The Kansas City Streetcar Authority (KCSA) partnered with the City of North Kansas City, Missouri (NKC), the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), and the City of Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO) to revisit the feasibility of a streetcar over the Missouri River. The 2026 NorthRail Refresh Study evaluated river crossing options, identified a preferred alignment, and potential stop locations to connect Downtown Kansas City and North Kansas City via a modern KC Streetcar expansion.

PURPOSE

CONNECT

- NKC and the Northland with Downtown KCMO
- "Fast and Frequent" service over the Missouri River

ENHANCE

- Accessibility for all users over the Missouri River
- Mobility choices for the metropolitan region
- Options for future connections to regional transit
- Climate protection and resilience through more efficient and environmentally friendly travel

DEVELOP

- Proven catalyst for economic development
- Support goals of the NKC Comprehensive Plan

NEED

The NorthRail Streetcar Extension project will continue the efforts and themes of the existing Streetcar system – to provide mobility and connectivity economic development and growth, community amenities and improved livability, and sustainability. The Missouri River serves as a significant barrier between NKC and downtown KCMO, with limited crossings, such as the Heart of America Bridge (HOA).

The KC Streetcar system was recently extended to both UMKC and the Berkley Riverfront area. The NorthRail Streetcar Extension seeks to build upon the success of the KC Streetcar and continue connecting neighborhoods. The expanded system will link with the NorthRail extension to create stronger connections for residents, employees, and visitors by connecting NKC to the Riverfront, downtown Kansas City, midtown, and activity centers further south, such as Country Club Plaza and UMKC.



EVALUATION PROCESS

A two-tiered screening process was used to evaluate multiple options and screen down alignments to a locally preferred alternative. The study area was segmented into three distinct geographic segments:

- South of the Missouri River (in KCMO)
- Streetcar-Only Bridge East of HOA (3rd St in KCMO - 10th Ave in NKC)
- North Kansas City (10th Ave - 32nd Ave)

The locally preferred alternative is based on a combination of technical evaluation and expressed public preference.

LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is a streetcar alignment in each of the following study area segments:

South of the Missouri River

- Several potential approaches to tie in to the existing River Market streetcar loop, including a Columbus Park station
- Strong community preference for a station in close proximity to the Columbus Park neighborhood

Streetcar-Only Bridge

- Dedicated transit infrastructure and reliable operations recieved strong support from public participation
- Community preference for separation of bike/ped facilities to minimize interactions with streetcars and automobiles
- A streetcar-only bridge just east of the Heart of America Bridge would cost less than widening the existing bridge

North Kansas City (Swift Ave.)

- Community, City, and Stakeholder vision for the future of NKC and the “Main Street” of NKC (land use compatibility/ employment and population existing and future density)
- Fewer implementation hurdles regarding regulatory bodies and permitting requirements
- Freight and vehicle impacts are less significant on Swift Avenue (as compared to Burlington Street)



NEXT STEPS

The study showed there is strong support in the community for the NorthRail expansion, and there continues to be significant economic development that is occurring in NKC that will bring added businesses and residents in close proximity. Several critical steps are needed to advance the project:

- Form a working group focused on advancing a financial strategy north of the river
- Incorporate LPA into the MARC’s regional metropolitan transportation plan
- Secure funding to advance environmental study and conceptual engineering
- Build support and advance regional funding and/or Transportation Development District expansion to support implementation