KANSAS CITY
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KANSAS CITY SIDEWALK PRIORITIZATION

Executive Summary

11.2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the thousands of Kansas City residents that shared their time and knowledge to guide the development of the Kansas City MO Sidewalk Prioritization Tool.

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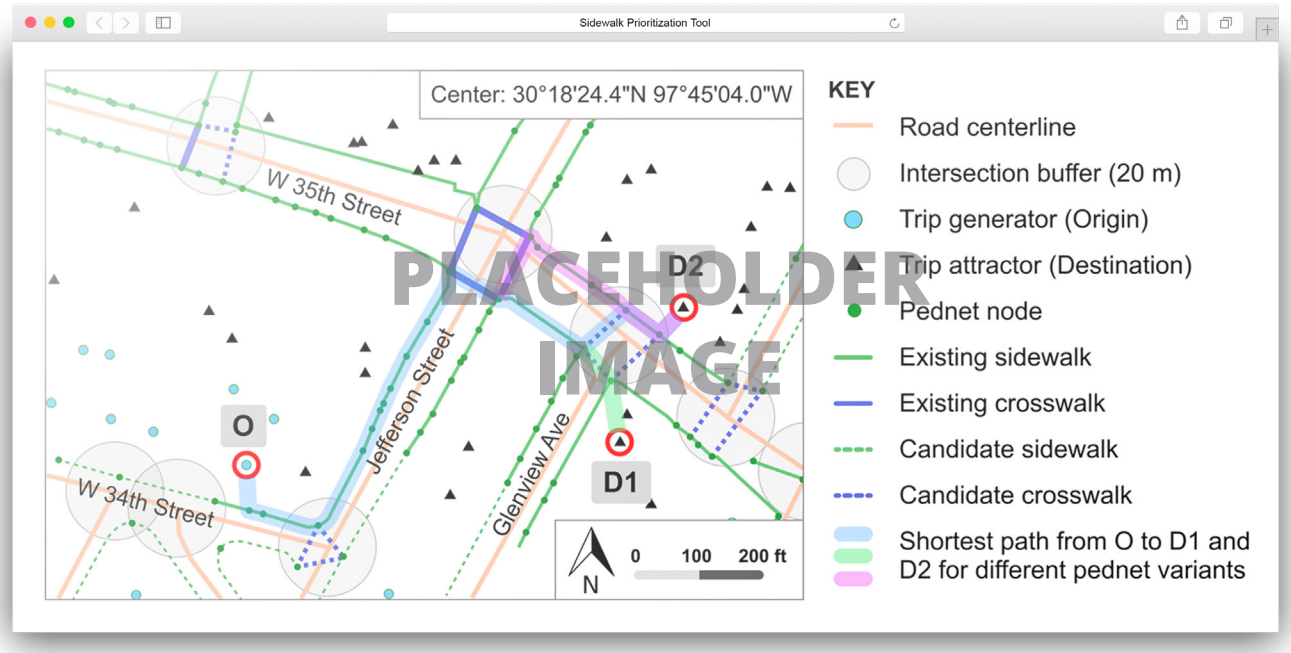
WHAT IS THE SIDEWALK PRIORITIZATION TOOL?



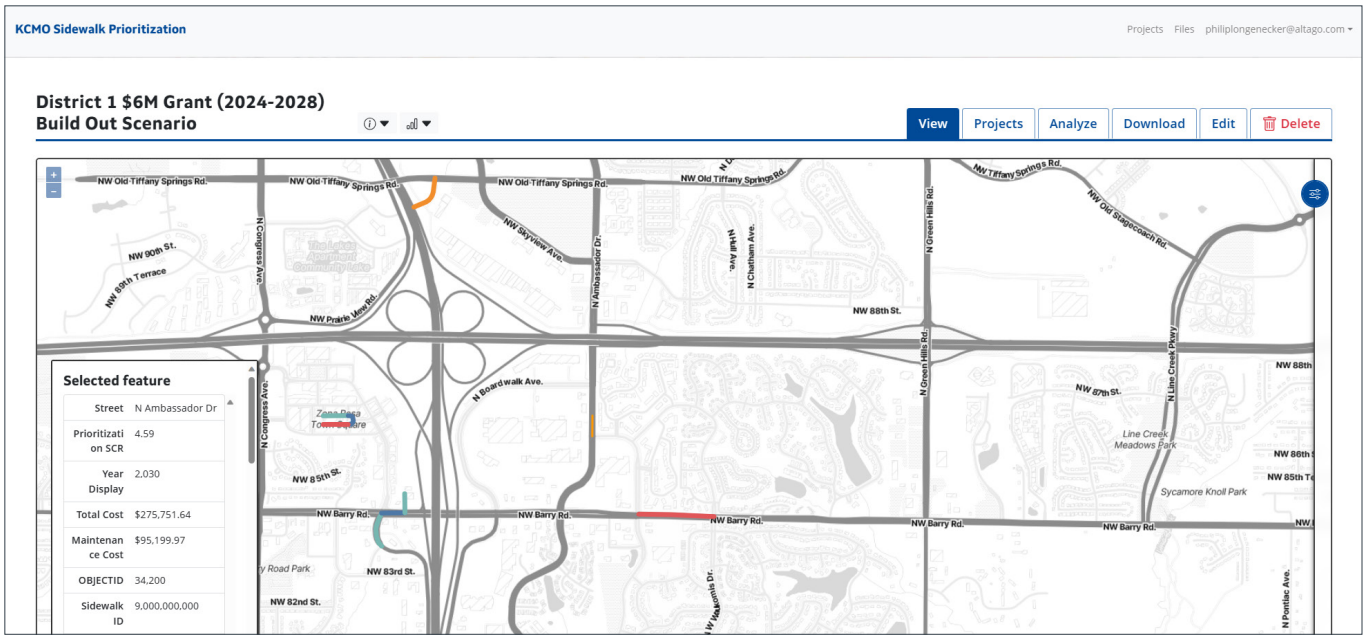
The City of Kansas City, Missouri is working to create safe and connected sidewalk network throughout the city. The sidewalk investments that are needed the most to achieve that varies across the city. Additionally, the ways in which Kansas City's Public Works Division can deliver those improvements varies, based on funding programs and staff capacity. The Kansas City Sidewalk Prioritization Tool is a new dynamic digital tool that allows the City to create short-term and long-term capital improvement programs that account for these variabilities.

The Kansas City Sidewalk Prioritization Tool makes it possible for Public Works staff to quickly and efficiently produce lists of sidewalk capital improvement projects that reflect the priorities of Kansas City and residents in each Council District, while also meeting the specific requirements and timelines of funding programs that vary in purpose and timeline. **The Tool helps Public Works staff decide where to build sidewalks in Kansas City, based on critical real-world variables that shape capital improvement programs:**

- **Budget and Timeline:** How much funding is available and when is it available?
- **Improvement Types:** Is the project sidewalk infill (new construction where a gap exists), maintenance (improving an existing segment of sidewalk), or both?
- **Community Priorities:** Which of the priority outcomes already established for Kansas City (such as access, equity, or safety) should be weighted highest based on the funding source?
- **Council District:** Which sidewalk improvements are most important to creating a safe and connected network within a specific Council District?

The Sidewalk Prioritization Tool exists as an easy-to-use web form where users enter parameters and adjust digital sliders to set each of the key variables. The sliders change the tool's output with a heat map that shows which projects are most important based on the specific criteria provided.

HOW WILL WE USE THE SIDEWALK PRIORITIZATION TOOL?



The existing sidewalk network is over 4,000 miles in length. As the City's public infrastructure has aged, there is a growing need for repair and maintenance. In response to this, the city passed the General Obligation Infrastructure Bond in 2017 which dedicates $5 million towards sidewalk repair and maintenance.

The City's first task is to address the backlog (community member requests related to existing sidewalk conditions between 2008-2016), which leaders estimate can be addressed by 2025. Once repairs are completed on the sidewalk backlog, the city will begin a systematic sidewalk construction and repair process that addresses other remaining needs on the city's sidewalk system. The Sidewalk Prioritization Tool will allow the City to produce targeted project lists for this next phase of improvements that will be implemented once the backlog repair and maintenance is complete.

The Tool is designed to answer the question, "If we had [an amount of money] to spend, where should we spend it to achieve our goals?" The tool answers with a map and related charts or graphs that update in real time to illustrate the how preferred projects are selected. The Tool can generate a list of projects to be completed in 1 year, 5 years, or 10 years, based on a given yearly budget. Users can create a profile in the tool to save their settings and come back to them later. This data can be downloaded in various formats for easy review and analysis in other software applications. Lastly, the tool can create an embeddable map of the prioritized scenarios that can be shared with the public in a view-only mode.

The Tool helps planners, engineers, and others see how needed improvements, desired community outcomes, and project budgets interact. By setting budget and timeline information, users can see what they can afford, ranging from large, impactful projects to smaller, quick-win projects.

WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE SIDEWALK PRIORITIZATION TOOL USE?

The Sidewalk Prioritization Tool incorporates the results of six different analyses related to Kansas City's existing sidewalk network and desired community outcomes (such as safety and access) with the results of broad, extensive community input that clarified local concerns and needs.

Data Collection and Analysis

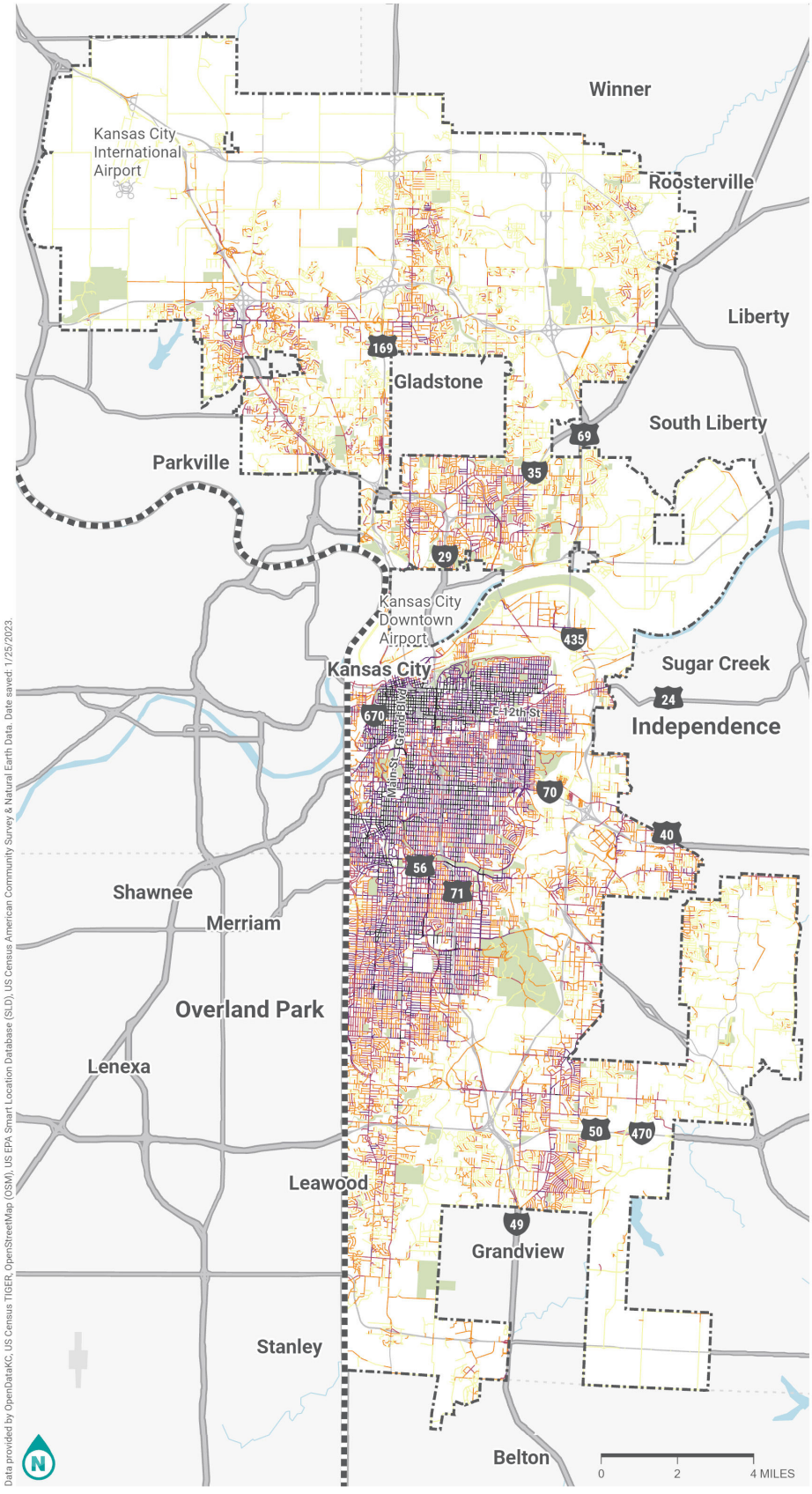
Data collection and analysis were important first steps in the planning process. **The project team conducted six types of analyses to identify opportunities throughout Kansas City to improve pedestrian infrastructure and address existing barriers:**

1. | **Access and Connectivity:** An evaluation of pedestrians' ability to navigate the City efficiently and comfortably, using data on sidewalk availability, pedestrian levels of traffic stress, and destination distance and route directness indices.
2. | **Sidewalk Condition:** An assessment of the overall condition of the City's existing sidewalks
3. | **Equity:** An assessment of demographics to identify concentrations of historically excluded communities.
4. | **Public Support:** A summary of the community's top needs, concerns, and aspirations as expressed during the public involvement period (see Community Engagement section below).
5. | **Pedestrian Demand:** A model predicting pedestrian demand based on 2019 and 2022 pedestrian counts
6. | **Safety:** An assessment of current and future crash risks.

The results showed high priority areas located throughout the City, with the highest scoring segments located in Downtown Kansas City and in the densest residential areas. While Downtown and dense residential areas tend to have more complete sidewalk networks than other parts of the City, they still have high PLTS scores (meaning high stress for pedestrians) on many segments. This is due to streets with high volumes of motor vehicle traffic and/or speeds that reduce comfort for people walking across or adjacent to it.

Finally, Alta created relative suitability scores on a scale of 0 to 1 based on percentile ranking of sidewalk prioritization scores within each Council District. This helps to prioritize the best scoring projects within each Council District to ensure geographic balancing and avoid all investments concentrating in the same district.

Map 1. | Prioritization Score

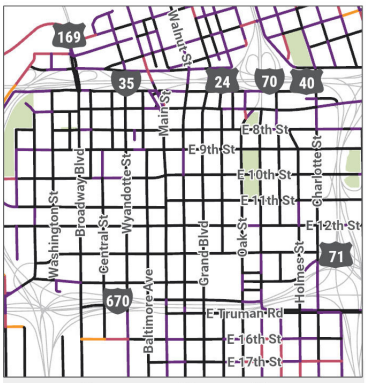


PRIORITIZATION SCORE

KANSAS CITY SIDEWALK PRIORITIZATION STUDY

PRIORITIZATION SCORE
- Higher Score
- Lower Score

DESTINATIONS + BOUNDARIES
- State Border
- Park
- Water
- Kansas City Boundary



Downtown Kansas City

KANSAS CITY MISSOURI alta

Community Engagement

The project team developed a community engagement plan at the start of the planning process to identify the engagement schedule, methods of communication, groups to involve, and community engagement goals. This resulted in holding Advisory Committee meetings, public meetings, a community survey, and a project website and virtual open house which helped build support and guide the development of the plan. Project updates were also given at regular meetings for the 5th District, the Northland Neighborhoods Inc, and Independence Ave CID in June 2023 to explain the work that had been done, show draft prioritization maps, and gather any additional feedback.

Advisory Committee

The City of Kansas City, Missouri Public Works department convened a Project Advisory Committee consisting of relevant agency and department representatives including staff from public works, parks and recreation, and the health department. The group formally met twice throughout the project to discuss and provide feedback on the prioritization plan and the toolbox.

Public Meetings

Two rounds of dedicated community engagement utilized a diverse set of engagement tools to involve as many groups as possible.

The first round of public meetings included in-person open houses in each council district to gather community input on priority goals for sidewalks in Kansas City and specific locations in need of connection or repair. 112 attendees signed in over the course of these in-person meetings.

The top three priorities identified were:

- Areas where people rely on walking the most.
- Areas connecting transit stops.
- Areas where there have been the most pedestrian-related crashes and injuries.

Community Survey

A community survey was launched in July of 2022 and received over 1,100 responses before closing in January 2023. The survey was available in both English and Spanish.

A variety of tools were used to advertise both the survey and the meetings including:

- Social media posts on the City's social media accounts.
- Regular e-blasts to over 600 recipients including neighborhood association presidents, chamber representatives, councilmembers, and anyone that participated in either an open house or survey that wished to provide their email for event reminders.
- 280-yard signs including 20 Spanish translated signs.
- Partnerships with Parks and Recreation and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to share information.
- Flyers in race packets for five community races in Kansas City.

Key takeaways from the survey include:

- 68% of respondents walk everyday.
- Most respondents walk for exercise, for fun, and to get to local businesses.
- Destinations that are a challenge currently include: parks, grocery stores, restaurants, and entertainment.
- Top priorities are improving the condition of sidewalks and safety of pedestrians.

Project Website & Virtual Workshop

The project website hosted all information regarding the project including dates and location of the meetings, survey links, and a virtual workshop. **The virtual workshop was created to provide more accessibility to those that either may not want to attend in person, or otherwise weren't able to attend.**

- The website received nearly 4,000 visits, 101 mapping entries, and 79 participants for the goal prioritizatio

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