



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

PAUL C. AJEGBA
DIRECTOR

March 3, 2022

Theodore G. Burch, P.E.
Division Administrator (Acting)
Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Theodore Burch:

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) requests a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for JN 130035, the proposed I-375 Project from the I-75/I-375 Interchange and the Gratiot Avenue Connector to the Detroit River. This includes Jefferson Avenue from Beaubien Street to Rivard Street and intersecting roadways along I-375, City of Detroit, Wayne County.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on December 22, 2020. Copies of the EA were distributed to potentially affected or interested parties and was available online. A legal notice announcing the availability to review the EA and announcing the public hearing was sent out on January 5, 2021, by MDOT. Two engagement events were held during the comment period for the I-375 EA. The first was a virtual event, held on January 27, 2021, and was attended by 169 people. The second was an in-person public hearing, held on January 28, 2021, and was attended by 22 people. The in-person hearing was held at the former UAW-GM Center for Human Resources in Detroit, Michigan.

In summary, the selected alternative includes:

- The I-75/I-375 Interchange will be an urban-type interchange with right-hand on-and off-ramps that will provide access to the Eastern Market, Gratiot Avenue, the new boulevard, Brush Street, and Mack Avenue. This improvement will make all ramps on the right side of the freeway.
- Braided ramps to and from Mack Avenue on I-75, meaning the ramps will pass over other ramps to and from the boulevard using bridges to separate the roadways and ramp traffic, eliminating weaving, or conflict points.

- Additional connectivity and access will be provided with a new bridge connecting Brush Park and Eastern Market, additional street connections in Eastern Market, and access to Brush Park from southbound I-75.
- A street-level boulevard will begin south of the I-75/I-375 Interchange and continue to the Detroit River, opening additional connections to the Detroit Riverfront, Eastern Market, Brush Park, and a new local connector street from Eastern Market to Gratiot Avenue.
- Signalized intersections will be located along the boulevard at Jefferson Avenue, Larned Street, Lafayette Avenue, Monroe Street, Macomb Street, Clinton Street, Gratiot Avenue, and at the Blue Cross Blue Shield parking structure.
- Direct left-turns will be allowed at most intersections along the boulevard, except at the intersection with Gratiot Avenue.
- Improved nonmotorized facilities, including a two-way cycle track connecting the Riverfront to the Montcalm Street extension to Gratiot Avenue. The two-way cycle track will then extend west to Brush Street and east to Gratiot Avenue, where it connects with the Dequindre Cut Greenway bicycle path.
- Potential excess real estate property will be available for future redevelopment and/or other purposes.

Enclosed with this FONSI request is a summary of comments, questions, and suggestions made during the public comment period, which officially ended on February 19, 2021. There were agency and public comments regarding historic environmental injustices with the original construction of the I-375 freeway and whether the use of the potential excess property should therefore benefit people from the affected communities. These comments resulted in changes to the EA's proposed mitigation measures and enhancements, including the MDOT acknowledgement that the clearing of the historic neighborhoods for urban renewal projects, which included the I-375 freeway, disproportionately affected black, low-income, and minority populations.

The razing of the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods remains a significant loss to the City of Detroit. To address the historic injustices of property condemnation for construction of the I-375 freeway and in the spirit of implementing Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, MDOT will form a new community-based local advisory committee focused on the recognition of the former predominantly black businesses and residential neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. This local advisory committee will be tasked with providing meaningful input and ideas on final design elements, as well as on ways to repurpose excess property that will remain after project construction. MDOT will provide engineering and public involvement staff to facilitate the development of ideas, however the intent of MDOT involvement will be to support community-based decision-making.

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The local advisory committee will be formed well enough in advance of the final design to include their input into the project and throughout the construction of the project. These and other mitigation measures and enhancements are presented in Chapter 3 (Project Mitigation and Enhancements Summary (Green Sheet)). Chapter 4 (Errata) identifies corrections to the EA, which includes a reduced number of impacted noise receptors.

Based on the enclosed documentation, we request a FONSI be issued, and that location and design approval be granted. We also request that FHWA post the enclosed Notice of Limitation on Claims for Judicial Review of Actions in the Federal Register.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Bradley C. Wieferich, Bureau of Development Director, at 517-241-3998 or WieferichB@Michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Ajegba, P.E.
Director

Enclosures

cc: Brad Wieferich



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Michigan Division

March 7, 2022

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In Reply Refer To:
HDA-MI

Mr. Paul Ajegba, P.E.
Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 W. Ottawa St.
Lansing, MI 48933

Finding of No Significant Impact:

Interstate 375 (I-375) from I-75/I-375 Interchange and the Gratiot Avenue Connector to the Detroit River, Job Number 130035

Dear Director Ajegba,

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) received Michigan Department of Transportation's letter dated March 3, 2022, requesting a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed I-375 Project from the I-75/I-375 Interchange and the Gratiot Avenue Connector to the Detroit River, including Jefferson Avenue from Beaubien Street to Rivard Street and intersecting roadways along I-375, City of Detroit, Wayne County.

In accordance with 23 CFR 771, FHWA has determined the selected alternative will not have significant adverse impacts on the human or natural environment. This FONSI is based on the December 22, 2020 Environmental Assessment, summary of the virtual public engagement event held on January 27, 2021, and in person public hearing held on January 28, 2021, and responses to comments received during the public comment period which ended on February 19, 2021.

FHWA independently evaluated this information and determined the documentation adequately and accurately discusses the purpose and need, relevant environmental issues, impacts of the proposed project, appropriate mitigation measures and community enhancements plan. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

If you have any questions, please contact Brandy Solak, Safety and Operations Engineer by email at Brandy.Solak@dot.gov or by phone at (517) 702-1855.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Dionise, P.E.
Engineering and Operations Director
Deputy Division Administrator (Acting)

For: Theodore G. Burch, P.E.
Division Administrator

GEF

By e-mail

cc: Tony Kratofil, MDOT
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Mark Dionise, FHWA
Theodore Burch, FHWA

File Directory: O:\FHWA Records\ENVI Environmental - Planning and Program
Development\ENVI 2 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Related Documents
File Name: I-375 FONSI Determination_BNS_03072022.pdf