

Kansas Cities Levees – Silent Sentinels of the Plains

The Kansas Cities Levee System is the system of flood risk reduction structures that helped turn the Town of Kansas into the thriving regional metropolis of Kansas City. The flood control system consists of 6 miles of floodwalls, 46 miles of earthen levees, and protects \$22 billion in investment in over 5,000 structures and the businesses that occupy them, and the income of 90,000 workers' families. The seven levee units cross state, county, and city geographic boundaries, making the interconnected system at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers one of the most vital infrastructure projects in the Midwest.

Originally authorized in 1936, then again in 1944, 1954, and 1962, the project saw phases of construction running into the 1970's. Performance concerns during and after the Great Flood of 1993 prompted an analysis of the system leading to feasibility studies of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 construction work has begun on levee units in Fairfax, the East Bottoms, and North Kansas City. The Phase 2 Feasibility Study has passed the Civil Works Review Board as of May 10, 2014, awaiting a Chief's Report and continued funding so that construction may begin on the Armourdale and CID levee units.

The levee system is estimated to have prevented \$4.5 billion in damages in the 1993 event (\$8.4 billion in 2014 dollars). The continued performance of the system is critical to the economic vitality of the Midwest, the nation's rail system, and the manufacturing and distribution economy of our region. Through a unique stakeholder engagement partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City Industrial Council and its members work to push this project through its next stage of revitalization so it may continue to offer flood risk management benefits that business owners, property owners, and risk managers throughout our region can depend on.