

US-23 ATM CSS Study, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties
JN 123268C – CS 81075, 47013

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

September 22, 2015

Project Background

The US-23 corridor passes through Ann Arbor and Northfield Townships, northeast of the city of Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County and through Green Oak and Brighton Townships southeast of the city of Brighton in Livingston County. North of Ann Arbor, the freeway runs through woodland and near several lakes. The townships located along the 17-mile freeway are rural in character, with only scattered pockets of industrial and commercial activity and residential properties, primarily near the seven local interchanges along the corridor. Ann Arbor Charter Township just north of Ann Arbor offers the most developed area due to its proximity to the City and the University of Michigan but still manages to preserve some of its semi-rural identity.

Although rural in character, the US-23 corridor in the project area experiences severe congestion and high delays in the southbound direction during the morning peak hour and in the northbound direction during the evening peak hour. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has identified some mid-term and long-term mobility and safety initiatives to mitigate the impacts of the heavy directional commuter travel pattern. These initiatives, grouped under the umbrella of the US-23 Active Traffic Management (ATM) project will be implemented over multiple years as funding becomes available. Conscious of this fact and wanting to maintain uniformity and consistency along the corridor and deliver a project which solutions fit its context and reflect the public's concerns and needs along its length, MDOT is utilizing its Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process to guide future design work over the years along the corridor.

Purpose of the Project

With the current lack of funding, a widening of the existing facility is not feasible, thus the subsequent development of the US-23 ATM project; which consists of varied components including freeway courtesy patrols, new Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) initiatives, extensions of deficient ramp terminals to meet current standards, the widening and reconstruction of existing bridges, the implementation of wider shoulders to carry traffic during peak hours, and crash investigation sites.

Project Goal

Through the MDOT CSS process, the US-23 ATM project is planned to address the operational efficiency, community transportation needs, and ensure the project contributes to the community's character and value in to the future.

Project Objectives

The following objectives have been established to support the project's goal. These would be achieved through the MDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions process which includes public and agency involvement early and continuously through the project.

1. Implement community-specific themes and/or aesthetic elements and materials compatible with existing City and Township aesthetic improvements and themes ensuring compatibility with the communities' character and values.
2. Develop a natural landscape theme for the entire corridor.
3. Integrate newly-designed structures within the proposed aesthetics.
4. Improve and expand pedestrian crossing, trail and pathway access to existing area facilities.
5. Work to harmonize input from different stakeholders, MDOT and other designers to arrive at reasonable, feasible and practical alternatives.

Project Approach

Parsons will facilitate the CSS process by performing the following:

- Document the project corridor and surrounding landscape. Base information will be collected and analyzed to produce a comprehensive understanding of the corridor, and the adjacent communities' character, landscape and overall context.
 - Conduct, lead, and evaluate stakeholder engagement activities. In addition, we will assist MDOT in the development of aesthetic design documents for the project.
 - Develop a range of aesthetically-appropriate design solutions based upon the corridor, the general context and public input. The design solutions will serve to generate further input, discussion and enable the public to understand the project and the potential range of aesthetic options.
 - Create a feeling of ownership through continuous community involvement during the conceptual design phase, as they will have helped to create the final aesthetic solutions.
 - Review all designs to ensure they will conform to current MDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO practices, guidelines, policies, and standards including the Road Design Manual, Standard Plans, Drainage Manual, Roadside Design Guide, A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, and the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
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