

I-696: Three Pedestrian Plazas Over Freeway

Context

These three pedestrian plazas are located in the cities of Oak Park and Southfield in Oakland County. The area includes a mix of residential, community, and commercial properties.

Purpose and Description

The purpose of the pedestrian plazas is to maintain connectivity within neighborhoods that would have been separated by the freeway construction. Three pedestrian plazas (bridge decks), each approximately 700 feet wide, within a mile length along I-696, were built as part of the original freeway construction in 1989.

Public Engagement

Residents adjacent to each plaza provided design input as to surface features such as green space, curvilinear walkways, active and passive play areas, and a local street. In addition, features removed by the freeway were replaced.

Context Sensitive Solutions Approach

The width of each plaza was determined by adjacent residential developments, established pedestrian paths, no additional residential purchases would be made, and that no artificial ventilation would be required. The bridge carrying Greenfield Road over the freeway was given extra wide pedestrian sidewalks and a few isolated homes were purchased to increase park areas adjacent to the plazas.

Outcome

The plaza surfaces are maintained by the cities of Oak Park and Southfield, while MDOT retains maintenance responsibility for the plaza structures.

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