



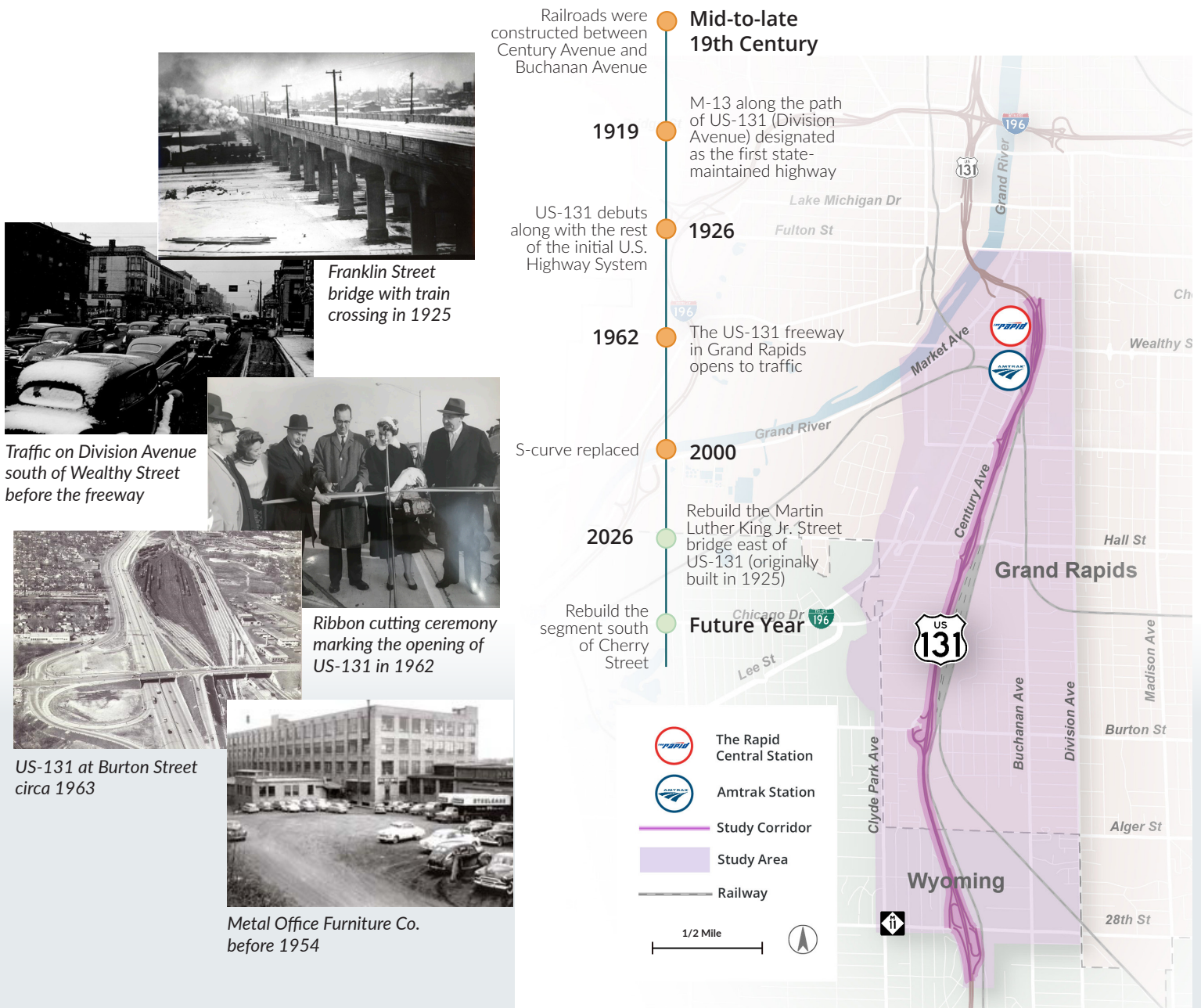
# PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY



## INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) identified the segment of US-131 between M-11 (28th Street) and Cherry Street in Wyoming and Grand Rapids as a critical focus area to be analyzed in a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study. This segment, which carries 110,000 to 140,000 vehicles daily, will need preservation projects over the next decade to address road and bridge condition issues. The segment is also experiencing congestion and safety issues that are projected to worsen due to ongoing growth and development within the city of Grand Rapids.

## US-131 Corridor History





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## PURPOSE AND NEED

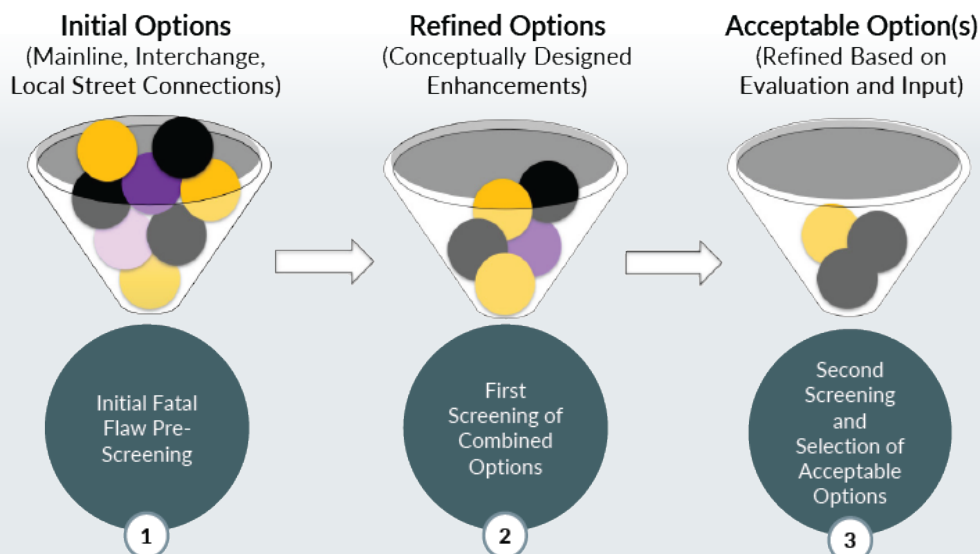
The following Purpose and Need guided the study process, including the development, evaluation and screening of options. Development of these needs was based on a review of existing conditions and challenges, as well as feedback from stakeholders and the public. See report for more information about existing conditions.

### Study Purpose

- Preserve essential local and regional mobility;
- Improve traffic safety and operations;
- Relieve congestion and improve travel time reliability for local and regional freight, passenger and emergency transportation;
- Address pavement and bridge infrastructure conditions;
- Maximize multimodal access and improves access to the freeway;
- Identify partnership opportunities to enhance all modes of travel along corridors adjacent to freeway;
- Identify priorities based on reasonable future revenues;
- Minimize travel disruptions and delays during construction phases of future improvement projects within the PEL study corridor;
- Assess opportunities for future infrastructure maintenance efficiencies.

### Study Need

-  Safety, operational and congestion issues;
-  Aging infrastructure requiring rehabilitation and reconstruction;
-  Interchange operational issues resulting from changing travel and adjacent land use patterns;
-  Freight transportation bottlenecks and access limitations;
-  Growing regional traffic volumes and metro area development;
-  Reliability for emergency vehicles and first responders;
-  Mobility challenges for non-motorized connections across the freeway
-  Need for more local street grid connections;
-  Public transit circulation issues, particularly at The Rapid Central Station.



The three-step PEL process completed for this study





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## ACCEPTABLE OPTIONS (to be studied further)

The US-131 PEL Study explored ways to improve one of west Michigan's busiest urban corridors. Options that were studied included adding shoulders, modifying lanes and reconfiguring select interchanges to enhance safety, operation and connectivity. Improvements to the performance of the freeway were studied, as well as how to reduce impacts on surrounding communities. Further phases will refine these options further. Key features of the identified options include:

### Reconfiguring the Wealthy Street Interchange

MDOT is considering modernizing the Wealthy Street interchange, including an option that would make Wealthy Street an underpass beneath US-131. There is also an option to maintain Wealthy Street as an overpass with reconfigured right-side on and off ramps. Both of these options will be studied further to assess feasibility and alignment with community needs. These options would include enhanced improvements for nonmotorized infrastructure, opportunities for community design features, and other locally identified needs.

### Modernizing the Freeway and Ramps

As the area continues to grow, MDOT is evaluating safety and operational improvements on US-131 to enhance mobility on the corridor. As part of this effort, some limited additional lanes and shoulders were reviewed. Improving access to and from the freeway was also investigated. This included evaluating freeway ramp spacing that could result in some ramp closures.

### Improving Local Connections

MDOT, partners and the community also identified multiple opportunities for new or improved local street connections across US-131 for nonmotorized, passenger and freight traffic. Potential new connections include Logan/Buckley Street, Graham Street (with connections to Century Avenue, Hynes Avenue and Buchanan Avenue), and Kirtland Street. Any interchange rebuilding in the corridor would include multimodal enhancements to existing local street crossings.





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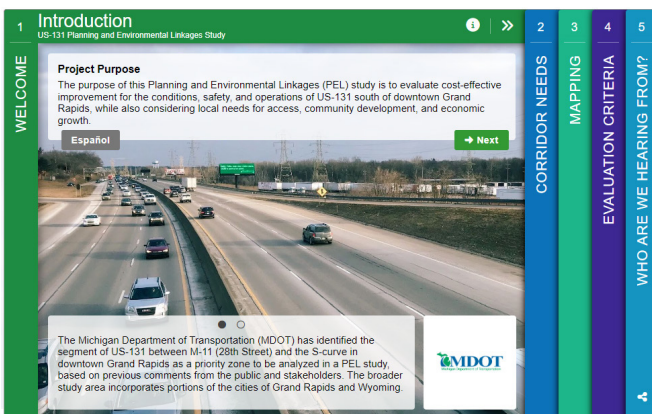
## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

During the PEL study, MDOT conducted three phases of public engagement to collect input. MDOT also hosted regular meetings with the LAC that was composed of leaders from many diverse stakeholder organizations to share and gather information, identify issues and assist with development and evaluation of options. For more information, refer to the study report and the public engagement summary in the report appendix.

- 2020** Phase 1: Virtual public engagement due to the COVID-19 pandemic (December 2020 - February 2021)
- 2022** Phase 2: Online and in-person engagement, plus targeted group meetings (February 2022 - April 2022)
- 2023** Phase 3: Online and in-person engagement, plus targeted group meetings (October 2023 - February 2024)



### Local Advisory Committee and Stakeholders



MetroQuest Survey (Dec. 20, 2020 - Feb. 8th, 2022)



Phase 3 Public Meeting on Nov. 9, 2023

## NEXT STEPS

Although there is not yet funding identified for construction, MDOT will collaborate with partners to further study and advance improvements in the study corridor. Next steps include further design, safety analysis, traffic studies and environmental review, leading to construction once funding is identified. Additional studies for the Wealthy Street interchange area are set to begin in 2025, with ongoing public and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.



### Online Resources

US-131 PEL Study Project Site  
[michigan.gov/US-131PEL](https://michigan.gov/US-131PEL)

