems@topeka.org	

Original Submission	07/22/2024
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Score	n/a
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Part 1: Applicant Information

The name of the entity applying for the Build Kansas Fund:	City of Topeka, Kansas
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Project Name:	Topeka Bikeways: Phase V
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Entity type:	Local Government
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Applicant Contact Name:	Alleigh Weems
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Applicant Contact Position/Title:	Senior Management Analyst
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Applicant Contact Telephone Number:	+17853683036
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Applicant Contact Email Address:	apweems@topeka.org
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Applicant Contact Address:	620 SE Madison St
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Applicant Contact Address Line 2 (optional):	2nd Floor - Engineering
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Applicant Contact City:	Topeka
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Applicant Contact State:	Kansas
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Applicant Contact Zip Code:	66607
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Amended 8/21/2024

Is the Project Contact the same as the Applicant Contact? Yes

Part 2: Build Kansas Fund - Eligibility Criteria

Certify that you are pursuing a viable Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity for which your entity is eligible: Yes

Certify that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity you are pursuing has a required non-federal match component: Yes

What is the primary county that the project will occur in? Shawnee County

The Build Kansas Fund is intended to support Kansas-based infrastructure projects. Please provide a list of all the zip codes this project will be located in, along with an estimated percent [%] of the project located in that zip code. For example, if seeking funding for road infrastructure, provide a rough percent of the roads expected in each zip code:

[Zip Code Percentage.xlsx](#)

Part 3: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - Grant Application Information
Please Note: This information is related to the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity to which you will apply. This is NOT information for the Build Kansas Match Fund.

Please enter the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity title that the entity is applying for: Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)

What is the funding agency for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity? U.S. Department of Transportation

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20.205 -- Highway Planning and Construction

What is the Assistance Listing Number (ALN) for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity?

What is the application due date for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity?

7/17/2024

What is the federal fiscal year for this Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity?

2024

Enter the amount of funding being applied for, from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunity:

\$12,566,327.00

Enter the total project cost:

\$15,707,909.00

Enter the required non-federal match percentage:

20%

Part 4: Build Kansas Fund - Match Application Information Beginning in July 2024 and moving forward, eligible applicants are expected to contribute a portion of the non-Federal match requirement. This contribution can be in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions. The goal is to demonstrate the applicant's commitment to the project. The contribution should be significant enough relative to the Build Kansas Fund request. For a local public entity, 5% of the non-federal match is a good guideline, but not a requirement

Enter the non-federal cash match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable:

\$157,079.10

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Enter the estimated value of the non-federal in-kind match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable: 0.0

Enter the non-federal cash match amount being requested from the Build Kansas Fund: \$2,984,502.90

Expected breakdown of funding sources to support the project: Enter the funding source and projected amount from each source to support this project:

[Kansas+DOT+table_V2.xlsx](#)

Part 5: Build Kansas Fund - Means Test and Eligible Applicant Match

What other available funding sources that are currently planned to go unused by your entity will be leveraged for this project? Applicant Cash Match will be leveraged through Bikeways Master Plan programmatic CIP funds

What other available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund monies will be used for this match? N/A

What other sources of in-kind match will be leveraged for this project? Please list and include the actual or estimated value of each. N/A

What other funding sources (local, federal or non-federal) will to be used for this match? N/A

Amended 8/21/2024

Describe your efforts to find other available funding sources for this project: Three projects from the overall Bikeways circulation study were submitted to the most recent round of KDOT Transportation Alternatives program; if not awarded funds, the city will continue to seek future state offered opportunities for grant funding. USDOT RAISE will be leveraged for portions of the original Bikeways Phase V segments outside of the corridors described in this proposal (e.g. NE River Rd SUP). Four phases of the Bikeways Master Plan have been completed to date, with Phase V being planned in 2023. These phases were funded from the Countywide ½ Cent Sales Tax (allocated every other year), four TA Grants, and locally raised funds. Countywide ½ Cent Sales Tax is programmed at \$500,000 in FY 2023 and every other year until 2030.

Part 6: Additional Information

Please upload a copy of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) program application associated with this request OR a 2-page executive summary providing an overview of the project:

[ATiIP_Narrative_Final.pdf](#)

Provide any additional information about this project (optional):

Part 7: Terms and Conditions

Understanding of Fund Release Requirements: checked

Understanding of Use of Funds: checked

Understanding of Reporting Requirements: checked

Authority to Make Grant Application: checked

Persons and Titles: Alleigh Weems
The following persons are responsible for making this Build Kansas Fund application.

Position/Title: Senior Management Analyst

Additional: April Hazen Shaffer

Position/Title: Senior Grant Program Administrator

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Additional:

Position/Title:

Additional:

Position/Title:

Internal Form

Score n/a

Pre-Award Information:

Eligible for Build
Kansas Fund? YES

EDD / Region: Non EDD/Tribal

Project Primary Zip
Code:

Sector: Transportation

Application ID: 2024-055-NoEDD

BKF approved
amount: 2984502.9

Post-Award Information:

Awarded BIL Grant?

Deviation Report:

Deviation Type: Match Request Adjustment

Amended 8/21/2024

Deviation Summary: Alleigh Weems with the City of Topeka would like the BKF award letter based on the City providing the 5% of the Federal match requirement. The City confirmed they are going to provide the 5% of the match requirement. We will send them an award letter. I will ask them to update the BKF application numbers.

The match amount changed slightly and here is why: As discussed previously, I had a call with Alleigh Weems on late Tuesday afternoon and asked if the City could provide the local match dollars. It was then that she told me the City did adjust their ATIIIP grant request at the last minute slightly lower because the RAISE grant they were recently awarded did have an overlap with a couple of the bike lane segments they had in the ATIIIP grant application. The change reduced the total project cost from \$16,640,153 to \$15,707,909 and adjusted some of the segments. That will reduce the 20% non-Federal match requirement from \$3,328,030 to \$3,141,582. With the 5% of the total non-Federal match requirement (\$157,079.10) provided by the City, the BKF request will now be \$2,984,502.90.

Funding Source	Percentage	Total Funding
ATIIIP Funds:	80%	\$12,566,327
Other Federal Funds:	- -	
Non-Federal Funds (Topeka):	1%	\$157,079.10
Non-Federal Funds (BKF)	19%	\$2,984,502.90
Total Project Cost:	100%	\$15,707,909

Deviation Date: 7/18/2024

Amended 8/21/2024

Source	Amount
BIL Federal Funds (applied for)	\$ 12,566,327.00
Build Kansas Funds (non-federal match)	\$ 2,984,502.90
Eligible Applicant Cash Match	\$ 157,079.10
Eligible Applicant In-Kind Match (estimated value)	
Additional Project Contribution (if applicable)	
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 15,707,909.00

Zip Code	% of project in zip code	State
66616	20	Kansas
66607	20	Kansas
66603	20	Kansas
66608	20	Kansas
66606	20	Kansas



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FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

Topeka Bikeways Phase V

City of Topeka, Kansas

Project Description

The City of Topeka, Kansas is seeking an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment (ATIIIP) grant to address eight crucial projects, six of which were outlined in the recent [Bikeways Phase V](#) circulation study. These projects will specifically create better access in our downtown core, providing connectivity to workforce opportunities, transit routes, and essential destinations such as food sources, schools, and green spaces. This application represents the culmination of over a decade of strategic planning and implementation to transform Topeka into a bicycle-friendly community.

History of Bikeways Investment

2012 Topeka Bikeways Plan Proposed Network

The development of the [Topeka Bikeways Master Plan](#) in 2012 set the stage for greater bicycling in Topeka. Adopted by the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO), the initial plan



included eight trails and a 122-mile on-street bike network to be built in five phases over a 15-year period. Since then, Topeka has expanded the total planned mileage to 167 miles and continues to look for opportunities to increase bicycle facilities through Complete Streets projects and other city and county initiatives.

Purpose of the 2020 Bike Plan Update

The development of the Topeka Bikeways Master Plan in 2012 set the stage for greater bicycling in Topeka. Adopted by the MTPO, the initial plan included eight trails and a 122-mile on-street bike network to be built in five phases over a 15-year period. Since then, Topeka has expanded the total planned mileage to 167 miles and continues to look for opportunities to increase bicycle facilities through Complete Streets projects and other city and county initiatives.

The [2020 Fast-Track Bike Plan Update](#) serves as an action plan and supplement to the 2012 Plan, responding to evolving community priorities and current best practices. This update:

- Refreshes bike plan goals and prioritization criteria
- Establishes a priority "low-stress/high quality" network appealing to users of all ages and abilities
- Recommends grant-ready "ultimate design" projects to complete by 2030
- Illustrates high-level design concepts to jump-start priority projects
- Updates existing routes and design guidance
- Acknowledges the need for iterative planning with regular updates

Fast-Track Bike Plan:

Guiding Principles for Bicycling in Topeka

Equity and Access for All: Improve access for all members of the community to key destinations, trails, and neighborhoods along a safe, connected, and well-maintained bicycle network.

Plan and design for bicyclists of all ages and abilities recognizing the diverse needs of low-income users, youth, women, people of color, seniors and other underrepresented groups.

Health, Wellness and Safety: Provide opportunities for active transportation choices through the planning, design and promotion of the bicycle system.

Increase roadway safety for bicyclists.

Sustainability and Economic Development:

Reduce the environmental impacts and infrastructure costs of the community's transportation system through greater opportunities for active transportation.

Capitalize on the potential of an all ages and all abilities bicycle network to attract tourists, residents, and businesses.

Livability: Support bicycling and active transportation as critical components in providing a high quality of life for people living, working, recreating, and visiting Topeka.

Land Use and Transportation Connections:

Prioritize a destination-based bicycle network with end-of-trip facilities to support active transportation.

Accomplishments to Date

Over the past ten years, Topeka has made significant progress in supporting bicycling as a key component of our transportation system:

- Developed and adopted our first Bikeways Master Plan in 2012
- Secured a countywide half-cent sales tax with up to \$3.5 million for bike projects through 2031
- Developed Design Guidelines to strengthen city and county Complete Streets policies
- Built approximately 85 miles of on-street bike facilities
- Received approximately \$4.4 million in grants for bicycling improvements
- Achieved Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists
- Adopted a new Land Use Growth Management Plan with Transportation choices as a major pillar
- Adopted the Futures 2045 Regional Transportation Plan with increased emphasis on active transportation

Phase V Implementation – 2024

The Topeka Bikeways Circulation Study aims to advance the network recommendations of the 2012 Bikeways Master Plan and 2020 Fast-Track Bike Plan. It develops high-level concept designs for ten roadway corridors identified for the next phase of implementation (Phase V). This ATIIIP application includes six of these corridors, as three have been proposed for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)'s [Transportation Alternatives](#) (TA) Program, and one was included in a recently-awarded [RAISE Grant](#) application. To accommodate the agency's minimum \$15m capital construction application requirement, two non-Phase V projects have been included in this proposal as a supplement.

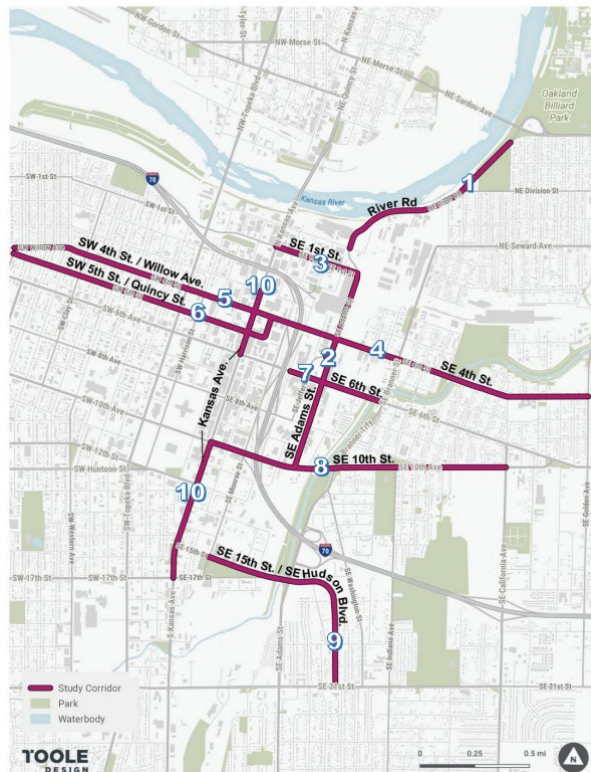
Project Location and Broader Context

Founded in 1854, the City of Topeka (39° 02' 05" N x 95° 41' 44" W) is one of 25 designated First-Class Kansas cities. Located in Shawnee County, Topeka is the Kansas State Capital, is 62 miles west of Kansas City, 137 miles northeast of Wichita, and is bisected by Interstate 70. It covers 62.76 square miles, with a population density of 2,017 people per square mile.

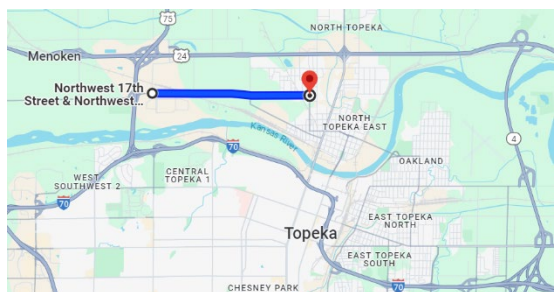
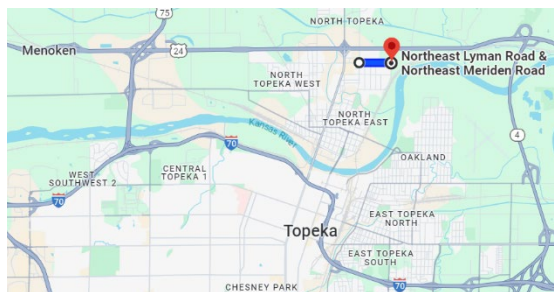
Table 1. Study Corridors

Corridor	Extents
1 - NE River Rd	NE Crane St to NE Emmett St
2 - SE Adams St	SE 10 th Ave to SE 1 st St
3 - SE 1st St	Kansas Ave to Jefferson Trfy
4 - SE 4th St	NE Golden Ave to Kansas Ave
5 - SW 4th St	Washburn Ave to Kansas Ave
6 - SW 5th St	Washburn Ave to SE 4 th St
7 - SE 6th St	SE Madison St to SE Branner St
8 - SE 10th St	S Kansas Ave to SE California Ave
9 - SE 15th St / SE Hudson Blvd	SE Monroe St to Maryland Ave to SE 21 st St
10 - Kansas Ave	3 rd St to 6 th St and 10 th Ave to 17 th St

Figure 1. Study Corridors



The project area is designated as urban per NOFO criteria.



The Landon Trail joins the Shunga just south of downtown and continues for 4.5 miles through southeast Topeka, continuing into the surrounding Flint Hills, and the Soldier Creek Trail serves North Topeka.

These new Phase V projects will enhance connectivity to these existing assets and to key destinations throughout the city. Topeka offers many attractions that appeal to visitors, including the Brown v. Board of Education historical site, Gage Park with its zoo and Discovery Center, the Kansas History Center, the State Capitol, and distinctive commercial districts. Enhancing Topeka's bicycle-friendliness will add to the visitor experience and attract new residents and investment.

Topeka has completed major projects that are both important recreational assets and the basis for a broader bicycle transportation system. The Shunga Trail – a greenway that links many of Topeka’s parks along Shunganunga Creek – connects the city’s west side with downtown and to the eastern



Figure 2. Section A (Kansas Ave to Adams St) – Existing (79' curb to curb)



Figure 3. Section A (Kansas Ave to Adams St) – Proposed (79' curb to curb) *

Current Community Access

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) of Topeka contains approximately 72.4 miles of bicycle infrastructure and 89.2 miles of existing trails (both concrete & nature trails). Buffers of ¼ and ½ miles are used to determine proximity to the on-street bicycle system and to trails.

In the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA):

- 42% of residents (71,200) are within ¼ mile of bicycle facilities
- 63% of residents (105,100) are within ½ mile of bicycle facilities
- 16% of residents (27,200) are within ¼ mile of a trail
- 32% of residents (54,400) are within ½ mile of a trail

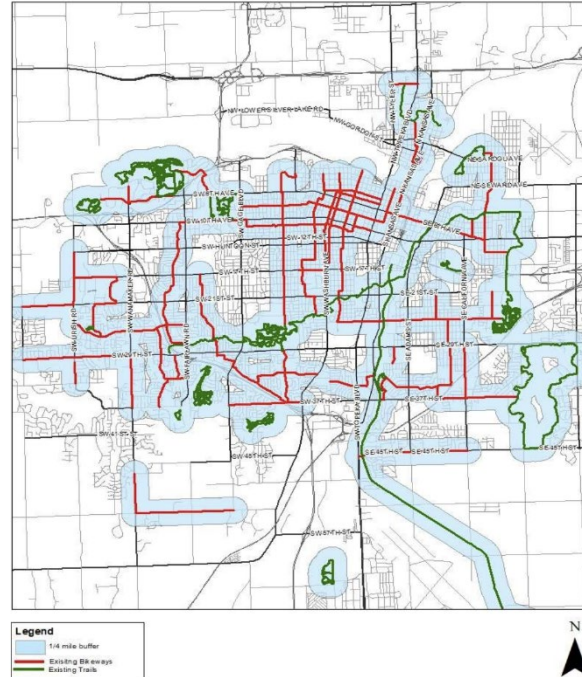
Environmental Justice (EJ) areas access:

- 58% within ¼ mile and 82% within ½ mile of bike routes/trails
- 23% within ¼ mile and 45% within ½ mile of trails

EJ areas, typically older and denser, have better overall coverage despite older facilities. The current growth rate of pedestrian and bikeways facilities continues to positively impact EJ populations.

Figure 4-6: Current Bikeways System Access Map (1/4-mile access area)

1/4 Mile Buffer around Existing Bikeways & Trails



Project Area Study: [Replica](#) data indicates a total of 1,470 bike and pedestrian trips along the proposed segments on a typical Thursday in Fall 2023. Trip purposes are split primary between Home (30.4%), Shop (28.4%), Social (7.37%), and School (7.23%). These findings demonstrate substantial existing demand for active transportation infrastructure and highlight the diverse use of these corridors. Enhancing route accessibility will encourage increased ridership and attract new users. This project serves to further community cohesion and promote healthier, more sustainable travel choices to all Topekans.



Figure 2. Section A (Kansas Ave to Adams St) – Existing (79' curb to curb)



Figure 3. Section A (Kansas Ave to Adams St) – Proposed (79' curb to curb) *

Current Community Barriers

Central Topeka is one of several food deserts in Topeka, impacting our low-income communities by adding travel time to a grocery store or seeking other food sources. Many Neighborhood Improvement Associations are in areas where the housing was built between the 1890s and 1940s. Redlining caused a lack of neighborhood investment, with many homes converted to apartments in an effort to address a housing stock mismatch (lack of affordable apartment options), while not addressing larger issues or routine maintenance. The increase in conversions led to many neighborhoods being downzoned to single-family districts. Deteriorating housing conditions created a situation where homes were easier to demo than rehab, leaving many vacant lots. With rising construction costs and single-family zoning, many of these lots have remained open and unoccupied.



Figure 2. Section A (Monroe St to Madison St) – Existing (26' curb to curb)



Figure 3. Section A (Monroe St to Madison St) – Proposed (26' curb to curb) *

An additional key barrier relates to available monetary capacity. Some limited funding to support Bikeways development is available under the City’s Bikeways Master Plan Program. This accounts for \$500,000 a year, allocated through Countywide Sales Tax in the Topeka [Capital Improvement Plan](#). However, with the rising cost of inflation, this tool has not allowed for Topeka to make great strides in building out our bike/pedestrian network. To further put this into perspective, the current level of funding only affords the City up to a mile and a half of new sidewalk per year with consideration to capital costs alone. With these known challenges in mind, City staff recognized ATIP as an imperative to address areas where funding allowances have not kept pace with infrastructure needs throughout the community.

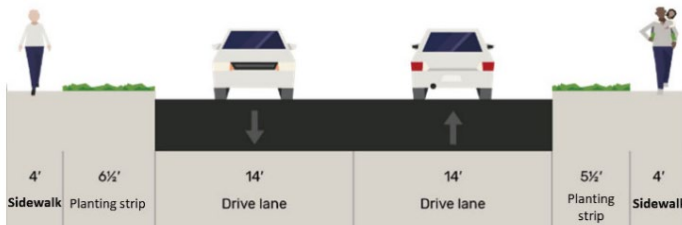


Figure 10. Section E (SE Adams St to SE 17th St) – Existing (28' curb to curb)



Figure 11. Section E (SE Adams St to SE 17th St) – Proposed (28' curb to curb)

Lead Applicant and Other Parties

The City of Topeka Finance Department currently administers various KDOT and other Federal-based transportation funds related to projects, as well as the MTPO. One such example of this is Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding, a pass-through of Federal funding from KDOT, that was awarded to the City in 2021. The MTPO is in active coordination with the City in delivery of Bikeways projects and is involved in amending any future projects into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on a quarterly basis.

Project Budget

The budget provided does not include previously incurred expenses and no expenses are expected to be incurred between time of award and obligation of funds.

Funding Source	Percentage	Total Funding
ATIP Funds:	80%	\$12,566,327
Other Federal Funds:	-	-
Non-Federal Funds (Local):	20%	\$3,141,582
Total Project Cost:	100%	\$15,707,909

Costs by Segment

Corridor Segment	Estimated Cost
SE 1st St: Kansas Ave to Jefferson Tfwy	\$917,917
SE 4th St: SE Market St to Kansas Ave	\$2,476,612
SE 6th St: SE Madison St to SE Branner St	\$177,450
SE 10th St: S Kansas Ave to SE Branner Tfwy	\$1,355,256
SE 15th St/SE Hudson Blvd: SE Monroe St to Maryland Ave to SE 21st St	\$1,820,676
Kansas Ave: 3rd St to 6th St	\$1,973,975
NE Lyman Rd: N Kansas Ave to NE Meriden Rd	\$2,494,656
NW Lower Silver Lake Rd: NW Brickyard Rd to NW Taylor St	\$4,491,367
Total	\$15,707,909

Contingency and Cost Estimates

Contingency was calculated at a rate of 30% of total cost per project. This can be viewed in greater detail in the appended Cost Opinion documents. In the event that a project exceeds initial estimates, the City of Topeka will look to supplement overages through existing programmatic funds (e.g. Bikeways Master Plan Program) or seek assistance through State-led grant funding. Costs were developed by a third-party consultant, Toole Design Group, in addition to Topeka Engineering Department. Due to recent announcement of FY24 RAISE Grant funding, corridor segment estimated costs have been modified to reflect the new scope(s) of each project impacted.

Other Opportunities Pursued

KDOT TA was utilized for 3 projects from the overall circulation study; if not awarded funds, the city will continue to seek future state offered opportunities for grant funding. As previously indicated, USDOT RAISE will be leveraged for portions of the original Bikeways Phase V segments outside of the corridors outlined in the above table.

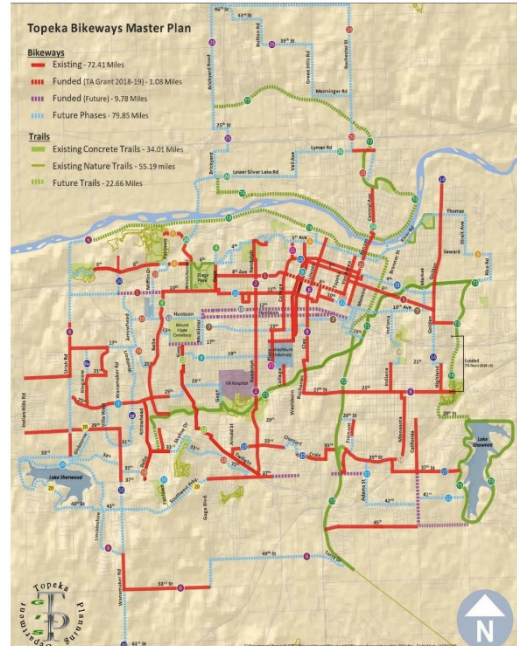
Four phases of the Bikeways Master Plan have been completed to date, with Phase V being planned in 2023. These phases were funded from the Countywide ½ Cent Sales Tax (allocated every other year) four TA Grants, and locally raised funds. These four phases have produced approximately 80 miles of bicycle infrastructure, and 31 miles of concrete recreation trails.

Funding is programmed at \$500,000 in FY 2023 and every other year until 2030. Approximately 14 miles of bikeways and trails have been added to the bikeways trails network since 2021, an increase of approximately 12%.

The City has additionally submitted this project proposal to the [Build Kansas Fund](#), a state-supported program to provide matching dollars for Kansas municipalities that successfully apply for Federal grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Bikeways Master Plan Funding

Another sub-category of the Topeka CIP's ½-cent sales tax allocation for roadway improvements includes funding to support the implementation of Topeka & Shawnee County Bikeways Master Plan. In 2012 the City and MTPO funded a Bikeways



Master Plan that was produced by RDG Consultants and the MTPO partners. This Plan was adopted by the City and the County in 2012 and was most recently updated in 2020. Several phases of this Bikeways Master Plan have been implemented mainly through the use of TA grant awards, which have total more than \$4.5 million as of 2023. The ½-cent sales tax allocates \$500,000 every other year for Bikeways Master Plan implementation. These improvements include on-street bike lanes, 10-foot side paths, roadway markings and signage. The majority of these funds are utilized as match funds for the federal TA grant funds.

Project Readiness

Federal Regulations

The City has adhered to Title VI/Civil Rights requirements, in addition to Federal construction and pay (prevailing wage) regulations related to all project administration. This project will comply with all applicable Federal requirements including but not limited to Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR).

The City of Topeka has adopted [2010 ADA Standards](#) and aims to implement new PROWAG through existing policy, technical specifications, and ongoing internal trainings. As part of the site development process, the City will coordinate the proposed sidewalk segments to be constructed within new compliance standards as a condition of this grant funded project.

NEPA Status

The City plans to submit NEPA filings for a categorical exclusion within the first 1-2 month of award notification. We will prioritize this process so that it is as efficient as possible while meeting all requirements. The City will coordinate closely with Richard Backlund's Topeka-based FHWA office on working through any questions or concerns that arise with the application. Staff will additionally secure all necessary Federal/State reviews, approvals, permits, and environmental studies expeditiously and as deemed necessary.

ROW Acquisition Plans

There is expected to be minimal to no requirement for ROW acquisition. This assumption has been accounted for in the Project Budget section, and City staff, namely our ROW Real Estate Officer, will allot time necessary to execute formal negotiation and paperwork with property owners if and when the need arises.

State and Local Approvals

This project will be added as an amendment to the 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) at the next scheduled meeting of the MTPO [Technical Advisory Committee](#). It is anticipated to then be released for a two-week public comment period before consideration by the MTPO Policy Board. The TIP amendment will be approved before funds are obligated.

Schedule for Making Changes to TIP Projects

Changes to TIP projects (including additions and amendments of projects) are processed quarterly beginning at the January MTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting of each year. This provision was incorporated into the amendment process to provide a more efficient TIP amendment process. However, in the event there is an amendment that requires immediate processing the MTPO staff is at liberty to circumvent the amendment schedule.

Future TIP Amendment Dates:

- July 2024 (Approved by MTPO on June 27th)
- September 2024 (Approved by MTPO on August 22nd)

All design will follow standard detail/specifications for the City of Topeka, State of Kansas, and all other safety and technical requirements.



Figure 2. Section A (3rd to 6th, 10th to 13th) – Existing (88' curb to curb)



Figure 3. Section A (3rd to 6th, 10th to 13th) – Proposed (88' curb to curb)

Project Schedule

The following table displays a summary project schedule broken down into two phases of bid solicitation and construction cycles. This is due to the large amount of work proposed and realistic timeline to accommodate the substantial amount of infrastructure to be designed and constructed. It includes preparation of NEPA documents, internal reviews, RFP selection and approval, and applicable permitting requirements. Public engagement regarding the project will begin at the announcement of award and will continue throughout the duration of the project lifecycle. All necessary activities will be complete to allow ATIP grant funds to be obligated sufficiently in advance of the administrative deadline. Construction can begin upon the obligation of grant funds.

Amended 8/21/2024

Project Task	2025				2026				2027				2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Environmental																
NEPA																
STIP/TIP																
Design																
Contract/Procurement																
City Council Process																
Bid/Award																
ROW/Permits																
Construction																
Start Work Order																
Inspection																
Closeout																

Technical Feasibility

All design will follow standard detail/specifications for the City of Topeka, State of Kansas, and all other safety and technical requirements.

The City of Topeka has the resources necessary to complete this project on time and within budget. Resources include:

- Staff time
- Access to technical experts
- Experience in Federal grant administration: KDOT (TA, Cost Share), HUD (CDBG, HOME, ADDI, ESG), ARPA, FCC (ACP)
- Ability to mobilize resources in a timely manner
- Political, community, and internal support
- Partnership with other agencies
- Confidence that the project will be granted a Categorical Exclusion during NEPA review

This project will be structured with the City Engineering Department working in lockstep with the City Planning & Development Department to draft and develop segments. Our committed staff of engineers, planners, and administrators will serve as dedicated stewards in executing a successful project. Over a dozen City staff across our organization, spanning decades of construction management experience, will coordinate diligently to streamline processes. By design, this project integrates seamlessly within the City’s CIP and will be managed and prioritized as such. We are confident that our shared institutional knowledge and established procedures will allow us to deliver this project efficiently and effectively.

Public Engagement

The City of Topeka is dedicated to educating and increasing dialogue between residents and their local government. We employ a coordinated, multi-departmental approach to achieve this through our Community Engagement, Public Works, Utilities, and Communications departments. This project is no exception, and it epitomizes those efforts and will be actively working with stakeholders to communicate milestones and phasing.

The City also has [established procedures](#) related to public meetings for residents to attend and learn about projects near them that may impact their daily lives. City and consulting staff, as well as City Councilmembers from their respective districts, will frequently attend these to answer any constituent questions and offer clarity on project goals and expectations. These opportunities give residents ample notice in advance of major work to be conducted and to plan for potential disruption to services. City social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) and earned media with local news outlets will also be employed to announce initial plans, and continue to feature projects later to demonstrate what was accomplished with DOT’s financial assistance.

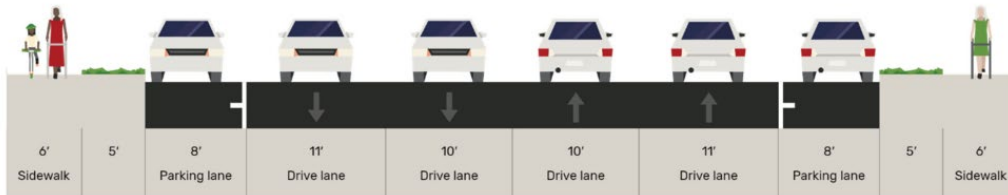


Figure 4. Section B (13th to 17th) – Existing (58' curb to curb)

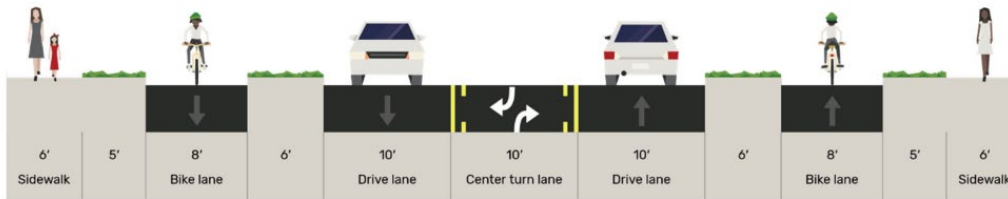


Figure 5. Section B (13th – 17th) – Proposed (58' curb to curb)

Assessments of Project Risks/Mitigation Strategies

Communication Risks

The City intends to conduct robust community outreach including but not limited to NIA meetings and presentations, which generally take place on a monthly basis, as well as other community meetings where community members can review the plans and discuss challenges and concerns they might have. These strategies will follow internal best practices and be in alignment with the MTPO’s [Public Participation Plan](#).

Additionally, Topeka recently created its [Diversity Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Office](#) in January 2023. It develops, implements, and incorporates DEI strategies throughout the city. Also in 2023, Topeka hired its first Language Access Coordinator to implement and develop its Language Access Plan. Topeka is working to provide Limited English Proficiency residents with information about city services in an equitable, meaningful, and timely manner.

Topeka’s ADA Advisory Council further advises in areas including communications issues relating to sensory impairments. Topeka uses closed captioning in its communication channels, including YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom; and ASL interpreting services for those who request/need public accommodations like qualified interpreters.

Upon award and throughout implementation, the City will pursue active engagement with citizens through the utilization of CAC and ADA Advisory Council, public meetings, and routine updates regarding scheduled construction.

Merit Criteria

Mobility and Community Connectivity

The project will significantly enhance mobility and community connectivity by creating an active transportation network connecting key destinations within Topeka. Each corridor has been strategically selected to provide crucial links in the overall network:

- SE 4th St: Provides a direct connection to the Shunga Trail
- SE 6th St: Connects to existing bike lanes and improves access to the Shunga Trail
- SE 15th St/SE Hudson Blvd: Improves access to Landon Nature Trail and Shunga Trail
- Kansas Ave: Provides direct access to the primary business district
- NE Lyman Rd: Provides access to Kansas Ave corridor and early learning facility
- NW Lower Silver Lake Rd: Provides connection to industrial and trade workforce

These improvements will additionally integrate active transportation facilities with transit services, improving access to public transportation throughout the city.

Community Support

Fast-Track Plan: On August 29, 2019, the Fast-Track Bike Plan project team solicited input at an open house, which took place at the Shawnee County Health Department with approximately 20 participants. An online survey and interactive map were promoted to Topeka residents between late spring and early summer of 2019. The online survey and interactive map mimicked the format that was used at the community workshops and pop-up events. The online survey was completed by approximately 280 people. The online interactive map had nearly 70 users.

Participants in the open house and online engagement had an opportunity to identify examples of routes missing from the future network, high priorities for improvement, and destinations to which they would like to bike. This information was compiled and contributed to the selection of priority routes and the additions to the long-term network.

Phase V: Draft concepts for the 10 corridors were developed by the consultant team based upon existing conditions, planned conditions, City goals, and engineering judgement. Draft concepts were presented to the Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC) for review and discussion on May 18, June 15, and July 20, 2023. In addition, email comments on draft concepts were also provided by CSAC members. Draft concepts were revised based upon CSAC input.

The draft concepts were then presented to the public for review and input. The consultant team coordinated a pop-up meeting during Oktoberfest on October 7, 2023, on behalf of the MTPO. The event was held from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 528 SE Adams Street in Topeka, Kansas. The consultant team interacted with 71 people during the event. Each reviewed a map of the corridors as well as the existing and proposed typical sections for each of the corridors. Participants used a combination of star stickers, post-it notes, and markers to record comments. In general, meeting participants were supportive of the proposed improvements, especially if they were to be accompanied by street and pedestrian improvements.

Of the 71 people who participated in the meeting, the consultant team tallied a total of 50 star stickers among support of specific corridors, most favored typical sections, and support for the plan in general:

- General support of the ten corridor options (17 stickers)
 - Most support include River Road (3 stickers), SE 10th Street (3 stickers), and SE 4th Street (3 stickers)
- Favored concept sections (10 stickers)
 - Favorite section was SE 4th Street Section A (5 stickers)
 - Support of plan in general (23 stickers)

The street sections with the most support included protected and designated bike lanes and those with trees and new green space. Participants expressed concerns about the condition of certain downtown roads, such as SE Adams Street where the Topeka Vendors Market event is held. Some said they would rather have roads fixed than bikeways installed on failing road surfaces. Of the 71 people who participated in the pop-up, roughly half lived in or around the circulation plan's focus area. The other half lived outside the extents of the circulation plan's focus area. Two or three specifically stated that they bicycle downtown.

Commitment to Increase Active Transportation

To measure the success of joint City of Topeka-MTPO goals related to Bikeways development and evaluate the components and effectiveness of the network, criteria were developed by the Netherlands' Centre for Research and Contract Standardization in Civil and Traffic Engineering, one of the world's leading authorities in the design of bicycle-friendly infrastructure. Using these standards, Topeka's bicycle network should generally fulfill six requirements:

1. **Integrity:** Topeka's bikeway network should form a coherent system throughout its evolution, linking starting points with destinations, being understandable to its users, and fulfilling a responsibility to convey them continuously on their paths.
2. **Directness:** Topeka's bikeway network should offer cyclists as direct of a route as possible with minimum detours or misdirection.
3. **Safety:** Topeka's bikeway network should maximize bicycle safety, minimize or improve hazardous conditions and barriers, and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists.
4. **Comfort:** Most bicyclists should view the network as within their capabilities without mental or physical stress. As the system grows, it will comfortably meet more types of users' needs.
5. **Experience:** The Topeka bicycle network should offer its users a pleasant and positive experience that capitalizes on the City's built and natural environments.
6. **Feasibility:** The Topeka bicycle network should provide more benefits than costs and should be a wise investment of resources, capable of developing in phases and growing over time.

City-County Coordination

The 2023-2025 Shawnee County [Community Health Improvement Plan](#) identifies walkability, especially regarding access and transportation to medical services, education, food, and employment.

One key goal of the Plan is to "Decrease the percentage of Shawnee County residents who are overweight, through Intervention Strategy 4.3.c: Support the continuation of Complete Streets Advisory Committee guidelines, continued programming and initiatives, including the expansion

of multipurpose pathways and other bike, pedestrian, and transit enabling infrastructures to improve community connectedness and active transport throughout Topeka and Shawnee County. Additionally, the City of Topeka, in coordination with MTPO and other community partners, is currently finalizing its updated Safe Routes to School Plan, which has been supported with by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas [Pathways to a Healthy Kansas](#) grant funding.

The project incorporates principles from DOT's [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) and the [Safe System Approach](#), aiming to significantly improve safety for all road users.

Financial Completeness

The project demonstrates a fully committed funding package that meets the 80% match requirement. The City of Topeka has a strong track record of managing federal transportation funds and has allocated the necessary local matching funds in its budget.

Equitable Development

Complete Streets

In September 2012, the MTPO approved a [Complete Streets Policy](#) in support of the region's vision for a safe, balanced, multi-modal and equitable transportation system that is coordinated with land-use planning and protective of the environment. This policy guides and informs the MTPOs planning and programming work. Complete streets are streets, highways and bridges that are routinely planned, designed, operated and maintained with the consideration of the needs and safety of all travelers along and across the entire public right-of-way. This includes people of all ages and abilities who are walking; driving vehicles such as cars, trucks, motorcycles or buses; bicycling; using transit or mobility aids and freight shippers. In 2019 the MTPO adopted a Complete Streets Guideline manual, which supports the ideologies of the Complete Streets Policy, and [illustrates](#) a variety of implementation strategies for different streetscapes.

This project modernizes the community's transportation network in terms of Complete Streets principles, reduces overall maintenance costs due to reduced vehicular travel, and addresses transportation needs of underserved communities. Building walkable and bikeable infrastructure helps preserve the condition of our neighborhood streets, as users will begin using pedestrian paths as intended in lieu of the street with other modes of transportation.

This project will address existing disparities in bicyclist and pedestrian fatality rates and provide improved access to jobs, schools, and services for low-income communities and disadvantaged communities. Specific equity benefits include:

- Improved safety on SE 4th Street, where two fatal bicycle crashes occurred
- Enhanced connectivity to job centers and key destinations in disadvantaged areas
- Increased access to green spaces and recreational opportunities

Greater Topeka Partnership (GTP) and the City have collaborated in developing [Momentum 2027](#), a community-wide strategic plan built to unleash growth and economic opportunity for all, founded on principles of equity and inclusive prosperity. A primary objective of this initiative centers around Active Core and Neighborhoods: "Continuing the community's renaissance through ongoing downtown revitalization and renewed support for diverse, well-maintained, thriving, and sustainable neighborhoods."

Other DOT Goals/Priorities

Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Topeka's Complete Street Guidelines encourage 10-11ft lanes on arterial and collector streets as they provide many safety benefits for all users. The AASHTO Green Book provides flexibility in travel lane width and allows lanes to be as narrow as 10 feet in a variety of contexts.

[According to KDOT](#), in 2022, the City of Topeka recorded 3,174 crashes. Of these, 66 were pedestrian-related. (Pedestrians defined as: pedestrians, pedalcyclists, rider of animal; occupant of a legally parked vehicle, an animal-drawn carriage, or a machine operating for its intended purpose.) The state total pedestrian-related crashes was 977, making Topeka's share of the yearly total 6.6%. This while only representing roughly 4.3% of the state's [population](#). This suggests Topeka is seeing a higher than per capita share of pedestrian-related deaths.

The vast majority of city-wide pedestrian and bicycle crashes are injury crashes; however, 14 fatal crashes were reported in this time frame, with two fatal bicycle crashes on the study segments. Both fatal crashes within the study segments took place on 4th Street, at the intersections of Kansas Avenue and Taylor Avenue. Though these crash counts are too low to draw statistical conclusions, it does indicate that bicycle safety on 4th Avenue warrants special attention. Additional crash information such as the direction of vehicular movement or other details that may shed light on the specific crash type was not available from the KDOT database.

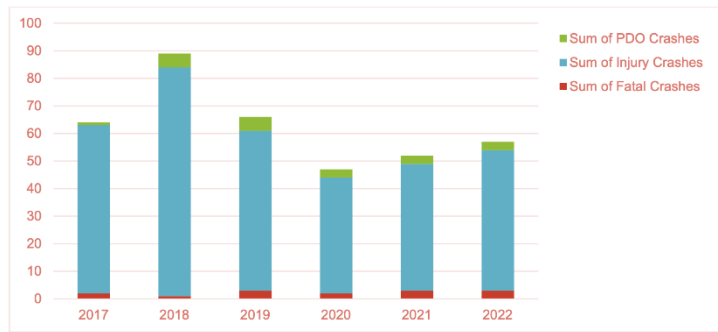


Figure 3-7 - City-Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes by Year and Severity

The intersection of SE 15th Street and SE Adams Street has been identified as a critical safety concern in the MTPO [Transportation Safety Plan](#). Between 2010 and 2016, this intersection experienced one of the highest frequencies of crashes in the city, with 20 fatal and injury crashes recorded. Furthermore, the corridor along SE 15th Street, particularly the segment just south of Central Highland Park neighborhood, has been noted as uncomfortable for road users. This data underscores the urgent need for safety improvements in this area, which this project aims to address through enhanced bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Access to Jobs and Key Destinations

Specific areas that will benefit from enhanced connectivity upon completion of the Bikeways Phase V projects include:

- **SE 4th St: Kansas Ave to NE Golden Ave**
 - Section B & C: A SUP along the north side of SE 4th Street is recommended, which provides a direct connection to each of the Shunga Trail connections.
- **SE 6th St: SE Madison to SE Branner St**
 - Separated bike lanes will easily tie into the existing SE 6th Street bike lanes east of SE Chandler Street. Separated bike lanes accommodate the interested but

concerned user and would make it easier for those coming from the west to access the Shunga Trail.

- **SE 15th St/SE Hudson Blvd: SE Monroe St to Maryland Ave to SE 21st St**
 - Section A & B: Provide a SUP along the south side of 15th Street unless ROW is limited as the proximity to the park and lack of driveway crossings will improve comfort and access to the Landon Nature Trail. This will also address a sidewalk gap along this side of the roadway. The path should cross to the north side of 15th Street after Madison so that path users can access the Shunga Trail entry point located northwest of the bridge.
- **Kansas Ave: 3rd St to 6th St and 10th Ave to 17th St**
 - Provides direct access to primary business district
- **NE Lyman Rd: N Kansas Ave to NE Meriden Rd**
 - Provides direct access to Kansas Ave commercial corridor and amenities
- **NW Lower Silver Lake Rd: NW Brickyard Rd to NW Taylor St**
 - Establishes connection to industrial and trade workforce for multimodal commute

Economic Competitiveness

The City's proposal aims to generate strategic investments by improving connectivity to key business districts, particularly downtown. This investment aligns with modern urban development trends, making Topeka more attractive to young professionals and innovative companies seeking vibrant, sustainable communities. The project will likely stimulate tourism, create jobs during construction, and offer long-term economic benefits through increased property values and new business opportunities in bicycle-related services. Additionally, the improved infrastructure may reduce transportation costs for residents, further contributing to local economic vitality. Through this comprehensive approach, Topeka is positioning itself competitively among mid-sized cities as a forward-thinking, economically vibrant community that prioritizes sustainable transportation and quality of life.

Environmental Protection

By creating a more comprehensive and connected network of bike lanes and paths, the project aims to increase the percentage of trips made by active transportation modes, thereby reducing vehicle trips and associated greenhouse gas emissions. This effect is amplified by integrating active transportation facilities with existing transit services, creating more opportunities for multi-modal trips. This project also incorporates climate resilience measures where applicable and considers ways to reduce lifecycle emissions from project materials, addressing both immediate and long-term environmental concerns.

Beyond emissions reduction, the project is anticipated to yield additional environmental benefits. New green spaces and tree plantings along certain segments will contribute to carbon sequestration and local air quality improvement. The enhanced bicycle network may positively influence land use patterns, potentially encouraging more compact, mixed-use development. Importantly, the project addresses environmental justice by improving air quality and providing low-emission transportation options in disadvantaged communities. This aligns with both local and national sustainability goals, serving as a model for environmentally conscious urban infrastructure development.

Quality of Life

City of Topeka Policies: The City identified “Community Appearance” as a priority outcome in its [2023-2027 Strategic Plan](#): “Neighborhoods are the foundation of Topeka’s identity. As we implement methods to improve the appearance of the Capital City of Kansas, neighborhoods are a central and critical focus of this effort. Goals within this strategy include code compliance, infrastructure improvements, and community partnerships.” Some of the objectives include:

- Improve connectivity both within and between neighborhoods:
 - Ensure maintenance and improvements of citywide infrastructure including sidewalks, streets, streetlights, and utilities.
- Improve the Neighborhood Health Assessment Scores:
 - Connect neighborhood visions with resources from the Planning and Community Engagement Departments to fill gaps in developing and implementing neighborhood plans.
- Reduce the number of code compliance cases:
 - Improve education and resource availability to develop a culture that encourages proactive code compliance.
- Work with partners to enhance community appearance:
 - Partner with other organizations to coordinate clean-up and neighborhoods beautification efforts.

Community Appearance was further noted as an outcome of the City’s [operating budget](#): “quality of our street and utility infrastructure, public safety throughout the community, the visual appearance of our parks and neighborhoods, and how we offer and provide essential services to those in need.”

From the Detailed Action Plan (Appx. A):

- Community Appearance strategy: “Enhance appearance of all neighborhoods”
- Goal: “Improve connectivity within and between neighborhoods”
- Action: “Construct sidewalks and shared use paths”
- Tactic: “Seek additional funding for infill sidewalks”

Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals

Safety

The Transportation Safety Plan is scheduled to be updated in the coming year. Its purpose is to identify locations/corridors that may benefit from systemic, low cost safety improvements and to provide direction in the prioritization of local transportation safety needs within the MTPO Region. The Bikeways Master Plan is supported as a countermeasure in addressing pedestrian access, safety, and inequities. Further, sidewalk construction is noted as low-cost and high-benefit treatment to prioritize cyclist and pedestrian safety.

The City of Topeka is familiar with KDOT’s [Active Transportation Plan](#) that was published in 2023, and recognize the safety strategy from installing/improving active transportation infrastructure (sidewalks) in an effort to reduce the frequency and severity of crashes involving pedestrians, cyclists, and other active transportation users.

From a national perspective, this project utilizes the implementation of [walkways](#) as a proven safety countermeasure in achieving the Safer Roads element in the Safe System Approach of the USDOT National Roadway Safety Strategy in an effort to reach zero roadway fatalities.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Sidewalks assist in promoting active transportation and reduces car dependence. The Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board (TSAB), whose mission is to promote and advocate for policies that support sustainability, noted in their [2022 Annual Report](#): “this board continues to recommend the City Council support efforts to expand and improve non-car transportation, including implementation of the Complete Streets and Bikeways master plans, and support of Topeka Metro.” The goal is to supplement existing transportation infrastructure investments with alternatives for all modalities. TSAB has been informed of this project and has expressed their full endorsement of support.

Topeka City staff participate in active transportation efforts in Topeka’s ongoing community health coalition, [LiveWell Shawnee County](#), and have additionally received the group’s enthusiastic support for grant funding.

Nationally, the City of Topeka’s proposal aligns with [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#)’s “Increase Convenience” key strategy. The City of Topeka’s proposal would additionally be in alignment with KDOT’s [Transportation Emissions Reduction Strategy](#), as construction of non-motorized facilities is consistent with the State’s Strategy.

Equity

The City of Topeka implements community-identified priority projects through its Capital Improvement Plan, Capital Improvement Budget, and annual U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding priorities for neighborhood projects through the [DREAMS Program](#).

Topeka DREAMS: The Topeka DREAMS Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives Program (NIIP) is a neighborhood investment partnership program between the City of Topeka and area Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIAs). To be considered an NIA, the neighborhood must have 51% or more households with incomes less than 80% of the Topeka area median income as currently determined by HUD. The program is designed to assist NIAs with improving their neighborhoods through, community collaboration, neighborhood planning, public infrastructure improvements, and affordable housing and housing rehabilitation in low and moderate income (LMI) neighborhoods of Topeka.

The City is committed to strategies for improving the ability for all travelers to commute to school, work, recreation, or to transit stops. We recognize that access to core services such as health care significantly improves long-term potential for residents to grow and thrive in the Topeka community.

Workforce Development/Job Quality/Wealth Creation

Historic Backdrop: [The Topeka Capital Journal](#) reported effects of redlining dating back to the 1930s with the discriminatory federal “Home Owners Loan Corporation” on Black and immigrant residents in East Topeka and North Topeka, impacting their economic and health outcomes. It also reports: “Today, Topekans living in formerly redlined neighborhoods are more likely to be food insecure and have a shorter life expectancy. These inequities are strikingly mapped along the same lines as the redlining of North and East Topeka. Many of the same neighborhoods that were redlined in Topeka are now classified by the USDA as food deserts, areas where people have limited access to healthy and affordable food...Topeka census tracts with the city’s lowest life expectancy rates significantly overlay with redlined districts. The Kansas Health Foundation found that disparities in Topekans’ average life expectancies today overlaid significantly with 1930s redlining maps.”

A Larger Conversation on Affordable Access: The [2020 Topeka Citywide Housing Market Study and Strategy](#) found 30% of Topekans are housing cost burdened, spending 30%+ of their income on housing, with 13% spending between 30% and 50%. Topeka’s minority populations often experience housing cost burdens. Of white households, 31% cannot afford \$788 in rent (Hispanics=36% and African Americans=52%). Five of the top eight fastest growing occupations and 53% of new jobs will pay <\$35,000 per year, meaning they can only afford \$875 per month to avoid being cost burdened.

A Place for Progress: Though Kansas did not officially establish slavery, it enabled racial segregation through school segregation in local districts, namely in elementary schools. Buses and railroads were integrated, but most restaurants, hotels, and public places were usually segregated, by practice not by law. Topeka has a long history of experience with segregation and disadvantage, highlighted in the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision on the 1951 class action lawsuit of “[Brown v. Board of Education](#)”. This project aims to address some of the historic disparities of a lack of infrastructure development.

This project is unique in that it addresses a critical infrastructure need in addition to promoting equity and active transportation. Our areas of lower income lack basic amenities like safe sidewalks, which can have a significant impact on mobility, access to core services, and quality of life. By prioritizing these areas for bike/ped improvements, the City of Topeka is granted a greater degree of intervention to ensure all members of our community have necessary and safe access to the pedestrian network. Our community-informed process is a quintessential example of how government and citizens may engage and empower change, highlighting our collective commitment to creating a better future for next-generation Topekans.

FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

Key Community Institutions

This proposal showcases a comprehensive network of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure that will facilitate safe and accessible travel for residents, workers, and visitors. The project will extend or complement existing public transit routes, making it easier for residents to access employment opportunities, education institutions, healthcare facilities, and community services

communitywide. By integrating active transportation infrastructure with public transit, the project will provide substantial additional opportunities for residents to access jobs, schools, and key destinations without relying on personal vehicles. For example, the project will create a seamless connection between the downtown bus station and nearby employment centers, making it easier for residents to commute to work. Additionally, the project will improve access to schools, including Washburn University and other area elementary schools, by providing a safe and convenient route for students to walk or bike to campus. By connecting community destinations and public transit facilities, this plan will promote a more sustainable, equitable, and accessible transportation system in Topeka's downtown core.

Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities

KDOT developed the [Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment](#) (VRUSA) as part of the Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Using crash data, socioeconomic data, roadway attributes, and pedestrian/cyclist usage estimates, KDOT created:

1. High Injury Network (HIN): Identifies road segments with elevated concentrations of vulnerable road user (VRU) injury crashes.
2. High-Risk Network (HRN): Identifies road segments with potential for elevated VRU injury risk based on shared characteristics with HIN segments.

Risk factors include urban four-lane roads, arterials, bus routes, 30-35 mph speed limits, disadvantaged areas, high traffic volumes, distance from trauma centers, and moderate to high VRU trip estimates. VRU Priority Corridors were established based on injury crash locations in addition to recurring risk factors:

- Priority Level 1: On both HIN and HRN
- Priority Level 2: On HIN (highest) or HRN (highest)
- Priority Level 3: On HRN (moderate-higher) but not on HIN

Of the City's proposed segments, KDOT has indicated the following as VRU Priority Corridors:

- SE 6th St – Priority Level 3, Total Risk Score: 45
- Kansas Ave – Priority Level 1, Total Risk Score: 45

Implementing safety improvements in these high-risk areas will significantly reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities and not only improve safety, but enhance accessibility to jobs, education, and essential services for residents in disadvantaged areas.