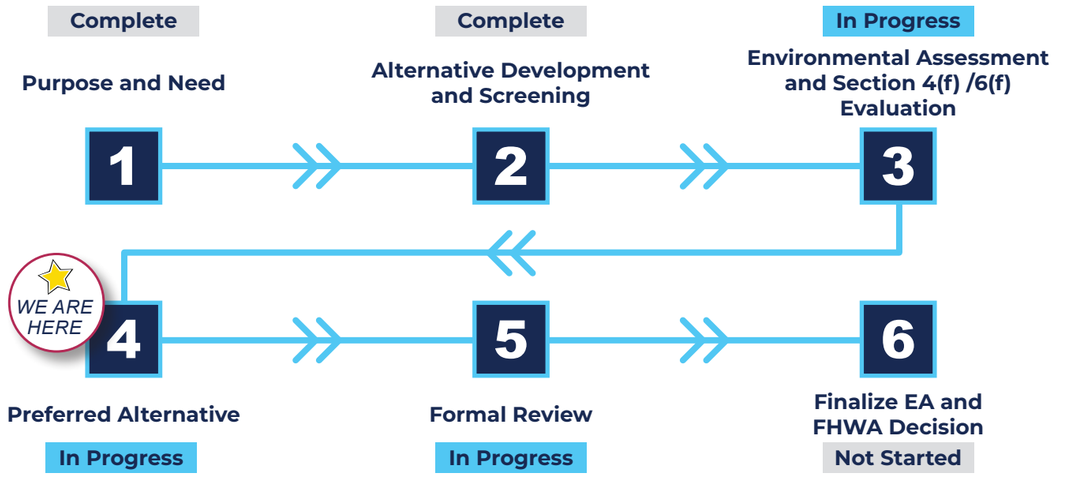
What is an Environmental Assessment?

An Environmental Assessment is a federally required document under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) designed to evaluate a project's potential impacts to the natural and human environment.

Since there have been previous studies on this corridor to determine solutions, this EA is evaluating alternatives according to each's ability to meet the Purpose and Need. After a more detailed evaluation, a preferred alternative will be selected and that recommendation will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). FHWA will either issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and design and construction can move forward or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will need to be completed.

EA Assessment Process



Ways to Get Involved

- Public Meetings
- Surveys
- Sign up for email updates
- X (Formerly Twitter): @MoDOT_KC
- Facebook: MoDOT.KansasCity

Website: tinyurl.com/I-70KCProject

Contact

MoDOT Project Manager: Jodie Puhr, P.E.

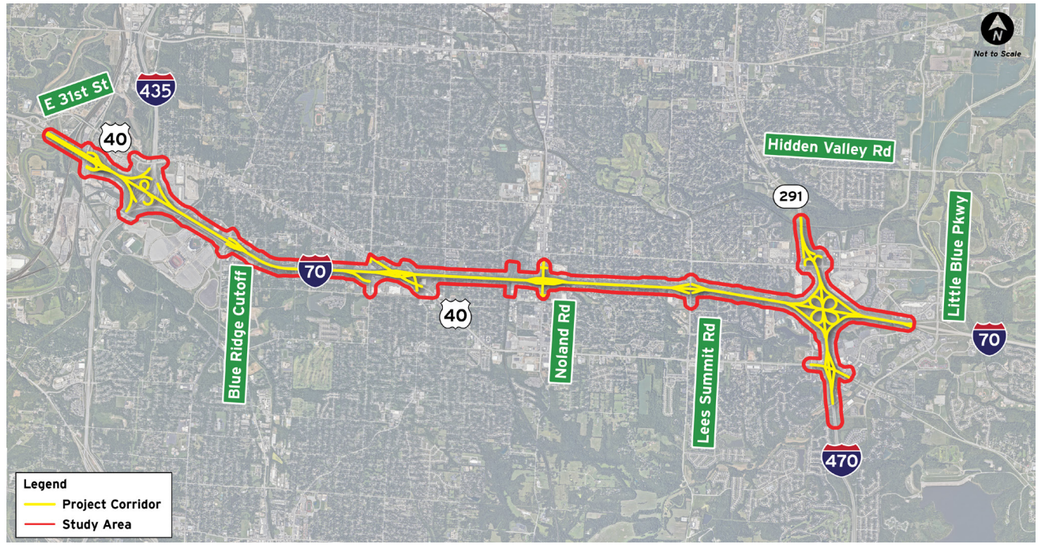
Project Email: i70_ea_i435_i470@modot.mo.gov

I-70 Environmental Assessment: I-435 to I-470

Factsheet | Fall 2025

Study Area Map

The map below depicts the I-70 Environmental Assessment (EA) Study Area. The yellow highlights the specific region being evaluated.



The Study Area boundary is approximately 250 feet outside of the existing right of way.

Study Purpose

This project is one of several which will modernize the I-70 corridor across the state. I-70 from I-435 to I-470 provides a critical link to the central region of the United States, particularly for freight traffic, and is a key access point for the Kansas City region.

The primary goal of the Environmental Assessment (EA) is to evaluate short- and long-term alternatives and identify proposed actions to:

- Restore and maintain existing infrastructure
- Improve accessibility and goods movement
- Reduce congestion

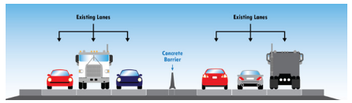
Purpose and Need

The proposed project is needed to:

- Improve Safety
- Improve Accessibility and Goods Management
- Reduce Congestion
- Restore and Maintain Existing Infrastructure

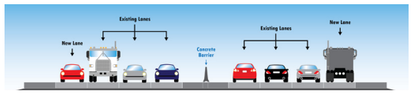
Alternatives Considered

The three alternatives below carried forward from the Tier 1 EIS will be evaluated according to their ability to meet the Purpose and Need and minimize impacts to the natural and human environments.



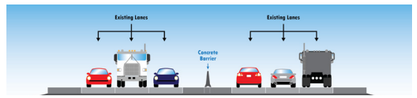
A No Build Alternative

Maintain the existing configuration. No change will be made to the number of lanes, shoulder widths, or ramp layouts aside from what is already programmed and/or scheduled.



B Add General Capacity

- Remove and replace all pavement adding wider shoulders
- One (1) additional lane in each direction



C Fix Key Bottlenecks

- Remove and replace all pavement adding wider shoulders
- Retain three (3) lanes in each direction

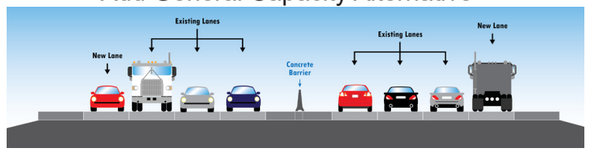
Possible Improvements

- Longer ramp acceleration and deceleration merging lanes
- Auxiliary lanes between interchanges at key locations
- Upgrade shoulder widths to meet today's design standards
- Consideration for possible bus-on-shoulder lane
- Collector-Distributor roads at key locations
- Local interchange capacity and safety improvements where warranted

Recommended Preferred Alternative

- ✓ Meets Purpose and Need
- ✓ Addresses Congestion and Traffic Safety Concerns
- ✓ Similar cost amount to the Fix Key Bottlenecks Alternative

Add General Capacity Alternative



The Add General Capacity Alternative met the Purpose and Need of the project by:

Improving Safety

- Adding new lanes to enhance capacity
- Improving ramps and interchanges

Reducing Congestion

- Additional lanes will increase the overall corridor's travel speed and increase the corridor's throughput.

Improve Accessibility and Goods Movement

- Addition of lanes for other modes of transportation and larger transportation vehicles.
- Improved access to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections in the project area.

Restore and Maintain Existing Infrastructure

- Replacement of pavement and bridges along the corridor.
- Addition of through lanes would impact long-term travel reliability and life-cycle costs through additional capacity in the corridor.

Both alternatives (B and C) were shown to have similar impacts to the natural and human environments, with some impact to the floodway/floodplain, and limited right-of-way aquisition.

The Add General Capacity Alternative is estimated to cost $350-$400 Million.

Noise Study

As part of the Environmental Assessment, MoDOT conducted a noise study to determine if noise walls would be feasible and cost-effective.

Noise Study Process

1. Identifying Noise Impacts:

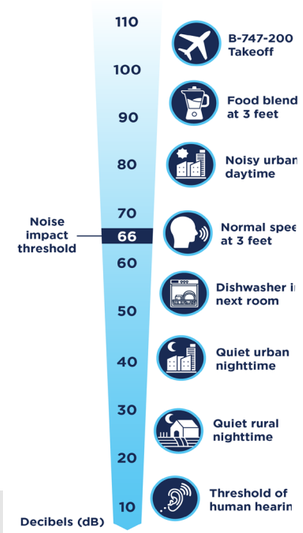
A detailed software model, validated with field measurements, is used to assess existing noise and predict future noise levels.

2. Evaluating Noise-Reduction Strategies:

Where noise impacts are identified, noise reduction strategies will be evaluated. Noise walls are the most common strategy on a corridor like I-70. Noise walls must meet certain criteria in order to be recommended for construction.

Per MoDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) noise policies, noise abatement strategies are considered feasible and reasonable if:

- *They are physically constructible without significantly impacting maintenance, safety, drainage, etc.*
- *They do not exceed 1,300 square feet of wall per residence that would benefit from the wall. A benefit is defined as a 7 decibel reduction.*
- *They are desired by the owners and residents of the properties that would benefit from the wall.*



Noise Wall Locations

The map shows locations where noise walls were evaluated. There are locations where noise walls are recommended for further study because they would help reduce noise for those properties nearby. There are other locations where noise walls were evaluated but do not meet the criteria of reducing noise for those nearby properties.