MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

GUIDANCE FOR

Trunkline Main Streets

Kirk T. Steudle, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation

Dear Michiganders -

Transportation is a vital component of Michigan's economy, providing a network of options that each of us rely upon every day, whether we walk, bike, ride, or drive whenever we work, shop, or play. Main streets are an integral part of Michigan's transportation network, and reflect the character and identity of our communities.

On behalf of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), I am pleased to present to you Guidance for Trunkline Main Streets. The document was developed to serve communities and public agencies in Michigan that seek to study or implement modifications, improve multi-modal transportation options, and provide greater accessibility for residents, visitors, and businesses along trunkline main streets. In this document, we refer to a trunkline main street as a non-freeway business loop, business route, M route, or US route.

MDOT is committed to working with communities, public partners, and stakeholders to develop collaborative approaches for the planning, design, and implementation of projects on trunkline main streets. This document will help promote a process to establish clear expectations and shared responsibilities, while always keeping in mind the safety and vitality of Michigan communities. The content of the document demonstrates MDOT's continuing efforts to provide the highest quality transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life.

Sincerely,

Kirk T. Steudle
Director

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1 Introduction

Main streets serve as the economic, social and cultural centers of communities throughout the state of Michigan. A community main street is the primary transportation corridor that supports daily travel, commerce, recreation, activities, and events. Main streets are also a reflection of a community's identity, supporting civic pride and community congregation.

State roadways (trunkline) that function as main streets present both opportunities and challenges. The function of main streets may support additional multi-modal options, and greater accessibility for residents, visitors, and business. However, proposals by communities to implement modifications to trunkline main streets may also impact operations, the environment, funding, and long-term maintenance requirements. As the public agency with jurisdictional responsibility over state trunklines, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is often faced with balancing community recommendations with providing local, regional, and statewide mobility. Supporting the needs of the traveling public is also essential to the economic vitality of Michigan communities.

MDOT is committed to working with* public agencies, partners and stakeholders in Michigan to develop collaborative approaches for the planning, design and implementation of projects on trunkline main streets. Effective collaboration on projects requires well-established two-way communication at the onset between MDOT and the community or public agency. MDOT is limited in resources, and relies on the community to serve as a key partner. Thererfore, it is important to develop mutually agreed-upon expectations, and foster a cooperative spirit to help achieve the completion of a main street project.

This document was developed to serve as an informational guide and resource, outlining expectations and shared responsibilities for communities throughout the state. The contents reflect engineering, design, and planning practices and standards. The document also highlights recent updates to policies and manuals that improve multi-modal transportation and design flexibility. Weblinks to state and national resources are provided in the last section of the document.

**This document consistently refers to the relationship between MDOT and the "community." However, a trunkline main street project may be the result of a locally sponsored/locally led project on MDOT trunkline. The term "community" also applies to public entities, such as a transit agency. An example may be a transit improvement project being pursued by a transit agency that involves structural or operational changes within MDOT trunkline.*

Purpose:

This document is intended as a summary guide for community members and leaders, engineers, planners, design professionals, city staff, and others to understand the key expectations, requirements, and shared responsibilities for main street projects.

Contents:

- *Main Street as a State Trunkline*
- *MDOT Planning Process*
- *Collaboration and Partnerships*
- *Conclusion - Striking the Balance*
- *Resources*
- *References*

2 Main Street as a State Trunkline

Core Concepts and Principles

Transportation is a vital component of Michigan's economy, providing a network of options that all travelers rely upon every day, whether by auto, truck, bicycle, walking, or public transit. Main streets serve an important role in supporting the state's economy and transportation system. This section provides an overview of main streets, including primary characteristics, design, and function.

Main Streets Defined

Main streets are located throughout Michigan in all types of settings, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. They are non-freeway trunkline arterials, including business loops, business routes, M routes and US routes. Main streets provide access for a community, such as a downtown, major activity center, historic district, or a larger urbanized area. Main streets and the surrounding area and network of streets comprise an important public space for communities. The ideal main street is an attractive activity center for shopping, tourism, business offices, dining and entertainment, retail, and a venue for public events. Many communities in the state place a significant emphasis on their main streets as the center of commerce for the area or regional economy. They also support the preservation of a community's key historic assets. Communities of all sizes from small to mid-size to large are served by a main street corridor.

A trunkline "main street" refers to a non-freeway arterial road on an MDOT business loop, business route, M route, or US route.

Photo above: M-125 (Monroe Street), Monroe

Photo below: US-31 (Munson Avenue), Traverse City

It is important to acknowledge that the opportunities and challenges on a main street may vary significantly in large urban environments, such as Detroit or Grand Rapids, from those in smaller communities, like Marshall, Houghton, or Vassar. The roadway design or typical section may be similar or identical, but the greater context of the area may be far different. Therefore, MDOT recognizes that each and every main street project presents unique opportunities and challenges specific to a particular community and the local context.

Some of the locally initiated trunkline main street projects could involve one of more of the following:

- Aesthetic/streetscape improvements
- Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations
- Capacity improvement
- Corridor redevelopment
- Intermodal connections
- One-way to two-way conversions
- Operational improvements
- Road diets
- Traffic calming
- Transit/bus rapid transit (BRT)
- Water quality improvements

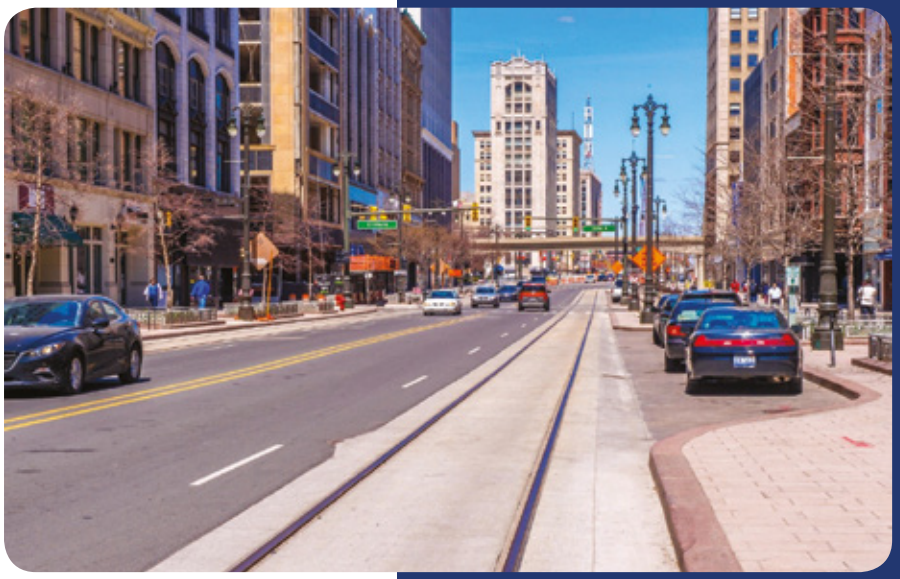


Photo above: US-41 (Shelden Avenue), Houghton
Photo below: M-1 (Woodward Avenue), Detroit

Key Characteristics of Main Streets

Trunkline main streets vary in size with a number of different cross sections. Main streets may be blocks to several miles in length, and may be connected by a local street network. Land uses in the community along a main street may also vary from compact, mixed-uses with buildings closely spaced together in downtown or traditional urban settings, to more dispersed single-purpose land uses in suburban or rural areas. The corridor may serve many parts of a community or region, including the commercial district, downtown, historic, and residential areas.

In general, main streets often support higher levels of vehicle traffic circulation, throughput, and pedestrian/bicycle activity, especially during peak travel periods of the day. Due to their central importance in the community, many main streets have pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit stops/stations, and streetscape design treatments. The following provides a generalized description of some of the major features and functions of typical main streets.

Accessibility (Access)

Most main streets in Michigan started as the focal point of the community. Main streets support access to important community assets, such as the city or town hall, post office, banks, restaurants, shops, entertainment, and other essential services.

Accessibility or access is the ability to reach goods, activities, services, and destinations. Access on main streets reflects both mobility (people's ability to travel) and local land use patterns (the location of activities). Accessibility tends to be optimized with multi-modal transportation and a more compact, mixed-use, walkable main street area, which reduces the amount of travel required to reach destinations. This perspective means greater consideration should be given to nonmotorized modes, transit and accessible land use patterns. Accessibility also reflects key considerations for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Universal Design.

Photo above: M-21 (Main Street), Lowell

Photo below: Downtown South Haven

Mobility

Main streets provide an important corridor for mobility, facilitating the efficient movement of people, goods and services. The users of main streets are primarily motorists, but a growing number of travelers in Michigan communities rely upon bicycle/pedestrian accommodations and transit. Freight providers (trucks) also depend upon main streets to effectively move products through the community and region.

Mobility is the ability and ease of traveling a roadway, or to move about in order to get to a destination from one point to another. Increased mobility supports the need for efficient and safe travel flow by automobiles, trucks, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, but it does not result in gaining better access to destinations. The premise of mobility is that an increase in travel time or speed is beneficial to the main street corridor, supporting the connection of the community and neighboring communities to each other. Increased mobility, however, must be properly balanced with providing sufficient and safe access to a main street corridor.

Connectivity

Main streets are part of a larger transportation network of a community. A well-connected community supports improved access to/from the main street corridor and meets the needs of all users by auto, truck, bus, foot, bicycle, or other assistive device. Main streets also support connections to other major areas of activity, such as employment centers, entertainment, museums, retail centers, and historic districts.

Photo above: Buffered bike lane, M-43 (West Saginaw Street), Lansing
Photo below: I-94 BR (Michigan Avenue), Marshall

Connectivity refers to the density of connections on the road network, and the directness of links. A well-connected transportation network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead-ends. As connectivity increases, travel distance decreases and route options increase, allowing more direct travel between destinations while creating a more accessible system. Communities with a grid network are often well-connected to the main street corridor and thus have decreased travel time, more efficient travel and less congestion.

Intermodal connections are also a function of a well-connected transportation network. Transit stops or stations along a main street support modes connectivity between bicycle/pedestrian and motorized transportation with major activity centers.

Flexible Roadway Design

The design of main streets reflects the overall character of the roadway and local context while balancing the roadway right of way to accommodate all users and abilities (especially travelers with disabilities). Main street design should also compliment adjacent land uses. Overall, main street design is meant to be safe, functional, and contribute to an attractive destination.

As a focal point of the community, competing demands may exist along main streets. Design features are carefully developed by MDOT based on the travel needs of the local community, key stakeholders, and partners. Main street design is also based on sound professional judgement and standards, funding availability, maintenance considerations, life-cycle costs, environmental stewardship, and multi-modal system efficiency.

Photo above: Bus stop, M-3 (Gratiot Avenue), Eastpointe

Photo below: M-150 (Main Street), Rochester

Often, there is more demand for roadway and roadside features than there is space. Therefore, appropriate roadway design is critical to support both access and mobility on trunkline main streets. MDOT has the responsibility to oversee consistent application of roadway design standards on all state trunkline to ensure safety and mobility for the traveling public, including opportunities for context sensitive design and flexibility.

MDOT designs various types of roadways to meet specific level of service (LOS) standards. Proposals that would result in unacceptable LOS need to be acknowledged and addressed by MDOT and the community. Main street corridors also are part of the larger transportation network of a community and region. Impacts on the operations of the greater system must be considered, in addition to the accommodation of all users – bicyclists, motorists, pedestrians, and transit riders.

The following list provides a summary of design concepts that could be considered by a community for incorporation along a trunkline main street. More detailed information, including links to MDOT roadway design standards and guidance documents, along with complete streets and context sensitive solutions, are provided in Section 6 - Resources. These resources provide communities with a greater understanding of possible design options for projects on trunkline.

- Bike signals
- Bike lanes
- Corner curb radii and curb extensions (bulb-outs)
- Crosswalks
- Driveways/access management

Photo above: Roundabout, US-41/M-28 interchange, Downtown Marquette

Photo below: On-street bike lanes, Grand Rapids

Summary of design concepts continued:

- Intersection treatments (bicycles, pedestrians, trucks)
- Lane width modification
- Medians and islands (center, refuge, corner)
- Mid-block crossings
- One-way to two-way conversions
- On-street bike lane/shared lane
- On-street bike parking
- Parking lane treatments
- Parklets
- Pavement markings
- Pedestrian signals/countdown timers/flashing beacons
- Protected/buffered bike lanes
- Road diets
- Roundabouts
- Shared-use lanes
- Sidewalks/adjacent nonmotorized paths
- Signs
- Speed limit modification
- Traffic calming
- Transit stops/stations
- Traffic signals
- Turn lanes
- Universal design (curb ramps, accessible pedestrian signals)

Photo above: Off-street parking, Iron River
Photo below: M-43 (Grand River Avenue), East Lansing

Streetscape/Aesthetics

Main streets reflect the character and identity of a community. Streetscapes help make communities more attractive, inviting, and livable. Well-designed streetscapes can also improve driver awareness of the surrounding corridor, including nonmotorized users. Some examples of the benefits of streetscapes along a main street include:

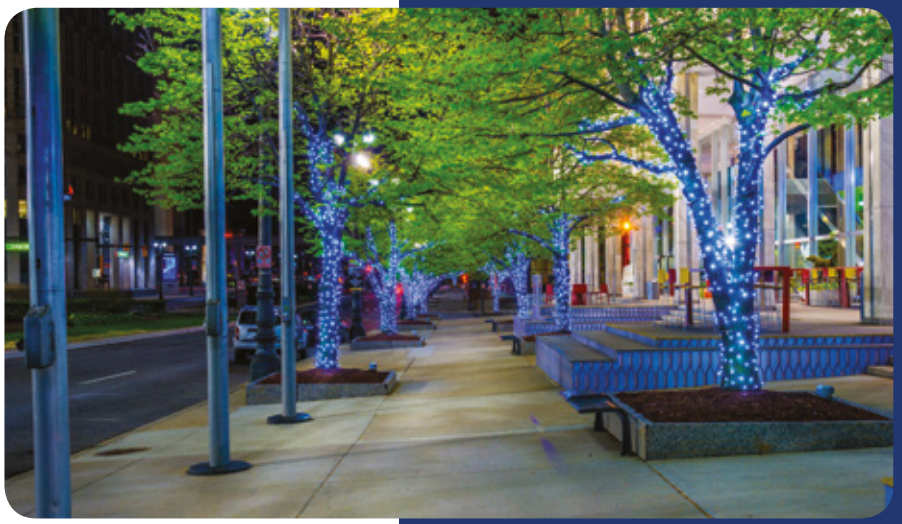
- Accentuate or compliment the local context and area's unique natural features.
- Visually unify the street and surrounding area.
- Improve the aesthetics and attractiveness of the street and community.
- Enhance the identity of the community.
- Provide improved safety and comfort of all users.
- Support environmental sustainability.

The use of various streetscape elements on main streets may vary based on a variety of factors, such as the local context, street condition, right of way availability, maintenance, and funding. The following list provides a summary of example streetscape treatments that could be considered for incorporation along trunkline main streets. More detailed information on MDOT guidance documents for streetscapes is provided in Section 6 - Resources.

- Banners and decorations
- Gateway signs/monuments
- Outdoor café/restaurant seating

Streetscape clock, Downtown Marshall

Wayfinding sign, Ann Arbor



M-1 (Woodward Avenue), Detroit

Various streetscape elements continued:

- Planting strips
- Sidewalk cafe's
- Sidewalk treatments (brick pavers, colored/textured design)
- Signage/wayfinding
- Street lighting (decorative or pedestrian scale)
- Street furnishings (furniture, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, flower baskets)
- Street trees
- Transportation artwork

Community Asset

The main street in many communities serves as the downtown, commercial business district, historic district, or major urban or rural activity center. The corridor and surrounding land uses along or near the main street often represent the location of the highest value of land per acre in the community or region.

There is also a growing movement within Michigan and the nation for supporting the revitalization and re-development of main street downtowns and special districts as key locations for historic preservation and place-making. The appeal of downtown main streets draws visitors, promotes commerce, and adds value to a community's character and image. The mix of land uses and historic and unique structures also reinforces the value of main street corridors to the community. Main streets can be a catalyst for local economic development.

Photo above: M-37, Buckley

Photo below: Historic building, US-12/I-69 BR, Coldwater

Environmental Stewardship

The main street corridor can be managed in a way that helps foster environmental stewardship in the community. Specifically, the planning for more multi-modal options and green space treatments on main streets are reflective of a growing trend in Michigan toward environmental sustainability practices.

In general, traditional main streets have been designed to support walkability. The addition of on-street bike facilities, bike parking, or transit-supportive amenities not only benefit drivers, but may also result in reduced driving, less congestion and lower emissions. Decorative street plantings can filter rainwater and help preserve water quality. Main streets are also often centrally located, and improved access to/from a main street may foster sustainability through more transportation connections. Likewise, main streets that are planned, engineered and designed to better accommodate high volumes of peak-period traffic and traffic flow contribute to a more efficient transportation system.

The use of specific construction principles with human-made and natural materials supports environmental stewardship practices on main streets. Some examples include:

- Bioretention plantings
- Bioswale
- LED lighting
- Pervious pavement and materials
- Reintroduction of native plant species
- Reused or recycled materials
- Street trees and landscaping
- Traffic signal coordination
- Warm mix asphalt
- Water quality islands

Bioretention island, Grand Rapids

LED lighting, US-23, Oscoda

Hot mix asphalt pavement

3 MDOT Planning Process

Introduction and Overview

The planning for main street projects on state trunkline requires a comprehensive understanding of MDOT's planning process. Without a realistic planning approach, along with environmental, operational and community impact analyses, main street projects may remain only conceptual in nature and not be officially endorsed or implemented. This is also the time that partnerships and responsibilities must be established to ensure the successful implementation of the community vision. Partnerships will foster greater community input, financial contributions and maintenance agreements. Section 4 provides further discussion on collaboration and partnerships.

This section describes how MDOT conducts the statewide-level planning process, which includes both long-range planning and project planning. Other required processes for developing transportation projects are also included. By understanding the planning process, communities and public agencies will be better positioned to collaborate with MDOT on main street projects.

MDOT Jurisdictional Responsibility

MDOT is responsible for all I, US, and M routes throughout Michigan, which includes 9,669 route miles of pavement (32,047 lane miles), more than 4,700 highway, railroad and pedestrian bridges, and all adjacent infrastructure (i.e., carpool parking lots, rest areas, noise barriers). MDOT also owns 665 miles of state rail, and four airports.

MDOT's seven region offices (Bay, Grand, Metro, North, Southwest, Superior, and University) each handle transportation-related construction, maintenance and programs within each region's geographic boundaries (***MDOT region office locations***). Region offices are managed by professional engineers who are trained to direct and oversee the transportation activities and programs of their respective regions. Transportation Service Centers (TSCs) are designed to respond to the transportation needs of local communities, which may include specific trunkline main streets projects. The TSCs are geographically located throughout the state. Typically, there are two or three TSCs in each region. The TSCs perform a number of functions, such as issuing permits, performing road and bridge construction and maintenance, responding to urgent transportation needs, and advising local residents about state and federal funding opportunities.

Long-Range Planning

MDOT is responsible for developing and maintaining a state long-range transportation plan (SLRP). The SLRP, also called the ***"2040 MI Transportation Plan" (2040 MITP),*** establishes the vision, goals, and objectives for Michigan's transportation system and sets the policy framework for transportation investment decisions. The 2040 MITP identifies current and emerging needs for all modes of transportation within the state and sets investment priorities for meeting those needs. The document focuses on the corridors of highest significance and decision principles guiding program development. The SLRP spans a 20-year period and is updated approximately every five years. MDOT has relied on representatives from communities across Michigan, along with diverse stakeholder groups, to provide public input as part of all plan updates. This may include key issues, such as multi-modal transportation, accessibility, transit, and proposals for projects on trunkline main streets. Unlike community and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) long-range transportation plans, the 2040 MITP does not identify specific projects.

The four primary goals of the 2040 MITP include:

1. System Improvement: Modernize and enhance the transportation system to improve mobility and accessibility.
2. Efficient and Effective Operations: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation system and transportation services, and expand MDOT's coordination and collaboration with partners.
3. Safety and Security: Continue to improve transportation safety and ensure the security of the transportation system.
4. Stewardship: Preserve transportation system investments, protect the environment, and utilize public resources in a responsible manner.

2040 MI Transportation Plan Vision Statement

"Michigan's 2040 transportation system is a safe, efficient, resilient and integrated multi-modal system and serves as the foundation of the state's economic vitality and quality of life and support for its residents. Transportation providers throughout the state will work together to address the system's diverse needs. The entire system will be maintained, preserved and protected as one of the state's most important physical assets."

State Transportation Improvement Program

Prepared by MDOT in partnership with local transportation agencies, the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a compilation of trunkline and local projects that meet the transportation goals and strategies for a four-year period. The transportation projects reported in the STIP were developed in coordination with MPOs representing urbanized areas, and with rural task forces (RTFs) and small urban areas. The planning process relies on the participation of state and local government officials, public and private transit providers, organizations representing the customers and providers of transportation in Michigan, and the general public. The STIP is not a single report; it is comprised of 14 separate documents: 13 individual MPO transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and one statewide non-MPO STIP document. MDOT has developed the ***FY 2017-2020 STIP*** with significant opportunity for public comment and involvement.

Five-Year Transportation Program and Call for Projects

The Five-Year Transportation Program is an essential part of the governor's plan for economic growth for Michigan, and includes planned investments for highways, bridges, transit, rail, aviation, marine, and nonmotorized transportation. Investments in all of these transportation modes provide jobs to Michigan's economy, accessibility to urban and rural development, improved safety and efficiency of the transportation network, and enhanced quality of life for Michigan citizens.

The highway portion is a rolling program; each year, the first year is implemented, a new fifth year is added, and program/project adjustments are made to the other years. The Five-Year Program creates a continuous, interactive dialogue with the users of the state transportation system to anchor MDOT's project development and delivery systems.

The annual Call for Projects (CFP) process provides an opportunity for stakeholders to have input at the earliest stages of ***project development***. MDOT's seven region offices, 22 TSCs and statewide planning staff work throughout the year to share project lists with local agencies, stakeholders and the public. Information is presented at rural elected officials' meetings, TSC transportation summits, RTF meetings, and meetings with legislators. In addition to formal presentations, MDOT staff members informally discuss individual projects within the plan with economic development and tourism agencies, rural planning agencies, MPOs, road commissions, local officials, tribal governments, businesses, local nonprofit groups, and the general public.

Public participation in the Five-Year Program feeds into the STIP. The current ***2017-2021 Five-Year Program*** serves as an opportunity for the public to be notified and provide local input to the upcoming STIP. The road and bridge projects proposed in the Five-Year Program are incorporated into MDOT's STIP.

MDOT survey crew

Project Planning/Development

MDOT takes a comprehensive approach in project development, referencing previous planning documents and studies, key strategies and priorities, and ***asset management*** principles. During project development, potential work is carefully evaluated by MDOT in partnership with communities and local transportation agencies. All projects will have stakeholder engagement, but the level of engagement will vary from project to project. The following link provides a general overview of MDOT's project development process: "***How a Road is Built.***" The primary phases include: ***1. Planning; 2. Design; and 3. Construction.***

MDOT solicits dialogue with local governments, road commissions, industry groups, land-use advocates, and state agencies early in project planning. A cooperative spirit and an awareness of community interests help achieve the ultimate goal: projects that fit their surroundings while effectively meeting transportation needs. Key project planning initiatives that MDOT has undertaken over the last several years include:

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

MDOT's CSS policy was adopted by the State Transportation Commission (STC) in 2005. Since then, MDOT has provided or sponsored training in the CSS approach to project development for more than 1,000 staff, consultants, and local government officials. In 2011, MDOT was awarded national recognition by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for its CSS program. CSS is an integral part of MDOT's Highway Call for Projects process. In the Call for Projects process, MDOT continues to engage stakeholders on multi-modal needs and accommodations in their projects, utilizing the CSS project development process and maintaining compliance with the principles and requirements under the STC policy on Complete Streets.

Complete Streets Policy

The STC approved a Complete Streets Policy on July 26, 2012. The policy is designed to improve mobility and access for all legal users of roadways under MDOT's jurisdiction, and applies to projects undertaken or permitted in MDOT right of way. Michigan currently has more than 100 local complete streets policies.

Multi-Modal Development and Delivery (M2D2)

M2D2 is a comprehensive department effort to examine planning, design, construction, maintenance, and the operational needs of all potential modes of travel using MDOT right of way. Based on that analysis, MDOT will modify its practices, procedures, standards and guidance in 2016-2017 to help ensure that all modes are considered as projects are developed, and that they are safely served, where appropriate, based on the context and roadway function.

Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Committees

Regional committees were formed in 2013 by MDOT leadership to help foster stakeholder engagement and encourage discussions between state and local road agencies, roadway users, and groups affiliated with walking and bicycling.

Planning and Environmental Linkages

MDOT participates in the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) decision-making approach. PEL integrates traditional transportation planning with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision-making process. This approach helps MDOT, communities, and partner agencies consider environmental issues and challenges early in the planning process. MDOT has successfully used PEL studies to refine transportation problem statements, develop alternative solutions, and identify recommended solutions to move forward into further development. A PEL also provides MDOT with a way to engage communities in problem-solving so they can have a stake in advancing the short and long-term solutions that result from a study. Linking planning and NEPA can eliminate potential duplication of planning and NEPA processes, and overall cost reduction.

National Environmental Policy Act Planning

The NEPA Act of 1969 places a significant emphasis on public involvement and transparent decision-making, making it compatible with CSS principles. MDOT's NEPA program relies heavily on stakeholder and partner engagement to identify environmental concerns, determine their intensity, and plan for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating them. Before the NEPA process takes place, MDOT is involved in pre-NEPA analysis and planning to identify the purpose and need of the project, along with potential existing and projected impacts on the environment. During pre-NEPA, full funding for all phases of a project must be identified (i.e., preliminary engineering (PE), final design, right of way, utility relocation, construction, and/or construction phases).

Context sensitive designed bridge, US-31 BL, Whitehall

NEPA requires varying amounts of stakeholder engagement depending on the classification level and the nature of the affected resources. There are three levels of NEPA classification and documentation:

- Categorical Exclusion (CE) – Lowest level of impact (about 90 percent of MDOT projects).
- Environmental Assessment (EA) – Significance of impact is unknown, so further investigation is needed (about 5 percent of MDOT projects).
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Highest level of environmental harm requiring planning to minimize and mitigate for adverse effects (about 5 percent of MDOT projects).

MDOT stresses early and continuous public involvement throughout its planning processes. From goal-setting to project selection to environmental clearance, the public plays an important role in shaping Michigan's transportation system.

Public Involvement in Transportation Decisions

Public involvement, essential for effective project planning, is required by NEPA and under Title 23; Section 450.212, Code of Federal Regulations for Statewide Transportation Planning. MDOT employs the very latest in technology to reach out and engage the public, including the Internet, social media, and state-of-the-art audience participation tools. While the methods for carrying out public involvement are left to the discretion of each state, the process must provide:

- Early and continuous opportunities for involvement.
- Timely information about transportation issues, processes, and procedures.
- Reasonable access to technical and policy information.
- Use of visualization techniques to communicate issues and concepts.
- Adequate notice of involvement opportunities at key decision points.
- Methods for considering and responding to public input.
- A course of action for considering and seeking out the needs of traditionally underserved groups.
- Periodic review and evaluation of the public involvement process.

MDOT stresses early and continuous public involvement throughout its planning processes. From goal-setting to project selection to environmental clearance, the public plays an important role in shaping Michigan's transportation system. MDOT strives to include diverse public participation by following various federal statutes that help guide its participation activities. Some of these include providing accommodations for persons with disabilities, environmental justice, and translation for persons with limited English proficiency, consulting with tribal governments, and anti-discrimination practices under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ***(MDOT Public Involvement).***

MDOT Guidance Documents and Manuals

MDOT maintains a comprehensive set of formalized and well-documented procedures, practices, standards, guidance documents, and manuals. Based on the efforts undertaken in support of the M2D2 initiative, modifications are being made to help ensure that all users of the transportation system are considered for complete modal integration. The context and function of the roadway, such as a main street, will help shape a more flexible approach to design.

Additionally, at the federal level of government, FHWA issued finalized ***new roadway design standards in May 2016*** that significantly streamline criteria that local communities and states adhered to in the past for roadways on the national highway system ***(NHS)***. Instead of the 13 controlling design criteria applied previously to all NHS roads, FHWA will now just apply 10 criteria to the design of high-speed roads like interstates. For low-speed roads, such as most main street urban roads or rural roads with posted speed limits under 50 miles per hour, only two of the original 13 criteria will remain in effect: Design Speed and Structural Capacity. This change provides for greater flexibility in roadway design and allows for modifying roadways for the context of downtowns, activity centers, and walkable communities.

Traffic Regulations and Guidelines

The Michigan State Police, with assistance from MDOT, sets traffic regulations on state trunklines for speed, parking, and stop control. The basis for these regulations are established by state law in the Michigan Vehicle Code. MDOT Traffic and Safety staff have developed traffic regulations and guidelines to provide communities with proper guidance and a full understanding of the legal basis required for any proposed modifications to a trunkline main street. Further information is provided in the guidance document, ***MDOT Traffic Regulations Guidelines***.

HAWK signal, I-94 BR (Washtenaw Avenue), Ann Arbor

4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Keys to Success

The successful planning and implementation of trunkline main street projects requires collaboration between the community, key partners, stakeholders, and MDOT.

The successful planning and implementation of trunkline main street projects requires collaboration between the community, key partners and stakeholders, and MDOT. Collaboration may be required not only during the pre-planning, planning and design phases, but also during construction, operations, and long-term maintenance. MDOT's goal is to serve as a partner. As the steward with jurisdictional responsibility, MDOT is also the agency that typically oversees all project activities from day one to completion. This section provides a discussion of collaboration and partnership-building to enable a general understanding of the expectations and shared responsibilities for all parties involved in a main street project.

Partners and Stakeholders

Partners and stakeholders are the key individuals and groups most directly impacted by the project. They may be local businesses, land owners, community advocates and leaders, citizens, and investors. They may have a significant personal interest in the main street project, or even a financial stake. Aside from the jurisdictional leadership and staff of the community, partners and stakeholders will likely have the most interest in understanding the details of the project and in sharing their opinions, concerns, and support. Therefore, the community should engage in open and honest conversation with all partners and stakeholders, including key MDOT personnel, to ensure opinions and perspectives are shared with the goal of building a consensus. The community and its partners are expected to lead the stakeholder and public engagement process.

MDOT's ***CSS Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement*** provides a comprehensive approach for how the department works with the community and its key partners and stakeholders in the planning and design of transportation projects. This document should be referenced by the community as an important resource for understanding how to be effectively engaged with MDOT in project development.

M-115 (Huron Avenue), Vassar

Community Visioning

Every project that is proposed by a community requires close coordination with MDOT and its respective region and TSC offices. Communities interested in developing a project or initiating a study are encouraged first and foremost to develop a practical vision for the type(s) of improvements or modifications they are seeking along the trunkline. A vision should be developed with a full understanding of the possibilities as well as the limitations along the corridor, such as funding, right of way, operations, and long-term maintenance. It may be based on previous planning by the community in their respective comprehensive plan.

When beginning a dialogue with MDOT, a vision is the most significant first step a community should take to begin the planning process. Without a vision, and in particular a realistic long-term outlook, the process for reaching full implementation is much more difficult. The vision should also be reflective of a collaborative approach, involving MDOT and all key partners and stakeholders within the community. Regardless of size and scope, all interested parties should be included in a concerted effort to define the vision for a proposed main street project.

There are many ways to approach the development of a main street project vision. Three components to consider include:

- Visual – A visual depiction that effectively describes and depicts the project vision, such as an image, diagram, model, graphic, or animation.
- Written – The communication of the vision in writing describes the project and helps clarify the desired outcomes.
- Verbal – To ensure consistent communication of the vision within the community, and to key partners and stakeholders, the development of concise talking points or a summary sheet is beneficial to support project advancement.

Streetscape and Reconstruction, US-41 (Quincy Street), Hancock

The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the shared expectations and responsibilities for a main street project.

Memorandum of Understanding

The process of arriving at an agreed-upon vision, plan, and design for implementing a trunkline main street project requires the full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the shared expectations and responsibilities for a project. Specifically, an MOU provides a formal agreement between two or more parties (i.e., MDOT and the community), and may also establish a formal partnership. An MOU is not legally binding, but it does outline the shared or common course of action with the intention of establishing a working relationship. It should state the rights, duties, decisions, and commitments made between MDOT and one or more communities. The MOU should lay out all of the mutually accepted expectations, individual and shared responsibilities, and feature a timeline. Additionally, as part of the MOU, a resolution of support will be required from the community and other jurisdictions or public agencies along the main street corridor. The resolution of support will ensure full consensus is achieved regarding the proposed improvements or modifications to the trunkline main street.

Traffic Impact Evaluation

Main street trunklines serve the accessibility and mobility needs of all users. MDOT's primary responsibility is to ensure efficient and safe traffic flow on state trunklines. Therefore, traffic impacts on the trunkline as a result of any proposed modification will need to be carefully evaluated. The initiation and funding of the appropriate traffic analysis to support the vision or proposal are typically the responsibility of the local requesting entity. The analysis will determine the impacts of the proposed project, and will be coordinated with the review and formal approval by MDOT.

Permitting

The temporary use of MDOT right of way along a trunkline main street may be granted for facilities such as sidewalk cafes or parklets, and for road temporary closures for festivals and events. A permit may be issued to a municipality or tribal nation by MDOT pending submittal, review and approval of a permit application. Permit resource links are provided in Section 6 – Resources.

Funding and Project Implementation

In 2015, the Michigan State Legislature passed a state transportation revenue package that, over time, will generate additional transportation funding for the state of Michigan. Approximately 40 percent of the new funding is dedicated to MDOT, with counties and cities getting the other 60 percent.

Also in 2015, Congress passed a new federal authorization bill called the Fixing America Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), which will provide certainty regarding federal funding levels for a number of years and a continuation of the policy direction of its predecessor bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The policy implications for states include performance measures and system condition requirements for roads and bridges on the NHS and federal-aid system. These requirements will have a significant impact on how MDOT stratifies its system condition goals and investments, with the interstate and freeway system utilizing the majority of MDOT funding to maintain appropriate pavement and bridge condition. Consequently, matching expectations to limited funding will be a challenge for MDOT and all local units of government.

Based on this new reality, the finance of main street projects will require an approach based on mutual cooperation with the expectation that all parties have a financial stake and responsibility. Due to funding limitations, MDOT will continue to be limited in the design features or other accommodations that may be desired by a community for a main street corridor.

For example, when a main street project becomes an MDOT region priority for reconstruction and rehabilitation (R&R) improvement, there is typically limited funding to implement the full desires of the community. Therefore, the community will need to either apply for separate funding (i.e., TIGER grants, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants) or contribute other local sources of funding to the project. MDOT is more than willing to work with communities on achieving their vision, but mutual funding partnerships will be pivotal to achieve the desired outcomes. New and innovative funding sources may also need to be pursued, as outlined in the following discussion of local and state funding options.

Pedestrian crossing sign, US-131 BR, Three Rivers

Local Funding Options

Communities, or local units of government in general, have more funding mechanisms and flexibility than MDOT, and are encouraged to explore various revenue sources when pursuing a main street project. A significant local funding contribution will typically be required for post-study project phases, including early preliminary engineering (EPE), preliminary engineering (PE), right of way, and construction. A sample list of funding sources available to communities includes:

- Property Millage **–** Counties, cities, and townships in Michigan are enabled to establish millages for funding transportation. A very large number of cities and townships have passed millages to pay for road, bridge and transit improvements.
- Special Assessment – A method used by cities, townships, and counties to pay for transportation infrastructure improvements that benefit a defined area (i.e., downtown development area, the entire township, neighborhood, or special district). Improvements can range from roads to sidewalks to parking facilities, street lights, water and sewer, etc.
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) – DDAs can use a variety of funding methods for local transportation – i.e., TIF districts, special assessment, revenue bonds, millages, or private contributions.
- TIFA (Tax Increment Financing Authority) – Michigan cities have this option at their disposal to use the property tax revenue from increases in taxable value for transportation improvements, among many others (TIF capture, value capture).
- Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) – like a DDA, a CIA can be formed along a corridor and incorporate TIF, special assessments, or bonding. Cities, villages, and townships are all eligible. The focus is on economic development and to revitalize corridors and surrounding communities.
- Private Investment Infrastructure Funding Act (2010) – The act permits more involvement in public projects, helping municipalities to find funding sources. Cities, villages and townships are able to form partnerships with other public or private entities to develop projects involving road and transit improvements.

- Private Contributions – Communities may also pursue private investment to support or supplement the completion of main street projects. Additionally, community fundraising such as crowdfunding is another option. The Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) Patronicity Program ***(http://www.michiganbusiness.org/community/public-spaces-community-places/#crowdfundmi)*** enables communities to raise funding and receive grant matches for projects that support "public spaces" and "community places."

State Funding Options

Communities have a variety of options to also pursue state and federal competitive grants for main street projects. The following list is not exhaustive and only includes some of the most common state funding opportunities. Section 6 - Resources provides a more complete listing of links to state funding sources.

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) - TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects like bike paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.
- Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) – TEDF provides funding for transportation improvements that enhance the state's ability to compete in a global economy, promote economic growth and improve the quality of life in the state of Michigan. However, Category A TEDF funding has specific requirements tied to target industries and job creation or revitalization.
- Small Urban – The Small Urban Program provides federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding to areas with a population of 5,000 to 49,999. Road and transit capital projects are eligible for STP funds.
- The Rural Task Force Program – Provides federal dollars to rural counties with a population under 400,000 (78 out of 83 counties). These dollars must be spent in their geographic areas and both road and transit capital projects are eligible.
- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) - The Michigan SIB loan program is available to any Act 51 public entity (county road commissions, cities, villages, or MDOT) for eligible transportation projects. The SIB complements traditional funding techniques and serves as a tool to meet urgent project financing demands.

Jurisdictional Transfers of Road Mileage: Option for Local Ownership

In Michigan, per ***Public Act 296***, the transfer of road ownership could be considered between MDOT, counties, and cities or villages if the agencies losing or gaining jurisdiction formally agree to the transfer. Communities may determine that accepting ownership of a portion of state trunkline is in their best interest for meeting their long-term vision for a main street corridor. A jurisdictional transfer would mean that the community takes over ownership with full responsibilities for administration, planning and design, and all ongoing maintenance of the right of way, which may include sidewalks, the roadway, curb and gutter, lighting, etc.

Maintenance Agreement

The development of a maintenance agreement between MDOT and the community may be necessary to ensure proper long-term maintenance of a main street project. MDOT may seek a formal maintenance agreement with the local community to outline clear expectations, along with a commitment to all required responsibilities. In many instances, proposed projects may lead to construction elements and maintenance requirements that exceed MDOT's ability to feasibly maintain over time. Early discussions should take place during the planning and visioning stages of the project. This process may also involve a preliminary assessment of the potential maintenance needs of proposed features along the main street, such as material choices. Areas located outside of the roadway, but within the right of way, may also need to be considered, including transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Photo above: Pedestrian refuge, M-43 (Grand River Avenue), East Lansing

Photo below: US-131, Cadillac

5 Conclusion

Striking the Balance

Transportation projects on main streets are developed and implemented by a multidisciplinary team of engineers, planners, environmental scientists, landscape architects, and financial experts. A diverse professional team is essential to identify and address the potential for a wide array of modifications for a main street project. These modifications may address safety, traffic flow and system efficiency, multi-modal access, environmental stewardship, construction, and life-cycle costs.

MDOT recognizes the importance of a transportation system that meets the needs of all users in the community. The implementation of projects on main streets should be constructed with an approach that emphasizes striking a balance between feasibility, affordability, the vision of the community, accessibility and mobility for all users, and fostering environmental stewardship. Other key considerations could include minimum road width, roadway safety, capacity, and crash history.

There may also be many competing priorities along a main street. Therefore, this guidance document serves as a resource to help foster taking a balanced and realistic approach to trunkline main street projects. Communities may also use this document to begin a dialogue with MDOT, and help develop a vision for their respective trunkline main street corridor.

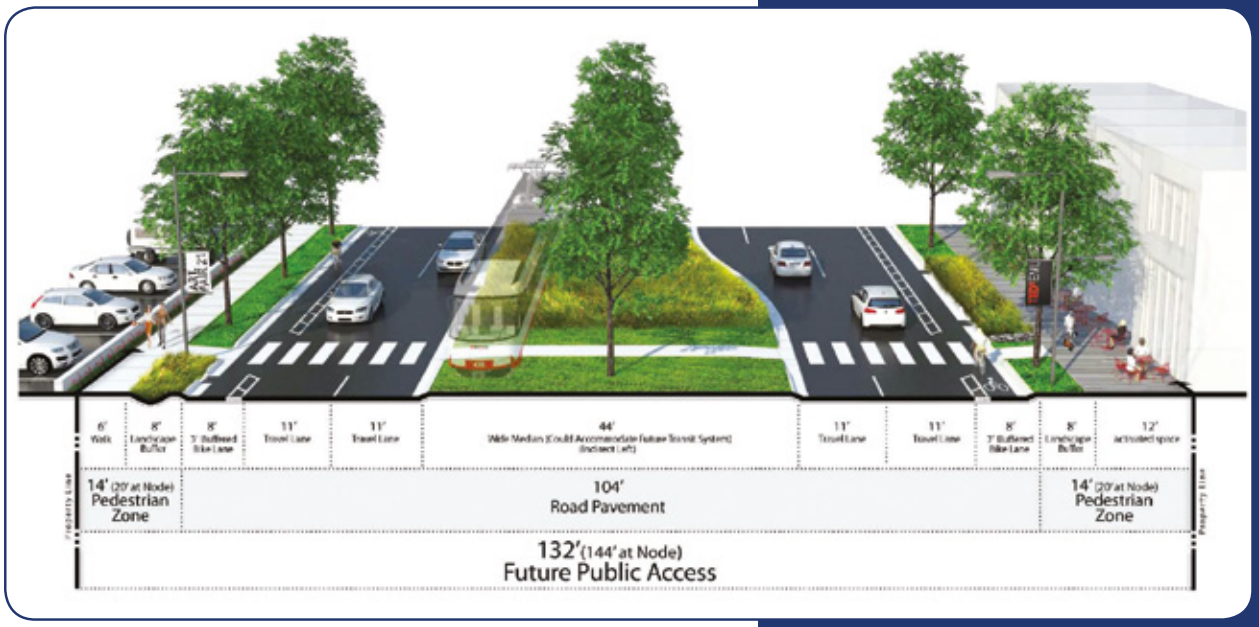


Photo above: Reimagine Washtenaw - M-17 (Washtenaw Avenue) in Washtenaw County

6 Resources

Weblinks to state and national resources in support of trunkline main street projects.

Michigan Department of Transportation Website
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot

About MDOT
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9623---,00.html

MDOT Regions
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9623-36042--,00.html

MDOT Planning Resources

Asset Management
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_15757---,00.html

Bicycle and Pedestrian Terminology
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_BicycleandPedestrianTerminologyBooklet_445994_7.pdf

Complete Streets
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9623_31969_57564---,00.html

Context Sensitive Solutions
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_41446---,00.html

Introduction to Transit Modes in Michigan
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_IntroToTransitModesInMich_450707_7.pdf

Five-Year Transportation Program
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_14807_14810_59639---,00.html

How a Road is Built
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9615-129011--,00.html

Public Participation
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_14807-142404--,00.html

State Long-Range Transportation Plan
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/1,1607,7-151-9621_14807_14809---,00.html

State Transportation Improvement Program
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_14807_14808---,00.html

MDOT Services, Manuals and Guides

MDOT Doing Business Contacts
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9625---,00.html

Design Services
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9625_21540_36037---,00.html

Development Services (real estate, permits, utility coordination, agreements, local agency programs)
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9623_26662_26679---,00.html

Local Agency Program
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9625_25885---,00.html

MDOT Administrative Rules regulating Driveways, Banners and Parades
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/Admin_Rules_booklet_186108_7.pdf

MDOT Bridge Design Manual
http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/design/englishbridgemanual/

MDOT Manuals and Guides Page
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9622_11044_11367---,00.html

MDOT Permits Resources
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9625_26039---,00.html

MDOT Right of Way Construction Permits
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9623_26662_26679_27267_48606-182161--,00.html

MDOT Road Design Manual
http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/design/englishroadmanual/

MDOT Scoping Manual
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9622_11044_11367-243045--,00.html

Guidance for Installation of Pedestrian Crosswalks on Michigan State Trunkline Highways
http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/tands/Details_Web/mdot_guidance_for_installation_of_pedestrian_crosswalks_on_michigan_state_trunkline_highways.pdf

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices – Michigan
http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/tands/Details_Web/mmutcdcompleteinteractive.pdf

MDOT Grants and Funding

MDOT Grant Programs
http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_17216---,00.html

Additional State Resources

MDOT Traffic Regulations and Guidelines
http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/tands/Details_Web/mdot_traffic_regulations_guidelines.pdf

Public Act 296 of 1969 – Transfer of Jurisdiction over Highways
https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(w1aae4hrrh4iiyeeaslxlzfq))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-Act-296-of-1969

National Resources and Information

AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 4th Edition
https://bookstore.transportation.org/item_details.aspx?ID=1943

Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/multimodal_networks/part00.cfm

American Public Transportation Association Resources
http://www.apta.com/resources/Pages/Default.aspx

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Flexibility Resources – FHWA
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design_flexibility.cfm

Context Sensitive Solutions Guidance
http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Context Sensitive Solutions Primer
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/context/css_primer/

FHWA Accessibility Resource Center
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/accessibility/

FHWA Bicycle Facilities and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/mutcd/

FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding, Design, and Environmental Review: Addressing Common Misconceptions
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/misconceptions.cfm

FHWA Environmental Review Toolkit Website
https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/index.asp

FHWA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making (2015 Edition)
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/publications/techniques/chapter00.cfm

FHWA Road Diet Informational Guide
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/info_guide/rdig.pdf

FHWA Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/separated_bikelane_pdg/page00.cfm

FTA Transit Planning Resources and Links
https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/transportation-planning

FTA Transit Oriented Development Resources and Links
https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/funding-finance-resources/transit-oriented-development/tod-research-publications

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices – National
http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_2009r1r2.htm

National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
http://nacto.org

- **Urban Bikeway Design Guide**
  http://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/
- **Transit Street Design Guide**
  http://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/
- **Urban Street Design Guide**
  http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/

NHS Design Criteria Revision Controlling criteria for design and documentation for design exceptions on National Highway System (NHS), 2016
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/standards/160505.cfm

TRB Navigating Multi-Agency NEPA Processes to Advance Multimodal Transportation Projects
http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/174665.aspx

USDOT Livability Initiative Website
https://www.transportation.gov/livability

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