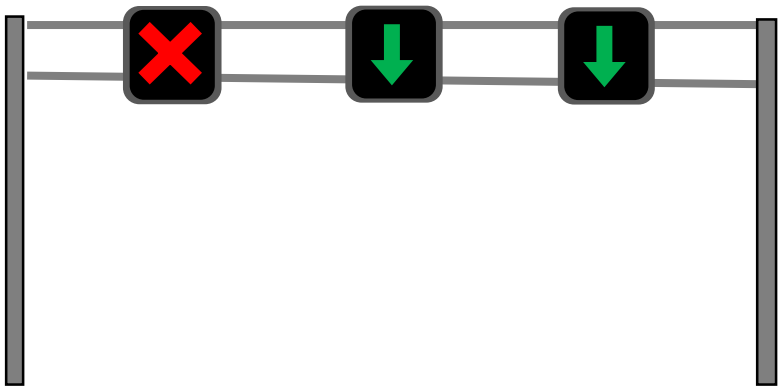
Finding of No Significant Impact and Supporting Documentation for a Finding of No Significant Impact

US-23 Improvements from M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road

Washtenaw and Livingston Counties
CS 81075 and 47013, JN 123214
June 2015



Prepared by the:

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

In cooperation with the:

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Michigan Division

June 30, 2015

315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, MI 48933
517-377-1844 (office)
517-377-1804 (fax)
Michigan.FHWA@dot.gov

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-MI

Mr. Kirk T. Steudle, P.E.
State Transportation Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
Lansing, Michigan

Finding of No Significant Impact
Proposed US-23 Improvements from M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road
CS 81075 and 47013, JN 123214, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties

Dear Director Steudle:

Reference is made to your letter dated June 16, 2015 which requested a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the above referenced project. We have completed our final review of the Environmental Assessment document and supplemental information and conclude the preferred alternative will have no significant impacts to the environment. Accordingly, our signed FONSI determination is enclosed. Please transmit a notice to the affected Federal, state and local government units informing them the FONSI document will be available from your Department, or our office, upon request from the public.

By our adoption of the FONSI and completion of the public comment/hearing requirements of 23 USC 128, MDOT is authorized to proceed with further project development. Should you have questions please contact me at 517-702-1855.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Johnston

Digitally signed by Julie A. Johnston
DN: cn=Julie A. Johnston, o, ou=FHWA - Michigan Division, email=julie.johnston@dot.gov, c=US
Date: 2015.06.30 16:17:29 -04'00'

Julie A. Johnston
Area Engineer

For: Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.
Division Administrator

lmw
Enclosure (2)
By e-mail
cc: Timothy Marshall, FHWA
Patrick Marchman, FHWA
Ted Burch, FHWA
Tom Hanf, MDOT
Geri Ayers, MDOT
Paul Ajegba, MDOT
Mark Sweeney, MDOT
DMS: US-23ATMFONSI
File Directory: O:\FHWA Records\ENGI Engineering and Operations
File Name: US-23ATMFONSI_JAJ_06302015

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Michigan Division

June 30, 2015

315 W. Allegan Street, Room 201
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Finding of No Significant Impact
Proposed US-23 Improvements from M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road
CS 81075 and 47013, JN 123214, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties

FINDING

In accordance with 23 CFR 771, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that the preferred alternative will not have any significant impacts on the human or natural environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the:

- January 21, 2015 Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Supplemental material submitted by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on June 16, 2015.

FHWA independently evaluated this information and determined the documentation to adequately and accurately discuss the purpose and need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine that an EIS is not required. In addition, the US-23 Improvements project elements have been added to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) 2015 Spring Amendments of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2014 - 2017 transportation improvement program (TIP) with the construction phase of this project is listed in the FY 2016 SEMCOG TIP per 23 USC 135 and 134.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Active Traffic Management (ATM) project includes:

- Mainline US-23
  - Four 12-foot lanes (two lanes in each direction), a 10-foot wide outside shoulder; and an 11-foot wide inside (median) shoulder with a two-foot paved median shy distance with the inside shoulder to accommodate for the ATM system
  - Six crash investigation sites constructed at the outside shoulders;
  - Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) lane assignment gantries;
  - Capital preventative maintenance (CPM-mill and fill) between the US-23/M-14 west interchange north to Silver Lake Road
- Other elements
  - Bridge replacements at 6 Mile Road, 8 Mile Road and North Territorial Road
  - Operational improvements at the North Territorial Road and 8 Mile interchanges with the construction of roundabouts, and the removal of the park and ride lot for a minor relocation of the 5 Mile Road connection to North Territorial Road;
  - Northbound and southbound entrance lane ramp extensions at the interchanges;

- The widening of the US-23 bridges over Barker Road and the railroad to accommodate the shoulder for the ATM system and;
- CPM work at the bridges over US-23 at Joy and Warren Roads.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND MITIGATION

The EA and EA Green Sheet (see attached) contains the anticipated environmental impacts, required mitigation, and any environmental enhancements. Environmental enhancements are those activities above and beyond what is required by law. and developed in cooperation with the local community.

COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The FHWA verified MDOT conducted the public involvement process in accordance with 23 CFR 771.119. The EA and Supplemental Information contains documentation of public meetings, public and resource agency comments received as well as responses to those comments.

REVISIONS TO THE ENVIRONMETNAL ASSESSMENT

The EA released for public review was signed on January 27, 2015. Prior to finalization of the EA, FHWA Michigan Division staff reviewed it and provided comments. All of the Division's comments have been addressed. The supplemental material submitted by the MDOT on June 16, 2015 contains the information pertaining to public comments and a revised Green Sheet.

DETERMINATION THAT AN EIS IS NOT NECESSARY

Per 40 CFR 1508.27 – Council on Environmental Quality's regulations requiring consideration of a project's context and intensity in determining whether the project will have a significant impact, the EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required. The FONSI will be reevaluated as appropriate pursuant to 23 CFR 771.29(c).

Date: 6-30-15

Timothy C. Marshall

Digitally signed by Timothy C. Marshall
DN: cn=Timothy C. Marshall, o=Federal Highway Administration, ou=Michigan Division Office, email=Timothy.Marshall@dot.gov, c=US
Date: 2015.06.30 16:11:26 -04'00'

Timothy C. Marshall, P.E.
Engineering and Operations Manager
FHWA Michigan Division

Request letter and supporting documentation for the Finding of No Significant Impact

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR

June 16, 2015

Mr. Russell L. Jorgenson, P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration, Michigan Division
315 West Allegan Street, Room 201
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Mr. Jorgenson:

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) requests a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed US-23 improvements from the west US-23/M-14 interchange north to the Silver Lake Road interchange, located in Ann Arbor and Northfield Townships, Washtenaw County; and Green Oak Township, Livingston County; Control Sections 81075 and 47013; and Job Number 123214.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project was approved by the Federal Highway Administration on January 27, 2015. Copies of the EA were distributed to potentially affected or interested parties. A public hearing on the proposed project was held on February 26, 2015. Certification of the public hearing and a copy of the public hearing transcript were transmitted to your office on March 30, 2015.

The project includes:

- Mainline US-23
  - Four 12-foot lanes (two lanes in each direction), a 10-foot wide outside shoulder; and an 11-foot wide inside (median) shoulder with a two-foot paved median shy distance with the inside shoulder to accommodate the shoulder for the active traffic management (ATM) system;
  - Six Crash investigation sites constructed at the outside shoulders;
  - Intelligent Transportation System lane assignment gantries;
  - Capital preventive maintenance (CPM-mill and fill) between the US-23/M-14 west interchange north to Silver Lake Road.
- Other elements
  - Bridge replacements at 6 Mile Road, 8 Mile Road and North Territorial Road;
  - Operational improvements at the North Territorial Road and 8 Mile interchanges with the construction of roundabouts, and the removal of the park and ride lot for a minor relocation of the 5 Mile Road connection to North Territorial Road;
  - Northbound and southbound entrance lane ramp extensions at the interchanges;
  - The widening of the US-23 bridges over Barker Road and the railroad to accommodate the shoulder for the ATM system, and;
  - CPM work at the bridges over US-23 at Joy and Warren Roads.

Enclosed with this FONSI request are comments, questions, and suggestions made at the public hearing; 28 associated letters, resolutions, and e-mails submitted to MDOT before closing of the public comment period on March 17, 2015, and responses; and the updated project mitigation summary (Green Sheet).

Based on the enclosed documentation, we request a FONSI be issued, and that location/design approval be granted.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either me or Mark Van Port Fleet, Bureau of Development Director, at (517) 241-3998.

Sincerely,

Kirk T. Steudle
Director

Enclosure

Attachment A

DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING A FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE PROPOSED US-23 INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN LIVINGSTON AND WASHTENAW COUNTIES, MICHIGAN, CONTROL SECTIONS 81075 AND 47013, AND JOB NUMBER 123214.

SECTION 1

PROPOSED PROJECT

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed US-23 infrastructure and operational improvements in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties, Michigan from the west US-23/M-14 (tri-level) interchange (Exit 45) north to the Silver Lake Road interchange (Exit 55) (see Figure 1) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on January 21, 2015. Legal notices were placed in the *Livingston Daily* and *the Ann Arbor News* on February 15, 2015 announcing the availability of the EA and a public hearing to comment on the EA. The public hearing was held February 26, 2015 at the Northfield Township Hall. Sixty people were in attendance. The public hearing was held in accordance with Federal and State Public Involvement/Public Hearing Procedures, the public involvement/hearing requirements have been met as certified by MDOT's Public Hearing Officer and can be found in APPENDIX A. Comments

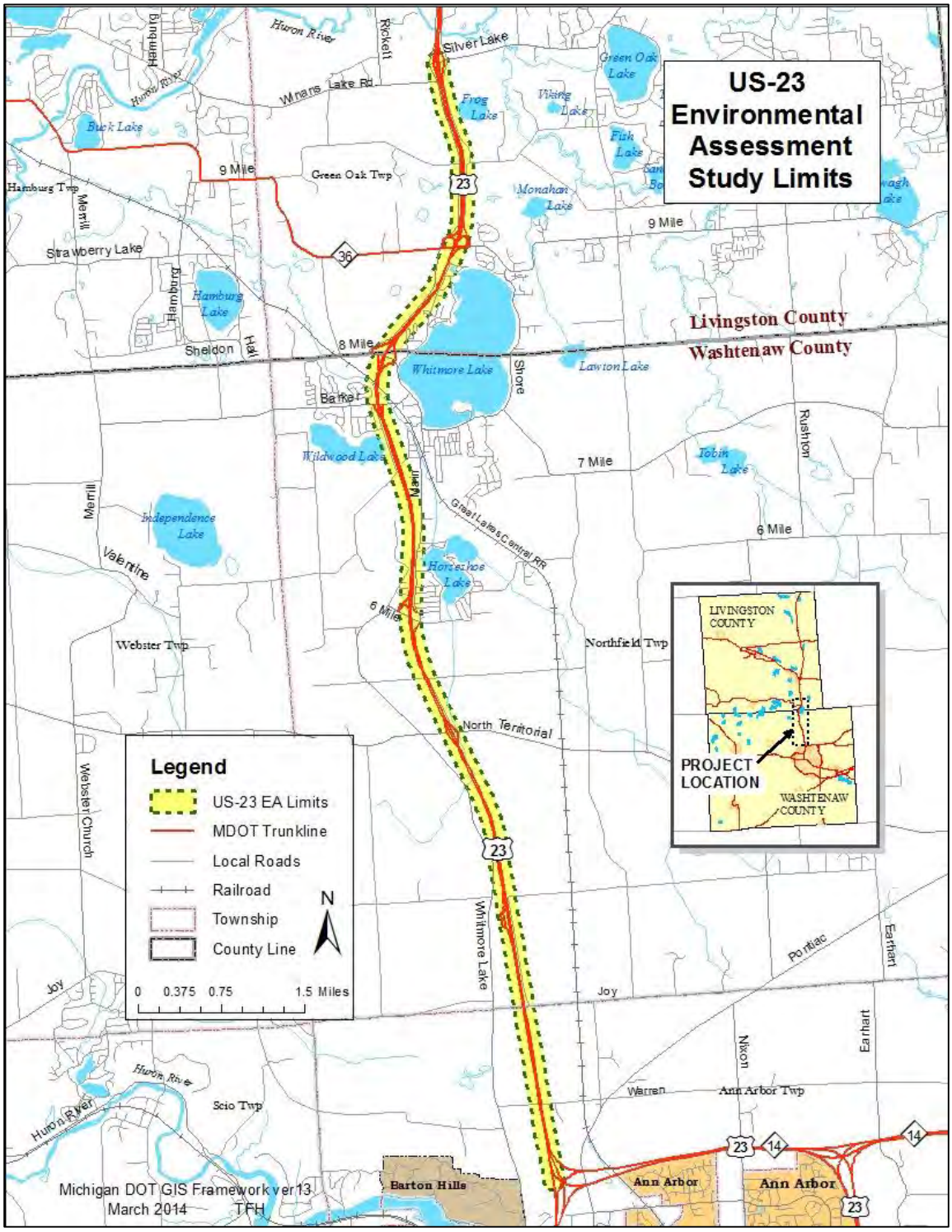
The comment period ended on March 17, 2015, MDOT has proposed design modifications based on comments received. The proposed changes include:

- extending the recommended noise barrier (NB-R) 600 feet. The reanalysis of NB-R is found in Section 2.8.
- selected the roundabout configuration for the 8 Mile Road interchange

The US-23 Improvements project elements have been added to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) 2015 Spring Amendments of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2014 - 2017 transportation improvement program (TIP)

Five alternatives were reviewed for potential environmental, economic, and community impacts in the EA. The Preferred Alternative, Active Traffic Management (ATM), was selected as the Preferred Alternative for this project. Below is a brief description of each alternative and the reasons why it was either chosen or dismissed.

Figure 1 – Environmental Assessment Study Corridor



1.2 ALTERNATIVES

No Build

The No Build alternative is the baseline alternative to compare traffic and impacts with the Build Alternatives. It includes elements already in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) transportation improvement plan (TIP) and required maintenance. The No Build is not considered a reasonable alternative because it does not address the functional obsolescence, operational inefficiencies, or provide for incident management. Furthermore, it does not relieve the directional weekday peak hour traffic congestion. The modeling of this alternative illustrates the continuation of the directional peak period congestion and deterioration of the traffic flow in this corridor through 2040.

Build Alternatives

Transportation Systems Management (TSM):

This alternative includes the N. Territorial, 8 Mile, and 6 Mile Roads bridge replacements which will also accommodate future pedestrian and non-motorized travel.

The N. Territorial Road bridge replacement includes the realignment of 5 Mile Road to intersect N. Territorial Road east of the existing intersection. Roundabouts will be constructed on N. Territorial Road at the ramp termini. The park and ride lot will be removed and will be reviewed for replacement at a later date.

The TSM Alternative also includes ramp extensions and minor operational improvements at intersection terminals such as signal timing changes or storage lanes that do not require right-of-way.

This alternative does address infrastructure needs and some of the operational inefficiencies, but does not present opportunities to relieve the US-23 mainline traffic congestion due to traffic incidents and directional weekday peak hour traffic congestion.

Ramp Metering:

Ramp metering is the use of traffic signals to control the flow of traffic entering a freeway facility. This alternative analysis included all the elements listed in the TSM Alternative and includes metering of the following on-ramps:

- 6 Mile Rd. On-Ramp to SB US-23 (300 feet from cross street)
- 8 Mile Rd. On-ramp To SB US-23 (381 feet from cross street)
- M-36 On-Ramp to SB US-23 (311 feet from cross street)
- M-36 On-Ramp to NB US-23 (300 feet from cross street)

Although the addition of ramp metering at these select locations did not result in significant freeway operational improvements, it is anticipated that ramp metering will have an impact on safety by reducing the number of crashes at the merge areas for these metered ramps. This alternative does address infrastructure and some of the operational

inefficiencies, but does not present opportunities to relieve the US-23 mainline traffic congestion due to traffic incidents and directional weekday peak hour traffic congestion.

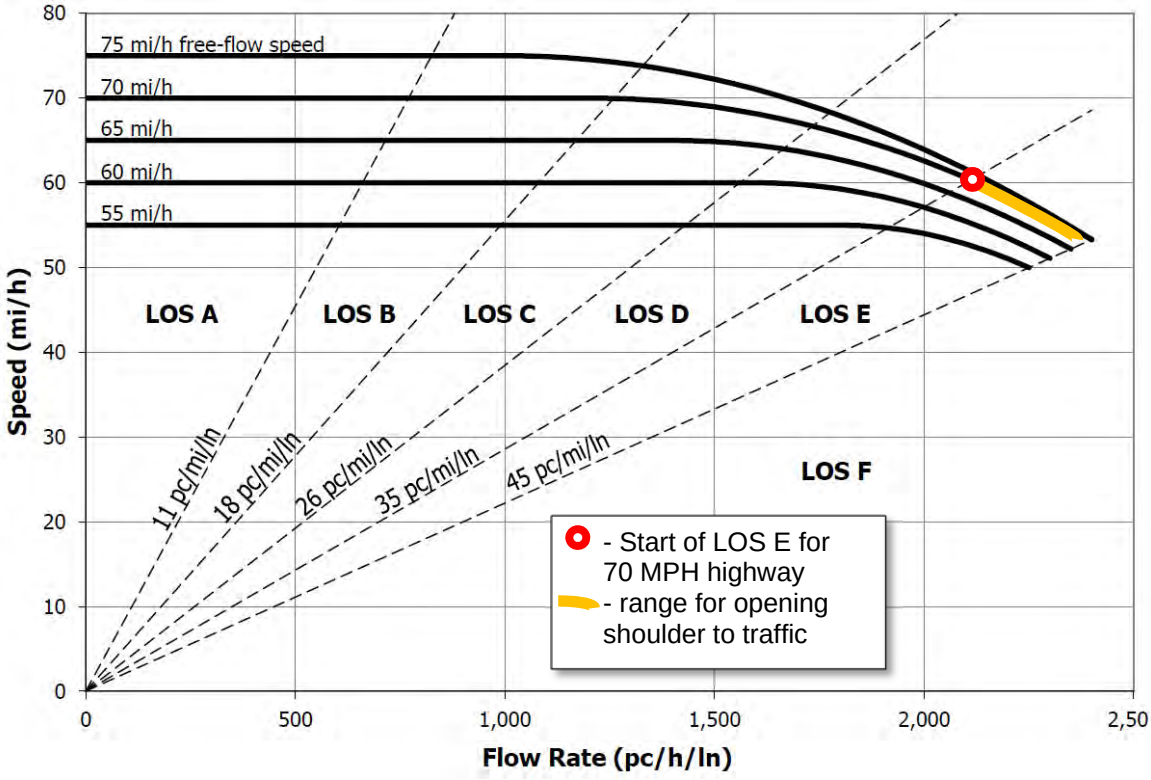
Active Traffic Management (ATM), <u>Preferred Alternative</u>:

This Alternative includes all the elements listed in the TSM Alternative, six crash investigation sites (CIS) and an active traffic management (ATM) system. The ATM includes dynamic shoulder use from the west US-23/M-14 interchange to south of the M-36 interchange, to relieve the directional peak period traffic congestion. The ATM does not continue further north due to the configuration of US-23 bridge at the M-36 interchange. The median on the bridge does not have sufficient room to add the needed inside shoulder for the ATM. This would require a complete reconstruction of the interchange. There is no available funding for this in the near future. Figure 3 (page 7) illustrates all the elements of the Preferred Alternative.

The ATM will be in operation with the southbound (SB) shoulders only open to traffic during the typical AM peak period of 6:30 – 9AM. The northbound (NB) shoulders will only be open to traffic during the typical PM peak period of 3:30 – 7PM. The shoulders will be restricted to passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks. The shoulders will also be available for traffic diversion in the event of mainline incidents; such as, collisions, mechanical breakdowns, or when traffic meets congestion thresholds during off-peak hours due to special event traffic or seasonal fluctuations. MDOT defines congestion thresholds as the rising freeway density (or dropping of the level of service (LOS)) with the reduction of speed as traffic volume nears roadway capacity. ITS software is being developed to continuously monitor and automatically detect when the freeway traffic density is climbing and is nearing capacity. The intent would be to open the shoulder to traffic during LOS E conditions and prior to LOS F so that stop and go conditions are minimized to reduce the probability of rear-end collisions. Figure 2, on the following page, (from the Highway Capacity Manual 2010) shows that for a roadway with a posted speed limit of 70 mph that LOS E conditions start at about 60 mph with traffic volumes around 2100 vehicles per lane. It also illustrates the range when the shoulder will be opened for traffic.

Figure 4 (page 9) illustrates cross sections of the highway lanes with the hard running shoulder sections for the dynamic shoulder use lanes of the ATM.

Figure 2: Freeway Speed-Flow Curves
(LOS = level of service; pc = passenger car; ln = lane).



This Alternative includes the reconfiguration of the 8 Mile Road interchange along with its bridge replacement due to the widening of the US-23 bridges over the railroad to accommodate the dynamic shoulder use configuration. The 8 Mile Road interchange reconfiguration includes adding roundabouts. The Alternative also requires the widening of the US-23 bridges over Barker Road to accommodate the dynamic shoulder use configuration.

This alternative alleviates the stop-and-go traffic conditions that currently exist on US-23. Because of this, SB US-23 would experience some congestion near the US-23/M-14 interchange. MDOT has developed a design strategy to mitigate this congestion. MDOT will include a four-lane treatment that will start south of the Warren Road bridge and provide four lanes at the US-23 and M-14 split (two lanes to each roadway). The additional lane will not require any additional right-of-way. This option will help reduce the traffic congestion during the AM peak hours near the SB US-23/M-14 interchange.

This is the Preferred Alternative as it fulfills all the elements of the purpose and need.

ATM with High Occupancy Vehicles (ATM-HOV):

This alternative includes all the elements listed in the ATM Alternative, except the dynamic shoulder use during the periods of directional peak hour traffic would be designated for high occupancy vehicle (HOV) use and will only be available for passenger vehicles and small trucks with 2 or more occupants.

Although both the ATM and ATM-HOV alternatives met the Purpose and Need similarly, the ATM-HOV alternative did not operate as well as the ATM alternative. This is particularly seen during the AM peak hour on SB US-23 from North Territorial Road to the EB/WB M-14 split as presented in the Traffic Report. Because there were not as many vehicles that would be eligible for HOV use, the ATM with the general purpose lane showed better lane balance with the distribution of vehicles and hence, better operations.

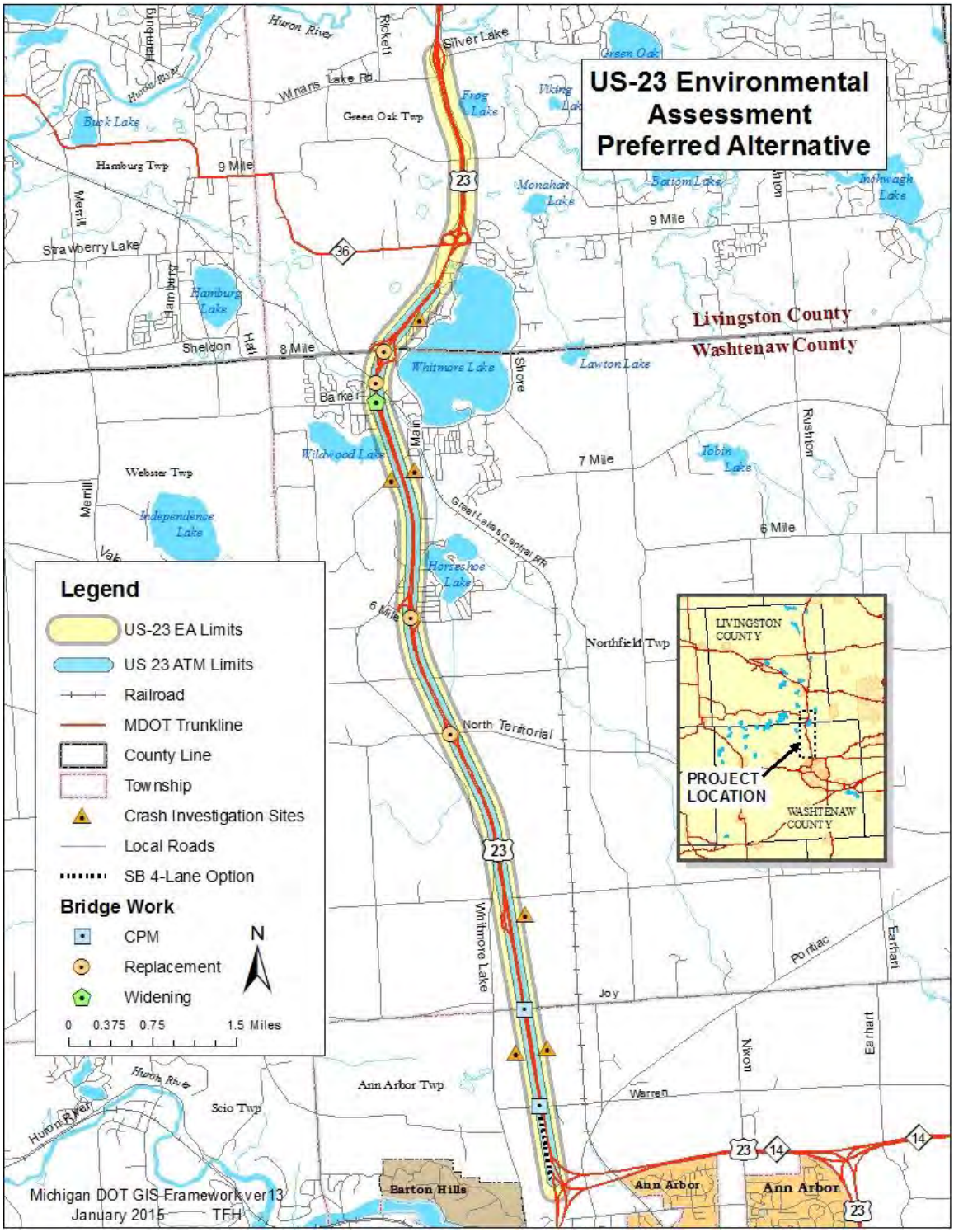
Enforcement is a necessary component of successful HOV implementation. The enforcement of the dynamic shoulder as an HOV lane would be very challenging compared to the enforcement of the shoulder as a general purpose lane. During the congested time periods, if the median shoulder use is designated as HOV-only, an officer would need to recognize if a vehicle was not an eligible HOV user (a "violator") and then pull them over. Since the median shoulder would be in use, the only shoulder available for enforcement would be the right shoulder which makes this operation difficult. The stopping of a violator in the HOV would defeat the purpose of the operation.

The ATM-HOV Alternative does fulfill most of the elements of the purpose and need, but due to the operational and enforcement issues it is not a preferred alternative.

Project Mitigation Summary "Green Sheet"

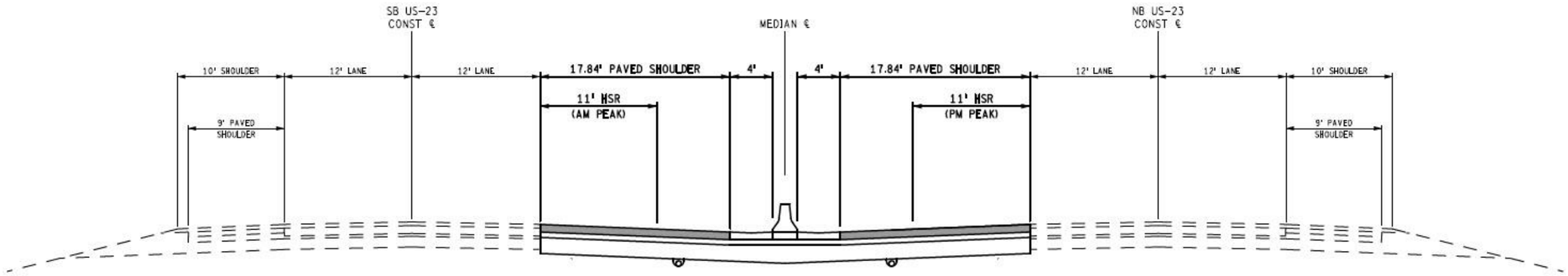
A final Project Mitigation Summary "Green Sheet" that describes proposed mitigation measures for this project is found after Section 2.8.

Figure 3: Preferred Alternative – ATM Alternative Elements



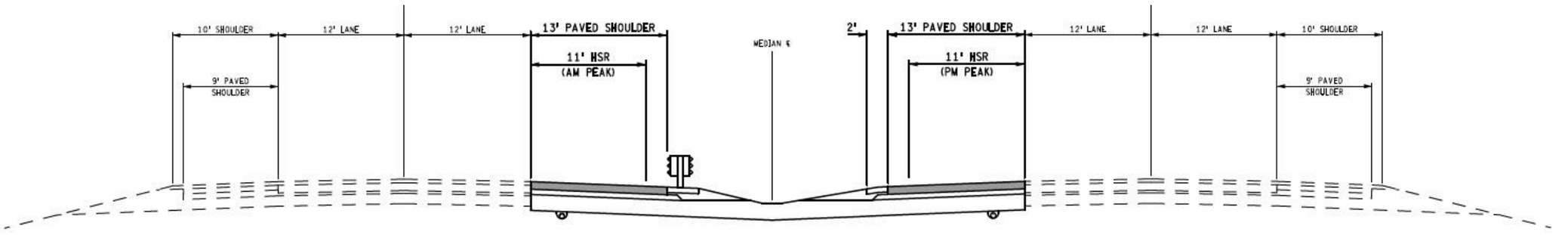
Attachment A

Figure 4 – ATM Dynamic Shoulder Use Lanes Cross Sections



PROPOSED TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

SECTION APPLIES TO:
SOUTHERN END OF ATM (SOUTH OF WARREN ROAD) TO JOY ROAD



PROPOSED TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

SECTION APPLIES TO:
JOY ROAD TO NORTH END OF ATM (SOUTH OF THE M-36 INTERCHANGE)

HSR: Hard Shoulder Running pavement for dynamic shoulder use

Attachment A

SECTION 2

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

MDOT received two letters and one e-mail from federal resource agencies; one letter from a State Representative; two letters and one e-mail from state agencies; five letters from local agencies; one letter and nine e-mail comments from the public during the comment period that ended on March 17, 2015. From the public hearing; MDOT received seven comments from guests who completed written comment forms, one letter from a subdivision association deposited into the comment box, and no comments from guests were given to the court reporter.

The following is a summary of the resource agency letters and the comments from the public that were received and responses to those comments. Copies of the letters and emails are included in APPENDIX B.

2.1 LETTERS FROM RESOURCE AGENCIES

MDOT received two letters and an e-mail from federal resource agencies. The comment letters were received from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Department of Interior (DOI) and an e-mail from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The DOI and FAA each reviewed the EA document but provided no comment.

The USEPA comments and responses to the comments are as follows:

Comment: "...the EA is unclear if bridge replacement will cause the weight restrictions to be removed to accommodate heavy duty truck traffic. Recommendation: EPA recommends the issue of weight restrictions and the proposed North Territorial Road bridge replacement be clarified."

Response: The weight restrictions will be removed with the replacement of the North Territorial Road bridge making it available for heavy-duty truck traffic.

Comment: "The EA is not clear on whether the (*Freeway Courtesy*) Program will be expanded to handle disabled vehicles on US-23, particularly during peak travel times. If Program expansion is a feature of proposed improvements, does appropriate funding exist for this type of service expansion?"

Response: The Freeway Courtesy Patrol program is presently in operation and will be reconfigured or expanded to provide for peak hour assistance of the ATM system.

Comment: "EPA is concerned that removal of the park and ride facility will encourage more people to take solo trips, reduce air quality, and cause an increase in traffic congestion. EPA recommends the rationale for removing the park and ride lot without replacement be included in the EA. How many cars are parked in this lot on a typical day? Where is the nearest location park and ride lots that motorists can use? Can the near location absorb the users from this lot?"

Response: Its present location requires removal to facilitate the reconfiguration of the interchange. Moreover, the present access to the lot is off 5 Mile Road, which in turn merges with the northbound US-23 entrance ramp as a single intersection on N. Territorial Road. That is, the N. Territorial Road end of the ramp functions as a two way roadway. This roadway/ramp configuration creates a dangerous situation and is against current MDOT and FHWA standards.

The N. Territorial Road park and ride lot has a 40 vehicle capacity. The closest park and ride lot is located five miles north at the M-36 interchange with a 71 vehicle capacity and is able to absorb the temporary loss of the spaces at the N. Territorial Road lot.

MDOT will replace the N. Territorial Road carpool lot within 3-5 years of the approval date of this FONSI. The new carpool lot will accommodate at least the same number of cars as the current lot. The general location of the park and ride replacement at N. Territorial Road was studied in the EA for impacts adjacent to MDOT ROW needs for the relocation of 5 Mile Road. If this location is found not feasible for whatever reason during its design phase, then another location will be considered and an environmental clearance will be conducted if the proposed park and ride lot includes property outside of MDOT ROW.

Meanwhile, MDOT and AAATA remain in consistent consultation for future park and ride lot locations for transit options along the US-23 corridor.

Comment: "The TSM Alternative includes ramp extensions and minor operational improvements at intersection termination such as signal timing changes or storage lanes that do not require right-of-way.

Recommendation: EPA recommends clarifying what is meant by a "storage lane that does not require right-of-way."

Response: The storage lanes are extended exit ramp turn lanes from the intersection termini down the ramp to divide the traffic earlier to shorten the vehicular queuing and enhance interchange operation. The extended lanes could be constructed within the limits of existing MDOT property, and would not require the purchase of additional property.

Comment: "The EA is not clear on why ramp metering is not included in the preferred alternative as a way to decrease the number of incident events along the US-23 corridor. EPA recommends clarification be added to the EA to explain the decision not to include ramp metering in the proposed improvements."

Response: A successful adaptive ramp metering system in this corridor would break up the groups or “platoons” of vehicles entering the freeway at the ramp merge points. Adaptive ramp metering control is a coordinated traffic response where ITS recognizes traffic bottlenecks and triggers the ramp metering. Coordinated traffic responsive ramp metering operation seeks to optimize a multiple-ramp section of a highway, often with the control of flow through a bottleneck as the ultimate goal.

Overall, adaptive metering of the ramps for gaps in freeway volumes was not a beneficial use of ramp metering due to the low ramp traffic volumes along the US-23 EA study corridor. Each interchange was analyzed to determine the benefit of ramp metering for platoon dispersion.

In regard to the Preferred Alternative, the roundabouts that are proposed for the interchange ramps of North Territorial and 8 Mile Roads work as another way to break up platooning vehicles and, therefore, ramp metering would not be necessary at these locations.

The three remaining locations were shown to provide an operational or safety benefit from ramp metering:

- 6-Mile on-ramp to SB US-23
- M-36 on-ramp to SB US-23
- M-36 on ramp to NB US-23

Although the 6-Mile location could be accomplished without a major ramp improvement, the M-36 interchange would require significant ramp modifications to accommodate ramp metering. However, with the significant improvements in operation anticipated from the preferred alternative (ATM), it was determined that these ramp metering locations would most likely provide minimal additional benefits, eliminating the need to include it in the proposed improvements.

Comment: "The EA is not clear on why these CIS were proposed. Are additional CIS needed north of 8 Mile Road and/or near North Territorial Road? EPA recommends the rationale for selecting the six CIS be included in the EA."

Response: MDOT has determined that crash investigation sites (CIS) will improve motorist safety when an accident occurs. The crash investigation sites will provide those involved in an accident and the emergency responders a location to safely clear and investigate accidents without impeding traffic. This is paramount to the purpose and need of the project to develop safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation improvements.

The number and location of the crash investigation sites were selected based upon the prevalence of crash history and where exit ramps are not nearby providing refuge. Additional CIS's beyond what is shown in the EA document are not anticipated.

Comment: "This section of the EA indicates that travel time savings realized by each of the build alternatives is anticipated to be larger than what is shown in Table 4.0. EPA requests clarification in the EA how the VISSIM simulation, which takes into account ideal conditions but was calibrated to match existing conditions as much as possible, with travel times that vary day-to-day, anticipates larger travel time savings than what is shown in Table 4.0."

Response: The VISSIM model uses average peak hour traffic conditions in the simulation. It is beyond the capabilities of the VISSIM model to calculate the impacts of

non-ideal conditions such as stalled vehicles on the shoulder, erratic driver behavior, etc. We just know that the travel time savings we show are for an average peak with no outside factors such as a blocked shoulder or snow. It is expected that having the shoulder lane during non-ideal conditions will help even more.

Comment: "The VISSIM model simulation shows there are more gaps and larger head ways for the onramp traffic to merge into traffic with the use of the A TM shoulder during peak periods, which helps eliminate the slow-down due to merging traffic. The EA also indicates that the median shoulder would be used to maintain traffic during an incident, which should decrease the likelihood of secondary crashes due to traffic backups.

Recommendation: This information is confusing. EPA suggests greater differentiation between the median shoulders and the on-ramps to clarify the above. For example, the median shoulder would be used to maintain traffic during an incident on the on-ramps, which should decrease the likelihood of secondary crashes due to traffic backups on the on-ramps."

Response: The median shoulder will be used for different purposes, each with different safety benefits. First, during the peak hours, the shoulder will be open to improve operations. With the additional use of the shoulder, this allows vehicles to be distributed in 3 travel lanes (versus 2) which provides for more gaps for the entering on-ramp traffic. Secondly, the median shoulder will be used for incident management during off-peak periods, which will reduce backups and the likelihood of secondary crashes.

Comment: "It is confusing to the reviewer why two different proposed typical cross sections are section (shown) in Figure 5.2. Additionally, the Figure shows a paved shoulder and a hard shoulder running pavement for dynamic shoulder use. What is the difference between a 'hard shoulder running pavement' and a paved shoulder? EPA recommends this discussion be clarified to explain why two cross sections and two pavement types are proposed."

Response: The top roadway cross section illustrates the ATM lane configuration from the north ramp splits of the west US-23/M-14 interchange north to the Joy Road bridge. The bottom cross section illustrates the ATM lane configuration from the Joy Road bridge to the north ATM terminus south of M-36. The difference between a 'hard shoulder running pavement' (HRS) and a paved shoulder is that the HRS is the section where traffic will travel during the ATM operation and the paved shoulder acts as a typical paved shoulder separating the travel lane from the edge of the roadway. Pavement striping will identify the HRS (dynamic shoulder use) section of the shoulder.

Comment: "Roundabouts are a fairly new roadway feature for many parts of the U.S. Depending on how widely roundabouts are being used in Michigan, EPA recommends MDOT and FHW A conduct an intensive effort to inform drivers about this configuration in an effort to increase familiarity and reduce the potential for traffic incidents. EPA

suggests a combination of videos and simulations, fact sheets, etc. during public meetings and public hearings addressing how roundabouts will function at the on- and off-ramps."

Response: Michigan's first roundabout was built in 1996 and we now have over 100 roundabouts throughout the State. MDOT has a public website (http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9615_53039---,00.html) dedicated to roundabouts which includes background information, frequently asked questions and a video showing how to drive through a roundabout.

Comment: "EPA recommends the EA be augmented with an explanation focused on the efficiency and safety differences between proposed signal controlled intersections and roundabout configurations at this interchange (*8 Mile Road*) to inform the public comment process."

Response: Although both options were considered as "acceptable" treatments, the roundabout option for the 8-Mile interchange shows better operation as compared to the signalized operations (see the EA Traffic Report). According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "although traffic signals can work well for alternately assigning the right-of-way to different user movements across an intersection, roundabouts have demonstrated substantial safety and operational benefits compared to most other intersection forms and controls, with especially significant reductions in fatal and injury crashes." [1] In addition, the "Highway Safety Manual (HSM) indicates that by converting a signalized intersection to a roundabout, a location can experience a 78 percent reduction in severe (injury/fatal) crashes and a 48 percent reduction in overall crashes. " [1]

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, FHWA-SA-12-005 – Proven Safety Countermeasures – Roundabouts.
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/fhwa_sa_12_005.cfm

Comment: "The conclusion for the Threatened and Endangered Species section indicates that field surveys did not result in locating any state- or Federally-listed threatened, endangered or special concern species.

Recommendation: EPA recommends the information concerning purple twayblade and willow aster be augmented by indicating these species were not located in project corridor."

Response: The purple twayblade and willow aster are not located in the project corridor.

Comment: "The EA indicates that tree removals will occur mainly at the proposed relocation of 5 Mile Road north of North Territorial Road. The 3.32-acre wooded area is located directly adjacent to the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake drain. Recommendation: EPA recommends MDOT and FHWA commit to voluntary tree mitigation and winter removal restrictions in the Project Mitigation Summary (Green Sheet) to avoid possible impact to avian or bat species. A potential for tree mitigation would be the Ann Arbor and

regional communities' green belt program. Additionally, the EA is not clear whether all or a portion of the 3.32-acre wooded lot will be cleared. EPA recommends these two items be discussed in the EA."

Response: The intent is to only remove the trees needed to relocate the road and potentially a few others for the new crossing of Horseshoe Lake Drain, approximately 1.8 acres. The worst case scenario is to remove all the trees in the 3.32 acre wood lot. The specific area and number of trees will be determined during the design phase. Trees will be individually evaluated for their value based on size and species. Replacements will be done at a 1:1 ratio for trees of value and will generally be positioned as close as possible (outside the clear zone) to where they were removed.

Comment: "The EA indicates MDOT is considering the use of Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) methods to minimize the impacts to motorists at all bridge replacements.

Recommendation: EPA recommends the EA be augmented with applicable criteria MDOT and FHWA will use to determine whether ABC methods will be used to replace bridges and minimize impacts to motorists."

Response: The use of accelerated bridge construction (ABC), such as the Self-Propelled Modular Transporter (SPMT) described in Section 5.2, of the EA will be determined during the design process after the investigation of the soils conditions in the construction staging area (that is, that the area can support construction and transportation activity), and the availability of the transporter within the construction schedule. Traffic is maintained during construction with a detour required only during the period of bridge demolition and during the time to transport the bridge from its construction site to its final location. Traditional bridge replacement operations will be used if the ABC method is not feasible. Traffic will be maintained with detours or lane shifts as necessary.

Comment: "The EA indicates the existing US-23 crossing of Horseshoe Creek is currently a 6' x 10' dual culvert. MDOT proposes to extend the twin culverts 10' on each end. Flow is proposed to be maintained in one culvert while the other is extended. EPA assumes this means that an instream diversion will be used to divert all stream flow through one culvert while the other is being extended.
Recommendation: The EA is not clear how much flow enters the dual culvert system, but measures should be taken to ensure that diversion of the entire stream flow into one culvert at a time will not cause hydraulic scour either on the outlet of the culvert or through it (if this is a bottomless culvert). EPA recommends construction occur during dryer months when low flow can be safely accommodated through one culvert. EPA recommends these two issues be clarified in the EA."

Response: Typically, when MDOT is using an instream diversion, we ensure that no harmful interference to backwater occurs in rain events up to and including the 10 year event. If a flow higher than that occurs, it will overflow the contractor's containment

system and flow through both barrels relatively unimpeded. There may be some minor increases in velocity in a given individual barrel but it would only occur during higher flows (close to a 10 year event) and would not exceed the 10 year event velocity. These are 4 sided box culverts, so the bottom is concrete. We do not anticipate scour being an issue, even under temporary conditions.
We will review the construction schedule during the design phase and work with the various stakeholders on when the culvert extensions will be constructed. Culvert construction is dependent upon many factors including the requirements of permitting agencies, staging of a project and constructability of the proposed work. Ideally any culvert construction would be done under low water conditions.

Comment: "The Green Sheet indicates the "Special Provision for Migratory Bird Protection" (Provision) will be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to nesting birds for the proposed widening at the Great Lakes Central Railroad overpass south of 8 Mile Road and the bridge at Barker Road.
Recommendation: EPA recommends the obligations in the Provision be briefly explained in the EA. For example, does the Provision include seasonal work restrictions?"

Response: The following is added to the Green Sheet, "The protection offered to migratory birds through the special provision is based on the scope of work, season, and presence of nesting birds with eggs or young. This may include avoidance by scheduling construction outside of the nesting season or erecting barriers to prevent birds from using the structure."

Comment: "The Green Sheet indicates several voluntary measures may be implemented by the Contractor to reduce engine activity or reduce emissions per unit of operating time. MDOT's Standard Construction Specification Sections 107.15(A) and 107.19 would apply to control fugitive dust and cleaning of haul roads. All MDOT vehicles and equipment must follow MDOT Guidance #10179 Vehicle and Equipment Engine Idling.

Recommendation: EPA recommends commitment, to the greatest extent feasible, to the following provisions to reduce impacts from diesel emissions." (construction)

- Using low-sulfur diesel fuel (less than 0.05% sulfur).
- Retrofitting engines with an exhaust filtration device to capture diesel particulate matter before it enters the construction site.
- Positioning the exhaust pipe so that diesel fumes are directed away from the operator and nearby workers, ...
- Using catalytic converters to reduce carbon monoxide, aldehydes, and hydrocarbons in diesel fumes.
- Using enclosed, climate-controlled cabs pressurized and equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to reduce the operators' exposure to diesel fumes.

- Regularly maintaining diesel engines, which is essential to keep exhaust emissions low. ...Purchasing new vehicles that are equipped with the most advanced emission control systems available.
- With older vehicles, using electric starting aids such as block heaters to warm the engine reduces diesel emissions.
- Using respirators, which are only an interim measure to control exposure to diesel emissions. In most cases, an N95 respirator is adequate. Never use paper masks or surgical masks without NIOSH approval numbers....
- Reducing exposure through work practices and training, such as turning off engines when vehicles are stopped for more than a few minutes, training diesel-equipment operators to perform routine inspection, and maintaining filtration devices."

Response: The following statement will be added to the mitigation Green Sheet: "MDOT will prepare a special provision for the contractor to address emission and fugitive dust control to the greatest extent feasible." The following is an example that could be included in the special provision for technical proposal:

> **Air Quality**. Provide an "Air Quality Monitoring and Site Cleanliness Plan" addressing how the Contractor plans to limit airborne particulates and visible dust during construction. This plan must also address how the project site and sidewalk areas will be kept as free as possible from dust, mud, dirt, and miscellaneous debris, as well as a plan for how to respond to and mitigate complaints received. The "Air Quality Monitoring and Site Cleanliness Plan" must contain at a minimum:
>
> (1) A description of mitigation measures taken to prevent decreased air quality from airborne particulates and visible dust.
>
> (2) A description of what specific steps will be taken on a daily basis to address and mitigate concerns regarding site cleanliness.
>
> (3) A complaint response and resolution process, including a timeframe for when action will be taken once a complaint has been received.

Comment: "Additionally, EPA commends MDOT's commitment to include project features designed to reduce the direct impact from construction. Namely, those BMPs include routing road and bridge runoff through vegetated swales prior to discharge into project watercourses to treat stormwater and reduce flow rates and volume to minimize potential erosion issues."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Comment: "EPA commends efforts to treat stormwater for 80 percent sediment removal using appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce flow rates and volume to minimize potential erosion issues during construction."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

2.2 STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MDOT received a letter from Michigan State Representative Gretchen Driskell. The summary comment from the letter and the response to the comments follows:

Summary Comment: "If possible, I encourage a one-year demonstration period of Active Traffic Management with High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, in order to maximize capacity, prevent traffic congestion, and reduce noxious emissions."

Response: The ATM with High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (ATM-HOV) was analyzed and considered as an alternative in this EA; however, due to issues related to operations and enforcement, the ATM-HOV was not the recommended alternative.

Operations-

Although both the ATM and ATM-HOV alternatives met the Purpose and Need similarly, the ATM-HOV alternative did not operate as well as the ATM alternative. This is particularly seen during the AM peak hour on SB US-23 from North Territorial Road to the EB/WB M-14 split as presented in the Traffic Report. Because there were not as many vehicles that would be eligible for HOV use, the ATM with the general purpose lane showed better lane balance with the distribution of vehicles and hence, better operations.

Enforcement-

Enforcement is a necessary component of successful HOV implementations. The enforcement of the dynamic shoulder as an HOV lane would be very challenging as compared to the enforcement of the shoulder as a general purpose lane. During the congested time periods, if the median shoulder use is designated as HOV-only, an officer would need to recognize if a vehicle was not an eligible HOV user (a "violator") and then pull them over. Since the median shoulder would be in use, the only shoulder available for enforcement would be the right shoulder which makes this operation difficult. The stopping of a violator in the HOV would defeat the purpose of the operation.

During these same congested time periods, the ATM-general purpose lane would be open to all users. Therefore, an officer only needs to enforce that shoulder use for typical traffic violations such as speeding and does not have to enforce it for lane use violations. When the ATM shoulder is closed (which would occur during lighter traffic conditions), it would be much easier for an officer to recognize the violator and pull that vehicle over on the median shoulder (which would be available for enforcement since it would be closed to traffic).

MDOT has a responsibility to weigh the risk of success against that of failure. As part of the response to comments, we further explored the HOV option and determined that the risk of having the dynamic shoulder use lane fall back into general use versus HOV use is great given the enforcement challenges in this specific corridor and with Michigan's lack of legal electronic enforcement. The risk of failure involves the expenditure of Federal aid that may require pay-back, should MDOT fail to meet the performance standards.

Moreover, FHWA requires an enforcement plan before a DOT is allowed to implement an HOV lane with annual accountability to say that the enforcement is working, so there are higher standards for success of enforcement of an HOV lane to receive federal funding and approval.

The US-23 ATM will be the first of its kind in the State of Michigan. The Active Traffic Management (ATM) operation has been successfully implemented in other states. ATM operations are also being considered in the State along other highways with peak hour congestion. The successful operation of the US-23 ATM will act as a model in the development, operation, enforcement and maintenance in these other corridors.

2.3 STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

MDOT also received comments from three state agencies. The following comments were received from the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), and the State of Michigan, Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The comments and the MDOT's responses are listed below:

The State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comment: "Natural environment items, such as stream crossings and water quality, appear to be addressed through proposed mitigation and required permits."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Comment: "Specifically addressing the Whitmore Lake public access site, the EA indicates no impacts are anticipated and provides a plan to maintain traffic on US-23 during construction."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

The State of Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Comment: "You did, however, identify seven parcels enrolled in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program, Part 361of the Natural Resource Environmental Protection Agency, 1994 Act 451 (formerly PA 116), that are in the vicinity of the project with one directly adjacent to the proposed work. While none of the identified parcel are expected to be impacted by the project, you note that you will include a Special Provision for PA 451, Part 361 (formerly PA 116) in the project proposal indicating, 'No borrow shall be taken from the PA 116 enrolled properties and no disposal of excess or unsuitable material will be allowed on these properties'. This should ensure that the adjacent enrolled property, in particular, is without impact.'"

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Comment: "No additional major impacts to agriculture are noted as a result of this project. Our main concern, then, remains the potential impact on intra- and inter-county drains. You note areas of proposed impact to drainage infrastructure- the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain and the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. We understand that you have been working with the office of Evan Pratt, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, to coordinate project work with his office and expect that you will continue to do so."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

The State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comment: "As the EA indicates, a permit will be required from the MDEQ under the Floodplain Regulatory Authority, found in Part 31, Water Resources and Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended at the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain and the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. We do have some concerns with the proposed extension of the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain and would like to be involved early on in the design process. There is abnormal stream bank erosion occurring on the downstream side of this crossing due to the configuration of the existing culvert and stream channel. Extending the culvert may increase the erosion in this area."

Response: Comment acknowledged. MDOT plans to engage in coordination with MDEQ through the early coordination permit process. The culvert is planned to be extended no more than 10′ each side. MDOT has conducted a hydraulic analysis of the maximum extension and found no increase in outlet velocities or upstream backwater. A transition will be designed between the outlet and the downstream channel to keep the flow within the channel and to guide the water through the downstream bend.

Comment: "No wetlands are proposed to be impacted by this project."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Comment: "The EA identified three known and one potential site of environmental contamination within or adjacent to the project area. Any excavation or potential disturbance within these areas shall be coordinated with the MDEQ's, Remediation and Redevelopment Division."

Response: Appendix E provides the Project Area Contamination Survey (PACS) report. The report indicates all the sites are a low risk. These sites will be noted on plan sheets and a pay item included for the removal of contaminated soil. If groundwater is encountered it will be considered contaminated and will be disposed of or treated. MDOT will coordinate with MDEQ's, Remediation and Redevelopment Division if there is any excavation planned or potential disturbance within these areas.

MDOT also received comments from five local agencies and resolutions from two local agencies. The following comments were received from the Washtenaw County Department of Public Works, the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, Green Oak Charter Township, the City of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority. The resolutions were both unanimous in support of the project and were from the Northfield Township Board and the Washtenaw County Road Commission. The comments and the MDOT's responses are listed below:

The Washtenaw County Department of Public Works has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Comment: "We have attached a map of the floodplain in the vicinity of Horseshoe Lake, showing a flood stage of more than 9 feet during the 1% recurrence storm event. The primary reason for significant flooding in this area is that the input capacity to the lake far exceeds the outlet capacity. At this time we are writing to inform you that independent of the 1% event, this area routinely floods to an extent several feet above the court-set lake level, and we have received reports of property damage as a result."

Response: The 1% FEMA mapped floodplain for Horseshoe Lake lies primarily east of Main Street. The floodplain elevation is referenced as 905' (NAVD 88) and the road elevation and median ditch are above this elevation. Since all work is to be done in the median of US-23, there are no impacts to the floodplain in this location. There will be no measureable change in the Horseshoe Lake floodplain as a result of this project.

Comment: "It is noted in the EA Section 6.12.4 that BMPs will be utilized to reduce stormwater flow rates and volume. It is imperative that additional runoff volume not result from the project due to the drainage and public health issue discussed above. It is understood that this office may technically have no permit jurisdiction unless the MDOT were connecting to or impacting our drain or easement. In the case where a permit is required from this office we note that the above policy of no increased volume and water quality treatment would be a condition of a permit from this office based on PA 40 of 1956. In the case where no permit is required, we encourage the MDOT to consider the goal of no additional runoff as an important element of the health, safety, and welfare of the public."

Response: Comment acknowledged. MDOT will use BMPs and consider innovative methods toward the goal of no additional runoff as a result of the project in relationship to all relevant areas such as Horseshoe Lake.

Comment: "Section 6.13 indicates that a floodplain analysis is required when a proposed project would 'affect any floodplain'. Due to the fact that much of the proposed project would create stormwater runoff that flows into the existing floodplain surrounding Horseshoe Lake it is understood that the project would "affect any floodplain", and therefore this floodplain analysis is required. This analysis is necessary

to assure that no additional impacts on the residents, properties and environment within this floodplain occur."

Response: The stormwater conveyance system is in the very beginning stages of design. It is anticipated that stormwater runoff from the project will continue along existing drainage paths where possible. MDOT strives to use best management practices (BMP's), where practicable, when designing conveyance systems to handle storm water runoff from its projects. There will be no measurable change in the Horseshoe Lake floodplain as a result of this project.

Comment: "Section 6.15 also discusses extending the culverts where U.S. 23 passes over the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. Analysis of this extension must be completed to assure no detrimental backwater impacts occur as a result of this modification. As noted elsewhere, the capacity of this outlet is substantially less than inflows to the lake, and any modification may be of great concern to residents while representing a potential liability to the MDOT."

Response: A hydraulic analysis has been performed for the proposed 10' (maximum) extensions of the 10'x6' twin box culverts under US-23. The analysis indicates no increase in backwater, therefore no potential for harmful interference to riparian property owners upstream of the proposed work.

Comment: "Section 6.15 discusses culverts in the area of North Territorial Road east of U.S. 23. It is not clear as to what is proposed in this area as the discussion reads that the culvert under North Territorial will be replaced and it also reads that it will remain in place. This item should be clarified and if replacement is proposed an analysis of an increase in size must be completed to assure no additional downstream flooding impacts."

Response: An existing 9'9" x 6'7" plate arch culvert is proposed to be replaced with an 8' x 14' box culvert at the same location. In addition to this replacement a new culvert will be needed to the north for the relocation of Five Mile Road. This will be the same size 8'x14' box culvert. An engineering analysis of the size of the replacement has been performed and no upstream or downstream impacts are indicated.

Comment: "Independent of the EA process or any technical analysis related to the above issue, we would appreciate any opportunity to discuss the possibility of the MDOT providing infiltration, detention, or other methods of stormwater management for existing as well as proposed facilities in the study area. We have been successful in obtaining grants for green infrastructure associated with transportation projects, and would be pleased to work together to seek funding opportunities to address our mutual needs should there be an opportunity."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Comment: "We urge MDOT to reduce the scope of this project to address bridge infrastructure and ramp access improvements only, and redirect the remaining funds towards the greater needs of the urbanized area, which serves a much denser population of residents, businesses, and institutions."

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Comment: "This *(ATM-HOV)* alternative was not included in the scope of the current Environmental Assessment, and summarily dismissed due to legislative and enforcement concerns. This is a critical omission in our opinion. Based on dialogue with MDOT officials, we are concerned that this option was only removed from consideration due to the time and effort it would take to determine if the enforcement and legislative barriers could be overcome, and not because the HOV lane was not the superior alternative. We urge MDOT to include the HOV lane alternative in the Environmental Assessment with the supposition that the technical and legal barriers can be overcome."

Response: Legislative barriers is not stated in the EA as a reason for not identifying the ATM with High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (ATM-HOV) as the Preferred Alternative. The ATM-HOV is not a superior alternative. The ATM-HOV was analyzed and considered as an alternative in this EA; however, due to issues related to operations and enforcement, the ATM-HOV was not the recommended alternative.

Operations-

Although both the ATM and ATM-HOV alternatives met the Purpose and Need similarly, the ATM-HOV alternative did not operate as well as the ATM alternative. This is particularly seen during the AM peak hour on SB US-23 from North Territorial Road to the EB/WB M-14 split as presented in the Traffic Report. Because there were not as many vehicles that would be eligible for HOV use, the ATM with the general purpose lane showed better lane balance with the distribution of vehicles and hence, better operations.

Enforcement-

Enforcement is a necessary component of successful HOV implementations. The enforcement of the dynamic shoulder as an HOV lane would be very challenging as compared to the enforcement of the shoulder as a general purpose lane. During the congested time periods, if the median shoulder use is designated as HOV-only, an officer would need to recognize if a vehicle was not an eligible HOV user (a "violator") and then pull them over. Since the median shoulder would be in use, the only shoulder available for enforcement would be the right shoulder which makes this operation difficult. The stopping of a violator in the HOV would defeat the purpose of the operation.

During these same congested time periods, the ATM-general purpose lane would be open to all users. Therefore, an officer only needs to enforce that shoulder use for typical traffic violations such as speeding and does not have to enforce it for lane use violations. When

the ATM shoulder is closed (which would occur during lighter traffic conditions), it would be much easier for an officer to recognize the violator and pull that vehicle over on the median shoulder (which would be available for enforcement since it would be closed to traffic).

MDOT has a responsibility to weigh the risk of success against that of failure. As part of the response to comments, we further explored the HOV option and determined that the risk of having the dynamic shoulder use lane fall back into general use versus HOV use is great given the enforcement challenges in this specific corridor and with Michigan's lack of legal electronic enforcement. The risk of failure involves the expenditure of Federal aid that may require pay-back, should MDOT fail to meet the performance standards. Moreover, FHWA requires an enforcement plan before a DOT is allowed to implement an HOV lane with annual accountability to say that the enforcement is working, so there are higher standards for success of enforcement of an HOV lane to receive federal funding and approval.

The US-23 ATM will be the first of its kind in the State of Michigan. The Active Traffic Management (ATM) operation has been successfully implemented in other states. ATM operations are also being considered in the State along other highways with peak hour congestion. The successful operation of the US-23 ATM will act as a model in the development, operation, enforcement and maintenance in these other corridors.

Comment: "The assessment acknowledged the poor performance of downstream facilities, such as the Main Street exit or the east triple-decker on eastbound M-14, and acknowledges the proposed congestion-mitigation would further deteriorate these downstream points. It is well known that the Main Street exit from M-14 towards downtown Ann Arbor, and North Main Street heading into downtown Ann Arbor, are already severely congested. We urge MDOT to assess this further, consider that assessment as part of the overall study, and refrain from proceeding until potential downstream impacts are adequately studied."

Response: Comment acknowledged. Please see the Traffic Report for a detailed analysis of WB M-14 at Main St. The results of the analysis showed that the WB M-14/Main St. area would operate at LOS F under No-Build conditions and for all the alternatives. This condition is a result of the heavy traffic volume on the Main St. off ramp and the short weaving distance between the Barton Rd. on-ramp and this Main St. off-ramp.

Under the No-Build conditions, there are several areas along SB US-23 that operate poorly in the morning peak hour that cause stop-and-go traffic conditions along SB US-23. These areas act as a filter that keeps traffic from getting to the WB M-14/Main St. area. Because of this, the WB M-14 off ramp from US-23 flows relatively well.

For the ATM alternative, the Traffic Report shows that the WB M-14 off ramp from US-23 will operate at LOS F during the morning peak hour. This is not due to the operations of the ramp itself, but is caused from the slow-downs at the WB M-14/Main Street area.

This area was also studied by the City of Ann Arbor as part of their Northeast Area Transportation Plan. Recommendations were made as a result of that study but were not implemented. See website for City of Ann Arbor master plan: http://www.a2gov.org/departments/planning-development/planning/Documents/MasterPlans/NEATP/Chapter3Final.pdf.

Comment: "The Environmental Assessment mentions the parallel study to provide commuter rail service from Livingston County to Ann Arbor, but does not include the potential impact of such service in the future capacity demands on the US-23 corridor. While the service is 5 to 7 years away from launch, the potential impact of the service to reduce US-23 congestion was not considered or analyzed."

Response: The current WALLY feasibility study has not yet estimated the amount of traffic that could be diverted from US-23 to the proposed commuter rail. Many factors affect traffic diversion, such as the fare charged for the rail, the location of stations, and the convenience of moving from one mode to another (how do people get from the rail station to their office?), speed of the train, and frequency of trains. An earlier feasibility study from June 2008, found some diversion of cars would help, but not solve the congestion problem. The feasibility study can be found on the AAATA website: http://www.theride.org/Portals/0/Documents/5AboutUs/WALLY/2.4.6%20Wally%20Business%20Plan%20September%2008.pdf.

Comment: "With limited transportation funding available, investments should be focused on maintaining existing infrastructure, and encouraging more sustainable transportation options."

Response: The ATM proposal makes maximum use of existing roadways with relatively low environmental impacts. MDOT remains open to working with State, Federal and local agencies on multi-modal solutions for mobility.

Green Oak Charter Township has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comment: "The noise abatement wall should be extended 935 feet North to intersect with the entrance to the boat launch. (MDNR)"

Response: A re-analysis of the barrier (NB-R) found the barrier can be extended to the area adjacent to the entrance of the MDNR boat launch. The re-analysis is included in the Section 2.8 of this document. The following statement will be added to the mitigation Green Sheet: "The new noise wall will be approximately 2600 feet long with an average height of 12 feet and will provide noise abatement for 32 residences and a private school. The barrier will be concrete post and panel constructed 5 feet inside of MDOT ROW. Grading permits (10 feet) will be required on the residential side of the ROW. It should be noted there is a small waterway or swale that crosses the ROW near Dort Drive. If during design this creates an insurmountable obstacle, the barrier will be designed (2000

foot long and 11 foot high) to protect 24 residences and a private school as described in the EA."

The previous statement is in agreement with the FHWA required "Statement of Likelihood" that is included within the Noise Analysis Report, which states:

> "Based on the studies thus far accomplished, the Michigan Department of Transportation intends to install highway traffic noise abatement in the form of a barrier presented in Table 12 in this document (*Noise Analysis Report*). The preliminary indications of likely abatement measures are based on preliminary design for barrier cost(s) and noise abatement as illustrated in Table 13 in this document (*Noise Analysis Report*). If it subsequently develops during final design that these conditions have substantially changed, the abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision of the installation and aesthetics of the abatement measures(s) will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the Context Sensitive Design process."

Comment: "I support the roundabouts on all interchanges especially the 8 Mile bridge."

Response: Comment acknowledged. Roundabouts are included with the North Territorial Road and 8 Mile Road bridge replacements and interchange reconfigurations.

Comment: "In design for maintenance items from 9 Mile/M-36 North that consideration for non-motorized trails are included."

Response: Comment acknowledged. The proposed project only includes capital preventive maintenance (CPM) on US-23 north of the 9 Mile/M-35 interchange. No other construction activities are scheduled as part of this project.

The City of Ann Arbor has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comment: "The scope of the study should include the east and west tri-level junctions as well as the primary interchanges of US-23 and M-14 within the City of Ann Arbor. These should include M-14 with North Main Street and Barton Drive, as well as US-23 with Plymouth Road, Geddes Road, and Washtenaw Avenue."

Response: The logical termini or beginning and end of the proposed construction was determined based on the preponderance of needs within the identified corridor and detailed in the Purpose and Need. These elements as identified in the Purpose and Need include a response to the directional peak hour congestion, infrastructure, incident management and safety needs, economic feasibility, and required maintenance. The Barton Road/Main Street interchanges on M-14 are included in the Traffic Report and the US-23/M-14 east tri-level is included in Section 2.7 of this document in response to the comments on the EA. The EA will have addressed one interchange in each direction outside the EA study's southern physical limits.

Comment: "Expand TSM Tools and Techniques. Items such as managing (reducing) posted speed limits, incident response teams, and minor capital investments to integrate parallel arterials as a reliever system are possible ways to reduce the need to invest $80M in this corridor with the potential to facilitate safety and flow."

Response: Comment acknowledged. TSM strategies seek to reduce congestion and promote efficiency through infrastructure, operational, and technological improvements. TSM elements are a large part of the US-23 Improvement Project and include constructing roundabouts, extending the ramps to improve the merging and weaving onto the freeway, constructing crash investigation sites (CIS), widening the inside shoulder for incident management and using ITS to dynamically control the use of the corridor to level out speeds through advisories, warn motorists of upcoming queues and better manage incidents.

Comment: "Include TDM. The EA does not incorporate Travel Demand Management (TDM) approaches to manage travel. TDM is a well-known and proven strategy to address traffic congestion. The EA should include consideration of enhancing, not eliminating, park and ride lots and other TDM strategies to complement the ATM-HOV lane approach."

Response: TDM elements are included in the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative includes an Active Traffic Management system with Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), bridges at 8 Mile, 6 Mile and North Territorial Roads designed to accommodate non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians. MDOT and AAATA remain in consistent consultation for future park and ride lot locations and transit options.

Comment: "Ramp metering would need to be installed along the entire segment from I-96 to M-14 to enable it to function fully and effectively. Proposing and then evaluating a subset of interchanges for installing such devices is not a recommended practice. It is no surprise that with partial implementation of this approach, it fails to provide the needed relief."

Response: Ramp metering was considered for the entire segment but was only feasible for the locations identified in the EA. The US-23 Improvements Traffic Report's Section 4 "Build Alternatives" under "Ramp Metering" details the factors that identified the ramp meter locations.

Comment: "A closer look at adjacent facilities as part of the ATM system appears warranted. There is a parallel set of arterial roadways, Old US-23 and Whitmore Lake Road among others. These facilities are not fully described in the report, but are shown on the figures and maps. They should be included in the traffic analysis. These roads can serve as viable relievers during incidents. Improvements may be needed to link these facilities to the active traffic network and provide increased capacity for them to serve as reliever roads. Such linkages and improvements should be included in the scope of the US-23 analysis."

Response: The analysis of Old US-23/Whitmore Lake Rd. was analyzed and is included in the US-23 Improvements Traffic Report. Interchange and intersection improvements that facilitate the performance of the Preferred Alternative were analyzed and incorporated.

Comment: "More and better data is needed, including Detailed Crash or safety analysis in narrow lane operating areas and in the southern tier impacted zones."

Response: Appendix A-2 in the Traffic Report provides detailed crash information for the corridor. This data and our proposed lane width of 13 feet (including a 2 foot shoulder) for the dynamic shoulder use should result in safety benefited given data from other states. Please see the following research results of the "Shoulder Use Safety Analysis, Research Phase 1" from the Federal Highway Administration.
http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/atdm/research/

Comment: "The southern tier impact areas should include data and analysis of both tri-level junctions as well as the interchange areas from North Main Street along the freeway through and south to Washtenaw Avenue. The analysis and data in these areas should include the weaving and merging sections west of the western tri-level junction and south of the east tri-level junction to be complete."

Response: Please see the US-23 Improvements Traffic Report for a detailed analysis of the interchange at WB M-14 at Main St. and the western tri-level. The analysis of the US-23/M-14 east tri-level interchange is included as a response to comments is detailed in Section 2.7.

The results of the supplemental analysis of the US-23/M-14 east tri-level indicate that there is not a major impact to the operations at this interchange as a result of the proposed ATM. The majority of the movements at this interchange will operate acceptably for both the No-Build and ATM alternative with the exception of SB US-23 between M-14 and Plymouth Rd. The WB M-14 ramp to SB US-23 ramp will operate at a LOS F for the No-Build alternative. For the ATM alternative, this ramp will continue to operate at LOS F with a slight decrease in operating speed anticipated. The weaving movement on SB US-23 between M-14 and the Plymouth Road ramp will also operate at LOS F for both the No-Build and ATM alternatives.

Comment: "HOV use of the hardened shoulder is a safer and more effective use of the proposed lane. The EA should include a full comparison of HOV operations and their benefits compared to the proposed "General Purpose" use of the hardened shoulder lane. Such detailed analysis is an integral element of a thorough review of the utility and benefit of ATM-HOV compared to an ATM general purpose."

Response: MDOT made these comparisons. Please refer to Appendix A of the Traffic Report.

Comment: "Include HOV enforcement zones. Such zones can be installed within the median areas to enable HOV to work. Enforcement zones are similar to the proposed crash investigation facilities. Space is, or can readily be made, available in the median areas for such elements, if deemed absolutely necessary. If median enforcement zones are not feasible, the project should evaluate the impacts of placing the hardened shoulder on the outside of the roadway; allowing the Crash Investigation Sites to serve as HOV enforcement areas as well. This more than doubles the utility of these proposed investments."

Response: The median width is limited and does not have enough room for added facilities beyond the proposed improvements. At this location, hard shoulder running on the outside lanes makes for an awkward transition through the M-14 and US-23 split on the south side of the project limits. The existing outside shoulder is restricted at both the Joy and Warren overpasses to 8 foot wide, which is below the required ATM width of 13 feet.

Comment: "Many other environmental features need to be evaluated by resource specialists."

Response: All NEPA required environmental features were studied by MDOT resource specialists and qualified consultants. The mitigation activities and permits requirements are addressed in the accompanying Green Sheet.

The Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comment: "Throughout the rest of the report, the area described as the "project location" is, for traffic analysis purposes, treated as though it is also the only area which is impacted by the project. Section 6.0, 'Affected Environment and Potential Impacts' (beginning on page 33) also defines the impact area as stopping short of Ann Arbor. There is no recognition of effects of the project on points further downstream (south) from the west US-23/M-14 tri-level interchange."

Response: All environmental factors are studied for direct impacts under worst-cased scenario conditions within a 500 foot buffer from the US-23 EB/WB M-14 split at the west tri-level to the Silver Lake Road interchange. Factors such as water quality, land use, environmental justice, social, economic, indirect and cumulative affects where studied within their appropriate coverage areas.

Comment: "Significant volumes of traffic continue south of the tri-level and exit onto North Main Street, which acts as a funnel as it enters the heart of downtown Ann Arbor. Although the very point of the project is to increase upstream capacity, and therefore traffic flow to that stretch of roadway, the EA analysis makes no mention of any increased volumes on that roadway, nor does it attempt to characterize any changes in levels-of-service that would result. Presumably, these increased traffic volumes will also make use

of local Ann Arbor street capacity, a prime example being Depot Street heading east to the UM Medical Center."

Response: The purpose or point of the project is to address the immediate insufficiencies of the corridor by focusing on traffic safety, operational and infrastructure concerns, and the directional peak hour congestion in the US-23 corridor. The preferred alternative addresses these items within the physical constraints of the existing freeway. Under the ATM alternative, the traffic entering North Main St. from M-14 will enter the City of Ann Arbor at the same rate as it does under existing conditions.

Comment: "Impacts as described above may also be of some concern at points east of the west tri-level bridge, on US-23 as it continues south past the east tri-level bridge, potentially affecting Plymouth, Geddes and Washtenaw."

Response: The analysis of the US-23/M-14 east tri-level interchange is included as a response to comments is detailed in Section 2.7 of this document.

Comment: "The sole purpose and need of the project, as described, is to accommodate and encourage growth in automobile traffic."

Response: The EA states, “The purpose is to address the immediate insufficiencies of the corridor as described in the previous section by focusing on traffic safety, operational and infrastructure concerns, and the directional peak hour congestion in the US-23 corridor.” There is no statement within the document indicating the preferred alternative provides for the accommodation or growth in automobile traffic. The dynamic shoulder use will only be available during the directional peak hour periods or lane diversion for incident management. The dynamic shoulder use is not in operation on a 24/7 basis.

Comment: "ATM/HOV is dismissed based on the simple argument that it cannot be enforced. The analysis cites 'difficulty in recognizing a violating vehicle' but does not point out that, nevertheless, states throughout the US have successfully implemented HOV."

Response: The success of the HOV in other states must be taken in context, such as, which lane is used as the HOV lane, the length of the lane, the hours of operation, whether there is physical barrier separating the HOV lane from general traffic, etc.. There are physical limitations within this study area that hinder the ability of police to enforce HOV traffic laws. One way to overcome these limitations is with electronic monitoring, however, Michigan law does not allow electronic enforcement. Experience in other states indicates that compliance with manual HOV enforcement is very low. Other states have reacted by turning to electronic monitoring or to tolling in response, however, these tools are not available in Michigan. When the shoulder is closed to traffic during off-peak hours, drivers violating a lane-closed signal (e.g. red "X" in the electronic sign over the shoulder) will be violating Michigan Vehicle Code Section 642(1)(c) and can be cited for a civil infraction.

Comment: "The analysis dismisses North-South Commuter Rail (WALLY) as an alternative, while acknowledging that MDOT received multiple comments requesting that this project be included in the EA."; "As a result, the traffic impacts of N-S Rail have not been calculated as part of the EA and are not available for comparison to the Preferred Alternative. This makes it impossible to calculate, for example, how the two projects compare in alleviating traffic congestion (LOS, or Level of Service) or reducing highway travel times, although both of these measures are repeatedly referred to as important criteria for selecting among the alternative actions."

Response: There are good reasons for having the ATM move forward before completion of the WALLY feasibility study: 1) MDOT must replace three bridges and repair two more bridges with other basic repairs that are required to maintain safe operation of the freeway. 2) Regardless of the future of WALLY, the US-23 corridor needs work to improve incident management operations. 3) Peak hour congestion relief is only one component of the improvements and in a way merely a side effect of using the shoulders during relatively brief portions of the day. Use of the shoulders will be about 3 hours a day in each direction out of 24 hours.

The current WALLY feasibility study will try to predict theoretical ridership numbers, which will show possible diversion. However, given that Michigan has little experience with commuter rail, the WALLY is not likely to produce significant diversion from US-23.

Comment: "Bus Bypass Shoulders (BBS) was not included as an alternative despite the fact that these are used successfully in Minneapolis / St Paul, Chicago and many other regions throughout the United States.
This alternative is dismissed by the EA with a single statement: 'The Feasibility Study did not recommend the BBS so it was not moved forward as an alternative for this EA."

Response: A Bus By-Pass Shoulders alternative does not meet the purpose and need of this project. The purpose is to address the immediate needs of the corridor including concerns about safety and available funding. Also, the successful operation of a Bus By-Pass Shoulder system depends on adherence to a designated schedule. The bus operation during the peak hours would create the merge and weave safety problems which is mentioned in the 2009 I-96 to M-14 Feasibility Study. This of particular concern for this project in the AM at the southbound US-23/westbound M-14 split, and would cause schedule uncertainty.

This project does not preclude any future transit efforts. The purpose of the project is to meet the immediate needs of the corridor with consideration of transportation funding restrictions. MDOT will continue to coordinate with the local and regional transit authorities on developing a comprehensive transit operation.

Comment: "It appears from the description above that the shoulders can potentially be used at any time, so that there is a fine line between 'dynamic shoulder use' and what could be considered a permanent third lane on US-23. As pointed out previously, there

is no discussion of any enforcement mechanism for preventing use of the shoulders even when the gantry signage is showing a closed indicator."

Response: The EA states that the dynamic shoulder use availability will be indicated by electronic signage on gantries over the roadway. Drivers violating a lane-closed signal (e.g. red "X" in the electronic sign over the shoulder) during the off-peak hours will be violating Michigan Vehicle Code Section 642(1)(c) and can be cited for a civil infraction.

Comment: "Although this chapter contains a section on 'Maintaining Traffic During Construction', there is no mention of any transit alternatives such as express bus service, or N-S Rail service. In fact the park and ride at North Territorial will be removed, and the EA commits only to studying its replacement."

Response: The purpose of the project in part is to address the immediate needs of the corridor including concerns about deteriorating infrastructure and available Federal funding. MDOT does not own or operate any transit systems. Any transit alternatives, even a temporary operation, such as express bus service, or North-South Commuter Rail service would require a coordinated effort among MDOT, AAATA and the City of Ann Arbor. The effort requires negotiating operation and funding agreements, property acquisition, additional operation elements (such as park and ride lots), and environmental clearance. These processes would delay the construction of elements of the project. Infrastructure improvements in this corridor are time sensitive as weight restrictions have been implemented due to deterioration.

2.4 COMMENTS FROM STATEWIDE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

MDOT also received comments from one statewide and three local organizations. The comments were received from the statewide Michigan Environmental Council, the comments were received from the local organizations Friends of Wally, Washtenaw Walking and Biking Coalition, and the Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowners Association. The comments and the MDOT's responses are listed below:

The Michigan Environmental Council has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Comments: "Figure 1.0 and Section 6.0 depict the EA scope as the "500-foot buffer… where most impacts may occur." While this may be the status quo for assessments like this one, MDOT's analysis recognizes that impacts will be felt well beyond this buffer."

Response: All environmental factors are studied for direct impacts under worst-cased scenario conditions within a 500 foot buffer from the US-23 EB/WB M-14 split at the west tri-level to the Silver Lake Road interchange. Factors such as water quality, land use, environmental justice, social, economic, indirect and cumulative affects where studied within their appropriate coverage areas.

Comments: "...the results of the VISSIM simulation for ramp operation, makes it clear that the Active Traffic Management option, the preferred alternative, will alter the traffic conditions downstream of the EA scope."

Response: The traffic conditions south of the project limits are expected to remain as they are due to the weave/merge activity at the Barton Road and Main Street interchanges.

Comments: "This demonstrates that the project effectively relocates the "bottle neck" condition currently felt along the corridor. Surely the environmental impacts of this congestion will be felt much further south than M-14, ..." "We have similar concerns about congestion that will likely occur near Silver Lake road during the PM peak, and the environmental impact that may occur north of that area, as traffic is diverted from three to two lanes."

Response: The limits of the ATM improvement ends south of M-36. The analysis within the US-23 Improvements Traffic Report's Section 4 and in the accompanying Appendix A, Section A-4, included the northbound shoulder ending south of M-36 and showed that the backups will be less than what is being experienced currently.

Comments: "The EA does not take into account the land use implications that will result with the preferred alternative. As presented, this project acts as a signal for development…"

Response: Any predicted traffic volume increase on US-23 is from induced traffic of vehicles that had used other roadways to avoid the peak period congestion on US-23. No new area-wide traffic is anticipated outside of the predicted future growth, which would occur even if the US-23 ATM were not built. The future zoning and land use plans account for development at the locations mentioned in the EA.

While easing peak hour congestion and improving safety make the driving experience more predictable, these changes do not necessarily allow for the type of volume of increased traffic that would spur new development. Where development occurs along an existing freeway can only be studied using current and future local land use plans, which was done as part of this analysis. When development occurs is based upon many economic factors and any attempt to predict the timing for development would be speculative.

Comments: "First, we believe the decision to disregard the "Transit Service Options" and "Bus Bypass Shoulders" options based on results of the 2009 feasibility study in the corridor was a serious oversight considering the public feedback provided during the December 2013 public meeting for this project. Several individuals and organizations urged the department to consider multi-modal solutions for this corridor."

Response: This project does not preclude any future transit efforts. The purpose of the project is to meet the immediate needs of the corridor with consideration of

transportation funding restrictions. MDOT will continue to coordinate with the local and regional transit authorities on developing a comprehensive transit operation.

Comments: "To relieve the safety concerns regarding the ability for law enforcement to safely pull over a vehicle for an HOV violation, cameras could be used – just as they will already be used to monitor traffic conditions for the ATM alternative."
Response: Camera enforcement is not legal in Michigan.

The Friends of WALLY has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Summary of Comments: The Friends of WALLY advocate the continued pursuit of the North-South Commuter Rail to augment this project.

Response: Comment Acknowledged. The study of the North-South Commuter Rail is ongoing.

The Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowners Association has reviewed the document and had the following comment:

Comment: "When our subdivision was built in the early 2000's a resident contacted MDOT about the traffic noise level and he received a letter stated that if there were any changes made or improvements to US 23 that the noise level and the request for relief may be considered."... "I would like to know if there can be consideration for our subdivision which is just south of US 23 before the Plymouth Rd. exit and after the Geddes Rd. entrance I exit."

Response: The subdivision is located outside the defined project limits for direct impact analysis. FHWA restricts doing a noise abatement analysis to the direct area around the project limits as defined in the environmental document. The noise abatement analysis was conducted along the study corridor defined within the environmental document. A noise abatement analysis will be conducted when a qualifying US-23 project is identified adjacent to the location of the subdivision.

The Washtenaw Walking and Biking Coalition has reviewed the document and had the following comments:

Comments:
Things we support:

- Repairing the road.
- Ramp extensions.
- Bridge improvements, including the accommodations for bicycling and walking.
- Crash investigation sites.
- Extra lane at the southbound US-23/M-14 split.
- Roundabouts at selected interchanges.

Response: Comments are acknowledged.

Comments:
Things we support: (*continued*)

- Alternative shoulder management -- A managed shoulder lane that would be opened to general traffic only when there is a crash or other incident that blocks a lane. Barring a lane blockage, the shoulder lane should be limited to multiple-occupant vehicles. Signage should allow an "HOV only" message for that lane. Any use of the shoulder lane requires enforcement. If possible, median areas should be created where violators could safely be stopped without having to cross to the right shoulder.
- HOV tools -- Creating the legal framework, under MDOT leadership, for proper enforcement of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Response: Comments are acknowledged. The ATM Alternative meets all the elements of the Purpose and Need. The Traffic Report shows that the ATM Alternative operates better than the ATM-HOV Alternative on SB US-23 from North Territorial Road to the US-23/M-14 split during the AM peak hour traffic conditions. Enforcement is a necessary component of successful HOV implementations. The enforcement of the dynamic shoulder as an HOV lane would be very challenging as compared to the enforcement of the shoulder as a general purpose lane. During the congested time periods, if the median shoulder use is designated as HOV-only, an officer would need to recognize if a vehicle was not an eligible HOV user (a "violator") and then pull them over. Since the median shoulder would be in use, the only shoulder available for enforcement would be the right shoulder which makes this operation difficult.

During these same congested time periods, the ATM-general purpose lane would be open to all users. Therefore, an officer only needs to enforce that shoulder use for typical traffic violations such as speeding and does not have to enforce it for lane use violations. When the ATM shoulder is closed (which would occur during lighter traffic conditions), it would be much easier for an officer to recognize the violator and pull that vehicle over on the median shoulder (which would be available for enforcement since it would be closed to traffic). Also, there is not enough room in the median to accommodate the hard running shoulder and areas to safely pull violators and enforcement vehicle out of traffic.
The legal framework of the enforcement of any HOV lanes will be the result of discussion between MDOT and the Michigan State Police.

Comment:
Things we support: (*continued*)

- "Wally" study -- Continued investigation of the "Wally" rail option, with the goal of understanding soon the probable costs and timeframes.

Response: Comments are acknowledged. The North-South Commuter Rail is currently conducting a feasibility study. See www.nsrailstudy.com for more information.

Comment:
Things we oppose:

- Proposed shoulder management -- A lane regularly opened to all vehicles during the southbound a.m. peak and the northbound p.m. peak.

Response: Comment acknowledged. The US-23 Improvements Traffic Report concludes that the ATM Alternative provides the most efficient directional peak hour congestion management over the other alternatives.

Comment:
Things that concern us about the "preferred alternative":

- Traffic impact -- The proposed widening seems likely to increase total vehicle volumes arriving in Ann Arbor. And historically, adding road capacity has induced additional traffic.
- Parking impact -- Higher vehicle volumes imply more parking demand, which conflicts with Ann Arbor goals to limit new parking.
- Non-motorized impact -- Higher traffic would discourage bicycling and walking, which conflicts with the local goals embodied in non-motorized transportation plans.
- Carpooling discouragement -- Added capacity reduces the impetus for people to carpool and thereby reduce congestion.

Response: Comments acknowledged. The purpose of the project is to address the current corridor operational inefficiencies as well as infrastructure, incident management and safety needs. Most of the expected induced traffic volumes on US-23 as a result of the project originate from current commuters who presently drive on alternative routes to Ann Arbor to avoid the peak hour congestion.

This project does not preclude any future transit efforts. MDOT will continue to coordinate with the local and regional transit authorities on developing a comprehensive transit operation.

Comment:
Things that concern us about the "preferred alternative":

- Land-use impact -- Transportation policy should support the local land-use goals of compact development, preservation of open space, and development in areas served by diverse transportation options. Adding highway capacity conflicts with these goals. Many urban-area communities can accommodate more housing and other development, and many rural areas would like to retain what they can of their rural character.
- Relation to goals -- The impacts of this project would conflict with adopted local goals.

Response: Comments acknowledged. MDOT works with metropolitan planning authority (MPO) and local governments during the local and statewide transportation planning process and takes in consideration their land use goals. MDOT consults these organizations when a capacity improvement project is being studied.

Comment:
Things that concern us about the "preferred alternative":

- Congestion strategy -- Whereas this proposal seeks to address congestion by adding capacity, local plans seek to reduce congestion by increasing ways to travel, as exemplified by the WATS transit plan and the ReImagine Washtenaw plan.

Response: The project addresses congestion by a congestion management strategy through the dynamic shoulder use of the ATM overseen by an intelligent transportation system. This project does not preclude any future transit efforts. MDOT will continue to coordinate with the local and regional transit authorities on developing a comprehensive transit operation.

Comment:
Things that concern us about the "preferred alternative":

- EA scope -- We found no analysis in the EA of the above impacts outside of the land immediately adjacent to the corridor and no focus on the countywide transportation system.

Response: All environmental factors are studied for direct impacts under worst-cased scenario conditions within a 500 foot buffer from the US-23 EB/WB M-14 split at the west tri-level to the Silver Lake Road interchange. Factors such as water quality, land use, environmental justice, social, economic, indirect and cumulative affects where studied within their appropriate coverage areas.

2.5 LETTER AND EMAIL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The following, in alphabetical order, are the letter and nine email comments from the public during the comment period that ended on March 17, 2015. The letter is from Yousef Rabhi. These are presented in table format for ease of reference.

Author	Comment	Response
A.P. Gariepy	"Is there any plan to do resurfacing before the main improvement project?"	The resurfacing of the roadway will occur after the main improvements to ensure the new pavement will not be damaged by construction activities.
A.P. Gariepy	"I agree that the ATM proposal is the best bang for the buck. I can't wait to see it!"	Comment acknowledged.

Author	Comment	Response
Jacqueline Burkowski	"Our main concern with the proposed US 23 project is the noise factor with the increased traffic flow, because I live within 300 ft. and the noise from the existing traffic is horrendous now! Are there going to be any measures taken to abate this noise increase?'	The noise analysis was completed according to FHWA and MDOT regulations and procedures. All noise sensitive receptors within the area of potential impact, approximately 300 feet along this corridor, were included in the analysis. The location of noise abatement was identified using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model and required abatement parameters. Please, see the Noise Analysis Report for details.
Anonymous	"I just read the article in our local newspaper about all the improvements coming to us 23. Thank you for finally taking the time and taking care of those issues! One of congestion spots I was disappointed to see was not on this list. As you are driving westbound on 94 to exit at 180 to get on US 23 north, that is always a congested hot mess. Have any surveys or studies been done to improve this area? You can easily sit on the exit ramp for less than a half mile from the Onramp for up to 30 minutes. Then, spend another 15 to 20 minutes merging onto 23 itself. Once you get is actually on 23, there is no traffic flow problem at all."	Comment acknowledged. The statewide highway conditions are compared and analyzed with the most needed areas included in the MDOT 5-Year Transportation program. Peak hour congestion problems occur at many locations. Financial resources do not allow us to address congestion in most locations. Improvements to the I-94 Exit 180 interchange to which you refer is not included in the current 5-Year program (2015-2019).
Janine Rogers	"A big 'YES' to move forward with the proposed improvements for US-23 between Brighton and Ann Arbor!"	Comment acknowledged.

Author	Comment	Response
Kari Mastro	"What about the emission from the cars? Has there been a study on that? How close is to(o) close for a house to be near a freeway?"	The level of emissions effect is dependent on the traffic characteristics and numbers. The traffic numbers along the US-23 corridor are below what the US Environmental Protection Agency considers to identify a project as one of air quality concern.
Kari Mastro	"This will have not only more noise impact but also faster traffic, bringing the traffic closer to my home. With the nails popping out of our walls already, and cracking from vibration along with not being able to open our windows, are you doing anything to protect our property? Will there be a wall built to help with at least the noise? Could you possibly buy out the row of homes that is so close to freeway?"	A vibration analysis was not done because FHWA does not require it. They have found the rubber tires typically do not produce enough vibration to cause structural damage. Their study has determined normal living activities (e.g., closing doors, walking across floors, operating appliances) within a building have been shown to create greater levels of vibration than highway traffic.
Phillip Farber	"I am opposed to the proposed widening of US-23 along the US-23/M-14 to Silver Lake route. While I do not oppose the other proposed safety improvements, widening is not a solution to congestion." "A better use of public road funds would be to establish a light rail system in the US-23 corridor north of Ann Arbor to mitigate congestion in the daily commute."	A feasibility study for a commuter rail is underway.

Author	Comment	Response
Sarah Meyer	"I support expanding 23-as allowed-to improve flow and congestion."	Comment acknowledged.
Sarah Meyer	"I am also a supporter of the North-South commuter rail (WALLY) and believe giving drivers different transportation options is a good thing. Maybe there can be a "mini" WALLY set up during construction on 23?"	The implementation of a temporary WALLY operation from 8 Mile Road to Ann Arbor during construction is not economically feasible and will cause delay of needed infrastructure replacement. Setting up such an operation would involve the Federal Transit Authority and would be required to go through its own environmental study process.
Terry Meeks	"I think you and your team are on the right track to address the challenges presented by the congestion/infrastructure for that area."	Comment acknowledged.
John T. Levinson	"In a survey of some of our employees and contractors concerning your information and alternatives, there was unanimous agreement the Active Traffic Management (ATM) alternative is by far the best solution offered by MDOT."	Comment acknowledged.
Yousef Rabhi	"MDOT should move to abandon plans to increase capacity on US-23 and reallocate those dollars to other priorities for our State such as repairing our existing infrastructure. "	Comment acknowledged. The preferred alternative addresses safety and efficiency within the physical constraints of the existing freeway as described in the Purpose and Need.
Yousef Rabhi	"However, in the interest of protecting lives, MDOT has a responsibility to move forward with the safety portions of the project."	Comment acknowledged. This project will improve the safety of this corridor through the use of ITS, the extension of the entrance ramps, crash investigation sites (CIS), roundabouts and a widened shoulder.

Author	Comment	Response
Yousef Rabhi	"By adding a third lane to a two lane highway, MDOT will add 33% more capacity to the sprawl housing market, reducing housing demand in Washtenaw County. Additionally, MDOT will be adding 33% more cars on the roads and in the parking lots of Washtenaw County and Ann Arbor, decreasing our resident's quality of life and increasing congestion on our roads."	The ATM alternative does not add a third lane to US-23. It is a shoulder enhancement to improve operation. The traffic analysis shows a maximum increase in traffic volumes on SB US-23 of 18 percent and 9 percent for NB US-23. The volumes were analyzed through a team that included SEMCOG, WATS and MDOT representatives. For more information regarding the traffic forecasting methodology, please see the Traffic Report's Appendix A-6 Traffic Forecasting. This additional traffic was analyzed as part of the EA.
Yousef Rabhi	"Foremost, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the elements of the proposal which are not only welcomed, but necessary. Safety, being a paramount value, has been at the center of much of the project through the inclusion of common-sense features such as extended entrance ramps, round-a-bouts and the addition of new crash investigation areas. Other features aim to ease the burden of residents who live in proximity to the corridor by installing noise barriers and other features. While it would be welcomed to see more of the money used to install such features, with a particular focus on Whitmore Lake, the intent of decreasing noise pollution for the neighbors is to be commended."	Comment acknowledged.

Author	Comment	Response
Yousef Rabhi	"Of the many aspects of this plan, only the lane expansion stands to my attention as not only unnecessary, but also costly and unsustainable."	Comment acknowledged. The project does not include a lane expansion. The intent of this project is to provide hard running shoulders to address the operations of the corridor during the peak hour congestion and during incidents.

2.6 COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM PUBLIC HEARING ATTENDEES

The following are the five comments from the public in alphabetical order at the Public Hearing on February 26, 2015. A letter placed in the comment box from the Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowners Association is previously addressed. These are presented in table format for ease of reference.

Author	Comment	Response
Carl Boboise	"I am VERY disappointed that the propose noise abatement wall does not extend from Exit 53 to Exit 54…"	Comment acknowledged. The topography of the right-of-way (slope of the land from the roadway to the right-of-way at Main Street) makes it infeasible to construct an extended barrier to Exit 54.
Greg Perchen	"I have a major concern about the "type" of overpass that will be replacing the existing one over 6 mile rd., in particular, because it impacts my family regarding pedestrian access. My son attends WL High on the west side of US-23, with absolutely NO safe thoroughfare to walk, or ride his bicycle to school from the Horse Lake sub on the east side of US-23. Please clarify."	The new 6-Mile Rd. bridge will have a raised sidewalk. Northfield Township is responsible for providing sidewalk connections the bridge. MDOT is open to working with the township on this issue.
Hugh Gurney	"Support preferred alternative…"	Comment acknowledged.
Hugh Gurney	"I also urge the implementation of the North-South rail…"	Comment acknowledged.

Author	Comment	Response
Jack Brugger	"The S/B exit at Barton Road needs to be expanded."	Comment acknowledged. The Barton Road interchange is outside of the project limits.
Jack Brugger	"provide bus shuttles at peak times…every entrance/exit from Ann Arbor to M-59"	MDOT is in consistent communication with AAATA on additional park and ride lots and transit options.
Leo Hanifin	"…will not afford our region the benefits of expanded regional transit service."	This project does not preclude any future transit efforts. The purpose of the project is to meet the immediate needs of the corridor with consideration of transportation funding restrictions.
Leo Hanifin	"...the North South Commuter Rail (aka "WALLY"), would provide considerable impact on congestion and be far more affordable than alternative road expansion projects…"	The WALLY commuter line costs and benefits are uncertain, given that it is just starting the study phase of project development. The ATM proposal costs are well-known, given the more advanced phase of development for this proposal. See www.nsrailstudy.com for more information.

Author	Comment	Response
Leo Hanifin	" In fact, one way that this upcoming US-23 improvement project could provide more public understanding and ridership experiences would be to implement the "WALLY Shuttle" concept during your upcoming construction project."	The implementation of a temporary WALLY operation from 8 Mile Road to Ann Arbor during construction is not economically feasible. Meeting the procedural, operational, and facility requirements would delay construction of the much needed infrastructure and operational elements of the US-23 project. The North-South Commuter Rail needs $5 million to put in a parking lot at 8 Mile Road and make other improvements, and the Federal funding acquisition process takes 18-24 months to complete. The passenger rail operation rail cannot proceed until a fare structure is organized, speeds are determined (partially based on track quality and safety), and receipt of Federal Transit Authority (FTA) permission for passenger service operation. The successful operation needs the identification of a location for and construction of a facility to maintain and store the train, and to build a station in Ann Arbor with a commitment from the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority (AAATA) to service the station to provide connections to work offices. Moreover, the FTA has a role in developing passenger service and this working relationship requires clarification once the WALLY is approved to move forward after the completion of the feasibility study. FTA and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) have oversight for operating equipment and grade crossings. State also has responsibility for grade crossing. There are 10-11 grade crossings, 5 do not have warning devices, 2 have stop signs, and 3 have cross-gates. Safety upgrades are required at all of these crossings.

Author	Comment	Response
Margaret Eagan	"Also, there will be a northbound bottleneck when the ATM stops south of M-36, Severe!"	The limits of the ATM improvement ends south of M-36. The analysis included the northbound shoulder ending south of M-36 and showed that the backups will be less than what is being experienced currently.
Margaret Eagan	"We need noise abatement control at Barke(r) + Six."	The noise abatement analysis was conducted throughout the corridor. The analyzed abatement measure for these locations did not meet required the standards for recommendation. See the Noise Abatement Analysis Report for details.
Michael Perry	"We live in fear traveling across 23 at Lee road, and moving through the 23 96 intersection, I think we endure enough. We pay our taxes and voted for road funding, please fix US 23 properly and add the third lane in both direction from I 94 through M 59... As it should be."	The I-96/US-23 interchange is currently being reconstructed with the realignment of ramps to increase efficiency and safety. MDOT does not have funds to add a lane on US-23 for the length of the project corridor, nevertheless, US-23 from I-94 to M-59. An added lane for this project would be about triple the cost of the ATM.

As part of the design phase, MDOT will hold Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) workshops to give the public an opportunity for additional input on the design features and potential facades of the new bridge.

2.7 US-23/M-14 EAST TRI-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Based on comments received during the public comment period, additional analysis of the impacts outside of the study area for the ATM Alternative was performed. The following is a description of the methodology and findings of this analysis of the East Tri-Level.

2.7.1 METHODOLOGY

Since the East Tri-Level was outside of the study area, the traffic volumes for this interchange were developed using supplemental information obtained from SEMCOG's travel demand forecasting model along with the traffic volume forecast information provided for the No-Build and ATM alternatives in the Environmental Assessment.
For the No-Build alternative, the traffic volumes for the East Tri-Level were extrapolated from the traffic volumes provided in the US-23 Feasibility Study (November 2009) in conjunction with the US-23 Environmental Assessment.
For the ATM alternative (as shown in the EA Traffic Report) the induced/diverted traffic on SB US-23 during the AM peak hour was estimated at 18% just south of N. Territorial Rd. For the PM peak hour, the induced/diverted traffic was estimated at 9% just south of N. Territorial Rd.
When carrying these volume increases beyond the study area, this results in an additional 498 vehicles on SB US-23 heading toward the East Tri-Level during the AM peak hour and an additional 351 vehicles heading from the East Tri-Level toward the West Tri-Level in the PM peak hour. Of these additional vehicles, it was estimated (from SEMCOG's travel demand forecasting model), that 40 percent were destined to and from the south on US-23 and 60 percent were destined to/from the east on M-14.
The projected traffic volumes for the No-Build and ATM alternatives for the East Tri-Level are presented in Figures 1 and 2. Traffic volumes were projected for those movements impacted by the ATM alternative.

2.7.2 CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The Highway Capacity Software 2010 was used to analyze the capacity for the freeway segments, ramps and weaves for all impacted movements at the East Tri-Level. The results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.
The results indicated that with the additional traffic that is forecasted for the ATM alternative at the East Tri-Level, the majority of the impacted movements operate at acceptable Levels-of-Service during the peak hours. However, during the AM peak hour the WB M-14 ramp to SB US-23 will continue to operate at LOS F (as compared to the No-Build conditions) with a slight decrease in merging speed anticipated. Furthermore, the weave movement from the WB M-14 ramp to SB US-23 will remain at LOS F for both the No-Build and ATM alternatives. During the PM peak hour, the NB US-23 segment between the east and west Tri-Levels, where the freeway drops from 4 lanes to 3 lanes, will operate at a LOS D (as compared to LOS C for the No-Build conditions).

Table 1: Highway Capacity Software (HCS) Results for AM and PM Peak Hour for No Build (2040)

Description	Facility Type	Ave Density per lane (pc/mi/ln)	Ave. Speed	LOS
Southbound US-23 During the AM Peak				
SB US-23 To EB M-14	Ramp (G)	8.2	68.0	A
SB US-23 From WB M-14	Ramp (H)	44.0	--	F
SB US-23 South to Plymouth Rd.	Weave	(v/c = 1.20)*	**--**	F
EB M-14 From NB US-23	Ramp (J)	15.1	66	B
Northbound US-23 During the PM Peak				
NB US-23/WB M-14	Segment	24.2	67.8	C
NB US-23 to EB M-14	Ramp (I)	19.1	67.9	B

Density reported in passenger cars per mile per lane
*volume to capacity ratio reported versus density for weave segments
Ramp labeling is shown to correspond with the analysis labeling from the US-23 Feasibility Study (November 2009)

Table 2: Highway Capacity Software (HCS) Results for AM and PM Peak Hour for ATM (2040)

Description	Facility Type	Ave Density per lane (pc/mi/ln)	Ave. Speed	LOS
Southbound US-23 During the AM Peak				
SB US-23 To EB M-14	Ramp (G)	10.2	67.1	B
SB US-23 From WB M-14	Ramp (H)	45.8	--	F
SB US-23 South to Plymouth Rd.	Weave	(v/c = 1.28)*	--	F
EB M-14 From NB US-23	Ramp (J)	17.8	65.0	B
Northbound US-23 During the PM Peak				
NB US-23/WB M-14	Segment	26.8	66.2	D
NB US-23 to EB M-14	Ramp (I)	20.5	67.9	C

Density reported in passenger cars per mile per lane
*volume to capacity ratio reported versus density for weave segments
Ramp labeling is shown to correspond with the analysis labeling from the US-23 Feasibility Study (November 2009)

Figure 5: No-Build Peak Hour Volumes for East Tri-Level, AM (PM)

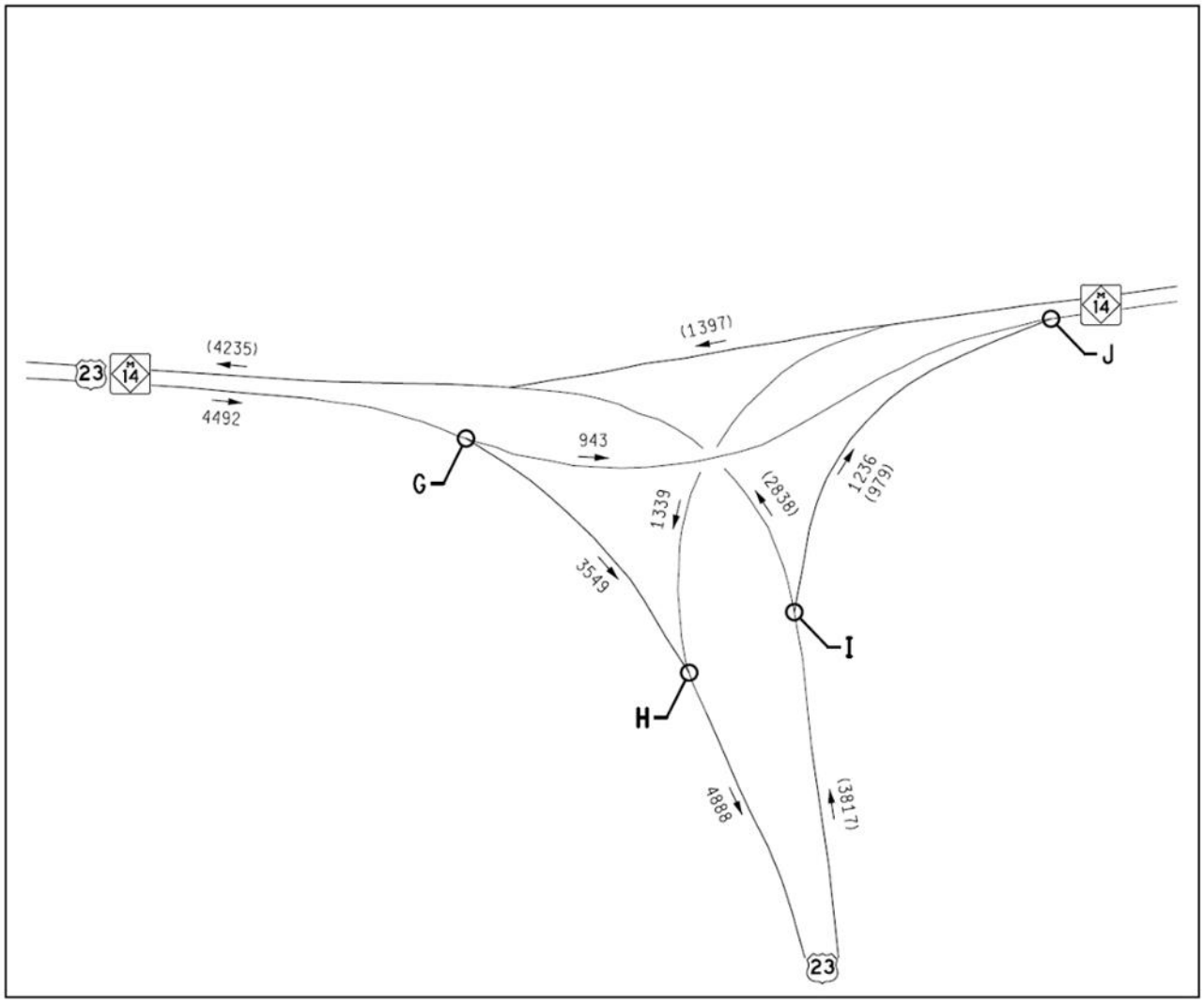
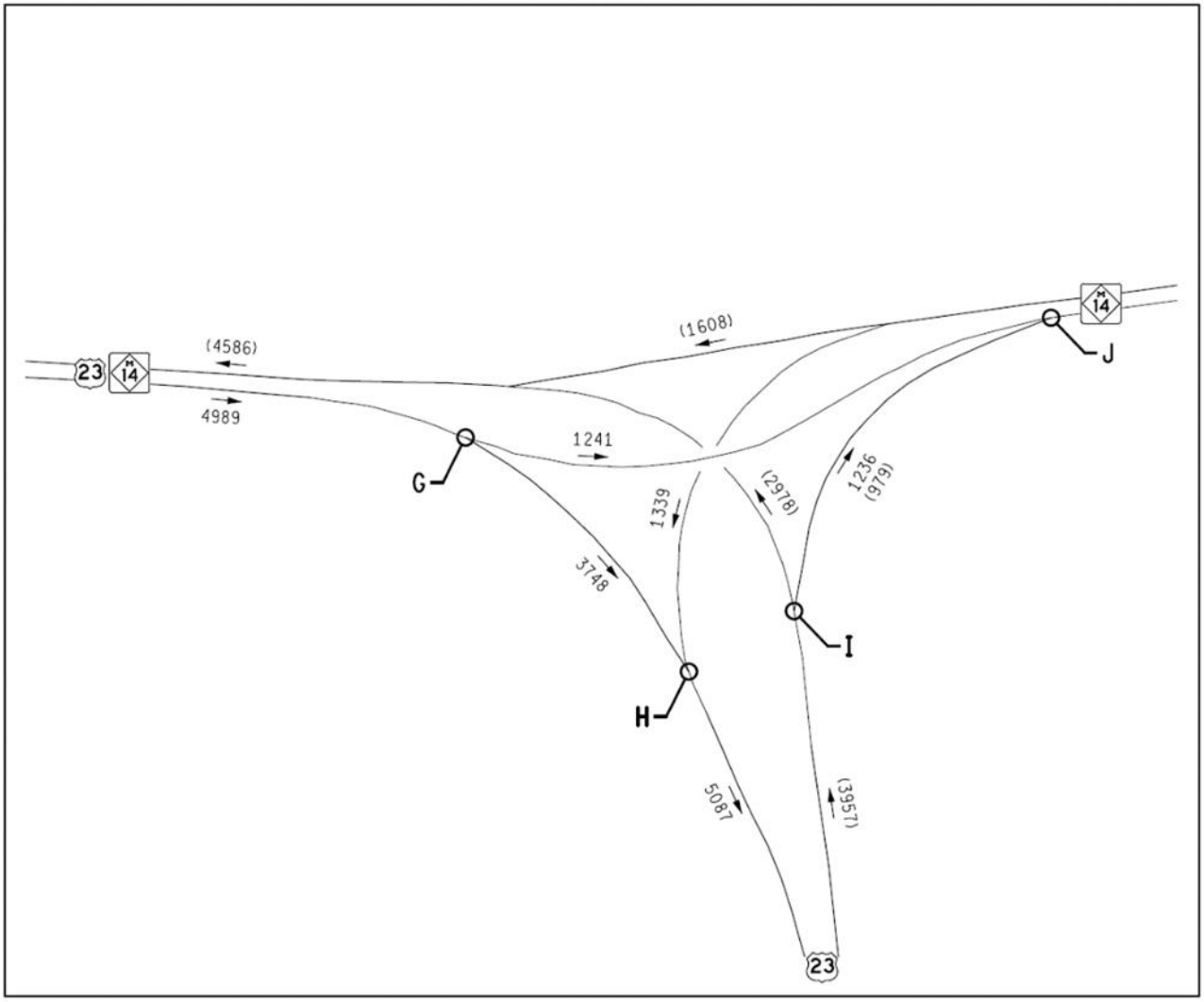


Figure 6: ATM Peak Hour Volumes for East Tri-Level, AM (PM)



2.8 RECOMMENDED NOISE BARRIER (NB-R) REEVALUATION

The following noise barrier reevaluation was conducted in response to a Public Hearing comment from Mark St Charles, Green Oak Township Manager.

A longer wall that satisfies the feasibility and reasonableness criteria was identified after looking at multiple alternatives. This wall is located approximately 5 feet west of the eastern right-of-way line and runs from a point approximately 70 feet southwest of the property line that separates the Best Western Hotel from the Heidelberg Rd trailer park to a point approximately 120 feet northeast of the Main St/ DNR Park Road intersection. Figures 4, 5, and 6 show the location of the proposed wall and the benefited receivers.

This wall has a total length of 2,600 feet and an average height of 12.34 feet. A summary of the feasibility and reasonableness results are provided below.

Additionally, it should be noted there is a small waterway or swale that crosses the ROW near Dort Dr. There should be a way to work around the swale, but it may impact the constructability slightly. The Statement of Likelihood presented in the *US-23 Improvements Noise Analysis Report* also pertains to this barrier. It states, "If it subsequently develops during final design that these conditions have substantially changed, the abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision of the installation and aesthetics of the abatement measures(s) will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the Context Sensitive Design process."

Table 3: Reanalyzed Recommended Barrier (NB-R)

Noise Barrier ID	Number of Attenuated locations					Cost	Cost / Benefited	Feasible	Reasonable
	≥ 10 dB(A)	≥ 7 dB(A)		≥ 5 dB(A) (Benefited Receivers)					
		#	% of Benefited	#	% of Impacted			(Y/N)	(Y/N)
NB-R Extended	8	16	50%	32[1]	94%[2]	$1,449,000	$45,281.25	Y	Y

[1] 29 impacted receivers and 3 non-impacted receivers

[2] 29 of the 31 impacted receivers were benefited

Figure 7: Revised Recommended Barrier – NB-R (South End)

Figure 8: Revised Recommended Barrier – NB-R (North End)

Figure 9: Revised Recommended Barrier [Insert] – NB-R

Figure 10: Revised Recommended Barrier [Insert] – NB-R

Project Mitigation Summary (Green Sheet)
For the Preferred Alternative

June 3, 2015

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Proposed US-23 Improvements
From the West US-23/M-14 Interchange North 10.2 Miles to
Silver Lake Road in Green Oak, Northfield, and Ann Arbor Townships,
Livingston and Washtenaw Counties, Michigan

This Project Mitigation Summary "Green Sheet" contains project specific mitigation measures being considered at this time. These mitigation items may be modified during the final design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction phases of this project.

I. Social and Economic Environment

A. *Relocations and Access to Residential and Commercial Properties* - This project will require 10.6 acres of additional fee ROW for the N. Territorial Road interchange re-configuration and 5 Mile Road realignment. Grading permits (1.7 acres) may be required at the six locations where crash investigation sites (CIS) will be located along US-23. Construction easements will be required for access through private property to build the barrier along the ROW. A consent-to-grade driveways permit will also be required on this project. Access to adjacent residential and commercial properties will be maintained during construction. All fee ROW will be acquired in conformance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

B. *Noise Impacts* – The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) noise abatement re-analysis has identified one longer feasible and reasonable noise barrier location along the project corridor. The noise barrier will be located on the east side of US-23 from approximately 70 feet SW of the property line that separates the Best Western Hotel from the Heidelberg Road Trailer Park to a point approximately 120 feet NE of the Main Street/DNR Park Road intersection. The new noise wall will be approximately 2600 feet long with an average height of 12 feet and will provide noise abatement for 32 residences and a private school. The barrier will be concrete post and panel constructed 5 feet inside of MDOT ROW. Grading permits (10 feet) will be required on the residential side of the ROW. It should be noted there is a small waterway or swale that crosses the ROW near Dort Drive. If during design this creates an insurmountable obstacle, the barrier will be designed (2000 foot long and 11 foot high) to protect 24 residences and a private school as described in the EA.

   An engineering level noise abatement analysis will be completed on the warranted abatement measure to ensure it meets final design phase feasibility and reasonableness criteria. If during final design these conditions have substantially changed, the

abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision of the installation and aesthetics of the abatement measures(s) will be made upon completion of the project's final design and the Context Sensitive Design process. A meeting to discuss the noise wall aesthetics will be offered to all affected property owners.

C. *Recreational Properties* – There are four recreational properties directly adjacent to the proposed project and two other recreational properties just outside of the project limits. The Contractor shall not park any vehicles or store any equipment or materials on any public recreational property. Access to the recreational properties must be maintained at all times during construction. The "Special Provision for Construction Staging Areas" will be included in the project proposal.

D. *Air Quality Impacts* – The construction period is of short duration and construction mitigation is not required. However, several voluntary measures may be implemented by the Contractor to reduce engine activity or reduce emissions per unit of operating time. Construction equipment should be kept clean, tuned-up, and in good operating condition. MDOT's Standard Construction Specification Sections 107.15(A) and 107.19 would apply to control fugitive dust during construction and cleaning of haul roads. All MDOT vehicles and equipment must follow MDOT Guidance #10179 (2/15/2009) Vehicle and Equipment Engine Idling. MDOT will prepare a special provision for the contractor to address emission and fugitive dust control to the greatest extent feasible.

II. Natural Environment

A. *Stream Crossings* – There are four stream culverts within Washtenaw County on this project. US-23 crosses over the upper reaches of Traver Creek through a 36" cross culvert. There is no median inlet and this stream will not be impacted by the construction of the US-23 ATM.

A tributary of the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake County Drain crosses US-23 through a 60" cross culvert. The culvert does not have a median inlet and will not be impacted by the construction of the US-23 ATM.

The Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain is carried under North Territorial Road in a 9'9" by 6'7" plate arch culvert which will be replaced with an 8' by 14' box culvert. A new 8' by 14' culvert crossing of the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain will be required for the relocated 5 Mile Road to the north. A staging plan will be developed to maintain stream flow during culvert replacements except for short periods of time required to place culvert sections. The existing twin 6' by 10' culverts that carry the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain under US-23 between Barker Road and the US-23 railroad bridge to the north will be extended approximately 10 feet on each side. The drain flow will be maintained in one of the culverts while the other culvert is extended.

B. *Agricultural Land* – There are seven parcels of land enrolled in the Act 451, Part 361, Farmland and Open Space Preservation (old PA 116), within the project area but only one parcel is directly adjacent. These properties are not expected to be impacted by any type of ROW acquisition or grading permits. A Special Provision (SP) for PA 451, Part 361 (formerly PA 116) enrolled properties will be developed and included in the project proposal. The SP will state "No borrow shall be taken from the PA 116 enrolled

properties and no disposal of excess or unsuitable material will be allowed on these properties".

C. *Wetlands* – No wetlands have been identified within the US-23 ROW within the project limits. Soil erosion and sedimentation controls will be implemented to protect adjacent wetlands outside of MDOT ROW.

D. *Floodplains* - Culvert sizes will be reviewed (and increased if necessary) in the design phase following completion of the hydraulic and scour analysis's to ensure that culverts are able to pass the 100 year storm event without increasing backwater elevations.

E. *Water Quality* - Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be used to treat storm water when designing the US-23 drainage systems. BMP's such as routing road and bridge runoff through vegetated swales prior to discharge into project water courses will be included in this project. BMP's will also be used to reduce flow rates and volume to minimize potential erosion issues.

F. *Wildlife Resources* - The "Special Provision for Migratory Bird Protection" will be set up on this project and be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to nesting birds for the proposed widening at the Great Lakes Central railroad overpass south of 8 Mile Road and also the bridge at Barker Road. The protection offered to migratory birds through the Special Provision is based on the scope of work, season, and presence of nesting birds with eggs or young. This may include avoidance by scheduling construction outside of the nesting season or erecting barriers to prevent birds from using the structure.

G. *Tree Removal* - The small 3.32 acre woodlot adjacent to the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain under North territorial Road will require many tree removals of approximately 1.8 acres for the new drain crossing and relocated Five Mile Road. As many trees as possible will be saved. Trees will be individually evaluated for their value based on size and species. Replacements will be done at a 1:1 ratio for trees of value and will generally positioned outside the clear zone as close as possible to where they were removed. Cutting of trees in this area will be minimized to the greatest extent possible to conserve general wildlife habitat.

III. Hazardous/Contaminated Materials

A. *Environmental Contamination* - The Project Area Contamination Survey (PACS) identified three known and one potential site of environmental contamination within or adjacent to the proposed project area: two active gasoline stations located in the southwest and southeast quadrants of the US-23 and Territorial Road Interchange; a former industrial facility located in the southwest quadrant of US-23 and Eight Mile Road; and potential contaminated soil that may contain Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PNA's) and metals at the Great Lakes Central Railroad crossing located south of the US-23 and Eight Mile Road Interchange. No environmental contamination issues were identified with any proposed real estate acquisition.

If excavation activities are to occur within the vicinity of the above noted known and potential contaminated sites, an estimate for contaminated soil removal, and the Special Provision for Non-Hazardous Contaminated Material Handling and Disposal, should be included in the final plan package. In addition, the Special Provision for

Asbestos Removal and Disposal should be included in the project package in anticipation of encountering asbestos conduits on bridges. All contaminated media must be handled and disposed of appropriately in accordance with state and federal regulations.

IV. Construction

A. *Maintaining Traffic* – Both lanes of US-23 traffic in each direction will be kept open during peak hours and a single lane is allowed at night and during off peak hours. Traffic on US-23 ramps may be closed for short periods of time during reconstruction. Traffic on local roads where bridges (North Territorial, 8 Mile, and 6 Mile) will be replaced will be detoured over local roads to adjacent bridges crossing US-23. At least one local road bridge will be open while the other two are being replaced. Throughout all stages, message boards, signs, and website updates will be used to notify drivers of detours, lane closures, traffic shifts, and changed travel patterns. MDOT will coordinate with local officials to provide updated project information to assist all motorists including emergency vehicles (police, fire, and ambulance), school buses, and public transit.

B. *Soil Erosion/Sedimentation Control* - Strict soil erosion and sedimentation controls will be set up and maintained during construction.

C. *Construction Noise and Vibration*- Construction noise will be minimized by measures such as requiring construction equipment to have mufflers, that portable compressors meet federal noise-level standards for that equipment, and that all portable equipment be placed away from or shielded from sensitive noise receptors if at all possible. All local noise ordinances will be adhered to unless otherwise granted exception by the responsible municipality.

   To document potential vibration damage from construction activities, residential structure foundation surveys will be offered in areas where vibration impacts could occur. Structures within 150 to 200 feet of construction operations such as bridge/pavement removal or piling/steel sheeting installation will be identified during final design. Vibration impacts are not anticipated at this time.

D. *Construction Permits* - Permits under Act 451, Parts 31 (Water Quality and Floodplains) and 301 (Inland Lakes and Streams) will be required from the MDEQ for this project. Coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which is administered by the MDEQ, is also required.

E. *Railway Coordination* – During design and construction of this project; MDOT will coordinate with the Great Lakes Central Railroad regarding the widening of the US-23 structure over the railway.

SECTION 3

ERRATA

3.1 MAIN DOCUMENT

Page 9

Published: - "Ramp metering is the use of traffic signals, typically a signal yellow light, to control the flow of traffic entering a freeway facility."

Corrected: - "Ramp metering is the use of traffic signals to control the flow of traffic entering a freeway facility."

Page 21

Published: - "The traffic cameras will be monitored through the Southeast Michigan Traffic Operations Center (SEMTOC). Street lighting and other ITS devices and technologies that collect and disseminate traffic information in real time installed along the ATM corridor will enhance the cameras' effectiveness during low visibility periods."

Corrected: - "The traffic cameras will be monitored through the Statewide Transportation Operations Center (STOC) in Lansing. Infrared cameras and other ITS devices and technologies that collect and disseminate traffic information in real time installed along the ATM corridor will enhance traffic monitoring effectiveness during low visibility periods."

3.2 EA MAIN DOCUMENT AND NOISE REPORT

Main Document, Page 65; Noise Report, Page 30

Published: - "Barriers NB-C, NB-E, NB-G, NB-H, NB-I, NB-J, NB-L, NB-M, NB-T and NB-U exceed the $44, 187 plus 3% ($45,313) allowable cost per benefiting unit."

Corrected: - "Barriers NB-C, NB-E, NB-G, NB-H, NB-I, NB-J, NB-L, NB-M, NB-T and NB-U exceed the $44, 187 plus 3% ($45,513) allowable cost per benefiting unit."

The revised amount in the parentheses does not change the conclusions in the document.

FIGURE 9: Corrected Street Labels

The incorrect street names (Main St and Kenton Dr) are circled in yellow above. All should be labelled "N. Shore Dr."

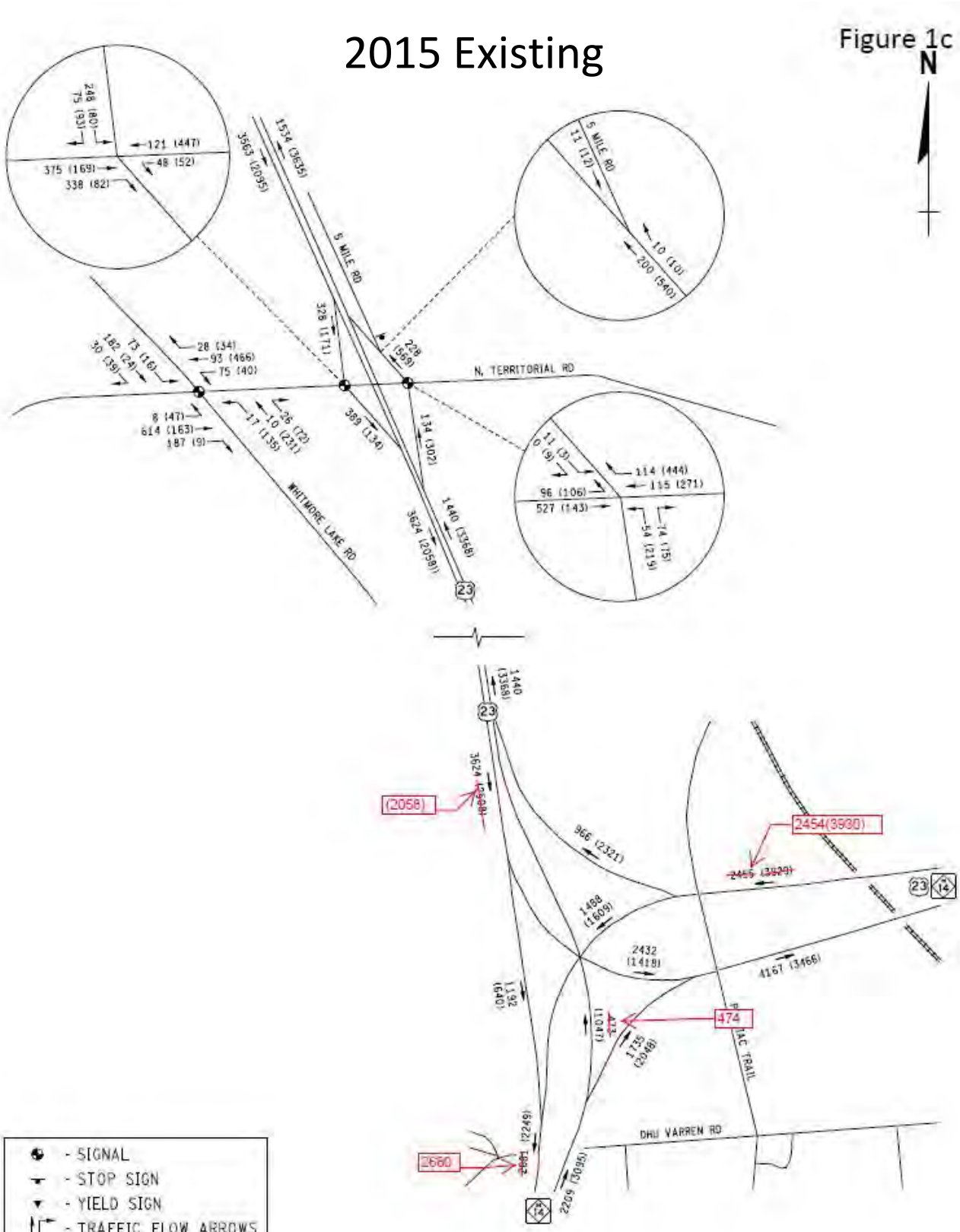
3.3 TRAFFIC REPORT – APPENDIX A-3 TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The traffic volume labels included small arithmetic errors and transposing of some traffic numbers. All occur at and south of the US-23/M-14 tri-level interchange. The following pages show the incorrect numbers struck-through with the correct numbers in red in call out boxes.

The traffic volume corrections do not change the Environmental Assessment conclusions.

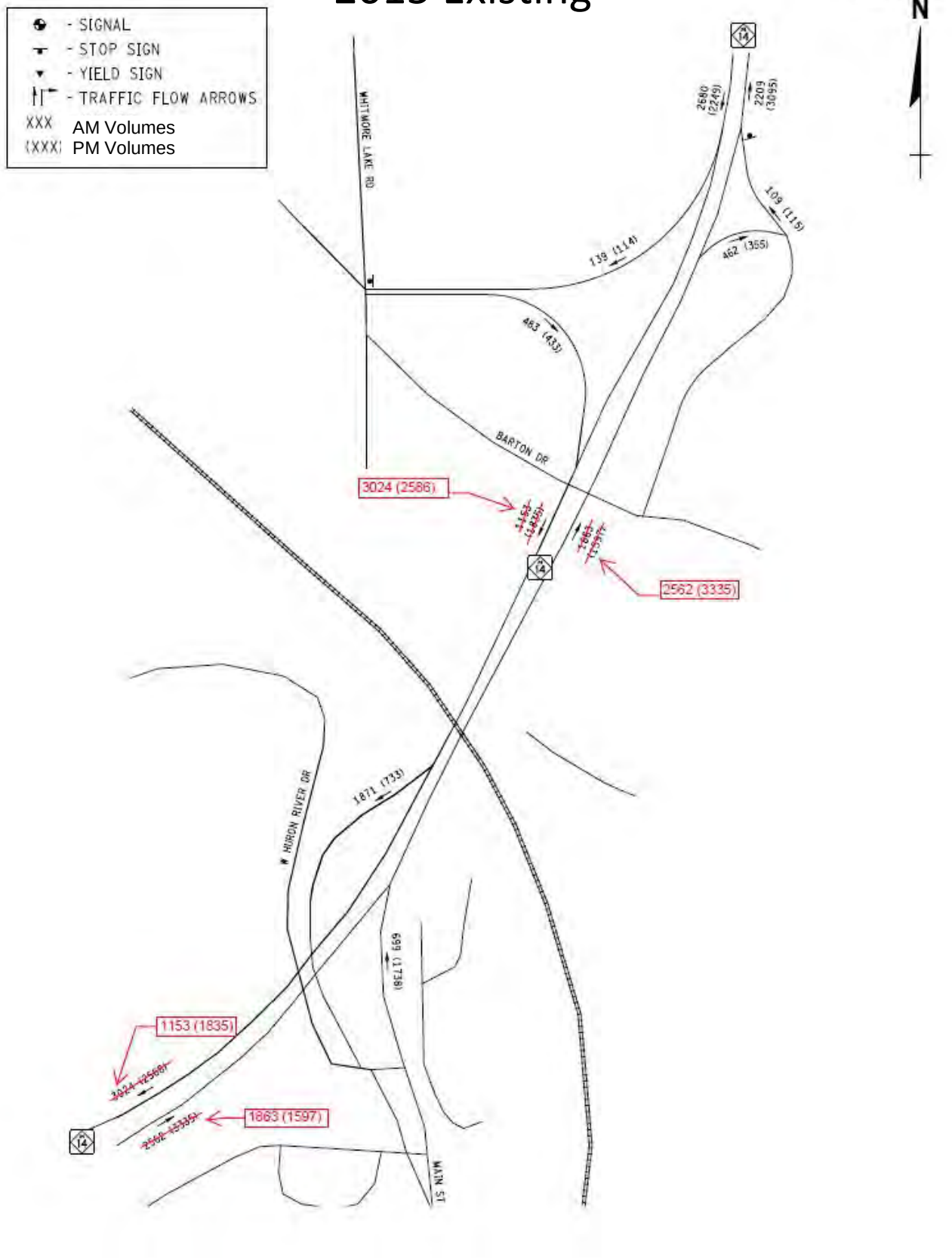
2015 Existing

Figure 1c



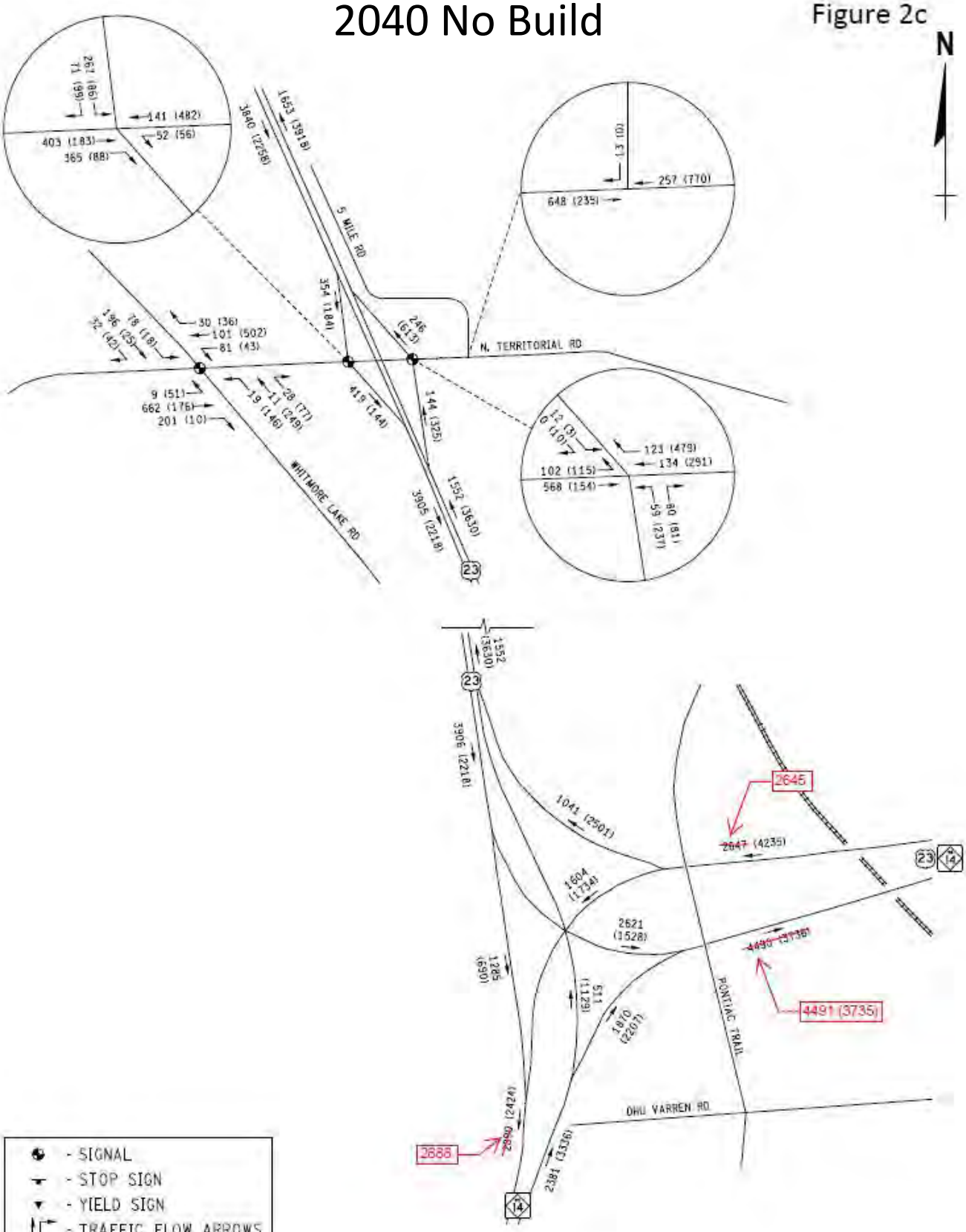
2015 Existing

Figure 1d



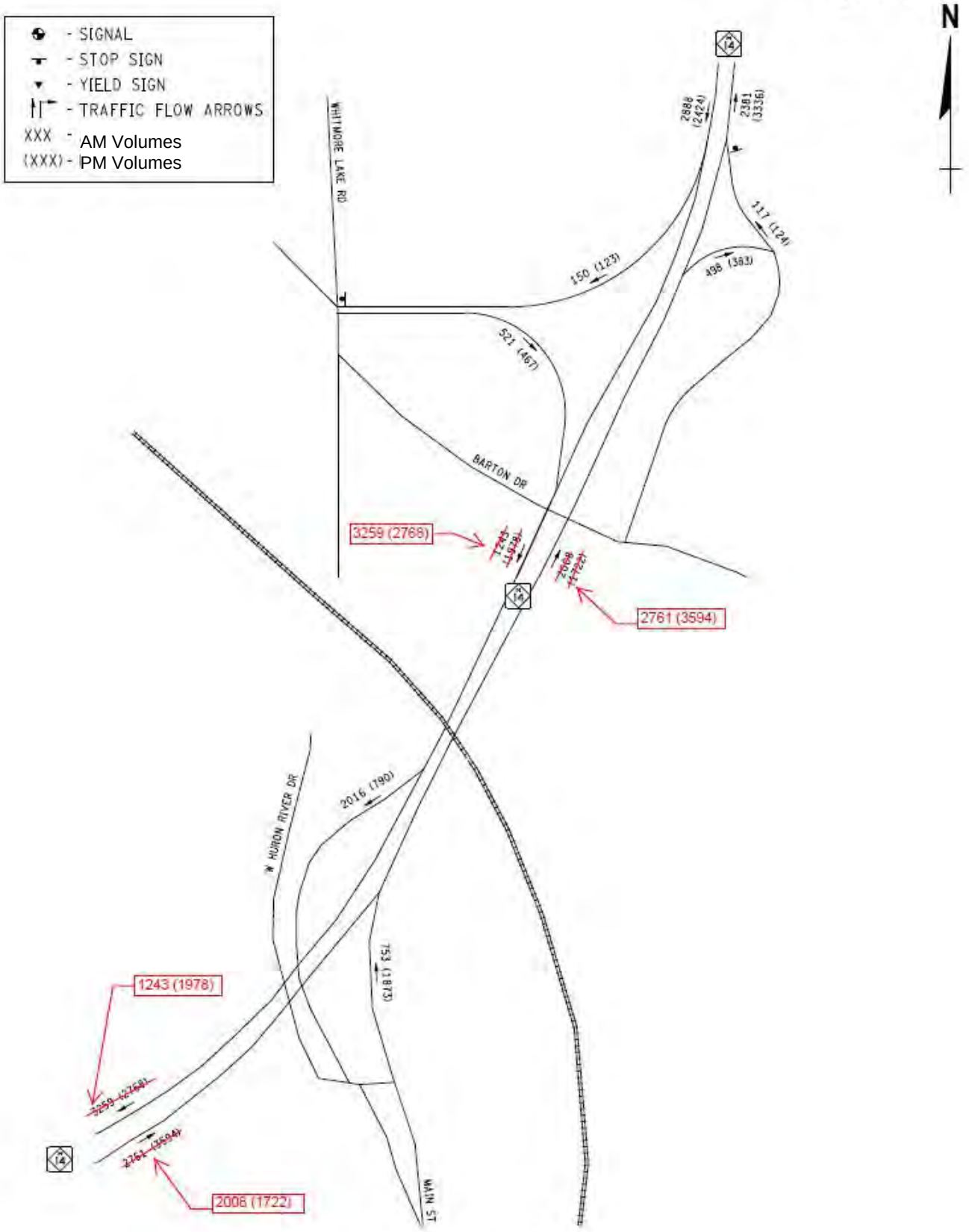
2040 No Build

Figure 2c



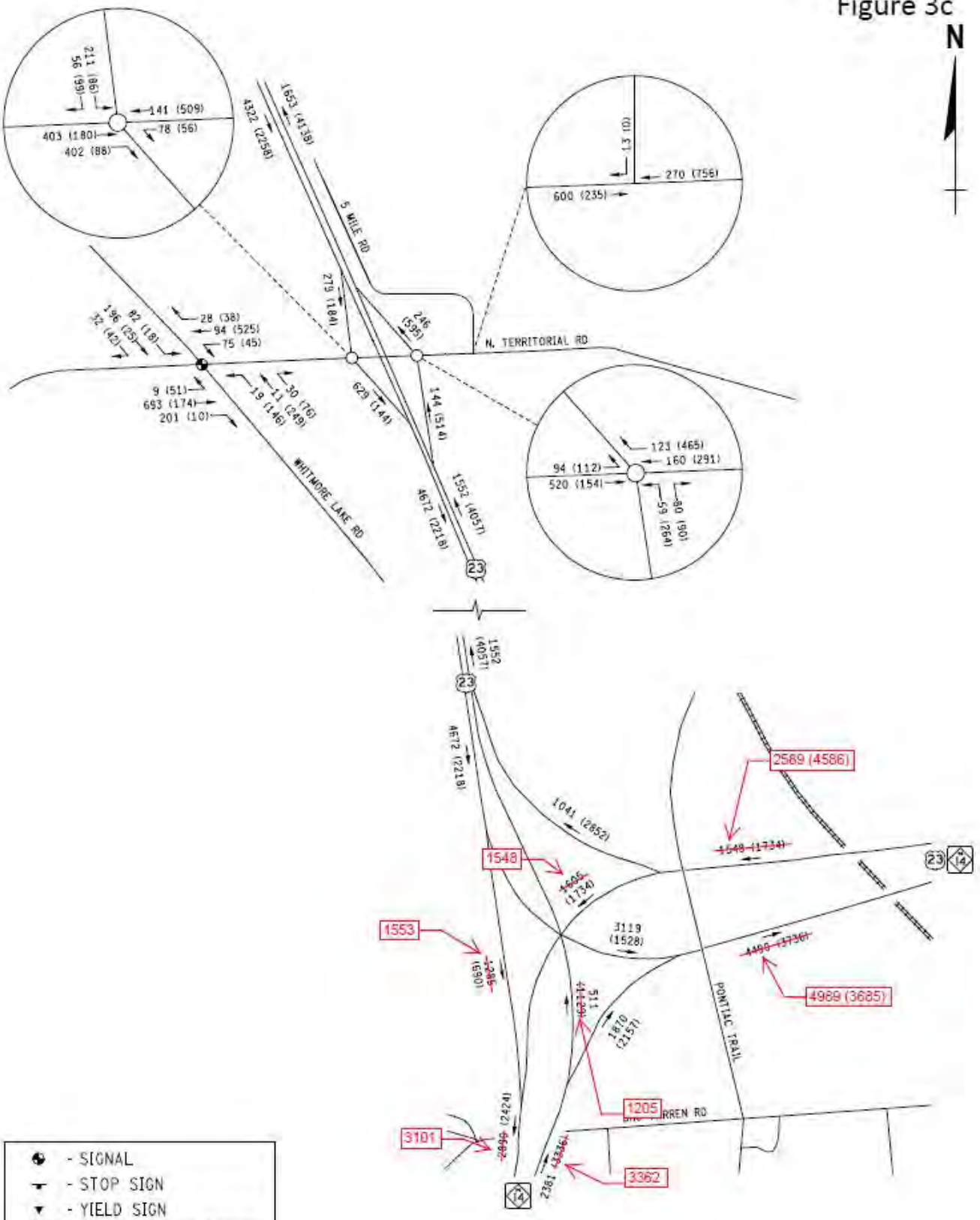
2040 No Build

Figure 2d



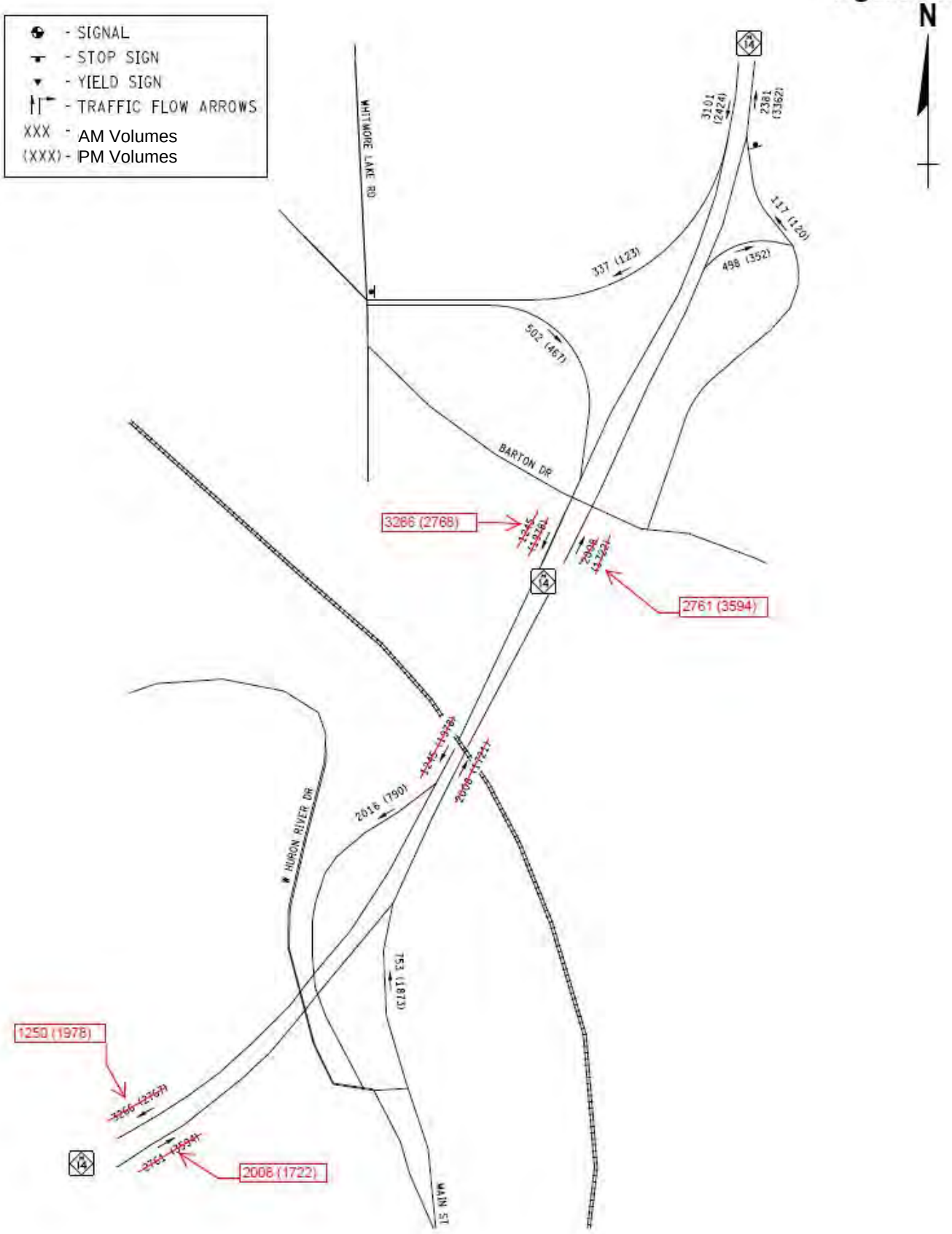
2040 ATM

Figure 3c



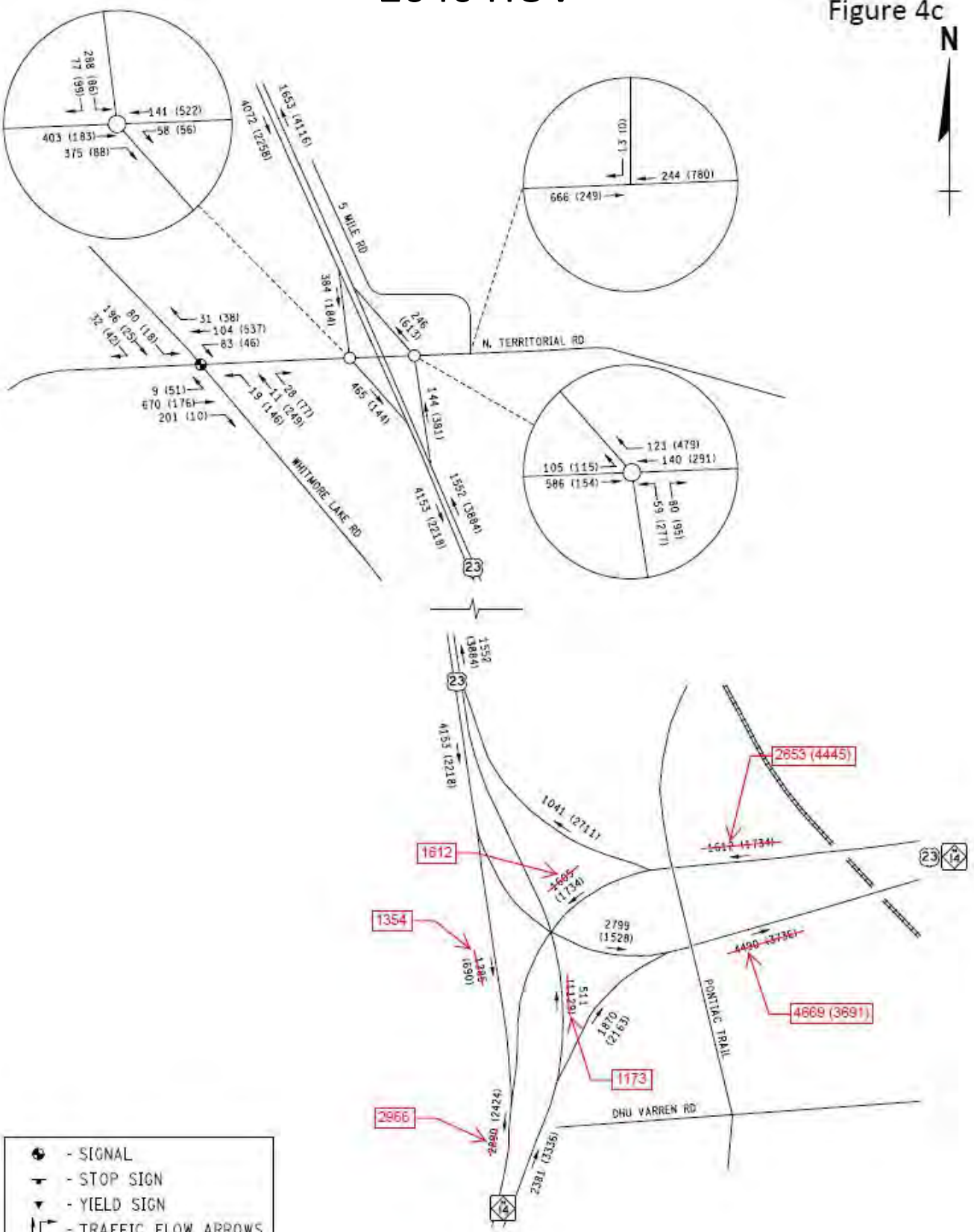
2040 ATM

Figure 3d



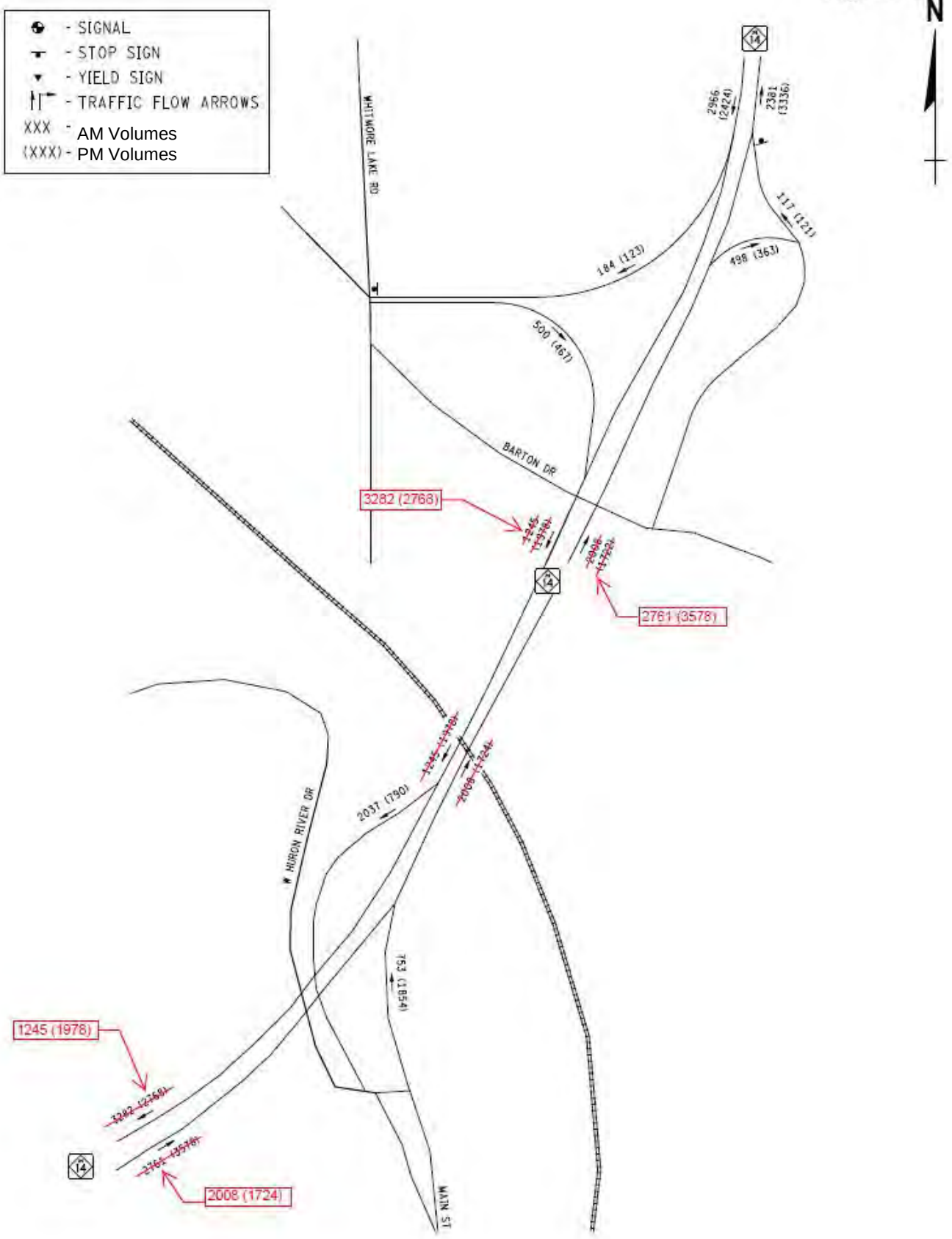
2040 HOV

Figure 4c



2040 HOV

Figure 4d



Appendix A

Public Meeting News Releases

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR

March 30, 2015

Certification of the public hearing and comment period for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed improvements to ten miles of US-23 from the west US-23/M-14 interchange north to the Silver Lake Road interchange in Northfield and Ann Arbor Townships in Washtenaw County, and Green Oak Township in Livingston County.

This certifies that MDOT placed a legal notice in the *Ann Arbor News* and *Livingston Daily Press newspapers* on Sunday, February 15, 2015, to obtain public comments on and announce a public hearing for the US-23 Proposed Improvements Environmental Assessment.

The advertisement, as well as a news release issued by the MDOT Office of Communications, invited the public to attend the hearing, which was held on Thursday, February 26, 2015, at the Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Whitmore Lake. A certified courter reporter recorded the hearing proceedings, which included a formal presentation followed by an open microphone comment session. The reporter also was available to receive comments privately between the sessions. A FAX number and U.S. mail and E-mail addresses were included in all hearing information for persons wishing to submit comments by the stated March 17, 2015 deadline.

This hearing transcript includes the hearing notice, news release, brochure, PowerPoint presentation and comments. If you have any questions, please contact me at 517-373-9534.

Robert H. Parsons
Public Involvement and Hearings Officer

Michigan Department of Transportation
newsroom

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2015**

CONTACT: Kari Arend, MDOT Office of Communications, 517-750-0406
arendk@michigan.gov

MDOT Seeks Comment on US-23 Proposal; Schedules Public Hearing for Feb. 26

WHAT:
The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is seeking public comments on a recently completed Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed improvements to US-23 between the west US-23/M-14 interchange and Silver Lake Road in Washtenaw and Livingston counties. In addition, a formal hearing is set for Thursday, Feb. 26, where MDOT will present an overview of the EA, including the alternatives considered and potential impacts and measures needed to minimize those impacts. A formal presentation will occur at 4:30 and 6 p.m. at the hearing.

WHO:
MDOT officials
Local officials
Interested residents and commuters

WHEN:
Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015
4- 7 p.m.

WHERE:
Northfield Township Hall
8350 Main St, Suite A
Whitmore Lake

Special accommodations: 810-227-4681

BACKGROUND:
Improvements to US-23 include replacing and upgrading pavement, median shoulders, bridges and entrance and exit ramps along the corridor. The EA also analyzed the effects of using upgraded shoulders, message boards and enhanced ITS technology as part of a new traffic management system to reduce congestion, improve safety and better accommodate through traffic during peak periods.

The EA is available for review and comment through March 17, 2015. For a list of where the document is available and how to submit written comments, information is available on MDOT's Web site at www.michigan.gov/mdotstudies

###

MDOT says: Drive like you want to make it home tonight.

www.michigan.gov/drive | **www.twitter.com/MichiganDOT** | **www.facebook.com/MichiganDOT**

Local

ANN ARBOR

U-M call center boss mailed rocks after complaints, suit claims

By John Counts
johncounts@mlive.com

Two women are suing the University of Michigan claiming they were punished after lodging sexual harassment complaints against colleagues at the call center where they worked.

One of them, 48-year-old Lorie Biggs, of Pinckney, claims her supervisor even mailed her a box of rocks after being fired instead of the personal effects she requested from the office.

Biggs and Jamie Mercurio, 30, of Belleville, filed suit against the university and its board of regents in the U.S. District Court on Jan. 13 claiming their civil rights were violated, according to federal records.

Both women worked as patient service associates at a U-M call center, said their attorney, Cait Malhiot of Gold Star Law. Biggs started in November 2010 and Mercurio in April 2012, according to the suit.

"You don't expect something like this to happen there," Malhiot said, referring to the university's generally good reputation as a workplace.

The women claim that a co-worker, Richard Page, sent them sexually explicit messages through their work computers and propositioned Biggs for sex.

> **"You don't expect something like this to happen there."**
>
> CAIT MALHIOT, ATTORNEY TO THE TWO WOMEN WHO ARE SUING U-M, REFERRING TO THE UNIVERSITY'S GENERALLY GOOD REPUTATION AS A WORKPLACE

Page also is alleged to have taken a picture of Biggs at work with his cellphone, and she believed it was of a sexual nature, according to the lawsuit.

In January 2013, Biggs complained to her then-supervisor, Jenny Wilson, who said there had been previous sexual harassment complaints about Page in the past, but nothing was ever done about it, the suit says.

A month later, Donna Navarre became the department's supervisor. The women complained about Page to Navarre, who "took no action to (their) complaint and Page's sexual harassment continued," the lawsuit says. The women continued to complain, but Navarre did nothing, the suit alleges.

In one instance, the women complained to Navarre about a co-worker they felt was "leering at them," but Navarre responded by telling the women to "drop a pen and pick it up in front of the co-worker to 'give him a show,'" according to the suit.

Biggs also requested a specific chair due to a specific back disability, but never got it despite providing medical documents, she claims.

In January 2014, Mercurio was put on temporary unpaid leave and Biggs was fired or "alleged performance issues."

Malhiot said her clients have both received numerous awards and accolades for their work over the years.

The suit contends the women were being punished for repeatedly making sexual harassment complaints.

After Biggs was terminated, she asked that her personal effects from the office be mailed to her. Navarre allegedly mailed her something different, however, according to the suit.

"For whatever reason, she was supposed to send her personal effects, but sent her a box of rocks," Malhiot said.

The federal lawsuit claims that both the sexual harassment and retaliation, in the form of their respective punishments, violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Another count in the suit says the university violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by not providing Biggs with the chair she requested.

Mercurio continues to work at U-M with Navarre, Malhiot says. Page is also still employed with the university, she added.

The university asked for an extension to respond to the lawsuit, which the plaintiffs granted, according to Malhiot.

A message for university spokesman Rick Fitzgerald was not immediately returned, but the school generally does not comment on pending litigation.

MUSKEGON

Official: Murderer's planned escape foiled by officers

By John S. Hausman
jhausman@mlive.com

Sharp eyes and quick action by alert corrections officers foiled a planned escape by a notorious double murderer Wednesday at the Muskegon Correctional Facility.

Patrick C. Daniel, formerly of Ann Arbor — serving two life sentences without parole for first-degree murders in 2001 and 2002 and a shorter sentence for disinterring a body — was housed in an "honors unit" at the state prison, according to Tom Tylutki, president of the Michigan Corrections Organization, the union representing state corrections officers.

The unit is for medium-security Level Two prisoners, including Daniel, considered relatively low risk because of good behavior in prison. As such, Tylutki said, Daniel had privileges and access to "luxuries" that officers believe he used to prepare a breakout — including items fashioned into two homemade maps of West Michigan, a homemade compass and two homemade flashlights.

Also found in Daniel's cell were items including prison fatigues painted white, other clothing, packaged food and a home-made yarn rope stuffed in a duffel bag that had been altered into a backpack.

Other items that could have been used as weapons, suspected to have been cached by Daniel, were later found in a search of a prison auditorium.

"This guy was very serious," Tylutki said. "This was another example of the officers saving the day."

Michigan Department of Corrections officials declined to confirm the name or security level of the prisoner while the investigation continues, but they too praised the corrections officers.

"We have some very alert staff who foiled what appeared to be a planned escape," said MDOC spokesman Chris Gautz, who also declined to confirm details of what the officers found.

Daniel

"We're very appreciative, and we really want to commend the staff who found what they found and derailed this plan."

Gautz said the prisoner was placed in segregation after the discoveries, and the investigation continues.

According to Tylutki, a corrections officer was making rounds Wednesday morning in the prison yard. While searching a trash bin, part of his standard duties, the officer found a prisoner's uniform that had been painted black. Evidence on the discarded uniform led investigating officers to Daniel's cell, where a search uncovered the other items.

Daniel, now 44, is in prison for life for murdering his 32-year-old longtime girlfriend Becky Britton in September 2001 and Robert Bilton Jr., 35, in March 2002.

The victims' bodies were discovered in the trunk of Daniel's car in Utah on March 14, 2002. Daniel was headed from his Ann Arbor condominium to Las Vegas when Utah State Police stopped him.

NOTICE

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW

The Northfield Township Board of Review will meet in the Northfield Township Municipal Offices located at 8350 Main Street Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189 on the following days:

Tuesday March 3, 2015 at 7:00 pm for the organizational meeting (no appeals will be heard).

By appointment to hear appeals on,

Tuesday	March 10, 2015	1:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Thursday	March 12, 2015	9:00 am to 5:00 pm

The purpose is to review the assessment rolls of Northfield Township. Matters pertaining to the assessment of property may be brought before the Board of Review. Appointments will be taken until 4:00 pm on Thursday, March 12, 2015. Appeals will also be accepted by letter.

All letter appeals must be **received by 4:00 pm on Thursday, March 12, 2015. **

	TENTATIVE RATIO	TENTATIVE FACTOR
101 – AGRICULTURAL	50.00	1.00
201 – COMMERCIAL	50.00	1.00
301 – INDUSTRIAL	50.00	1.00
401 – RESIDENTIAL	50.00	1.00
601 – DEVELOPMENTAL	50.00	1.00
PERSONAL PROPERTY	50.00	1.00

THOMAS D. MONCHAK
ASSESSOR,
NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

7218406-01

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
2015 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW MEETINGS

As required by the General Property Tax Act, public notice is hereby given by the Charter Township of Ypsilanti, that the March Board of Review will meet on the following days at the Civic Center located at 7200 S. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197 for the purpose of reviewing the 2015 assessment roll and hearing objections thereto:

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

TUESDAY	MARCH 3	9:00AM —10:00AM

APPEAL HEARINGS

TUESDAY	MARCH 3	10:00AM - 3:00PM
WEDNESDAY	MARCH 4	9:00AM - 4:00PM
THURSDAY	MARCH 5	9:00AM - 4:00PM
MONDAY	MARCH 9	9:00AM - 4:00 PM
TUESDAY	MARCH 10	9:00AM - 8:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	MARCH 11	9:00AM —7:00PM

A taxpayer or his or her agent who wishes to appeal his or her assessment or taxable value is requested to call the Assessor's office at 734-487-4927 to schedule an appointment for appearance at the Board of Review. **A resident or non-resident, or his or her agent may appeal by filing his or her protest by letter. All written appeals must be received before the Board of Review adjourns on March 11, 2015.** A letter of authorization signed by the property owner indicating agent representation shall be required. Taxpayers are welcome to contact the Assessor's Office prior to the Board of Review dates to discuss their 2015 assessments, or taxable values.

Please visit www.ytown.org to access information about assessments and taxable values. Petitions for appeal are available at the Assessing Department or at www.michigan.gov/treasury. Click on Property Tax Forms —Board of Review for form **L-4035**.

The tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for the 2015 Assessments and taxable values in the Township as determined by the Washtenaw County Equalization Department are as follows:

CLASS	TENTATIVE RATIO	SEV MULTIPLIER
Agricultural	50%	1.0000
Commercial	50%	1.0000
Industrial	50%	1.0000
Residential	50%	1.0000
Personal Property	50%	1.0000

Appointments for the Board of Review may be made beginning Tuesday, February 17, 2015 by calling the Assessor's Office at 734-487-4927.

American With Disabilities (ADA) Notice, the Township will provide necessary reasonable service to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon five-(5) days notice. Please contact the Assessors office if these services are required.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI

7197017-01

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PROPOSED US-23 IMPROVEMENTS US-23/M-14 WEST INTERCHANGE TO SILVER LAKE ROAD WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES, MICHIGAN

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on proposed improvements to ten miles of US-23 from the US-23/M-14 west interchange to Silver Lake Road in Northfield and Ann Arbor townships, Washtenaw County, and Green Oaks Township, Livingston County.

MDOT will conduct a public hearing at the Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Suite A, Whitmore Lake, on Thurs., Feb. 26, 2015 to receive comments on the EA document. To allow easier participation for those in the study area, the public hearing will take place continuously from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with formal presentations at 4:30 and 6 p.m.

The EA describes and analyzes the proposed work and the measures taken to minimize harm to the project area. The proposed project involves replacing and upgrading pavement, median shoulders, bridges, and entrance and exit ramps. It also analyzes the effects of using upgraded shoulders, permanent message boards, cameras and other active traffic management system technology to reduce congestion, improve safety, manage incidents and better accommodate through traffic during peak hours.

MDOT has encouraged public involvement during the study process by conducting public meetings on Dec. 12, 2013 and Aug. 14, 2014, and by providing study information and opportunities to comment at www.michigan.gov/mdotstudies. The EA is available for review and comment through March 17, 2015, on-line and at the following locations: Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Ste. A, Whitmore Lake; Northfield Township Library,125 Barker Rd., Whitmore Lake; Green Oaks Township Hall, 10001 Silver Lake Rd., Brighton; Ann Arbor Township Hall, 3792 Pontiac Tr., Ann Arbor; Livingston County Clerk Office, 200 E. Grand River Ave., Howell; Washtenaw County Clerk Office, 200 N. Main, Ann Arbor; Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave.; Brighton Public Library, 100 Library Dr.; MDOT Brighton Transportation Service Center, 10321 E. Grand River, Ste. 500, Brighton; MDOT University Region Office, 4701 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson; and the MDOT Bureau of Development, 425 W. Ottawa St., Lansing.

A court reporter will record the hearing's formal presentation and public comment session, and will be available to take comments in private for inclusion in the public hearing transcript. Citizens also may complete a written comment form at the hearing or mail, fax or e-mail their comments to: Robert H. Parsons, Public Involvement and Hearings Officer, Bureau of Development, Michigan Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909; Fax: 517-335-5696; or e-mail: parsonsb@michigan.gov. Comments must be e-mailed, faxed or postmarked on or before Mar. 17, 2015. A copy of the complete transcript, including all of the written and recorded oral comments received, will be available for public review in March 2015 at the above listed locations.

With seven days advance notice, the document may be available in alternate formats, including large print, audio file and other languages. For more information on this public hearing, or to request accommodations, please write to the above address or call (517) 373-9534.

7222759-01

Store readies shoppers for doomsday

Kalkaska man says he wants to help people survive the apocalypse

BY JON CARLISLE
MICHIGAN.COM

AP

David C. Rosenberg owns Northern Michigan Homestead Survival Products in Kalkaska, where he offers free survival classes and hands out free food packages to visitors.

KALKASKA — This wasn't his idea. It was God's.

Long ago, David Rosenberg said God told him the end of the world is near, and he'd better start preparing for it. So he studied how to survive in the wilderness, buried a bunch of food in the yard and waited for the apocalypse.

He's still waiting. But the end is going to come, Rosenberg insists. And he said his mission is to help as many people as possible survive the collapse of civilization.

"I think there's going to be pandemonium, of course," the 76-year-old said. "People are going to panic, people that aren't ready. It's going to be tragic because you won't be able to go to the store to buy food."

Rosenberg is the owner of Northern Michigan Homestead Survival Products, in a small building off two-lane M-72 just on the outskirts of Kalkaska.

"Are You Ready For Whatever?" a sign near the road inquires.

He opened the store a few years ago, where he offers free survival classes and hands out free food packages to visitors. He claims he has never made money from the business. "Just enough to pay for the heat," he said.

Rosenberg said he believes the end is coming because America has lost its way, religiously speaking, and God's not happy.

"Some people disagree with that," he said. "I've caught some flak. That's OK. I wouldn't argue with them about it. But that's what I believe."

He doesn't seek followers, shakes his head at the term "Christian survivalist" even though he shares much of that ideology, and though he has been the pastor of a church for years, doesn't even like being called that. "I don't call myself pastor. I'm just David Rosenberg."

Mostly, he's just a rural guy who's part of a subset of Americans convinced that the end is near for one reason or another, and though he could have become a hermit living with his stockpile, he felt an urge to help everyone else get ready, too.

"I think America's going to collapse is what I think," he said. "I don't know when, but I absolutely believe it's going to happen."

World's demise awaited for long time

Doomsday fears are nothing new. The belief in an eventual, catastrophic end to the world is embedded in many religious traditions, and smaller, often fringier movements predicting the world's impending demise have appeared over the years.

The topic still resonates — there's a show on the National Geographic channel, "Doomsday Preppers," that features a rotating cast of survivalists with varying wild beliefs about doomsday. It's become one of the network's highest-rated programs.

"I hate that show," Rosenberg said. For one thing, he thinks the survivalists are dumb. "They're on TV. I'm sure everybody knows who they are and where they're at, and when things go down, that's where everybody's going to go."

For another thing, unlike them, Rosenberg hates attention. He doesn't advertise, instead relying on word-of-mouth to bring visitors. His store's website is barebones and offers no way to order online. He isn't calling on people to join him, and in fact specifically says when the end comes they can't come to his house.

If God wanted someone to carry out this mission, Rosenberg sure was an odd choice.

For 25 years, he was a hard-partying, hard-selling, aluminum siding salesman who liked drinking, drugs and women, all just a little too much. He'd already cycled through two marriages and divorces before turning 40.

The Rosenberg family has been in this part of the state since 1875, when two Jewish brothers, one of them his great-grandfather, moved here and set up a homestead, and were encouraged by the locals to become Christian, change their name and tell people they were German. The religion changed but the name stuck.

One day, Rosenberg and his soon-to-be third wife visited his elderly uncle, who was a pastor at a nearby church. The 80-year-old uncle apparently gave the pair one hell of a speech, because Rosenberg and his future wife left the house convinced they'd been saved.

A few months later, he said, he heard a voice.

"God spoke in my heart," Rosenberg remembered. "He said to get ready."

Rosenberg got right to it. He quit partying, attended Bible college, founded a ministry and named it — what else? — End Times Ministries. He got himself a guard dog, buried bags of wheat, planted fruit trees, assembled three years' worth of firewood and waited.

Keith Sutton knows all about survival. Ever since being hit by a truck a few years ago, then run over by a tractor-trailer not long after, he has struggled. He lost his job, then his home, and has had to learn survival techniques for far more immediate reasons than doomsday.

"I've been in and out of the hospital, on and off of work," said the 54-year-old. "It's very, very hard. So I'm doing that kind of stuff. You have to learn."

For him, survival is about being in his 50s with a body full of metal plates and finding that few people in the area want to hire someone his age in this condition. Growing and storing food became a necessity when his income dried up.

He studied survival techniques, learned food preservation and canning from an elderly woman living nearby, and works whatever odd jobs come his way.

"Anything to get me by," he said. "There's gonna be a time when I won't be able to work, so I'm preparing for the worst."

Lessons in survival

Sutton met Rosenberg at a prayer retreat, and the two became friends. Now, Sutton drives in from Traverse City to help teach the survival classes, which are held irregularly whenever enough people show interest.

"We'll do it even if just one person shows up," Sutton said.

Their lessons go beyond teaching practical skills and address the social aspects of a postapocalyptic world. You simply can't lone wolf your way through the end of the world, they say. There's still got to be a community helping each other.

"We're not in it as individuals, and that's where you see a lot of people are prepping like that — 'I'll build my bunker and when all hell breaks loose, I got my guns and ammo.' That's the wrong concept of prepping. It'll take a small organized group in order to prepare the right way. But a lot of people are living in fear."

It's ice cold in the store. Rosenberg spares the costly heat for the adjacent office on the other side of the building, where he has two desks, one telephone, a bathroom and a storeroom converted to a bedroom for a born-again ex-con who just got out of prison after nine years and needed a place to stay.

The store is a wood-paneled room with a conference table for lessons, a shelf full of lanterns and water purifiers, and an array of freeze-dried foods offering decent-in-theory entrées like creamy pasta and vegetable rotini with chicken, noodles and beef in savory mushroom sauce and cheesy lasagna.

Curious travelers who spot his road-fronting sign sometimes stop in to look around, but most of his customers come from the gun shows where he sets up a table to advertise his store and its classes.

"We've had people come up from Owosso, we've had people come down from Cheboygan," he said.

The phone rang. It was someone requesting the store catalog. Rosenberg said OK and wrote down the caller's address, even though there really isn't a store catalog. But he'll put something together for the man, a bundle of checklists and photocopies, just to have something to send, just to possibly spare one more person when the world as we know it comes to an end.

John Carlisle writes for the Detroit Free Press.

HOWELL TOWNSHIP
MARCH 2015
BOARD OF REVIEW

The Howell Township Board of Review will hold an organizational meeting on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 9:30 am for the purpose of reviewing the 2015 Assessment Roll with the Assessor.
The Howell Township Board of Review will meet and hear appeals by appointment only on Monday, March 9, 2015 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 1:00pm to 5:00pm; Tuesday, March 10,2015 from 4:00pm to 8:00pm; and Wednesday, March 11, 2015 from 1:00pm to 6:00pm. Please call 517-546-2817 ext. 101 to schedule an appointment. The meetings are held at the Howell Township Hall located at 3525 Byron Road. Additional meetings if needed will be scheduled and posted at the Township Hall. You can schedule an appointment to review your assessment with the Assessor prior to the Board of Review by calling 517-546-2817 ext. 101. Tentative Equalization Factor for all classes is 1.0000. Residents and non-residents may appeal by mail, but letters must be received no later than 4:00 pm March 11 , 2015.
POSTMARKS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.
Marilyn Collins
Howell Township Assessor

(02-12/13/15-2015 DAILY 230583)

NOTICE
PUTNAM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW

The Putnam Township Board of Review will meet to review the 2015 Assessment Roll on Tuesday March 3, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. The Putnam Township Board of Review will meet to hear appeals related to the 2015 Assessment Roll on:
Monday, March 9, 2015 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Friday, March 13, 2015 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, March 17, 2015 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
At the Putnam Township Hall 3280 W M-36 Pinckney, Michigan.
Please call 734-878-3131 to make an appointment or email assessor@putnamtwp.us

Tentative Ratios & Factors

Agricultural	48.96
	1.0212
Commercial	48.31
	1.0350
Industrial	47.59
	1.0506
Residential	47.61
	1.0502
Personal	50.00
	1.0000

(02-15/22 & 03-01-2015 DAILY 231435)

CITY OF BRIGHTON
2015 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW

The Board of Review for the City of Brighton will convene for its Organizational Meeting with the Assessor on Monday, March 9, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. The Board of Review will hear property assessment appeals by appointment only on the following dates:

Monday, March 9, 2015	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 11, 2015	5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Wednesday, March 18, 2015	(if needed) 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Monday, March 23, 2015	9 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. or concluded

Appointments may be made by calling the Assessor's Office at (810) 227-9006. All meetings of the Board of Review are held at Brighton City Hall, 200 North First Street, Brighton, Michigan.

Non-Residents may appeal by mail. A form L-4035 "Petition to Board of Review" must be completed and submitted with your written appeal. The L-4035 approved by the State Tax Commission is available at www.michigan.gov/treasury. When you reach the site, click on Local Government Services, Forms/Instructions, Local Government Officials Forms, Number 618 (Form L-4035). All such appeals must be postmarked by March 13, 2015.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for each class of property for 2015 are as follows:

Commercial	50.00%	1.0000
Industrial	50.00%	1.0000
Residential	50.00%	1.0000
Personal	50.00%	1.0000

To comply with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Any citizen requesting accommodation to attend this meeting, and/or to obtain this notice in alternate formats, please contact David Blackmar, ADA coordinator, (810) 225-8001, at least five business days prior to the meeting.

COLLEEN BARTON,
ASSESSOR

(02-15/20/24-2015 DAILY 231336)

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTFOR PROPOSED US-23 IMPROVEMENTS S-23/M-14 WEST INTERCHANGE TO SILVER LAKE ROAD WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES, MICHIGAN

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on proposed improvements to ten miles of US-23 from the US-23/M-14 west interchange to Silver Lake Road in Northfield and Ann Arbor townships, Washtenaw County, and Green Oaks Township, Livingston County.

MDOT will conduct a public hearing at the Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Suite A, Whitmore Lake, on Thurs., Feb. 26, 2015 to receive comments on the EA document. To allow easier participation for those in the study area, the public hearing will take place continuously from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with formal presentations at 4:30 and 6 p.m.

The EA describes and analyzes the proposed work and the measures taken to minimize harm to the project area. The proposed project involves replacing and upgrading pavement, median shoulders, bridges, and entrance and exit ramps. It also analyzes the effects of using upgraded shoulders, permanent message boards, cameras and other active traffic management system technology to reduce congestion, improve safety, manage incidents and better accommodate through traffic during peak hours.

MDOT has encouraged public involvement during the study process by conducting public meetings on Dec. 12, 2013 and Aug. 14, 2014, and by providing study information and opportunities to comment at www.michigan.gov/mdotstudies. The EA is available for review and comment through March 17, 2015, on-line and at the following locations: Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Ste. A, Whitmore Lake; Northfield Township Library,125 Barker Rd., Whitmore Lake; Green Oaks Township Hall, 10001 Silver Lake Rd., Brighton; Ann Arbor Township Hall, 3792 Pontiac Tr., Ann Arbor; Livingston County Clerk Office, 200 E. Grand River Ave., Howell; Washtenaw County Clerk Office, 200 N. Main, Ann Arbor; Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave.; Brighton Public Library, 100 Library Dr.; MDOT Brighton Transportation Service Center, 10321 E. Grand River, Ste. 500, Brighton; MDOT University Region Office, 4701 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson; and the MDOT Bureau of Development, 425 W. Ottawa St., Lansing.

A court reporter will record the hearing's formal presentation and public comment session, and will be available to take comments in private for inclusion in the public hearing transcript. Citizens also may complete a written comment form at the hearing or mail, fax or e-mail their comments to: Robert H. Parsons, Public Involvement and Hearings Officer, Bureau of Development, Michigan Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909; Fax: 517-335-5696; or e-mail: parsonsb@michigan.gov. Comments must be e-mailed, faxed or postmarked on or before Mar. 17, 2015. A copy of the complete transcript, including all of the written and recorded oral comments received, will be available for public review in March 2015 at the above listed locations.

With seven days advance notice, the document may be available in alternate formats, including large print, audio file and other languages. For more information on this public hearing, or to request accommodations, please write to the above address or call (517) 373-9534

Appendix B

Received Comments

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

MAR 17 2015

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF E-19J

Kristin Schuster, Manager
Environmental Services Section
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
Murray D. Van Wagoner Building
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Patrick Marchman
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration
315 West Allegan Street, Rm. 201
Lansing, Michigan 48933

RE: EPA's Comments Concerning Proposed US-23 Improvements from the West US-23/M-14 Interchange (Exit 45) North to the Silver Lake Road Interchange (Exit 55), Green Oak Township, Livingston County, and Northfield and Ann Arbor Townships, Washtenaw County, Michigan

Dear Ms. Schuster and Mr. Marchman:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the environmental assessment (EA) dated January, 2015 concerning the above-mentioned project. Our comments in this letter are provided in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

US-23 experiences heavy directional traffic volumes during weekday peak commuting hours – southbound (SB) during the morning commute and northbound (NB) during the evening commute. The 2015 morning SB and NB late afternoon peak traffic is measured as Level of Service D to F. Traffic incidents (minor collisions or mechanical failure) are another cause for traffic congestion in the project area. On-ramps, constructed during the 1960's when a lower speed limit was followed, do not provide adequate merging distance for traffic to safely enter onto US-23. Additionally, the bridges over US-23, constructed between 1957 and 1962, have been determined to be structurally deficient and the two US-23 bridges over rail lines do not meet current specifications for clearance.

The EA presents four alternatives in addition to the "No Build" alternative. The four alternatives considered to address the transportation infrastructure and congestion problems include:

- Transportation Systems Management (TSM);
- Ramp Metering;
- Active Traffic Management (ATM); and
- ATM with High Occupancy Vehicles (ATM-HOV).

The preferred alternative is ATM.

The preferred alternative includes the following components:

- Bridge replacements/widening to accommodate the dynamic shoulder;
- Ramp extensions designed to improve the safety at merge and diverge areas and minor operational improvements at intersection terminals such as signal timing changes or storage lanes that do not require right-of-way (ROW);
- Six crash investigation sites; and
- An ATM system – dynamic shoulder use from the west US-23/M-14 interchange to south of the M-36 interchange to relieve directional peak period traffic congestion and for traffic diversion in the event of traffic incidents.

The alternative should alleviate traffic congestion that currently exists on US-23 during peak travel times.

Pursuant to our review of the EA, EPA has the following comments arranged by category.

Project Features

1. The EA indicates the North Territorial Road bridge has been posted for weight restrictions. Roundabouts are proposed at the on- and off-ramps, and the proposed bridge replacement will have 12-foot lanes with 10-foot shoulders for future non-motorized and pedestrian access. However, the EA is unclear if bridge replacement will cause the weight restrictions to be removed to accommodate heavy duty truck traffic
   Recommendation: EPA recommends the issue of weight restrictions and the proposed North Territorial Road bridge replacement be clarified.

2. The EA indicates that expansion of the Freeway Courtesy Patrol Program (Program) is a near-term opportunity.
   Recommendation: The EA is not clear on whether the Program will be expanded to handle disabled vehicles on US-23, particularly during peak travel times. If Program expansion is a feature of proposed improvements, does appropriate funding exist for this type of service expansion?

3. The preferred alternative includes all the elements of the TSM Alternative. The EA indicates the TSM alternative includes North Territorial Road bridge replacement and realignment of 5 Mile Road to intersect North Territorial Road approximately 500 feet east of the existing northbound on-ramp. Roundabouts will be constructed on North Territorial Road at the ramp termini. The park and ride lot will be removed and will be reviewed for replacement at a later date.
   Recommendation: EPA is concerned that removal of the park and ride facility will encourage more people to take solo trips, reduce air quality, and cause in increase in traffic congestion. EPA recommends the rationale for removing the park and ride lot without replacement be included in the EA. How many cars are parked in this lot on a typical day? Where is the nearest location park and ride lots that motorists can use? Can the near location absorb the users from this lot?

4. The TSM Alternative includes ramp extensions and minor operational improvements at intersection termination such as signal timing changes or storage lanes that do not require right-of-way.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends clarifying what is meant by a "storage lane that does not require right-of-way."

5. The preferred alternative does not include ramp metering. As stated in the EA, ramp metering includes the use of traffic signals, typically a signal yellow light, to control the flow of traffic entering a freeway facility. This control aims to maximize the capacity of the highway and prevent traffic flow breakdown and the onset of congestion. The ramp metering alternative included metering of the following on-ramps:
   - 6 Mile Rd. On-Ramp to SB US-23 (300 feet from cross street);
   - 8 Mile Rd. On-ramp To SB US-23 (381 feet from cross street);
   - M-36 On-Ramp to SB US-23 (311 feet from cross street); and
   - M-36 On-Ramp to NB US-23 (300 feet from cross street).

   The EA also indicates that, although the addition of ramp metering at select locations does not result in significant freeway operation improvements, it is anticipated that ramp metering would have an impact on safety by reducing the number of crashes at the merge areas for the se metered ramps.
   Recommendation: The EA is not clear on why ramp metering is not included in the preferred alternative as a way to decrease the number of incident events along the US-23 corridor. EPA recommends clarification be added to the EA to explain the decision not to include ramp metering in the proposed improvements.

6. The preferred alterantive includes dynamic shoulder use from the west US-23/M-14 interchange to south of the M-36 interchange, to relieve the directional peak traffic congestion.
   Recommendation: The EA is not clear on why these termini points were selected for dynamic shoulder use? Could dynamic shoulder use be used northward to the project termini at Silver Lake? EPA recommends the rationale for selecting these dynamic shoulder termini points be clarified in the EA.

7. The preferred alternative includes six crash investigation sites (CIS).
   Recommendation: The EA is not clear on why these CIS were proposed. Are additional CIS needed north of 8 Mile Road and/or near North Territorial Road? EPA recommends the rationale for selecting the six CIS be included in the EA.

Traffic Analysis – Peak Hour Congestion

1. Travel time from the VISSIM simulation takes into account ideal conditions and although the VISSIM model was calibrated to match existing conditions as much as possible, field measures of travel time vary day-to-day.
   Recommendation: This section of the EA indicates that travel time savings realized by each of the build alternatives is anticipated to be larger than what is shown in Table 4.0. EPA requests clarification in the EA how the VISSIM simulation, which takes into account ideal conditions but was calibrated to match existing conditions as much as possible, with

travel times that vary day-to-day, anticipates larger travel time savings than what is shown in Table 4.0.

Safety

1. The EA indicates the preferred alternative would use the median shoulder to help relieve traffic congestion along US-23 within the study area.
   The VISSIM model simulation shows there are more gaps and larger headways for the on-ramp traffic to merge into traffic with the use of the ATM shoulder during peak periods, which helps eliminate the slow-down due to merging traffic. The EA also indicates that the median shoulder would be used to maintain traffic during an incident, which should decrease the likelihood of secondary crashes due to traffic backups.
   Recommendation: This information is confusing. EPA suggests greater differentiation between the median shoulders and the on-ramps to clarify the above. For example, the median shoulder would be used to maintain traffic during an incident on the on-ramps, which should decrease the likelihood of secondary crashes due to traffic backups on the on-ramps.

Preferred Alternative Features - ATM

1. Figure 5.2 shows the proposed US-23 ATM lane configuration cross section.
   Recommendation: It is confusing to the reviewer why two different proposed typical cross sections are section in Figure 5.2. Additionally, the Figure shows a paved shoulder and a hard shoulder running pavement for dynamic shoulder use. What is the difference between a "hard shoulder running pavement" and a paved shoulder? EPA recommends this discussion be clarified to explain why two cross sections and two pavement types are proposed.

Bridge Replacements

1. The North Territorial Road bridge replacement includes roundabouts at the on- and off-ramps and the realignment of 5 Mile Road approximately 500 feet to the east of the US-23 NB on-ramp.
   Recommendation: Roundabouts are a fairly new roadway feature for many parts of the U.S. Depending on how widely roundabouts are being used in Michigan, EPA recommends MDOT and FHWA conduct an intensive effort to inform drivers about this configuration in an effort to increase familiarity and reduce the potential for traffic incidents. EPA suggests a combination of videos and simulations, fact sheets, etc. during public meetings and public hearings addressing how roundabouts will function at the on- and off-ramps. A mixed education effort including the use of websites, signage or other media, as appropriate, to inform the public about the configuration may also serve to increase familiarity with roundabouts. Wisconsin DOT's Roundabout's website is a useful source of information: http://dot.wi.gov/safety/motorist/roaddesign/roundabouts/works.htm

2. Proposed signal controlled intersection and roundabout configuration options are considered for the 8 Mile Road interchange. The EA indicates an option will be chosen after public comment and further design analysis.

Recommendation: EPA recommends the EA be augmented with an explanation focused on the efficiency and safety differences between proposed signal controlled intersections and roundabout configurations at this interchange to inform the public comment process.

Flora Review

1. The conclusion for the Threatened and Endangered Species section indicates that field surveys did not result in locating any state- or Federally-listed threatened, endangered or special concern species.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends the information concerning purple twayblade and willow aster be augmented by indicating these species were not located in project corridor.

Fauna Review

1. The EA indicates that tree removals will occur mainly at the proposed relocation of 5 Mile Road north of North Territorial Road. The 3.32-acre wooded area is located directly adjacent to the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake drain.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends MDOT and FHWA commit to voluntary tree mitigation and winter removal restrictions in the Project Mitigation Summary (Green Sheet) to avoid possible impact to avian or bat species. A potential for tree mitigation would be the Ann Arbor and regional communities' green belt program. Additionally, the EA is not clear whether all or a portion of the 3.32-acre wooded lot will be cleared. EPA recommends these two items be discussed in the EA.

Maintaining Traffic During Construction

1. The EA indicates MDOT is considering the use of Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) methods to minimize the impacts to motorists at all bridge replacements.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends the EA be augmented with applicable criteria MDOT and FHWA will use to determine whether ABC methods will be used to replace bridges and minimize impacts to motorists.

Stream and Drain Crossings

1. The EA indicates the existing US-23 crossing of Horseshoe Creek is currently a 6' x 10' dual culvert. MDOT proposes to extend the twin culverts 10' on each end. Flow is proposed to be maintained in one culvert while the other is extended. EPA assumes this means that an in-stream diversion will be used to divert all stream flow through one culvert while the other is being extended.
   Recommendation: The EA is not clear how much flow enters the dual culvert system, but measures should be taken to ensure that diversion of the entire stream flow into one culvert at a time will not cause hydraulic scour either on the outlet of the culvert or through it (if this is a bottomless culvert). EPA recommends construction occur during dryer months when low flow can be safely accommodated through one culvert. EPA recommends these two issues be clarified in the EA.

Green Sheet – Wildlife Resources

1. The Green Sheet indicates the "Special Provision for Migratory Bird Protection" (Provision) will be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to nesting birds for the proposed widening at the Great Lakes Central Railroad overpass south of 8 Mile Road and the bridge at Barker Road.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends the obligations in the Provision be briefly explained in the EA. For example, does the Provision include seasonal work restrictions?

Green Sheet – Social and Economic Environment

1. The Green Sheet indicates several voluntary measures may be implemented by the Contractor to reduce engine activity or reduce emissions per unit of operating time. MDOT's Standard Construction Specification Sections 107.15(A) and 107.19 would apply to control fugitive dust and cleaning of haul roads. All MDOT vehicles and equipment must follow MDOT Guidance #10179 Vehicle and Equipment Engine Idling.
   Recommendation: EPA recommends commitment, to the greatest extent feasible, to the following provisions to reduce impacts from diesel emissions.

   The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has determined that diesel exhaust is a potential occupational carcinogen, based on a combination of chemical, genotoxicity, and carcinogenicity data. In addition, acute exposures to diesel exhaust have been linked to health problems such as eye and nose irritation, headaches, nausea, asthma, and other respiratory system issues. EPA recommends the following measures are explicitly committed to in the draft EA to further reduce impacts to air quality from diesel construction equipment.

   - Using low-sulfur diesel fuel (less than 0.05% sulfur).
   - Retrofitting engines with an exhaust filtration device to capture diesel particulate matter before it enters the construction site.
   - Positioning the exhaust pipe so that diesel fumes are directed away from the operator and nearby workers, thereby reducing the fume concentration to which personnel are exposed.
   - Using catalytic converters to reduce carbon monoxide, aldehydes, and hydrocarbons in diesel fumes. These devices must be used with low sulfur fuels.
   - Using enclosed, climate-controlled cabs pressurized and equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to reduce the operators' exposure to diesel fumes. Pressurization ensures that air moves from inside to outside. HEPA filters ensure that any incoming air is filtered first.
   - Regularly maintaining diesel engines, which is essential to keep exhaust emissions low. Follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule and procedures. Smoke color can signal the need for maintenance. For example, blue/black smoke indicates that an engine requires servicing or tuning.
   - Reducing exposure through work practices and training, such as turning off engines when vehicles are stopped for more than a few minutes, training diesel-equipment operators to perform routine inspection, and maintaining filtration devices.

- Purchasing new vehicles that are equipped with the most advanced emission control systems available.
- With older vehicles, using electric starting aids such as block heaters to warm the engine reduces diesel emissions.
- Using respirators, which are only an interim measure to control exposure to diesel emissions. In most cases, an N95 respirator is adequate. Workers must be trained and fit-tested before they wear respirators. Depending on work being conducted, and if oil is present, concentrations of particulates present will determine the efficiency and type of mask and respirator. Personnel familiar with the selection, care, and use of respirators must perform the fit testing. Respirators must bear a NIOSH approval number. Never use paper masks or surgical masks without NIOSH approval numbers.

Water Quality

1. The EA indicates the preferred alternative will result in a slight increase in impervious surface, which is expected to increase the volume and flow rates of runoff from the roadway and sediment loads to surface waters. EPA commends efforts to treat stormwater for 80 percent sediment removal using appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce flow rates and volume to minimize potential erosion issues during construction.

2. Additionally, EPA commends MDOT's commitment to include project features designed to reduce the direct impact from construction. Namely, those BMPs include routing road and bridge runoff through vegetated swales prior to discharge into project watercourses to treat stormwater and reduce flow rates and volume to minimize potential erosion issues.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed project. Please send future NEPA documents pertaining to this project as they become available. Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Kathy Kowal of my staff at 312-353-5206 or via email at kowal.kathleen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

cc: Thomas Hanf, MDOT

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

March 20, 2015

9043.1
ER 15/0118

Mr. Patrick Marchman
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration
315 West Allegan Street, Rm. 201
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Mr. Marchman:

The Department of the Interior (Department) has no comment on the Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Proposed US-23 Improvements from the West US-23/M-14 Interchange North to the Silver Lake Road Interchange, located in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties, Michigan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lindy Nelson
Regional Environmental Officer

cc:

Thomas Hanf, MIDOT

Hanf, Thomas (MDOT)

From: Brad.N.Davidson@faa.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2015 4:03 PM
To: Hanf, Thomas (MDOT)
Cc: Brad.N.Davidson@faa.gov
Subject: Federal Aviation Administration - Review of the Environmental Assessment dated January 2015: US 23 Improvements (M-14 to Silver Lake Road)

Mr. Hanf,

The FAA was supplied a copy of the EA for proposed US-23 improvements between M-14 (Exit 45) and Silver Lake Road (Exit 55). Based on our review of the document there does not appear to be any potential conflict with any federally obligated public use airport in the area. As such the FAA does not have any comments on the proposed improvements related to potential impacts to aviation.

We appreciate the opportunity provided for our review of the document to evaluate any potential impacts to aviation.

Future MDOT projects throughout the State of Michigan should be coordinated with our office to the attention of John Mayfield, ADO Manager.

Sincerely,

Brad Davidson, P.E.
Environmental Protection Specialist
Detroit Airports District Office
Federal Aviation Administration

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

DAN WYANT
DIRECTOR

March 11, 2015

Ms. Kristin Schuster, Manager
Environmental Services Section
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Ms. Schuster:

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment (EA) – US-23 Improvements, M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Water Resources Division (WRD), has completed review of your January 2015, submittal of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the US-23 Improvement project in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, Michigan.

The purpose of the EA is to evaluate insufficiencies in the corridor including directional heavy traffic volumes in the A.M. (south bound) and P.M. (north bound), the lack of safe pull off areas, 4 structurally deficient bridges, inefficient on ramps and interchanges and the need for required road maintenance. The existing road consists of 2 lanes with shoulders in each direction. The EA indicates that the following alternatives were evaluated:

1) No-Build includes minor bridge work, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and preventative maintenance.

2) Transportation Systems Management (TSM) - includes the no-build elements and bridge replacements at North Territorial, 8 Mile, 6 Mile, and over the Great Lakes Central Railroad.

3) Ramp Metering - includes the TSM elements and traffic signals at various ramps.

4) Active Traffic Management - (ATM) – includes the TSM elements, dynamic use of the shoulders during A.M. and P.M peak hours, six crash investigation sites, reconfiguration of the 8 Mile Road interchange, widening of the US-23 Bridge over Barker Road, and possible 4 lane treatment starting at Warren Road.

5) ATM with High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) - includes the ATM elements with the exception that the shoulders could only be used for HOV usage.

The EA indicates that alternative 4 (ATM) is the preferred alternative.

The WRD does not object to the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for this project. We have the following comments:

1) As the EA indicates, a permit will be required from the MDEQ under the Floodplain Regulatory Authority, found in Part 31, Water Resources and Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended at the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain and the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. We do have some concerns with the proposed extension of the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain and would like to be involved early on in the design process. There is abnormal stream bank erosion occurring on the downstream side of this crossing due to the configuration of the existing culvert and stream channel. Extending the culvert may increase the erosion in this area.

2) No wetlands are proposed to be impacted by this project.

3) The EA identified three known and one potential site of environmental contamination within or adjacent to the project area. Any excavation or potential disturbance within these areas shall be coordinated with the MDEQ's, Remediation and Redevelopment Division.

As the project planning becomes better defined, we may have additional comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this request and provide comments. If you have any questions or need to schedule a field review, please contact Mr. John Skubinna of our office at 517-284-5501, skubinnaj@michigan.gov; or you may contact me at 517-284-5504, fulcherg@michigan.gov; or MDEQ, WRD, P.O. Box 30458, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7958.

Sincerely,

Gerald W. Fulcher, Jr., P.E., Chief
Transportation and Flood Hazard Unit
Water Resources Division

cc: Mr. Kathleen Kowal, USEPA
Mr. Chris Mensing, USFWS
Mr. John Konik, USACE
Mr. Patrick Marchman, FHWA
Mr. Jon Russell, MDEQ
Mr. Mitch Adelman, MDEQ
Ms. Mary Vanderlaan, MDEQ
Ms. Kathy Shirey, MDEQ
Mr. John Skubinna, MDEQ

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

JAMIE CLOVER ADAMS
DIRECTOR

March 2, 2015

Ms. Kristin Schuster, Manager
Environmental Services Section
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: US-23 corridor improvements - US-23/M-14 to Silver Lake Road - Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Schuster:

I received your request for review and comment of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed US-23 corridor improvements from the US-23/M-14 west interchange to Silver Lake Road interchange in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties. I have reviewed the proposed improvements and the Preferred Alternative with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) staff.

As noted in our response as part of the Early Coordination Process, the proposed project corridor is highly developed and most of its construction, except as noted at North Territorial Road, will be conducted within the existing Michigan Department of Transportation right of way. You did, however, identify seven parcels enrolled in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program, Part 361of the Natural Resource Environmental Protection Agency, 1994 Act 451 (formerly PA 116), that are in the vicinity of the project with one directly adjacent to the proposed work. While none of the identified parcel are expected to be impacted by the project, you note that you will include a Special Provision for PA 451, Part 361 (formerly PA 116) in the project proposal indicating, "No borrow shall be taken from the PA 116 enrolled properties and no disposal of excess or unsuitable material will be allowed on these properties". This should ensure that the adjacent enrolled property, in particular, is without impact.

No additional major impacts to agriculture are noted as a result of this project. Our main concern, then, remains the potential impact on intra- and inter-county drains. You note areas of proposed impact to drainage infrastructure – the Catholic Church Horseshoe Lake Drain and the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. We understand that you have been working with the office of Evan Pratt, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, to coordinate project work with his office and expect that you will

continue to do so. Beyond this, to the best of our knowledge, we have no additional concerns regarding the project plans for the Preferred Alternative.

MDARD appreciates being included in this Environmental Assessment Process. Feel free to contact me at (517) 284-5612 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Abigail Eaton
Environmental Stewardship Division

cc: Richard Harlow, Manager, Farmland and Open Space Program, MDARD

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Schuster, Kristin (MDOT)
Sent: Monday, March 16, 201S 11:04 AM
To: Hanf, Thomas (MDOT); Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: Fwd: DNR Comments_EA for US-23

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Mistak, Jessica (DNR)" <[redacted]>
Date: March 16, 2015, 10:35:02 AM EDT
To: "Schuster, Kristin (MDOT)" <[redacted]>
Cc: "Dexter, James (DNR)" <[redacted]>, "Jones, Lynda (DNR)" <[redacted]>
Subject: DNR Comments_EA for US-23

Hi Kristin,
Your February 10, 2015 letter to Bill Moritz requesting Michigan Department of Natural Resources comments on the EA for proposed US-23 improvements was forwarded to me for response.

I have reviewed the EA and comments submitted by Sharon Hanshue on May 1, 2014 regarding the consideration for substantial traffic using the DNR's Whitmore Lake public access site. Natural environment items, such as stream crossings and water quality, appear to be addressed through proposed mitigation and required permits. Specifically addressing the Whitmore Lake public access site, the EA indicates no impacts are anticipated and provides a plan to maintain traffic on US-23 during construction.

Also, it is acceptable to send future documents in electronic format only.

Sincerely,
Jessica

Jessica Mistak, Supervisor
Habitat Management Unit
DNR Fisheries Division
6833 Hwy 2, 41, M-35
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E-MAIL: gretchendriskell@house.mi.gov

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GRETCHEN DRISKELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

March 17, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

As State Representative of Michigan's 52nd House District and as a member of several boards that analyze transportation systems, I encourage you to approve the Environmental Assessments and move forward with the proposed plan to improve US-23 at the M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road. I have been a strong supporter of this project for many years. This construction project will provide a safer, more efficient, and more reliable transportation system for all motorists traveling between Washtenaw and Livingston Counties.

After reviewing the Environmental Assessments, I advise taking an approach that prioritizes safety and efficiency for travelers while simultaneously highlighting the need for environmental protections. If possible, I encourage a one-year demonstration period of Active Traffic Management with High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, in order to maximize capacity, prevent traffic congestion, and reduce noxious emissions. I have faith that this will be the most effective solution that could be implemented in a cost-effective manner in the next several years.

Thank you to those working on this project and for giving the necessary consideration to this demanding problem. After my extensive research and involvement with this issue, I offer my strong recommendation to the use of Active Traffic Management and HOV as the most efficient among available options. If you have any questions regarding my involvement or preferences, please do not hesitate to contact my office via email at gretchendriskell@house.mi.gov or by phone at 517-373-0828. I am happy to assist in any way I can.

Sincerely,

G. D. Driskell

Gretchen Driskell
State Representative
52nd House District of Michigan

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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RE: Comments on January 2015 US-23 Improvements Environmental Assessment - JN 123214 CS 81075, 47013

March 17, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

The Office of Community and Economic Development is providing the following comment on the proposed US-23 Improvements, between Silver Lake Road in Livingston County to M-14/US-23 north of Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County, as outlined in the January 2015 Environmental Assessment.

Proposed Project Scope

The proposed improvements are intended to reduce congestion along US-23 during peak periods, and address other bridge infrastructure deficiencies, among other transportation improvements. The project includes an additional travel lane (shoulder) to be opened during peak periods to reduce congestion due to commuter traffic from Livingston County, primarily to job centers in the Ann Arbor area. We support necessary infrastructure upgrades to bridges and access ramps, and accompanying non-motorized improvements. However, we are concerned about the expenditure of any additional funds to add travel lanes along this corridor, given that numerous studies have shown that adding travel lanes increases traffic congestion by encouraging more people to drive. Related, research and experience have also demonstrated that any relief realized is short-lived – with congestion returning to current levels within 5-7 years.

We encourage MDOT to instead direct valuable transportation funds toward transportation infrastructure deficiencies that serve more densely populated areas. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, along with the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti City Councils, and the Boards Trustees of Pittsfield and Ypsilanti Townships recently adopted the Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis. This report includes a variety of strategies to advance greater equity in Washtenaw County including more access to high performing job centers by lower-income households. The report recommends focusing transportation investments near existing jobs and commercial centers, housing, and public transit. We urge MDOT to reduce the scope of this project to address bridge infrastructure and ramp access improvements only, and redirect the remaining funds towards the greater needs of the urbanized area, which serves a much denser population of residents, businesses, and institutions. This improves the quality of life and function of urbanized areas, which will reduce sprawl and the correlate demand on commuter-impacted corridors such as US-23.

HOV Not Analyzed as a Build Alternative

The 2009 US-23 Feasibility Study provided a comprehensive analysis of providing a dedicated High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane. The 2009 study concluded that it is an option worthy of consideration. This alternative was not included in the scope of the current Environmental Assessment, and summarily dismissed due to legislative

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and enforcement concerns. This is a critical omission in our opinion. Based on dialogue with MDOT officials, we are concerned that this option was only removed from consideration due to the time and effort it would take to determine if the enforcement and legislative barriers could be overcome, and not because the HOV lane was not the superior alternative. We urge MDOT to include the HOV lane alternative in the Environmental Assessment with the supposition that the technical and legal barriers can be overcome. The omission of this option, despite its inclusion in the 2009 Feasibility Study compromises the investigation of other reasonable alternatives.

Environmental Assessment does not Consider Downstream Impacts

The assessment acknowledged the poor performance of downstream facilities, such as the Main Street exit or the east triple-decker on eastbound M-14, and acknowledges the proposed congestion-mitigation would further deteriorate these downstream points. It is well known that the Main Street exit from M-14 towards downtown Ann Arbor, and North Main Street heading into downtown Ann Arbor, are already severely congested. We urge MDOT to assess this further, consider that assessment as part of the overall study, and refrain from proceeding until potential downstream impacts are adequately studied.

North/South Commuter Rail (WALLY) Not Fully Considered

The Environmental Assessment mentions the parallel study to provide commuter rail service from Livingston County to Ann Arbor, but does not include the potential impact of such service in the future capacity demands on the US-23 corridor. While the service is 5 to 7 years away from launch, the potential impact of the service to reduce US-23 congestion was not considered or analyzed.

Summary

Transportation is changing in Michigan and around the country. With limited transportation funding available, investments should be focused on maintaining existing infrastructure, and encouraging more sustainable transportation options. The auto-dependent communities that were built are becoming unsustainable in various ways, but primarily in their inability to adequately maintain transportation and municipal infrastructure systems. Baby Boomers and Millenials, the largest aggregate population segment that exists, are increasingly choosing to live in places that provide easily accessible amenities and services, through multiple transportation options.

We commend MDOT's initiatives and investment in non-motorized networks, streetscape and sense-of-place enhancements, and investment in existing and proposed rail projects like the North/South Commuter Rail. We also support MDOT's need to maintain the infrastructure it currently owns to provide regional access. However, any proposal to increase system capacity should be met with a much higher level of scrutiny, given the extremely limited transportation funds available, larger demographic trends that exist, and the key role that transportation investments can play in advancing regional equity.

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Thank you for considering these comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Callan
Director
Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development

EVAN N. PRATT, P.E.

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER
705 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

email: drains@ewashtenaw.org
http://drain.ewashtenaw.org

DENNIS M. WOJCIK, P.E.
Chief Deputy Water Resources Commissioner

Telephone 734.222.6860
Fax 734.222.6803

March 17, 2015

Ms. Kristin Schuster
Michigan Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Section
Bureau of Development
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

RE: January 2015 EA for proposed US-23 corridor improvements north of Ann Arbor

Dear Ms. Schuster

This office has reviewed the EA dated January 2015 for U.S. 23 improvements. As a result of this review we offer the following information for your use in project design.

There is a major issue from a drainage and public health perspective in this area, which warrants consideration throughout the design and construction process. We have attached a map of the floodplain in the vicinity of Horseshoe Lake, showing a flood stage of more than 9 feet during the 1% recurrence storm event. The primary reason for significant flooding in this area is that the input capacity to the lake far exceeds the outlet capacity. At this time we are writing to inform you that independent of the 1% event, this area routinely floods to an extent several feet above the court-set lake level, and we have received reports of property damage as a result.

As a result of these issues, we have worked with Northfield Township to require development which adds impervious surface within the catchment area of Horseshoe Lake to ensure no additional volume of runoff is generated by added impervious surface or other changes in existing runoff patterns. We are also concerned about water quality treatment and pre-treatment in all situations, but particularly due to use of Horseshoe Lake for recreational purposes. We wish to offer the input that infiltration has been demonstrated in detailed studies to provide substantially better treatment of roadway and parking lot pollutants than traditional detention basins, swirl chambers, and other mechanical treatment devices.

It is noted in the EA Section 6.12.4 that BMPs will be utilized to reduce stormwater flow rates and volume. It is imperative that additional runoff volume not result from the project due to the drainage

and public health issue discussed above. It is understood that this office may technically have no permit jurisdiction unless the MDOT were connecting to or impacting our drain or easement. In the case where a permit is required from this office we note that the above policy of no increased volume and water quality treatment would be a condition of a permit from this office based on PA 40 of 1956. In the case where no permit is required, we encourage the MDOT to consider the goal of no additional runoff as an important element of the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Section 6.13 indicates that a floodplain analysis is required when a proposed project would "affect any floodplain". Due to the fact that much of the proposed project would create stormwater runoff that flows into the existing floodplain surrounding Horseshoe Lake it is understood that the project would "affect any floodplain", and therfore this floodplain analysis is required. This analysis is necessary to assure that no additional impacts on the residents, properties and environment within this floodplain occur.

Section 6.15 discusses culverts in the area of North Territorial Road east of U.S. 23. It is not clear as to what is proposed in this area as the discussion reads that the culvert under North Territorial will be replaced and it also reads that it will remain in place. This item should be clarified and if replacement is proposed an analysis of an increase in size must be completed to assure no additional downstream flooding impacts.

Section 6.15 also discusses extending the culverts where U.S. 23 passes over the Horseshoe Lake Outlet Drain. Analysis of this extension must be completed to assure no detrimental backwater impacts occur as a result of this modification. As noted elsewhere, the capacity of this outlet is substantially less than inflows to the lake, and any modification may be of great concern to residents while representing a potential liability to the MDOT.

Independent of the EA process or any technical analysis related to the above issue, we would appreciate any opportunity to discuss the possibility of the MDOT providing infiltration, detention, or other methods of stormwater management for existing as well as proposed facilities in the study area. We have been successful in obtaining grants for green infrastructure associated with transportation projects, and would be pleased to work together to seek funding opportunities to address our mutual needs should there be an opportunity.

Knowing space is limited in this and most transportation corridors, we cite the recently constructed Latson Road interchange, and the Baldwin Road interchange (I-75, Metro Region) constructed over 20 years ago, as just two examples of the MDOT utilizing ROW in the vicinity of a freeway interchange to provide progressive stormwater management to address both water quantity and quality.

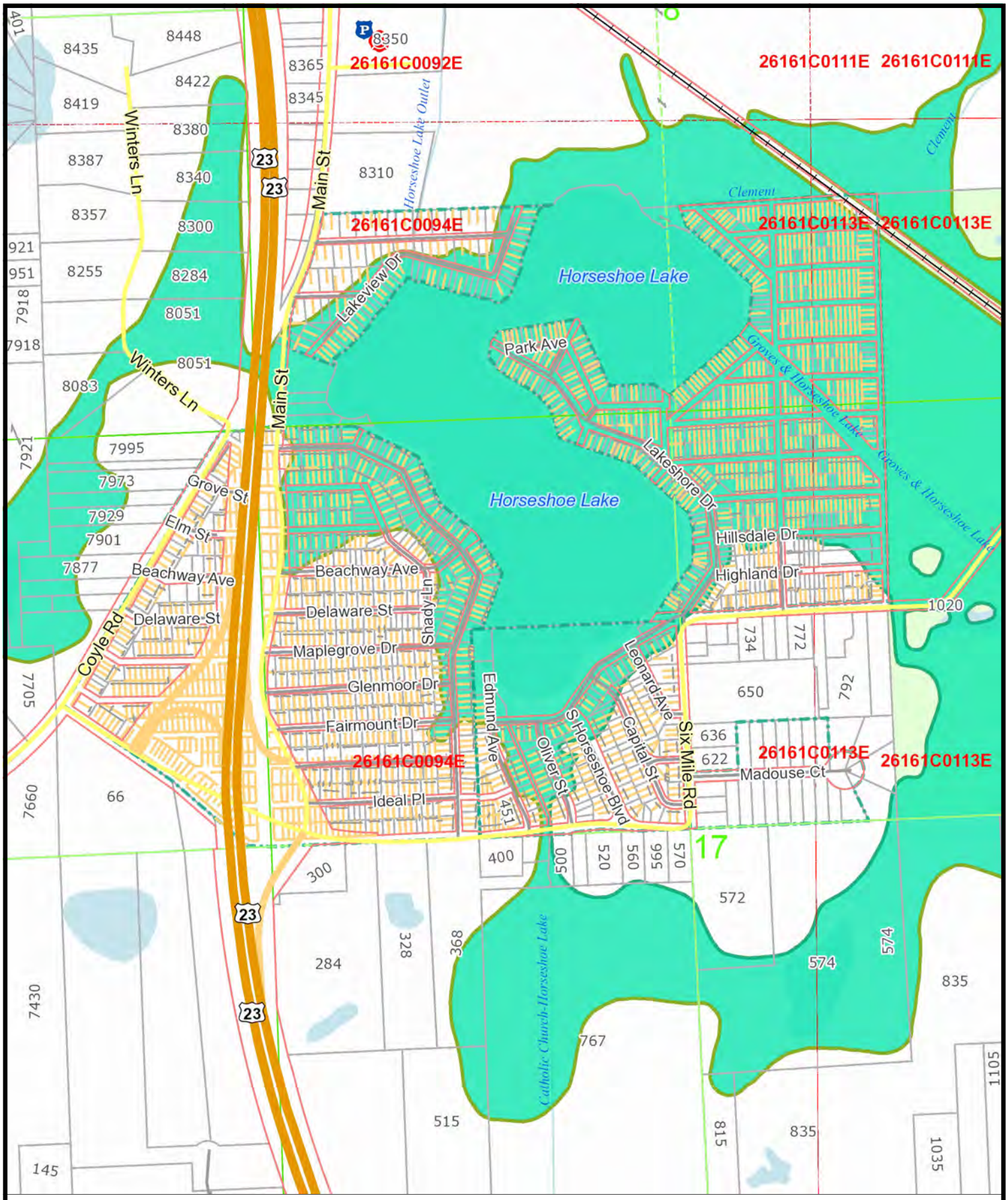
We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this project at this time, and in the future as more information about the specific alternatives and details become available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Evan N. Pratt, P.E.

Washtenaw County
Water Resources Commissioner
Director of Public Works

Cc: Howard Fink, Northfield Township Manager
Shelle Manning, Northfield Township Clerk (for Board distribution)
Horseshoe Lake Association



0 400.00 800.0 1,600.0 Feet

1: 9,600

3/26/2014

NOTE: Parcels may not be to scale.

The information contained in this cadastral map is used to locate, identify and inventory parcels of land in Washtenaw County for appraisal and taxing purposes only and is not to be construed as a "survey description". The information is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.

THIS MAP REPRESENTS PARCELS ATTHE TIME OF PRINTING. THE OFFICIAL PARCEL TAX MAPS ARE MAINTAINED SOLELY BY THE WASHTENAW COUNTY EQUALIZATION DEPARTMENT AND CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THAT OFFICE AT 734-222-6662.

March 16, 2015

Robert H. Parsons
Public Involvement and Hearings Officer
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI

Re: Michigan Environmental Council's Public Comments to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on the Environmental Assessment of US-23 Improvements, between the M-14 West Interchange and Silver Lake Road Interchange

Dear Mr. Parsons,

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) is a coalition of over 70 environmental, conservation and faith-based organizations located across Michigan. These organizations place a high priority on transportation issues as key to Michigan's economic success, good quality of life, and environmental prosperity. We appreciate that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) recognized the need to undertake an environmental assessment of the proposed US-23 project, and applaud its efforts to include stakeholders in the process.

MEC has reviewed the environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project in the US-23 corridor between the US-23/M-14 west interchange and the Silver Lake Road interchange. There are two areas of the assessment that we believe require additional consideration before this project can progress. We urge the committee to postpone its inclusion of this project for the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) until these concerns are adequately addressed.

First, we strongly recommend that MDOT expand the scope of the EA to better analyze the true impacts that this project will have on its environment. Second, we urge MDOT to partake in a more thorough analysis of alternative improvements options–specifically as it pertains to opportunities for public transit and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Scope of Environmental Assessment

Figure 1.0 and Section 6.0 depict the EA scope as the "500-foot buffer… where most impacts may occur." While this may be the status quo for assessments like this one, MDOT's analysis recognizes that impacts will be felt well beyond this buffer.

Table 4.1 on page 15, which shows the results of the VISSIM simulation for ramp operation, makes it clear that the Active Traffic Management option, the preferred alternative, will alter the traffic conditions downstream of the EA scope. Specifically, during the AM peak on the ramps connecting southbound US-23 to east bound and west bound M-14, the preferred alternative would change their ratings from a "B," with the no-build alternative, to a "C" and an "F," respectively.

This demonstrates that the project effectively relocates the "bottle neck" condition currently felt along the corridor. Surely the environmental impacts of this congestion will be felt much further south than M-14, and without the inclusion of that area in the EA scope, we cannot know the air, water, noise or other impacts that it may have. We have similar concerns about congestion that will likely occur near Silver Lake road during the PM peak, and the environmental impact that may occur north of that area, as traffic is diverted from three to two lanes.

The EA does not take into account the land use implications that will result with the preferred alternative. As presented, this project acts as a signal for development – specifically, encouraging green field, auto-oriented development in this area. The environmental impacts of development that will "likely take place at the currently zoned and planned existing ramp termini," as described on page 37 and depicted in figure 6.4, is not accounted for in this assessment and must be included to adequately understand the impacts of this project.

Transit and HOV Opportunities

The preferred alternative for this project, the Active Traffic Management (ATM) system with "dynamic shoulder use," has been touted as an innovative solution to congestion on US-23 and we truly appreciate MDOT's effort to look beyond traditional highway expansion as a solution to poor levels of service. However, MEC believes that the department's alternatives analysis is lacking in several areas.

First, we believe the decision to disregard the "Transit Service Options" and "Bus Bypass Shoulders" options based on results of the 2009 feasibility study in the corridor was a serious oversight considering the public feedback provided during the December 2013 public meeting for this project. Several individuals and organizations urged the department to consider multi-modal solutions for this corridor. Despite those requests, the decision to exclude those alternatives, and any non-auto oriented solution from this analysis severely narrowed the innovation of this project.

Second, the concerns about safety and enforcement presented in the EA for the ATM with HOV alternative are simply unwarranted. The preferred alternative will require enforcement to ensure motorists aren't using the "dynamic shoulder" when it is closed. This enforcement would not be markedly different from that required for ATM with HOV. The Michigan Legislature could very quickly enact a law to enforce HOV only lanes. In fact, the Michigan Environmental Council would be happy to be a part of that solution. ATM with HOV lanes could work to solve the capacity challenges that exist in the corridor, while encouraging transit use and carpooling— which both help to protect the environment, save money, and eliminate the number of vehicles travelling through the corridor.

To relieve the safety concerns regarding the ability for law enforcement to safely pull over a vehicle for an HOV violation, cameras could be used – just as they will already be used to monitor traffic conditions for the ATM alternative. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), there are nearly 350 HOV facilities operating or planned across 20 states. Despite challenges that may exist with enforcement, a recent survey of HOV lane operators by the U.S. DOT found that seventy-five percent (75%) of HOV systems are achieving current performance objectives. The top two objectives of HOV lanes are to "maximize person throughput" and "manage congestion by improving system efficiency," both apparent goals of

this project.[i] We would like the department to reconsider the ATM with HOV alternative, with our comments in mind.

Again, MEC urges MDOT to perform additional analysis and reevaluate the impacts of this project before moving forward. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on EA for the proposed US-23 project. As always, we are available to answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,

Liz Treutel
liz@environmentalcouncil.org
517.999.0414
Policy Associate
Michigan Environmental Council

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i *A Review of HOV Lane Performance and Policy Options in the United States - Final Report,* Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. and HNTB - Under contract to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), December 2008.

Comments on US-23 Widening Project

March 15, 2015

The Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) has the following comments regarding the proposed widening of US-23 between M-14 and Silver Lake Road. The "preferred alternative" in the Environmental Assessment (EA) attempts to address the peak-period congestion on this corridor.

Things we support:

- Repairing the road.
- Ramp extensions.
- Bridge improvements, including the accommodations for bicycling and walking.
- Crash investigation sites.
- Extra lane at the southbound US-23/M-14 split.
- Roundabouts at selected interchanges.
- Alternative shoulder management -- A managed shoulder lane that would be opened to general traffic only when there is a crash or other incident that blocks a lane. Barring a lane blockage, the shoulder lane should be limited to multiple-occupant vehicles. Signage should allow an "HOV only" message for that lane. Any use of the shoulder lane requires enforcement. If possible, median areas should be created where violators could safely be stopped without having to cross to the right shoulder.
- HOV tools -- Creating the legal framework, under MDOT leadership, for proper enforcement of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.
- "Wally" study -- Continued investigation of the "Wally" rail option, with the goal of understanding soon the probable costs and timeframes.

Things we oppose:

- Proposed shoulder management -- A lane regularly opened to all vehicles during the southbound a.m. peak and the northbound p.m. peak.

Things that concern us about the "preferred alternative":

- Traffic impact -- The proposed widening seems likely to increase total vehicle volumes arriving in Ann Arbor. And historically, adding road capacity has induced additional traffic.
- Parking impact -- Higher vehicle volumes imply more parking demand, which conflicts with Ann Arbor goals to limit new parking.
- Non-motorized impact -- Higher traffic would discourage bicycling and walking, which conflicts with the local goals embodied in non-motorized transportation plans.
- Carpooling discouragement -- Added capacity reduces the impetus for people to carpool and thereby reduce congestion.
- Land-use impact -- Transportation policy should support the local land-use goals of compact development, preservation of open space, and development in areas served by diverse transportation options. Adding highway capacity conflicts with these goals. Many urban-area communities can accommodate more housing and other development, and many rural areas would like to retain what they can of their rural character.
- Congestion strategy -- Whereas this proposal seeks to address congestion by adding capacity, local plans seek to reduce congestion by increasing ways to travel, as exemplified by the WATS transit plan and the ReImagine Washtenaw plan.
- EA scope -- We found no analysis in the EA of the above impacts outside of the land immediately adjacent to the corridor and no focus on the countywide transportation system.
- Relation to goals -- The impacts of this project would conflict with adopted local goals.

We believe that the "preferred alternative" presented in the EA does not adequately address impacts of the project. We believe that creation of "HOV only" lanes would be the best way to address congestion, minimize negative impacts, and support local goals. WBWC, with its coalition partners, represents the interests of thousands of bicyclists and walkers throughout Washtenaw County.

WBWC • 339 E. Liberty Street, Suite 300 • Ann Arbor, MI 48104 • 734-864-4095 • www.wbwc.org

Promoting transportation options that make sense for a sustainable and livable community.

RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SUPPORTING THE U.S. 23 CONSTRUCTION IMPROVMENTS AND TRANSPORATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT.

Northfield Township
County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan
Resolution No. 15-522

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Northfield Township Board of Trustees, County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, held on the 10th day of March, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time.

PRESENT: Trustees: Thomas, Tracy; Otto, Jacqueline; Westover, Angela; Engstrom, Marilyn; Dockett, Wayne Braun, Kathy; Chick, Janet

ABSENT: Trustees: N/A

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Engstrom and supported by Chick:

WHEREAS, the Township Board of Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan (the "Township"), determines that in its totality, the U.S. 23 improvements are positive for Northfield Township and the Southeast Michigan area; and

WHEREAS, while the Township is still concerned about noise impacts along the expressway at Barker Road, particularly adjacent to the Northfield Estates Manufactured Home Subdivision and the North Point Subdivision; and the size of the Bridge at North Territorial these concern does not override our overall support for the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Northfield Township Board of Trustees would like to indicate their support for this U.S. 23 improvements planed by the Michigan Department of Transportation and communicate this support to both the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments prior to both boards vote on the transportation improvement plan amendment.

AYES: Members: Thomas, Otto, Westover, Engstrom, Dockett, Braun, Chick

NAYS: Members: N/A

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Angela Westover, Township Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board of the Township of Northfield, County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, at a regular meeting held on March 10, 2015 and that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

Angela Westover, Township Clerk

WASHTENAW COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONERS
555 NORTH ZEEB ROAD
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48103
WWW.WCROADS.ORG

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FROM THE WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS FOR THE US-23 CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING THE ACTIVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners heard a presentation by Michigan Department Of Transportation (MDOT) Officials on March 17, 2015 regarding the proposed improvements to US-23 in both Washtenaw and Livingston Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners has determined that the planned improvements to US-23 including the three bridge replacements, ramp extensions, interchange improvement with roundabouts at both North Territorial Road and Eight Mile Roads, along with the Active Traffic Management System and other safety enhancements are positive improvements for Washtenaw County and the Southeast Michigan area; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Washtenaw County Road Commission supports the US-23 improvements planned by the Michigan Department of Transportation and communicates this support to MDOT, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

AYES: D. Fuller, B. Fuller, W. McFarlane

NAYS: None.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Washtenaw County Road Commissioners held on April 7, 2015, and is on file at the Office of the Washtenaw County Road Commission, 555 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103.

Roy D. Townsend, Deputy Clerk

Dated: 4/7/15

CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

301 E. Huron, P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
Phone (734) 794-6110 FAX (734) 994-8297

March 13, 2015

Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Sent via e-mail: ***parsonsb@michigan.gov***

Comments Re: Proposed US-23 Improvements Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Mr. Parsons:

MDOT has proposed an imaginative forward thinking approach to addressing regional highway safety and related capacity issues along a portion of the US-23 corridor. The City of Ann Arbor would like to fully support MDOT's proposed program for this corridor. It appears from review of the *Proposed US-23 Improvements –M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road Environmental Assessment (EA)* and its associated traffic study, that the projected benefits are experienced upstream along the corridor, allowing better flow, at the expense of downstream impacts. It is also difficult, nearly impossible, to know about the impacts that are not yet revealed. The study area does not include all impacted junctions, including the eastern tri-level junction of US-23 and M-14 and the interchanges of US-23 and M-14 at North Main Street, Barton Road, Plymouth Road, Geddes Road and Washtenaw Avenue. The missing data results in the EA being an incomplete analysis. The EA's limitations results in a very limited understanding of the benefits and impacts of the proposed investment on our city and regional travelers.

The City requests MDOT continue to advance studying the concepts for improving US-23 and that the defects in the EA be remedied, thereby adding data and information into the decision making process prior to a final review and finding by the FHWA. The effort should include full and careful consideration of the issues framed in this and prior correspondence; dated December 12, 2013, to you and May 1, 2014, to Kristin Schuster, attached. In the absence of comprehensive data and analysis of this proposal and its impacts on motorists and facilities, we could be guilty of simply expressing policy desires or making decisions based on inadequate information. We seek an informed discussion looking at the appropriate data and analysis, resulting in a recommendation for a cost effective strategy to improve safety and flow while assuring future access along the corridor and into Ann Arbor.

It may be that the Active Traffic Management (ATM) option is the preferred option; it may be that Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and a hardened shoulder used exclusively as Incident Management Lanes are effective. We simply ask that MDOT provide enough information that we can review and gain a full understanding of this proposal. If in the end it is an even choice between ATM and ATM-HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) on a vehicular and flow basis, we ask that MDOT proceed with an ATM-HOV approach, perhaps on a demonstration basis. ATM-HOV is effective along the corridor for moving vehicles, but is far superior to the ATM for the reasons enumerated below, and is also complementary to the existing City and regional transportation policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expand Study Area**. The scope of the study should include the east and west tri-level junctions as well as the primary interchanges of US-23 and M-14 within the City of Ann Arbor. These should include M-14 with North Main Street and Barton Drive, as well as US-23 with Plymouth Road, Geddes Road, and Washtenaw Avenue. According to the EA, the proposed project will generate increased traffic volumes during peak periods along the corridor above those in the "no build" scenario. This additional travel facilitated and induced by the improvement, is along already congested roadways. The congestion is located south of the Study Area and its trip attractor/generators. The only way to ascertain if the benefit of the improvement is greater than the impacts of the additional capacity's induced demand is to conduct analysis to logical termini, which are areas or places where people are traveling. Those termini would include the key interchanges within the northern tier of the City of Ann Arbor.
- **Expand TSM Tools and Techniques**. Items such as managing (reducing) posted speed limits, incident response teams, and minor capital investments to integrate parallel arterials as a reliever system are possible ways to reduce the need to invest $80M in this corridor with the potential to facilitate safety and flow. It is well known that lower urban freeway speeds reduce crashes and increase capacity of such freeway segments.
- **Include TDM.** The EA does not incorporate Travel Demand Management (TDM) approaches to manage travel. TDM is a well-known and proven strategy to address traffic congestion. The EA should include consideration of enhancing, not eliminating, park and ride lots and other TDM strategies to complement the ATM-HOV lane approach.
- **Re-evaluate Ramp Metering.** The EA describes Ramp Metering as simple yellow signals. This may evidence lack of understanding how ramp metering works or how it can be deployed. Ramp metering is used to both create gaps in traffic streams at on-ramps and with proper Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) applications, can be used to meter the number of vehicles allowed to enter a congested corridor. Lengthened cycle lengths for ramp meters are used as a

way to balance the needs of those on a corridor with those wanting to access a congested freeway.

Ramp metering would need to be installed along the entire segment from I-96 to M-14 to enable it to function fully and effectively. Proposing and then evaluating a subset of interchanges for installing such devices is not a recommended practice. It is no surprise that with partial implementation of this approach, it fails to provide the needed relief.

- **Consider Adjacent Facilities.**
- A closer look at adjacent facilities as part of the ATM system appears warranted. There is a parallel set of arterial roadways, Old US-23 and Whitmore Lake Road among others. These facilities are not fully described in the report, but are shown on the figures and maps. They should be included in the traffic analysis. These roads can serve as viable relievers during incidents. Improvements may be needed to link these facilities to the active traffic network and provide increased capacity for them to serve as reliever roads. Such linkages and improvements should be included in the scope of the US-23 analysis.
- **Complete Data and Analysis**. More and better data is needed, including Detailed Crash or safety analysis in narrow lane operating areas and in the southern tier impacted zones. Safety analysis is needed to explore the safety concerns related to general purpose traffic traveling at 70+ mph in narrow lanes with limited shoulders compared to the same lane serving high occupancy vehicles with a safer traffic record. The southern tier impact areas should include data and analysis of both tri-level junctions as well as the interchange areas from North Main Street along the freeway through and south to Washtenaw Avenue. The analysis and data in these areas should include the weaving and merging sections west of the western tri-level junction and south of the east tri-level junction to be complete. Specifically, the merging and weaving segments west of the western tri-level junction and south of the eastern tri-level junction that were cited as failing in the MDOT's earlier Feasibility Study.
- **Consider and Select High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes**. HOV use of the hardened shoulder is a safer and more effective use of the proposed lane. The EA should include a full comparison of HOV operations and their benefits compared to the proposed "General Purpose" use of the hardened shoulder lane. Such detailed analysis is an integral element of a thorough review of the utility and benefit of ATM-HOV compared to an ATM general purpose. Below, please find many attributes of successful HOV programs that would further enhance the utility of the proposed project.
    - HOV implementation allows more people per lane (Several of these points are further detailed below)
        - Greater efficiency for investment – more users of the new capacity

  - Greater environmental/greenhouse gas benefit - fewer cars results in less vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and fewer emissions
  - Safer facility – Fewer vehicles with a documented better safety record
  - Sustainable - Longer lasting improvement. HOV has been shown to move more trips in a lane allowing freeways longer intervals before further widening is required
  - Lower downstream impacts – fewer cars competing for scarce capacity downstream
  - Creates opportunities for transit – AAATA and other operators are looking for attractive, reliable system that HOV lanes can provide
  - Equitable
- Safer
  - Lower VMT results in fewer crashes – purely numbers
  - Transit –
    - Buses driven by licensed professionals
      - Much lower crash rate than SOVs
  - Vanpools
    - Vanpools have specific rules for avoiding distracted driving
    - Vanpools have safer crash history than other forms of transit and SOV
  - Carpools
    - Similar to Vanpooling
- Sustainable
  - Higher occupancy results in freeway capacity serving more people (addresses the regional job access need)
  - Inducement to HOV prolongs/eliminates need for future improvements
  - Reinforces park and ride investments
  - Fewer VMT for moving the same number of people
  - Fewer secondary crashes, due to safer operations and fewer primary crashes
  - Supports future rolling rapid transit or other regional transit services
- Downstream benefits – moving people not vehicles (moving more people in fewer vehicles)
  - Fewer vehicles at both east and west tri-level junctions
  - Fewer vehicles at interchanges/ramps
  - Fewer vehicles entering Ann Arbor and competing for space on local arterials
  - Fewer vehicles requiring new parking capacity
  - Smaller footprint for parking facilities

    - Lower externalities (congestion, crashes, noise impacts, etc.) on other people and vehicles on all roads, less delay
    - Less competition with other transportation system users (pedestrians and bicyclists) for space
- Transit Operators Benefit
    - Accrues to all transit operators
        - Michigan Flyer
        - Greyhound
        - Private Operators
        - AAATA
        - RTA
    - Provides travel time advantages
    - Provides reliable operations
    - Supports park and ride investments
    - Demonstrates possible future higher density (rail options)
- Equity
    - Serves all travelers, not just drivers
    - Creates opportunities for non-drivers to have more travel options
    - Doesn't require auto ownership or operation to enjoy benefits of project
    - Better meets needs of disabled persons and low-income households by enabling transit and other group travel options to have dedicated areas for operations
    - Enforcement: National statistics describe an 85-90% HOV compliance rate; greater compliance rate than speed controls

- **Include HOV enforcement zones**. Such zones can be installed within the median areas to enable HOV to work. Enforcement zones are similar to the proposed crash investigation facilities. Space is, or can readily be made, available in the median areas for such elements, if deemed absolutely necessary. If median enforcement zones are not feasible, the project should evaluate the impacts of placing the hardened shoulder on the outside of the roadway; allowing the Crash Investigation Sites to serve as HOV enforcement areas as well. This more than doubles the utility of these proposed investments.

BACKGROUND

- Ann Arbor is a growing regional economic hub. Increasing in both population and jobs.
- Economic growth and development at the level we are experiencing requires careful management and additional infrastructure to accommodate this positive condition while maintaining the City and region's quality of life.

- The City of Ann Arbor has adopted a Sustainability Framework encouraging wise use of all resources, including relying on Systems Management and Demand Management philosophies regarding infrastructure.
- The City of Ann Arbor's recent Transportation Plan Updates (1990 and 2009) set a foundation based on TSM and TDM. This echoed and reflected City transportation policy from the 1970's. One key objective of our City's transportation planning is to "Reduce emissions through less congestion and travel by means other than single-occupant automobiles." We look to MDOT to work in cooperation with us to deploy advanced technology to maximize the current system while at the same time implementing TDM strategies to achieve a sustainable future.
- We acknowledge that there is a need to address safety and capacity issues on the freeway corridors providing access to the City. However, twenty-first century transportation decision making supports the use of intelligent transportation systems applications such as the ATM approach, combined with effective support for other TSM and TDM techniques including provision of park and ride facilities and designation of additional capacity for high occupancy vehicles as a priority.

2015 DRAFT ENIVRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ISSUES

- **Process Issue – Earlier City Comments**. The current US-23 Improvements Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated traffic report addresses the US-23 corridor north of the western tri-level. This study area and scope is inadequate and fails the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) intent, statutory language and regulations. The City, through earlier comments, requested the EA scope and study area include access to and through the interchanges extending south from the project's proposed construction zone to the primary interchanges in the City served by this corridor. This request was based on technical information provided in earlier documents indicating that the existing system is experiencing congestion, and adding additional single-occupant vehicles to theses congested facilities will have a negative impact on the traveling public and the City of Ann Arbor. MDOT has not responded to, nor addressed, those comments. In fact, MDOT's earlier US-23 Feasibility Study defined the corridor as including the facilities from the eastern tri-level junction and segments to the north; the recently released report has deleted this facility from the study.
- **Scope Issue - Study Area Missing Data**. The limited scope of the study area remains an issue as no City reviewer can understand the overall utility (benefits or costs) of the proposal. Travel time savings and crash reduction are reported as benefits of the project. Since there are many alternatives considered and several solutions to the issues identified in the EA report, more information is

needed to understand how the increased capacity of the roadway impacts traffic flow and safety beyond the limits of the proposed improvement and current study area. There is insufficient scope and data to fully understand the implications of the additional volume created by this project may have adjacent to, and outside of, the project area. NEPA intends to allow good decisions to be made regarding public expenditures. At this time we do not have a good basis to understand if the increased throughput of the system provided north of Ann Arbor is offset by impacts on motorists already on the system at locations immediately beyond the areas included in the EA report.

- **Scope Issue – Study Area Traffic Impacts**. The EA report describes issues only directly adjacent to, or within, the project limits. Traffic growth resulting from the proposed project impacts interchanges and ramps far beyond the limits of construction. The impacts will affect the roadways providing access to, and within, the City of Ann Arbor. NEPA requires an EA to reveal and address project impacts at known impacted locations. The weaving section along M-14 south of US-23 moves from Level of Service (LOS) "B" to LOS "F" due to the project. The 2040 No Build alternative illustrates a future LOS of "B" for this same weaving segment. There are other known traffic issues not included in the current report. The earlier 2009 MDOT US-23 Feasibility Study included some of those areas framing these issues. For example, congested conditions are experienced along M-14 approaching the eastern tri-level junction during the AM peak. This facility backs up due to the merge area deficiencies as M-14's eastbound and westbound movements merge into, and with, southbound movements along US-23. This combining of traffic streams occurs just north of the Plymouth Road interchange area. The increased travel demand forecast to be created by the ATM Alternative is reported to result in a nearly 20 percent increase in the southern segment of the US-23 corridor during the AM peak period. This increased vehicle volume is likely to result in additional delay to every vehicle attempting to merge into this increasing traffic stream.

- **Process Issue - Independent Utility**. The EA describes a project without independent utility. The EA's traffic analysis ends prior to a logical end point. The primary destination of approximately 50% of traffic along the south end of the EA's US-23 corridor is to, and from, areas located within the City of Ann Arbor. This is well beyond the study area. As such the EA does not include a review of a project with independent utility.

    - NEPA requires:

        - (f) In order to ensure meaningful evaluation of alternatives and to avoid commitments to transportation improvements before they are

fully evaluated, the action evaluated in each EIS or finding of no significant impact (FONSI) shall:

1) Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;
2) Have independent utility or independent significance, *i.e.*, be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and
3) Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

- **Scope Issue –Study Limits.** Vehicle and person trips are not destined to a roadway segment along a freeway and so the question is where are trips destined to? This is an arbitrary point of analysis in the current EA. Trips do not end on the freeway; they are oriented to trip attractors or generators located nearby. Recognizing that Ann Arbor is the region's major employment center with a high percent of trips along US-23 in the peak period having origins and destinations in the City of Ann Arbor, the analysis should continue to logical locations. Therefore, we contend that the current EA's analysis is incomplete.
- **Study Issue – Data Inconsistencies**. Data and analysis are inconsistent. The various tables and charts in the report and its appendices are in conflict with one another. The narrative in the report speaks to travel increases of 12 to 17.9 percent for the ATM scenario; however, the figures in A-3 Traffic Volumes are not reflective of such increases. Given the summary nature of the materials, it is impossible to know whether the appendices' data is consistent with the analysis used to draw conclusions included in the EA report.
- **Study Issue – TSM and TDM Evaluation Methods**. There is value in the information surrounding the No Build and TSM alternatives responding to issues created at the south end of the segment. There are segments shown to shift from LOS "B" to "F" as a result of modeling the increased and induced demand resulting from implementation of the ATM alternative(s) as described in the EA's charts and tables. The No Build and TSM Alternative have less impact at the south end of the study area during the AM peak. Why not build the hardened shoulder lane and only use it exclusively for incident management, while relying on TSM techniques to address the safety issues at the interchanges? This can allow for maintaining a high level of service for the entire mainline. This occurs due to elimination of the delay based on incidents at the ramps and secondary crashes that occur as a result of the poor ramp design. This should be studied in greater detail providing the incident management capability without the negative externalities of additional capacity during peak periods. TDM should

also be evaluated as a mitigation mechanism for the impacts at the downstream locations.

- **Study Issue - TSM Speed Management.** Speed management, reducing posted Speed Limits to reflect urban nature of traffic, is a common tool used to create safer urban freeways. It is generally recognized that a modest decrease in the posted speed of urban freeways - - 65 MPH to 55 MPH - - results in safer freeway conditions. Less well-known is the fact that freeways' optimum capacity is well below the 65-75 MPH operating speed of this facility. Michigan has recently increased speed limits for"rural" roadways; this corridor behaves, and should be managed as, an urban expressway with reduced speed limits, especially during peak periods. Reducing the overall speed to 55 MPH during peak periods should be studied in greater detail and included in the TSM approach. The ATM system allows for this to be easily accommodated.
- **Study Issue - Ramp Metering**. Description of ramp metering "yellow lights" may evidence a lack of understanding of how ramp metering can be used or works. Ramp metering can be used to create gaps in traffic streams at on-ramps. With a comprehensive ITS monitoring and feedback system, ramp metering can be used to limit the number of vehicles allowed to enter a congested corridor. Lengthened cycle lengths for ramp meters are used as a way to balance the needs of those on a corridor with those wanting to access a congested freeway.
- **Study Issue – Travel Time Savings Statement.** The report shows a modest travel time savings, approximately one minute per vehicle, resulting from the ATM project. Is the impact of reducing the Level of Service, increasing delay at the south end, accurately reflected? What about the areas not shown in the analysis? How accurate is the regional model or VISSIM in evaluating LOS "F" on travel time analysis? What is the impact to the overall travel time of the motorists on regional roadways?
- **Study Issue – Other Environmental Areas.** Many other environmental features need to be evaluated by resource specialists. There are numerous environmental impacts - air quality, noise, storm water runoff, wetlands, which require additional time and analysis.
- **Economic Impact analysis.** Recognizing the construction costs of the project are known, approximately $80M, the resultant benefits and costs to motorists and the community should be addressed in comparing the various alternatives. It may be possible the there are equal safety benefits for several of the alternatives, but the overall user cost of additional delay at downstream junctions and interchanges, resulting from increased throughput created by this project, may offset the reported travel time benefit.

Once again, thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the reports related to this project. We continue to applaud MDOT for its creativity and innovation in looking at an Active Traffic Management system combined with limited construction to enhance safety and capacity along this corridor. As stated above, we continue to want to fully understand the impacts of this investment. Hopefully, our comments are received as they are intended, constructive comments intending to create data to describe a project we can all support. We look forward to MDOT and FHWA's considerations and the next steps towards documenting the full impacts of the project as NEPA intends, resulting in a finding that allows the appropriate alternative to move forward to implementation.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Powers
City Administrator
City of Ann Arbor

TheRide

2700 S. Industrial Highway
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734.973.6500 Phone
734.973.6338 Fax
TheRide.org Online

March 16, 2015

Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Email: parsonsb@michigan.gov.

RE: US-23 Environmental Assessment, dated January 2015

Dear Mr. Parsons:

I am writing to provide AAATA comments on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) dated January 2015. AAATA appreciates the innovative approach to the well-known issues on that roadway, and we applaud you for pursuing a cost-effective use of scarce resources. However, we do have some concerns about the EA, and believe that further innovation is needed to ensure the project minimizes potential adverse impacts and advances the state-of-the-art in corridor mobility planning.

The attached analysis prepared by AAATA staff provides the details of our comments. These fall into several categories:

1) We don't think the impact area for the EA is defined broadly enough. While the project may generate benefits throughout the defined project area, we are concerned that it may actually increase traffic problems in and near Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. By expanding the area of the analysis, I think the EA can better investigate these potential issues.

2) We believe that the issue of High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes has not been given sufficient attention. AAATA's long-range plans call for express bus service in the US-23 corridor, and we believe that HOV lanes are very important to the success of such service, not to mention mobility in general. The EA asserts that HOV lanes are not enforceable, yet there must be some enforcement of the shoulder-use periods. We suggest that whatever mechanism is intended for monitoring and enforcing the use of the shoulders could also be used for HOV lanes. And of course, without enforcement, the use of the shoulder becomes, de facto, provision of a third lane.

We very much appreciate MDOT's recent efforts to explore with AAATA the concept of including express bus service as an option in the corridor. We have no budget for such service in our current five-year plan, but we could consider such service in a longer time frame that coincides with completion of your project. It is unlikely that express bus service would be very successful without HOV lanes in place.

TheRide

These would not only benefit our express bus services, but the users of our van pool programs as well. Adding such lanes later would be an expensive and unpopular retrofit to the project.

3) We would like to see more attention given to the use of transit as a way to mitigate construction and longer-term congestion impacts. In addition to the potential for Express Service, there is also the potential for a scaled-down N-S Rail service that could be implemented within the timeframe prior to ATM construction, again assuming that funding could be found for such service. We have furnished concepts and preliminary cost estimates to MDOT for the transit services that could be considered, and are happy to continue cooperation in the exploration of these ideas. However, we think it is important to explore these issues within the context of the Environmental Assessment, which has not yet been done.

The AAATA Board is also expected to take a formal position on this issue, related primarily to express bus and HOV lanes. The attached draft resolution was passed on 3/10/15 by the Board Planning and Development Committee and will be forwarded to the full Board at their regular March 19 meeting for action.

Thanks for the opportunity to review this document and to help improve a very important transportation project for the region.

Very Truly Yours,

Robert Guenzel
Interim Chief Executive Officer

AAATA Staff Analysis – DRAFT 3/6/15

US-23 ATM Project Environmental Assessment (EA)

(M-14/US-23 West Interchange to Silver Lake Road; Washtenaw and Livingston Counties JN 123214 CS 81075, 47013; January 2015)

Extracts from, and summaries of, the Environmental Assessment report are provided below, with AAATA staff commentary shown in italics.

EA text, verbatim, from "Preface", page i:

"The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires that social, economic, and natural environmental impacts of any proposed action of the federal government be analyzed for decision-making and public information purposes. There are three classes of action. Class I Actions are those that may significantly affect the environment and require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Class II Actions (or "categorical exclusions") are those that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment, and do not require the preparation of an EIS or an Environmental Assessment (EA). Class III Actions are those in which the significance of impacts is not clearly established. Class III Actions require the preparation of an EA to determine the significance of impacts and the appropriate environmental document to be prepared -- either an EIS or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

This document is an Environmental Assessment for the proposed US-23 Improvements from the west US-23/M-14 Interchange north to the Silver Lake Road Interchange in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties. It describes and analyzes alternatives, potential impacts, and the measures proposed to minimize harm to the project area. It will be distributed to the public and to various federal, state, and local agencies for review and comment. A formal public hearing on this project will be held. If review and comment by the public and interested agencies support the determination of "no significant impact", this EA will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with a recommendation that a FONSI be issued. If it is determined that the preferred alternative will have significant impacts that cannot be mitigated, the preparation of an EIS will be required.

This document was prepared by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), in cooperation with FHWA. The study team includes representatives from the following areas within MDOT: Design, Project Planning, Real Estate, Construction and Technology, Traffic and Safety, Transportation Service Centers, and Region offices. Information contained in this EA was also furnished by other federal and state agencies, local units of government, public interest groups, and individual citizens."

EA text, verbatim, from: "1.1 PROJECT LOCATION", page 1

"US-23 freeway is a major north-south arterial that begins in Michigan at the Ohio State Line near Toledo, traverses through the cities of Ann Arbor and Flint, runs adjacent to the Lake Huron shoreline and terminates at Mackinaw City. The project corridor is a 10 mile four-lane section of US-23 within

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties (Figure 1.0) from the west US- 23/M-14 (tri-level) interchange (Exit 45) north to the Silver Lake Road interchange (Exit 55)."

AAATA Staff Commentary

Throughout the rest of the report, the area described as the "project location" is, for traffic analysis purposes, treated as though it is also the only area which is impacted by the project. Section 6.0, "Affected Environment and Potential Impacts"(beginning on page 33) also defines the impact area as stopping short of Ann Arbor. There is no recognition of effects of the project on points further downstream (south) from the west US-23/M-14 tri-level interchange. Yet it is these very impacts that are most significant to the city of Ann Arbor and the AAATA service area. Significant volumes of traffic continue south of the tri-level and exit onto North Main Street, which acts as a funnel as it enters the heart of downtown Ann Arbor. Although the very point of the project is to increase upstream capacity, and therefore traffic flow to that stretch of roadway, the EA analysis makes no mention of any increased volumes on that roadway, nor does it attempt to characterize any changes in levels-of-service that would result. Presumably, these increased traffic volumes will also make use of local Ann Arbor street capacity, a prime example being Depot Street heading east to the UM Medical Center. Other local streets will be affected as well. However, the EA is silent with respect to impacts on these streets.

Impacts as described above may also be of some concern at points east of the west tri-level bridge, on US-23 as it continues south past the east tri-level bridge, potentially affecting Plymouth, Geddes and Washtenaw.

Given the City of Ann Arbor's general policy to avoid street widening, not to mention the physical impossibility of widening many local streets, traffic flow increases that are enabled by the proposed improvements to US-23 can only create further congestion within the City itself. With respect to AAATA operations, already challenging conditions will be made worse, impacting on-time performance and reliability, which in turn will affect ridership.

EA text, verbatim, from "2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED", page 3:

"The purpose is to address the immediate insufficiencies of the corridor as described in the previous section by focusing on traffic safety, operational and infrastructure concerns, and the directional peak hour congestion in the US-23 corridor. The goal is to develop safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation improvements to assure that the corridor will meet the current and future highway operations with the use of state of the art traffic control measures along with improved infrastructure."

AAATA Staff Commentary

The purpose and need statement describes the project as addressing "immediate insufficiencies" with a focus on "traffic safety, operational and infrastructure concerns". This disregards modern transportation planning goals and principles such as the need to encourage compact and efficient land use patterns, achieve air quality objectives, and reduce urban sprawl. The sole purpose and need of the project, as described, is to accommodate and encourage growth in automobile traffic. As observed above, this growth in vehicular traffic will be highly focused on the City of Ann Arbor, impacting the quality of life for City residents. As reflected in City and AAATA planning documents, there is a general goal of improving

access to, and mobility within, the City for people, while attracting greater numbers of single-occupancy vehicles is discouraged.

EA text, summarized and excerpted from "3.0 ALTERNATIVES", pages 5-12

The EA begins by citing the MDOT 2009 US-23 Feasibility Study as a source of the alternatives to be studied, and then goes on to list the options treated specifically by the environmental assessment. The alternatives analyzed for the EA are the following:

- No Build: This alternative is established as the comparison (or base) alternative for the analysis. It includes minor bridgework, ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems, i.e. traffic monitoring and information systems), and capital preventive maintenance.

- Transportation Systems Management: This includes bridge replacements at N. Territorial, 8 Mile, 6 Mile Roads and the US-23 bridges over the Great Lakes Central Railroad. The road bridges will accommodate pedestrian and non-motorized travel. Also include ramp extensions, signal timing changes, and alterations to storage lanes.

- Ramp Metering: Use of traffic signals to control the flow of vehicles entering the roadway

- Active Traffic Management (ATM), Preferred Alternative: "includes all the elements listed in the TSM Alternative, six crash investigation sites (CIS) and an active traffic management (ATM) system. The ATM includes dynamics shoulder use from the west US-23/M-14 interchange to south of the M-36 interchange, to relieve the directional peak period traffic congestion. The southbound (SB) shoulders will only be open to traffic during the typical AM peak period of 6:30 – 9AM. The northbound (NB) shoulders will only be open to traffic during the typical PM peak period of 3:30 – 7PM. The shoulders will be restricted to passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks. The shoulders will also be available for traffic diversion in the event of mainline incidents; such as, collisions, mechanical breakdowns, or when traffic meets congestion thresholds during off-peak hours due to special event traffic or seasonal fluctuations."

- ATM with High Occupancy Vehicles (ATM-HOV): "The HOV dynamic shoulder use has many issues with regard to enforcement and safety. The State of Michigan does not have a specific law to enforce HOV only lanes. Such lanes can be enforced under the Michigan Vehicle Code 257.642 mandating adherence to traffic control devices, such as, signage or electronic message boards restricting lane usage."

  "HOV Lane Enforcement Handbook (2006),6 reported difficulty in recognizing a violating vehicle (detecting that there are 2 or more people in the vehicle) during periods of heavy traffic."

  "There is no inside shoulder with this alternative where police officers can safely pull over a vehicle for an HOV violation. Either the police officers would need to block the median shoulder lane to pull over a vehicle, which would block the flow of traffic in that lane, or they would need

to signal for the violating vehicle to pull the vehicle over in the right shoulder, which would be very difficult and dangerous."

"Camera enforcement could improve the enforcement of HOV. However, Michigan does not have the legislation or the infrastructure and resources to support camera enforcement at this time."

"The ATM-HOV Alternative does fulfill most of the elements of the purpose and need, but due to the enforcement and safety issues it is not a preferred alternative."

- North-South Commuter Rail (WALLY): "The North-South Commuter Rail from Howell to Ann Arbor, popularly known as the WALLY (Washtenaw – Livingston Rail Line), is not an alternative in this study. However, public comments from the December 2013 and August 2014 public meetings included requests to add the WALLY as a "build alternative". This section is in response to the public comments by explaining the WALLY's relationship to this Environmental Assessment."

  "The US-23 Modernization EA and the WALLY are concurrent studies and are separate but complementary projects, in that, neither project alone is likely to alleviate congestion in the US-23 corridor entirely, but each concept would be part of the solution."

  "WALLY development will continue with or without US-23 development and will be required to follow the environmental clearance process as defined in the National Environmental policy Act (NEPA) after the feasibility study is complete. The separation of the US-23 Improvement EA and the WALLY Phase II study ensure both projects proceed without delay."

AAATA Staff Commentary

The discussion of interest in this section is the difference between the EA's view of ATM vs. ATM with HOV. ATM/HOV is dismissed based on the simple argument that it cannot be enforced. The analysis cites "difficulty in recognizing a violating vehicle" but does not point out that, nevertheless, states throughout the US have successfully implemented HOV.

The analysis cites safety concerns with pulling over a violating vehicle, but the project includes six new accident investigation sites which, properly designed, might be used for enforcement purposes.

The report also does not address the fact that, with the shoulders signalized as to whether drivers are allowed to use them or not, there will either 1)need to be enforcement against un-permitted use of the shoulders, or 2)the shoulders de facto become third lanes.

The analysis makes no mention of future provision of HOV, although this has been cited frequently by MDOT, in their public remarks, as a desirable and even likely future possibility.

The analysis dismisses North-South Commuter Rail (WALLY) as an alternative, while acknowledging that MDOT received multiple comments requesting that this project be included in the EA.

As a result, the traffic impacts of N-S Rail have not been calculated as part of the EA and are not available for comparison to the Preferred Alternative. This makes it impossible to calculate, for example, how the two projects compare in alleviating traffic congestion (LOS, or Level of Service) or reducing highway travel times, although both of these measures are repeatedly referred to as important criteria for selecting among the alternative actions.

Because N-S Rail is not included as an alternative, there is also no discussion of how it compares with respect to the many other impact categories that the EA must address, such as water quality, air quality, land use and safety. These are all areas in which rail service frequently excels compared to highway projects.

Bus Bypass Shoulders (BBS) was not included as an alternative despite the fact that these are used successfully in Minneapolis / St Paul, Chicago and many other regions throughout the United States. This alternative is dismissed by the EA with a single statement: "The Feasibility Study did not recommend the BBS so it was not moved forward as an alternative for this EA."

EA text, summarized from "4.0 TRAFFIC ANALYSIS", pages 13-22

The comparative analysis of ATM vs. ATM/HOV is primarily based on estimates of travel time and level-of-service (LOS) impacts. The estimated travel time savings of ATM over ATM/HOV is 1 minute per vehicle for the trip between I-96 and the tri-level bridge.

LOS (Level-Of-Service)is a measure of traffic density and can range from A (free-flow) to F (bump-to-bumper, stop-and-go). ATM was compared to ATM/HOV by estimating the LOS at the entrance and exit ramps to US-23. For the southbound morning peak period, the analysis estimated that 3 of 11 ramps would perform more poorly under the ATM alternative than under the ATM/HOV alternative. For the northbound evening peak period, 1 out of 12 ramps was estimated to perform more poorly in the ATM/HOV alternative than in the ATM alternative.

AAATA Staff Commentary

ATM is not compared to ATM/HOV in any of the other EA impact categories, such as air quality, water quality impacts, noise and land use.

Since the N-S rail project is not included in the alternatives, there is also no comparison to that proposed project, in spite of evidence (and a stated belief on MDOT's part) that the N-S Rail project could contribute to some level of congestion reduction.

As mentioned previously, traffic impacts outside of the narrowly-defined project area have not been estimated, but are likely to occur.

EA text, summarized and excerpted from "5.0 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FEATURES", pages 21-32

ATM consists of a range of improvements including traffic cameras, message boards, and "dynamic shoulder use. The extract below provides key information about the dynamic shoulder use feature. "The ATM will only use the inside median shoulders for the dynamic shoulder use during the directional peak hour congestion (SB from 6:30 – 9AM and NB from 3:30 – 7PM) with lane availability indicated by electronic signage on gantries over the roadway. The gantries will be spaced ½ to 1 mile apart. In addition, US-23 will be monitored for congestion outside those periods in the event of mainline incidents; such as, collisions, mechanical breakdowns, or when traffic meets congestion thresholds during off-peak hours due to special event traffic or seasonal fluctuations. The shoulders at those times will be available for traffic diversion."

Staff Commentary

It appears from the description above that the shoulders can potentially be used at any time, so that there is a fine line between "dynamic shoulder use" and what could be considered a permanent third lane on US-23.

As pointed out previously, there is no discussion of any enforcement mechanism for preventing use of the shoulders even when the gantry signage is showing a closed indicator.

Summary of "6.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS", pages 33-82

This section is largely an analysis of the potential impacts of the preferred alternative, and makes no mention of the other alternatives. In general, the EA concludes that there are no, or negligible, adverse impacts in the categories listed, or that the impacts can be mitigated. The report does note that there will be "a slight increase in impervious surface which will increase the volume and flow rates of run-off from the roadway and sediment loads to surface waters"

AAATA Staff Commentary

Although this chapter contains a section on "Maintaining Traffic During Construction", there is no mention of any transit alternatives such as express bus service, or N-S Rail service. In fact the park and ride at North Territorial will be removed, and the EA commits only to studying its replacement.

Resolution

Express Bus Service on U.S. 23

WHEREAS, traffic congestion due to incidents and obsolete design on U.S. 23 between Brighton and Ann Arbor has reached unacceptable levels during morning and evening peak periods; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) proposes to address design deficiency and add capacity during peak periods; and

WHEREAS, MDOT also proposes to monitor and control traffic by means of electronic systems; and

WHEREAS, MDOT has further proposed that the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (TheRide) provide express bus service between a park-and-ride lot on land to be provided by MDOT and destinations in the Ann Arbor area; and

WHEREAS, financial support will be necessary to provide the aforesaid express bus service; and

WHEREAS, attracting significant numbers of riders to an express service requires service characteristics, including trip reliability, travel speed competitive with or faster than a single-occupancy vehicle along the same route:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority Board of Directors shall agree to provide express bus service along U.S. 23 only if and when the following conditions are met:

1. Adequate funding is available above and beyond current income sources to build and properly maintain a suitable park-and-ride facility;
2. Adequate funding is available to operate express bus service at a market based fare that will foster ridership;
3. Provision is made for express buses to bypass traffic congestion so that service will be reliable and competitive with travel in single-occupancy vehicles.

_____ _____

Charles Griffith, Chair Date

_____ _____

Susan Baskett, Secretary Date

Endorsed by the AAATA Planning and Development Committee March 10, 2015

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

I am writing to express my concerns about the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) proposed Hard Shoulder Running (HSR) US-23 project. This project would widen the north-bound and south-bound shoulders of US-23 between Whitmore Lake and north Ann Arbor for 7.3 miles. It would create an additional, but intermittent, travel lane on those shoulders. It is exciting to see that MDOT is working to ease congestion on US 23 between Whitmore Lake and north Ann Arbor. However, we also support a fiscally responsible and balanced approach to this issue of US 23.

As supporters of the North-South Commuter Rail from Howell to Ann Arbor, popularly known as the WALLY (Washtenaw – Livingston Rail Line), we believe investments in this transportation mode would augment your current efforts to reduce US 23 congestion at less cost to tax payers. We have opened dialogue with and received support from communities and private sector entities that would benefit from WALLY. The commuter line would offer that balanced approach to US 23 issues and would provide a positive economic impact to the area.

We are still very interested in making sure that the federally-required analysis of this project fully takes into account the costs and benefits of rail service as a supplement, or alternative, to increasing highway capacity in the corridor. Environmental Assessment states that “The North-South Commuter Rail from Howell to Ann Arbor, popularly known as the WALLY (Washtenaw – Livingston Rail Line), is not an alternative in this study.”

We believe the Environmental Assessment should have examined the evidence that a rail option would improve the cost-effectiveness of travel in the corridor, utilize state assets like the leased rail car, and reduce adverse environmental impacts.

We continue to welcome an opportunity to have a representative sit with both your strategic and tactical planners in discussing commuter rail options that would augment your existing plans. Your reply to this inquiry will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Michael Lamb

Friends of Wally

503 Madison

Howell, MI 48843

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Palmer, Stephanie (MDOT)
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 11:05 AM
To: Martin, Kari (MDOT); Hanf, Thomas (MDOT); Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Cc: Sweeney, Mark (MDOT); Ajegba, Paul (MDOT)
Subject: FW: US 23 Public Hearing

From: Foley, Jennifer (MDOT)
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 10:43 AM
To: Palmer, Stephanie (MDOT)
Subject: FW: US 23 Public Hearing

FYI

From: Terry Meeks [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 10:28 AM
To: Foley, Jennifer (MDOT)
Subject: US 23 Public Hearing

MS Foley,
It was a pleasure meeting you yesterday at the public hearing for the US 23 improvement project. Thank you for giving me so much of your time to explain the plans to me. I think you and your team are on the right track to address the challenges presented by the congestion/infrastructure for that area. The presentation was very informative and illustrated the hard work that MDOT has already done to prepare for this massive project.
Best of luck going forward and I am eager to observe the ATM in action.

Respectfully,

Terry E Meeks
Retired Crash Researcher
National Automotive Sampling System (NASS)

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Phillip Farber [redacted]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2015 2:42 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: Widening US-23 at M-14 to Silver Lake

Mr. Parsons,

I am opposed to the proposed widening of US-23 along the US-23 / M-14 to Silver Lake route. While I do not oppose the other proposed safety improvements, widening is not a solution to congestion.

It has been shown repeatedly that increased capacity leads to induced demand, encouraging commuters to choose to live farther from their destinations thereby restoring congestion and burning even more fuel. This phenomenon in a primary driver of urban sprawl.

Research has shown that there are actually fewer cars on the road than five years ago. We should not create conditions that favor a relatively small number of drivers for a relatively short time at the expense of the public at large.

A better use of public road funds would be to establish a light rail system in the US-23 corridor north of Ann Arbor to mitigate congestion in the daily commute.

Thank you and Best Regards,

Phillip Farber
Ann Arbor, MI

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Kari Mastro [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 11:18 AM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: US23

Hi Bob,
I got your email regarding the studies you have made with regards to US23. I have only a few questions and was hoping that you could answer them.

1. You are widening Barker Road entrance ramp which is right behind my house. This will have not only more noise impact but also faster traffic, bringing the traffic closer to my home. With the nails popping out of our walls already, and cracking from vibration along with not being able to open our windows, are you doing anything to protect our property? Will there be a wall built to help with at least the noise? Could you possibly buy out the row of homes that is so close to freeway? What about the emission from the cars? Has there been a study on that? How close is to close for a house to be near a freeway?

I do invite you to come to my home and I can give you a tour of our annual nail pops and cracks that we have to continueously repair. On average, we have at least 30 at all times.

I will be attending one of the meetings but having the answers to my questions will put my mind at ease.

Thank you for your time!

Kari Mastro
nkmastro@sbcglobal.net

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Jacqueline Burkowski [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 3:28 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: Re: MDOT Seeking Comments on Proposed US-23 Improvements, Public Hearing Feb. 26

Our main concern with the proposed US 23 project is the noise factor with the increased traffic flow, because I live within 300 ft. and the noise from the exsisting traffic is horrendous now! Are there going to be any measures taken to abate this noise increase? There really needs to be noise studies done and proper steps (like noise barrier walls) to manage them with regards to the residents living in this area. And if there were noise studies done I would like to see the results especially of the north bound traffic lanes just before the bridge over M36 along the west side of Whitmore Lake by the public boat launch. It's horrible, and has been since they turned that stretch into an interstate. Which was not engineered or designed to handle the ridiculous amount of traffic that it does everyday. The residents along this project need not be forgotten as well as the people that need to use this stretch to get to work everyday. Living on Whitmore Lake should be a wonderful experience but living next to US23 is terrrible and it should not be. Please, consider the noise issue and prevent what you can (with noise barrier walls), please. James and Jacqueline Burkowski 11339 N. Shore Dr. Whitmore Lake 48189

On Wednesday, February 18, 2015 10:15 AM, "Parsons, Bob (MDOT)" <ParsonsB@michigan.gov> wrote:

Dear Friend of Transportation:

The Michigan Department of Transportation has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on proposed improvements to ten miles of US-23 in Washtenaw and Livingston counties. You are encouraged to review and comment on the EA on-line at www.michigan.gov/mdotstudies or at one of several area locations listed below. Additionally, MDOT will record public comment at a hearing scheduled for Feb. 26, 2015, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Suite A, Whitmore Lake.

The EA describes and analyzes the proposed work and the measures taken to minimize harm to the project area. The proposed project, between the US-23/M-14 west interchange and Silver Lake Road, involves replacing and upgrading pavement, median shoulders, bridges, and entrance and exit ramps. The EA also analyzes the effects of using upgraded shoulders, permanent message boards, cameras and other active traffic management system technology to reduce congestion, improve safety, manage incidents and better accommodate through traffic during peak hours. Download the EA summary here.

A court reporter will record the hearing's formal presentation and comment sessions, and will be available to take comments in private for inclusion in the public hearing transcript. Persons also may complete a written comment form at the hearing or mail, fax or e-mail their comments to: Robert H. Parsons, Public Involvement and Hearings Officer, Bureau of Development, Michigan Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909; Fax: 517-335-5696; or e-mail: parsonsb@michigan.gov. Comments must be e-mailed, faxed or postmarked on or before Mar. 17, 2015.

The EA is available for review and comment at the following locations:

- Northfield Township Hall, 8350 Main St., Ste. A, Whitmore Lake;
- Northfield Township Library,125 Barker Rd., Whitmore Lake;
- Green Oaks Township Hall, 10001 Silver Lake Rd., Brighton;
- Ann Arbor Township Hall, 3792 Pontiac Tr., Ann Arbor;
- Livingston County Clerk Office, 200 E. Grand River Ave., Howell;
- Washtenaw County Clerk Office, 200 N. Main, Ann Arbor
- Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave.
- Brighton Public Library, 100 Library Dr.
- MDOT Brighton Transportation Service Center, 10321 E. Grand River, Ste. 500, Brighton
- MDOT University Region Office, 4701 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson; and
- MDOT Bureau of Development, 425 W. Ottawa St., Lansing

A copy of the complete transcript, including all of the written and spoken comments received, will be available for public review in March 2015 at the above locations.

With seven days advance notice, the document may be available in alternate formats, including large print, audio file and other languages. For more information on this public hearing, or to request accommodations, please write to the above address or call
(517) 373-9534.

Sincerely,

Bob Parsons
Public Involvement and Hearings Officer
Bureau of Development
Michigan Department of Transportation
517-373-9534

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Leo Hanifin [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 3:S6 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: RE: US23 improvements

Bob,

Here are my comments on the US-23 improvements project:

As a resident of Livingston County and a past director of the Michigan Ohio (MIOH) University Transportation Center, I am pleased that MDOT is planning improvements to the US-23 corridor. However, while these promise to reduce congestion on US-23, they are not the ultimate, long term solution to the North-South commuter challenge here. I am an avid advocate of the use of transit to solve this issue, and to contribute to the vitality and environmental health of our county and our entire region.

If MDOT only employs expansion of road capacity to reduce future congestion, it will be extremely expensive and will not afford our region the benefits of expanded regional transit service. Those benefits include economic development, retention of younger citizens, improved quality of life (especially seniors and people with disabilities) and improve environmental quality.

As you know, one solution that MDOT and others are considering, the North South Commuter Rail (aka "WALLY"), would provide considerable impact on congestion and be far more affordable than alternative road expansion projects, such as adding a third lane to US-23 (estimated to cost approximately $.5 billion). I urge MDOT to "stay the course" on the development and implementation of WALLY.

In fact, one way that this upcoming US-23 improvement project could provide more public understanding and ridership experiences would be to implement the "WALLY Shuttle" concept during your upcoming construction project. Even if this only ran from Eight Mile Road to Ann Arbor, with buses from AAATA to distribute riders at the terminus, it would provide an experience that many riders would value, leading to greater public support for a longer and more permanent WALLY system. Why not contribute simultaneously to better roads and better transit?

Leo

Dr. Leo E. Hanifin

Special Consultant to the College of Engineering and Science University of Detroit Mercy

cell: 313-402-4295

From: Parsons, Bob (MDOT) [ParsonsB@michigan.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 10:18 AM
To: Leo Hanifin
Subject: RE: US23 improvements

Feel free to submit it electronically up to midnight tonight. Use this E-mail address. Will that work? Bob Parsons

-----Original Message-----
From: Leo Hanifin [mailto:leo.hanifin@udmercy.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 10:11 AM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: US23 improvements

Bob,

I just realized that I was asked to submit a letter on the US23 improvements project by today. However, I have a very full day today. Can I submit this tomorrow, or is today a "hard deadline"?

Leo

Dr. Leo E. Hanifin

Special Consultant to the College of Engineering and Science University of Detroit Mercy

cell: 313-402-4295

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: A.P. Gariepy [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 1:10 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: US-23 Improvements: Public Comment

Hello Bob,
I am an automotive engineer who commutes along this stretch daily. I agree that the ATM proposal is the best bang for the buck. I can't wait to see it! My only concern is the timing. The condition of the road surface is deteriorating quickly, and this project will take a while to get started. As a former vehicle durability engineer, I cringe as my car takes its twice-daily beating to and from work. I often take alternative routes just to avoid it. I noticed that the main cause of traffic incidents is "mechanical failure" and wonder if some of those could be related to the condition of the road surface...

I am a big fan of the grinders that take down the bumps, but it seems that we then get potholes in their place several months later.

Is there any plan to do resurfacing before the main improvement project?

Thanks for your consideration,

Arthur P. Gariepy
5758 Trail Side Ln
Hamburg Twp

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Arend, Kari (MDOT)
Sent: Friday, February 27, 201S 12:46 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: Fw: Contact MDOT (ContentID - 329218)

Hi Bob

Comments I received on the US-23 ATM EA study. Thought you might want this one for the official record. (though there's a lot more in it than just a comment on US-23 - but I will respond)

Thanks. - kari

From: BadAddress
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2015 6:05 PM
To: MDOTWebInfo
Subject: Contact MDOT (ContentID - 329218)

UserName: Michael Perry
org:
Address: 3783 Honors Way
City: Howell
Phone: 2488900835
State: Michigan
Zip: 48843
Email: mp_[redacted]
Comment: I understand your team is looking for input on a dynamic lane plan on 23 south of Brighton..
US 23 needs a third lane in both directions , as it has become a major north south route to some of the most growth potential in the state.
In vest in the area properly. We waited years for the Latson 96 interchange , and now the area in beginning to grow.
We have dealt with the dangerous 23 / 96 interchange , with traffic crossing at a frightening rate.. 5o now that is near to being improved , we will be subjected to changeable lanes traveling to and from Ann Arbor.. Not even close to a good idea.. Almost as bad as the Lee Road " Circles of Death " as they are referred to by my neighbors.
I know bridges and freeways out east and 94 in Chicago have this type of situation .. but only because they ran out of bridge span or dense urban land issues..
We live in fear traveling across 23 at Lee road , and moving through the 23 96 intersection , I think we endure enough . We pay our taxes and voted for road funding , please fix US 23 properly and add the third lane in both direction from I 94 through M 59.. As it should be.

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: John T. Levinson [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 9:57 AM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Cc: Howard Fink (finkh@twp.northfield.mi.us)
Subject: MDOT US23 Proposed Improvement Public Hearing
Attachments: img-224094535-0001.pdf

Dear Mr. Parsons,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed US 23 improvements at the Public Hearing at the Northfield Township Hall on February 26, 2015. My personal schedule does not allow for me to attend the hearing in person but I consider this a very critical issue for the health, welfare and sanity of our Rhetech employees and suppliers. In a survey of some of our employees and contractors concerning your information and alternatives, there was unanimous agreement the Active Traffic Management (ATM) alternative is by far the best solution offered by MDOT.

Please consider Rhetech and its 100+ employees at the Whitmore Lake plant and many suppliers supporting this facility to be fully supportive of this proposal - please make it happen and the sooner the better!

Regards,

John T. Levinson
President
Rhetech a HEXPOL Company
1500 North Territorial Road
Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Rainbowgrin [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 6:14 AM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: on ramp to us 23 from I 94 westbound

I just read the article in our local newspaper about all the improvements coming to us 23. Thank you for finally taking the time and taking care of those issues! One of congestion spots I was disappointed to see was not on this list. As you are driving westbound on 94 to exit at 180 to get on US 23 north, that is always a congested hot mess. Have any surveys or studies been done to improve this area.? You can easily sit on the exit ramp for less than a half mile from the Onramp for up to 30 minutes. Then, spend another 15 to 20 minutes merging onto 23 itself. Once you get is actually on 23, there is no traffic flow problem at all.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Janine Rogers [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 6:01 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: US-23 Improvements

Hello Mr. Parsons,

A big "YES" to move forward with the proposed improvements for US-23 between Brighton and Ann Arbor! These enhancements are a good 20 years overdue! I have made the trip through that frustrating bottleneck during the AM and PM rush hours for too many years!! What a welcomed and much appreciated change!

Kind Regards,
Janine Rogers
810-923-9092

Sent from my iPhone

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
COMMENT FORM

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* * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * *

Name RHETECH INC. (JOHN LEWNSON) E-mail [redacted]

Address 1500 NORTH TERRITORIAL ROAD

City WHITMORE LAKE State MICHIGAN Zip Code 48189

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

RHETECH WAS done some sampling for our Employees and suppliers (Trucking companies) AND we would recommend the ACTIVE TRAFFIC Management (ATM) Preferred ALTERNATIVE for many reasons cited in the Project Information MATERIALS. OUR Employees and suppliers are major USERS of THIS HIGHWAY. JOHN LEWNSON President 2/23/15

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowners Association
Ann Arbor Township (Marblewood Way -Old Earhart & Plymouth Rd.)

P.O. Box #130623

Ann Arbor, MI 48113

To: MDOT

From: Ritchie Coleman, President, Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowner's Association

Subject: US 23 "Dynamic Shoulders' " work on Northbound US 23:

Request for a sound wall and traffic noise level reduction plan

Date: February 26, 2015

Greetings, I am the president of the Ann Arbor Parkview Homeowner's Association located on Marblewood Way off of Old Earhart and Plymouth Rd. Our subdivision is located in Ann Arbor Township and west of our property line is US 23 North /South bound.

When our subdivision was built in the early 2000's a resident contacted MDOT about the traffic noise level and he received a letter stated that if there were any changes made or improvements to US 23 that the noise level and the request for relief may be considered.

My home is located at the back of the subdivision and I can see the traffic from our master bedrooms as well hear the traffic around the clock as well as my neighbors. **All of the residents have noticed the increase in traffic and volume on US 23 N/S bound over the past several years.**

The new project "Dynamic Shoulders' " that is north of our area on US 23 doesn't mention relief for homeowners for the noise level that boarder US 23 north / south bound traffic. I would like to know if there can be consideration for our subdivision which is just south of US 23 before the Plymouth Rd. exit and after the Geddes Rd. entrance / exit.

The increase in traffic volume and noise level is a "quality-of-life" issue and we are hoping for some relief with a sound wall or device that is appropriate to shield our homes from the increased traffic noise levels.

I've spoken with Mr. Adam Zemke, MI House of Representatives 55th District and our Ann Arbor Township officials that advised the project is under MDOT's jurisdiction.

Please contact me at 734 649 9386 or by email at richcoleman@comcast.net. I can also be reached at my office, Pittsfield Twp. D.P.S., 734 822-4959 during the day.

Thanks

Cc: Ann Arbor Parkview HOA members, State Rep. Adam Zemke, 55th District, Mike Moran, Ann Arbor Twp.

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES
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* * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * *

Name CARL BOBOIGE E-mail

Address 9418 SANDLEWOOD DR

City WHITMORE LAKE State MI Zip Code 48189

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

WE NEED NOISE ABATEMENT CONTROL AT BARKE & SIX. Where you have planned, the population is very sparse.!

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
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*** * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * ***

Name Margaret L. Egan E-mail [redacted].com

Address 9950 Dort Dr.

City Whitmore Lake State MI Zip Code 48189

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

I am very disappointed that the proposed noise abatement wall will not extend all the way from exit 53 to exit 54 on the east side of US 23. We can not have a normal conversation on our deck due to the noise.

Also, There will be a northbound bottleneck when the ATM stops south of M36, Severe!

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
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*** * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * ***

Name GARY PERCHA E-mail [redacted]

Address 400 BEACHWAY

City WHITMORE LAKE State MI Zip Code 48189

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

I HAVE A MAJOR CONCERN ABOUT THE "TYPE" OF OVERPASS THAT WILL BE REPLACING THE EXISTING ONE OVER 6 MI RD., IN PARTICULAR, BECAUSE IT IMPACTS MY FAMILY REGARDING PEDESTRIAN ACCESS. MY SON ATTENDS WL HIGH, ON THE WEST SIDE OF US23, WITH ABSOLUTELY NO SAFE THOROUGHFARE TO WALK OR RIDE HIS BICYCLE TO SCHOOL, FROM THE HORSESHOE LAKE SUB ON THE EAST SIDE OF US23. PLEASE CLARIFY.

G. Percha

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

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*** * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * ***

Name HUGH D. GURNEY E-mail [redacted]

Address 2270 HICKORY CIRCLE DRIVE

City HOWELL State MI Zip Code 48855

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

I support the Preferred Alternative, particularly the improvements to entrances at eight mile and Barker Roads. Any improvements to this wretched highway would be helpful.

I also urge implementation of the North-South Rail proposal to further alleviate rush hour congestion on U.S. 23

Please return this form to:

Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
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*** * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * ***

Name Jack Brugger E-mail

Address 5995 Leland DR

City Ann Arbor State MI Zip Code 48105

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

1. The SIB EXIT INTO Ann Arbor at BARTON Rd. needs TO be EXPANded. If you do NOT correct the ENTRY/EXIT problem AT BARTON you will STILL have TRAFFIC back up EVEN with three Lanes.

2. provide Bus shuttles AT peak Times 6-9A AND 3-6 pm AT EVERY ENTRANCE/EXIT from Ann Arbor TO M-59. The Buses need to drop off and pick up AT U of M Campus, Hospital, AND AATA Bus depot. AND other MAJOR Employers.

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov

Parsons, Bob (MDOT)

From: Meyers, Sarah [redacted]
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2015 3:29 PM
To: Parsons, Bob (MDOT)
Subject: US-23 Improvements

Dear Mr. Parsons,
I am writing to provide comments regarding the proposed improvements to US-23. I have been commuting on 23 daily for over 10 years now (from Howell to Ann Arbor) and am pleased to hear improvements are finally being considered! As many know, 23 can be a chaotic and dangerous road, with too many cars crammed into 2 lanes which leads to accidents and of course a lot of frustrated drivers. I support expanding 23-as allowed-to improve flow and congestion. I am wondering, though, what alternatives might be in place to mitigate the increased congestion that construction will cause? I am also a supporter of the North-South commuter rail (WALLY) and believe giving drivers different transportation options is a good thing. Maybe there can be a "mini" WALLY set up during construction on 23?

Thank you,
Sarah Meyers

****

To the Michigan Department of Transportation,

You are each wonderful and well qualified professional public servants who have devoted your careers to bettering the lives of everyday Michiganders. Your drive to make Michigan a better place is an enduring testament to your commitment to the citizens that you serve. Thus, my commentary is never intended as a slight on your professionalism or your fundamental desire to do what is right. Quite the opposite, I would appeal to what I know is a deep knowledge of these issues to build an understanding of my position as it relates to the US-23 highway expansion. It is my unwavering belief that the addition of lane capacity to US-23 will be a detriment to sustainability, equity and long term economic growth in Washtenaw County.

Foremost, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the elements of the proposal which are not only welcomed, but necessary. Safety, being a paramount value, has been at the center of much of the project through the inclusion of common-sense features such as extended entrance ramps, round-a-bouts and the addition of new crash investigation areas. Other features aim to ease the burden of residents who live in proximity to the corridor by installing noise barriers and other features. While it would be welcomed to see more of the money used to install such features, with a particular focus on Whitmore Lake, the intent of decreasing noise pollution for the neighbors is to be commended.

Of the many aspects of this plan, only the lane expansion stands to my attention as not only unnecessary, but also costly and unsustainable. While it stands alone, the fundamentally regressive nature of this component of the plan stands tallest as a glaring concern. Without the full removal of the capacity element of this project, the plan serves as a further detriment to progress for sustainability, equity and economic development in Washtenaw County.

At its core, the premise of the lane expansion proposal is flawed. The capacity component of the project is purported to address the issue of congestion. The theory is a simple one: add a lane, increase the capacity, and thus decrease the congestion. This is a very simple solution to a complex and difficult problem. This thinking is akin to a curing a reoccurring headache with Aspin. MDOT has devised a symptomatic cure to a systematic problem.

The effectiveness of this theory has been disproven time and time again since the advent of our modern highway system. One need only look at the sprawled out, highways of Los Angeles to see how this theory has been tested ad nauseam and proven its ineffectiveness. Simply put, lanes were added to reduce congestion and the new lanes were rapidly filled with more cars, thus creating more demand for new lanes and resulting in the wide, pollution generating highways that we see today. This observation can be easily explained by the simple economic theory known as "induced demand". In essence, the more a supply increases, the more a good is consumed. Or, in this case, "if you build it they will come". When the fundamental issues causing the demand are not addressed it leads to severe socio-economic and environmental consequences.

Southeast Michigan has perhaps the best examples of how this short-sighted solution has driven regional planning, causing the depopulation of urban areas and the proliferation of sprawling suburbs. Detroit's depopulation may not have been catalyzed by the construction of the highway system, but the

suburbanization of our region was undisputedly facilitated by it. Highways essentially created the opportunity for commuters to live at a greater physical distance from their place of employment. The limiting factor to the length of the commute became traffic congestion. The demand for highway space remained high, but the resource is by its nature quite limited. By adding capacity, MDOT reduced travel time and thus engineered a disincentive for people to live near where they work. By adding capacity for sprawl to accelerate, suburban populations will continue to increase while the urban populations continue to decline. The impact of this demographic shift is that those who can afford to drive will live further out and those that can't will be left behind creating a region that is replete with inequality of access to jobs and core services. The dream of open and clear highways, rapidly gives way to the sobering economic segregation of our region and miles of slow traffic billowing clouds of dangerous greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

In the case of US-23, the regional demographics are, admittedly, different, but the fundamental issues are the same. Jobs are largely concentrated around the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and the majority of commuters using the US-23 corridor between Livingston County and Ann Arbor are coming in to work in Ann Arbor in the morning and going home towards Livingston County at night. This is evidenced by the traffic demand modeling that MDOT has done and further reinforced by the proposal itself which calls for the opening of one additional lane south bound in the morning and one lane northbound in the evening. This plan thus blatantly acknowledges that the proposed lane expansion will only serve those who have chosen to live further away from where they work, thus facilitating sprawl development.

Some have argued that commuters cannot afford to live in Ann Arbor, which is what has driven sprawl development. However, while there is admittedly a severe undersupply of affordable housing in Ann Arbor for those below Ann Arbor's median household income of $55,000, Livingston County's median household income is over $20,000 higher at $72,000. Increasing affordable housing options in Ann Arbor is paramount, but building more highway capacity for communities of commuters that choose to live far from work will not help to ameliorate that situation.

By adding a third lane to a two lane highway, MDOT will add 33% more capacity to the sprawl housing market, reducing housing demand in Washtenaw County. Additionally, MDOT will be adding 33% more cars on the roads and in the parking lots of Washtenaw County and Ann Arbor, decreasing our resident's quality of life and increasing congestion on our roads. Washtenaw County taxpayers will, in turn, bear the increased cost of road repair without the financial support of the commuting community.

Increased commuting capacity along the corridor means increased demand for suburban houses. This translates to more farms and forests being transformed into new suburban development. Cars, being a necessity of suburban life will multiply, further spiraling into ever-higher greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. More highway capacity will then be needed to accommodate increased demand, and we are back to where we started. Except this time with fewer greenfields and 33% more cars polluting the air. Plainly put, increased capacity means increased sprawl, which at its core drives up greenhouse gas emissions.

Further, as our roads continue to crumble, the expenditure of road dollars to expand our State's road maintenance liability is short sighted. Not only are the dollars used for the capacity expansion not going to fix our outdated road ways, but we are actually adding new lane miles to maintain and plow. This is a vast misappropriation of priorities when bridges are falling onto the drivers and potholes are growing ever deeper.

The capacity portion of this project simply does not serve the best long term environmental, economic or equity outcomes for our region and state. It is wrong for Ann Arbor, wrong for Washtenaw County, and wrong for Michigan. MDOT should move to abandon plans to increase capacity on US-23 and reallocate those dollars to other priorities for our State such as repairing our existing infrastructure. However, in the interest of protecting lives, MDOT has a responsibility to move forward with the safety portions of the project.

As we look to the future, let us not lose sight of our past. Let us move away from the unsustainable and devastating planning practices of the 20th century and look to a bright future where we can build equitable communities, resilient economies and a better earth for all. While difficult, the larger issues at play can be addressed. We Michiganders have a way of rolling up our sleeves to solve complex issues the right way. Our grit and determination means that together there is nothing that we cannot do. We owe it to ourselves and to the generations of proud Michiganders to come to learn from our past as we look to build a better future for all.

Sincerely,

Yousef Rabhi
Vice-Chair, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
[redacted]
734-548-5159

US-23 IMPROVEMENTS – US-23/M-14 TO SILVER LAKE ROAD
WASHTENAW AND LIVINGSTON COUNTIES
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
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*** * * PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * * ***

Name DAVID HORTON - SUNOCO E-mail [redacted]

Address 366 E. NORTH TERRITORIAL RD @ US23

City WHITMORE LAKE State MI Zip Code 48189

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

Please use the space below and additional pages if necessary. Turn your comment form in at the public meeting. If you wish, you may mail, fax or e-mail them (see below).

NORTH TERRITORIAL IS AN IMPORTANT HEAVILY TRAVELLED ROAD WITH SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCIERNS DURING THE BRIDLE REPLACEMENT. THERE ARE LIMITED OPTIONS FOR POLICE AND FIRE EMERGENCIES WITH MUCH LONGER RESPONSE TIMES DURING BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION.

THE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN THE NORTH TERRITORIAL COMMIDOR STRONGLY URGE MDOT TO CONSIDER THE MOST TIME EFFECTIVE PLAN FOR THE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, EVEN IF IT INCURS ADDITIONAL COSTS.

Please return this form to:
Bob Parsons
MDOT Public Involvement
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
Fax: 517.335.5696
parsonsb@michigan.gov