

Michigan Mobility Telephone Town Hall – Unanswered Questions

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) held public telephone town hall meetings on Feb. 5 and 6. The following are answers to questions that were not addressed during the town hall due to time constraints.

Michigan Mobility – State Long-Range Transportation Plan Questions

- **Does Michigan Mobility include pedestrian transportation and public transportation?**
Yes, Michigan Mobility 2045 includes pedestrian and public transportation. In fact, it includes all modes of transportation in Michigan.
- **Is Michigan Mobility 2045 related to the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in Metro Detroit?**
Michigan Mobility 2045 includes all modes of transportation, including transit. The RTA is one part of the transit system in Michigan.
- **Will this state long-range transportation plan affect Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan?**
Yes, the state long-range transportation plan covers the entire state of Michigan, including Sault Ste. Marie.
- **Will there be new transit options in southwest Michigan? Will there be new transit options?**
Although we are not aware of any new options that are currently in the works, the Southwest Michigan Regional Planning Commission just completed a study of public transit in Berrien County, which identifies potential projects and strategies to improve transit in the region. You can read the final report from that study at https://www.swmpc.org/downloads/final_berrien_transit_study.pdf.
- **Does this plan include Traverse City? Traverse City needs additional transportation and parking.**
Michigan Mobility 2045 covers the entire state of Michigan. However, the City of Traverse City has jurisdiction over the city streets and parking. The city continues to study and plan improvements for their transportation system and parking. MDOT has jurisdiction over US-31/M-72 that are within the boundaries of the city.
- **Does Michigan Mobility address mitigation efforts of potential chemical spills or other hazards?**
While the Michigan Mobility 2045 plan does not specifically address chemical spills, there will be a robust discussion of how MDOT minimizes and responds to a variety of risks. Extreme weather events, cybersecurity, man-made disasters, and many other risk

factors are being considered by the department. Identifying these risks also enables MDOT to be proactive and possibly mitigate against the issues that pose the most threat.

- **What kind of taxes can we expect to see from this plan?**

The Michigan Mobility 2045 plan is a long-range planning document that isn't project-specific; the plan sets the long-term goals for mobility in Michigan. Road user fees and taxes are established by the Michigan Legislature.

- **How will the state long-range transportation plan affect insurance rates?**

The Michigan Mobility 2045 plan is a long-range planning document that sets the long-term goals for mobility in Michigan. Insurance rates don't fall under the purview of MDOT.

Policy Questions

- **Can MDOT turn its highways to toll roads?**

No, it would require an authorizing law by the Michigan Legislature, as well as changes to federal law. Under federal law, tolls can be charged only in a few limited places on federal-aid roads. More information is available at

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT Toll Roads Brochure 548788 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_Toll_Roads_Brochure_548788_7.pdf).

- **Is the formula for road funding based on traffic volume?**

There are formulas that dictate different sources of state and federal road money. Factors included in the various formulas include traffic volume, road classification, population, lane mileage, etc. While traffic volume isn't a consideration in all of the funding formulas, the various factors do indirectly account for roads that carry a lot of traffic.

- **Are there plans to update signs on scenic [Pure Michigan Byways](#) to make them more visible?**

MDOT has been replacing the old Heritage Route signs with the new Pure Michigan Byway signs according to scheduled maintenance. All trunkline signs are replaced approximately every 15 to 20 years since the reflectivity of signs begins to degrade beyond 20 years.

- **Why can't road projects and utility projects (sewers, gas lines, etc.) be coordinated to occur at the same time?**

MDOT understands the frustration of seeing a newly repaired road torn up for utility work. MDOT works with utility companies whenever possible to schedule work at times that are beneficial to both parties; however, there are many times when emergency repairs to the networks require work that cannot be delayed. To improve the

coordination between road agencies and utilities, the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) was created in 2018. The MIC is still getting started but its goal is to better utilize resources and ensure that roads are disrupted as few times as possible for construction and utility work.

- **Are there any plans to limit the weight trucks can carry on Michigan's roads and how are the load weights of logging trucks regulated?**

Michigan truck weight laws are established by Michigan Legislature. These weight restrictions are enforced by the Michigan State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division and by local motor carrier officers and weighmasters. More information is available at

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_TruckWeightBrochure_418682_7.pdf.

Safety Questions

- **Why aren't speed limits lowered on highways during icy and snowy conditions?**

When weather conditions change, the Michigan Basic Speed Law (*MCL 257.627*) requires drivers to "drive at a careful and prudent speed not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, having due regard to the traffic, surface, and width of the highway and of any other condition then existing." Michigan's Basic Speed Law requires motorists to drive at a "careful and prudent" speed in all driving conditions to be able to stop within the clear distance ahead. It may require driving slower than the posted speed limit. There is no provision written into the law that allows for the lowering of speed limits due to changing weather conditions.

- **Why are roundabouts being installed around the state?**

Roundabouts are identified as a [proven safety countermeasure](#) because of their ability to substantially reduce the types of crashes that result in injury or loss of life.

Roundabouts are designed to improve safety for all users, including pedestrians and bicycles. Most significantly, roundabouts reduce the types of crashes where people are seriously hurt or killed by 78 to 82 percent when compared to conventional stop-controlled and signalized intersections.

- **Does MDOT plan on using social media to increase road safety?**

MDOT posts safety messages every day on social media, ranging from messages about the Toward Zero Deaths initiative (TZD), road worker safety, pedestrian safety, bicycling safety, posting Mi Drive alerts about traffic incidents and closures to help drivers plan their drives, and posting information and answering questions about such roadway features as roundabouts, Michigan Lefts, green lights on snowplows, the Freeway Courtesy Patrol, the Move Over Law, aging drivers, and speed limits. For links to all MDOT social media sites, go to : https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9620_67093-261456--,00.html.

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Public Transportation, Rail, and Aviation Questions

- **Bike lanes were installed in my community. Why are there not signs telling bicyclists that they need to ride in the bike lane, not in the road?**
Bicyclists are legal users of a roadway and state law does not require a bicyclist to use a bicycle lane or a shared use path if one exists.
- **Why divert limited resources to public transit when we cannot afford to maintain the roads?**
Public transit is part of the whole transportation system in Michigan and needs to have equal consideration for funding. In fiscal year 2017, there were more than 81 million passengers who used public transportation. Without public transportation, there would be many people who would not be able to get to medical appointments, shopping centers or school. Public transportation allows people to stay where they live.
- **Will the Capital Region Airport be expanded to include more direct flights?**
The Capital Region International Airport in Lansing currently has a primary runway that is 8,506 feet in length. This existing infrastructure allows for commercial jet traffic to operate to destinations non-stop. Economics, as well as other factors, drive the decisions of the airline operators to select which flights to offer.
- **Are there plans for passenger rail around Petoskey?**
In October 2018, Bay Area Transportation Authority, in cooperation with the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, completed a [feasibility study](#) passenger rail service between Ann Arbor and Traverse City, and up to Petoskey. The study provides an initial analysis on cost and ridership estimates.
- **Are there any plans for monorails in Michigan?**
There are no plans for monorails currently.
- **Are there any plans for transit in Iron County that is wheelchair accessible?**
Public transportation is a local decision. There currently are two providers for Iron County, UP Community Services and TRICO, Inc. Please talk to these agencies to see if you can get your transportation needs met by either of these providers.
- **I live in Justine. Where can I learn more about transit options near my home?**
You will need to contact your local transit agency. For a listing of public transit agencies by county, go to https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/TransitAgenciesByCounty_608034_7.pdf. Click on the link for an agency to get contact information.
- **Are there any new transit plans in the Westland, Plymouth, and Canton areas?**
There are not any new transit plans in that area. Westland is an opt-in community for SMART service, meaning they pay a millage for SMART service, but Plymouth and

Canton are opt-out. SMART is in the middle of completing a comprehensive operational analysis that is exploring redesigning their system, but recommendations from that project won't be available until the end of summer. For more information, contact SMART at <https://www.smartbus.org/>.

- **Where can I learn more about bus routes and wait times in the Grand Rapids area?**

Please contact The Rapid at 616-456-7514 or visit their website at www.ridetherapid.org. For a listing of all public transit agencies by county, go to https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/TransitAgenciesByCounty_608034_7.pdf. Click on the link for an agency to get contact information.

- **What are you doing to make SMART buses more reliable in Detroit?**

Public transit in Michigan is locally operated. Please contact SMART for specific questions regarding their transit operation at 313-223-2100 or visit the website at www.smartbus.org.

Road Project Questions

- **What are the main differences between constructing roads with concrete and asphalt?**

The biggest differences between concrete and asphalt are the following:

- The thickness of aggregate base and subbase layers supporting the pavement. It is 16 inches under concrete and 24 inches under asphalt.
- The asphalt surface is constructed in layers, called lifts. This allows for each layer to be compacted to the appropriate density. With concrete, it is placed in layer.
- MDOT places joints in the concrete to control where it cracks. This is not required with asphalt.
- Steel bars are placed across the joints in the concrete. No steel is required in asphalt.
- The material properties MDOT tests for are numerous and differ between concrete and asphalt.

- **Why doesn't MDOT use sealer in seams and cracks on roadways?**

MDOT does seal the joints that are placed in concrete pavements. MDOT also seals cracks in both concrete and asphalt. If the cracks in asphalt become too numerous, particularly in the wheel paths, MDOT will not seal them because it is more cost effective to use a surface seal that covers the entire surface.

- **What is the future of M-95 in the Upper Peninsula? Will there be added lanes or rest stops?**

MDOT currently has no plans to add additional lanes or rest stops along M-95.

- **Are there plans to construct an interchange on I-75 at Pickford Road in the Upper Peninsula?**

There currently are no plans to install a new exit ramp along I-75 at Pickford Road in the Upper Peninsula.

- **Is there a long-term plan to expand I-69 to three lanes in both directions between Flint and Port Huron?**

There are no plans to expand I-69 between Flint and Port Huron at this time.

- **Are there plans to fix overpasses on US-131 near Grand Rapids?**

Yes, bridges and overpasses (including those on US-131) are prioritized based on conditions and funding available. For the most recent list of MDOT projects, please check out the annual [Five-Year Transportation Program](#).

- **Are there plans to resurface Badgley Road in Jackson?**

The Region 2 Planning Commission (<https://www.region2planning.com/>) just completed their preliminary 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program project list. Badgley Road was added to the new list in Fiscal Year 2023. It is proposed as a full reconstruct of the roadway.

- **I find it difficult to merge onto the highway at the I-94/US-131 interchange near Kalamazoo. Can this interchange be improved?**

MDOT is aware of the challenges people face on the roads across the state. While the weaving and merging within interchanges can feel challenging to a driver, they are a safe way to transition vehicles from one freeway to another. In 2008, this interchange was significantly improved by reconfiguring the ramp access and the addition of a third lane on I-94 eastbound and westbound. In 2016, MDOT replaced all of the freeway signs at this interchange and added enhanced roadside delineation to improve motorists navigation through the area. As traffic volumes increase over time, the MDOT staff in the Southwest Region continue to monitor traffic operations in the area and look for opportunities to make additional improvements.