# Jayhawk Watershed Improvements Project
# FAQ and Project Guide

The City of Lawrence is excited to begin construction for the Jayhawk Watershed Improvements Project, located west of downtown. This essential and much needed stormwater infrastructure upgrade will address aging and undersized systems that have caused localized flooding during intense rainfall, affecting homes and businesses within the watershed. Construction **began in late March 2025**, and will impact traffic, parking, and access in the area for an extended period.

We've created this FAQ and Project Guide to provide you with critical information about the upcoming construction project, expected closures, and potential traffic impacts. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Nick Hoyt, project manager, at nhoyt@lawrenceks.org.

## Project Background

The existing stormwater system in the Jayhawk Watershed area is inadequate and includes an underground stone culvert made in 1911 that was undersized and can no longer support our drainage needs. Today, the stormwater system provides less than a two-year level of service, meaning there is a 50% chance that any storm could overwhelm the system and lead to flooding.

**The project will target flooding in key areas, including:**

- Low-lying streets and alleys between W 8th and W 9th Streets (Tennessee to Indiana Streets);
- Intersection of 9th and Indiana Streets;
- Alleys north of 9th Street between Tennessee Street and Indiana Street;

## Project Goals & New Improvements

The Jayhawk Watershed Project is focused on improving the stormwater system, which includes modernizing our outdated infrastructure and addressing the issues that cause flooding. Using community feedback and data from rainfall models, the City has developed a plan that will bring a host of vital improvements to the area, including:

- A reconfiguration of 9th Street from 4 lanes to 3 lanes from Illinois Street to Vermont Street;
- Installing wider bike lanes and wider parking spaces along 9th Street;
- Updating sidewalks to meet ADA accessibility;
- Installing a pedestrian hybrid beacon or Hawk (PHB) at 9th Street and Louisiana Street;
- Installing new stormwater infrastructure to significantly reduce flooding, prevent property damage, and improve drainage;
- Replacing various sanitary sewers and water mains all along the project;
- Implementation of traffic calming along 8th Street between Illinois Street and Indiana Street;

The project will enhance safety, reduce property damage risk, and provide long-term, sustainable solutions to stormwater management in the Jayhawk Watershed.

# Traffic Impacts, Road Closures, & Property Access

**Our Planning & Phasing Process:**
As we began planning this vital work for the Jayhawk Watershed years ago, the City recognized an opportunity to combine the construction work of this project and several others together instead of tackling multiple overlapping projects in this area at different times. By strategically choosing to complete these various projects at the same time, we are ensuring that we only disrupt the area once.

This "corridor" approach allows us to be more efficient, reduce long-term inconveniences, and provide a better level of service to residents and businesses! While the temporary impacts to traffic will be noticeable, this coordinated effort ensures a stronger, more streamlined infrastructure improvement project that will greatly benefit our local residents and businesses.

Additionally, over the past year, our project team has coordinated with the *University of Kansas, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, KU Athletics, KU Engineering, and other stakeholders* to phase this project in a way that minimizes impacts during large City events such as KU graduation, KU football games, 2026 World Cup, downtown events, and more.

**Project Phasing:**
The Jayhawk Watershed project will be split into four phases, starting from the Kansas River to the intersection of 9th and Indiana Streets, with the first phase expected to last approximately 18-24 months. Business owners, residents, and daily commuters should expect significant traffic changes and temporary closures throughout the project's timeline.

**Upcoming Traffic Impacts:**

## 2025

### 8th and Tennessee

- Spring 2025
- This intersection will be fully closed
- Drivers on Tennessee will be detoured to Vermont Street

### 8th Street and Louisiana Street 800 Block

- Summer 2025 – Winter 2026
- This area will experience full closures

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## 2026

### 9th Street – Louisiana and Mississippi

- All of 2026
- 1st Phase: Both westbound 9th St. lanes will be closed
  - One eastbound lane will remain open
- 2nd Phase: Eastbound and westbound lanes on 9th Street will be open for traffic.

### Alley Work and Traffic Calming Installation

- Fall 2026
- Traffic Calming Circles will be installed on 8th Street

**How We Work to Minimize Impacts for All:**
The City is committed to maintaining access to local businesses. We ask for your patience and understanding whenever temporary disruptions to parking and delivery access may occur. However, residents and businesses in the area should anticipate delays and potential detours during construction.

The City will maintain access to at least one of the sidewalks along 9th Street during construction. For the duration of the project, bicyclists will be detoured to 7th Street. Our project plans include a signage plan to better direct customers to businesses when a business's 9th Street access is impacted.

## Stay Informed

To help everyone stay informed, the City of Lawrence will provide regular updates via email, social media, and the project website. We will share progress reports, anticipated closures, and detour maps as construction progresses.

For more detailed information and to stay updated on traffic impacts and project progress, visit lawrenceks.org/jayhawk-watershed. For questions or concerns, please contact Nick Hoyt, nhoyt@lawrenceks.org.