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1 Court Reporter Public Hearing Report

IN THE MATTER OF: I-375 IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT, PUBLIC HEARING

January 28, 2021

Prepared by

NetworkReporting
— STATEWIDE COURT REPORTERS —

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

In the Matter of:
I-375 Improvement Project

/

PUBLIC HEARING

200 Walker Street, Detroit, Michigan
Thursday, January 28, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

APPEARANCES: MONICA MONSMA
 Hearing Officer

 JONATHAN LOREE
 Senior Project Manager

RECORDED BY: Rachel Sunde, CER 6538
 Certified Electronic Recorder
 Network Reporting Corporation
 Firm Registration Number 8151
 1-800-632-2720

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1 Detroit, Michigan

2 Thursday, January 28, 2021 - 4:18 p.m.

3 MR. LOREE: I just want to start by saying thank
4 you. I know it's a small crowd, but those that made it out
5 certainly we are here in some different times. And I'm glad
6 that we're still able to do some in-person interaction on
7 the project. It's a study that we've been working on for a
8 number of years now, and that we're excited -- we're really
9 excited to present the project, the status of where it is
10 today, and our environmental assessment, which are our
11 findings of the potential project or the project impacts.

12 So I guess, without further ado, we do have a
13 presentation that talks about the project and will go into
14 some of those impacts. And then we'll have an opportunity
15 to probably do some questions, it's a small group. And then
16 you can comment on the record, the public record on the
17 project, and those will be recorded, and categorized, and
18 responded to within the FONSI. Which is the final step of
19 our process, is what's called a finding of no significant
20 impact on the environmental assessment where we would
21 address those comments within the FONSI. And I know Monica
22 Monsma, our public hearing specialist, will go over that a
23 little bit too, after the presentation. So I think we'll go
24 ahead and start the presentation.

25 (Video presentation played)

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1 MS. MONSMA: Hello, good afternoon. I'd like to
2 bring the public comment portion of this hearing for the
3 I-375 environmental assessment in Wayne County, Detroit,
4 Michigan, to order. This hearing is being conducted in
5 accordance with Federal Highway Administration and MDOT
6 public hearing procedures. I am Monica Monsma, the public
7 hearings officer and I will be your moderator tonight.

8 Before we begin, I'd like to express my
9 appreciation to our host for this venue, and their help with
10 providing a location and technical support for this public
11 meeting. Also, to Michigan legislators, the City of
12 Detroit, and area elected officials.

13 This hearing provides an opportunity for the
14 public to comment for the record on the environmental
15 assessment. MDOT announced this hearing through a news
16 release issued to area news media. It placed the
17 announcement on our website at Michigan.gov/I375study, a
18 legal notice also appeared in The Lansing State Journal, The
19 Detroit Chronicle, The Detroit News, and The Detroit Free
20 Press.

21 To enable MDOT to consider your comments,
22 everything that is said today will be recorded and
23 transcribed into a hearing transcript. Doing the recording
24 today is Rachel Sunde, a certified court reporter.

25 The hearing is being conducted using a combination

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1 of open forum and open mike styles. The first part of the
2 hearing provided you with an opportunity to view displays
3 and speak one-on-one with project team members. This formal
4 portion of today's hearing that we will begin shortly is not
5 a Q&A. We invite you to the microphone to make public
6 comments. All audience members who wish to speak are asked
7 to complete a speaker registration slip. The speaker slips
8 are available from staff, just raise your hand and you will
9 be handed one. I will call on the speakers in the order in
10 which I receive the slips. Please print your name on the
11 slip and hand it to one of the facilitators and you will be
12 called upon to speak shortly. Again, simply raise your hand
13 now and you will be handed a speaker registration slip.
14 Print your name on the slip, hand it to one of the
15 facilitators, and you will be called on.

16 We appreciate your assistance. It is important
17 that we hear from all who wish to comment whether publicly
18 or privately. If you prefer to make your statement in
19 private, the court reporter will be available to take
20 comments following the hearing. Besides verbal comments,
21 you are welcome to provide written comments by completing a
22 comment form and depositing it in the collection box located
23 in the hall. If you need assistance with the form, please
24 ask and someone from the project team will assist you. If
25 you need more time to consider your comment, you can take a

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1 comment form home and mail or email it to the addresses on
2 the comment form. All comments postmarked or dated
3 electronically by February 19, 2021 will be included in the
4 official transcript.

5 We are here today to listen. Team members will
6 also do their best to clarify information if necessary. But
7 in general, comments and questions will be addressed later
8 in the final document. Following this hearing, MDOT will
9 note and review all comments and concerns raised this
10 evening along with comments received during the open comment
11 period. Then we will draft written responses to your
12 concerns, and include them in an official hearing transcript
13 which is provided to the Federal Highway Administration for
14 their review and consideration in issuing their document.

15 Now we enter the time in the hearing where you
16 have the opportunity to provide your comments publicly. If
17 you wish to speak for the record, please fill out the
18 speaker identification slip and raise your hand. I will
19 call on the first speaker shortly. All right. Our first
20 speaker this evening is Dominic. If you would like to make
21 your way to the microphone you can begin.

22 MR. MOCERI: Good afternoon. Dominic Mocerri, 200
23 Walker, Detroit, Michigan. The land designated as excess
24 land along the eastern improvement side of this project, I
25 believe should be considered to be left as open space. This

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1 is going to be a world glass boulevard, and to be world
2 class we should be consistent with the greenways that we see
3 in Washing D.C., that we see along Central Park in New York,
4 that we see along Chicago, and especially south of downtown.
5 What a great place to display artwork, a great place for
6 families to enjoy open space. And to do all this work just
7 to have 31 acres of excess land that may be sold off to
8 developers like myself is counterproductive.

9 Let's shore up the vacant land that we already
10 have existing in the City of Detroit. There are great
11 developments that have not yet started yet that we don't
12 need this competing with those. And at the same time, that
13 green open space, the value is exponentially greater if used
14 all by the public and not by private enterprise. I know it
15 sounds contrary from a developer like myself, but we have to
16 think bigger and larger for generations to come.

17 Our family built the Holy Family Church five
18 generations ago, and four generations of our family have
19 been married there. We appreciate the drop-off area that is
20 designed in front of the church. And we thank you for that
21 forward thinking. We also think that this improvement is
22 vital to the integrity and sustainability of the great City
23 of Detroit. Again, I'm a University of Detroit graduate and
24 I had most of my classes right there at Jefferson and the
25 Service Drive. And I can't wait until it's no longer called

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1 the Service Drive.

2 Again, thank you for this time. I hope that MDOT
3 and the planners and stakeholders will see the value of
4 keeping that area green. And 31 acres of more development
5 is just more development. Let's keep it open. We're doing
6 all this work and it could be instrumental in world class
7 and let's keep it that way. Thank you so much.

8 MS. MONSMA: Next we have Christos followed by
9 Melanie.

10 MR. MOISIDES: Christos Moisides, 400 Monroe. I'll
11 leave some of the comments to Melanie next regarding
12 Greektown. But some of the concerns I do have is in regards
13 to Greektown. We own Fishbones and a lot of other holdings,
14 International Center Building in Greektown, and been
15 involved in the development of the Greektown area for over
16 30 years. While I do appreciate the connectivity as we have
17 holdings in Eastern Market, Greektown, and other holdings in
18 the Detroit area, making this more connective, I also think,
19 obviously, towards the disrupting businesses. And I think
20 Melanie will cover some of that coming up soon.

21 The concern I have is obviously some of the larger
22 stakeholders that I'm sure will be commenting as well at
23 some point, from Greektown Casino and others as being
24 disruptive. We've gone through quite a disruptive year, and
25 I know this is off into hopefully better times will happen

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1 between now and 2027 when this project is going.

2 But I think the concern that also Mr. Mocerì
3 mentioned was that we have a lot of open land right now to
4 do other developments. We are not a metropolis right now,
5 which we are lacking ground floor square footage. We have a
6 lot of areas to build and a lot of areas to do so. I just
7 hope we find better use for the open land for some green
8 space for bike paths. In that nature would also be, I would
9 say, as productive as possible to make it less disruptive to
10 the businesses that have suffered greatly recently. And
11 hopefully we'll be in better shape in years to come. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. MONSMA: Next is Melanie, followed by Frank.

14 MS. MARKOWICZ: Thank you. My name is Melanie
15 Markowicz, I'm the Executive Director of Greektown
16 Neighborhood Partnership. We are a 501(c)3 non profit
17 community development organization representing the
18 Greektown district. And that's all the business and
19 property owners within Greektown. Our district is bounded
20 by Randolph on the west, Gratiot on the north, I-375 on the
21 east, and Lafayette on the south. And we represent over 30
22 business and property owners within the district. We have
23 72 parcels in our district.

24 And this project we worked very closely with MDOT
25 over the last several years taking part in the advisory

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1 committee meetings. And working through a lot of the
2 preferred alternative, you know, opportunities there are to
3 create this type of connectivity that will connect Greektown
4 with the other neighborhoods in the broader downtown in some
5 dynamic ways.

6 We want to bring forth the very real, real
7 consequences of constructing this project to our district.
8 We have the highest concentration of small business owners
9 in the central business district. And when this project is
10 constructed over whatever construction time line, you know,
11 three years or so, it's going to be devastating for our
12 small business owners. Especially with the impact of
13 COVID-19. Not to mention our larger business owners in the
14 district such as the Greektown Casino.

15 In reading through the EA, we did notice some
16 streets identified for two-way conversions, Saint Antoine,
17 and of course Macomb Street. We want to make sure that if
18 these do go through for two-way conversions, that we
19 understand why the benefits that we work with business and
20 property owners through the entire process. Because their
21 parking garages will need to be reconfigured, and that
22 certainly is an economic impact just for the reconfiguration
23 itself.

24 But during the length of the project, we need to
25 make sure that we can get access to our district for the

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1 public to come to Greektown and enjoy this district of
2 Greektown. We certainly want to be included in the EA for
3 any studies of the traffic patterns for access, as well as
4 event days. Because Greektown is just a really big part of
5 events in our downtown core. We also want to make sure that
6 the intersection of Saint Antoine and Gratiot is one that
7 goes through and benefits our district as part of our
8 Greektown neighborhood framework plan. Which did
9 incorporate this project into what our neighborhood will
10 become in the future with ongoing development in the
11 district.

12 So we want to make sure that as this project moves
13 forward, that Greektown is considered and included. That
14 all access construction if this project does move forward,
15 that you're communicating very closely with the Greektown
16 business and property owners. Thank you.

17 MS. MONSMA: Next is Frank, followed by Lauren.

18 MR. KALINSKI: Hi, good evening everybody. My
19 name is Frank Kalinski, I'm from Livonia, Michigan. And
20 I've been following this project for many, many years. I'm
21 really just so happy to see it coming to fruition now. One
22 of the things at the conceptual level is plantings of trees,
23 leaving spaces for green spaces. You know, they've done
24 such a beautiful job on the Riverwalk with native species.
25 But that's got to be done, you know, at the conceptual

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1 stage. We've got to keep that, you know, everything that we
2 do needs to be, you know, those spaces.

3 And especially for areas for the small businesses.
4 People like to go out to dinner, they like to go for a
5 stroll. And this is -- you know, if we could make these
6 places available. And the hardest time is during the
7 wintertime, when you see a lot of these beautiful drawings
8 it's always in June or July or something. We need to really
9 think about what do we do with the snow. I think that's one
10 of the biggest problems I see with a lot of these projects.
11 The project is finished and where do we put the snow, can
12 you get a pickup truck and plow those walks easily, stack
13 that snow someplace. That's really critical because a lot
14 of people will come out and eat, you know, if they can walk.

15 The other thing that I see is on these boulevards
16 you have a wide median that nobody ever uses. The cars get
17 a nice look at it, you know. But that's the only -- and it
18 just gets mowed. And so to minimize the center median on
19 these types of projects, and maximize the places along the
20 sides that people can use is really critical to make it a
21 useful place. So you know -- and again I'm just really
22 happy to see this, this is a big shift in the way that we do
23 things. And thank you very much.

24 MS. MONSMA: Next we have Lauren.

25 MS. HOOD: Hello. My name is Lauren Hood. I'm a

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1 lifelong Detroit, urban planner, and as of late reparation
2 strategist. So what I want to bring to everyone's attention
3 here is the loss of the Black Bottom neighborhood was really
4 inter-generationally devastating for black Detroiters. So
5 we're talking about a cultural asset that wasn't only
6 valuable for Detroit, but across the nation when you think
7 about the entertainers that played here and the people that
8 came here to stay, and visit, and participate in that
9 cultural history.

10 So the fact that there is a project to resurface
11 the area where that neighborhood, that cultural asset was
12 decimated and we're not talking about any kind of
13 restoration efforts. I'm not advocating for, like, a check
14 to go to the descendants of Black Bottom. But there needs to
15 be some sort of attention to -- some sort of repair efforts
16 for the harm that was done. The fact that there is no
17 mention in this project of talking to the people that are
18 still here. Like, people still feel that pain, there are
19 children of parents, you know, descendants of families that
20 were here when that freeway came and decimated their
21 neighborhood. So it took away their businesses, it took
22 away their community connections. It decimated their
23 political power, their collective will. There are all these
24 things that were lost when that freeway decimated that
25 community.

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1 And we're not at all talking about through this
2 resurfacing project how we address that. So if there could
3 be some consideration for how you tend to that. Even if
4 it's something as minimal as some kind of storytelling,
5 there just needs to be some sort of acknowledgment for what
6 was lost and the harm that was caused to people that is
7 still being felt by people that are still here today. Thank
8 you.

9 MS. MONSMA: Is there anyone else who wishes to
10 speak?

11 MR. LOREE: For the people that just walked in, we
12 do have a presentation, so if you want to wait for the next
13 round. I think everyone who saw the presentation has just
14 commented. So if you wish to comment now though, you can,
15 so we'll give you that option.

16 MS. MONSMA: Yeah, you may comment now or watch
17 the presentation, and then we'll have a second comment
18 period. We'll repeat a comment period again.

19 MS. MARKOWICZ: Is there a portion where we can
20 ask detailed questions in the next round?

21 MR. LOREE: Yes.

22 MS. MONSMA: Yes. All right. For this round, is
23 there anyone else who wishes to speak? Well, hearing none,
24 I will conclude this portion of our open mike portion of our
25 hearing for this hour. And in closing I just want to say

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1 that we truly value your views on this I-375 EA. And all
2 the information obtained during this hearing will be shared
3 with the project team. In the time remaining, you can view
4 the displays, ask the team, or express your concerns and
5 ideas for the record to the court reporter who will continue
6 to take comments throughout the hour. All comments received
7 along with MDOT's response to your concerns will be included
8 in the official hearing transcript which will be available
9 for review. This transcript will be posted online at
10 Michigan/gov/I375Study. Thank you for participating.

11 (Off the record)

12 MR. LOREE So we're going to prepare to run the
13 presentation again. I know it's a small crowd. Melanie, I
14 think you had some other specific questions. After the
15 presentation starts, we can go and we can talk a little bit.
16 So I do want to say, you know, small group, pandemic, we're
17 very thankful that you're able to join us today and learn a
18 little bit more about the I-375 project and our
19 environmental assessment. We're doing this as part of our
20 federal process, kind of wrapping up, essentially, sharing
21 what the project is and identifying any of the environmental
22 impacts. So please enjoy this presentation that talks about
23 the project. And afterwards, our public hearing specialist,
24 Monica Monsma, will open up the microphones and you can
25 provide a comment on the public record. Thank you.

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1 (Video presentation played)

2 MS. MONSMA: Hello. I'd like to bring the public
3 comment portion of this hearing for the I-375 environmental
4 assessment in Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan, to order.
5 This hearing is being conducted in accordance with Federal
6 Highway Administration and MDOT public hearing procedures.
7 I am Monica Monsma, MDOT's public hearings officer and I
8 will be your moderator today.

9 Before we begin, I would like to express my
10 appreciation to our host venue with their help providing a
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12 Also, to Michigan legislators, the City of Detroit, and area
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14 This hearing provides an opportunity for the
15 public to comment for the record on the environmental
16 assessment. MDOT announced this hearing through a news
17 release issued to area news media. It placed an
18 announcement on our website at Michigan.gov/I375study, as
19 well a legal notice also appeared in The Lansing State
20 Journal, The Detroit Chronicle, The Detroit News, and The
21 Detroit Free Press.

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23 comments, everything that is said today will be recorded and
24 transcribed into a hearing transcript. Doing the recording
25 today is Rachel Sunde, a certified court reporter.

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1 This hearing is being conducted using a
2 combination of open forum and open mike styles. The first
3 part of the hearing provided you an opportunity to view
4 displays and speak one-on-one with our project team members
5 to provide comments and ask questions. This formal portion
6 of today's hearing that we will begin shortly is not a Q&A.
7 We will invite you to the microphone to make public
8 comments. All audience members who wish to speak are asked
9 to complete a speaker registration slip. The slips are
10 available from staff, just raise your hand and you will be
11 handed one. I will call on speakers in the order in which I
12 receive the slips. Please print your name on the slip, hand
13 it to one of the facilitators and you will be called upon to
14 speak during this portion. Again, simply raise your hand
15 now and you will be handed a speaker registration slip.
16 Olivia is coming out to help pass out the slips right now.
17 So just keep your hands raised for a moment. Thank you.

18 We appreciate your assistance. It is important
19 that we hear from all who wish to comment whether publicly
20 or privately. If you prefer to make your statement in
21 private, the court reporter will be available to take
22 comments following the hearing. Besides verbal comments,
23 you are welcome to provide written comments by completing a
24 comment form and depositing it in the collection box located
25 in the hall. If you need assistance with the form, please

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1 ask someone from the project team and they will assist you.
2 If you need more time to consider your comment, you can take
3 the comment form home and mail or email it to the addresses
4 on the comment form. All comments postmarked or dated
5 electronically by February 19, 2021 will be included in the
6 official transcript.

7 We are here today to listen. Team members will
8 also do their best to clarify information if necessary. But
9 in general, comments and questions will be addressed later
10 in a final document. Following this hearing, MDOT will note
11 and review all comments and concerns raised this evening
12 along with all comments received during the open comment
13 period. Then we will draft written responses to your
14 concerns, and include them in the form of an official
15 hearing transcript which is provided to FHWA for their
16 review and consideration in issuing their decision document.

17 Now we enter that time in the hearing where you
18 will have the opportunity to provide your comments publicly
19 so everyone present can hear. If you wish to speak for the
20 record and have not done so already, please fill out one of
21 the speaker forms and raise your hand. All right. I will
22 now call the first speaker. The first speaker is Tai, and
23 you can move to one of the three microphones located in that
24 main aisle. And go right ahead.

25 MR. TRAN: Hello, how are you? I represent the

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1 Detroit Athletic Club. And currently the Madison on and off
2 street to access the interstate is integral to our business
3 and the people who visit our business. So I want to make
4 sure that there is an option to get back on the boulevard
5 from Madison traveling northeast. To access the boulevard,
6 so that we don't have to come out of our garage and go all
7 the way down to Clinton just to make a left turn to get back
8 on the boulevard. We have about 2-3,000 cars that exits our
9 building daily, and that would make -- our business model,
10 it wouldn't work very well for us because the flow of
11 traffic. Especially on game day or any other public events
12 that are going to draw a crowd.

13 MS. MONSMA: Next we have Jacob followed by
14 William.

15 MR. GRAHAM: Hi. Thank you so much for having
16 this public meeting in person today. I know it's difficult
17 during these challenging times. I guess I would like to
18 invite everyone to think of Gratiot Avenue right now in
19 Eastern Market and what it's like to cross Gratiot Avenue.
20 I don't think that anyone thinks of that as being pleasant.
21 And I have to say I am disheartened to see that this
22 boulevard is wider than Gratiot Avenue, which it intersects
23 with. And seeing the impervious surface reduction of nine
24 percent, that seems pretty minimal to me. Seeing three
25 minutes and 57 seconds to cross this boulevard and to hear

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1 things like there is a pedestrian refuge island, so it's
2 nice to be -- a spot to wait for a second cycle to cross. I
3 don't know if anybody in this room has ever waited at a
4 pedestrian refuge island for a second cycle, but it's
5 something you do when you have no other option. It's not
6 something you choose to do. So I guess I ask MDOT to at
7 least look at Gratiot and not make something bigger and
8 scarier. Thank you.

9 MS. MONSMA: All right. Next we have, I believe,
10 William, followed by Daryl.

11 MR. GILBRIDGE: Thank you very much. My question
12 has to do with the, what will the zoning be on the green
13 space acreage that results -- as a result of going from the
14 I-375 to a boulevard on the property that's adjacent to the
15 boulevard? Will that be residential, will that be business
16 like it was on Hastings Street? Is there any thought given
17 to what the zoning will be on the property?

18 MR. LOREE: We can do more questions afterwards.
19 But I will speak, I guess, just to the fact that the zoning
20 will have to be redone. And that's its own public process
21 that the City and MDOT will be working together on as we
22 work on the design of the project. So there will be more
23 engagement around that in the future.

24 MR. GILBRIDGE: Thank you.

25 MR. MONSMA: Next is Daryl.

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1 MR. KAISER: Hello, thank you. My name is Daryl
2 Kaiser, I represent the Detroit Windsor Tunnel. I want to
3 go on record saying the Detroit Windsor Tunnel is supportive
4 of the project, but I do have the following five comments
5 that I'd like to request and put on record, please. We'd
6 like MDOT to share any information on the current and
7 projected traffic volumes at Jefferson and Randolph as the
8 ingress and egress point at Detroit Windsor Tunnel is based
9 on your analysis and study, that's number one.

10 Number two, have you determined the effect other
11 the M-10 freeway in terms of speed, volume, and level of
12 service? Will this reduce or increase commute times? And
13 what will the effect be on M-10 and Jefferson at Randolph.

14 Number three, when you use the seven minutes to
15 get to the tunnel using the southbound boulevard as you've
16 noted in your presentation, in getting to the tunnel in the
17 afternoon, have you determined the effect of this traffic on
18 the tunnel and what will that be?

19 Number four, has your study measured the impact on
20 the Detroit Windsor Tunnel caused by this seven minute
21 afternoon traffic using -- traffic delay using the
22 southbound boulevard? Please note that a negative impact on
23 the Detroit Windsor Tunnel traffic will have an effect on
24 the revenue share that the tunnel is required to make under
25 its concession agreement with the City of Detroit. And has

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1 that been taken into consideration?

2 Number five, we have reviewed both the
3 environmental assessment and the appendix D, the air quality
4 technical report, and understand the conclusion that was
5 reached regarding the air quality standards that were in
6 compliance with the Clean Air Act. However, we want to
7 inquire with respect to the increased traffic delays during
8 peak hours. Is there any concern that there will be an
9 impactful change of the greenhouse gas emissions in the
10 downtown area during that time? In particular the Jefferson
11 and Randolph area from increased vehicle wait times. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. MONSMA: Is there anyone else who wishes to
14 speak? Hearing none -- next is Dominic.

15 MR. MOCERI: Hello. Dominic Mocerri, 200 Walker,
16 Detroit, Michigan. I spoke earlier. One thing in regards
17 to the excess land, right now it's shown as green space and
18 it should be continued to show green space. I'm an expert
19 in land planning and have developed -- our family has
20 developed more residential properties than anyone else in
21 the State of Michigan. You've heard the billion dollar mile
22 in Oakland Township, and sometimes you do more with less.
23 Why is the great value of the residential neighborhood in
24 excess of a billion dollars in the one mile stretch in
25 Oakland Township, because of the wide expanse and green

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1 space that goes with it.

2 The values of the residential neighborhood in
3 Lafayette Park and others will exponentially be greater with
4 the green space than trying to shoehorn more development in
5 there which would be counterproductive to your goals and
6 aspirations for the 375, or M-375 improvements. I am for
7 the M-375 improvements, but I also am for the green space it
8 shows on the plan not be future developed. 31 acres is
9 going to be a consternation and it's going to be
10 counterproductive to the goals and sustainability of the
11 City of Detroit.

12 One thing I look at what Olmsted has done with the
13 great planning at the turn of the century. And what the
14 great planning has done with MDOT here and with keeping the
15 green space instead of selling it off for 31 acres, what a
16 great spot for families. What a great spot to have before
17 and after the ball games. I want to call it tailgating, but
18 it won't be tailgating it will be blankets, and parkways,
19 and gatherings. I thank you for this opportunity, and I
20 think the presentation was done exceptionally well. Thank
21 you.

22 MS. MONSMA: All right. Is there anyone else who
23 would like to speak? Hearing none, this will include the
24 open portion -- the open mike portion of our hearing. In
25 closing, I'd just like to say we value your views on the

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1 I-375 EA. All information obtained during this hearing,
2 will be shared with the project team. In the time remaining
3 you can view the displays, ask questions of the team, or
4 express your concerns and ideas for the record to the court
5 reporter who will continue to take comments throughout the
6 hour. All comments received along with MDOT's responses to
7 your concerns will be included in the official hearing
8 transcript which will be available for review. This
9 transcript will be posted online at Michigan.gov/I375Study.
10 Thank you for participating this evening.

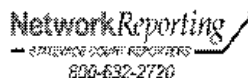
11 (Off the record)

12 MR. LOREE: Good evening. I want to say thank you
13 to everyone for being here today. I know certainly it's
14 challenging times with the ongoing pandemic. But this is a
15 very important project for MDOT, for the City, and we're
16 very excited to reach this point where we have the
17 environmental assessment complete. And you know, most of
18 our preliminary project planning is done. So we're going to
19 start a presentation that basically presents the project as
20 well as the findings that we have from our environmental
21 assessment. And after that you will have the opportunity to
22 comment on the project record. So without further ado,
23 we'll start the presentation. Thanks.

24 (Video presentation played)

25 MS. MONSMA: Hello. I'd like to begin the public

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1 comment portion of this hearing for the I-375 environmental
2 assessment in Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan, to order.

3 This hearing is being conducted in accordance with Federal
4 Highway Administration and MDOT hearing procedures. I am
5 Monica Monsma, MDOT public hearings officer and I will be
6 your moderator today.

7 Before we begin, I would like to express my
8 appreciation to our host for their help with providing a
9 venue location and technical support for this public
10 hearing. Also, to Michigan legislators, the City of
11 Detroit, and area elected officials.

12 This hearing provides an opportunity for the
13 public to comment for the record on the EA. MDOT announced
14 this hearing through a news release issued to area news
15 media. It placed the announcement on its website at
16 Michigan.gov/I375study, and a legal notice also appeared in
17 The Lansing State Journal, The Detroit Chronicle, The
18 Detroit News, and The Detroit Free Press.

19 To enable MDOT to review and consider your
20 comments, everything that is said today will be recorded and
21 transcribed into a hearing transcript. Doing the recording
22 is Rachel Sunde, a certified court reporter.

23 The hearing is being conducted using a combination
24 of open forum and open mike styles. The first part of the
25 hearing provided an opportunity for you to view displays and

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1 speak one-to-one with project team members and to provide --
2 and for project team members to provide comments and for you
3 to ask questions. This is the formal portion of today's
4 hearing and it is not a Q&A. We will invite you to the
5 microphone to make public comments. All audience members
6 who wish to speak are asked to complete a speaker
7 registration slip. The speaker slips are available from
8 staff, just raise your hand and you will be handed one. And
9 then I will call on the speakers in the order in which I
10 receive the slips. Please print your name on the slip and
11 hand it to one of the facilitators and you will be called on
12 to speak during this portion. Again, simply raise your hand
13 now and you will be handed a presenter -- a speaker
14 registration slip. Print your name on the slip, hand it to
15 one of the facilitators, and then you will be called on.

16 We appreciate your assistance. It is important
17 that we hear from all who wish to comment whether publicly
18 or privately. If you prefer to make your statement in
19 private, the court reporter will be available to take
20 comments following the hearing. Besides verbal comments,
21 you are welcome to provide written comments by completing a
22 comment form and depositing it in the collection box located
23 in the hall. If you need assistance with the form, please
24 ask and someone from the project team will assist you. If
25 you need more time to consider your comment, you can take

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1 the comment form home and mail or email it to the address on
2 the comment form. All comments postmarked or dated
3 electronically by February 19th, 2021 will be included in
4 the official transcript.

5 We are here today to listen. Today team members
6 will also do their best to clarify information if necessary.
7 But in general, comments and questions will be addressed
8 later in a final document. Following this hearing, MDOT
9 will note and review all comments and concerns raised this
10 evening along with all comments received during the open
11 comment period. Then we will draft written responses to
12 your concerns, and include them in the form of an official
13 hearing transcript which is provided to the Federal Highway
14 Administration for their review and consideration in issuing
15 their decision document.

16 At this time I will wait for the speaker slips and
17 then we will begin the public comment. All right. I will
18 now call the first speaker. I have Terrence followed by
19 Ray. So Terrence can make your way to one of the
20 microphones and begin your comments.

21 MR. GERMAN: Hi, how are you? Can you hear me?

22 MS. MONSMA: Yes.

23 MR. GERMAN: No echo, okay, good. I have two
24 questions, a small one and a big one. They're pretty easy,
25 I believe. The first question is there have been advisory

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1 groups who have been commenting for the past several years.
2 Are they closed now or are they still open for others to
3 participate?

4 MS. MONSMA: I missed just the first part of that.

5 MR. GERMAN: The advisory groups that have been
6 participating --

7 MS. MONSMA: Oh, the advisory groups.

8 MR. GERMAN: Yeah, are they closed?

9 MS. MONSMA: Are they closed --

10 MR. LOREE: Really this is reserved for comments,
11 but I know we have a small crowd.

12 MR. GERMAN: Okay.

13 MR. LOREE: The advisory groups right now they're
14 kind of concluding the environmental phase. But we know
15 that we'll have outreach as we work into the design work for
16 the project. So there is other opportunities and we will be
17 reconvening those groups and others to also provide input as
18 we work through design.

19 MS. MONSMA: Thank you for clarifying, Jon.

20 MR. GERMAN: Okay. Well, my second comment will
21 be a comment and not a question. The right-of-way aspect of
22 the project, there is concern regarding excess property and
23 how that will be determined to be for sale, or if it's going
24 to be the ownership of city, or county, or state. Obviously
25 if it is for sale to a private entity as determined, that

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1 could impact how residential community engagement proceeds
2 going forward. So there is a slight concern about how
3 excess property will be dealt with going forward. That's
4 all.

5 MR. LOREE: Sure. Thank you.

6 MS. MONSMA: Next we have Ray.

7 MR. SMITH: Yes. My name is Ray Smith, I am a --
8 one of the founders of what's called the Black Bottom Group.
9 There is a real personal project, and when I say personal,
10 my grandparents lived on Jay Street, and that's one of the
11 names that was mentioned, streets that was mentioned in the
12 video. Also, we are now in a position to have there be a
13 Black Bottom marker, to have Black Bottom recognized as a
14 historical area.

15 I also have family members who stay on Rivard
16 Street. And we're trying to find out how it will impact the
17 residents there. Also for there to be any proposals, or has
18 there been any proposal to recognize the area in terms of
19 maybe something like heritage center or any space,
20 commercial space on the boulevard. Yeah, those are the
21 things that we're interested in, in terms of finding out if
22 this is going to be just an extension of a freeway -- not a
23 freeway, a street, traffic, or something more so of a green
24 space where families can come out and enjoy themselves.
25 Just a little bit more interested in what will the boulevard

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1 offer the community. And also, will this project have some
2 form of recognition of the former area called Black Bottom.
3 Because when they razed Black Bottom and pursued to build
4 the freeway, I mean, the -- the site stayed for seven years
5 under construction. So is this project ready to go in 2027
6 or is it going to be, you know, razing the area and
7 construction will sit there for seven years like it did back
8 in 50's and 60's. It was eight long years before
9 construction proceeded here.

10 So that's our concerns we have from Black Bottom
11 in terms of, you know, is this project, is it 100 percent on
12 point and ready to go in 2027. Thank you very much.

13 MS. MONSMA: Is there anyone else who wishes to
14 speak?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you going to reply to
16 that or are you just recording it?

17 MS. MONSMA: We are just recording.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will there ever be a back
19 and forth? I don't need a mike for that. I'd like to think
20 we're standing up here and having a conversation, I don't
21 want it to be one way --

22 MS. MONSMA: Sure. I will conclude this portion
23 and then we'll go back to the two way conversation. It's
24 sort of a two part public engagement.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Forgive me if I'm getting

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1 ahead of you.

2 MS. MONSMA: No problem. All right. Hearing no
3 one else who wishes to speak, I will close this open mike
4 portion of our hearing. In closing, we value your views on
5 the I-375 EA. All the information obtained during this
6 hearing will be shared with the project team. In the time
7 remaining you can view displays, ask questions of the team,
8 or express your concerns and ideas for the record to the
9 court reporter who will continue to take comments throughout
10 the hour. All comments received along with MDOT's response
11 to your concerns will be included in the official hearing
12 transcript, which will be available for review. This
13 transcript will be posted online at Michigan.gov/I375Study.
14 Thank you for participating this evening.

15 (Off the record)

16 MR. LOREE: Hello and good evening. I want to say
17 thank you for everyone for being here to participate
18 tonight. I know certainly there is -- there is lots of
19 challenges with the ongoing pandemic. And I want to say on
20 behalf of MDOT and the project team, we're very excited
21 right now to be at this phase and be able to share the
22 project today and the environmental assessment. Which is
23 measuring all of the socioeconomic and environmental impacts
24 of the project. So we'll kick off a presentation here to go
25 over the project highlights and those impacts. And

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1 afterwards, you'll have an opportunity to comment on the
2 public record. So thanks ago for being here and we'll start
3 the presentation.

4 (Video presentation played)

5 MS. MONSMA: Good evening. I'd like to bring the
6 public comment portion of this hearing for the I-375
7 environmental assessment in Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan,
8 to order. This hearing is being conducted in accordance
9 with Federal Highway Administration and MDOT public hearing
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15 Also, to Michigan legislators, the City of Detroit, and area
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18 public to comment for the record on the environmental
19 assessment. MDOT announced this hearing through a news
20 release issued in area news media. It placed the
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24 Press.

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1 everything that is said today will be recorded and
2 transcribed into a hearing transcript. Doing the recording
3 is Rachel Sunde, a certified court reporter.

4 This hearing is being conducted using a
5 combination of open forum and open mike styles. The first
6 part of the hearing provided an opportunity for you to view
7 displays and speak one-to-one with project team members and
8 to provide comments and ask questions. This formal portion
9 of today's hearing that we will begin shortly is not a Q&A.
10 We will invite you to the microphone to make public
11 comments. All audience members who wish to speak are asked
12 to complete a speaker registration slip. The slips are
13 available from staff, just raise your hand and you will be
14 handed one. And then I will call on the speakers in the
15 order in which I receive the slips. Please print your name
16 on the slip and hand it to one of the facilitators. Again,
17 simply raise your hand now and you will be handed a speaker
18 registration slip. Print your name on the slip, hand it to
19 one of our facilitators, and then you will be called upon to
20 speak.

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22 that we hear from all who wish to comment whether publicly
23 or privately. If you prefer to make a statement in private,
24 the court reporter will be available to take comments
25 following the hearing. Besides verbal comments, you are

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1 welcome to provide written comments by completing a comment
2 form and depositing it in the collection box located in the
3 hall. If you need assistance with the form, please ask
4 someone -- please ask and someone from the project team will
5 assist you. If you need more time to consider your comment,
6 you can take a comment form home and mail or email it to the
7 address -- to the addresses on the comment form. All
8 comments postmarked or dated electronically by February 19,
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11 will also do their best to clarify information if necessary.
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15 evening along with all comments received during the open
16 comment period. Then we will draft written responses to
17 your concerns, and include them in the form of an official
18 hearing transcript which is provided to the Federal Highway
19 Administration for their review and consideration in issuing
20 their decision document.

21 All right. I will now call the first speaker,
22 Alexander. You may go to one of the microphones.

23 MR. VASILIOV: Hello. I want to first thank you
24 for hosting this. Especially I times like these, it's very
25 difficult to have civic discussions in person these days.

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1 Once again, appreciate everyone making the sacrifices to be
2 here on a Thursday night. My name is Alex, I live in
3 downtown Detroit. If I could get an app, please, displayed
4 in the back? Is that possible right now?

5 MS. MONSMA: Not at --

6 MR. VASILIOV: Of the I-375 corridor proposal.

7 MS. MONSMA: Not at the moment.

8 MR. VASILIOV: Okay. Not possible. One of the
9 things that I enjoy the most about the environment of that
10 area is being able to have access to the Riverfront and
11 Dequindre Cut. While I take my routes in the summertime,
12 obviously not in the wintertime, I go from the Riverfront to
13 the Dequindre Cut, make my way back over either through
14 Gratiot or just in front of Greektown. I take advantage of
15 the overpasses over there, those have crosswalks at both the
16 exit and entrance ramps that would be adjacent to those
17 bridges.

18 My two concerns basically, one the addition of a
19 bike lane along that corridor seems rather redundant since
20 it runs essentially parallel to the Dequindre Cut. And
21 anyone who's using a bike would much rather be doing it not
22 next to cars whenever possible. And I would assume that
23 most people would continue to use the Dequindre Cut in favor
24 of that in opposition to this new trail.

25 Second, my other concern is connectivity between

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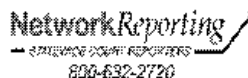
1 Lafayette Park and downtown. A lot of resources come from
2 both neighborhoods. And being able to access them adds
3 benefit to people wanting to walk instead of driving their
4 cars across busy intersections to get to where they're
5 going. While a crosswalk is admirable and trying to make it
6 longer is, again, admirable. You're still dealing with 11
7 plus lanes of traffic, which is not ideal when previously we
8 were only dealing with two lanes and then a bridge to
9 connect us over the busier sections of the road.

10 Again, I would also stress that basically
11 encouraging pathways or an environmental scenic route that
12 would connect the Dequindre Cut to downtown and completing a
13 loop would be preferable to having a lot of these trails
14 leading to nowhere. Or worse having redundant trails that
15 also lead to nowhere because they run parallel. That's all.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. MONSMA: Next we have John.

18 MR. WYLIE: Hi. My name is John, and I live in
19 downtown Detroit. I have two questions and a comment. My
20 first question would be, I did not see on the latest
21 iteration of the presentation what the intersection, whether
22 it's a four-way stop, a light, or what the intersection
23 connection was for every intersection below Jefferson
24 towards the river. I noticed on past iterations they had
25 four-way traffic signals and those were removed. So my

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1 question would be whether it's going to be a right-of-way
2 for the boulevard, whether it's going to be a four-way stop
3 with stop signs, or if it's going to be a light? It just
4 wasn't showed (sic) on the newest iteration.

5 MS. MONSMA: After we close this portion, we can
6 go out to the boards and discuss that.

7 MR. WYLIE: Perfect. My second question would be
8 whether or not MDOT has had any contact with developers who
9 have projects planned along this corridor. A couple that
10 come to mind would be the U of M Innovation Center with Dan
11 Gilbert and Stephen Ross. The, I believe it's called
12 Lafayette West that's going where the old Wayne State
13 Pharmacy was, as well as a Bedrock development of the
14 Brewster Douglas project area. And whether or not they are
15 pushing their projects back to wait for this boulevard to be
16 done, whether they're trying to do them before it's done.
17 Or if there has been any contact with them about if this
18 effects their time line. I know originally this was planned
19 a few years earlier and it got pushed back to 2027. I was
20 wondering if that's impacted their plans. Or if there has
21 been any connection with them on these time lines.

22 And then my last comment would just be I would
23 also express a desire to possibly see a lane reduction on
24 the boulevard for -- especially with the plan of having a
25 crossing of almost four minutes in between, that seems

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1 pretty long. I know there is traffic implications. But
2 just for the record, I would also advocate for less lanes
3 each direction. So thank you.

4 MS. MONSMA: Is there anyone else who wishes to
5 speak? Hearing none, that concludes this open mike portion
6 of our hearing. In closing, we value your views on the
7 I-375 EA. All information obtained during this hearing will
8 be shared with the project team. In the time remaining, you
9 can view the displays, ask questions of the team, or express
10 your concerns and ideas for the record to the court reporter
11 who will continue to take comments throughout the hour. All
12 comments received along with MDOT's response to your
13 concerns will be included in the official hearing transcript
14 which will be available for review. This transcript will be
15 posted online at Michigan.gov/I375Study. Thank you for
16 participating this evening.

17 (Meeting concluded at 8:08 p.m.)

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36:14	27:14 31:12 34:14	shift 12:22	26:6,12 30:14	suffered 9:10
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			specialist 3:22 15:23	

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14:1	34:24	35:23	Wayne 4:3 16:4	year 8:24
talks 3:13 15:22	today 3:10 4:22,24	useful 12:21	25:2 32:7 37:12	years 3:8 8:16 9:11
team 5:3,24 6:5 15:3	6:5 14:7 15:17	uses 12:16	ways 10:5	9:25 10:11 11:20
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22:11 23:19,20	transcribed 4:23	24:3 25:25 31:7	William 2:10 19:14	19th 27:3
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13:6 14:13 15:14	36:5 37:16	Walker 1:8 6:23	work 7:6 8:6 10:19	
19:18,20 23:20	tunnel 21:2,3,8,15	22:15	19:10 20:22 28:15	
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3 2:3				
30 8:16 9:21				
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23:15				
32 2:16				
34 2:17				
36 2:17				
375 23:6				
3rd 2:12,13				
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4 2:4				
4:00 1:9				
4:18 3:2				
400 8:10				
4th 2:15,16				
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50's 30:8				
501(c)3 9:16				
57 19:25				
6				
6 2:5				
60's 30:8				
6538 1:15				
7				
729:23				
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8 2:5				
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2 Public Hearing Written Comments and Speaker Cards



Public Hearing Comment Form

Environmental Assessment I-375 Improvement Project in Detroit from I-75
South of Mack Avenue to South of Jefferson Avenue

Public Hearing: Thursday, January 28, 2021, 4 to 8 p.m., at 200 Walker St., Detroit, MI 48207

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- All comments must be submitted or postmarked, by February 19, 2021.

Name (Please Print):

Louis Vaupotic

Date: 1/20/21

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

- ① Will there not be pressure for the Windsor to Detroit Tunnel to back up and maybe there will be a public push to close it in the future?
- ② I sent a proposal for an aerial tram across the Detroit River to the governor of Michigan. The tram would land on new state land that is freed up. I left my proposal at the public meeting and would
- Thank You!





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Name (Please Print):

Jacob Grehn

Date:

1/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Please do not make a boulevard that is even more challenging to walk across than Gratiot Ave. Gratiot is already a huge barrier and Eastern Market does not need another one.

Thank You!





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Name (Please Print): Stephanie Austin

Date: 1/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

I'm disappointed by the increase in ^{pedestrian} crossing times. I like to walk from Lafayette^{park} to downtown and am not looking forward to it taking over 3 min to cross the boulevard. I also find it concerning that the Impervious Service only decreases by 9%. That leads me to believe that the boulevard isn't decreasing the size of the road which seems impossible since it will no

Thank You!





Public Hearing Comment Form

Comments:

longer be a freeway. I also enjoy biking around Detroit and it is hard to imagine that a bike path next to 9 lanes of traffic will be pleasant or useful since it will be so challenging to cross over to downtown.

Thank You!





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Name (Please Print):

Gloria Myers

Date:

Jan. 28, 2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Living in Lafayette Park, I see an increase of traffic on the 2-way surface streets that run thru neighborhoods, especially at morning and afternoon rush hour. I think this project will result in increases in neighborhood traffic. Unfortunately I think more accidents will occur. Only time will tell.

Thank You!



Speaker Card



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Name (Please Print):

Ray Smith

Date:

1/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

The history of I-375 in relation to
Blackbottom Neighborhood

Thank You!



Speaker card



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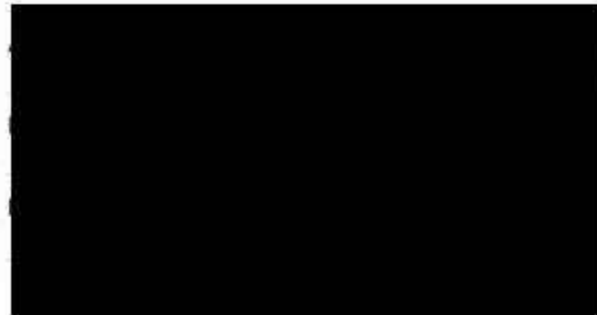
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Name (Please Print): Wm GILBRIDE

Date: 1-28-2021



Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

What ~~is~~ zoning designations will be
applied to the vacant land?

Thank You!



Speaker card



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Name (Please Print):

Tai Tran

Date:

1/28/21

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Madison access to boulevard.

Thank You!



Speaker card



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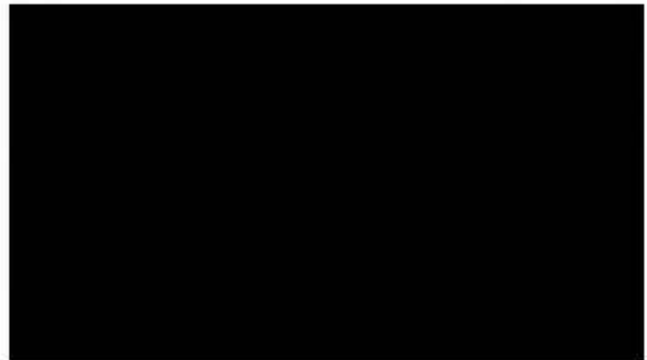
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Name (Please Print):

DOMINIC J. MOCERI

Date:



Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker card



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Name (Please Print): Christos
Moisides

Date: 1.28.2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker card



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Name (Please Print):

Melanie Markawicz, Greentown Neighborhood Partnership

Date:

01/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



SPEAKER CARD



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Name (Please Print):

Frank Kalinski

Date:

1-28

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker card



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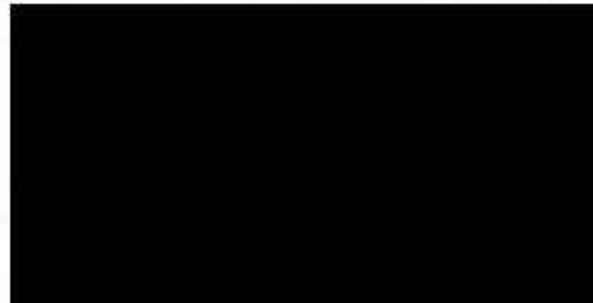
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Name (Please Print):

Lauren Hood

Date: 1/28/21



Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



SPEAKER CARD



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Name (Please Print): Jacob Graham

Date: 1/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

6

Thank You!



Speaker Card



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Environmental Assessment I-375 Improvement Project in Detroit from I-75
South of Mack Avenue to South of Jefferson Avenue

Public Hearing: Thursday, January 28, 2021, 4 to 8 p.m., at 200 Walker St., Detroit, MI 48207

The Environmental Assessment (EA) considers the impacts of significant changes and/or planned improvements to the Detroit I-375 Improvement Project. It also reviews the purpose and need for improvements and describes the alternatives that were considered. To read the EA and to learn more about the I-375 Improvement Project, please visit: www.michigan.gov/I375Study.

Please use this form to provide MDOT with your comments on the EA by:

- Dropping it into the comment box at one of the public hearings,
- Emailing your comments to:
MDOT-I-375Corridor@michigan.gov
- Sending your comments to:

Attn: Monica Monsma
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
E-mail: MDOT-I-375Corridor@michigan.gov

- All comments must be submitted or postmarked, by February 19, 2021.

Name (Please Print):

Daryl Kaiser

Date:

1/28/2021

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker Card



~~Public Hearing Comment Form~~

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Date:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

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Name (Please Print):

TERRENCE GERMAN

Date:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker card



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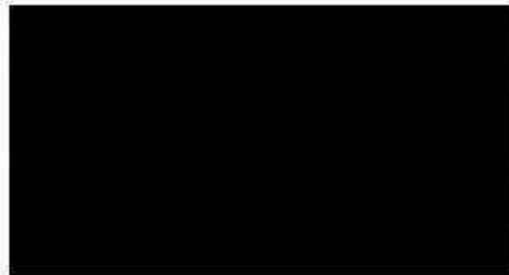
- Dropping it into the comment box at one of the public hearings,
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Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
E-mail: MDOT-I-375Corridor@michigan.gov

- All comments must be submitted or postmarked, by February 19, 2021.

Name (Please Print): Alexander Vasilov

Date: 1-28-21



Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



Speaker Card



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Lansing, MI 48909
E-mail: MDOT-I-375Corridor@michigan.gov

- All comments must be submitted or postmarked, by February 19, 2021.

Name (Please Print): Jon Wyke

Date: 1/25/21

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Comments:

Write on the back or use additional pages if necessary.

Thank You!



3 Public Comment Letters

3.1 Bedrock

Bedrock Comment on the I-375 Improvement Project

2/19/2021

TO: Mr. Jonathan Loree
Senior Project Manager
Michigan Department of Transportation
Metro Region Office
Michigan Department of Transportation
18101 West Nine Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075

FROM: Kofi Bonner, CEO, Bedrock Detroit

SUBJECT: Bedrock Detroit comment regarding the I-375 Improvement Project

Bedrock Detroit ("Bedrock") is submitting comment pursuant to the Public Comment Period for the preferred alternative for the I-375 Improvement Project. Bedrock is part of the Rock "Family of Companies," also known as the FOC, which collectively is the largest employer in the city of Detroit.

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, we want to commend MDOT for shepherding a new vision through the I-375 Improvement Project that will be transformational for Detroit in several ways:

- It will replace the outdated infrastructure we have today and provide a new, beautiful gateway into downtown.
- Similar to other urban freeways, the construction of I-375 destroyed diverse urban neighborhoods and divided communities. The I-375 Improvement Project will ameliorate the barrier and moat-like condition that is created by the I-375 we have today by building better connections with downtown Detroit and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Ultimately, the new I-375 corridor will unlock value for the community and create new opportunities for jobs and housing.

FEEDBACK AND CONCERNS

1. **We believe that adding connectivity from the I-375 Boulevard to Brush Park and adjacent neighborhoods is single most important addition to be made to the proposed plan.** As designed, residents of Brush Park and the future development on the Brewster-Douglass site, many of whom will be living in affordable housing units, are not able to easily connect to the I-375 Boulevard. This limits current and future residents' ability to access economic and recreational opportunities and reinforces the existing barriers between neighborhoods that were created during the original construction of I-375.
 - The great benefit and design intent of the New Boulevard plan is that it effectively reconnects neighborhoods that were divided by the previous highway program. The approach provides more options for drivers, disperses traffic, and makes walking and biking more pleasant.
 - We see great potential in connecting Eastern Market, Lafayette Park, Greektown, Downtown, and the Detroit riverfront through the proposed design of the I-375 Boulevard.
 - However, there is an important missed opportunity in the lack of the I-375 Boulevard's connection to Brush Park and the former Brewster-Douglass Site ("Douglass Site").

Page 1 of 4

- Brush Park and the Douglass Site are neighborhoods rich in history, and today are diverse communities with significant low-income housing. This neighborhood will feature even more affordable housing in the future.
- In developing the 22-acre Douglass Site, Bedrock is committed to delivering 800 residential units, 25% of which will be designated as affordable.
- The size and layout of the Douglass Site could accommodate commercial and other mixed-uses, which could attract and support businesses and create jobs within the neighborhood.
- While it appears that the I-375 Boulevard extends from the riverfront to I-75, it only effectively spans from the riverfront to Gratiot. North of Gratiot, the I-375 Boulevard is essentially an elongated on-ramp to I-75. Under the current design:
 - **Vehicles traveling northbound** along the I-375 Boulevard will not be able to enter Brush Park. Instead, they will be required to take the I-75 ramps either northward or southward.
 - **Vehicles traveling southbound** from Brush Park and the Douglass Site do not have any opportunity to access the I-375 Boulevard and must take a circuitous route to reach downtown and the riverfront.
 - **Cyclists** traveling to and from Brush Park on the I-375 Boulevard are limited to a convoluted and indirect route. Cyclists are likely to seek a more direct route by riding in a dangerous position alongside traffic and/or on the sidewalks, where they will disturb pedestrians.
 - **Pedestrian** experience accessing Brush Park from the I-375 Boulevard could be harsh, as pedestrians will walk on sidewalks alongside a highway condition and will need to cross highway access points during signalized intervals.
- In short, without appropriate connectivity to the rest of downtown Detroit and the riverfront, the residents of Brush Park and the Douglass Site will be limited in their access to the job centers and recreational opportunities of downtown Detroit. Poor connectivity to the I-375 Boulevard and the CBD also hampers the potential of the Douglass Site to accommodate robust commercial space and impairs the opportunity to create jobs within the neighborhood.

The I-375 Boulevard is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reconnect disparate neighborhoods with an accessible, multi-modal boulevard. Connecting the I-375 Boulevard with the residents of Brush Park and the Douglass Site would connect the residents of one of Detroit's most richly historic neighborhoods – many of whom will be living in affordable housing units – to the job centers of the Central Business District and the beauty of the riverfront. Enhancing connectivity to Brush Park is an important opportunity for the I-375 Boulevard to connect Detroiters to jobs, to recreation, and to each other. Bedrock believes there are design solutions that can achieve this objective, and we stand ready to work with MDOT to find the appropriate solution for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians to connect to Brush Park.

2. **Reducing the excessive width of the boulevard represents a second key opportunity to create a great pedestrian friendly “front door” for downtown Detroit.** We believe MDOT should reduce the number of travel lanes either in a temporary or permanent way to ensure the project achieves its objectives of reconnecting the urban fabric and creating a pedestrian-safe thoroughfare.
- As many cities grapple with de-commissioning or transforming aging infrastructure, Detroit and MDOT have the opportunity to be a national model with the transformation of I-375 into a context-sensitive boulevard that is safe and accessible for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

- The proposed plans are designed to accommodate peak-hour traffic with minimal delays for longer-haul commuters. We believe this needs to be balanced with the 24-hour experience of pedestrians and neighbors along the boulevard, who will struggle to safely and conveniently cross as many as 12 travel lanes, and with crossing times as long as four minutes.
 - Bedrock is particularly concerned with the intersection of Gratiot and the I-375 Boulevard which will be immediately adjacent to the new Detroit Center for Innovation (DCI), a world-class innovation district anchored by the University of Michigan. For the DCI to be a welcoming environment for bright minds and innovators, the Center needs to be accessible and interconnected with the surrounding neighborhoods. In the proposed plans, the DCI is surrounded by several intersections that would be overwhelming and uncomfortable for pedestrians given the scale of the crossings.
 - Reducing the width of the roadway by permanent or temporary means would make it easier and safer to cross on foot and could reduce the propensity of drivers to speed and create risks for pedestrians.
 - Bedrock believes there are temporary solutions to pilot a narrower boulevard through parklets, moveable curbs, parking lanes, landscaping, bulb-outs, and more.
 - Bedrock stands ready to collaborate with MDOT on responsible adjustments to I-375 Boulevard widths.
3. **There are achievable and meaningful opportunities to improve the pedestrian and bike experience along the I-375 Boulevard.**
- Within the current I-375 Improvement Project design, the pedestrian experience is particularly intimidating north of Gratiot. We believe MDOT should consider softening that experience by exploring a pedestrian pathway located within the excess land on the west side of the I-375 Boulevard. These parcels are likely too narrow to accommodate future development but could create a pleasant pedestrian connection sheltered from traffic.
 - The two-way bike facility on the east side of the boulevard does not accommodate safe bike travel on the west side of the boulevard. This limits accessibility to the Central Business District and the Detroit Center of Innovation. Rather than crossing the boulevard to access the east-boulevard bike infrastructure, cyclists on the west side of the boulevard are likely to seek a more direct route by riding in a dangerous position alongside traffic and/or on the sidewalks, where they will disturb pedestrians. The excess land to the west of the boulevard north of Gratiot and the wide sidewalks of the west side of the boulevard could be studied to accommodate additional bike facilities.
 - We also believe that further clarity would be very beneficial around tie-ins to the surrounding bike network, especially bike infrastructure on Gratiot.
4. **Bedrock will also be eager to understand and minimize disruption from construction** as the I-375 Improvement Project moves into construction planning, and we plan to collaborate to ensure that the process is user-friendly for commuters and neighbors throughout the corridor.

MOVING FORWARD

Bedrock looks forward to contributing to the I-375 Improvement Project as a partner, as the I-375 corridor is a vital thoroughfare providing access to Downtown Detroit and all of the office, residential, retail, and other assets within the urban center of Detroit.

- As the largest employer and investor in the urban core, the Family of Companies has a vested interest in the positive experiences of the thousands of employees, residents and visitors who use the corridor to access downtown and adjacent areas.
- Bedrock is developing transformational projects that will bring even more businesses, visitors, and commuters into the urban core. These projects include:
 - The ground-up redevelopment of the site of the former Hudson's department store into a landmark mixed-use development with world-class office space, a hotel, a conference and event center, and residences
 - The transformation of the historic Book Tower into a mixed-use project featuring residential, hotel, event, and office space
 - The expansion of One Campus Martius to supply 337,000 SF of new cutting-edge office space, attracting new companies and enabling current Detroit-based companies to grow
 - The ground-up redevelopment of the Monroe Blocks site with an exciting mix of uses that will bring even more activity to Campus Martius and Cadillac Square
- The I-375 corridor is also vital to the next generation of Bedrock's transformational investments in Detroit:
 - **The Detroit Center for Innovation** at the corner of Gratiot and I-375. This mixed-use innovation campus anchored by the University of Michigan will foster high-growth entrepreneurship and attract new and innovative businesses to downtown Detroit.
 - **The Douglass site** at the interchange of I-75 and I-375, formerly the site of the Brewster Douglass public housing projects adjacent to Brush Park, which Bedrock intends to re-develop into a vibrant community that prioritizes affordability and equity of opportunity.

In summary, Bedrock looks forward to collaborating with MDOT on the following points:

- Vehicular connections into Brush Park and the Douglass Site from the I-375 Boulevard
- Strategies to reduce the width of the I-375 Boulevard temporarily or permanently
- Options for improved pedestrian and bike connectivity into Brush Park and the Douglass Site, and throughout the length of the I-375 Boulevard
- Construction planning and strategies to minimize disruption

Thank you for your consideration.

Kofi Bonner, CEO, Bedrock Detroit

3.2 Detroit Greenways Coalition



DetroitGreenways.org – P.O. Box 32013, Detroit, Michigan 48232
info@detroitgreenways.org, (313) 649-7249

February 19, 2021

To: Michigan Department of Transportation (via email)

Re: I-375 Environmental Assessment comments

We want to first state our appreciation for being a part of the stakeholder advisory committee. This was a very good opportunity to share our design concerns and see those addressed in the preferred alternative.

Our comments are:

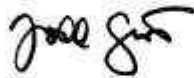
- **Cycle tracks.** All cycle track widths should be 12' wide, which is the [NACTO](#) desired width. We also want to see a commitment to not allow additional vehicle access points across the cycle tracks.
- **Brush Street bridge.** The Brush Street bridge should have bicycle facilities that connect Brush Park to the Montcalm cycle track. Ideally those bike facilities would extend north to the existing Brush Street bike lanes at Wilkins.
- **Montcalm cycle track west terminus.** Montcalm and Brush are often closed to traffic during stadium events. The Detroit Police Department has installed semi-permanent road closure equipment on both Montcalm and Brush that is not safe for bicyclists to ride over. These two issues lead to the Montcalm cycle track not being a safe connection to downtown.
- **Protected phasing for turns.** All right turns across cycle tracks should have protected phasing to reduce vehicle-bicyclist conflicts. Two-lane turns across crosswalks should also employ protected phasing to reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.
- **Reduced crosswalk widths.** We want fewer boulevard vehicle travel and turn lanes in order to reduce pedestrian crosswalk widths, especially on the boulevard and E. Jefferson (towards downtown.) We believe this could be justified given the expected traffic reductions from changed work commuting patterns.
- **Lafayette tunnel crossing.** We continue to advocate for a European-like bike and pedestrian tunnel connecting Lafayette under the boulevard which would allow non-stop travel with minimal conflicts. This could be a major gateway feature connecting downtown and the east side for non-motorized users.
- **Pedestrian signalization.** We want to minimize pedestrian delay throughout this project. Walk intervals should be maximized using "Rest in WALK". Pedestrian actuation should only be used when necessary. While pedestrian actuation may be desired during peak vehicle travel periods, pedestrian recall should be used outside of peak. Pedestrian travel shouldn't be penalized all of the time to accommodate short periods of peak vehicle traffic.
- **No Turn on Red.** No Turn on Red is preferred to increase motorist compliance with traffic control devices while improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. We are especially concerned about motorist compliance at dual turn slip lanes (e.g. I-75 service drive EB at new local connector, Gratiot WB to the boulevard NB.)

Our Vision is a strong, healthy, vibrant City of Detroit and surrounding region where a seamless network of greenways, green spaces, blue ways and complete streets is an integral part of people's active lifestyle including day-to-day transportation and recreation.

- **Reduced turning speeds.** We ask that shorter curve radii be used to reduce vehicle turning speeds across crosswalks and cycle tracks, especially at slip lanes.
- **Urban street vs. freeway.** We would like to see BMP infrastructure design that clearly informs motorists of the transition from freeway to urban street. This proposed alternative design basically informs motorists that the boulevard is practically a freeway north of Gratiot. We see motorists treating existing Detroit service drives as freeway extensions with their high design speeds. We also know of at least four bicyclist crashes recently (two fatal) on Detroit service drives with speed being a predominant factor.
- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure.** This project is a great opportunity to handle stormwater runoff from the abundant and adjacent impervious surfaces (e.g. Eastern Market, stadium parking, etc.). We would like the EA to identify land area for GSI BMPs. We would also suggest using GSI as a long linear green buffer between the boulevard and cycle track.
- **Climate Change.** This project should address its impact on carbon emissions related to climate change. This seems to be especially important given the US DOT's new commitment to addressing climate change as well as Governor Gretchen Whitmer's executive order for carbon neutrality.

Please contact us if you have questions or require any clarifications.

Sincerely:



Todd Scott
Executive Director

3.3 Detroit Mercy Law



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February 18, 2021

TO: MDOT

By Email: MDOT-I-375Corridor@michigan.gov

FROM: University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Environmental Law Clinic

RE: Comment Letter on I-375 Environmental Assessment and Preferred Alternative

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the I-375 Environmental Assessment and Preferred Alternative. We are writing in general support of this project, but with a few suggestions and concerns. With our suggested changes, this project can be more beneficial to the community, surrounding neighborhoods and will align with the goals of the *City of Detroit Master Plan*.¹

The initial construction of I-375 destroyed the historic district of Black Bottom, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City of Detroit.² The current project presents the opportunity to connect adjoining communities, restore important cultural and entertainment assets, while encouraging a vibrant pedestrian zone adequately served by public transportation.

Our primary concerns with the Preferred Alternative, which will be outlined further below, include: the proposed number of traffic lanes, lack of reliable public transportation connections, accessibility, walkability, and environmental impacts.

Number of Traffic Lanes

Our first concern relates to the proposed number of traffic lanes. The Preferred Alternative involves the removal of I-375, and in its place, building a six-lane boulevard at current street level from I-75 to Jefferson Avenue. As part of the plan, there will also be a four-lane boulevard from Jefferson Avenue to Atwater Street. While MDOT seeks to enhance connectivity with this approach, in our view, this model involves too many traffic lanes.

As of 2020, the City of Detroit is home to 664,139 people and research shows that 26% of households do not have access to their own vehicle.³ The City's population is declining at a rate of 0.44% annually and has decreased by 6.95% since the most recent Census, which recorded a population of 713,777 in 2010. If the number of these traffic lanes are reduced, there will be an increased demand for public transportation, carpooling, bicycling and walking.

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We recognize the Preferred Alternative incorporates a two-way cycle track connecting the Riverfront to the Montcalm Street extension to Gratiot Avenue. However, we believe the external lanes on both sides of the boulevards should be replaced with two-way bike lanes as opposed to only one on the side facing Lafayette Park. We appreciate the inclusion of sidewalks in the model that will be twenty feet wide on the west side of the boulevard and ten feet wide on the east side, as a design best-practice includes bike paths with an adjacent four-foot-wide unpaved area to accommodate walkers.⁴ However, if the model was amended to include a two-way bicycle lane on both sides, this would offer convenience and ease-of-use for cyclists who wish to ride on either side during their commute. If these changes are adopted to create more accessible non-motorized transit options, there will be less cars on the road and less of a need for a nine-lane boulevard (inclusive of turning lanes).

Moreover, the Preferred Alternative envisions a ten-foot two-way bike lane on the side facing Lafayette Park. The proposed width for these lanes is too narrow for usage and should be increased by a few feet. As suggested in a guide by the U.S. Department of Transportation, two-way bicycle paths should range "from eight feet to 13 feet wide."⁵ To avoid cyclists from being crammed next to one another, the width size of these lanes should increase to be on the higher end of design recommendations. Reducing the envisioned 9-lane boulevard (inclusive of turning lanes) would allow for adequate size bicycle lanes. Decreasing the vehicle traffic lanes will align with the demand for use of the road but also allows for multi-modal transportation. Multi-use lanes utilized by pedestrians and bikers, separate from other traffic, will benefit the community at large. Designated bicycle lanes would not only allow for safer routes for commuters, biking is a preferred activity for out-of-town visitors when exploring the City and neighborhoods.

Public Transportation

Our next concern is the Preferred Alternative's interface with the public transportation system. As noted above, many Detroit residents do not have access to cars and rely heavily on public transportation, carpooling, and walking. The Preferred Alternative should be amended to incorporate dedicated bus lanes, including infrastructure that can easily integrate with a rapid bus transportation system.

As of 2010, there were 2.6 million seniors living in Michigan.⁶ According to the 2010 census data, in the City of Detroit, 11% of the population comprises of senior citizens.⁷ As of 2016, 21.7% of the Detroit population are persons with disability.⁸ Seniors and people with disabilities are heavily impacted by a lack of reliable, efficient public transit. Detroit transit riders experience delays due to insufficient numbers of busses and routes, traffic density, improper route management, and lack of first and last mile connectivity. Numerous studies have demonstrated that coordinated planning and usage of multimodal transportation systems enhance the effectiveness of transportation networks.⁹ The UN-HABITAT Global Report on

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Human Settlements emphasizes that multimodal transportation contributes to enhancing the impression of mass transit and enabling sustainable urban mobility.¹⁰ As the *City of Detroit Master Plan* recognizes, “transportation systems provide the means to connect residents to each other...retail centers and other services.”¹¹ The Preferred Alternative should be amended to provide for more multimodal transportation and supporting infrastructure for more reliable bus transit.

A more efficient multimodal transportation plan will enhance the City of Detroit as a destination for out-of-town visitors, aligning with the *Master Plan Industrial Centers Goal 1*: making Downtown Detroit more of a destination.¹² The Preferred Alternative should provide for a transportation system that appeals to more visitors and residents. We acknowledge that the project will not allow for a complete redesign of the public transportation system in Detroit but see value in MDOT modifying the funding model of the Preferred Alternative to better allocate resources to public transit and better equip the City of Detroit for future transit development.

Finally, it is our understanding that SMART, DDOT, and DTE Energy are currently in the planning phase for the location of electric bus charging stations. We encourage MDOT to coordinate with these stakeholders. One of the charging stations is proposed for Larned near or in the footprint of the Preferred Alternative. We fully support the expansion of electric buses in the City and encourage all of the stakeholders to locate charging facilities so that they will not have to be moved during construction, saving expense and avoiding possible adverse bus route and rider impacts.

Accessibility

The Preferred Alternative should provide for greater accessibility. While the Preferred Alternative seeks to increase connectivity by adding the new I-75/I-375 Interchange, more can be done with respect to accessibility. In addressing this concern, MDOT should consider what the surrounding urban landscape will look like when the project is complete. The Preferred Alternative does not focus enough on creating walkable interconnectedness for the surrounding communities. Seamless connectivity is imperative to redress the separation that I-375 created between communities. Greater accessibility will achieve several of the *City of Detroit Master Plan* goals, including *Goal 1, Policy 1.2*, to “encourage development plans to connect dispersed and isolated districts, neighborhoods and communities through street and pedestrian improvements.”¹³ And rather than selling and developing all surplus land, leaving surplus land vacant for greenspace can provide a noise buffer and function as stormwater control.¹⁴

The Preferred Alternative should further be modified to better connect Eastern Market and Lafayette Park with the downtown core. The surplus land on the east side of the boulevard would be a good park or

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public space. These efforts will further achieve *Goal 3: Policy 3.2* in the *City's Master Plan*, a goal to "ensure convenient mass transit connections to parks and recreational facilities."¹⁵

With the new developments at University of Michigan's Detroit Center for Innovation and Brush Park, there will be a drastic increase in pedestrian and non-motorized traffic in the area.¹⁶ The Preferred Alternative should cater to the future needs of these new developments. While MDOT makes efforts to improve walkability by including countdown signals, refuge islands and protected left-turns, these components are not sufficient to truly connect the surrounding neighborhoods. We encourage MDOT to revisit and analyze the benefits that would result from adding further pedestrian walkways, connecting neighborhoods and decreasing the number of vehicle lanes.

Environmental Impacts

The Preferred Alternative does not adequately address environmental impacts from climate change and fails to promote a healthier ecosystem. Under the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA"), MDOT is required to assess climate impacts and to select the least harmful alternative. As outlined in the guidelines set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality, "climate change is a fundamental environmental issue, and its effects fall squarely within NEPA's purview."¹⁷ The guidelines further state that thoughtful consideration of climate change is important for agencies in order to justify and improve the quality of their decisions.¹⁸

Transportation is a major contributor of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases ("GHGs"). According to the US Energy Information Administration, the transportation sector is now the largest contributor to GHGs in the United States, ahead of electricity generation.¹⁹ Carbon dioxide makes up 95% of all transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.²⁰ These numbers are troubling because "greenhouse gases lead to warmer temperatures and all the hallmarks of climate change... more extreme weather, heat-related deaths, and increasing transmission of infectious diseases."²¹ MDOT should reconsider the number of traffic lanes in the Preferred Alternative and encourage less-polluting modes of transportation. Reducing vehicle trips into the downtown core and replacing those trips with transit or bicycles will decrease vehicle miles travelled and decrease GHG emissions.

MDOT should further assess climate change impacts relating to stormwater management. Stormwater management is one of the biggest water quality issues facing Michigan and the City of Detroit.²² The Preferred Alternative should increase green infrastructure through the creation of stormwater retention areas. By reducing the number of traffic lanes, the amount of pavement in the area will also decrease, slowing and reducing stormwater runoff. We are already experiencing more intense rain events in Detroit resulting from the warming climate. Higher intensity rain events have overwhelmed the stormwater

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management system in recent years leading to flooded roadways, basement flooding, and uncontrolled releases into the Detroit River. We encourage MDOT to work with SEMCOG, the City of Detroit, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and other stakeholders to incorporate green infrastructure stormwater management into the Preferred Alternative.

We acknowledge that the Preferred Alternative would decrease impervious surfaces by 9% from the status quo. However, stormwater runoff is a major and growing environmental concern in the City of Detroit. There is more work to do and decreasing vehicle lanes in the Preferred Alternative would also reduce impervious surfaces and lessen stormwater runoff and associated water pollution.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has found that public transportation emits significantly lower GHGs per passenger mile in comparison to private vehicles. The Department determined "the more passengers that are riding a bus or train, the lower the emissions per passenger mile. For instance, U.S. bus transit has about a quarter (28%) of its seats occupied on average and emits an estimated 33% lower greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile than the average U.S. single occupancy vehicle."²³ The Preferred Alternative should be amended to provide for increased transit options to address not only accessibility, but to help reduce GHGs.

Finally, to be consistent with the *Detroit Master Plan*, "priority should be given to those alternatives that reduce negative impacts on the environment and the City's residents."²⁴

CONCLUSION

Implementing these suggestions will help connect neighborhoods, boost economic activity in the project area, align with the goals of the *City of Detroit Master Plan*, and will be beneficial to both the I-375 project and the City of Detroit as a whole. Through this project, MDOT has the opportunity to reduce pollution, promote community connectedness, increase foot, bicycle and bus transit, and help the continued revitalization of the City of Detroit. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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Thank you for considering our comments.

Nicholas J. Schroeck

Director, Environmental Law Clinic
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law
schroenj@udmercy.edu
313-596-9817

On behalf of:

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law
Phyllis L. Crocker, Dean and Professor of Law

Transportation Riders United
Megan Owens, Executive Director

Motor City Freedom Riders
Idrees Mutahr, and Marisa Gies, Co-chairs of MCFR Board of Directors

¹ City of Detroit "Master Plan," adopted July 2009. <https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-05/Master%20Plan%20Text.pdf>

² Detroit Historical Society, "Encyclopedia of Detroit" <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/black-bottom-neighborhood>

³ University of Michigan, *Michigan News* "Hitchin a ride: Fewer American have their own vehicle" January 23, 2014 <https://news.umich.edu/hitchin-a-ride-fewer-americans-have-their-own-vehicle/>

⁴ Caltrans Highway Design Manual – Chapter 1000, Bikeway Planning and Design, January 2006, pg. 144.

⁵ Federal Highway Administration "Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide," May 2015. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/transportation/govt.ca/memo/116901502_Appendix.pdf

⁶ Government of Michigan Demographics Documents, https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/Demographics_404592_7.pdf

⁷ Census.gov – Data from 2010 United States Census - https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/Demographics_404592_7.pdf

⁸ Drawing Detroit, "Population with Disability: Populations Living with Disabilities and Poverty Overlap in Detroit," January 31, 2018 <http://www.drawingdetroit.com/tag/population-with-disability/>

⁹ SmartCity Press, "Multimodal Transport System – Enabling Efficient Access from First to last mile in Smart Cities," May 21, 2019 <https://www.smartcity.press/multimodal-transport-system/>

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ City of Detroit "Master Plan", page 55.

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¹³ City of Detroit 'Master Plan', page 36.

¹⁴ City of Detroit 'Master Plan', page 15.

¹⁵ Bloomberg CityLab "Detroit is Turning Vacant Lots into Sponges for Stormwater" Jessica Hester, June 24, 2016 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-06-24/in-detroit-vacant-land-can-help-mitigate-sewage-overflows-and-improve-water-quality>

¹⁶ City of Detroit 'Master Plan', page 47.

¹⁷ <https://detroit.curbed.com/detroit-development/2019/10/30/20939927/stephen-ross-dan-gilbert-michigan-innovation-center-detroit>

¹⁸ CEQ Final Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Effects of Climate Change in National Environmental Policy Act Reviews, page 2.

¹⁹ Id., page 3.

²⁰ <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/transportation-replaces-power-in-u-s-as-top-source-of-co2-emissions>

²¹ US Department of Transportation "Public Transportation's Role in Responding to Climate Change" January 2010 <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/PublicTransportationsRoleInRespondingToClimateChange2010.pdf>

²² NRDC, "Air Pollution: Everything You Need to Know," November 1, 2016 <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/air-pollution-everything-you-need-know>

²³ Great Lakes Now "The 2017 Regional Stormwater Summit," October 16, 2017

<https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2017/10/stormwater-is-one-of-the-biggest-water-quality-issues-facing-michigan/>

²⁴ Id.

²⁵ City of Detroit 'Master Plan', page 55.

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3.4 Greektown Casino Hotel



February 19, 2021

Mr. Paul C. Ajegba, P.E., Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
State Transportation Building
425 W. Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. Ajegba,

Greektown Casino-Hotel has reviewed the draft Environmental Assessment for the I-375 Improvement Project (the "EA") and is providing these comments for inclusion in the public record. I-375 provides the only direct highway access to Greektown Casino-Hotel, which is located immediately off the Lafayette Avenue exit. Accordingly, Greektown Casino-Hotel, its employees and guests will be significantly impacted by the proposed I-375 Improvement Project (the "I-375 Project" or the "Project"). We are therefore requesting that Greektown Casino-Hotel be included as a stakeholder in all planning phases of the Project to ensure that the I-375 Project proactively addresses our concerns on the front end with respect to design, phasing and construction. To that end, we are further requesting that the EA errata sheet include mitigation measures in the "Green Sheet" and other areas of the EA to specifically address the impacts of the I-375 Project on the Greektown Casino-Hotel.

As you may know, Greektown Casino-Hotel has been operating since 2000. We, together with the other two Detroit casinos, provide revenues to support approximately 18% of the City's annual budget. We also provide thousands of good union jobs and employ hundreds of City of Detroit residents. Along with many other businesses in the City, Greektown Casino-Hotel has been financially devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have twice been forced by government orders to close our operations these past 12 months, the first time for almost 5 months. In 2020, our revenues decreased by 58% from 2019. Even now, we are only permitted to operate at approximately 12% of capacity and can offer extremely limited amenities. Given the financial repercussions that Greektown Casino-Hotel has already suffered (and continues to suffer) during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact to its thousands of employees, many of whom have yet to be called back to work, we simply cannot endure any more significant disruptions to our operations. Additional losses to our revenues will be devastating and we may be unable to recover for years to come.

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The City of Detroit and MDOT have long understood how critical direct access is to the success of casino developments as both employers as well as a significant revenue contributor to the City's budget, as indicated by the proposed reconstruction of I-375 in the early 2000's to support the East Riverfront casino locations. Although the casinos were ultimately located elsewhere, the I-375 Lafayette Avenue exit is the only direct highway access for Greektown Casino-Hotel. We therefore cannot emphasize enough the direct impact of the I-375 Project solely on the Greektown Casino-Hotel, as both the MGM and MotorCity Casinos are readily accessible directly off of highways, and implore MDOT to take this into consideration, through the EA, planning, design, and construction phases of the Project.

In addition to the larger issue of overall highway access to the Greektown Casino-Hotel, we also noted that the Project identifies land abutting the Greektown Casino-Hotel Garage along the I-375 Service Drive between Monroe and Macomb Streets for Temporary ROW utilization during construction. It is our understanding that this temporary ROW is required for reconstruction of the sidewalk. This area is a main access point to the Greektown Casino-Hotel Garage and is used to access the Greektown Casino-Hotel. Further, any two-way conversions of Macomb and St. Antoine will also negatively impact access to the Greektown Casino-Hotel Parking Garage and the Greektown Casino-Hotel vehicular entrances.

The EA does not directly address what mitigation measures MDOT intends to take to ensure that we can remain open and accessible during the entirety of this Project and that to the extent highway access becomes unavailable for any period of time, that time period is limited. These actions are critical to us being able to maintain our operations and remain financially viable during this time period. Specifically, all that the "green sheet" states in this regard is as follows:

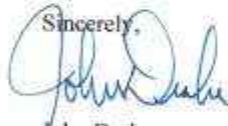
Maintenance of Traffic – During the Project's design phase, MDOT will develop a detailed traffic management plan that will outline how the Project will be built and how traffic will be managed during construction, including detour routes for any closures. To the greatest extent possible, access to the service drives and adjacent properties will be maintained throughout construction, with limited short-term closures as needed to reconstruct private I-375 Improvement Project [Environmental Assessment 117] driveways. All temporary vehicle, pedestrian, or nonmotorized detours will be signed, and notices will be placed in local media prior to the start of the detour.

Based on this description, it is critical that Greektown Casino-Hotel be allowed to participate in preparation of the traffic management plan. The Lafayette exit is the only direct highway access to Greektown Casino-Hotel, and the construction period of the new boulevard, as currently proposed, will cut off the main vehicular access point to our complex, as there is no other highway or large boulevard that connects Greektown Casino-Hotel to other downtown areas and the metro region in the same way. A reasonable alternative must be provided during any closure periods that provides for easy on and off access to the highway. Moreover, any closures that impact access to Greektown Casino-Hotel should be minimized as to time periods and prioritized for completion. We will also need sufficient notice so that we can advise our employees and guests of the issue and provide viable highway alternatives, and we need MDOT to work with us to provide ample signage for such alternatives during all affected time periods.

Greektown Casino-Hotel believes that the Project would have a direct negative effect on its operations, employees and revenues during the construction phases and that this impact has the potential to adversely affect us for years to come without proper mitigation. We recognize the value the I-375 Improvement Project will provide to the City of Detroit and the surrounding communities once completed. We have participated in the planning and discussion sessions concerning this Project for many years in order to communicate our concerns and ideas. Our desire is to continue to be collaborative and work with MDOT to move this Project forward, but in a manner that is as minimally disruptive to our employees and our patrons as possible. We therefore request direct inclusion in the EA errata for the "Green Sheet" and other areas of the EA. Greektown Casino-Hotel must be provided with reasonable ingress and egress to its complex during project construction, and mitigation efforts that are satisfactory for its employees and guests must be provided if the Project is to proceed.

We hope that MDOT will strive to mitigate the concerns identified in this letter, and we look forward to productively working together to that end. We will continue to work with MDOT and the City to ensure that the proposed Project considers Greektown Casino Hotel, its employees, guests and the important revenues that it provides to both the City and the State. We are confident that if we work together collaboratively and in partnership, with proper participation, notice and mitigation efforts, we can move this Project forward in a manner that is as minimally disruptive as possible.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and look forward to working with you. Please reach out to us with any questions at john.drake@pngaming.com or 313-309-7470. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Drake
VP and General Manager

3.5 Greektown Neighborhood Partnership



February 16, 2021

Mr. Paul C. Ajegba, P.E., Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
State Transportation Building
425 W. Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. Ajegba:

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership reviewed the draft Environmental Assessment for the I-375 Improvement Project and are providing comments for inclusion in the public record. As the environmental assessment and planning phase continues, we underscore the importance of working with and communicating with your constituents and the stakeholders who will be impacted most, ensuring that the project proactively addresses concerns on the front end in both design and construction. To that end, we are requesting that the Environmental Assessment errata sheet include mitigation measures in the "Green Sheet" and other areas of the EA which specifically address the impacts of the I-375 Improvement Project on the Greektown District.

The Greektown Neighborhood Partnership (GNP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the long-term economic and cultural vibrancy of Greektown, a prominent district in downtown Detroit. Through partnerships, we advance the equitable development of the district through community and economic development programs, all while celebrating our cultural roots. We advocate for the community, publicly representing the neighborhood and ensuring that Greektown's interests are served and considered. Greektown is the eastern gateway to downtown and encompasses the community bounded by Randolph Street to the west, Gratiot Avenue to the north, I-375 to the east, and Lafayette Street to the south.

The I-375 Improvement Project will greatly impact the future of our district in a variety of ways, as the following intends to describe. First, we have outlined our design considerations, principles, strategies, and goals for the future of our district through our *Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision*. We then detail our recent interactions with the Michigan Department of Transportation and other stakeholders on the proposed I-375 Improvement Project. Comments are provided on the potential design outcomes set against our goals for the district. Lastly, we explore concerns and considerations associated with project construction, and comment on the information provided in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA), ultimately making a final statement on Greektown Neighborhood Partnership's perspective on the proposed project at this time and request for mitigation measures to be included in the EA errata sheet.

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In September of 2019, the Greektown Neighborhood Partnership completed and shared the outcomes of a privately funded and community-led urban planning initiative, the *Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision*. This Framework was adopted as the neighborhood plan by the City of Detroit and was spearheaded by a group of stakeholders representing the neighborhood's businesses, organizations, cultural spaces, and families. The purpose of the *Framework Vision* is to unite the neighborhood, city leaders and planners, private developers, and other stakeholders behind a common vision for the future of Greektown. The Framework focused on five key categories: Public Realm, Mobility and Parking, Culture and History, Development Opportunities, and Neighborhood Experience. Design strategies are based on connecting to surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown core, increasing built density and activation, introducing new public spaces connected by activated pedestrian paths, and creating a mixed-use neighborhood. Armed with an implementable *Framework Plan* and riding significant momentum, Greektown Neighborhood Partnership is launching a number of initiatives related to public space, vertical development, programming and events, arts, culture, heritage, and mobility.

GNP engages with partners and stakeholders to prepare and coordinate several development projects in and around the district, including the I-375 Improvement Project, Detroit Center for Innovation, new Exchange residential development tower, streetscape improvements, and public spaces. Through the *Framework Vision*, our district has proactively prepared for this influx of construction programs and has defined how each may integrate with our neighborhood. Recognizing that the I-375 Improvement Project was a potential reality, whether in the immediate term or down the road, GNP worked with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the City of Detroit during the development of the *Framework Vision* to analyze how the I-375 Improvement Project could be incorporated into our future.

As part of the *Framework*, our planning team analyzed the mobility and circulation needs of Greektown to understand present and future challenges and opportunities stemming from downtown Detroit's development. We created several recommendations to support Greektown's economic development, including the restructuring of streets, transit, and planning priorities. As a principle, we sought to evolve Greektown's network of streets to better accommodate multi-modal and pedestrian movement. We worked to re-envision the street network and traffic patterns to improve flow and encourage multi-modal travel while enhancing the pedestrian experience on primary streets with new streetscape designs and activations. In general, our design strategies for propelling the district forward emphasize connecting Greektown to other parts of downtown and adjacent neighborhoods such as Lafayette Park, Eastern Market, and the Theater and Stadium Districts. Greektown's three most important corridors are Monroe Street, St. Antoine Street, and Brush Street. These primary corridors are identified for pedestrian enhancement, connectivity, neighborhood gateways, activation, and development.

In relatively recent history, Greektown's narrow streets were converted to one-way traffic to allow for greater traffic capacity heading in a single direction. Our *Framework Plan* aims to evolve that system with key principles of 21st century street design. First, we call for Greektown's historic street

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network to be studied for reconfiguration to once again allow for two-way traffic on some streets, if this is deemed appropriate, beneficial, and cost-effective with minimal adverse impacts to property owners. The City of Detroit's 2018 *Downtown Detroit Transportation Study* identified the majority of streets in Greektown for potential one-way to two-way street conversions, recommending to work with Greektown Neighborhood Partnership and our *Framework Plan*, in addition to MDOT, to identify and implement needed changes. This same study further recommended a Gratiot Avenue and Brush Street redesign, identifying Brush Street as a key pedestrian connection between Greektown and the stadiums. Our *Framework Plan* also calls for stronger pedestrian design for key corridors, including Monroe Street, St. Antoine Street, Brush Street, Beaubien Street, Randolph Street, and Gratiot Avenue. A complete streetscape improvement program for the length of Monroe Street from Randolph to I-375 is central to our success. The extension of this treatment to the proposed Boulevard upon its completion would be necessary for neighborhood connection and integration. All of these elements, and more, function in concert with the proposed I-375 Improvement Project and thus must be considered with any design and construction planning.

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership recommends through our *Framework Plan* to maximize the benefits of all potential construction projects including the proposed transition of I-375 being converted to an at-grade boulevard, recognizing opportunities for circulation and mobility improvements that accompany the project concept. The plans for I-375 should be harmonized with our neighborhood's expected traffic flow, and furthermore with the economic development priorities of business and property owners, both large and small. At this time, Greektown has no residents, but this will change soon with new residential development slated for within and nearby the neighborhood. We take those future residents' considerations into account.

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership has been an active member of the I-375 Improvement Project Local Advisory Committee (LAC), taking part in the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process over the last several years, with seven LAC meetings in total. The last LAC meeting was on September 17, 2019. Much of this work has focused on coordination with stakeholders to make refinements to Practical Alternatives as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA), exploring and addressing any environmental impacts associated with the project. GNP met with MDOT one-on-one on January 10, 2020. We were also present at meetings where MDOT presented the project to the Detroit Theater District Business Association on December 3, 2019 and the Greater Downtown Business Association on February 19, 2020. We understand that MDOT is seeking a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) as an outcome of the EA with Preferred Alternative 5B with Direct Lefts. We also attended the most recent online virtual event and public hearing on January 28 and 29, 2021, providing public comments to the draft EA.

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership believes that the Preferred Alternative presented largely achieves the project purposes and needs, as identified by MDOT. A delicate balance must be struck between the need for vehicular traffic flow timing, capacity needs, and non-motorized travel connectivity, as well as economic impacts. We believe that design with direct left turns is the optimal one. Other elements of the design presented should likewise encourage pedestrian and

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multi-modal connectivity, safety, and crossings. Supporting pedestrian activity is an essential goal of our *Framework Plan*. All Greektown destinations benefit when the streets are supportive and safe for pedestrians. Our planning team recommends that Monroe Street, St. Antoine Street, and Brush Street all be considered priority corridors for pedestrian-focused infrastructure. High priority intersections include Gratiot Avenue and Randolph Street, Gratiot Avenue and Brush Street, Randolph and Monroe Street, and connecting St. Antoine across Gratiot Avenue, as this crossing will be significantly impacted by traffic movements once the I-375 boulevard design is implemented. Greektown Neighborhood Partnership will consider any changes or adjustments to the proposed Preferred Alternative design in accordance with priorities for our district and our *Framework Plan*.

While Greektown Neighborhood Partnership recognizes the potential benefits of the design outcomes associated with the I-375 Improvement Project for Greektown, the construction of that design has the potential to impact our community in negative ways. These impacts could have grave consequences for the future of one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. With a rich cultural and architectural legacy, Greektown is a traditional center of ethnic commercial business and retailing, having served multiple communities in its 190-year history. Many businesses in our community have been here for generations and what makes Greektown especially unique is that it's distinctly Greek, with many Greek families still owning and running businesses in the district. It has nearly the largest, if not the largest, concentration of small business owners in the Central Business District. This is augmented by our partners in the district, Greektown Casino-Hotel and Bedrock. Today, we're proud to have over 30 individual property owners across our 72 parcels ranging in size and development type, many of whom are long-time multigenerational owners.

We understand that detailed information about project construction phasing and timing is unknown, as this will be determined during the planning phase of the project. The construction period of the new boulevard, as currently proposed, will cut off the main vehicular access point to our district. Unlike other impacted neighborhoods, there is no other highway or large boulevard that connects Greektown to other downtown areas and the metro region in the same way. This has an acute economic impact to our entire district. Without this direct access, which people have relied upon since I-375 was built in the 1960s, they may choose to visit other areas of downtown. The potential immediate loss to business revenue for restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, including the Greektown Casino, could be devastating. We also estimate a profound social loss for our organizations and places of worship due to this access issue. Longtime businesses and organizations that have come to characterize the identity of Greektown could be adversely impacted by the proposed construction logistics plan. Coupled with the present impact of COVID-19, Greektown's cultural identity and financial solvency are at stake.

GNP believes the project has a direct effect on the social and economic environment of Greektown during project construction and that this impact has the potential to negatively affect the district for years to come without proper mitigation and coordination. We realize that economic and social impact are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We request direct inclusion in the EA errata for the "Green Sheet" and other areas

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of the EA. Greektown must have reasonable ingress and egress to the district during project construction, and mitigation efforts that are satisfactory to the neighborhood and we look forward to continuing to work with MDOT on this project.

Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision Consideration

It is appropriate to cite the *Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision* in the EA, just as it recognizes the *Your! Detroit East Riverfront Study* and the *Eastern Market Neighborhood Framework Plan*, aligning with future development and placemaking in the project area. We request this inclusion and consideration in the EA and in future phases of project design and construction. Our *Framework Plan* lays out several public infrastructure projects that will maximize quality of life in Greektown, the most important being a streetscape improvement program for the entire length of Monroe Street from I-375 to Randolph Street. The streetscape program has the potential to alleviate hardship for the Greektown district. This project can and should be closely coordinated with MDOT and the I-375 Improvement Project. Greektown Neighborhood Partnership is currently working on pre-development planning for this program. Construction funding and timing can be coordinated to amplify benefits for the Greektown neighborhood, and we consider MDOT a great partner as we plan together for the future of Greektown and the Central Business District. Additionally, the potential excess land that could become developable as a result of this project directly abuts Greektown. Zoning, disposition, and use should be in coordination with and compliment the current and future use of the Greektown area.

Street Conversions

In the draft EA, we noted a planned two-way conversion of St. Antoine Street between Montcalm and Lafayette Streets, as well as a two-way conversion of Macomb Street from Beaubien to the new boulevard. Additionally, the EA noted corridors in our district identified with the highest reroute traffic in Greektown on Randolph, Brush, and Beaubien Streets, along with potential roadway or signal improvements. First, any street conversions in Greektown must take into account impacts to property owners and the likelihood that entries to parking garages and other businesses may need to be reconfigured to support two-way conversions. Any reconfigurations may require construction and subsequent costs to private property. All potential two-way conversions and studies must include a cost/benefit analysis that directly takes these impacts into account and works with property owners to assess the appropriateness, need, and feasibility of any potential changes to our street patterns, taking into account the realities for business operations on the ground. Working with the Greektown community for their vision of the future is essential. Second, we recognize that the City of Detroit's 2018 *Downtown Detroit Transportation Study* identified the majority of streets in Greektown for potential one-way to two-way conversion. We request that these studies are coordinated with the I-375 Improvement Project, as the street system is inextricably linked, and also because of the anticipated increase in traffic on Randolph, Brush and Beaubien Streets as a result of this project. Last, we request that all two-way conversion studies and implementation of those identified as appropriate and beneficial to Greektown are completed prior to the construction start of the I-375 improvement Project. This will allow the public to adapt to the new street



configuration and navigate access to the Greektown district and other areas of downtown, helping ease access challenges during project construction. We request these considerations be addressed in the "Green Sheet".

Gratiot Ave./Madison Ave./St. Antoine St. Intersections and Special Events Analysis

In the draft EA, we noted that the Preferred Alternative includes a reconfiguration of the intersection on Gratiot with that of St. Antoine and Madison Avenue. We underscore the importance of this intersection and the connectivity of St. Antoine across Gratiot for both vehicular and pedestrian flow as a priority for the Greektown district. Greektown requests that the "Green Sheet" be amended to include Greektown by name as a stakeholder in all studies related to this intersection and also to include Greektown in considerations of the special event area analysis, as Greektown is heavily involved in event traffic and subsequent economic impacts.

Greektown Casino-Hotel Consideration

In the draft EA, we noted that the project background includes a reference to a potential reconstruction of I-375 in the early 2000's to support direct access to proposed casino developments at the East Riverfront, which ultimately did not materialize. The EA furthermore states that the casinos were located elsewhere, and the character of development has changed in this stretch. We emphasize the importance of Greektown Casino-Hotel as the I-375 Improvement Project takes shape through the environmental assessment, planning, design, and construction phases. Both the MGM and MotorCity Casinos are readily accessible directly off of highways, and this project will render the Greektown Casino as the sole casino not accessible in this manner, both during and after project construction, resulting in substantial economic impacts. We also noted that the project identifies land abutting the Greektown Casino Garage along the I-375 Service Drive between Monroe and Macomb Streets for Temporary ROW utilization during construction. This area is a main access point to the Greektown Casino Garage and is used to access the Casino and the district as a whole. It is our understanding that this temporary ROW is required for reconstruction of the sidewalk. We also note that any two-way conversions of Macomb and St. Antoine will impact the Greektown Casino Parking Garage and the Greektown Casino Hotel vehicular entrances. We emphasize the critical need to work closely with the Casino on all elements of this project and to mitigate adverse impacts and maximize benefits.

Greektown Small Business Consideration

The draft EA notes that there will be business impacts during construction and that MDOT will mitigate access challenges to the fullest extent possible through maintenance of traffic and creation of a detailed traffic management plan. Again, we emphasize the potential adverse impacts to small business owners in Greektown during the construction timeline and the need to mitigate these impacts in order to preserve the financial and cultural vitality of our district. We also note that we have three places of worship in Greektown: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Old St. Mary's Catholic Church, and Second Baptist Church.

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We hope that MDOT will strive to mitigate the concerns identified in this letter, and we look forward to productively working together to that end. We are also encouraged by having the City of Detroit as a partner; Just as Greektown has supported the City as a light of vibrancy in times of economic downturn, we have confidence that we will be supported in our hour of need. We will continue to work with MDOT and the City to ensure that the proposed plan considers Greektown's future and is achieved in ways that positively impact the community. Our main goal is to ensure that long-time businesses survive and thrive during and after project implementation, and that public infrastructure projects as laid out in our *Framework Plan* come to fruition in close coordination and partnership with MDOT and stakeholders. We await public-facing community engagement opportunities for the I-375 Improvement Project and are happy to help facilitate this engagement with the MDOT team. Greektown Neighborhood Partnership appreciates the State's efforts to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive means of transit for people of all ages and abilities and looks forward to the continuation of Detroit's economic and cultural growth. Please reach out to us with any questions at melanie@greektowndetroit.org or 313.265.9266. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melanie A. Markowicz".

Melanie A. Markowicz
Executive Director

CC: Johnathon Loree, Senior Project Manager, Michigan Department of Transportation
Vince Keenan, City of Detroit Mayor's Office
Ron Brundidge, City of Detroit Department of Public Works

3.6 Senator Stephanie Chang



February 19, 2021

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

Via electronic mail: mdot-i-375corridor@michigan.gov

Dear Ms. Monsma,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the I-375 Environmental Assessment. I am a former resident of Lafayette Park and have followed this issue over the past six years while serving in the state legislature.

As you know, in 2017, when the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) was considering six different alternatives, my office conducted a door-to-door and online survey to learn what neighbors thought about the alternatives and about their preferences for what should take place if the freeway were to transition to a boulevard. I also held a townhall about I-375 on September 14, 2016. MDOT presented at this meeting.

When asked about the factors residents were most concerned about, survey respondents were fairly mixed in prioritizing walkability (31%), impact on landmarks (22%), safety impact (18%), noise (16%), and air quality (13%). One of our survey questions was: "If I-375 becomes a surface street, what would you prefer to see more of?" The answer choices were "more green space", "more residential", or "more commercial development". Fifty-four (54) percent of respondents chose green space, 26 percent chose residential, and 20 percent chose commercial.

I am pleased to see in the proposed alternative that the boulevard is located to the western side of where I-375 currently sits, and that there is significant green space on the eastern side closer to the existing neighborhoods, with bike lanes. However, the Environmental Assessment notes that there will be land that becomes available as I-375 becomes a boulevard, and that land could potentially be sold for development. Page 21 of the Environmental Assessment notes that "Another consideration was creating potential excess

property, which could be used for development opportunities alongside Lafayette Park on the east edge of the corridor.”

I urge MDOT and the City of Detroit to work closely with residents to determine the best and most appropriate use for any such excess land that becomes available, so that those who live closest and will be most impacted by noise, traffic, vibration, and air pollution are able to express their needs and concerns. Many Lafayette Park residents indicated they would much prefer green space to additional residential or commercial development. The construction of I-375 decades ago physically destroyed a vibrant Black community, and as I-375 is taken down, any and all needs and concerns of the current vibrant community must be heard.

While the proposed alternative seeks to advance walkability and connections to and from Downtown and to the Riverfront, I urge MDOT to consider recommendations from the community to ensure greater pedestrian safety, such as a reduction in number of lanes on the boulevard, a low speed limit, and even wider sidewalks. If more people are anticipated to be walking and biking to and from downtown or the river, we should take as many steps as possible to ensure that they will be safe doing so.

The Environmental Assessment indicates that there will be 27 impacted receptors for noise impact and that “there is no feasible way to build a noise wall that provides enough benefit for the receptors.” I understand that this is the case according to the analysis provided, but I urge MDOT and the City to work collaboratively with neighborhood residents to explore other possible solutions besides a noise wall to lessen the noise impact. I also hope that MDOT might consider revising the department handbook to allow greater flexibility regarding the cost per benefited receptor for future projects.

Page 46 of the Environmental Assessment notes that “there are no expected increases in traffic along Rivard Street due to the residential nature of the roadway and the lack of direct access to Gratiot Avenue.” I am somewhat doubtful that this assumption will hold true, especially if there is an effort to develop the old Woodward Academy or develop commercial properties on the excess land that is shown on the illustrations as green space.

The net number of parking space that will be removed (449) is alarming, especially knowing that visitors to Ford Field and Comerica Park sometimes park on residential streets to the east of I-375, interfering with residents’ ability to park near their homes. The combined impact of the removal of parking spaces and the potential for development that may lead to greater parking need is concerning. I hope that the City of Detroit will implement parking policies that would address parking concerns well in advance.

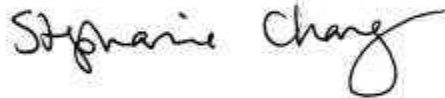
I am pleased to see that MDOT and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services plan to work with homeless individuals prior to construction to ensure that they are relocated and that their needs are met. The Environmental Assessment recognizes that the proposed change and potential future plans for the area may increase property values and rents, but states that improved pedestrian access, infrastructure connectivity and the environment outweigh the negative impact. I cannot agree that displacement due to rising

rents is less impactful to a person than walkability. I recognize that the City has taken important steps to address the rising cost of rent in the city, and I will also continue to try to advance policies at the state level related to housing justice.

As the project moves forward, I would urge MDOT to engage the community as fully as possible so that residents are aware of what the project will entail, what the impact of construction will be, and who they can contact with any concerns, and so they can express issues as they arise. Please consider me as a partner in getting information out to residents and assisting with communication. I hope that MDOT will develop a thorough plan for construction that minimizes negative impact on nearby residents, and that this plan will be developed in consultation with community members. Similarly, noise, vibration, pollution, and other quality of life protections during this construction phase will be important and I hope that MDOT will ensure that nearby residents are able to give their input.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Chang
State Senator, District 1
Minority Floor Leader

3.7 U.S. Environmental Protections Agency (EPA)



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

February 9, 2021

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:
Mail Code RM-19J

Ruth Hepfer
Federal Highway Administration - Michigan Division
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment for Improvements to Interstate 375 from Interstate 75 to Atwater Street, and Jefferson Avenue from Woodward Avenue to Rivard Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Dear Ms. Hepfer:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has received an Environmental Assessment (EA), dated December 22, 2020, for the above-referenced project. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The proposed project involves improvements to Interstate 375 (I-375) from Interstate 75 (I-75) to Atwater Street, and Jefferson Avenue from Woodward Avenue to Rivard Street. The study limits are I-75 to Atwater Street (from north to south) and Jefferson Avenue from Woodward Avenue to Rivard Street (from east to west); the study area also includes the I-375/I-75 interchange, the Gratiot Connector, and part of Gratiot Avenue. Three alternatives were presented in the EA:

- No Build Alternative. The proposed project, as described in the EA, would not occur.
- Alternative 4. Convert the I-375 freeway to a surface-level boulevard with four lanes in each direction south of Gratiot Avenue. Features of the mainline for Alternative 4 would include:
 - Transition the freeway from its existing depressed grade at Gratiot Avenue to meet the local street grade at Clinton Street;
 - Eliminate both service roads adjacent to I-375;
 - Shift the boulevard section to the east side and continue it as a local street south of Jefferson Avenue, connecting directly to Atwater Street;
 - Add a new riverfront connection east of Schweizer Place;
 - Construct a shared-use path connecting the River Walk to Antietam Avenue, providing a landscaped buffer between the path and the neighborhood side right of way (ROW) line;
 - Add a new local road along the western edge of the I-375 corridor from Larned Street to Clinton Street to improve mobility and reduce congestion along the boulevard;
 - Align the boulevard closer to the existing Schweizer Place alignment in a way that minimizes impacts to existing properties south of Jefferson Avenue as well as the historic Christ Church Detroit;

- Realign the I-375 freeway mainline through the interchange to reduce ROW impacts;
 - Realign mainline I-75 to minimize ROW impacts;
 - Realign northbound I-75 and northbound I-375 roadways so that northbound I-75 enters from the right, allowing I-75 traffic to utilize Mack Avenue;
 - Realign southbound I-75 and southbound I-375 roadways such that southbound I-75 is on the right-side of the freeway, allowing traffic from Mack Avenue to more safely access southbound I-75 and to improve operations;
 - Prohibit traffic flow to and from Mack Avenue interchange from I-375; and
 - Construct Gratiot Avenue as a grade-separated interchange going over I-375.
- Alternative 5. Alternative 5 includes the same components as Alternative 4, except it shifts the boulevard along the western side of the corridor instead of the eastern side.

FHWA and MDOT have selected Alternative 5 as the proposed project's preferred alternative. We appreciate FHWA and MDOT addressing many of our scoping comments¹ in the EA, including reuse of construction debris, using uncontaminated soil for fill, and using best management practices (BMPs) for air quality, noise, vibrations, erosion control, and stormwater management. FHWA and MDOT also propose to install green stormwater management infrastructure, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and green space with native vegetation. We also note that FHWA and MDOT have conducted extensive environmental justice (EJ) outreach with the City of Detroit and affected EJ communities. Based on our review of the EA, we recommend the following be included in the forthcoming Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents.

Pedestrian Safety

The EA states an engineering study will be conducted to consider the needs of pedestrians. The EA did not discuss the feasibility of installing pedestrian/bicycle tunnels and/or bridges, either in lieu of the proposed sidewalks, or in addition to the proposed sidewalks. We recommend FHWA and MDOT consider pedestrian tunnels and/or bridges when conducting the forthcoming engineering study.

We look to FHWA and MDOT to commit to the BMPs described in the EA. Please send us a copy of the Final EA and FONSI documents once they become available. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mike Sedlacek of my staff at 312-886-1765 or sedlacek.michael@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

KENNETH
WESTLAKE

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WESTLAKE
Date: 2021.02.09 15:12:50
-0600

Kenneth A. Westlake
Deputy Director, Tribal and Multimedia Programs Office
Office of the Regional Administrator

Cc: Janet Attarian, City of Detroit
Jonathan Loree, Michigan Department of Transportation

¹ See EPA Scoping letter, dated July 12, 2017.

3.8 U.S. Department of Interior



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Custom House, Room 244
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-2904

February 10, 2021

9043.1
ER21/0006

Russell L. Jorgenson
Federal Highway Administration
Michigan Division
315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation for Interstate 375 (I-375) Improvement Project, From I-75 south of Mack Avenue to Detroit Riverfront, Located in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Jorgenson,

The Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for Interstate 375 (I-375) Improvement Project, From I-75 south of Mack Avenue to Detroit Riverfront, Located in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, Job Number 130035 Control Section 82111, 82195, 82196, 82251, 82072 and the Section 4(f) evaluation starting on page 99 of the document.

Background Information

I-375 is a 1-mile-long freeway connecting the I-75 freeway directly to Jefferson Avenue. The EA describes and analyzes the proposed work and the measures taken to minimize harm to the project area. The proposed preferred alternative involves re-constructing the I-75/I-375 interchange with right-hand on and off ramps, braided ramps to and from Mack Avenue on I-75, a new bridge connecting Brush Park and Eastern Market, a street-level boulevard, a new local connector street, signalized intersections, nonmotorized improvements, and potential opportunities for future development resulting from possible excess property.

Section 4(f) Comments

Section 4(f) applies to both historic and recreational resources impacted by the project.

There are several Section 4(f) resources in the study area:

- Brush-Adelaide Park
- Antietam Park
- Dues Playfield
- Lafayette Plaisance Park
- Lafayette Central Park
- Grand Circus Park
- Harmonie Park
- Dequindre Cut Greenway
- RiverWalk/Iron Belle Trail
- Holy Family Roman Catholic Church
- Mrs. Solomon Sibley House
- Eastern Market Historic District

The Department's review concurs with the draft determination that the project's preferred alternative would result in temporary right-of-way impacts to both the Dequindre Cut Greenway and the RiverWalk/Iron Belle Trail.

There are two historic resources and one historic district on or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as reported in Section 4.6 Historic Resources that would be affected during construction of the boulevard. They include the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church at 641 Walter P. Chrysler Highway, the Mrs. Solomon Sibley House at 976 East Jefferson Avenue and the Eastern Market Historic District. Roadway and sidewalk construction will result in temporary impacts to 1.52 acres of frontage at Holy Family Roman Catholic Church and 0.17 acres of frontage at the Mrs. Solomon Sibley House. The Eastern Market Historic District may incur similar temporary impacts if work extends beyond the curb line. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will work to avoid and minimize impacts. Access will be maintained to the properties during and after construction. These temporary impacts will be mitigated with detours during construction and the work will not permanently affect the use, features, or activities of the Section 4(f) resources.

The Department concurs with the Section 4(f) de minimis impact findings for the affected properties, meaning that their proposed minor use will not affect occupancy, facilities, or functions, or create substantial noise or visual effects. The impacts would not be an adverse effect because no structures would be affected, and the Project would not alter or diminish, directly or indirectly, the characteristics and integrity of the properties that would otherwise qualify them for inclusion in the NRHP.

To assess impacts, MDOT coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which is the official with jurisdiction over Section 4(f) historic properties. The SHPO determined and documented that under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Project will have no adverse effect on historic properties.

If there are any additional concerns, please contact Christine Gabriel, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Regions 3, 4, and 5, National Park Service, 601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, or by email at christine_gabriel@nps.gov.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

JOHN
NELSON

John V. Nelson
Regional Environmental Officer

Digitally signed by JOHN
NELSON
Date: 2021.02.10 15:18:13
-05'00'

cc: NPS-MWR-PC

4 Public Comments: E-Mail, Letter, and Website Comments

Table 1: E-Mail, Letter, and Website Comments

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
Peter L. Conway	Email	I prefer that I-375 not be closed. I use it almost daily. I realize that Black Bottom was razed to make room for it, but making I-375 into a surface street will not bring Black Bottom back unless you are planning on tearing down Ford Field and Comerica Park as well.
Daniel Egan	Email	I second revisiting "alternative 6" (as explained by the 2nd caller tonight)
Terrence German	Email	I hope you are doing well. I want to again thank you and your colleagues for the Public Hearing event on Thursday January 28th. It was informative and insightful. Information on the project is always important to share. Hence, I am requesting a full document of the Environmental Assessment of the I-375 Improvement Project. Thank you for your time and consideration, Ms. Monsma. My contact information is provided below.
John Nguyen	Email	<p>Hi I am responding to the I-375 public comment.</p> <p>Just to give a background, I live in Downtown and will be walking across the I-375 surface road to get groceries from Meijer which is currently being under in Lafayette Park.</p> <p>First off I hope that there will be funding for this I-375 surface road because it not only removes a barrier between Downtown and Lafayette Park, but also makes it more walkable for residents, and provides more land usage for developments. It may also save money on bridge maintenance in the future. Also there are a lot of freeways and main roads to get to Downtown without I-375.</p> <p>The preferred alternative still seems rather wide, ideally there should be the least amount of lanes possible considering that many residents don't drive. Take Jefferson between Downtown and Hart Plaza for example, crossing there as a pedestrian is not fun. The center median should also be removed because it makes it more walkable and decreases maintenance (such as maintaining grass and trees). I can see a need for it for pedestrians if there are too many lanes. If a median is still required, maybe there can be an opportunity to run a sidewalk throughout the median or potentially creating a public space similar to Woodward between Campus Martius and Jefferson (although that would require a lower speed limit).</p> <p>So based on the Annual Average Daily Traffic AADT (AADT) the mid section of I-375 gets about 33k and lower section gets about 10k vehicles. It might be similar to the north side of Woodward in Downtown at 15k vehicles. It still may be possible to do 2 lanes north and 2 lanes south since traffic usually gets reallocated to freeways so the new I-375 surface road should have a lower AADT than it currently does as a freeway.</p> <p>That is all my comments for now.</p> <p>Regards,</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		John Nguyen
Anthony Vanky	Email	'You mention the development potential of "excess land". This has potential to reconnect neighborhoods. What is the process for the activation (or not) of those areas?'
Steven J Kelly	Email	Reading the well done 4 page information about the proposed I-375 project, I don't see anywhere the estimated cost and where the money will come from? Federal? State? City? How much money is being planned to throw into this hole (and I imagine the cost of 'fill' alone will be extraordinary to bring it up to grade level)?
Theresa Clayton	Email	I'm just receiving the "Guide to the Environmental Assessment and Opportunities to Engage" newsletter. It's February and the meetings were scheduled for January 28. When will the next set of public meetings be held? You need to reschedule additional meetings because the newsletter arrived late and I was definitely unaware of any other advertisements.
Anthony Vanky	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transformation to an avenue to a boulevard running N/S between Lafayette Park and Greektown is quite wide without a clear sense of traffic calming for pedestrians crossing this future avenue. Many such roads like sections of 14 Mile Road are quite pedestrian unfriendly, with infrequent lights and crossings. The speeds, as a result, are higher than the posted 45 MPH as a result. Traffic calming, particularly with residential developments adjacent to the project, are needed. • While much conversation has been about making the land near I75 "productive", there are quite wide greens-aces in the Lafayette Park/Greektown section and toward the River, which may provide opportunities for development to restitch these neighborhoods back together. For instance, an original proposal for the Boston Big Dig also proposed using several blocks along the now Greenway were to include buildings to help reconnect neighborhoods. Although this may find resolution in the design phase, this has implications on the proposal now. • There have been multiple instances where impacts to automotive traffic have been discussed. However, I have not heard similar discussions about bike and pedestrian impacts.
Laurie McLean	Email	I am a neighbor. I live on Saint Aubin, exactly 1 mile from my workplace at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan on E. Lafayette. I moved to downtown Detroit to be within walking distance from my office. It's a bonus that I'm also within walking distance of Greektown, the Riverfront and Eastern Market. Working at Blue Cross has given me ample opportunity to walk between our building on Lafayette and our offices at the Ren Cen. I am very familiar with crossing Jefferson Ave at Beaubien. This is frankly a terrifying experience that I hate! It takes two cycles of the traffic lights to get the whole way across. It is often iffy if you will be able to get across the South section between the median and the Ren Cen before the traffic commences from the four lanes held at the traffic light. In addition, cars turning right from Beaubien to Jefferson frequently jump the light disregarding pedestrians in the crosswalk. On the other hand, crossing I-375 using the bridge over the freeway on Lafayette is safe and easy.

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>I understand the emotional aspect of this project, the destruction of Paradise Alley and the barrier created between what was Blackbottom and is now Lafayette Park and Elmwood. But, if worsening the separation of the local neighborhoods and downtown is the goal, this proposal couldn't be better!</p> <p>There will be no easy way to cross this new huge traffic monster from my home to my work or to entertainment at Greektown. The mess created on Gratiot will also create a barrier between our neighborhoods and Eastern Market. Don't forget that access to the safety of the Dequinder Cut is limited to a few widely separated entrances. Most people who live in Lafayette Park and Elmwood cross Gratiot to get to Eastern Market.</p> <p>My main concern with this plan is pedestrian safety for the neighbors. I'm also concerned with traffic noise and air quality from exhaust as a result of creating such traffic density at the neighborhood grade.</p> <p>To me, this seems like two wrongs not making right and I'm really disappointed the proposal got this far. It makes no sense and is an expensive disaster in the making.</p>
Jacob Graham	Email	<p>To whom it concerns,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the I-375 removal and modernization project in downtown Detroit. My name is Jacob Graham and I live in the City of Detroit in Islandview. I am concerned about the ramifications that MDOT's "preferred alignment" will have on pedestrian safety and the future of the Downtown / Lafayette Park area.</p> <p>MDOT's proposed design optimizes for the rapid movement of vehicles from regional freeways into and out of downtown Detroit, prioritizing the needs of commuters coming into Detroit from other communities. I believe that the proposed design does not serve the current needs of existing and future neighbors and Detroiters in general, and am advocating for an alignment that is inclusive of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An overall reduction in street width. This includes the removal of one lane in each direction, and a one foot reduction in lane width across all lanes, to promote slower traffic speeds. A four-lane road with 10 foot wide lanes is much more appropriate for urban environments and will move nearly as much traffic as the existing six lane plan. 2. Instituting a speed limit no greater than 35 miles per hour, especially south of Gratiot Avenue. 3. Allocation of additional width to the East sidewalks along the Boulevard to support ground-floor tenants of future mixed use developments. This can be done by using excess ROW from the above considerations, or reduction on the West sidewalks, which are adjacent to parking garages that lack active ground-floor uses and do not benefit as much from foot traffic. 4. Inclusion of metered street parking and loading zones for delivery and ride hailing services. These features will act as a buffer

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>between traffic and the sidewalk, and help support future ground-level retail and mixed-use development. If MDOT is unwilling to reduce the overall width of the built boulevard, converting travel lanes to street parking in the short term could simulate a narrower boulevard and improve the experience of pedestrians while preserving MDOT's ability to utilize lanes for travel in the future. Alternatively, if the reduced width proves to effectively move traffic and the street parking is deemed to be in excess, it could be turned into public space.</p> <p>5. Establishment of an intentional, transparent, and collaborative approach to define the future of the excess land that will be available for development after the construction of I-375. MDOT, the City of Detroit, and local agencies must acknowledge that the construction of I-375 disenfranchised, demolished, and displaced the businesses and property of Detroiters, especially Black Detroiters. Development of this land must be inclusive and approachable to Detroit residents.</p> <p>6. Enhanced safety for pedestrians and cyclist traffic crossing the boulevard on east-west streets and arterials. This includes curb extensions, textured pavement in crosswalks, and the removal of all vehicle slip lanes planned near excess ROW that is planned for future mixed-use urban development. These facilities will help drive towards MDOT program "Toward Zero Deaths" and the City of Detroit "Streets for People" campaign.</p> <p>MDOT has the opportunity to design a pivotal project that rights the previous wrongs of demolishing Black Bottom for I-375 by creating a more intentional development that is future oriented and considers the wishes and aspirations of all Detroit residents.</p> <p>Please consider our above points and design a safer alternative alignment that removes one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction, and present it to the public for consideration and feedback.</p> <p>Thank you, Jacob Graham</p>
Adina B. Pergament	Email	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the I-375 removal/improvement project in downtown Detroit. My name is Adina Pergament and I live in Oak Park, just outside the city and work downtown. I am highly invested, both personally and professionally, in creating and fostering a Detroit that is walkable, bikeable, and attractive for ALL people to live, work and play in. I am concerned about the ramifications that MDOT's "preferred alignment" will have on pedestrian safety and the future of the Downtown / Lafayette Park area.</p> <p>MDOT's proposed design optimizes the rapid movement of vehicles from regional freeways into and out of downtown Detroit, prioritizing the needs of commuters coming into Detroit from other communities. I believe that the proposed design does not serve the current needs of existing and future neighbors, businesses in the</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>area, and Detroiters in general, and am advocating for an alignment that is inclusive of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An overall reduction in street width. This includes the removal of one lane in each direction, and a one foot reduction in lane width across all lanes, to promote slower traffic speeds. A four-lane road with 10 foot wide lanes is much more appropriate for urban environments and will move nearly as much traffic as the existing six lane plan. A road that is, sidewalk edge to sidewalk edge, 125 ft will divide Lafayette Park/Eastern Market from the downtown much the way that Jefferson does to the RenCen/Riverfront. A road that you need a skyway to cross does not make for a vibrant, walkable/bikeable city. 2. Instituting a speed limit no greater than 35 miles per hour, especially south of Gratiot Avenue. 3. Allocation of additional width to the East sidewalks along the Boulevard to support ground-floor tenants of future mixed use developments. This can be done by using excess ROW from the above considerations, or reduction on the West sidewalks, which are adjacent to parking garages that lack active ground-floor uses and do not benefit as much from foot traffic. 4. Inclusion of metered street parking and loading zones for delivery and ride hailing services. These features will act as a buffer between traffic and the sidewalk, and help support future ground-level retail and mixed-use development. If MDOT is unwilling to reduce the overall width of the built boulevard, converting travel lanes to street parking in the short term could simulate a narrower boulevard and improve the experience of pedestrians while preserving MDOT's ability to utilize lanes for travel in the future. Alternatively, if the reduced width proves to effectively move traffic and the street parking is deemed to be in excess, it could be turned into public space. 5. Establishment of an intentional, transparent, and collaborative approach to define the future of the excess land that will be available for development after the construction of I-375. MDOT, the City of Detroit, and local agencies must acknowledge that the construction of I-375 disenfranchised, demolished, and displaced the businesses and property of Detroiters, especially Black Detroiters. Development of this land must be inclusive and approachable to Detroit residents. 6. Enhanced safety for pedestrians and cyclist traffic crossing the boulevard on east-west streets and arterials. This includes curb extensions, textured pavement in crosswalks, and the removal of all vehicle slip lanes planned near excess ROW that is planned for future mixed-use urban development. These facilities will help drive towards MDOT program "Toward Zero Deaths" and the City of Detroit "Streets for People" campaign. <p>Streets for People City of Detroit</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>The City of Detroit is developing Streets for People, a transportation plan with a singular focus — to make it e...</p> <p>7. Given the scale of the project and the construction timeline slated for years into the future, I recommend a more comprehensive public engagement process that brings to the table more Detroit voices and increased engagement with neighbors. The current process has been shallow in its engagement and feels like a box-check rather than genuine engagement.</p> <p>MDOT has the opportunity to design a pivotal project that rights the previous wrongs of demolishing Black Bottom for I-375 by creating a more intentional development that is future oriented and considers the wishes and aspirations of all Detroit residents.</p> <p>Please consider our above points and design a safer alternative alignment that removes one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction, and present it to the public for consideration and feedback.</p> <p>Thank you, Adina</p>
<p>Signed,</p> <p>X. Andrew Stromme X. Devon Malloy X. Dan Lenz X. Emilie Eros X. Sarah Craft X. Kay-Anne Reed X. Ziggy Allenlundy X. Megan Zabik X. Nithin Vejendla X. Veronica Head X. Zoe Yeshayahu X. Matthew Cargille X. Dustin Kang X. Imran Mumtaz X. Allison Murdock X. Caleb Conley X. Katherine Emley X. Madeleine Gazzolo X. Simrit Jhita X. Sarah Smith X. Alessandro Uribe-Rheinbolt X. Anton Buri X. Hannah Merten X. Lauren Hoffman X. Timothy Morris X. Mike Schutte X. Ann Marie Diener X. Joe Penn X. Eileen Iannone X. Winson Law</p>	Email	<p>Community of Detroit Entrepreneurs Public Comment on Proposed I - 375 Preferred Boulevard Alignment</p> <p>As members of the entrepreneurial community in Detroit, we believe that the proposed 100' roadway alignment of the I-375 Boulevard project is excessively wide, which endangers pedestrians and cyclists, does not deliver on the goal of re-stitching Detroit's former Black Bottom community, and ultimately limits a culture of connectivity and accessibility that is essential to foster entrepreneurship and economic growth. We believe that this project follows outdated road design and traffic management principles that damage connection and sense of place due to the width and vehicle-oriented nature of the preferred alignment. That said, the I-375 reconstruction project has great potential to be restorative for the community and catalytic for entrepreneurship and economic growth if several adjustments are made.</p> <p>Our community in Detroit is comprised of many rising entrepreneurs and innovators, a majority being residents of the City of Detroit, and who are working in Detroit at startups, nonprofits and in other innovative spaces. We believe that the built environment actively shapes the success and retention of entrepreneurs and innovators, and that oftentimes Detroit's startup ecosystem is held back by a history of divisive planning decisions that limit connectivity and ease of access. Many of us live car-light or car-free, and experience firsthand the difficulties of navigating wide boulevards and avenues on foot or bike. We are advocating that MDOT reconsider the proposed design to reduce the width of the boulevard and design a road that feels safe for pedestrians and encourages high-quality urban development between downtown and the east side of the city.</p> <p>MDOT's proposed design optimizes for the rapid movement of vehicles from regional freeways into and out of downtown Detroit,</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
X. James Reina X. Alec Persky-Stern X. Dana Franco X. Priyanka Jain X. Lyndon Bowen X. Caroline Morin X. Kelly Kang X. Joanna Jorgensen X. Christina Wang X. Rana Mohamed X. Kendall Nash X. Leah Ford X. Alex Tabing X. Brittany Eshelman X. Justine Kim X. Christina Ridella X. Madeleine Ringwald X. Julia Kortberg X. Gilberto Orozco X. Javier Castillo		<p>prioritizing the needs of commuters coming into Detroit from other communities. We believe that the proposed design does not serve the current needs of existing and future neighbors and Detroiters in general, and are advocating for an alignment that is inclusive of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. An overall reduction in 3. street width. We're asking for the removal of one lane in each direction, and a one foot reduction in lane width across all lanes, to promote slower traffic speeds. A four-lane road with 10 foot wide lanes is much more appropriate for urban environments and 4. will move nearly as much traffic as the existing six lane plan. 5. 2. 3. Instituting a speed limit 4. no greater than 35 miles per hour, especially south of Gratiot Avenue. 5. 3. 4. Allocation of additional 5. width to the East sidewalks along the Boulevard to support ground-floor tenants of future mixed use developments. This can be done by using excess ROW from the above considerations, or reduction on the West sidewalks, which are adjacent to parking garages 6. that lack active ground-floor uses and do not benefit as much from foot traffic. 7. 4. 5. Inclusion of metered street 6. parking and loading zones for delivery and ride hailing services. These features will act as a buffer between traffic and the sidewalk, and help support future ground-level retail and mixed-use development. If MDOT is unwilling to reduce the overall width 7. of the built boulevard, converting travel lanes to street parking in the short term could simulate a narrower boulevard and improve the experience of pedestrians while preserving MDOT's ability to utilize lanes for travel in the future. Alternatively, if the 8. reduced width proves to effectively move traffic and the street parking is deemed to be in excess, it could be turned into public space. 9. 5. 6. Establishment of an intentional, 7. transparent, and collaborative approach to define the future of the excess land that will be available for development after the construction of I-375. MDOT, the City of Detroit, and local agencies must acknowledge that the construction of I-375 disenfranchised,

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>8. demolished, and displaced the businesses and property of Detroiters, especially Black Detroiters. Development of this land must be inclusive and approachable to Detroit residents.</p> <p>9.</p> <p>6.</p> <p>7. Enhanced safety for pedestrians</p> <p>8. and cyclist traffic crossing the boulevard on east-west streets and arterials. This includes curb extensions, textured pavement in crosswalks, and the removal of all vehicle slip lanes planned near excess ROW that is planned for future mixed-use urban development.</p> <p>9. These facilities will help drive towards MDOT program "Toward 10. Zero Deaths" and the City of Detroit "Streets 11. for People" campaign.</p> <p>12.</p> <p>7.</p> <p>8. Given the scale of the project</p> <p>9. and the construction timeline slated for years into the future, we recommend a more comprehensive public engagement process that brings to the table more Detroit voices and increased engagement with neighbors. The current process has been shallow in its engagement</p> <p>10. and feels like a box-check rather than genuine engagement.</p> <p>11.</p> <p>When we as members of Detroit's entrepreneurial community envision a future for our city that fosters innovation and community, we think of places where people are prioritized over automobiles, and where Detroiters are able to easily connect, work together, innovate, and grow businesses. MDOT has the opportunity to design a pivotal project that rights the previous wrongs of demolishing Black Bottom for I-375 by creating a more intentional development that is future oriented and considers the wishes and aspirations of all Detroit residents.</p> <p>Please consider our above points and design a safer alternative alignment that removes one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction, and present it to the public for consideration and feedback.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Signed,</p> <p>X. Andrew Stromme X. Devon Malloy X. Dan Lenz X. Emilie Eros X. Sarah Craft X. Kay-Anne Reed X. Ziggy Allenlundy X. Megan Zabik X. Nithin Vejendla X. Veronica Head</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		X. Zoe Yeshayahu X. Matthew Cargille X. Dustin Kang X. Imran Mumtaz X. Allison Murdock X. Caleb Conley X. Katherine Emley X. Madeleine Gazzolo X. Simrit Jhita X. Sarah Smith X. Alessandro Uribe-Rheinbolt X. Anton Buri X. Hannah Merten X. Lauren Hoffman X. Timothy Morris X. Mike Schutte X. Ann Marie Diener X. Joe Penn X. Eileen Iannone X. Winson Law X. James Reina X. Alec Persky-Stern X. Dana Franco X. Priyanka Jain X. Lyndon Bowen X. Caroline Morin X. Kelly Kang X. Joanna Jorgensen X. Christina Wang X. Rana Mohamed X. Kendall Nash X. Leah Ford X. Alex Tabing X. Brittany Eshelman X. Justine Kim X. Christina Ridella X. Madeleine Ringwald X. Julia Kortberg X. Gilberto Orozco X. Javier Castillo
Jeffrey Nolish, Detroit Disability Power	email	<p>My name is Jeffrey Nolish and I am the policy director for Detroit Disability Power. I wanted to make a public comment on this project on behalf of our disability communities. A few weeks ago, I had access to a presentation from MDOT notifying us of the project and as I listened, I thought about demographics and I wanted to know if MDOT was engaging local disabled residents and tracking disability information. There is a diverse disability group in Detroit and I wanted to make sure everyone's voices are included.</p> <p>I'd like to know if MDOT has mapped out assisted living facilities in the impact, and surrounding, areas. Surely someone at MDOT has taken this into consideration. Recently, I learned that there are no pedestrian access lights in this design. With youth, elders, people</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>with disabilities close by, no pedestrian friendly lights strikes me as a huge issue.</p> <p>I don't think it's a good idea to create a walking path through seven lanes of traffic. It makes people uncomfortable. I understand you have businesses who want the traffic to come here. However, you are trading external access for internal, immediate access. You should consider pedestrian plans for going over or under the street.</p> <p>I understand the ball is rolling, but I really want MDOT to understand that people with disabilities should not be an afterthought. When you do disability friendly design, you design for everyone. Disability friendly design should be a forethought. We've seen so much crisis this last year and we'd really like to move this project along on a better foot.</p>
Melanie A. Markowicz	Letter	7 page letter
Nicholas J. Schroeck	Letter	7 page letter
Corey Leon	Website Comment	<p>I am in favor of the plan to turn I-375 into an at-grade boulevard. As a Lafayette Park neighborhood resident, I like the proposal to connect Gratiot and Jay street. 1) The development space north of Montcalm and east of M-375 is rather land locked. There will likely no access to the site from M-375, Montcalm is a small 2 way street, Rivard is too short to allow an access point and the New Local Connector is boulevard limiting access from traffic going northwest. Such a large site could generate an overwhelming amount of traffic. 2) Improve how to get onto I-75 southbound from Eastern Market and north Lafayette Park. It appears that one would have to go up to Mack or down Gratiot to the new M-375 boulevard. I suggest the route should be the New Local Connector, turn left on the southbound I-75 service drive and then a NEW RAMP east of Beaubien allowing southbound service drive access to the southbound M-375 connection into the freeway. 3) Allow left turns from northbound Gratiot onto M-375. Someone caught traveling north on Gratiot east of St Antoine will not be able to get onto M-375 for quite awhile. If they don't make an illegal left, they are stuck either turning right onto southbound M-375 to Clinton and doing a u-turn at the light (allowed?) or, because of the median on Gratiot, turning left on Russell and going up to Mack and then proceeding either north or south. Seems much easier to allow a left from northbound Gratiot onto M-375! 4) Below grade parking is very expensive in part due to the excavation necessary. Instead of filling in the below grade development areas, leave them at their current depth. Of course new streets like Clinton, Monroe and the streets connecting Montcalm and the New Local Connector will be at grade but don't fill in those middle parts. Allow potential developers to have a "fill allowance" - if they want to utilize the below grade space created, the State reduces the price based on the savings of filling the space.</p>
Julia Schlau	Website Comment	Overall, the preferred alternative presented on February 19th is a great improvement from previous iterations. I've outlined my main

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>concerns:</p> <p>1. Lacking Cross Neighborhood Connections</p> <p>In the preferred alternative connections are poor between the adjacent neighborhoods (Lafayette Park, Eastern Market, Downtown, Brush Park). I've specified a few missed opportunities below:</p> <p>Gratiot + Orleans Intersection is overly complicated for local traffic and not at all pedestrian friendly. I am advocating for increased access between Eastern Market and Lafayette Park.</p> <p>Riopelle has the potential to become a thru street across Gratiot connecting Eastern Market to Lafayette Park for both local traffic and pedestrians.</p> <p>It is a huge missed opportunity to not connect the boulevard to Brush Park, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. It's non-sensical, car-oriented, commuter-oriented, and dangerous.</p> <p>The bicycle lanes dead end at I-75 - this is non-sensical and dangerous. Bike lanes are not effective unless they are connected.</p> <p>2. Car-Oriented and Commuter-Oriented Boulevard</p> <p>The boulevard is far too wide for the urban condition. Detroit is full of wide, underutilized boulevards - why are we creating another one rather than taking an opportunity to create something wonderful? Something more like Woodward south of I-75 would be more appropriate (3 lanes in either direction).</p> <p>People live here - it is crucial to think about the short distance travel between neighborhoods that residents need to make alongside the commuter traffic. It is clear that current and future residents of this area have a lower priority in this plan than residents of other cities and areas who commute. That's not right.</p> <p>The boulevard along BCBS property is not pedestrian friendly and should be re-evaluated. This boulevard should serve more than the immediate needs of one specific stakeholder - I think a better compromise can be reached.</p> <p>3. Environmental Assessment</p> <p>What requirements are outlined in the environment assessment to lower the amount of pollution created from single occupant vehicles? "Minimizing idling car time" is not a valid or big enough improvement.</p> <p>Is there a plan for providing buses along this route that could minimize the number of single occupant vehicles on the boulevard? This is paramount to the success of the boulevard.</p> <p>It was mentioned that the trees will be replaced 1:1 for any that are</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>removed in the construction process - the number of trees should be significantly increased considering the changing streetscape and age of existing trees.</p> <p>As a note, I did not receive the mailed flier for the public meeting until a week after the event. I think there could have been a better effort to inform the local community (I found out through a neighbor posting on Next Door despite being heavily involved).</p> <p>Again, this is a huge improvement from existing conditions and previous iterations presented. Unfortunately, this is not progressive enough to make the new boulevard a nice place to walk, bike, or enjoy any future activity along.</p> <p>Hi to John and the team, I hope everyone is doing well. Thank you, Julia Schlau</p>
Gregory Rice	Website Comment	The construction of I-375 razed/destroyed Black owned businesses . Also the adjacent Black neighborhood (Black Bottom) on the near East side was razed/destroyed at the same time and to make room for "middle class housing". I think any plan should include incentives/opportunities for Black owned businesses in this area of redevelopment.
Daniel Hellebuyck	Website Comment	I feel that the I-375 reconstruction to a boulevard is a waste of resources when there are so many other MDOT roads in Detroit and Southeast Michigan that need attention- especially in these recessionary times where COVID has permanently sapped resources and delayed much needed construction projects. I think a better alternative would be to reconstruct the present depressed I-375 freeway to include several plazas in place of at-grade intersections as well as a plaza over the current Gratiot connector. . The current embankments could be "walled up" to free up space. The concept would be similar to I-696 in Oak Park. This concept would achieve reducing the footprint of I-375, provide more green space, and better facilitate traffic to and from the Downtown Detroit area.
Evan Lock	Website Comment	<p>The boulevard is much too wide (9 lanes!) It would be nearly impossible for pedestrians or cyclists to cross the road safely. Why does travel require a left turn lane when there is a divided median further down the road that could be used for standard Michigan-left turns?</p> <p>The protected PBL lane is welcome and appreciated. Landscaping and green space should be of larger emphasis.</p>
Patrick Jones	Website Comment	The medians on the boulevard are very narrow. I know the engineers on the project are looking at their antiquated traffic planning manuals and finding the prescribed number of travel lanes and best practices for turning lanes, but we aren't living in the 1970s anymore. The illustrative cross section on the public hearing brochure shows 6 lanes of traffic when counting turning lanes. Can you imagine the dreary clusterfuck of exhaust and pavement when crossing 6 lanes as a pedestrian? The state is absolutely making the correct move to remove I-375 and replace it with a boulevard, but let's invest so that the boulevard is worth it—so that the boulevard is a value added outcome to the project, not an incidental feature or an afterthought. I don't know if Larry the traffic engineer

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		really knows the difference! The greatest boulevards in the world are monumental, and they also simultaneously achieve smooth traffic flow. Boulevards from Paris to Beijing to Buenos Aires put the state's current design to shame. If they can do it in Beijing, we can do it in Detroit. Please make a wider boulevard median so that it can be robustly planted with trees that will have the space to grow. Some American precedents for consideration: East Parkway in Memphis, Bidwell Parkway in Buffalo, Park Presidio Boulevard in San Francisco, Napoleon Avenue in New Orleans.
Alice Bagley	Website Comment	The current plans for I-375 still leave way more travel lanes than necessary. Moving forward to combat climate change there is every reason to imagine that such wide roads will become a more liability than asset. We should take this opportunity to reduce the amount of pavement by at least a few more lanes and create more green space for stormwater and heat mitigation.
Ted	Website Comment	<p>We should look to remove at least one more motor vehicle travel lane to make way for a two way cycle track on both sides of the street. If not that, take two lanes to allow for dedicated public transit to run quickly and unimpeded on the new street.</p> <p>Additionally, the intersections should be constructed in the fashion of a Dutch roundabout. One where the mobility of pedestrians and cyclists are prioritized and allows for much safer travel in the area. This would eliminate the need for turning lanes entirely which will free up more space for greenspace/trees and multi-modal travel.</p>
Ted	Website Comment	Reduce the number of car lanes. We don't need two turning lanes. In fact, make every intersection into a Dutch-style roundabout and prioritize access and turning for bicyclists and pedestrians. There should also be a Bus Lane put in instead of more car lanes. We need a dramatic reduction in speeds and a much more balanced allocation of space.
	Website Comment	<p>Please further reduce automobile lanes. You are replacing a literal freeway with a road design that has the width and overall size to still invite people to drive at freeway speeds. There is not the needed capacity on this road, 2 full travel lanes plus turn lanes are sufficient.</p> <p>Please do not design this road to kill pedestrians.</p>
Nathaniel Gotfredson	Website Comment	There are too many lanes and not enough new space for buildings and housing. A 7 or 9 lane pedestrian crossing does not sufficiently connect to downtown.
Casey	Website Comment	Too many lanes. Why even bother replacing a very underused freeway with a 9 lane road? Should be half as many and use the space for something else.
Kenneth Byer	Website Comment	The new road is still much too wide, has way too many lanes and not enough room for pedestrians. It would also be nice to have a pedestrian tunnel at the intersection crossings if the project is to keep so many unnecessary lanes. I also want to voice my concerns about the timeline, I believe this highway removal needs to happen as soon as possible and should be one of MDOT's main priorities.
Neel Marathe	Website Comment	The plan is overestimating the amount of traffic on the road currently. I-375 is not used much and is rarely jammed. Yes, connecting it to street level will increase the traffic, but this is an opportunity to further invest in a better urban environment and encourage alternate modes of transport that aren't cars. By

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		reducing the number of lanes, more green space in the middle could become available and could be used like the spaces between Woodward and Monroe by campus martius. I like that there are plans for pedestrian infrastructure, but as a biker, I would feel more comfortable on a slightly wider bike lane. It is great to see that the bike lane is completely separated from the traffic. In a perfect world, I envision one of the lanes being a bus lane. I am aware this isn't a major corridor but it could definitely help circulate buses better in downtown. Again it would encourage alternate transport modes. Thank you.
Joel Arnold	Website Comment	<p>The current design of the road is *far too wide* right now. Removing the expressway and replacing it with a 9 lane road is far too wide and entirely unjustified for current traffic volumes. Further, despite the excessive number of lanes that will continue to divide neighborhoods, the design fails to use even one of its 9 lanes for a dedicated bus-only lane to serve the tens of thousands of Detroiters who ride the bus every day.</p> <p>This road will encourage drivers to go far too fast, not be inviting for pedestrians, and continue to function like a freeway if it has nine lanes. The road as designed should be reduced in size with more space given to developable land, dedicate one lane in each direction to exclusive uses of buses, and keep its dedicated two-way cycle track which is an excellent piece of the current design.</p>
Nithin Vejendla	Website Comment	<p>While it's great to see that the preferred alternative will include large sidewalks and a two way protected bike lane, it is still feels like it's entirely too geared towards cars. It should have less travel lanes, as it still feels like a barrier between Lafayette Park / the East Side and Downtown. It feels like you're putting another Woodward or Gratiot in downtown, when we already have several large boulevards (Jefferson, Woodward, Gratiot) nearby.</p> <p>It would be great if you reduced the travel lanes even further. I would accept an extra 5-10 minutes of motorized travel time if it meant better pedestrian connectivity and less high speed cars in downtown. Besides, for people who really need to get downtown quickly they can still use M-10. This should be restored to more of a neighborhood street. It should be two travel lanes in each direction max.</p> <p>I say this as someone who walks, bikes, drives, and takes the bus into downtown (moreso before Covid). This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to stitch downtown back into a pedestrian oriented, slow street street grid. I would hate to see us pass up this opportunity.</p> <p>I support the removal of on-street parking as well.</p>
Nat M. Zorach, AICP, MBA	Website Comment	The renderings I've seen of this are stuck in the 1950's era that MDOT so comfortably and regressively inhabits that is like, "let's have seventeen lanes of road." This is dumb and unnecessary. We need to have *as few traffic lanes as possible*, street parking, none of these ridiculous double turning lanes, and none of these ridiculous Michigan Lefts. We need to have protected bike lanes, preferably grade-separated, and preferably separated from specifically walking paths or sidewalks.

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>And what, pray tell, would we do with all of that extra space if not use it for roads roads roads? I'm glad you asked. We'd build buildings, obviously, like they do in real cities!</p> <p>Also, maybe we could have a BRT lane. I know you guys love cars, but come on, people, it's not the 1950's anymore. There's not going to be anything left of Metro Detroit's economy or, indeed, of the planet in general, if we continue this backward mentality of car worship.</p>
Tess Parr	Website Comment	There are far too many vehicle travel lanes in this plan. It's unsafe to pedestrians and cyclists. Expand the boulevard, add bus only lanes, more cyclist only lanes.. please have more consideration for the long term impacts of this design for mobility and public health and safety.
Ryan Schutte	Website Comment	This proposal has far too many lanes of traffic. As a nearby resident, 375 south of Lafayette is already only lightly used except for rush hour, but I expect that the majority of current 375 traffic will choose to reroute to M10 or directly to I75 via Woodward or Grand River. I think the project might be fully functional with less lanes or with repurposed lane as biking or parking.
Derek GOryl	Website Comment	<p>Overall I am glad this project is moving forward and the latest proposal is a drastic improvement from the current highway. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement.</p> <p>In order for the boulevard to be truly accessible, I would recommend lowering the amount of lanes. It seems unnecessary for this boulevard to be as wide, or wider, than Woodward, as there is significantly less vehicle traffic. Will commute times be impacted greatly if we reduce the lanes to 2 on each side? Even if they are, it is likely worth it for the pedestrian benefits gained. We should consider the U of M tech center development - what grad students will want to study in a building which overlooks 6+ lanes of traffic? This area will demand walkability, which we should greater account for. The greenspace east of the boulevard is a great addition. This has potential to be a great park/public space. However, if the boulevard remains 6+ lanes, then higher speeds and lack of urban texture could prevent people from using it.</p> <p>I would also recommend having bike lanes on both sides of the boulevard. In the current proposal, it is going to be annoying and dangerous for someone to cross the wide boulevard/intersection to access the bike lane. I assume pedestrians will end up biking on the both sides regardless, so it would better (and safer) to have designated bike lanes. Also consider scooters - the west sidewalk could see a lot of scooter traffic. Words cannot express how much safer scooters are on bike lanes vs sidewalks.</p> <p>By the time this project is complete, the surrounding urban landscape will be drastically different. With all of the nearby developments (Brush Park, Eastern Market, Downtown, etc), the volume of non-motorized/pedestrian traffic will be increased substantially. We talk a lot about "20 minute neighborhoods", however, this project seems primarily concerned with getting commuters to the suburbs in 20 minutes and not concerned with</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		the residents. The brochure states the purpose of this project is to "address existing and FUTURE transportation needs and roadway safety for ALL users." Please consider these suggestions prior to finalizing the design. If I'm overlooking something in my suggestions, I'm happy to discuss the proposal in greater detail. Thank you for your consideration.
Bill Houghton	Website Comment	Reduce the lanes vehicles. And more green space and bike lanes and walking lanes. This plan is too focused on cars. This is not an improvement.
Patrick J. Andrzejczyk	Website Comment	Please consider reducing the personal vehicle travel lanes proposed I-375 rebuilding project from nearly a dozen lanes down to three or four. Use the excess roadway capacity to install north-south protected bicycle lanes and bus lanes for SMART and DDOT buses. Simply painting the road surface green for cycle paths and red for the bus travel lanes, with appropriate road markings and signage, would be more than adequate to support safe, reliable, enjoyable cycling and transit use in the area. How much a better use for public funds than a boulevard with few pedestrian crossings, limited sidewalk space, very little usable land for redevelopment, and few, if any, transit or cycle path connections to the Downtown Detroit CBD, the Riverwalk or the Dequindre Cut.
Vince Ziols	Website Comment	Less travel lanes for cars. More crossing infrastructure. Create some bus only lanes/ More space for bike lanes, pedestrian walkways and greenspace. How will people with disabilities and the elderly cross all those lanes between lights? Make use of this project as a way to highlight a change from private-automobile to multi-modal city/region/state.
John Kruse	Website Comment	<p>I want to comment that the currently proposed alternatives still dedicate far too much space to vehicles. The route that I-375 runs through is surrounded by urban areas, and it's irresponsible to dedicate so much space to vehicles when we should be more accommodating to transportation alternatives in this area. The current proposed width would cause undue burden on pedestrians and make it a more dangerous area to cross.</p> <p>As a resident of Detroit, I think this area would be best served if there were only two lanes of traffic in each direction, with an additional lane for left turns only at intersections. Additionally, all these lanes should only be a maximum of 10' wide. The narrower lanes would provide traffic calming measures to slow down traffic in an urban area like this, and the reduced number of lanes would make pedestrian crossing an easier task. The additional land left over from this could then be sold off to be developed. Additionally, I think the bike lanes would be safer and more effective for cyclists if there were two one-way routes on either side of the road rather than the two-way lanes on a single side of the road.</p>
Trajan Centers	Website Comment	I like the new plans for I-375, and truly believe it should be reverted back to a boulevard for regular street and bicycle traffic. I think that the plan needs to be reduced by one-lane of thru traffic in each direction - two lanes traveling each direction, with additional turning lanes. I do not think that the road needs to be as wide as it is shown in the plans.
Carole A. Wrubel	Website Comment	As a Lafayette Park resident, it is my hope that the civil engineers, designers and our political and community leaders will move forward with the best interests of the thousands of residents that

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>reside in Lafayette Park and the surrounding neighborhoods. The design, construction, and activation of the boulevard replacing I-375 should focus on keeping the residential neighborhoods on the east side of the boulevard safe, healthy, and vibrant.</p> <p>Conscientious design of the new road must include deterrents on non-neighborhood residents (i.e., UM students & staff, concert & sports attendees) from parking on the east side of the new I375. Noise, safety, and the ability to easily come in and out of our community are critical considerations as well.</p> <p>My primary concern is related to the interests of large entertainment and sport venues. Please keep our community clearly informed of who the decision makers are, what their demands and expectations are, and what the impact on the surrounding communities (and the City of Detroit) will be if those demands are to be met.</p> <p>Respectfully, Carole A. Wrubel</p>
Breon Lewis	Website Comment	The project would work if extend East Montcalm all the way to the Eastern Market
Mitchell Mantey	Website Comment	<p>I am a resident of Detroit and a user of transit, a personal automobile, and nonmotorized transportation in the city. I am, overall, very happy with the preferred alternative; it attempts to balance the interests of all types of users, which is an improvement over MDOT's historical failures consider modes of transportation other than personal vehicles. The preferred alternative includes nonmotorized connections to the riverfront and along Montcalm between Eastern Market and the CBD, and it calls for the removal of the Gratiot connector and the monstrous interchange to which it attaches. Overall, implementing the plan will help reconnect downtown to Eastern Market, the Dequinder Cut, Lafayette Park, and the Jefferson corridor.</p> <p>Please see my constructive criticisms below:</p> <p>1 Gratiot is too wide and too fast. Gratiot is the most direct connection between the CBD to Eastern Market and the Dequinder Cut for all users. While the renderings represent an improvement over the status quo, Gratiot's cross section is essentially unchanged by this plan. The fact is that, as a pedestrian, I do not feel safe crossing Gratiot at any point in the study area, and I do not feel safe biking along it either. While the needs of motorists are not inconsequential, surely MDOT should also consider adding protected crosswalks, curb bumpouts, conversion of travel lanes to bus lanes, and/or a potential road diet. I find it unlikely that Michigan Ave on the opposite side of downtown would be eligible for a road diet but Gratiot isn't, yet that is essentially what MDOT is communicating through this study and the concurrent Michigan PEL.</p> <p>2. The boulevard is too wide. The current cross-section of I-375 includes three below-grade lanes in each direction with service drives of 3 lanes, for a total of 12 lanes traveling north and south. Meanwhile, the proposed boulevard calls for three north-south</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>travel lanes and balloons to 10 total lanes at the intersection with Gratiot. The preferred alternative further calls for a second, two lane north-south street, bringing the total maximum number of north-south lanes to 12. Only MDOT could remove a freeway without taking away one lane of traffic. While the volume of the traffic entering and exiting I-75 will certainly be large compared to other regional intersections, I find it hard to believe that the traffic volume will exceed (for instance), I-93's exit at Haymarket Square in downtown Boston (six total lanes), the Manhattan terminus of the Lincoln Tunnel in NYC (four lanes not including Port Authority ramps), the terminus of I-395 at New York Ave in Washington, D.C. (four lanes), and the terminus of the California 101 at Market Street in downtown San Francisco (five lanes). The suggestion that the I-375 corridor will need a greater capacity than some of the most traveled urban freeways in the country defies credulity. Please consider reducing the number of lanes on boulevard lest we replace I-375's moat with an equally imposing vehicular shooting gallery.</p> <p>Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments.</p>
Jeffrey Iu	Website Comment	<p>Thanks for your work and I am liking what I see! Some suggested changes, as this design still appears overwhelmingly auto centric:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protected Dutch style intersections for cyclists - Bike signals (not sure if this is included already) - Wider double cycle track - Existing intersection corner design seems like an awkward mixing zone for cyclists and pedestrians; consider redesigning to prevent potential collisions or other conflicts
Trevor Gross	Website Comment	<p>I feel like the lower-traffic intersections southeast of Jefferson could be good places for roundabouts. Also, could the exterior lanes potentially be converted to bus lanes? Only applicable if the RTA would update their master plan to have bus service along this route, but it could be a good idea to plan for the future, and a way to eliminate some lanes. I suspect that with the current number of lanes, there is absolutely no way that the 35mph speed limit would be adhered to.</p> <p>Please ensure that the landscaping between the road and sidewalks/bike lanes has grass or bushes (potentially some kinds that require no maintenance). The standard "tree in a hole in the concrete" doesn't look very nice, but it is all over the city. They need more plants to give the road a cozier feel.</p> <p>Side note- I would like to see more roundabouts throughout the city for roads that don't get a ton of traffic, since I feel like I am often stuck at lights with no cross traffic during off-peak hours. Roundabouts could be a good solution to calm traffic (eliminating accidents from running lights), keep low volume traffic flowing, and give elderly residents a place to take a break in the middle when crossing a street. They also look much better than the hanging wires required for traffic lights. Drivers in the city seems to have an issue with people not wanting to stop at red lights, so this could provide a safe way to prevent potential issues.</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
Daniel Parnell McCarter	Website Comment	<p>For me it is very important that we make sidewalk(s) and cycle tracks as far from vehicular traffic as possible. It is unhealthy for cyclists and walkers to be close to cars and trucks and the resulting emissions. When someone is engaging in physical exertion (like cycling), one is exposing one's lungs to greater amounts of any pollution that may be in the air. The amount of air pollution can increase exponentially as one approaches a roadway and so it's important that we have significant space between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles.</p> <p>A valuable way we can do this is by reducing the number of traffic lanes and using the saved space to plant trees, which help buffer people from exposure to vehicular emissions. The typical cross-section includes 3 lanes of traffic each way, excepting turn lanes. Given that generous turn lanes are included, and given that there are alternative roads besides I-375 itself to get to and around downtown, I think we can lower the number of traffic lanes each way to 2. The space we save as a result can be dedicated to trees that will help air quality and protect pedestrians and cyclists from emissions.</p>
Jordan Jackson	Website Comment	ok
Ray Stoesser	Website Comment	Thank you
Geoff Perrin	Website Comment	the current proposal seems to take what is currently an underused highway and turn it into a 9 lane highway with a median. If MDOT is trying to make the 375 corridor more conducive to safe pedestrian and bicycling, then, this is not the solution. Try crossing 7 lanes of woodward, or 9 lanes of jefferson at an intersection on foot, and you'll know exactly how unsafe it feels to do something like that. Please, please, please, give us an actual road diet. 2 lanes at most each way. Turn the rest into something for the people.
Mitchell Haba	Website Comment	<p>How is this any different from a highway? It's arguably less safe for seniors and the disabled.</p> <p>Decrease the amount of personal vehicle lanes, increase bike lanes and bus lanes.</p> <p>There is nothing good about this design whatsoever.</p>
Brandon Hu	Website Comment	This is a terrible idea. Both practical alternatives 4 and 5 do nothing to address the inherent car dependency of Detroit and transforming I-375 from a freeway to a boulevard, while it is an improvement, is not enough. I would like to see dedicated bus lanes, more space given to bikes, and in general less wide streets. Reducing the width of the freeway while not effectively decreasing its total width doesn't do anything meaningful for individuals who do not have cars. Just because there are large green spaces between lanes doesn't mean that a huge boulevard is any less daunting to cross or any less dangerous.
Scott Thompson	Website Comment	Please keep it a freeway. As a commuter in Detroit who regularly travels to the Ren Cen from my home, switching the design to anything less than a freeway is an inefficient use of state resources. It also would also cause adverse climate change implications due to more vehicles idling at traffic lights releasing CO2 into the

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		environment. We can't change the past - let's stop living in it and move forward.
Michael Agemy	Website Comment	If this project lacks merit and can't be justified for redirecting travel to the Riverfront. However Dan Gilbert and Duggan made the suggestion a while back. Regardless, if people disagree the plan is in motion. So many cities are building up with bars and events. Its not worth the travel downtown. It has become to congested.
Terry Shea	Website Comment	Stop wasting our tax dollars on stupid projects! Nobody is going to benefit from the removal of a freeway and the building of a boulevard. The space is not needed for anything! We were told the same thing about tearing down Tiger Stadium, and it was indeed torn down to make room for...absolutely nothing! What do you do at MDOT? Have meetings to see who can come up with stupidest, money wasting projects imaginable? Stop being idiots and stop wasting our money! Why not complete the freeway sections on US-31, US-127 and/or complete the freeway on US-131 down to the state line instead?
Daryl Nahorodny	Website Comment	I think it is a terrible idea, i work in the RenCen and before the pandemic traffic was horrible on 375 now you want to turn it into streets, which will cause more congestion and headaches. There are so many crumbling roads and bridges take care of what already needs it, not a new project that is just going to be chaotic once life is back to normal.
Mike Selak	Website Comment	I know that the history of area is a tragic one. I am a retired Registered Professional Engineer who has practiced for nearly 50 years mostly in Michigan and my hometown of Detroit. Born here in 1952, resided in for 33 years and educated by DPS, WSU BSCE and MSCE. Practiced downtown on Randolph and in the RenCen for over 20 years in the 70's and 80's and occasionally for another 30 years to this day. Whereas I was curious when I first heard of the proposed project some years ago I figured eventually to comment on the concept. Of course now is better late than never. In private I would use much stronger language but here goes. Though I have not done an exhaustive review I believe this an incredible waste of resources better spent on other deferred maintenance, ie fix the dam roads. On the surface I see no significant benefit other than aesthetics because there are existing connections between the 2 areas. Access to the riverfront is available. Whereas the existing is not ideal it is functional and our resources would be better spent elsewhere. Moreover unless the objective is to create more traffic congestion the raw figures of traffic volume are obvious evidence of how ill conceived this project is. Unless the objective is for little brother to become more like the congestion of the big apple or second city etc. and street level danger to the public, this is as if someone is trying to sabotage this area of downtown. My hope is that those who support the plan will realize that whatever forces are trying sell this are attempting to sell the public what seems to be an ill advised legacy monument.
Kurt Shuck	Website Comment	Removing the freeway appears to be the best option based on the experiences of other cities that have done this. It is a great opportunity to repair some of the damage to the urban project done by these historical mistakes. Not to mention that it is a cheaper alternative to rebuilding and the money better spent on other needed road projects.

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
Claire Barrett	Website Comment	As an east Detroit resident I fully support turning I-375 into a boulevard. It would improve access to the city and nearby neighborhoods to walkers and bikers. The growth just east of I-375 is stifled due to the highway. One thing I would like to see in the project is a greater interaction with the history of Black Bottom in Detroit, and an acknowledgement that building I-375 destroyed a vibrant black community in the city.
Tommie Obioha	Website Comment	I would love to see this move forward with intentional robust community engagement. I would love for the development to be rooted in and honor the fact that this was once the heart of Black Detroit. That will require extraordinary work to ensure access throughout this process by ALL STAKEHOLDERS.
Adam Gasper	Website Comment	<p>I like many aspects of the proposal, especially the Montcalm extension and overall improvements through Eastern Market. Many folks will say the 375 boulevard is still too wide, but it's a huge improvement over its current size, which greatly deters Downtown foot traffic from crossing 375 to Eastern Market. I imagine this will spur greatly needed activity on Gratiot Ave.</p> <p>A few observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Antietam Ave still makes no sense. Could it continue west to 375 instead of having to take the right onto the service drive street, then left onto Gratiot, then onto 375? *Antietam also sorely needs to be connected to the Russell St/Maple St intersection. This improvement cannot wait until 2027. The existing sidewalk is not handicap accessible (people in wheelchairs need to jump the curb) and it's an unnecessary cutoff for local traffic. I'm not sure if this is an MDOT issue but I did see this in the Eastern Market master plan. *Connecting Riopelle St to from the "new local connector" to the new Moncalm St would also benefit walkability in the area. *The new service drive street could be extended from Monroe St to at least Larned St. <p>Thank you for allowing my input and best of luck with the project. Hopefully we find some money sooner than 2027!</p>
Josh DeBruyn	Website Comment	The proposed project looks like a great project that will enhance the city of Detroit and make movement throughout the city easier for all users regardless of mode. The change in travel times in 2040 are just guesses and while some people will think this is unacceptable, those are likely the people who do not live in the city and don't have vested interest in making the area livable and welcoming. The benefits of this project outweigh any negatives.
Vanya Valencia	Website Comment	I support of the plan to convert I-375 into a surface-level boulevard
Kyle Richardson	Website Comment	<p>This is a great plan!! I hope Detroit, MDOT, Michigan and the government can make this plan a reality as quickly as possible. I-375 isn't needed anymore and if Detroit is going to grow in the future, we need a downtown that is welcoming to pedestrians, cyclists, etc - this is a good plan for that!</p> <p>I hope the people planning this have the courage to push for a shorter construction period than 4 years. It's ok if some roads have to be closed for a year if it means the future will come sooner!</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
Kirsten Mellem	Website Comment	I support the removal of the I-375 corridor and conversion to a boulevard that promotes walkability and access for all people. The I-375 has been a useless and obstructive highway for decades and has cut off continuity of Detroit. I support the proposal as long as bicycle and pedestrian access and safety are provided.
Joel Arnold	Website Comment	N/A
Maria Joens	Website Comment	We must focus on improving pedestrian pathways as well and improving pedestrian signals
Steven Lavrenz	Website Comment	Your report is very inadequate in addressing how safe travel speeds will be ensured. People *will* travel at near-highway speeds on the proposed roadway, and more pedestrians and bicyclists *will* be injured or killed, due to greater proximity to these vehicles. Your proposed design needs to have significantly greater attention paid towards traffic calming and speed management, in ways that don't simply rely on law enforcement to occasionally visit the site.
Jacob Herald	Website Comment	6+ year timeline is risking that what is designed now will not work well by the time construction starts. Separated bike lane is great, but lack of a bus lane is disappointing considering the 6+ lanes. It would be nice to have examples of existing boulevards with similar traffic layout.
Francis Cuthbert	Website Comment	I believe the removal of I-375 is a moral obligation to the city and state in atoning for the demolition of Black Bottom. It is also a long overdue opportunity to modernize Detroit's near-downtown areas, and wean the city off of its excessive auto infrastructure. As a resident of the immediate area, my priorities for the new plan are: maximized walkability between the Downtown, Eastern Market, and Lafayette Park neighborhoods by restoring as much of the original city grid as possible, maximizing bicycle lanes, making space in the plans for a street car or train line down Gratiot Ave, and residential and commercial zoning for new parcels created by removing I-375. Symbolically, the new boulevard should be named Hastings Boulevard, and there should be a public space with a monument to Black Bottom and its important history to Black Detroit. This is a chance to go big in connecting neighborhoods segregated by failed excessive auto infrastructure and a successful renewal plan will go a long way towards growing the neighborhoods east of Eastern Market! I'm a native Detroit who is back in town after 10 years living in NYC, and I believe the key to a flourishing city is mobility, connectivity and accessibility across socioeconomic lines. Please be ambitious and sustainably minded with this project!!
Steve St. Germain	Website Comment	I was very excited about this project (and still am) as I used to live in Lafayette Park and found the freeway very inconvenient. However the proposed solution, which is a slight improvement is still WAY too much road! It will be too difficult to cross due to its width. Bike lanes are a must and why not parallel parking? Something like complete streets that would encourage traffic calming, pedestrian walkways, bikes, etc. Think beyond the car for the future of Detroit. Please.
Dylan Shefman	Website Comment	Not only will the boulevard reinvigorate the Lafayette Park neighborhood to due enhanced walkability from the more developed Greektown, it will also remove the eyesore that is I-375. Depressed urban freeways are, well, depressing. Urban freeways, aside from being wholly unnecessary and physically cleaving neighborhoods, are ugly. They do not complement Detroit's

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		renowned architecture; in fact, they occupy space that could host housing, office space, or brand-new skyscrapers. MDOT has already spent years of planning and \$4.75 million in EIS funding - why put that to waste? This new boulevard will beautify the two neighborhoods it links. This is not even to mention the dark past of I-375 - deliberately constructed to clear the black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. I recommend the boulevard be named Hastings Street (or Hastings Blvd.), reminiscent of the street I-375 replaced.
Veronica Head	Website Comment	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the I-375 removal and modernization project in downtown Detroit. My name is Veronica Head and I live in the City of Detroit in Lafayette Park, very close to this project. I am concerned about the ramifications that MDOT's "preferred alignment" will have on pedestrian safety and health of the Downtown / Lafayette Park area.</p> <p>I am very concerned about the planned 160+ foot wide right of way for the Boulevard. To put that in perspective, this street is over half the length of a city block. As a frequent pedestrian in the area, I am worried about the safety of this corridor. MDOT has an opportunity to replace I-375 with a safe and economically vibrant corridor, and I'm discouraged to see this wide, vehicle dominant design as the preferred alternative.</p> <p>To sum up my concerns, I've provided the bullets below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crossing Detroit's wide avenues on a bike or while walking is incredibly dangerous. So dangerous in fact, that Detroit has the highest per-capita pedestrian death rate in the nation at 34.5 deaths per 100,000 residents. According to publicly available data from SEMCOG, over half of crashes involving pedestrian and bike fatalities occur on roads with four or more lanes of vehicular traffic. A 160-foot-wide boulevard with ~100' of traffic lanes will put hundreds of pedestrians and cyclists at risk of losing life or limb every single day, and this risk will be even greater for residents who use wheelchairs or other mobility assisted devices. - Several cities within Metro Detroit are already attempting to solve this problem by reducing the number of vehicle lanes on major arterial roads. Ferndale and Pleasant Ridge have proposed a "Road Diet" on Woodward near 9 mile in the interest of safety, and Detroit has already implemented a similar project on East Jefferson. MDOT's preferred alignment for this project goes entirely against this regional trend toward safe and healthy street design. - Designing this street for rush hour and major event traffic will lead to higher vehicle speeds. It is well-known that wide streets increase rate of vehicle speed, and this fact is almost universally accepted among transportation planners. High vehicle rates of speed drastically increase rates of pedestrian fatality and will likely counteract the work of MDOT program "Toward Zero Deaths." - The current alignment of 375 requires east-west bound cyclists and pedestrians to cross the Chrysler Service Drive in two separate locations flanking the freeway. While this is not ideal, each crossing only involves two to three lanes of traffic per side. MDOT's preferred alignment would require these citizens to cross up to 9 lanes of traffic at once, putting their safety at considerable risk.

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>I implore you to consider the above points, and the long-term negative effects the preferred alignment will have on pedestrian and cyclist safety in this area. Please consider a safer alternative with two lanes of vehicle traffic in each direction, and present it to the public for our consideration and feedback.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Veronica Head</p>
Jonathan Koller	Website Comment	<p>What are we actually get for all the money spent on this project? Better access to downtown? No. A safer environment along the 375 corridor? No. Better connections between downtown and the lower east side? No. More people walking, biking, or using transit? No. Increasing the utility of a piece of infrastructure that was born out of malice towards disenfranchised people? Yes! By creating some new buildable sites for our favorite local billionaire. Phew! I almost thought it was entirely without merit.</p> <p>How about we spend our "reconfiguration" money to transform our current regime of atrocious urban highway interchanges into modern highway stations that allow occupants to exit their vehicle and enter the city as a pedestrian as their vehicle continues on with another rider, or to a reasonable parking location. The urban effect of such stations would be similar to how train stations or subway stations work. Namely, allowing for concentration of humans, not cars, at urban highway interchanges and creating a safer environment for all street users.</p> <p>Long story short, the era of removing highway sections ended a generation ago. Now is the era of removing highway interchanges, and replacing them with highway stations. It's not particularly surprising to see a plan literally two generations behind modern practice, or a plan so clearly tailored to the interests of one individual. At least that one individual has a vision!! Who else would put this milquetoast idea forward at a time when cars ability to drive themselves should be radically transforming our physical automotive infrastructure? MDOT is playing a big roll in that transformation, why isn't that vision, the one that would benefit all road users, not driving the plan for i375?</p>
Jared Boot	Website Comment	The current proposal is still too auto-centric. The replacement for I-375 needs to truly prioritize pedestrian access and safety!
Steve Philips	Website Comment	This new plan for improving I 375 is a good start. However, it has a serious problem. It has way too many vehicle traffic lanes making it dangerous. We need to slim it down. Fewer car lanes. More room for pedestrians and more green space. Seriously, it's not safe to have to cross six lanes of traffic just to get to the median. Especially for seniors & families. Slim it down, please! Thank you!
Stephen A. Weatherholt	Website Comment	This project must address urban mixed use, the sort took part in destroying (all forms of mobility and land use) and MUST address the racial crimes the state and federal government committed by putting it in, in the first place.
Jacob	Website Comment	Thank you for taking public comments. 'Please consider pedestrians in this new plan. I was hoping that this new design would make it easier to walk from my apartment in Lafayette Park

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		to Greektown, but it doesn't seem like this will be the case. Detroit's boulevards rarely have turn lanes and as far as I can tell, never have double turn lanes. Please consider these comparable designs within the city and make something that is MORE walking friendly and not less.
Henry G. Werner Senior Director- Facilities & Support Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan	Website Comment	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) appreciates MDOT working with us and many other stakeholders to review and evaluate the various I-375 Project design alternates over the past several years. BCBSM supports the preferred alternate and believes it is the best design alternate to promote long-term viability in the area. We are looking forward to continued involvement as the discussion turns to developing detailed implementation plans that consider construction sequencing and traffic routing plans.
Allan Machielse	Website Comment	I have reviewed all alternatives. I am most in favor of alternative 5, which allows for the reclamation of land in Eastern Market through the removal of the massive underutilized Gratiot connector interchange; creates new access to Brush Street from I-75, which will relieve some of the Ford Field traffic; and minimizes the Madison Avenue ramp. The insertion of the I-75 and I-375 freeways into Detroit's urban fabric has been detrimental to the greater downtown area, which is now undergoing a massive resurgence. It is critical to minimize the impact and areas taken up by roadways to the extent possible to correct the mistake that was the construction of I-375 as a below-grade freeway separating downtown from Lafayette Park, and the massive Gratiot Connector that cuts off the Lafayette Park area unnecessarily from the Eastern Market. It is important to get this project right, since it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. Done correctly, it restores the urban fabric and opens up the most land for development, which will ultimately bolster our economy and create jobs for Detroiters.
Jason Gilmore	Website Comment	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the I-375 removal and modernization project in downtown Detroit. I am Jason Gilmore and I live in the City of Detroit in West Village. I am concerned about the ramifications that MDOT's "preferred alignment" will have on pedestrian safety and the future of the Downtown / Lafayette Park area.</p> <p>MDOT's proposed design optimizes for the rapid movement of vehicles from regional freeways into and out of downtown Detroit, prioritizing the needs of commuters coming into Detroit from other communities. I believe that the proposed design does not serve the current needs of existing and future neighbors and Detroiters in general, and am advocating for an alignment that is inclusive of the following:</p> <p>An overall reduction in street width. This includes the removal of one lane in each direction, and a one foot reduction in lane width across all lanes, to promote slower traffic speeds. A four-lane road with 10 foot wide lanes is much more appropriate for urban environments and will move nearly as much traffic as the existing six lane plan.</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>Instituting a speed limit no greater than 35 miles per hour, especially south of Gratiot Avenue.</p> <p>Allocation of additional width to the East sidewalks along the Boulevard to support ground-floor tenants of future mixed use developments. This can be done by using excess ROW from the above considerations, or reduction on the West sidewalks, which are adjacent to parking garages that lack active ground-floor uses and do not benefit as much from foot traffic.</p> <p>Inclusion of metered street parking and loading zones for delivery and ride hailing services. These features will act as a buffer between traffic and the sidewalk, and help support future ground-level retail and mixed-use development. If MDOT is unwilling to reduce the overall width of the built boulevard, converting travel lanes to street parking in the short term could simulate a narrower boulevard and improve the experience of pedestrians while preserving MDOT's ability to utilize lanes for travel in the future. Alternatively, if the reduced width proves to effectively move traffic and the street parking is deemed to be in excess, it could be turned into public space.</p> <p>Establishment of an intentional, transparent, and collaborative approach to define the future of the excess land that will be available for development after the construction of I-375. MDOT, the City of Detroit, and local agencies must acknowledge that the construction of I-375 disenfranchised, demolished, and displaced the businesses and property of Detroiters, especially Black Detroiters. Development of this land must be inclusive and approachable to Detroit residents.</p> <p>Enhanced safety for pedestrians and cyclist traffic crossing the boulevard on east-west streets and arterials. This includes curb extensions, textured pavement in crosswalks, and the removal of all vehicle slip lanes planned near excess ROW that is planned for future mixed-use urban development. These facilities will help drive towards MDOT program "Toward Zero Deaths" and the City of Detroit "Streets for People" campaign.</p> <p>Given the scale of the project and the construction timeline slated for years into the future, I recommend a more comprehensive public engagement process that brings to the table more Detroit voices and increased engagement with neighbors. The current process has been shallow in its engagement and feels like a box-check rather than genuine engagement.</p> <p>MDOT has the opportunity to design a pivotal project that rights the previous wrongs of demolishing Black Bottom for I-375 by creating a more intentional development that is future oriented and considers the wishes and aspirations of all Detroit residents.</p> <p>Please consider our above points and design a safer alternative alignment that removes one lane of vehicle traffic in each direction, and present it to the public for consideration and feedback.</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		Thank you, Jason Gilmore
Aras Butkunas	Website Comment	Please consider a future in which cars and the need for a 6 lane road adjacent to a downtown setting are no longer needed. There are many aspects of this plan which are good, however it still prioritizes the movement of vehicles, most of which will simply be using the road as a quick means to get into downtown/the riverfront and then quickly back to their suburbs. Please consider prioritizing the need of the residents of the area in question, both present and future. Most of which will be walking or biking to their jobs, stores, restaurants, etc etc.
Nathaniel Meriwether Zorach, AICP, MBA	Website Comment	I fully support the removal of I-375 and its replacement with a street with a MAXIMUM of four lanes, with ample pedestrian and cycling options. It is time for MDOT to bend to the will of the people, who overwhelmingly want alternatives to our state's massively overbuilt infrastructure for single-occupancy vehicles, instead of MDOT continuing to embrace its own internal, orthodox vision for an automotive future that involves Michiganders spending their whole lives in cars and trucks. We do not need eight lanes. We need streets and cities for people, not for cars and trucks. Please get with the program, MDOT. It is the 21st century, and the 21st century needs fixed-route transit and nonmotorized mobility infrastructure.
Paul Jones III	Website Comment	While I support the removal of the current 375 freeway configuration, the alternative boulevard presented is inappropriately wide for a downtown street. Moving forward with this design would continue to encourage high speeds into downtown, presenting a danger to Detroiters walking, biking, and the vitality of nearby neighborhoods. The team should look at examples like The Embarcadero in San Francisco or Route 29 in Trenton, NJ. These projects transformed outdated, underutilized highways into streets that are more appropriately scaled for urban environments and promote the type of walkability and activity Downtown Detroit desperately needs. More case studies of these types of projects can be found here: https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/Nashville%20Case%20Study%202%20-%20Seattle.pdf
Calley Wang	Website Comment	I support the removal of I 375 with four lanes and pedestrian and cycling options. This is in a dense, downtown area and bicycle and pedestrian traffic needs to be prioritized over cars. The "preferred alternative" north of Lafayette has far too many lanes, and is a bigger barrier to downtown mobility than the existing freeway. MDOT's own analysis shows that pedestrian crossings will take even longer than they do today. This is unacceptable.
Paul Jones III	Website Comment	The alternative configuration presented is not a good design for a city street. The wide lanes and crossing distances will serve as a barrier between downtown and other communities, a continuation of the division and racist planning policies that led to the initial construction of the freeway. The I-375 replacement should also address the displacement and erasure of Black Bottom through a more just design process and the intentional use of adjacent land for the benefit of Black Detroiters.

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
Will Laughner	Website Comment	<p>I really like the idea of removing I-375 and building a calmer transportation pathway. I really enjoy biking to the Eastern Market and Riverfront areas and I think a less hectic route with safer paths would make it a lot more enjoyable! I really like the Practical Alternatives 4 but I think it would be great to take some of the car lanes</p> <p>and median space away and create a larger non-motorized recreational path. I've really enjoyed using the Dequindre Cut and I think something like that which could include plenty of space for a wide variety of uses would be a great addition! Biking alongside cars can be somewhat scary and I think if they're more separated I'd feel more comfortable using the route and frequenting those areas more often.</p>
Ilan Gerould	Website Comment	<p>I fully support the removal of I-375, but this project effectively recreates a freeway like environment on surface level. As is, this project will continue to act as a neighborhood barrier due to excessively wide lanes, dual turn lanes, things that go against good urban street design.</p> <p>The lack of modern protected intersections for cycling is another glaring issue for an urban street proposal in 2021, given the width of the ROW. There is plenty of room taken up by excessively wide lanes and median spaces along the proposed blvd (specifically at crossing with Lafayette) that could instead provide protection for pedestrians and cyclists intersections, where crashes are most common, but this project doesn't do anything to address that. Given how Detroiters actually drive, I don't expect paint to be a magical barrier between travel lanes and bike lanes.</p> <p>I strongly, strongly urge you to research or reach out to other cities both in the US and Canada that have experience building urban bikeways. Seattle, Montreal, Vancouver, Portland. We should not be building compromising designs on a complete rebuild of a road, especially with the amount of space we are working with.</p>
Sanaya Irani	Website Comment	<p>Please narrow the road and restore the initial street grid. We need our streets to be safe for everyone, including the disabled and those who do not drive. A wide avenue will be little better than the existing freeway.</p>
Kevin McCoy	Website Comment	<p>I strongly support this project overall and commend MDOT for including extensive public input in the process.</p> <p>However there remain critical design flaws in the preferred alternative which must be addressed.</p> <p>The replacement boulevard is much larger and wider than is needed or desirable for a downtown urban area with significant pedestrian activity. The project is located between the central business district and a dense residential area and must be designed with pedestrians and cyclists as an equal travel mode to vehicles.</p> <p>The width of the roadway is excessive. It is not desirable or appropriate to design a surface boulevard in a central business district to carry vehicles at high speeds. The design speed should not exceed 35 mph South of Gratiot Ave. This can be accomplished</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>by reducing the number of through lanes to a maximum of two per direction and reducing the number of turn lanes to a maximum of one per direction at each intersection.</p> <p>The design should encourage drivers to adopt slower speeds which are appropriate for an active business district with significant pedestrian activity during both daylight and nighttime hours.</p> <p>Furthermore, the narrowing of the boulevard width and removal of extra turn lanes will address another design flaw: the expectation that pedestrians will wait up to four minutes to cross the boulevard, given expected signal timing. This is simply unacceptable and would serve to reduce pedestrian accessibility to the business district from residential areas to the East. Roadway and signal timing must be designed with pedestrians in mind as of equal importance to vehicle travel times and throughout. It is unacceptable to plan for such lengthy crossing times for pedestrians in order to preserve high speeds and capacity for vehicles.</p> <p>Emphasis in the DEIS on the modeled level of service for vehicles on roadway segments and at intersections does not include any significant discussion of the level of service for pedestrians attempting to cross the boulevard and traversing intersections. This is a significant oversight and should be corrected. This analysis should also consider the differing mobility needs of older resident and children, given that 25% of the residents of adjoining neighborhoods are over 65 or under 16. Signal timing should assume that a significant portion of pedestrians will be mobility restricted or disabled and provide longer than average crossing intervals and potentially dedicated pedestrian cycles when beg buttons are actuated.</p> <p>The goals of this project are laudable, but without paying additional attention to the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, it will fail to achieve its goals and may make the human environment worse than the current situation with the depressed freeway. MDOT and FHWA should take the time to ensure these issues are appropriately addressed before finalizing the design or approving any construction.</p> <p>I also encourage the project team to consider using design elements to encourage drivers to use Gratiot Ave as a primary gateway to the central business district (as opposed to the new boulevard). Gratiot was historically the gateway from the northeast and is designed with significant excess and underutilized capacity. There is no need for two, very large, arterial highways on such close proximity to each other serving the same areas of the central business district.</p> <p>A final consideration is the disposition of excess property "created" by removing the highway. As part of this project, MDOT should agree to transfer ownership of excess property to the City of Detroit within 3yr of completion of the project, at zero or minimal cost. This land was seized by the State using eminent domain powers and</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		should be returned to the people of Detroit when no longer needed for the transportation purpose. The City of Detroit and MDOT should research the former ownership of the lands seized and return lands when possible to original owners or residents.
Joe Geibig	Website Comment	<p>While I applaud MDOT's decision to raise I-375 back to surface level, I am disappointed that the current proposal doesn't address the "barrier" that I-375 makes between downtown and the rest of the city. In fact, based on the estimated conditions of crossing times ranging from ~1:30 - 4 minutes (24:04 in the presentation video), I would argue this makes it drastically worse. After looking at the other material I feel that Practical Alternative 4 does a better job of breaking up the traffic and provides more of a "corridor" that the city can use.</p> <p>I was encouraged by the opening portion of the presentation and it's acknowledgement that the removal of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom were historical and city planning blunders. Obviously nothing can be done to return these areas 100% back to the way they were, however I feel we have an obligation to try our best and to set the city up for success going forward. I feel like the following things do this and would like to see these prioritized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage density in the area to facilitate urban development of the corridor. - Maintain walkability from downtown to the eastside of I-375. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I feel this can be accomplished by having more local roads instead of just a few dedicated roads. - Maximize space for usability. Boulevards don't provide value to drivers nor do they provide value to pedestrians. <p>I recognize that this is not an easy task and that making everyone happy is not possible. However I think if we continue forward with a plan that continues to separate downtown from the rest of the city, we will only be perpetuating our past failures. As someone who (pre-pandemic) commuted downtown everyday for work, I prefer areas of the city that allow me to take advantage of the city on foot more than shaving a few minutes off my commute. We have an amazing opportunity before us to take this city to the next level by imagining this corridor as a space that's not just for cars.</p> <p>Great cities are defined by the value they provide to those that live, work, and play in them; not by how quickly people can get out of them.</p>
Cal Coplai	Website Comment	I encourage the team to revisit the design such that it is suitable for a downtown and multiple forms of mobility. The current design is likely to result in a continuation of the safety issues and disconnection created by the existing highway, rather than generate meaningful improvement. Given the history of this location and what was demolished to create the existing highway, extra care should be given to ensure this new design repairs that previous harm. This is an opportunity for MDOT to show leadership in repairing previous injustices, creating multi-modal and safe roads, and creating neighborhood linkages to downtown and new

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		economic opportunity for Detroit. However, the current design will not realize any of those potential benefits.
Sarosh Irani	Website Comment	I'm very glad that MDOT is removing I-375, since the current highway format destroyed a majority Black community and cuts of Downtown from the East Side of the city. However, the current proposed design is far too wide and would encourage dangerously high speeds. Making the boulevard narrow would open up more land for housing and commercial uses, and would ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. We have one opportunity to remediate the tragedy of destroying a Black neighborhood for this highway; we should make sure to move forward in an equitable manner that serves all Detroiters, not just those who drive.
Robert Bishop Tomasaitis	Website Comment	Demolish I375 and reconnect the surface street grid. the level of service is irrelevant to me and I will gladly drive longer to get downtown. Remove the giant polluting blockade that seals the east side of Detroit off from down town. I375 has racist and discriminatory history and reparations must be made.
	Website Comment	I do not support any auto-oriented development in downtown Detroit. The area needs more pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit-oriented development.
Nithin Vejendla	Website Comment	<p>The proposed alternative is still way too wide. The goal of this project should be to help downtown Detroit's revival, not hurt it. I am concerned that the 100' roadway, which is considerably wider or feels just as wide as Woodward, Gratiot, and Jefferson (all nearby roads) will create an obstacle to pedestrians and development in East Downtown.</p> <p>This is a once in a generation opportunity to set up downtown Detroit for success or failure. Continuing to pursue a car-first transportation network to facilitate easy suburban access to downtown will doom this portion of downtown to be more parking lots. The future is less cars. More and more people are moving to downtown specifically because they like being in places where they don't have to drive everywhere, and where walking is a safe and comfortable activity.</p> <p>The boulevard conversion should resemble a neighborhood street like Brush or Rivard. In other words, it should be much narrower.</p> <p>I know that you all will instinctively reject the notion that the road should narrower, probably because your design manuals say that every roadway should maintain a certain Level of Service (LOS). I want to remind the project team that LOS is not an inevitable law of human nature. Drivers are people, and people are human. So what if a narrower roadway becomes congested? It will just incentivize people to drive during off peak times, to take an alternative route (including I-75 or the Lodge), or it will cause people who live in the city to opt to take public transit, to bike, or to just park somewhere else.</p> <p>The concept of induced demand and reduced demand is widely attested and widely evidenced by a variety of sources, see here: https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/generated_traffic_and_induced_travel_itman.pdf</p>

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		<p>Many of these sources are traffic engineers and professionals, so you don't need to take my word for it. Reduced demand states that if you narrow the road further, traffic will just adjust to meet the equilibrium capacity of the roadway. In other words, there's no need to worry. We can stitch back downtown's street grid without needing to worry about the traffic.</p> <p>Like I said above, this is a once in a generation opportunity to break with the disastrous highway building program of the last 70 years, a program that destroyed majority Black neighborhoods like Black Bottom / Paradise Valley, and facilitated the flight of Detroit's population and employment to the suburbs. This could be our opportunity to envision a better future for Detroit, one in which our transportation system is build for pedestrians, bus riders, and cyclists, not just for cars. The choice is yours.</p>
Sean Tobin	Website Comment	I would like 375 either narrowed or covered in order to more readily stitch the road grid back together in the area.
Andrew	Website Comment	I think the replacement road is too wide and serves more trucks and cars than other modes of transit, this is the core of a metropolitan area and should be treated as such, build this area for walking, transit and biking. The redevelopment opportunities will be better investments for developers and will be better for bring interest to the downtown area. The replacement plans should true harder to reintroduce a human scale to the street network, and knit the eastern market and layette park areas back into the CBD.
Joél RK	Website Comment	Please go 3-4 lanes with pedestrian and bike friendly design, maybe a boulevard with shops. We need cities designed for the people, not for cars. Please don't replace this highway with another one; let's get some good people oriented city space! - born and raised Detroiter
Dahlia	Website Comment	Please remove I-375 in favor of more pedestrian friendly Area! The city of Detroit needs more of this
Jenna	Website Comment	I support the removal of I-375
Najma Muhammad	Website Comment	When planning for transportation for the future, we should take a more human-centric approach. We will not improve our city if we don't care for the people. The replacement should not be an 8 lane road for more cars and trucks, it should instead include bike lanes, wide sidewalks for pedestrians, bus rapid transit lanes, green traffic buffers, and other amenities that contribute to the health and safety of residents in the city.
Lauren Milia	Website Comment	I have lived in Detroit for over ten years and have probably used I-375 once. It is a pointless freeway that only serves suburban commuters, not to mention its construction completely decimated the vibrant neighborhood of Black Bottom. The freeway should be removed and these displaced families should most certainly hold stakes in land as it opens up.
Kyle Franklin	Website Comment	Get rid of the 375. Replace with a small street with a park, businesses, bike lanes. I live in Detroit and that would help connect our neighborhoods. Also i would support the removal of the lodge south of i75. I cant even walk from corktown to the downtown with going all the way around.
Justin Fenwick	Website Comment	As a Detroit resident, I support the REMOVAL of I-375 and its conversion into a surface-level street with four lanes, pedestrian

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		and cycling options. For an area seeing increased pedestrian use, 8 lanes is unacceptable.
Kristin Shaw	Website Comment	I support this project, but would like to see green stormwater infrastructure included; native vegetation in landscaping, dedicate lanes for AV/ Transit, protected bike lines. General purpose lanes could be reduced to prioritize bike/ped/ transit/ HOV? Thank you for your commitment to public input.
James McIlreavy	Website Comment	Would really prefer fewer lanes for traffic then this plan proposes. Real opportunity her for dedicated bike and bus lanes. Otherwise look forward to filling in the 375 trench!
Tony Wesley	Website Comment	The pedestrian crosswalk timing needs to be designed for pedestrians, not cars. I.e., it needs to be long. The street should have one fewer lane. It should be named Hastings Street.
Michael Hilden	Website Comment	The redesign is too wide!!! The boulevard will be the at-grade version of I-375. It will serve as a barrier between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods in exactly the same way as the highway. Stop catering to the commuter crowd headed to the Renaissance center and Blue Cross Blue Shield! There is no need for such a wide street for the life and health of the city itself. The only thing that a road that wide serves well is cars. The noise, pollution, and danger poised by a 6-lane boulevard is not a benefit to the city of Detroit. I-375 stole the neighborhood of Black Bottom from Detroit, so the least you could do is provide some justice and construct a road that actually allows for city life to take place.
Ian Solomon	Website Comment	These plans are honestly terrible. Not only do they reinforce one of the major issues of the 375 freeway which is the physical separation of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, but they also do not address or repair the objectively racist motivation of building the 375 sector in the first place. The city of Detroit deserves walkability, the Black citizens of Detroit deserve to be centered and reinvested in just as racist infrastructure is. Honestly an incredibly disappointing design that leaves me with little hope of Detroit moving forward at the pace of other large cities. If this is the future of our infrastructure we are further behind than we think.
Greg Mangan	Website Comment	While I applaud MDOT's effort to remove this horrible expressway that destroyed a vibrant, African-American neighborhood in the 1950's, I can't help but think this wide boulevard is designed specifically for suburban commuters at nearby companies, not for Detroit residents who already live here, nor those who may move here as a result of surrounding future developments. This boulevard is too wide and too dangerous for people walking, people biking, riding scooters, and using mass mass transit. It is only designed for vehicular traffic commuters to get in and out of the city as fast as possible. It should have less lanes of traffic in both directions with on-street parking to help the future commercial, residential and mixed-use developments. 35 mph is too fast of a speed limit, it should be 25 mph. We know that the lack of traffic in off-peak hours in combination with the 11 ft. travel lanes will cause drivers to speed in excess of 50 mph along this boulevard. I see it happen everyday on similar boulevards, (i.e. E. Grand Blvd., Mack).

Individual's Name	Comment Source	Verbatim Comment
		Please follow NACTO design guidelines and incorporate health, safety and welfare of individuals as the guiding principles of designing this boulevard. Forget about Level of Service (LOS), because that is only applicable for expressways, and should not take precedence over safety on a 1 mile stretch of surface streets in the middle of a city. I would also like to see protected bike lanes on the north and south bound side of the boulevard, rather than a two-way cycle track that is proposed.
Gordon Chaffin	Website Comment	I strongly support this project and this design. I grew up in Macomb County and am now a transportation and land-use expert in Washington, DC. This is exactly the kind of restorative justice needed for that neighborhood. I hope future projects will boulevard-ize highways elsewhere in Detroit that divided vibrant Black communities. Your design properly reflects the priorities of safety, comfort, and accessibility for all road users -- rather than maximizing vehicle LOS/minimizing travel delay coming off I-75 to the Detroit surface streets. Visitors from the suburbs should not be prioritized. The people who live, walk, recreate there should be your primary concern. In your final treatments of the streetscapes, please make sure the pedestrian and off-street bike paths are properly designed for stormwater off-flow. Also, please coordinate for Detroit DOT/Public Works to clear these paths ASAP after it snows. I hope that you will install green infrastructure like bioswales and/or rain gardens in the new greenspace. Thank you for creating better safety facilities for peds/bikes at the new at-grade intersections (esp. Gratiot). This is the beginning of a complete streets revolution in Detroit, smart growth placemaking centered along famous avenues, and finally taking advantage of our amazing Riverfront. I'm so proud to be a Michigander.
Narayanan Kidambi	Website Comment	<p>I think this project is good overall. I'm concerned about the large number of lanes on the surface boulevard. I understand that this is based on 2040 traffic projections, but that is still troubling for three reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It maintains a large physical barrier between the east and west sides. 2. Wide roadways are known to encourage speeding. 3. Most importantly, we already have a problem with overbuilt road infrastructure in the Detroit area, resulting in unsustainable maintenance costs and severing neighborhoods with wide roads. <p>The proposed boulevard seems to be another example.</p>
Lamont Powell	Email	How could I obtain a hard copy of the I375 access study? Specifically, I would like to know how the access bridge to Brush Park plans to be configured? Such as, is the new bridge going to lead into a road connecting thru the empty space in the SE corner of Brush Park? I am just a resident in the area and am concerned about traffic thru the area.

5 Virtual Event Comments

Table 2: Virtual Event Comments

Name	Comment/Question	Format Given
Breon Lewis	'Have they decided on which rendering is the best?'	Online
Breon Lewis	Screened: I like the rendering design where they proposed to extend Montcalm to Gratiot. And you have some follow up questions on the design.	Phone/ Screener
Ryan Reincke	'Why can't Chrysler Dr. be taken out? It looks as if it only serves one building and it creates unnecessary four-way intersections. It also creates less space on the newly founded space created by the removal of the freeway.'	Online
Jessica Prost	'what needs to happen before this project can begin?'	Online
Derek W Boice	Will there be designated bus lanes or thought about future qline extensions with level grade to step on and off busses/trolleys?' 'The road seems wide; has there been any thought about immediate parking reducing cars in downtown and forcing people to use public transit and utilizing new bike infrastructure?'	Online
Julia Schlau	'The boulevard is very car oriented, what requirements does MDOT have to provide equal weight to pedestrian and vehicular traffic?'	Online
Gerald D Conover	'What is your plan to deal with football and baseball traffic?'	Online
Gary Zundel	'Thanks for your hard work! Looks great!'	Online
Ryan Southen	'What sort of development will be sought in the land created by this plan? Will there be restrictions on height, etc.?'	Online
Tai Tran	'Is the live starting soon?' 'How will drivers access i-75 from Madison going east on any of the alternative plans?'' 'There needs to be both north and south access to the new boulevard from Madison St.'	Online
Hunter Harig	'Will there be sheltered bus stops located on the proposed boulevard? '	Online
Megan Owens	'Why so wide? How are families and seniors supposed to safely cross at Jefferson?' 'Are we supposed to be seeing/hearing anything? It's 6:03 and the Live Street Event pages says "event live now" but nothing's playing.' 'I guess you want comments not questions. I strongly recommend narrowing the number of lanes at Jefferson and prioritize pedestrian safety over car speed.' '(Why ask for questions if you're only taking comments? And why such a tiny space if you're inviting feedback?'	Online
Daniel Himes	'How is MDOT planning on keeping vehicle speeds at post limits. When surface roadways exceed 4 total lanes speeds significantly increase over posted limits' 'Not a question more of a comment. Large trees with canopies should be planted to make the route feel less like a highway'	Online
Royce A Gueringer	'If land north of the boulevard will be used for future development why not have parking lanes on that side?'	Online
Royce A Gueringer	If northside of the boulevard has land for future development why not include parking on that side?	Phone/ Screener
Charles Johnson	'Comment (not a question)- As a property owner on Madison Avenue it is important that Madison have direct access to both north and south on the new boulevard. It is critical to our existing business model.'	Online
Suzanne Cleage	'How will this impact the residents using the Chrysler Service Dr like the driveway for Jean Rivard residents at Larned?'	Online
David Robert Webb	'The preferred alternative still seems so very wide with so many lanes does MDOT anticipate a level of traffic that would require such a wide roadway with so many lanes?'	Online
Michael Lamping	'will there be roundabouts installed to improve traffic flow but also prioritize non-motorized users?' 'Do the current designs guarantee the safety of non-motorized users to the point where we will not see any traffic deaths after this is completed?'	Online

Jw Mitchell	'What are the pros and cons East Grand Blvd to Belle Isle Park converted from traffic under Jefferson to traffic at grade level?' 'Will the conversion create more work for Detroit Police to restrict traffic flow for special events.?' 'Traffic downtown can be gridlock in the summer will the additional grade level boulevard cause additional gridlock?'	Online
Anthony Vanky	'You mention the development potential of "excess land". This has potential to reconnect neighborhoods. What is the process for the activation (or not) of those areas?'	Online
Brian Peck	'Will there be reparations for the community of Paradise Valley/Black Bottom? Can the surplus land along the new avenue be used in those reparations for Black owned businesses/homes?'	Online
Matt H.	'I want to know how this project moves us toward a city that deemphasizes private vehicle ownership and parking and emphasizes community livability and walkability and mobility and accessibility for working class and disabled Detroiters.' 'How does this project prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists?'	Online
Sherman Puckett	'Will MDOT post this virtual presentation on Youtube?'	Online
Aaron Johnson	Screened: Comments on why Alternative 6 achieves the goals of land use planning better than alternates 4 and 5. Taken Live: Hi, I'm Aaron. I just recently moved downtown to finish my last remote semester at the university of Connecticut. I'm not only a proud returning resident of Detroit, but my degree is in sustainable urban design. So, research transportation's planning's of particular interest to me. First, I'll say thank you a lot to MDOT for pursuing what I hope is the first of many freeway removals projects here in Detroit and for beginning of the work of weaving the fragment city back together. I think that I-375, alternatives four and five make a lot of sense for the project area to the Northern green sheet and it would make the walk or bike ride between downtown and Eastern market attractive for a lot of people and a huge. South Gratiot, I have a question, the necessity for the construction of an entirely new eight-lane Boulevard, Detroit's full of Boulevard of this scale among others, Michigan Grand River and Gratiot that are about that size and they're way wider than is necessary.	Phone/ Screener
	They don't have that much traffic and their width encourages speeding and makes pedestrian crossings really intimidating. If you look at some of the pre-urban renewal aerial imagery that was shown in the presentation, when this area was much more densely populated, there was no need for a massive Boulevard. It was just regular block after block of continuous urban fabric, and these still exist as the Chrysler Service Drive. Between them there's already six lanes of vehicular traffic, and I think that's plenty. Why not just keep them, turn them into complete streets and use the entirely freed up area vacated by I-375 for new development in parks. It would save money and create more economic opportunity versus any of the other proposals turned in, it also best limit total area of impervious surfaces minimizing storm runoff. This idea is closest to alternatives six, which was inexplicably not selected as being quote, most consistent with the city of Detroit land use plans, economic development opportunities, enhance pedestrian and community access and placemaking opportunities.	
	I'd like someone to explain that decision to the public because alternative six would have been the most accessible, developable, and attractive, unless you really like the look of asphalt. Looking at figures three and four, and the environmental assessment alternative four and five would actually add a lane of traffic versus the existing freeway conditions, which should be up to 11 versus 10. And I think that's much more inconsistent with Detroit plan, the direction of urban planning, and it would also waste a lot of money. Alternative six deserves consideration by the community, I'd like to propose	

	that it'd be reconsidered alongside alternatives four and five with the following modifications, the service level streets should integrate two-way traffic, cycle tracks and where appropriate, transit island and the freed up access property should have potentially used as not only as a green light, but also residential and commercial development and parks. But despite my criticism, I'm really happy that the effort is moving forward, it represents a crucial first step for Detroit feature. And thank you so much for the opportunity to share my thoughts and please let me know if you'll be hiring in May. Thank you.	
Ray Smith	Screened: Where would excess property be in this area? Taken Live: My name is Ray Smith. I'm part of the Black bottom Group, the applicant for the bulk of marker have the area that was once called Black Bottom is recognized as a historical area. And one of my concerns is that into the history of what happened when the [inaudible 00:17:41] there was never an apologetical compensation of residence. My parents grew up on [inaudible 00:17:51] street right there behind that headquarter. There was never any compensation, there was never really a recognition that these people were [inaudible 00:18:05] time and would there be anything to recognize the areas. So, we flipped what historical aspect or cultural aspects within the deal out also. So, we've been approved to have a market [inaudible 00:18:26] placed in landscapes Central Park. and will there be an exception of perhaps half the market as well, part of the extension over development in that particular location. And my last question is excess property. And though for my [inaudible 00:18:55] to say, what would be excess property and would there be any opportunity to have some form where they [inaudible 00:19:10] similarly maybe a part [inaudible 00:19:14]	Phone/ Screener
Melanie Markowicz, Greektown Neighborhood Partnership	Screened: I represent the Greektown district and we applaud your efforts to work with the entire district. I also have a couple questions about specific intersections and streets Taken Live: Thank you for having me here today. My name is Melanie Markowicz, I represent Greektown Neighborhood Partnership, which is a nonprofit community development organization representing the business and property owners and the entire Greektown District. We are bounded by a Brand Off on the West, Gratiot on the north, I-375 to the east and Lafayette to the south. We worked very closely with an MDOT and the city of Detroit is this project has taken shape over the last few years. We've even proactively incorporated this project into our community development plans for the future in what is called the Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision, which has spelling out in planning for development and our district public street improvement projects, new public parks, and we incorporated the I-375 project into that plan proactively.	Phone/ Screener
	And so, we've worked very closely with MDOT through this process and we really thank you for that. So, in reading over the EA, we came across a variety of things, including 5(b) direct left turns, which is the preferred alternative that really complimented the interest of business and property owners in the Greektown District. We'd like to stress the importance of St Anne's Antoine Street crossing over Gratiot Avenue with a two-way conversion of that one-way street and how important that access point is for our community in the future development of our community moving forward. And so we want to continue to be involved in those conversations, is the study of that introspection takes place, as well as any type of studies related to event traffic, because the Greektown District has a huge influx of event traffic in lots of attractions during events that patrons like to visit.	
	So we truly like to be involved moving forward in those conversations as we have been, and we also like to comment on the plan three conversion from McComb street, the EA currently identifies McComb street for a two-way conversion from Bohemian to the Boulevard, the entire length of McComb	

	street right now just extends a block and a half further to that ending into the Plaza at Gratiot in Randolph. And so, we wanted to certainly see if we could study a two-way conversion for the entire length, if that might make sense for oncoming development in the area, including the exchange new residential development on the corner of Brush and McComb. And then we also want to stress the importance of Greektown as a district, one of the oldest historic districts in the whole city of Detroit, over 190 years old, and our business and property owners still to this day could be the highest concentration of small business owners in the entire central business district.	
	And it's important for mitigation during construction for this project to really take that into consideration. So not only do we have access, but thinking about the business impacts, both financial and cultural, because so many of our business owners have a cultural identity that defines our district as well as three places of worship within the district itself. We'd also like to note considerations for the Greektown Casino Hotel and access to that casino during construction and also after construction as well, because the other two casinos are readily available and accessible right off of highway. So, we certainly want to continue to work with MDOT and also the City of Detroit to make sure that this project takes shape, benefits all the business and property owners and residents of downtown Detroit as this moves forward. So, thank you.	
Wendy Caldwell-Liddell	Screened: Who is involved in doing the legacy work in terms of rebuilding areas for black people who live in Detroit given the impact that the project had? Taken Live: Wendy: Hi. Hi. Can you hear me?	Phone/ Screener
	Monica Monsma: Yes.	
	Wendy: Okay, awesome. so I am actually going to try not to be long-winded with this question because heard someone else ask it, which makes me go at, I'm not the only one who is considering a question like this, I'm so sorry my kids are crying, but given the impact that the original I-375 did have on stripping black families and black business owners in the city of Detroit, from generating any wealth to pass down to their kids, something that I would really love to see come out of this project is money set aside from the state and the federal government to make sure that those opportunities are possible for black people who live in the city of Detroit. And when I was invited to this meeting by a friend, she did inform me that work is already taking place and I'm glad to hear that coordination is going to start with the city this summer.	
	But I think ahead of that coordination, I think it's important that we start having these very plain conversations about what people were robbed of and understanding what those implications were, the fact that a lot of the descendants of a lot of those people are still in the city today and deserve to be paid back for what was literally from their grandparents and their ancestors. So I would really love to see when those conversations start with the city, some large allocation, as I mentioned from the federal and state government together making sure that business opportunities and things of that nature are available for black people in the city of Detroit. So, thank you guys so much for the work that you're doing, this sounds like a great project and I hope that that's something that can be considered going forward.	
David Di Rita	Screened: Represents Detroit Theater District Businesses generally supportive of the preferred alternative wanted to register their support with the additional work after the EA is closed Taken Live: Good evening. My name is David Di Rita. Thank you for allowing me to speak for a moment. I am the president of the Detroit Theater District Business Association. Our association represents approximately 30 property owners and business owners generally in the area bounded by I-375 to the east, Park Avenue to the west, Fisher Freeway to the North and Jon R.	Phone/ Screener

	Clifford to the south. Our organization has been extensively engaged with MDOT in evaluation of these various alternatives. And I want to say at the front end is broadly supportive of the preferred alternative. We recognize that a lot of difficult compromises and balance has had to occur in a project of this scope and complexity, and support and applaud the goal and the result in achieving what's been done so far. I will say that in this process, our concerns were largely around being able to continue to provide daily access to and from what is the largest theater and entertainment sports district of this kind in the country.	
	We have some initial concerns, particularly regarding, as it relates to the preferred alternative, particularly regarding access back to the new Boulevard from Madison Avenue, but worked very closely with Jon and his team to identify a preferred alternative that is not inside this preferred alternative yet, for exit that would allow a movement back out to Madison, down to Eastbound Gratiot and then out to a future access point onto the Boulevard. We recognize that additional bit of design has yet to be incorporated in the plan, but I have been very appreciative of MDOT's willingness to continue to work with us on that. And with that in mind, again, strongly supportive of this plan. We realized that it involves change, but we believe it's change for the better and look forward to continuing working both with our neighbors and with MDOT in future refinements and ultimately getting this project built.	
Timothy Boscarino	Screened: Supportive of the preferred alternative but think it could be improved in support of people with disabilities	Phone/ Screener
Ashley Dreyer	Screened: What is the duration of construction of I375 and the impact they envision it might have on traffic and local businesses? Taken Live: Awesome. So, I'm really excited about this project and really optimistic. I think it's been a long time coming and excited that we're getting to the project planning phase or beyond that, I should say. I think I heard you say no questions, but I only have a question about the duration of the construction. And if you have an estimated duration at this point in time of how long it might take once it starts, and if there's a plan in place to give economic relief to the local businesses in the area, if that construction is going to impact local businesses surrounding.	Phone/ Screener
Ted	'will there be roundabouts installed to improve traffic flow but also prioritize non-motorized users?' 'Do the current designs guarantee the safety of non-motorized users to the point where we will not see any traffic deaths after this is completed?'	Online

6 Virtual Event Transcript

Monica Monsma:

Hello.

Jon Loree:

Hey, good evening, everyone. Sorry for the slightly delayed start. Hi, my name is Jon Loree, and I'm joining the call from Berkeley, Michigan today. I'm the Senior Project Manager for the Michigan Department of Transportation and the lead for this I-375 Improvement Project. I want to thank everyone for joining us today to learn more about the project and recently completed environmental assessment. Our goal is to run this meeting as close to a public hearing format as possible in a virtual setting. So, there'll be a little bit of a different format than some of the other public engagement meetings that have been going on. As most of you know, I-375 is located in the City of Detroit and is a one-mile long freeway that connects the I-75 Freeway down to Jefferson Avenue. And there have been plans to replace the outdated freeway and the deteriorating roadways and structures as well, improving safety and connectivity and supporting economic and development and place making opportunities.

This would be accomplished through a new interchange at I-75 and at Grand Boulevard along the West side of the existing I-375 Corridor. This is a truly transformative project as the Boulevard would serve all users of the Corridor, increased connectivity in the area and provide direct connection to the Detroit Riverfront. From the start of this project, our stakeholders and the public have been at the center of this work to ensure that the project has community, residential and business input. Thank you all for your contribution to date and also for taking the time to join us for this call today. We will soon play a presentation that will go into further details on the project and the findings of the EA, then we will open the phone for public comments. Our comment period on the environmental assessment opened earlier this month and will last until February 19th, 2021.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, hold some data supporting virtual event to ensure that those at home have the opportunity to learn more about the project and provide comments as well. There are also other ways to provide comments that we will go over later in the presentation. All the comments on the project that you share today will be added to the official project record and addressed and within the projects, FONSI or finding of no significant impact. I'll turn it over to our Public Hearing Officer for MDOT Monica Monsma, to conduct a Title VII poll and go over some housekeeping items.

Monica Monsma:

Hello, I'm Monica Monsma, and I'm joining today from Chelsea, Michigan. I am the Public Hearing Officer for the Michigan Department of Transportation. Before we get started, I would like to quickly conduct the Title VII poll. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that the Michigan Department of Transportation provides an opportunity for everyone to comment on transportation programs and activities that affect their community. Title VII specifically states that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation, be denied the

benefit of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, service or activity receiving federal assistance.

I will read off a question and you can select the number key on your phone to answer, or if you are completing this online, you will be able to click the responses as they appear. The first question is to please indicate your zip code. I'll read a few choices and you can just press the appropriate key, press one for 48201, press two for 48211, press three for 48207, press four for 48226, press five for any other Detroit zip code that's outside of the project area, press six for commuter. I'll just wait a moment while everyone gets a chance to do that. We're just waiting for the results to get tabulated, thanks for your patience. And also, you can press *3 in order to ask a question.

All right. The next question, Title VII is a three-question survey, so we just completed the first one related to zip code and we'll move on to the next question in just a second. It looks like I have the green light to move to the second question, and this is to please indicate your race. If you have two races you would like to indicate, just put in one and then I'll ask the question again and you can put in a second choice. So, I'll repeat that in case it wasn't clear. So, the poll will only take one response at a time so if you would like to indicate two races, I'll do the poll twice. So, we'll get started, press one for African American, press two for White, press three for Hispanic, Latino, press four for Asian, press five for Native American, press six for other. And you can also press seven for two or more races, and then I'll go through the options again if you would like to indicate two specific races. So, I'll read those one more time.

Press one for African American, press two for White, press three for Hispanic, Latino, press four for Asian, press five for Native American, press six for other, and press seven for two or more races. And we'll just give it a moment for the results to get tabulated. Thanks for being patient, but this is an important aspect of our lives today. And it's great that we adhere to the wonderful aspects of Title VII, it truly is a great thing in our nation. All right. So now for the third question, this is to indicate your gender, press one for male, press two for female, press three for other. Once again that was, one for male, two for female and three for other, and we'll wait just a moment, get those tabulated. All right. Thank you for your participation. Moving on, our presentation will soon run, and then I'll officially open the phone for comments.

To give a comment anytime during the presentation on the phone, you need to click or press *3. After hitting *3, you will be taken off the main line into a private line to give your comment to a member of our team, you will then automatically be added back to the main event line and your comments will be added to our queue and then be taken live on the phone. So, stand by and listen for your name to share your comment live. So once again, that is *3, you'll taken offline, you'll be able to give your comments, we'll put you in a queue and you'll be able to speak at live if you would like, or you can just keep it private in the other offline room. So, it's a great way to do this, you'll get two options. Now please listen, and if you're joining us online, you can view the 30-minutes presentation on the I-375 Improvement Project, and for those-

Jon Loree:

That concludes the presentation, we will now open up the queue for comments on the project. If you are online there is the question box to provide a written comment beneath the video player, please use that for commenting in texts at this time. If you wish to

verbally comment and you are online, you will need to dial (866) 478-3388, and a screener can add you to that queue. Again, that number is (866) 478-3388. For those on the phone to ask a question, you will dial *3 and we'll be taken off the main line into a private line to give your comment to a member of our team. After you've spoken to a screener, you will automatically be added back to the main event and your comment will be added to the queue for our moderators. Please stand by and listen for your name to be ready to share your comment live.

If you do not wish to share your comment live, that is okay also, the team member will document it on the private line and add it to our record. Due to the limited time today, we will be taking the verbal comments on the line, and we will also be reading some of the written comments, but we will not be taking questions. If you have questions, our screeners will do their best to answer them. We will also reach out to answer questions that have been posted in the chat after this meeting. And you can also reach out to the project team at any time for additional follow-up. When commenting, please try to be respectful of others and try to limit your time to two or three minutes. You have a lot of participation today, and we just ask for your patience as we work through the queue and bring participants live.

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thanks, Jon. This is Monica once again and I think we're ready to take our first comment. We have Ashley on the phone, so I will go ahead and take you live Ashley, if you are ready.

Ashley:

Ready.

Monica Monsma:

Hi, Ashley, can you be you able to speak?

Ashley:

Hi. Yeah. Can you hear me?

Monica Monsma:

Yes.

Ashley:

Awesome. So, I'm really excited about this project and really optimistic. I think it's been a long time coming and excited that we're getting to the project planning phase or beyond that, I should say. I think I heard you say no questions, but I only have a question about the duration of the construction. And if you have an estimated duration at this point in time of how long it might take once it starts, and if there's a plan in place to give economic relief to the local businesses in the area, if that construction is going to impact local businesses surrounding.

Monica Monsma:

Well, yeah, those are great questions and comments. Sorry Jon, go ahead.

Jon Loree:

That's fine. I can go ahead and quickly answer, right now we're looking at about overall three-year construction duration. And a lot of that is due to the fact that we see there being complex staging to really maintain the access throughout the duration of the construction period. So, in order to maintain that access, we would break it up into smaller stages and that takes more time. So certainly, it's one of our pieces in our green sheet for the project is that we'll have outreach and additional participation in terms of how we handle the construction staging and we'll have that outreach during the design of the project.

Monica Monsma:

Alright, thanks, Jon. Next to go live we have Aaron Johnson. So, I'm going to send you live.

Aaron Johnson:

Hi, I'm Aaron. I just recently moved downtown to finish my last remote semester at the university of Connecticut. I'm not only a proud returning resident of Detroit, but my degree is in sustainable urban design. So, research transportation's planning's of particular interest to me. First, I'll say thank you a lot to MDOT for pursuing what I hope is the first of many freeway removals projects here in Detroit and for beginning of the work of weaving the fragment city back together. I think that I-375, alternatives four and five make a lot of sense for the project area to the Northern green sheet and it would make the walk or bike ride between downtown and Eastern market attractive for a lot of people and a huge. South Gratiot, I have a question, the necessity for the construction of an entirely new eight-lane Boulevard, Detroit's full of Boulevard of this scale among others, Michigan Grand River and Gratiot that are about that size and they're way wider than is necessary.

They don't have that much traffic and their width encourages speeding and makes pedestrian crossings really intimidating. If you look at some of the pre-urban renewal aerial imagery that was shown in the presentation, when this area was much more densely populated, there was no need for a massive Boulevard. It was just regular block after block of continuous urban fabric, and these still exist as the Chrysler Service Drive. Between them there's already six lanes of vehicular traffic, and I think that's plenty. Why not just keep them, turn them into complete streets and use the entirely freed up area vacated by I-375 for new development in parks. It would save money and create more economic opportunity versus any of the other proposals turned in, it also best limit total area of impervious surfaces minimizing storm runoff. This idea is closest to alternatives six, which was inexplicably not selected as being quote, most consistent with the city of Detroit land use plans, economic development opportunities, enhance pedestrian and community access and placemaking opportunities.

I'd like someone to explain that decision to the public because alternative six would have been the most accessible, developable, and attractive, unless you really like the look of asphalt. Looking at figures three and four, and the environmental assessment alternative four and five would actually add a lane of traffic versus the existing freeway conditions, which should be up to 11 versus 10. And I think that's much more inconsistent

with Detroit plan, the direction of urban planning, and it would also waste a lot of money. Alternative six deserves consideration by the community, I'd like to propose that it'd be reconsidered alongside alternatives four and five with the following modifications, the service level streets should integrate two-way traffic, cycle tracks and where appropriate, transit island and the freed up access property should have potentially used as not only as a green light, but also residential and commercial development and parks. But despite my criticism, I'm really happy that the effort is moving forward, it represents a crucial first step for Detroit feature. And thank you so much for the opportunity to share my thoughts and please let me know if you'll be hiring in May. Thank you.

Monica Monsma:

Thank you. All right. Those were some very thoughtful comments and we will hopefully be able to follow up with you on those alternatives. Next, we will take a few more phone callers, and then we'll also read some of the comments live that have come in from our virtual attendees. So, the next caller is Ray Smith. If you're ready, we'll have you speak.

Ray Smith:

Yeah, fine. My name is Ray Smith. I'm part of the Black bottom Group, the applicant for the bulk of marker have the area that was once called Black Bottom is recognized as a historical area. And one of my concerns is that into the history of what happened when the [inaudible 00:17:41] there was never an apologetical compensation of residence. My parents grew up on [inaudible 00:17:51] street right there behind that headquarter. There was never any compensation, there was never really a recognition that these people were [inaudible 00:18:05] time and would there be anything to recognize the areas. So, we flipped what historical aspect or cultural aspects within the deal out also. So, we've been approved to have a market [inaudible 00:18:26] placed in landscapes Central Park. and will there be an exception of perhaps half the market as well, part of the extension over development in that particular location. And my last question is excess property. And though for my [inaudible 00:18:55] to say, what would be excess property and would there be any opportunity to have some form where they [inaudible 00:19:10] similarly maybe a part [inaudible 00:19:14]

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thank you, Ray. Jon or anyone would like to share any info?

Jon Loree:

Yeah, thank you, Ray. So that's one of the pieces we are looking to further address in design as well is, and part looking at how the access property can play into that as well, is to really commemorate that history. And yeah, we're aware of the historical marker that just went in at the elementary school, and maybe one of the pieces that you can talk about is having that in a more prominent location within this new corridor, but we're looking to have some larger conversations even around that and how we can really weave that into the design and maybe even potentially some of the future land use. We do intend on also having some additional outreach and actually some close coordination with the city, what the ultimate picture or to make determinations on some of that land use will likely be. And again, that's something that we'll be working on into the end of the summer and into the

fall in close coordination with the city. And so there definitely is still some additional outreach work that will come out of that.

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thank you, Jon. All right. Our next caller is David Di Rita.

David Di Rita:

Good evening. My name is David Di Rita. Thank you for allowing me to speak for a moment. I am the president of the Detroit Theater District Business Association. Our association represents approximately 30 property owners and business owners generally in the area bounded by I-375 to the east, Park Avenue to the west, Fisher Freeway to the North and Jon R. Clifford to the south. Our organization has been extensively engaged with MDOT in evaluation of these various alternatives. And I want to say at the front end is broadly supportive of the preferred alternative. We recognize that a lot of difficult compromises and balance has had to occur in a project of this scope and complexity, and support and applaud the goal and the result in achieving what's been done so far. I will say that in this process, our concerns were largely around being able to continue to provide daily access to and from what is the largest theater and entertainment sports district of this kind in the country.

We have some initial concerns, particularly regarding, as it relates to the preferred alternative, particularly regarding access back to the new Boulevard from Madison Avenue, but worked very closely with Jon and his team to identify a preferred alternative that is not inside this preferred alternative yet, for exit that would allow a movement back out to Madison, down to Eastbound Gratiot and then out to a future access point onto the Boulevard. We recognize that additional bit of design has yet to be incorporated in the plan, but I have been very appreciative of MDOT's willingness to continue to work with us on that. And with that in mind, again, strongly supportive of this plan. We realized that it involves change, but we believe it's change for the better and look forward to continuing working both with our neighbors and with MDOT in future refinements and ultimately getting this project built.

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thank you, David. Before we take our next caller, I wanted to read an online message that we received from Melanie of the Greektown Neighborhood Partnership. She asked, and this was prior to Jon's earlier announcement, is there a phone number we may call to make verbal comments or call in if we are disconnected? So, I thought I'd give that number again. And it is (866) 478-3388. And for those of you who are providing comments online, all of those will also be counted in our public comment record. So, I'll read one more of those and then we'll go back to a live caller. One of the questions comes from Brianne Lewis virtually, which is, have they decided on which rendering is best? And I believe that was covered, but I wasn't sure if Jon or anyone else would like to follow up on that?

Jon Loree:

Yeah, we have selected a preferred alternative, is the alternative analyzed within the EA that was presented at the meeting tonight. And I believe that's an earlier question from before the meeting started. So, try prioritizing which ones of those we take live.

Monica Monsma:

Yeah. Okay. My apologies. Sometimes people need clarification. So, I thought I would just kind of start towards the top. All right, we'll take the next caller and that is Wendy.

Wendy:

Hi. Hi. Can you hear me?

Monica Monsma:

Yes.

Wendy:

Okay, awesome. so I am actually going to try not to be long-winded with this question because heard someone else ask it, which makes me go at, I'm not the only one who is considering a question like this, I'm so sorry my kids are crying, but given the impact that the original I-375 did have on stripping black families and black business owners in the city of Detroit, from generating any wealth to pass down to their kids, something that I would really love to see come out of this project is money set aside from the state and the federal government to make sure that those opportunities are possible for black people who live in the city of Detroit. And when I was invited to this meeting by a friend, she did inform me that work is already taking place and I'm glad to hear that coordination is going to start with the city this summer.

But I think ahead of that coordination, I think it's important that we start having these very plain conversations about what people were robbed of and understanding what those implications were, the fact that a lot of the descendants of a lot of those people are still in the city today and deserve to be paid back for what was literally from their grandparents and their ancestors. So I would really love to see when those conversations start with the city, some large allocation, as I mentioned from the federal and state government together making sure that business opportunities and things of that nature are available for black people in the city of Detroit. So, thank you guys so much for the work that you're doing, this sounds like a great project and I hope that that's something that can be considered going forward.

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thank you, Wendy. All right. We have an online comment from Charles Johnson, that is, as a property owner at Madison Avenue, it is important that Madison have direct access to both North and South on the new Boulevard. It is critical to our existing business battle. Thank you for that comment, Charles. All right. And once again, if you would like to call in and speak verbally, that phone number is (866) 478-3388. All right. We do have a few more online comments that we can go through, one of them is from Thai Tran and that is more of a question than a comment, how will drivers access I-75 from Madison going east in any of the alternative plans?

Jon Loree:

Right now, in the preferred alternative for the project to access the Boulevard, it would be by happening coming down to Clinton and then over to Boulevard or going north and using McComb to go east. So this is one of the pieces, I think Dave Derrida mentioned as well, that we see there being some opportunities to provide some stronger connections between Madison Avenue and the new Boulevard that we were exploring and we'll be having some additional work-on during the design phase of the project.

Monica Monsma:

All right. Thank you. We have a comment and question from JW Mitchell. What are the pros and cons East Grand Boulevard to Belle Isle converted from traffic under Jefferson to traffic at grade level? I'm not sure if that's something we want to get back to later, or if that's something we would like to address now, but that's a question we can certainly answer later, not this evening.

Jon Loree:

Yeah. I think that's something that's actually landing somewhere outside of the project limits to the east of the project.

Monica Monsma:

All right. And we have another caller, Mellon, so I will take you live now. Oh, I'm sorry. My apologies. Not quite ready yet. All right. We do have a question from Gerald from the online format, which is, what is your plan to deal with football and baseball traffic?

Jon Loree:

We have one of the improvements within the Interchange is that the service drives to and from 75 on the North side, we'll reconnect to the freeway at Brush Avenue. So that's a big benefit that you can now use the Northbound Service Drive up by Medical Park and Ford Field to access Northbound I-75. We also, within the preferred alternative are looking at providing direct access out into the Boulevard that would be used during major events at Ford Field that would be a police control type operation and only used during egress for those special events. I think as we look at some of the special events traffic in our green sheet mitigation, I think there's some more permanent solutions we can find to really provide multiple access points to both the Boulevard and the freeway when it comes to event egress to be able to effectively move that traffic in and out of area.

Monica Monsma:

All right. And we have another comment from Daniel Himes, large trees or canopies should be planted to make the road feel less like a highway. So, thank you for that comment. All right. And now it looks like we are ready for Melanie to go live. So, go ahead whenever you're ready.

Melanie Markowicz:

Thank you for having me here today. My name is Melanie Markowicz, I represent Greektown Neighborhood Partnership, which is a nonprofit community development organization representing the business and property owners and the entire Greektown

District. We are bounded by a Brand Off on the West, Gratiot on the north, I-375 to the east and Lafayette to the south. We worked very closely with an MDOT and the city of Detroit is this project has taken shape over the last few years. We've even proactively incorporated this project into our community development plans for the future in what is called the Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision, which has spelling out in planning for development and our district public street improvement projects, new public parks, and we incorporated the I-375 project into that plan proactively.

And so, we've worked very closely with MDOT through this process and we really thank you for that. So, in reading over the EA, we came across a variety of things, including 5(b) direct left turns, which is the preferred alternative that really complimented the interest of business and property owners in the Greektown District. We'd like to stress the importance of St Anne's Antoine Street crossing over Gratiot Avenue with a two-way conversion of that one-way street and how important that access point is for our community in the future development of our community moving forward. And so we want to continue to be involved in those conversations, is the study of that introspection takes place, as well as any type of studies related to event traffic, because the Greektown District has a huge influx of event traffic in lots of attractions during events that patrons like to visit.

So we truly like to be involved moving forward in those conversations as we have been, and we also like to comment on the plan three conversion from McComb street, the EA currently identifies McComb street for a two-way conversion from Bohemian to the Boulevard, the entire length of McComb street right now just extends a block and a half further to that ending into the Plaza at Gratiot in Randolph. And so, we wanted to certainly see if we could study a two-way conversion for the entire length, if that might make sense for oncoming development in the area, including the exchange new residential development on the corner of Brush and McComb. And then we also want to stress the importance of Greektown as a district, one of the oldest historic districts in the whole city of Detroit, over 190 years old, and our business and property owners still to this day could be the highest concentration of small business owners in the entire central business district.

And it's important for mitigation during construction for this project to really take that into consideration. So not only do we have access, but thinking about the business impacts, both financial and cultural, because so many of our business owners have a cultural identity that defines our district as well as three places of worship within the district itself. We'd also like to note considerations for the Greektown Casino Hotel and access to that casino during construction and also after construction as well, because the other two casinos are readily available and accessible right off of highway. So, we certainly want to continue to work with MDOT and also the City of Detroit to make sure that this project takes shape, benefits all the business and property owners and residents of downtown Detroit as this moves forward. So, thank you.

Monica Monsma:

Thank you.

Jon Loree:

Thank you, Melanie. We will continue to loop you in as we work on through some of the event traffic details, and we do anticipate keeping St Antoine as a two-way through that intersection of McComb and Madison. Also, the McComb one-way to a conversion just north of the casino there as part of the larger downtown transportation study. And they were looking at the road network and in and around Greentown and how providing some two-way conversions in there can make it a little less confusing for people to get around. So that was how that was pulled into this project and is something that we'll be coordinating with the city and exactly what scale of implementation they do at what time, I think, is a good conversation we can have with the city. Thank you.

Monica Monsma:

All right. At the moment, we don't have any other callers waiting and we still have a few minutes for public comment, so we can read through some of the questions and comments we've received from our virtual participants. One question comes from Jessica and that is, what needs to happen before this project can begin?

Jon Loree:

When we talk about next steps, this is the environmental assessment period and I would anticipate receiving a FONSI in May, at which point in time we could start into the design phase of the project, which is at least about a two-year process. And then we could go into construction, the construction funding for the project though right now is out in 2027. So, there's desires to move that up and I know that that is looking at ways to possibly do that, but right now we are looking at construction starting in 2027.

Monica Monsma:

All right, thank you. We have another question from Ted, which I believe this was covered, but maybe good to state again, will there be roundabouts installed to improve traffic flow, but also prioritize non-motorized users?

Jon Loree:

We really are looking to provide a safe non-motorized user experience in the project with the two-way cycle track on the East side of the Boulevard. One of the pieces there will be prohibiting Westbound right turns on red to really open that up and make that safe on the sidewalk for the bicyclists and pedestrians crossing. Sorry, Monica, I lost the question. What was the first part?

Monica Monsma:

Oh, asking if there were any roundabouts included.

Jon Loree:

Oh yeah. Roundabouts. We looked at some different intersection types early on in design phase. And I think the challenge with roundabouts is the amount of space that they do take. So right now, we're looking at the traditional intersections and really the idea of the Boulevard kind of meshing and working with the city grid as much as possible by providing more connections for the traffic to flow in and out of the CBD and the residential areas to the east.

Monica Monsma:

All right. And we have a question from Royce, which I have heard in another commenting format. So, I think it will be worthwhile here, if land north of the Boulevard will be used for future development, I'm sorry, I'm looking at the wrong one, but I'll go with this one. If land north of the Boulevard will be used for future development, why not have parking lanes on that side? And if that one we can't get to now, that's something we can certainly respond to later.

Jon Loree:

Yeah. I think I don't see anymore; I think we have a few other comments. I don't see more comments coming online, so I think we'll go ahead and conclude the comment period for today. So, I think everyone, I mean, if you did not comment today, you have until February 19th to comment on the document. We do have a final video that we'd like to share today to help visualize what the project looks like, will look like in the future, so the simulation of what, and going around after the construction of the project is complete, in terms of what that can look like to really help people visualize that. So, people on the phone, I know you can't see this, I apologize.

So, you can feel free to drop off, the video and the recorded presentation will be available on the project website, if you would like to view at a later date. It'll take a day or two, I think, for us to get them posted on the website, but you will be able to find them up there shortly. So, I think we can go ahead and start the video of the future representation, but we didn't include any jazzy piano or musical background, so it's more of just something to visually take in.

(Silence)

Great, thanks. Thanks a lot, everyone for your participation today. This truly is a transformative project, and it's exciting to see it continue to progress. So, with that being said, I guess we will now sign off, have a great evening.