



## Appendix C – Environmental Justice Technical Report



# Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum

Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension

December 14, 2018

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## 1. Introduction

This technical memorandum provides documentation on the environmental justice analyses for the Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension project.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act seeks to ensure that all groups and individuals have the right to access and participate in the transportation decision-making process.

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, requires the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), to take steps to ensure that minority or low-income neighborhoods are not subjected to disproportionate project impacts. Disproportionate adverse effects either mainly affect minority and/or low income populations or put more of a transportation burden on a minority and/or low income population and are recognizably more severe or of greater significance than the effects felt by non-minority and/or non-low income populations.

In May 2012, DOT issued an updated internal Order, Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (DOT order). The DOT Order updates the original Environmental Justice Order, which was published April 15, 1997. DOT Order 5610.2 sets forth the DOT policy to consider environmental justice principles in all DOT programs, policies and activities. FTA Circular 4703.1 was issued in August of 2012 in order to provide recipients of FTA financial assistance with guidance in order to incorporate environmental justice principles into plans, projects and activities that receive funding from FTA.

The guiding environmental justice principles followed by DOT and FTA seek to:

- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low income populations.
- Ensure full and fair treatment of all people and their involvement in the transportation decision-making process regardless of race, color, national origin, age or income.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in benefits received by minority and low income populations.

## 2. Environmental Justice Definitions

The following definitions of environmental justice terms, provided in FTA Circular 4703.1, are used in the analysis of whether minority and/or low income populations will experience potential environmental or health impacts from a proposed project.

### 2.1. Minority Population

A minority population means any readily identifiable group or groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed or transient persons such as migrant workers or Native Americans who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy or activity. Minority includes persons who are American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.

### 2.2. Low Income

Low income means a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

### 2.3. Low Income Population

A low income population means any readily identifiable group of low income persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy or activity.

### 2.4. Disproportionately High and Adverse Effect on Human Health or the Environment

A disproportionately high and adverse effect on human health or the environment is an adverse effect that:

1. is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low income population, or
2. will be suffered by the minority population and/or low income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low income population.

### 3. Environmental Justice – Existing Conditions

#### 3.1. Methodology

In order to evaluate the environmental justice issue as associated with the Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension, a 0.25 mile buffer was added to the project corridor within the U.S. EPA EJScreen tool (Figure 1), and the methodology used follows EO 12898, U.S. DOT Order 5610.2(a), and FTA Circular 4703.1. Minority and low-income populations within the 0.25 mile buffer were also identified using data from the 2012 – 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates.

Population averages for the project corridor using the EJScreen tool were able to be determined for the specific area within that 0.25 buffer for minority and age related populations. However, the percent of population below the poverty level was not available using this population average so census tract data from the 2012-16 ACS was utilized to determine the range throughout the project corridor (Figure 2).

#### 3.2. Population

In looking at the demographics surrounding the project corridor, it is helpful to consider and compare with those at the state, county and city level to see whether the population is similar or looks very different. The State of Missouri, Jackson County, Kansas City, Missouri and the area shown in Figure 1 are all represented in Table 1.

The percentage of minority individuals is varied across the state, county, city and project corridor. While Missouri is around 17 percent minority individuals, Jackson County and Kansas City, Missouri are at 33 and 40 percent respectively. Using the U.S. EPA EJScreen tool to estimate the minority population in the area surrounding the proposed project corridor, around 27 percent of the population are minority individuals. This is lower than the county and the city but higher than the state as a whole.

Looking at individuals below the poverty level, Missouri,

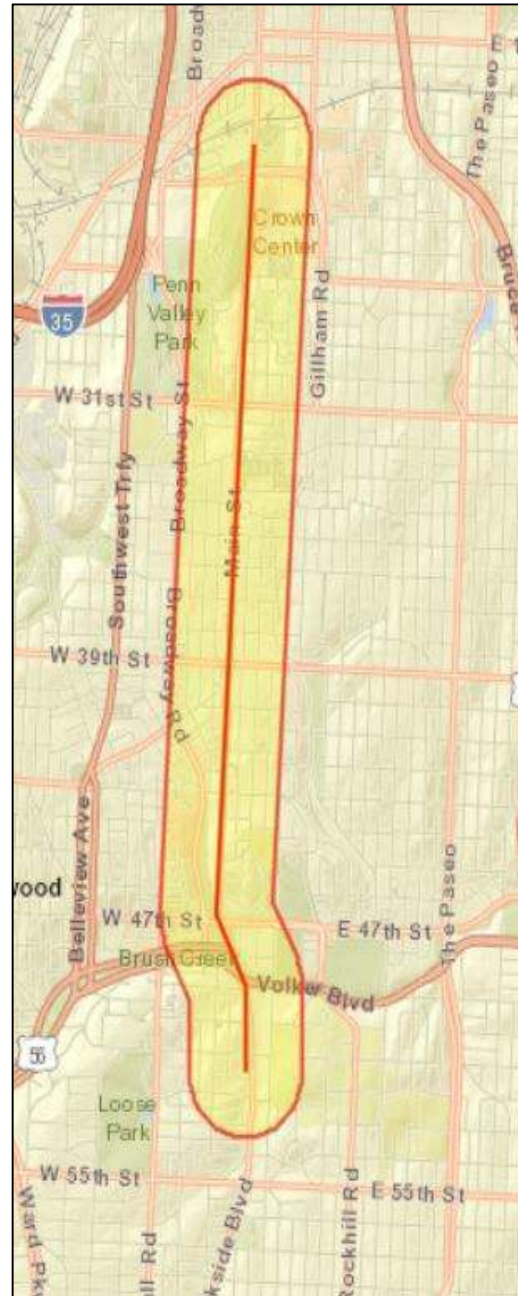
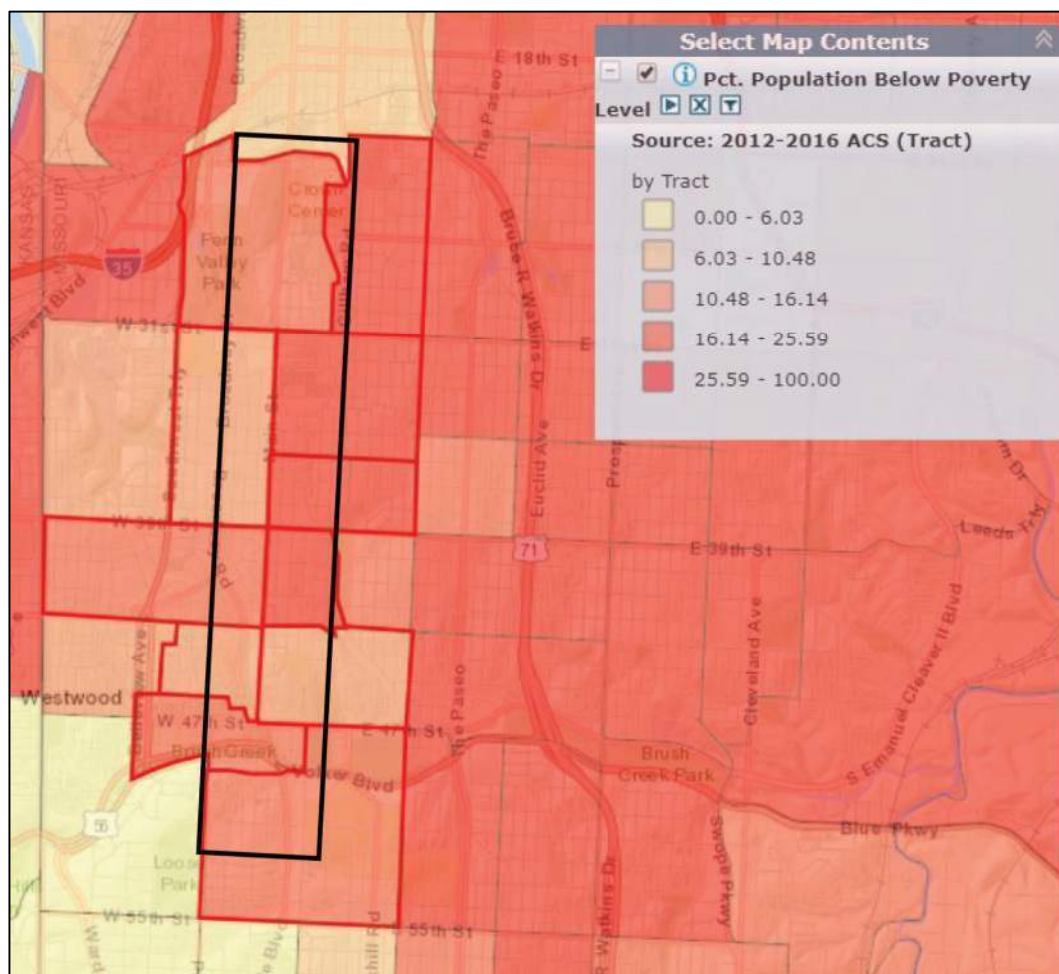


Figure 1. Streetcar corridor with 0.25 mile buffer



Jackson County and Kansas City, Missouri range from 15 – 18 percent. Figure 2 reflects information from EPA’s EJScreen with the census tracts touching the project corridor highlighted. There are 11 census tracts with some portion falling within the 0.25 mile buffer. The estimated range in the corridor falls between approximately 11 to 40 percent persons below poverty level. The majority of the project corridor falls between 11 to 27 percent. The census tract that is bordered by 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Troost Avenue, 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Main has the highest number of individuals below the poverty level at around 40 percent. Those census tracts just to the north and the south of that area include about 27 percent individuals below the poverty level.

The population over 65 years of age is highest at the state level of around 15 percent and falls to 13 and 12 percent for the county and city level respectively. Within the project corridor the population is lower than the others at a little over 10 percent.



**Figure 2. Percent Population Below Poverty**  
 Source: EJScreen [www.epa.gov/ejscreen](http://www.epa.gov/ejscreen)

Table 1. Demographics

	Missouri	Jackson County	Kansas City, Missouri	Project Corridor
<b>Total Population</b>	6,059,651	683,643	471,767	12,421
<b>White</b>	82.5%	66.6%	60.1%	72.8%
<b>Black or African American</b>	11.6%	23.7%	29.1%	11.5%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%
<b>Asian</b>	1.8%	1.7%	2.6%	5.0%
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
<b>Some other race</b>	1.1%	4.2%	4.4%	6.7%
<b>Over age 65</b>	15.3%	13.5%	12.1%	10.5%
<b>Persons below poverty</b>	15.3%	17.2%	18.3%	*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2012-16. EJScreen [www.epa.gov/ejscreen](http://www.epa.gov/ejscreen)

\* Persons Below Poverty data total corridor estimate not available via EJScreen, see Figure 2.



## 4. Environmental Justice – Effects Analysis

### 4.1. No Build

A No Build option would have no impact on environmental justice communities. A No Build option may still have negative economic consequences. Under a No Build option the additional transit mode and connections that would be available with the Build option would not be offered. The No Build option would not improve or negatively affect community cohesion.

### 4.2. Build

Disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority, low income or senior populations are not anticipated from this project. The proposed Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension route does include some areas with a higher percentage of persons below poverty than similar geographies, although the minority and over 65 populations are lower than the surrounding area. The only potential for higher or adverse impacts would be to the low income population in the area.

The proposed project is not expected to adversely impact access to other modes of transportation, connectivity, neighborhood cohesion, noise, or air quality so there are no disproportionately high or adverse effects to any populations in the area surrounding the proposed route. Thus, the effects of the proposed project would not have a higher impact on any environmental justice populations in the area as opposed to the non-environmental justice population.

The proposed Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension would be expected to provide additional transit opportunities for those living nearby. The Kansas City Streetcar Main Street would provide extended access along the corridor to the River Market and UMKC, as well as connectivity to bus lines that reach other portions of the metropolitan area. The proposed project is expected to have a positive impact on the low income and senior populations along the corridor who would be able to take advantage of this no to low fare option for improved access to services and employers along the entire Kansas City Streetcar route.

The Build option would provide direct economic benefits to the community by temporarily creating construction-related jobs and resulting expenditures on construction materials for the project within the Kansas City area. The level of such economic impacts is dependent upon the extent that contractors utilize local labor and purchase construction materials locally. Construction of the Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension would require acquisition of a limited amount of new right-of-way for the placement of traction power substations, but would not require acquisition of residences or businesses.

No environmental justice populations would be adversely impacted or displaced by the Kansas City Streetcar Main Street Extension.

## 5. Outreach to Minority and Low-Income Populations

The public engagement program for the proposed project has been designed to reach the affected population, including the environmental justice populations in the project corridor. Several public engagement opportunities have been offered for residents, business owners and other stakeholders to participate and share their thoughts on the project.

Two open house opportunities were provided in 2018. The first open house, held in April 2018 included more than 120 attendees, with nearly half indicating they were residents along the proposed extension. The second open house in June 2018 had more than 90 participants with 30 indicating they were residents along the proposed extension. There were also online surveys available after each of the public open house events. These surveys were filled out by 79% of residents in the Transportation Development District (TDD) and 28% residents in the TDD respectively.

The meetings and online surveys included information on the project's purpose and need, goals, transit connections and proposed stop locations and whether the streetcar should run on the inside versus the outside of the road. Participants were able to weigh in on proposed stop locations, transit connections and the preference on the inside versus outside running streetcar for various sections of the extension corridor.

Notification of the public engagement was shared in the following ways:

- Postcard invitations to the open house events were mailed to 1,666 property owners/residents between Union Station and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street from Walnut on the east and Baltimore on the west. Plaza District addresses were also included. Postcards were also hand-delivered to businesses and residential buildings along the alignment.
- E-mail blasts were also used to send the postcard invitations and the survey digitally to key stakeholders along the alignment, including business and civic groups to share and distribute to their audiences. Groups included Union Hill, MainCor, and the West Plaza Neighborhood Association.
- Press releases were sent to the media who provided coverage via radio and television.
- Social media was used to share information about the open house events as well as the survey.
- The project website also included the survey during the feedback period.

## 6. References

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, February 11, 1994.

Federal Transit Administration Circular 4703.1, Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients, August 15, 2012.

U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2012-2016.

U.S. DOT Order 5610.2(a), Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 77 FR 27534, May 10, 2012.

U.S. EPA, EJScreen, [www.epa.gov/ejscreen](http://www.epa.gov/ejscreen), accessed November 27, 2018.