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I-375 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

PARTICIPATE

GET THE FACTS

Visit the I-375 Project website: www.Michigan.gov/I375Study

Contact us: MDOT-I-375Corridor@Michigan.gov

I-375 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A Guide to the Environmental Assessment and Opportunities to Engage



FIGURE 1: THE BOULEVARD PORTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

TO THE I-375 STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY – THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Located in the city of Detroit, I-375 is a 1-mile-long freeway that connects the I-75 freeway directly to Jefferson Avenue. Through the I-375 Improvement Project, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to replace outdated freeway and deteriorating roadways and structures while improving safety and connectivity, and supporting economic development and placemaking opportunities.

Recently, MDOT finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA). This document is now available for public review before the formal public hearing and virtual outreach opportunities.

Normally, your local libraries and MDOT offices would host hard copies of the environmental documents for your review. However, the COVID-19 pandemic prevents this from happening. To stay safe and provide you with maximum opportunities to review the EA, we are sharing this brochure to provide you with a guide to the EA. The EA document is available on the project website, but we understand not everyone has access to the Internet. We are here to assist you with full access to these public documents no matter what the method, including mailing you a copy.

From the start, our stakeholders and the public have been at the center of this work to ensure the project has community, residential, and business input.

The I-375 project team says, “Thank You!” You have been asked on many occasions to help us make the I-375 corridor better and you’ve shared your time and ideas along the way. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback on the EA at our upcoming public hearing and/or virtually by phone or online.

As we move into the next phases of the project, including Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval, design, and construction, there will be many more opportunities for community input and participation. It is our hope those of you who participated so far will continue to do so, and others will join you.

Thank you again for your past, and future, support.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Loree, P.E.
I-375 Improvement Project Manager
Michigan Department of Transportation

YOU ARE INVITED TO A PUBLIC HEARING!

Thursday, Jan. 28, 4-8 p.m.

**Former UAW-GM Center for Human Resources
200 Walker St., Detroit, MI 48207**

Information on how to sign up, COVID-19 safety measures, and virtual outreach options are on the other side of this document.

ALTERNATIVE PROCESS

Illustrative Alternatives identified in the 2014 PEL Study were carried into the EA and screened

Alternatives are screened to identify the Practical Alternatives

Refinements made based on stakeholder feedback and detailed technical and environmental analysis

Alternatives screened to identify a Preferred Alternative

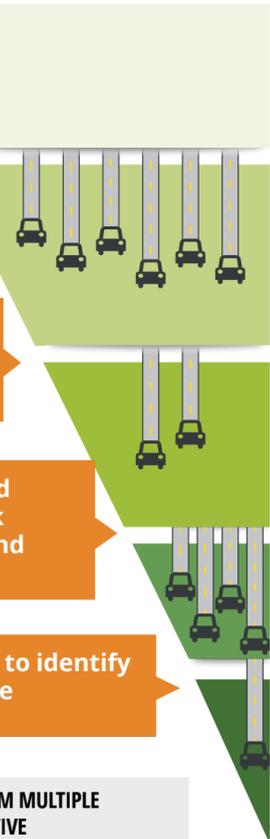


FIGURE 2: THE ALTERNATIVE PROCESS FROM MULTIPLE ALTERNATIVES TO A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The 2014 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study defined the project purpose and need and alternatives to address those needs. These were carried forward and refined through the EA process.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT INITIATED

ILLUSTRATIVE ALTERNATIVES

- Six Illustrative Alternatives and two Illustrative Interchange Alternatives were studied further as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. A screening process based on the purpose and need and stakeholder feedback was completed to narrow the six Illustrative Alternatives to two Practical Alternatives.

PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES

- Two Practical Alternatives were identified through the Illustrative Alternative screening, and combined with one Interchange Alternative. One Practical Alternative was selected to be further refined.

PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE REFINEMENTS

- Four refined Practical Alternatives were developed based on a need to further analyze the boulevard and the introduction of a new interchange alternative as a result of stakeholder feedback.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

- A Preferred Alternative was selected and is analyzed in the EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

View a complete analysis of impacts that would result from the Preferred Alternative in the EA at www.Michigan.gov/I375Study.

SAFETY AND MOBILITY

- Robust nonmotorized facilities, including a two-way cycle track, enhanced crosswalks with countdown pedestrian signals, pedestrian refuge islands at signalized intersections, and wider sidewalks.
- Increased number of potential crashes at intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists with vehicles. The same is true for vehicular traffic due to the shift from a freeway to an at-grade boulevard. “No Turn on Red” signs for vehicles approaching the protected cycle track will be added to keep vehicles from blocking the cycle track and improve safety at the signalized intersections.
- A reduction in travel speeds to 35 mph along the boulevard from the existing freeway speeds of 55 mph will calm traffic and reduce the severity of potential crashes.
- Elimination of several dangerous geometric deficient curves and weaving maneuvers.

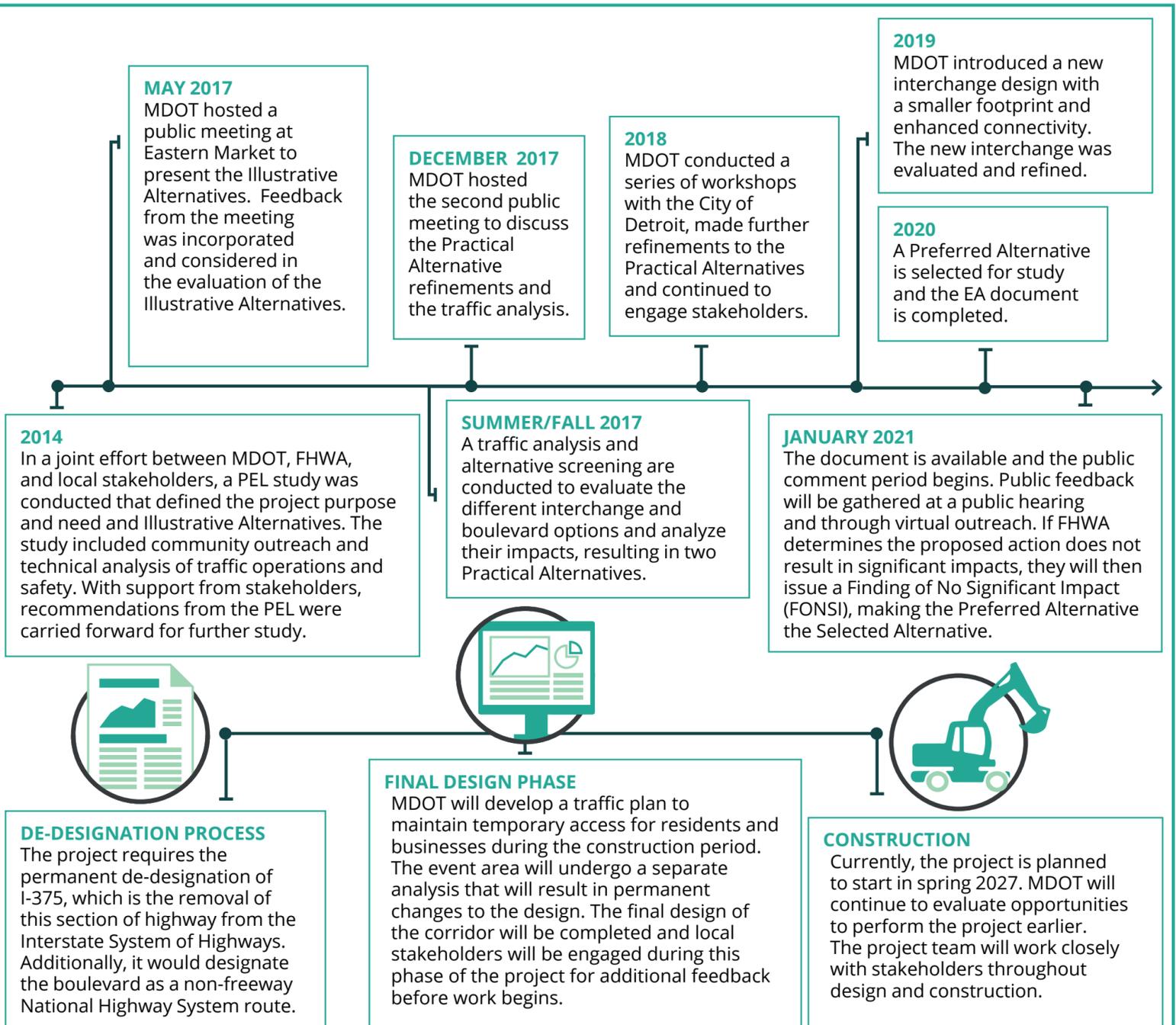
OPERATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY

- Several new roadway connections at Clinton Street and Montcalm Street, and a new local connector near Eastern Market will improve vehicular and nonmotorized access between neighborhoods and districts, including the event area, Brush Park, Eastern Market, and the Central Business District.
- On average, there is the potential for a two to seven-minute delay, depending on which direction you’re coming from. The delay is in comparison to future no-build conditions for 2040, and is due to the decrease in speed, signalized intersections, and increased traffic in the future.
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing times with the boulevard will be longer than the existing condition, ranging from one minute, 31 seconds to three minutes, 57 seconds.
- Improved nonmotorized facilities, including marked pedestrian crossings, a two-way cycle track on the boulevard and Montcalm Street, and a new connection to the riverfront.

RIGHT OF WAY (ROW)

- Requires the permanent acquisition of 3.2 acres of ROW spread across numerous parcels, including the land needed to extend Montcalm Street from Brush Street to Gratiot Avenue, extend the boulevard to Atwater Street, and to accommodate the interchange design. A map of temporary and permanent ROW needs can be found in the EA.
- The surface streets and the I-75/I-375 interchange require less physical space than the existing freeway. This results in potential excess property. In accordance with MDOT’s Real Estate Procedures Manual, FHWA approval will be required for any potential release of property secured originally for I-375. A post-construction review will be performed to determine the necessary requirements for the continued operation, maintenance, and safety of the new facility.
- Any land determined to be excess property will be handled in accordance with FHWA and MDOT standard practices. The excess property may be made suitable for sale or other use.

I-375 TIMELINE A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROJECT



NEXT STEPS

DE-DESIGNATION PROCESS
The project requires the permanent de-designation of I-375, which is the removal of this section of highway from the Interstate System of Highways. Additionally, it would designate the boulevard as a non-freeway National Highway System route.

FINAL DESIGN PHASE
MDOT will develop a traffic plan to maintain temporary access for residents and businesses during the construction period. The event area will undergo a separate analysis that will result in permanent changes to the design. The final design of the corridor will be completed and local stakeholders will be engaged during this phase of the project for additional feedback before work begins.

CONSTRUCTION
Currently, the project is planned to start in spring 2027. MDOT will continue to evaluate opportunities to perform the project earlier. The project team will work closely with stakeholders throughout design and construction.

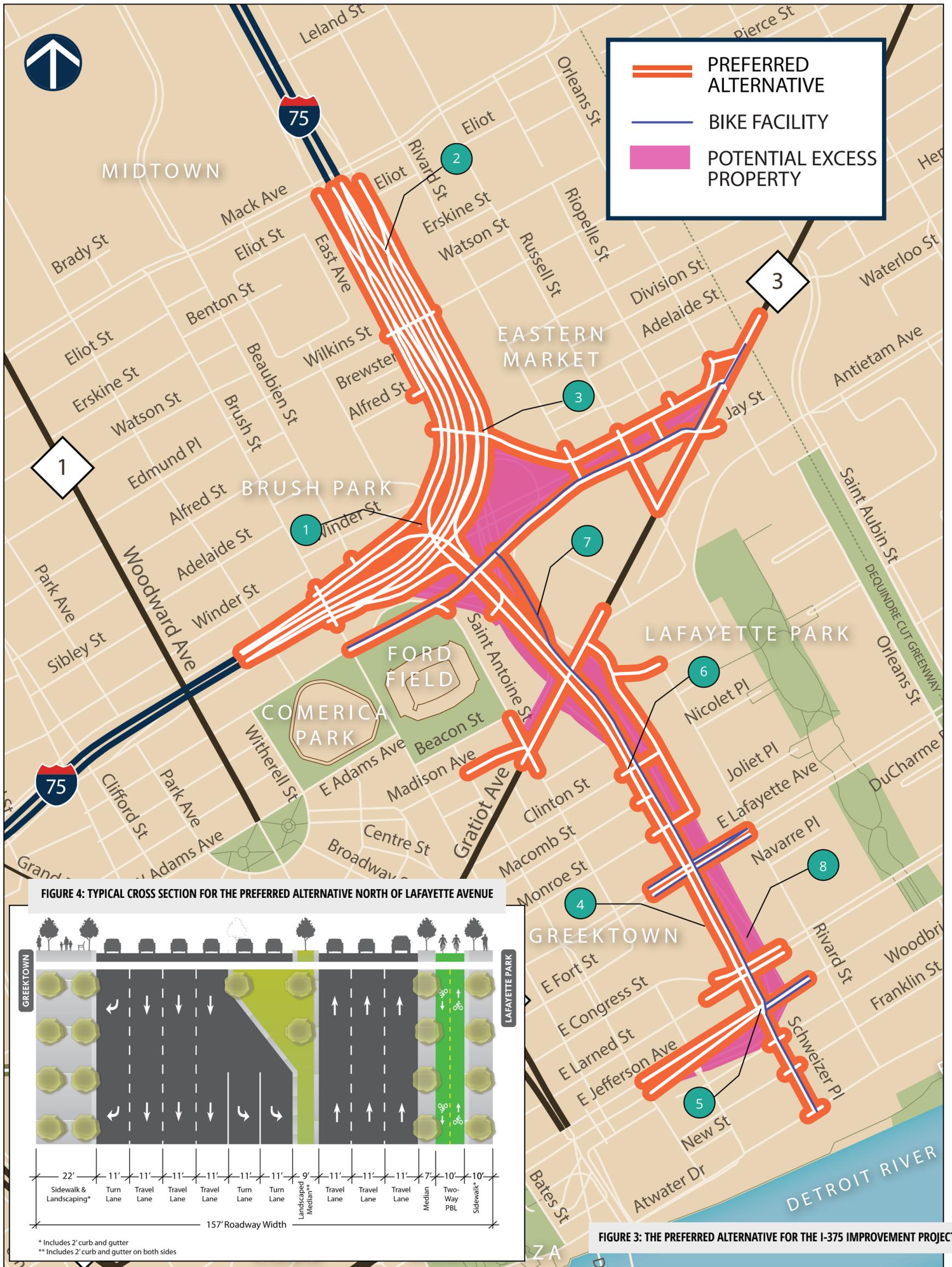


FIGURE 3: THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE I-375 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The **Preferred Alternative**, shown in Figure 3, involves the removal of I-375, corresponding service drives, and the Gratiot Avenue Connector. In place of I-375, a six-lane boulevard would be built at current city street level from I-75 to Jefferson Avenue and transition to a four-lane boulevard from Jefferson Avenue to Atwater Street. The existing I-75/I-375 interchange would be rebuilt with a smaller footprint and enhanced connectivity.

Some highlights of the Preferred Alternative include:

- 1** The I-75/I-375 interchange would be an urban-type interchange with right-hand on and off ramps that would provide access to the Eastern Market, Gratiot Avenue, the new boulevard, Brush Street, and Mack Avenue. This would eliminate the need to exit the freeway to stay on I-75.
- 2** Braided ramps to and from Mack Avenue on I-75, meaning the ramps would pass over other ramps to and from the boulevard using bridges to separate the roadways and ramp traffic, eliminating weaving, or conflict points.
- 3** Additional connectivity and access would be provided with a new bridge connecting Brush Park and Eastern Market, additional street connections in Eastern Market, and access to Brush Park from southbound I-75.

- 4** A city street-level boulevard would begin south of the I-75/I-375 interchange and continue to the Detroit River, opening up additional connections to the Detroit Riverfront, Eastern Market, Brush Park, and a new local connector street from Eastern Market to Gratiot Avenue.
- 5** Signalized intersections would be located along the boulevard at Jefferson Avenue, Larned Street, Lafayette Avenue, Monroe Street, Macomb Street, Clinton Street, Gratiot Avenue, and at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking structure.
- 6** Direct left-turns would be allowed along the boulevard, except at the intersection with Gratiot Avenue.
- 7** Improved nonmotorized facilities, including a two-way cycle track connecting the Riverfront to the Montcalm Street extension to Gratiot Avenue. The two-way cycle track would then extend west to Brush Street and east to Gratiot Avenue where it connects with the Dequindre Cut Greenway bicycle path.
- 8** Potential excess property that could be available for future redevelopment.

GET ENGAGED: VIEW THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PARTICIPATE IN AN UPCOMING PUBLIC HEARING



WHERE TO FIND THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- View the full document at: www.Michigan.gov/I375Study.
- Due to public health guidelines put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19, public copies are not accessible. Electronic or paper copies can be made available by request.
- To make a special request for a document or section of the document, please contact Monica Monsma, the public hearing officer for MDOT, at 517-335-4381 or MonsmaM@Michigan.gov.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

With advance notice of seven days, accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities and/or limited English-speaking ability, and persons needing, auxiliary aids or services of interpreters, signers, readers, or large print.

To make a request, please contact Orlando Curry at 517-241-7462 or CurryO@Michigan.gov.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

To hear an update on the I-375 Improvement Project, learn about the EA, and share your feedback and comments on the update.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

MDOT will hold both an in-person public hearing and a virtual outreach event. You can choose to comment in-person at the hearing, during the virtual outreach event, online via e-mail, or by U.S. mail. **All comments received by Friday, Feb. 19, 2021 will be included in the official record.**

VIRTUAL OUTREACH EVENT AND COMMENT OPTIONS

Wednesday, Jan. 27 6-7:30 p.m.

Register for an automatic call or connect online: www.Michigan.gov/I375Study
By phone: 866-478-3388

Submit a comment via e-mail:

MDOT-I-375Corridor@Michigan.gov

Submit a comment via U.S. mail:

Michigan Department of Transportation, Attn: Monica Monsma, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909

IN-PERSON PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, Jan. 28, 4-8 p.m.

Former UAW-GM Center for HR
200 Walker St., Detroit, MI 48207
Upon arrival, please pull up to the gate and a security guard will direct you to the complimentary parking under building.

4-5 p.m. High-risk individuals by appointment

- *The first hour will be for senior citizens and individuals at increased risk of severe illnesses from COVID-19. Please register for an appointment to join us during this time frame.*

5-8 p.m. Public access by appointment

- **Register for a time frame in advance:** To keep all attendees safe, there will be appointment times to select from. Sign up online at www.Michigan.gov/I375Study or by calling 517-335-4381 to choose a time to join us.
- **Non-registered individuals:** Due to current limitations on public gatherings, non-registered individuals will be accommodated either during available appointment times or as capacity allows. Please be prepared to wait for entry into the building to accommodate appropriate social distancing.

KEEPING YOU SAFE: GUIDELINES FOR THE IN-PERSON PUBLIC HEARING

To ensure the safety of all guests and staff, the following preventive measures will be enforced to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

- All attendees are required to wear a face covering at all times.
- Participants should remain at least 6 feet away from other attendees and staff.
- High-risk individuals and senior citizens are strongly encouraged to make an advance appointment during the first hour (4-5 p.m.). Every effort will be made to allow these individuals time to review the materials and exhibits ahead of the general public.
- Due to current state guidelines, a limited number of people will be allowed inside the room at a time and will be required to follow social distance guidelines.

MDOT will continue to review county and state public health guidelines to provide a safe environment.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The I-375 Improvement Project was created to identify a transportation improvement Preferred Alternative that will achieve the following goals:

- Address outdated interchange design and deteriorated bridges and roadways with an appropriate solution that considers safety, operations, and long-term lifecycle costs.
- Address existing and future transportation needs and roadway safety for all users.
- Improve connectivity to surrounding areas for both vehicular and nonmotorized users, and enhance connections to existing and planned transit services, which may result in improved community health.
- Enhance access to enable future development and other placemaking opportunities envisioned in official land use and long-term economic development plans.

KEY TERMS

- An **Alternative** is a design solution that meets the established Purpose and Need. There are various steps to gather feedback, study the area, and update the Alternative before a final selection, a **Preferred Alternative**, is made. See process displayed in Figure 2.
- The **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** of 1969 requires federal agencies to evaluate potential social, economic, cultural and natural environmental impacts of a proposed action prior to making a decision. Agencies must provide opportunities for public review and comment as part of the evaluation of potential impacts. For the purposes of this project, the **Environmental Assessment (EA)** is an evaluation of the potential impacts for the I-375 Improvement Project.
- If it is determined that the proposed action does not result in significant impacts and the impacts can be mitigated, the **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** will issue a **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**, and the Preferred Alternative becomes the Selected Alternative, and moves onto final design and work.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The EA was developed to assist in determining the significance of the impact the I-375 Improvement Project will have on the area. The following FAQs will help you understand key aspects of the project that may be of interest to you.

Why do we need your participation?

To ensure the I-375 Improvement Project serves the needs of all residents, businesses, and commuters, we need your feedback on the Preferred Alternative to ensure that it serves the community as a whole.

What is an EA and why is it needed?

NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare an EA when the impacts of a transportation project are uncertain. An EA determines the significance of impacts and the appropriate environmental document to be prepared.

How will businesses be accessed during work?

Access will be maintained during work. Staging will be addressed during the design phase. MDOT will develop a detailed traffic management plan that will outline how the project will be built and how traffic will be managed during work, including detour routes for any closures. To the greatest extent possible, access to the service drives and adjacent properties will be maintained throughout work, with limited short-term closures as needed to rebuild private driveways.

What will MDOT build?

The Preferred Alternative incorporates changes to the existing I-375 freeway, I-75/I-375 interchange, Gratiot Avenue Connector, and service drives.

In place of I-375, a six-lane boulevard would be constructed at the current city street level from I-75 to Jefferson Avenue, and transition to a four-lane boulevard from Jefferson Avenue to Atwater Street. The existing I-75/I-375 interchange would be rebuilt with a smaller footprint and enhanced connectivity.

When will work begin?

It is anticipated that the project will begin in 2027. However, MDOT will continue to evaluate opportunities to begin the project sooner.



CONTACT US

VISIT
www.Michigan.gov/I375Study

CALL
517-335-4381

E-MAIL
MDOT-I-375Corridor@Michigan.gov

