

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

For

Project Name: Kansas City Downtown Streetcar Project

Location: Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations (40 C.F.R. § 1508.13) and the Federal Transit Administration's NEPA implementing procedures (23 C.F.R. § 771.121), this document is intended to conclude the Environmental Assessment (EA) process for the Kansas City Downtown Streetcar Project, briefly presenting the reasons why the project will not have significant impact on the quality of the human environment; as a consequence, an environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The Environmental Assessment for the Kansas City Downtown Streetcar Project examined alternatives and potential impacts associated with the construction of the Streetcar Project in Downtown Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The purpose of the Kansas City Downtown Streetcar Project is to provide a transit option that will more conveniently connect people and places within the downtown area, and support city and regional efforts to develop and redevelop downtown Kansas City as a more attractive and successful urban area.

Two alternatives were examined in detail in the EA: the No Build Alternative and the Streetcar Alternative or Build Alternative (Selected Alternative). The Streetcar Alternative includes: (1) construction of a streetcar on Main street that runs approximately 2 miles doubled-track, with a northern terminus in the River Market District near 3rd Street and Grand Boulevard and a southern terminus near Union Station at Pershing Road. The Streetcar tracks will be in the street and approximately four, low-floor or partial low-floor, modern streetcars will operate in mixed traffic; (2) construction of streetcar stops at approximately every two blocks: nine stops northbound and nine stops southbound (counting the 3rd street/Grand Boulevard stop as a southbound stop); the streetcar stops will be similar in scale to the existing MAX BRT stops; (3) construction of a new vehicle maintenance facility (VMF) at the selected Site C (200 - 260 Holmes Street) to store and maintain the streetcar vehicles, and serve as the Streetcar operations center; the VMF site is approximately two acres in size (including a portion of the 2nd Street right-of-way) and will include a building up to two levels of approximately 22,000 square feet; and (4) single, overhead electrical wiring with pantographs connections between the vehicles and wire with up to five traction power substations. The system will operate seven days a week, between the hours of 8 AM and 9 PM with 10 minute (peak) and 20 minute (non-peak) headways.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

The EA was made available for a 30-day public and agency review and comment period beginning on September 26, and ending on October 26, 2012. Copies of the EA were made available for review at the following locations:

- City of Kansas City, Public Works/Capital Projects (414 East 12th Street, 18th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64106);

- Kansas City Public Library, Central Library (14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105); and,
- Mid-America Regional Council, Main Desk (600 Broadway, Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105).

The EA was also made available on-line at www.kcmo.org and www.kcsmartmoves.org.

Notice of the availability of the EA was published in several local newspapers of general circulation in the Project area (the Kansas City Star, The Pitch, Dos Mundos and The Call) about September 26, 2012. In addition, emails or postcards were sent to the Streetcar interested party's list. Copies of these notices are included in Appendix C.

The comment period concluded on October 26 with written comments provided to:

Ralph Davis, P.E., City Engineer
City of Kansas City
414 East 12th Street,
Kansas City, MO 64106

Ralph.Davis@kcmo.org
816-513-2740

Four written comments were received by the close of the comment period. All comments that were received were considered and addressed. One commenter raised a concern that the existing pedestrian path on Second street would be displaced by the Streetcar tracks that are planned to be built to connect to the vehicle maintenance facility. The second commenter expressed opposition to the Streetcar Project. A third asked about the alternatives considered, proposed financing, impact thresholds and economic analysis. The fourth comment was from US EPA Region 7 providing recommendations to minimize impacts for construction activities.

All comments were considered and addressed. Copies of comments and responses to all comments are included in Appendix A. Copies of all comments received are included in Appendix B. Additional information on agency coordination is provided in the EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND FINDINGS:

The following resources were evaluated in detail in the EA to determine the nature and severity of impacts.

Land Use, Consistency with Plans and Zoning: The majority of the new streetcar facilities (tracks, stops, and related infrastructure) will be constructed within existing street right-of-way. The Streetcar Project will result in minor changes in the use of the right-of-way. A new VMF will change the current use of site C, which is located in a light industrial area. No long-term adverse impacts to land use are expected from the construction or operation of the Streetcar Project. Implementation of the Streetcar Project will be consistent with, and supportive of, Regional and City plans, policies, zoning and other regulations.

Land Acquisition: Most of the Streetcar improvements will be constructed in existing public street rights-of-way. The Streetcar Project will require the acquisition of land for the VMF site. Site C, the selected site, will require acquisition of land for the site that is currently vacant. Acquisition procedures will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (49 C.F.R. part 24), as amended. Land acquisition is not anticipated for staging areas during construction.

Storm Water/Water Quality: The Streetcar Project will not result in substantial impacts to water resources or water quality. Future design work during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design will incorporate the required storm water management details in the design of the Streetcar improvements. Construction activities will be conducted under the Kansas City Erosion Control Program Permit MO-R100006 issued by MDNR.

Cultural Resources/Section 106 Finding (36 CFR 800): An architectural survey evaluated 287 properties within the area of potential effect (APE). Within the APE 145 historic resources are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), 19 properties have been previously determined eligible for listing and 23 properties were newly determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. Additionally, the reintroduction of the streetcar in downtown Kansas City will not result in adverse visual effects to the historic resources since it essentially reintroduces streetcars into the downtown area. FTA has determined that construction of the streetcar facilities and operation of the Streetcar Project will have ‘no adverse effect’ on identified historic properties. The Missouri SHPO concurred with this determination on September 13, 2012. In addition, no previously surveyed or recorded archaeological sites will be affected by the Streetcar Project.

Section 4(f) Finding (23 CFR 774): There will be no use of parks or recreation lands by the Streetcar Project. The Streetcar route will pass through three NRHP listed historic districts and will run in the right-of-way adjacent to numerous NRHP-listed and eligible properties. These historic resources are also considered Section 4(f) resources. The Streetcar Project will not require conversion of land occupied by these resources, or modify the features that make the resources eligible for listing in the NRHP. Therefore, the Streetcar Project will not result in any “use” of a Section 4(f) resource.

FTA has determined that no Section 4(f) resources such as parkland, wildlife refuges, and historic sites as defined in 23 CFR 774.17 are either acquired or affected by the project; therefore, further Section 4(f) evaluation is not necessary. There is no actual or constructive use of a Section 4(f) resource pursuant to 23 CFR Sections 774.11 or 774.15, respectively.

Environmental Justice: Low-income and minority populations that are the subject of Executive Order No. 12898 on environmental justice are present in the project area. Effects and benefits associated with construction and operations of the Streetcar Project will affect all populations equally within the study area. The benefits include enhanced mobility due to the new transit service and the effects include temporary disruptions during construction. The effects to the identified environmental justice populations will not exceed those borne by non-environmental justice populations in the study area and the Project will benefit all populations in the community by providing improved access to transit. Therefore, the Streetcar Project will not result in disproportionately high or adverse impacts to human health or the environment to any minority or low-income populations.

Hazardous Materials: There is no known contamination in the right-of-way or on the selected VMF site that will be used by the Streetcar Project. Construction of the Streetcar trackway and stops will involve ground disturbance that could encounter previously undocumented contaminated materials. The City will conduct a Phase I ESA for the selected VMF site as a requirement for acquiring the property. If warranted, the City will conduct a Phase II (subsurface) ESA which will include soil and groundwater testing, as appropriate. Should the Phase I ESA (and Phase II ESA if conducted) reveal the presence of hazardous materials, mitigation and clean-up measures will be defined and required as part of the property purchase agreement.

Noise and Vibration: Existing noise levels in the project area are relatively loud and typical of an urban arterial street that is dominated by roadway traffic noise. The general noise assessment results concluded there will be no noise impacts at any noise-sensitive receptor due to operation of the Streetcar Project. General vibration assessment results concluded that there will be no impacts at any noise-sensitive receptor due to Ground Borne Vibration from the Streetcar Project.

Transportation: The project will not result in substantial impacts to the existing transportation system. The project is an enhancement to the downtown transit system, and a potentially important connection to the future regional transit system. Projected opening year ridership is 2,700 riders per average weekday. Specific changes to traffic movements are discussed in the EA. The traffic analysis concluded that the proposed Streetcar

will affect traffic similarly to a bus traveling in the traffic lane. Traffic will not be adversely affected and will be maintained with acceptable and safe operations. Implementation of the Streetcar will not adversely affect existing bus service. The proposed action will have no long term adverse effects to travel patterns or access. There will be no long term adverse effects to parking along the Streetcar alignment, and there will be no substantial project-related impacts to pedestrians or bicycles.

Construction Related Effects: Construction of the Streetcar Alternative will result in temporary disruptions in the vicinity of project construction. Effects will include traffic delays, loss of on-street parking, temporary sidewalk closures, and short-term interruptions in access to business and general parking areas, a temporary increase in noise levels during construction hours and utility disruptions. These effects will be intermittent and of short duration, and efforts will be made to minimize their effects on adjacent businesses, residents, vehicles and pedestrians. Construction-related effects on traffic will include closure of one or more travel lanes and reduced speeds and travel delays in the construction zones. The City will prepare a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) to manage traffic and access effects. Access to all businesses and residents will be maintained during the construction phase, and the City will work with adjacent businesses to minimize the disruptions. The City will work with all the utility companies to define the relocation or adjustment plans.

MITIGATION MEASURES TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS:

While the Streetcar Alternative will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 5324(b)(3)(A)(iii), the following mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize effects. The City of Kansas City will be responsible for complying with local and state regulations as well as for carrying out these mitigation measures during design and construction phases.

1. Prior to construction, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared. Construction activities shall be conducted under the Kansas City Erosion Control Program Permit MO-R100006 issued by MDNR.
2. All property acquisitions will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, and the Uniform Relocation Act Amendments of 1987.
3. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be conducted for the selected VMF site. The City will coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies (MDNR and/or EPA), as needed, pending the result of Phase I ESA.
4. If unanticipated sources of hazardous or regulated materials are encountered during construction activities, work shall cease at that location and appropriate personnel and regulatory agencies shall be contacted to arrange for proper assessment, treatment, or disposal of those materials.
5. Prior to construction, a traffic control plan (TCP) shall be developed in conformance with local, state, and federal requirements to minimize these temporary traffic and access impacts. The TCP shall be developed and implemented during construction to manage vehicular, transit, and pedestrian circulation and access within the construction zone. The traffic control plan shall identify any detour routes required and will indicate the type and location of signage, signals, barriers, lighting, and flagmen as needed to implement the plan. The TCP shall be prepared in accordance with traffic engineering principles and practices governing traffic control during construction as prescribed in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and by the City. Access, both vehicular and pedestrian, to all businesses and residences shall be maintained during construction. Business and residences shall have at least one access point open during normal business hours.

6. Prior to construction, the City will conduct an energy assessment of the proposed vehicle maintenance facility and incorporate all feasible and sustainable elements in its design and construction.
7. The City will recommend that the contractor implements, if prudent, the best construction practices as outlined by the EPA in the attached email (Appendix B) in order to reduce temporary impacts on air quality during construction.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the Environmental Assessment and its associated supporting documents, which are incorporated herein by reference, and pursuant to 23 C.F.R. Part 771.121, the Federal Transit Administration finds that there are no significant impacts on the quality of the human environment associated with the construction and operations of the Kansas City Downtown Streetcar Project, and therefore the preparation of an environmental impact statement will not be necessary.

Legal Concurrence:  Date: 10/30/2012
Paula Schwach
Regional Counsel

Approved:  Date: 10/30/2012
Mokhtee Ahmad
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region VII