



# I-75 Planning/ Environmental Study

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: #1: What is this study about?**

**A:** The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is concerned about maintaining the safety of motorists and the strength of the economy in Oakland County. I-75 is the main north-south roadway through the county, carrying 150,000 to 200,000 vehicles per day.

The freeway varies between three and four lanes in each direction. Earlier studies indicated a need for widening the freeway to four lanes in each direction between 8 Mile Road and M-59. This covers approximately 18 miles of Oakland County, including the busiest stretches of I-75 in the county's southern end. As part of this current study, MDOT is also looking at reconstructing the 12 Mile Road and 14 Mile Road interchanges to improve safety and efficiency. Earlier studies also indicated a need for the Road Commission of Oakland County to improve major local roads near I-75.

**Q: #2: What is the purpose of this study?**

**A:** The purpose of the current study is to complete an Environmental Impact Statement for review by federal and state agencies. An EIS is required before they can approve any funding for corridor improvements.

**Q: #3: What is the purpose of improving I-75?**

**A:** The purpose of the project is to:

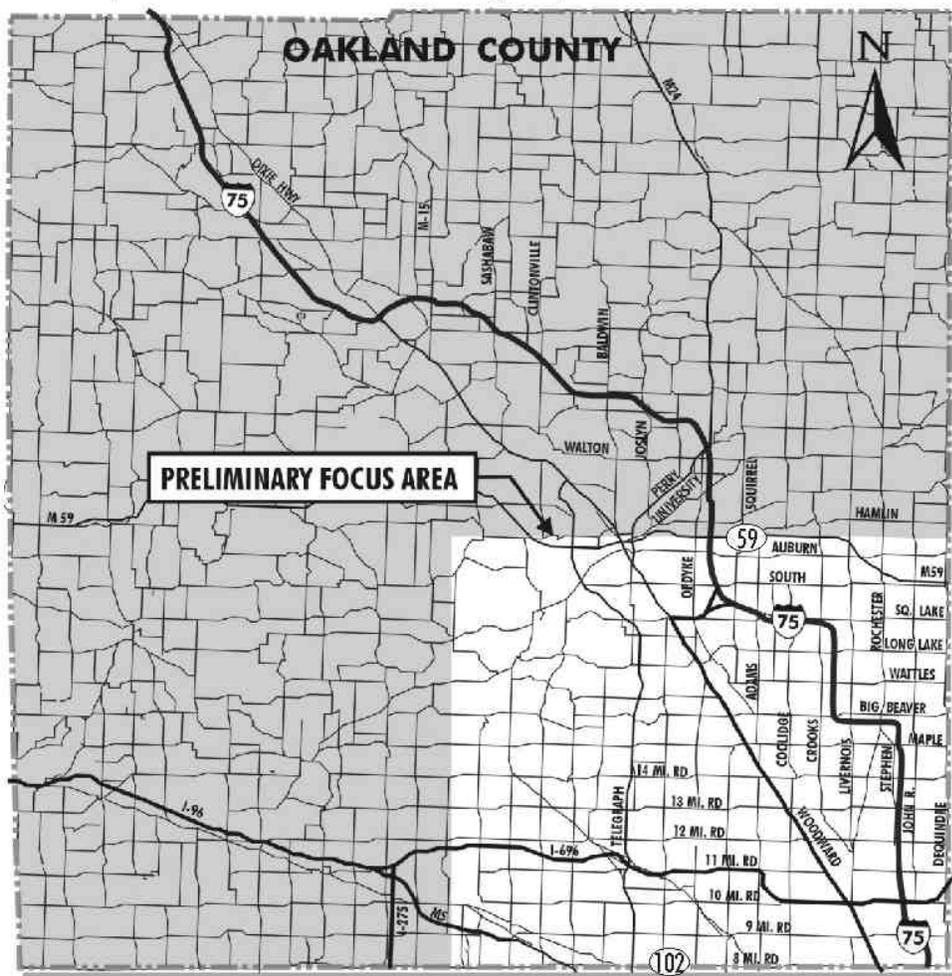
1. Improve motorist safety.
2. Improve travel efficiency and roadway capacity in the I-75 corridor by upgrading the roadway, interchanges and bridges to modern standards;
3. Provide additional transportation improvements, including the use of electronic Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

**Q: #4: Why is I-75 so congested, particularly in Oakland County?**

**A:** I-75 is a transcontinental highway stretching from Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to Miami, Fla. It is an extremely important component of the overall transportation system in Michigan and the United States. I-75 connects with 16 other freeways within Michigan alone.

When first building I-75, designers laid it out in a stair-step manner following property lines. This minimized impacts on developed land. The resulting "diagonal" routing of I-75 is why many Oakland County residents use it more for local trips than for regional travel. And, it is difficult for local roadways to provide relief to I-75 because they do not truly parallel the freeway. In addition to problems with its initial layout, population and job growth in Oakland County are creating a heavy traffic burden for I-75. The extensive growth in the county has been increasing dramatically during the past 20 years. Growth is expected to continue for the next 30 years.

As a result of these conditions, I-75, between M-59 and M-102 (8 Mile Road) operates between Levels of Service D (heavy congestion) to Level of Service F (extreme congestion) during peak travel periods. If no changes occur, gridlock will occur not only during peak hours but throughout the day by the year 2025.



**Q: #5: What issues does the study cover?**

**A:** The most critical issues are noise, air quality, safety, and effects on local communities. The study also covers the following issues:

- Traffic management
- Economic effects on local communities/tax base loss
- Impacts to property
- Drainage
- Wetlands
- Indirect (secondary) and cumulative impacts
- Community cohesion/special groups/environmental justice
- Surface water quality impacts
- Cultural resources
- Threatened/endangered species
- Floodplains
- Hazardous materials
- Utility systems
- Section 4(f)/6(f) lands (public parks).

**Q: #6: What options are being studied?**

**A:** The alternatives under consideration include the following: No-Build; Mass Transit; Transportation and Travel Demand Management Techniques; General Purpose, unrestricted freeway travel lanes for a total of four lanes only; and, a proposed lane in each direction for use during all or parts of the day by High-Occupancy Vehicles (HOV). If the alternative chosen is to add a lane to I-75, only one will be included in each direction, so that between M-59 and M-102 (8-Mile Road), the freeway will have four through lanes. But, it is noteworthy, that as the study has progressed, it was found that mass transit is unable to negate the need for an additional lane on I-75 and, therefore, is no longer an alternative to freeway widening.

**Q: #7: What is an HOV lane?**

**A:** HOV stands for high-occupancy vehicles. These are carpools with two or more people, and vanpools and buses. Work on I-75, to date, indicates that the HOV concept is feasible in both the morning and afternoon peak hours, and in both directions at those times.



**Q: #8: Why doesn't better mass transit eliminate the need for widening I-75?**

**A:** A transit system of improved feeder bus service and some high-speed/rapid transit in Oakland County is part of continuing studies by SEMCOG to benefit the region. However, analyses indicate these transit concepts will not alleviate the need for widening I-75.

**Q: #9: Who is doing this study?**

**A:** The Federal Highway Administration, MDOT and its consultant, The Corradino Group, form the study team that is working with local governments, businesses, and residents.

**Q: #10: How long will the study take?**

**A:** The study should be finished some time in the summer of 2004. Between now and then, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be produced for comment at a public hearing in the summer of 2003. After responding to comments on the DEIS, the Final EIS will be produced by the early part of 2004.

**Q: #11: Does the public have a say in this?**

**A:** MDOT has held several meetings since the start of the environmental impact study. MDOT will hold more meetings during the next year as the study continues. The Department's approach is to keep the public informed and ask for their input.



Meeting announcements are mailed to nearly 7,000 area residents and others who have expressed an interest in the project. To join the mailing list, call toll free; 1-866-GOFIX75 (463-4975). MDOT also works with the local media to announce the meetings. And, you can reach the project at any time by email at [www.mdot.state.mi.us/projects/I-75corridor](http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/projects/I-75corridor).

**Q: #12: Who makes the final decision?**

**A:** Upon receipt of public input, the final decision will be the responsibility of the federal government (Federal Highway Administration) based upon a recommendation provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The final decision will be documented in a Record of Decision, executed by the United States Secretary of Transportation, at the conclusion of the study.

**Q: #13: Where can I get more information?**

**A:** If you would like more information, contact Brenda Peek, MDOT Office of Communications, at 248-483-5100 or via e-mail at [peekb@michigan.gov](mailto:peekb@michigan.gov). You also can visit the project Web site at [www.mdot.state.mi.us/projects/I-75corridor](http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/projects/I-75corridor), or call 1-866-GOFIX75 (463-4975) toll free.