

## Removal of Memorial Drive Ramps, Addition of Washington Avenue Ramps and U-Turn

The I-70 access modifications proposed by the CAR 2015 project team center around a plan to “flip” the I-70 access ramps to and from Memorial Drive adjacent to the JNEM (Figure 2.7). A new taper style off-ramp from I-70 westbound to Memorial Drive northbound is proposed where the current on-ramp from Memorial Drive is situated. In accordance with FHWA preference for full interchanges, the I-70 eastbound off-ramp to Memorial Drive would be converted to a parallel style on-ramp from Washington Avenue as well.

These changes to the ramp orientation are proposed as a response to community concerns about Interstate access from the south should access via Memorial Drive be closed. The ramps would improve access to the northern area of the downtown central business district from the south, in accordance with a historic shift of peak hour traffic entering the downtown central business district. Thirty years ago, the major suburbs to St. Louis were north and west on I-70. Currently, however, the overall proportion of users accessing downtown from the south is roughly 10% higher than that from the north, based on peak hour ramp volumes. Therefore, the new ramps provide a benefit at the local level while serving the broader, regional traffic movements.

In addition, these modifications accommodate the closure of Memorial Drive proposed by the installation of the land bridge over the depressed section of Interstate highway. The Memorial Drive closure would incorporate the northbound section between Walnut and Washington Ave and the southbound section between Market and Chestnut Streets (Figure 2.7). Most of the land previously occupied by Memorial Drive in this area would be restored as National Park land. The land bridge would be landscaped to provide extended park space and ADA-compliant access to the new primary JNEM entrance that would face Memorial Drive. This proposed connection is illustrated in Figure 2.7.

With these modifications, the main vehicle gateway to downtown from the south would be via Walnut Street via the existing Memorial Drive exit with Washington Ave as a secondary downtown exit. The next exit from westbound lanes is at Madison Street, more than 1.5 miles further north. The main vehicle gateway from the North would continue to be via the existing mainline highway and express lane off-ramp exits at Broadway. North-south movements that once used Memorial Drive would now shift to North 4<sup>th</sup> and North Broadway.

Utilizing existing pavement from the portion of Washington Ave under I-70, a U-turn connection is proposed between northbound and southbound Memorial Drive, south of the Eads Bridge (shown as Figure 2.7). This connection would provide direct access for travelers using the new I-70 Memorial Drive exit whose destination is within the central business district (those who previously utilized Memorial Drive northbound to the Pine Street Bridge). Removing these vehicles from the intersections of Memorial Drive with Washington Avenue and the Eads Bridge, would reduce the volume serviced by those signals as well as the potential for pedestrian conflicts.

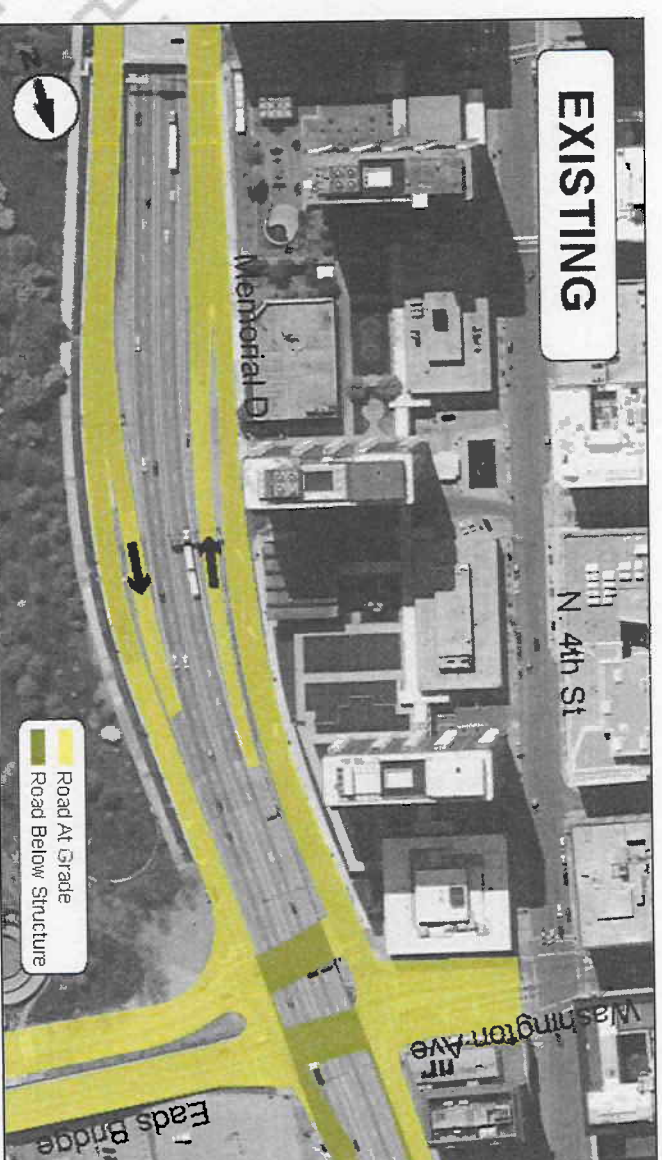


Figure 2.6: Existing Layout of Memorial Drive Ramps

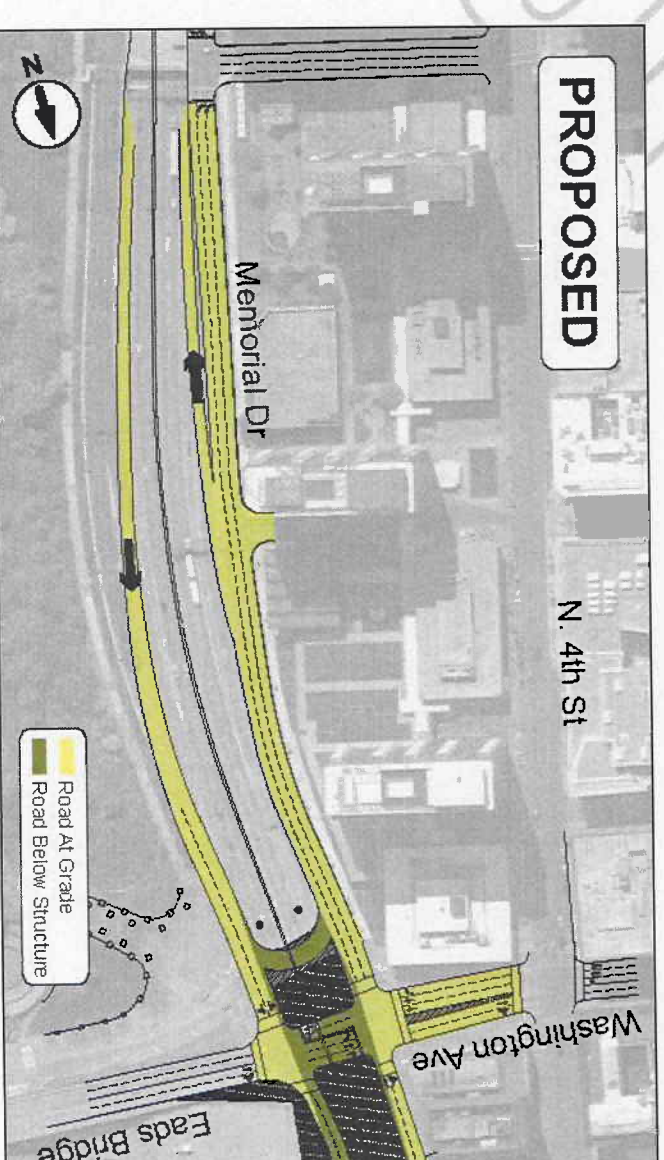


Figure 2.7: Proposed Layout of Washington Avenue Ramps and U-Turn

### North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Extension

North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is currently divided into two sections, decoupled in the vicinity of the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Bridge. The proposed modifications would create a continuous connection from the new I-70 westbound exit at Washington Street, to the existing section just north of the MLK Bridge landing. The revised alignment would:

- Begin at an improved intersection at the west end of the Eads Bridge where it meets the proposed off-ramp to Washington Ave;
- Run along the existing alignment underneath the elevated portion of the Interstate highway adjacent to Laclede's Landing;
- Connect with Convention Plaza and Laclede's Landing Blvd in an improved intersection at the base of the MLK Bridge;
- Provide a new, single lane, one way segment crossing over an existing traffic island to join with the existing section of North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street north of MLK Bridge and to the existing I-70 westbound on-ramp.

The extension provides a local connection from the northeast corner of the central business district to an existing on-ramp towards I-70 westbound and is intended to replace the access lost through the removal of the Memorial Drive on-ramp. At a local level, the extension allows better access and circulation into and out of Laclede's Landing and reconnects disjointed portions of the existing network.

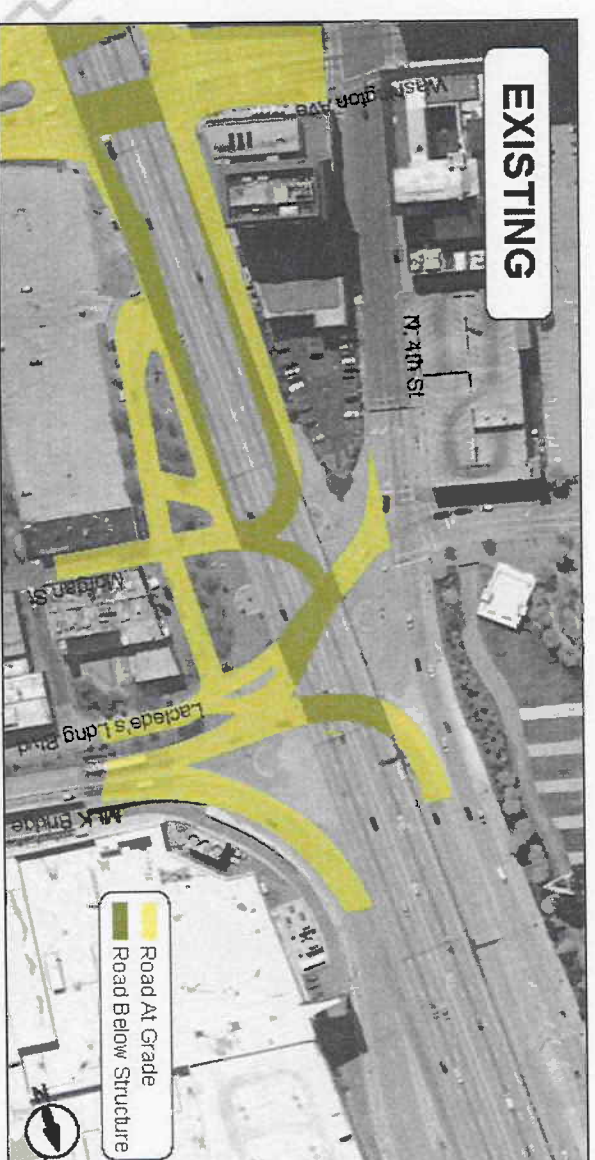


Figure 2.8: Existing Layout of North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Laclede's Landing



Figure 2.9: Proposed Layout of North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Extension to I-70 On-ramp