

# I-375 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

View the Preferred Alternative design and the Environmental Assessment (EA) document at [www.Michigan.gov/I375Study](http://www.Michigan.gov/I375Study). 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.

### What is an EA and why is it needed?

The National Environmental Policy Act (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.

### Will there be increased air pollution?

There are no anticipated impacts to air quality. The air quality analysis found that the project is not one of air quality concern and that it meets state and federal regulations.

### 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.

### When will work begin?

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

### 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.

### **What are the non-motorized improvements?**

The Preferred Alternative would have improved non-motorized facilities, including a two-way cycle track connecting the Riverfront to the Montcalm Street extension. The Montcalm Street extension includes a two-way cycle track connection from Brush Street to the Dequindre Cut. There would be pedestrian count-down signals located at each intersection. No Turn On Red would be implemented for westbound approaches at the boulevard to improve the safety for the two-way cycle track along the east side of the boulevard. The existing Lafayette Avenue bike lanes would be connected across the boulevard.

### **What will happen with the potential excess property?**

The Preferred Alternative's 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, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval will be required for any potential release of property which was originally secured for I-375. Due to the significant change in highway orientation and operation proposed by this Project, a post-construction engineering and operations review will be performed to determine next steps. The additional acreage may be available for development. MDOT would maintain it as green space until future land use has been determined.

### **If land east of the boulevard will be used for future development, why not have parking lanes on that side?**

The project does not include parking lanes on the east side of the boulevard to ensure that adequate width of the potential excess property remains for future development. The land use will be further studied during the project design and will consider parking needs, including potential for on-street parking.

### **What is the reason for the number of travel lanes?**

The number of lanes are needed to support traffic volumes anticipated along the boulevard. A city street-level boulevard would begin south of the I-75/I-375 Interchange and continue to the Detroit River. North of Jefferson Avenue, there would be three lanes in each direction along the boulevard. Three lanes are needed based on future year 2040 traffic volumes and included a 20% to 40% diversion to other routes in the study area. South of Jefferson Avenue, there would be two lanes in each direction. The median would separate the directions and there would be direct left-turn allowed at most signalized intersections. A separated cycle track would be located along the east side of the boulevard and extend from Atwater Street to the Montcalm Avenue extension.

### **Will there be changes to available parking?**

Due to adjustments for safety and operations, the Preferred Alternative impacts on-street parking as well as private parking lots within the Project area, including the Eastern Market area. The Preferred Alternative will create new access between the Event Area (stadiums and theater district) and Eastern Market, opening up additional parking opportunities. The new connection at Montcalm Street includes sidewalks and a cycle track that would allow visitors to park and then use the non-motorized facilities to reach their destination.

### **What are next steps for the project?**

If the FHWA determines that the proposed action does not result in significant impacts, then FHWA will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). MDOT will then begin the design of the project and then ultimately move into construction.

**How is MDOT planning on keeping vehicle speeds at posted limits?**

The posted speed limit for the boulevard will be 35 miles per hour. Best Management Practices (BPMs) will be used in the high speed to low speed transition area to improve safety. A series of signals to slow down prior to the boulevard will help reduce speeds. Other potential measures also include creating a gateway appearance prior to the transition and utilizing traffic calming measures to increase driver awareness of the speed change.

**Will noise increase?**

Changes in the noise levels under the Preferred Alternative would range from -6.2 to 5.3 decibels compared to existing conditions. Therefore, none of the predicted future noise levels would substantially exceed existing noise levels. Along I-375, noise levels generally slightly increase on the west side and slightly decrease on the east side. Two noise barriers were evaluated along the I-75 freeway, but were either not acoustically feasible (did not achieve a significant enough noise reduction) or reasonable (cost exceeds allowable cost per benefited receptor). Noise may increase during construction. Construction noise will be minimized by measures such as requiring that construction equipment have mufflers, that portable compressors meet federal noise level standards for that equipment, and that all portable equipment be placed away from or shielded from sensitive noise receptors if at all possible. All local noise ordinances will be adhered to.

**What are the pros and cons of East Grand Boulevard to Belle Isle Park being converted from traffic under Jefferson Avenue to traffic at grade level?**

This intersection is outside of the project study area and was not studied as a part of this project.

**Will there be dedicated bus lanes, a streetcar extension, or sheltered bus stops located on the proposed boulevard?**

This project does not include dedicated bus lanes, extensions of the streetcar, or changes to bus shelters. The Preferred Alternative includes new at-grade local street crossings that will improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit services, wider sidewalks and cycle track facilities, which improve access for SMART and DDOT riders. In addition, the Preferred Alternative provides the infrastructure to support expanded transit service to the riverfront, enhanced routing along East Jefferson Avenue, improved bus stop placement, and new routes with more direct east-west connections and access to the Central Business District. The boulevard cross section does not preclude re-dedicating lanes for transit in the future which could be identified in future studies.

**Why can't Chrysler Drive be removed?**

Chrysler Drive will provide driveway access to the adjacent parcels. A portion of the northbound service drive alignment from Gratiot Avenue south to Clinton is kept in the Preferred Alternative. This would serve two-way traffic. Replacing this segment of Chrysler Drive allows for the removal of potential driveway connections to the boulevard. Removing driveway connections to the boulevard will help improve traffic flow and safety on the boulevard.

**How will the Preferred Alternative impact the residents using Chrysler Service Drive, like the driveway for Jean Rivard at Larned?**

The Jean Rivard Apartments access along the service drives will be permanently removed. The project will incorporate appropriate access along Larned Avenue and Lafayette Avenue that provides similar, but slightly more indirect access.

### What is MDOT's plan to deal with special event traffic?

Additional analysis will be performed during design to refine intersection operations related to event traffic. This includes the project limits along the new boulevard from Clinton Street north to I-75 and the Gratiot Avenue/Madison Avenue/St Antoine intersection to the west. Meetings will be held with the Detroit Police Department and event venues to develop a Special Event Traffic Management Plan for events large and small. With the Preferred Alternative, special event traffic would have new ways to enter and exit the area, including the southbound I-75 service drive exit, Brush on-ramp, gated access to the northbound boulevard for large event egress at the Ford Field garage, and the Montcalm extension. Special event traffic will be considered during construction and development of the traffic management plan.

### Will there be roundabouts installed to improve traffic flow and prioritize non-motorized users?

Different intersection types were considered early on in the planning phase. The challenge with roundabouts is the amount of space that they use. The project uses traditional intersections to work with the existing city grid as much as possible by providing more connections for the traffic to flow in and out of the central business district and the residential areas to the east. Roundabouts are also more challenging for non-motorized users in urban environments. Vehicles in roundabouts never come to a complete stop and pedestrians must rely on timing gaps between traffic to cross.

### How will drivers access I-75 from Madison Avenue going east?

Eastbound Madison vehicles would take Brush north to the new Brush on-ramp at the service drive to access northbound I-75. To access I-75 using the new boulevard, vehicles would take Brush or Beaubien south to Clinton. Vehicles would turn left onto Clinton, then turn left onto the new boulevard to access northbound and southbound I-75. Additional event traffic analysis and intersection operations refinement will occur during design to optimize traffic movements in the Events area and Theatre District. This includes optimizing intersection operations to provide a stronger connection between Madison Avenue and the new boulevard.

### How will the project memorialize Black Bottom and Paradise Valley?

During the design phase, the project team will explore opportunities and engage with stakeholders and the public on how to recognize the historical significance and contributions of the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley communities which were displaced in conjunction with the original I-375 construction.

### Can comments still be submitted?

All comments received by February 19, 2021 will be included in the official record.

#### Submit a comment via e-mail:

[MDOT-I-375Corridor@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDOT-I-375Corridor@Michigan.gov)

#### Submit a comment via U.S. mail:

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



## CONTACT US

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