



Michigan Department of Transportation

The Capitol Loop

Fact Sheet

The Capitol Loop was developed in February 1986 as a joint effort between the city of Lansing and the state of Michigan to revitalize downtown Lansing and provide motorists with a signed route to various attractions in the Capital city.

Preliminary meetings began in 1999 to discuss major road upgrades to the Capitol Loop in conjunction with upgrading some of the oldest utilities in the city of Lansing. The project was scaled back in the fall of 2003 after local business owners raised concerns about how the project might affect the flow of traffic through the downtown business district. These issues were resolved through a series of public meetings.

MDOT's total project cost was \$15.4 million, which included the reconstruction of and streetscape improvements to Allegan, Ottawa, Capitol, Pine and Walnut streets, plus streetscape improvements to Cedar and Larch streets.

Work began in early April 2004 at the corner of Ottawa Street and Capitol Avenue and was completed in stages until Allegan and Walnut streets were opened in June 2005. MDOT worked with E.T. MacKenzie Companies (the prime contractor) and the city of Lansing to complete the road work and opened the project to traffic on June 30, 2005, three months ahead of schedule.

The city of Lansing's total project cost was \$5.6 million, which included the design and installation of a 30-inch sanitary sewer and 24-inch storm sewer at Ottawa Street; miscellaneous small diameter sewers at Allegan Street; and the reconstruction of Walnut and Pine streets.

- The city's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) program completed the Capitol Loop with the installation of new storm and/or sanitary sewers to replace combined sewers that, in some locations, dated back to 1892. This work will help reduce sewer overflows from this portion of the network and decrease a source of pollution entering the Grand River.
- The water main upgrade replaced a network that included lines originally installed in the late 1880s.
- The steam main replacement upgraded a network that included portions constructed in 1928.
- This project included \$1.08 million in state telecommunication improvements in addition to private investments in gas transmission and digital cable improvements.

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Once the project was underway, various problems needed to be addressed. In one instance, representatives of the historic Central United Methodist Church at Capitol and Ottawa streets informed MDOT that a structural problem had been discovered. To remedy the situation, MDOT changed the work-type methods and materials used by the contractor to limit vibrations that might have contributed to structural failure of portions of the building. These changes meant increased costs and time commitments, but resulted in the preservation of a historic downtown building. In another instance, the contractor worked to coordinate schedules, sidewalk construction and access to accommodate the spring opening of a new downtown eatery located in the new Boji Tower II in the midst of construction on Allegan Street.

MDOT and the city of Lansing encouraged customer involvement throughout the project. Stakeholder meetings were held in advance to gather public input from customers. Once the work began, regular project meetings were held weekly, first at the Principal Shopping District office, and later at the Boji Tower. These meetings provided updates on the work that had been completed the previous week and work that was expected to be completed in the coming week, and a forum to discuss concerns or issues of local businesses and residents.

Brochures, visor cards and posters were printed and distributed throughout the Capitol Complex and to adjacent businesses to provide advance notice to all affected customers. Real-time information was disseminated through a dedicated listserv, Web site, and programmable changeable message boards. Local media were kept informed, which in turn helped the public stay informed.

Pedestrian traffic was maintained at all times using existing sidewalks or constructed boardwalks. Throughout the project, access was maintained to all parking lots, and to all commercial and residential driveways.

The project was opened to traffic on June 30, 2005, three months ahead of schedule.

