

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The Jayhawk Watershed Project is focused on improving the stormwater system, which includes modernizing our outdated infrastructure and addressing the issues that cause flooding.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.

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.

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.

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.

Project Phasing:

The Jayhawk Watershed project will be split into several phases, with ongoing work in the Old West Lawrence neighborhood, additional work on 9th St., and a future project south of 9th St. Throughout this project, traffic control and street closures will change intermittently. Business owners, residents, and daily commuters should expect significant traffic changes and temporary closures throughout the project’s timeline.

Upcoming Traffic Impacts:

Completed Work	8th St. and Tennessee St.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2025 - December 2025 • Tennessee St. reopened with one lane of traffic each direction in August 2025 • 8th St., between Tennessee St. and Kentucky St., will reopen November 2025

2025	8th St. and Louisiana St. - 800 Block	Tennessee St., from 6th St. to 9th St.	9th St. closed from Indiana St. to Louisiana St.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2025 – Spring 2026 • This area will experience full closures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began Summer 2025 • Will fully reopen to two lanes of traffic by the end of 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins December 1, 2025 • 9th St. fully closed between Louisiana and Indiana • Traffic detoured to 6th St. between Iowa and Tennessee/ Kentucky

2026	9th St. (continued) – Louisiana to Mississippi	Tennessee St. - 700 Block	8th St. between Illinois St. and Indiana St.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of 9th St. work from December 1, 2025 • In early 2026, work will extend west of Indiana St. to Mississippi St. • Traffic detoured to 6th St. between Iowa and Tennessee/Kentucky • Local access to businesses will remain open • Scheduling for this work beyond May 2026 dependent upon City Leadership phasing decision (anticipated December 2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2026 – Fall 2026 • Tennessee St. will be reduced to one lane of traffic each direction • This work is in preparation of the Outdoor Aquatic Center - Major Renovation project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work on 8th St. will be scheduled to begin depending on the phasing for the 9th St. closure to maintain local access • Work will end in late 2026/early 2027 • Work to be completed for final phase of Old West Lawrence Traffic Calming project