

Ivan:

Hello, good morning and welcome to this live Telephone Town Hall. This morning, we're going to be answering your questions live about Michigan Mobility 2045. Our speakers this morning are from the Michigan Department of Transportation, and they will be joining us in just a moment. But first, I want to tell you how you can participate in this morning's Telephone Town Hall. Simply press zero on your keypad if you have a question. Press zero if you have a question. You'll be placed in a queue and our operators will then assist you in asking your question. Our speakers are going to answer as many questions as they can this morning in the time that we have allocated. If you do have a question but you'd prefer not to go live on the air, you can just let your operator know and I can read the question for you. We want to do whatever is most comfortable for you. You can also press seven at any time on your keypad to get the very latest from the Michigan Department of Transportation. It'll add you to our e-mail list and you'll receive updates. So please press seven at any time.

We've had some new friends and neighbors join us, so I'm going to repeat part of this message. Our speakers will be with us in just under a minute. So, I'd like to welcome everyone and wish you a good morning. This morning, we're going to be answering your questions live about Michigan Mobility 2045, or MM 2045. We're calling out to thousands of your neighbors and friends, and as we wait for them to get on the line, I'll let you know that the speakers this morning are from the Michigan Department of Transportation, and they will be joining us in just a moment. But I want to tell you how you can participate in the Telephone Town Hall this morning. Simply press zero on your keypad if you have a question. This forum is designed for you to ask questions live, and you can do that by pressing zero on your keypad. Once you do press zero, you'll be placed in a queue and our operators will then assist you in asking your question. Our speakers are going to answer as many questions as they possibly can tonight in the time that we have. If you do have a question but you prefer not to go live, just simply let your operator know and I can read the question for you.

Now, I'd like to introduce our speakers for this morning's call from the Michigan Department of Transportation. We have Brad Sharlow, who's the Michigan Mobility 2045 project manager, and we have Monica Monsma, who's the Michigan Department of Transportation public involvement and hearings officer. Brad, please take it away.

Brad Sharlow:

Thank you, Ivan. So, yes, good morning, everyone. We want to thank you for taking the time to listen in this morning and to provide us input as we move forward with our State Long-Range Transportation Plan. Today, we are hosting this live Telephone Town Hall meeting to discuss Michigan's efforts to develop a new state long-range plan with you and your neighbors. We are seeking opinions from a diverse group of Michigan residents and stakeholders to help set the direction for the future of transportation in Michigan. We need your help to establish strategies for a multimodal transportation plan that makes Michigan an attractive place to live and work. Please remain on the line and add your voice to this conversation. Your opinion matters.

The State Long-Range Transportation Plan, also known as Michigan Mobility 2045, or MM 2045, for short, has laid out a new vision, goals and objectives for all modes of transportation in Michigan, and we are now working to develop actionable strategies to achieve the vision and goals. The state long-range plan is federally required, with a 20-year planning horizon, and your participation in this Town Hall meeting will help establish the priorities for transportation in Michigan for the next 25 years. Additional information on our long-range plan can be found on our website at www.MichiganMobility.org. Because transportation is the foundation of the state's economic vitality and quality of life, we need to understand the needs and concerns of all Michiganders like you. Monica.

Monica Monsma: Thank you, Brad. I'm Monica Monsma from the Michigan Department of Transportation. As you know, a vibrant multimodal transportation system is vital to Michigan's future economic viability and competitiveness. In fact, about \$860 billion in freight moves on Michigan highways, rail lines and ports each year. As a result, Michigan Mobility 2045 will be the first in the nation to fully integrate state freight and rail plan requirements into a long-range transportation plan. With your input, MM 2045 will set the direction for all transportation investment decisions, including highways, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, rail, water, and air transportation for both passengers and freight, as well as new connected and autonomous vehicle technologies. Following the development of this long-range plan, the goals and strategies will be implemented throughout the process through that five-year transportation program, statewide transportation improvement program, metro planning organizations, rural program implementation, and other mode specific plans. Your voice is important. Please remain on the line as this Telephone Town Hall meeting is about to begin. We look forward to receiving your input. And as a side note, you can also go to www.MichiganMobility.org to learn more. Thank you. With that, Ivan, we're ready to begin taking questions.

Ivan: Sounds good. Thank you very much. Folks, if you've joined us in the last few minutes, we want to welcome you to this live Telephone Town Hall with the Michigan Department of Transportation. If you have a question, press zero on your keypad. Press zero on your keypad if you have a question. We're going to take our first question. Here is Don. Don calling in from Bridgeport, go ahead with your question, please?

Don: I'd like to know why so much money is being spent down in the Detroit area, tearing up roads on the freeways that have already been redone about three or four years ago and now they're tearing it all up again. And yet up in Michigan, we get nothing, the roads are so bad. It's pathetic.

Brad Sharlow: So, Don, good morning, thanks for calling in. In terms of how we invest our money, we have seven regions across the state that the money is allocated between and we have a call for projects process. And it's a combination of different factors that we look at in terms of the number of route miles for the MDOT roads within a region, as well as the volume of traffic on each of those.

But yes, we do use innovative formulas to ensure that each part of the state does get funding to the best of our ability. But one thing I understand is, yeah, that every area of the state needs additional funding and would like to see more work done as a whole. And we're doing our best to do the most efficient way to try to meet the needs for the state.

Ivan: Our next question comes from Rick in Grand Rapids. And Rick asked for his question to be read. The question is, what is the State Long-Range Transportation Plan?

Brad Sharlow: Well, thank you, Rick. Yes, the State Long-Range Transportation Plan is a federally required policy and strategic document that sets the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies and investments for Michigan's transportation system over the next 25 years. So we really look at the high-level policies in coordination across all modes of transportation in order to look at, where does the state want to be for all modes of transportation over the next 20 years? And so, this plan seeks to set that direction.

Ivan: Thank you. We have our first polling question. Folks, we invite you to participate here by using your telephone keypad. Please vote. I'm going to read a question and then the answers and you can vote with the one that most corresponds with how you feel. The question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to traveling on Michigan roads. Press one if it's the condition of the roads. Press two if it's congestion and reliability. Press three if it's safety of the roadways from crashes. Press four if it's resiliency, the ability of infrastructure to handle severe weather events. Again, the question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to traveling on Michigan roads. Press one if it's the condition of the roads. Press two if it's traffic congestion and reliability. Press three if it's safety of the roadways from crashes. And press four if it's resiliency, the ability of infrastructure to handle severe weather events. Please continue to vote while we take our next call and we'll announce the results of your survey here in just a moment. Our next call is from Hazel Park. This is Jack. Jack, please go ahead with your question?

Jack: Yeah, we're doing a major roadway reconstruction on all the bridges and around the Nine Mile/I-75 area. What's your date of the region transit plan you're looking at?

Brad Sharlow: Good morning, Jack. For this, one of the efforts that we're doing as part of the state long-range plan is to develop a statewide transit strategy, a strategic plan as well for that. And that timeline for our overall long-range plan, which includes transit strategy, is to hopefully have the plan ready by about this time next year. A draft plan completed for public comment at that time. So, we're working quite heavily right now in the development of these plans as a whole. And we're really looking forward for your feedback. The thing that we can ask for you this summer to help get your input on that is we do have an online survey that will be going out here this week that will ask for various priorities, for strategies in the plan. And if you go onto our website,

www.MichiganMobility.org, we'd be happy to hear your feedback, as we look at strategies across the board and that also includes transit.

Ivan: Thank you. Folks, I want to share with you the results from our last poll question. The question was, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to traveling on Michigan roads. Sixty percent of you said it's the condition of the roads; 19 percent of you said traffic congestion and reliability; 17 percent said safety of the roadways from crashes; and 4 percent of you said resiliency, the ability of the infrastructure to handle severe weather events. We are going to take our next question here in just a moment. This is Brian calling in from Sterling Heights. Brian, go ahead with your question please?

Brian: Yes, I'd like to know, because I live in Macomb County, if the state transportation plan takes into account putting the main transit region or the main transit hub for the Detroit region at the Michigan State Fairgrounds, because that particular location, from what I understand, connects the entire region on all four sides, north, south, east, and west. Does the state plan deal with that issue?

Janet Geisler: Good morning, Brian. This is Janet Geisler, I'm with the Office of Passenger Transportation at MDOT. Regional connectivity is certainly an important consideration for all parts of the state, including the Detroit area. The RTA, the Regional Transportation Authority, is responsible for coordinating all the transit in the southeast Michigan region. And so, they would be the organization that might plan for something like that. The statewide plan, MM 2045, will be looking at strategies that could include things like regional hubs in different parts of the state.

Ivan: Our next question comes from Paulette in Redford. Paulette, go ahead with your question.

Paulette: Okay. I just want to respond to the gentleman from Midland. The reason our roads in the Metropolitan Detroit area are so in need of repairs is because the majority of the large trucks that come into the state going through to the different industries are so heavy, they tear up our roads. You don't get as much traffic of heavy trucks tearing your roads up. However, I'm sure your roads need repair, but our roads are constantly being assaulted and destroyed by these trucks. But that's why there's so much repair in this area. That's what I see happen. Now, my question is, when we voted for money to go to, specifically, the roads and transportation to the roads, that money is attached before the bills are actually passed. You ask us to vote for it, and we vote. And then before you pass the bill in [inaudible 00:14:24] to actually use the money to repair the roads, that will repair the roads in Midland, as well as in Detroit. You attach other things to the bill and then the money does not all go to the roads. And me, as a voter, I expected it to go specifically for roads. That's what I voted for and I don't want anything else attached to it. But then you attach other things from the back door, and then the money is divided up and the roads get a small amount. So that's my question. Why do you?

Elisha: Good morning, Paulette. This is Elisha with MDOT and I'm a freight planner for the state and I can address the first portion of your question. So, Michigan truck weight law is designed a little bit differently. It's designed to control axle loads instead of gross vehicle weight. So we allow the use of more axles in combination with lower axle loadings for greater gross vehicle weights than maybe some other states. But the research has concluded that our freight axle weight formula results in lost pavement damage and a more productive and efficient transportation system. And Detroit, you're right, is certainly a freight transportation hub for the state and we plan to continue to work with the southeast region throughout the development of this plan to discuss their freight transportation needs issues and strategies. Thank you.

Ivan: Folks, we're going to take another polling question. Please vote on your keypad. The question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to using public transit. Press one if it's the frequency of service. Press two if it's the expansion of service. Press three if it's the reliability of service. Press four if it's safety for transit riders. And press five if it's the condition of vehicles. Again, the question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to using public transit. Press one if it's the frequency of service. Two, if the expansion of service. Three, for the reliability of services. Press four for safety of transit riders. And press five for the condition of the vehicles. Please continue to vote while we take our next question. The question comes from Joe in Flushing and Joe's question is, how does this plan affect me? And how does it relate to the transportation projects near my home?

Brad Sharlow: Yes, thank you very much, Joe. Our policies and strategies that are established in this integrated long-range plan will influence the future transportation projects, initiatives and investments where you live across the state of Michigan. So, this plan seeks to look at not only roads and bridges but also looking at transit, looking at nonmotorized transportation, looking at freight movement, rail movement, public transit, as well as water and air transportation, to look at how this is going to be shaping as we move forward, because all of these modes are getting more and more connected to one another each day. And so, this plan really looks to establish that and then to move forward with establishing project prioritization processes for that.

Ivan: Thank you, very much. Here are the results from the question we just asked about: your greatest priority when it comes to using public transit. Thirty-seven percent of you said the reliability of the services is your greatest priority; 25 percent said the expansion of services; 19 percent said safety for the transit riders is their top priority; 15 percent said frequency of service; and 4 percent said the condition of the vehicles. Thank you very much. We have a few more survey question comings up, so please stay tuned. We're going to take Terry from Fruitland Township. Terry, go ahead with your question, please.

Terry: My question is, how can we work more closely with MDOT to build share-the-road lanes on our rural roads in our township? We've put in some preferences at MDOT meetings for the last few years but we haven't really gotten a

response from MDOT, and I'm wondering how we can start working more closely to build share-the-road lanes.

Josh DeBruyn: Good morning, Terry. Thank you for your question. My name is Josh DeBruyn and I am the bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for the Michigan Department of Transportation, and I will try to answer your question today. New infrastructure along MDOT roadways for cyclists and pedestrians is often times constructed during the same time road projects are done. And so, while there might be a need today, unless a special source of funding is available, oftentimes, improvements to add accommodations for pedestrians or cyclists are not constructed until which time the road is constructed. So my recommendation would be to continue communicating with staff about the desire for additional accommodations for pedestrians or cyclists in your community. And when the roads come up for repair, hopefully those can be included at that time.

Ivan: This is Amy. Our next caller is Amy calling in and go ahead with your question and please tell us where you're calling from?

Amy: Hi, I'm Amy from Alpena, Michigan, and we live on a primary dirt road. That is a shortcut between M-65 and US-23 and we have a lot of heavy traffic. I'm wondering, who do we talk to get some attention to improve our road? The dust quality is horrible, we get about two weeks a year that we can be outside, really to enjoy. So I'm wondering, how do we get attention up here? Who do we talk to?

Brad Sharlow: Thank you. Thank you very much for that question. Yeah, one of the things this plan helps to convey is to help communicate who's responsible for which roads, in which infrastructure in the state. So what you're describing here to me looks like that's something talking with your county road commission on, probably is the representative that you would like to talk with, in terms of trying to address your question, specifically. And so this long-range plan does seek to look at all federal-aid roads. And what we're trying to do is work with all those partnering agencies in order to address all those types of concerns. And so, MDOT, of course, is responsible for about 9,600 lane miles of the road race across the state, which is only a small fraction of lane miles, which is over 110,000 miles across the state as a whole. However, MDOT roads do cover over 50 percent of that traffic across the state as a whole, including freight and trucks. And so, but in terms of your question, I would encourage contacting your local county road commission in terms of trying to determine how to handle those issues.

Ivan: We have our next polling question, folks. Could you please vote on your keypad? The question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to the infrastructure for people walking and biking. Press one if it's expansion of the network, press two for condition of the network, press three for safety of the network, and press four for resiliency, the ability of the network to handle naturally occurring events like flooding and erosion. Again, the question is, please identify your greatest priority when it comes to infrastructure for people walking and biking. Press one if it is the expansion of the network, press two for

the condition of the network, press three for the safety of the network, and press four for resiliency, the ability of the network to handle naturally occurring events like flooding and erosion. We appreciate you voting in these polls, it really helps us and we like to share the results with you as well. So please vote if you haven't yet. I also encourage you if you have not yet, press seven on your keypad to submit your e-mail address to the Department of Transportation, please do so now. We have operators standing by and they will take down your e-mail address. You can get updates from the Department of Transportation. Again, that's press seven. Our next question comes from Bob. Bob, please tell us where you're calling from and then go ahead with your question.

Bob: I'm calling from Atlanta, Michigan. My question is, other states like Illinois, they have I-PASS, which pays for all the construction on the tollways and roadways in that state. Why doesn't Michigan use something like that? Therefore, the taxation would not be on the residents it would be on the people that use the roads.

Elisha: Good morning, Bob, this is Elisha. Great question, so Illinois is actually a state that utilizes tolling. Michigan currently does not have any toll roads in our state. Currently, federal law prohibits the conversion of existing interstates to toll roads. Although there has been talk of changing that at the federal level and there are a few exceptions, including new freeways or reconstructed roads. While there are currently no toll roads in Michigan, tolls are collected at several bridges in the state, including the Blue Water Bridge, International Bridge, Mackinac Bridge, Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, and Ambassador Bridge, but we will continue to research and look at pooling out the potential revenue source for the state. Thank you.

Bob: Thank you very much. And I want to share the results with you from our survey question. It was identifying your greatest priority when it comes to people walking and biking. Forty-nine percent of you said the safety of the network; 40 percent of you said the expansion of the network; 10 percent of you who voted said it was the resiliency or the ability of the network to handle naturally occurring events like flooding and erosion; and 1 percent of you said the condition of the network. Thank you very much for voting. We have one more polling question coming up. But right now we're going to take our next live caller. This is Teresa, from Royal Oak. Teresa, go ahead with your question, please.

Teresa: Hi, yes. I was just wondering how the long-range transportation plan takes into account climate change going into the future? In terms of things like erosion or more severe weather events. And then how does it also think about trying to mitigate the effects of climate change?

Niles: Yeah, thanks Teresa. This is Niles Annelin with MDOT. Resilience to extreme weather events and climate change are a central part of this plan. Here you see strategies developed for each mode to try to help address how we can better handle events in the future.

Ivan: Our next caller is Matt, calling in from Grand Rapids. Matt, go ahead with your question, please.

Matt: Hello, I am curious about what the overall goal is as far as the plan goes? Is that to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled for single occupancy vehicles? And then a follow-up to that is, will induced demand be included as for traffic analysis for major freeway reconstruction projects? Thank you.

Brad Sharlow: Thank you, Matt. Yes, absolutely. All of these are different factors that we take into our forecasts when we established a long-range plan. We have different forecast models and analysis tools that help us understand not only the vehicle miles traveled, but the vehicle hours traveled. Also, the speeds and travel times, we have reliability data that helps to influence and explain to us not only how congested roads are but how reliable from day to day is it to get from one place to another? Yes, we will be establishing a hybrid of policies that really try to establish a balance between automobile use but also choices for other modes of transportation as well. And so, mobility will be one key aspect as one of our goal areas in the long-range plan but also network condition, choices in other types of options for other modes of transportation, as well as the efficient movement of people and goods is critical to this long-range plan, in order to drive the future of our economy and the quality of life for our state.

Ivan: Thank you, Brad. This next question comes from Rachel in Allen Park. Rachel asked for her question to be read. And the question is, does this plan cover bicycle transportation, mass transit or other modes of transportation?

Brad Sharlow: Yes, thank you, Rachel. Yes, this long-range plan covers all modes of transportation as a whole. And actually, what Michigan is doing with this plan is really taking it a step further and developing actual statewide mobile plans for many of these different efforts. So, this plan includes not only automobiles but it also includes freight movement, inner city transit, local transit, bicycles, pedestrians, passenger and freight rail, aviation, and marine transportation. So the nonmotorized bicycle and pedestrian, the transit, the freight and the rail are all developing specific mobile plans in conjunction with the state long-range plan. And all the people on the phone here today are representing those areas. And this plan really as a whole is looking to develop a vibrant, integrated multimodal transportation network for the future.

Ivan: Up next, we have Linda calling in from Shelby Township. Linda, go ahead with your question, please.

Linda: Yes, hello. I live in a township and township roads are county roads. A lot of people aren't aware of that and cities get their own money for roads. So what you are responsible for, I believe are just the state roads. We have a few state roads in our township. So, a great deal of this money and time that we're talking about won't even affect me in a township. But what I called about was, or the reason I wanted to ask a question, I wanted you to explain how many millions of dollars it costs per mile to do a road, what your budget is, how much money you

get from the federal government and then the people can understand the magnitude of the problem. It costs a million dollars to do a mile in my township for a five-lane road, I know that. Also, question number two, since rail came up, I used to be on the committee Rails to Trails, and I wanted it to be Rails with Trails because I think we've given up too much of our railway and a lot of that freight I drive next to on the expressway when it should be on the railroad and I would like somebody to address that second question. Thank you.

Brad:

All right. Linda, thank you. This is Brad. I'm going to try to do my best here to answer your questions. One of the things I want to highlight for everyone is, if we cannot answer your question specifically today, we will be having a Frequently Asked Questions page on our website where we're going to get those responses for you in the next couple of weeks. So, in terms of funding in the state of Michigan, you are correct. There is a lot of different owners and operators in the system. But one thing I do want to highlight, with this state long-range plan, we are really trying to make this not an MDOT plan but a state of Michigan long-range plan. So we are partnering with our county road commissions, with our cities and villages, as well as our transit operators and all our other infrastructure owners across all modes of transportation to establish this plan, which will set the policies and vision in place.

What I can say about the budget right now, I can't give you specific figures off the top of my head, but what I can say in regards to the budget is we are severely underfunded in terms of what the needs are, in order to achieve the options that people are looking for the future of transportation. What I can say is we are going to be doing a needs analysis this summer as part of this plan to identify what are the current and future needs of our network across all modes of transportation versus what funding is available. And we anticipate that those numbers are going to be quite substantial. And that information will be available on our website and will be an integral part of this plan as a whole.

In terms of your final question there, I'm going to have to get back with you on that and include that information in our Frequently Asked Questions chat page afterwards because I want to make sure I talk with our subject matter experts to make sure we get the information correct to you. Because I don't want to give you an answer that is misleading. And so, I will make sure that we have your questions documented so that we can ensure that we respond to those in the best fashion.

Ivan:

Thank you. Our next question comes in from Candice. Candice asked to read her question. So I will do that now. The long-term plan is forward-looking, except the fact that it won't matter what our objectives are if we can't maintain our current structures. What is the plan to maintain our current road structures in the state? Will there be any consideration given to toll roads?

Brad Sharlow:

And thank you, Candice. Yes, this long-range plan, you're absolutely right, is looking to the future. However, we can't be blind to what our current needs are or we can't ignore that. They say our current needs are going to be first and

foremost, in terms of what we do. But how we're trying to structure this plan as a whole is we're going to be establishing strategies in three tiers in order to try to transition from what our current needs are. In terms of preservation and safety and maintenance to how do we start transitioning to the future of our network with integrated modes and new technologies. And so, this plan will include some short-term strategies that go out over the next five or so, years that will be incorporated with more of our short-term planning and project prioritization processes. But then we'll have some mid-term and long-term strategies going out to the 25 years as a whole. But yes, we do have to do quite a bit of analysis to understand what our current needs are and where we're going into the future. And the plan will go through those exercises over the course of this summer.

Ivan: Up next we have Bob. Bob, please tell us where you're calling from and go ahead with your question.

Bob: This is Bob, I'm calling from East Lansing, Michigan. My question is for Josh DeBruyn. You spoke as to how bicycle infrastructure and nonmotorized and pedestrian infrastructure is part of new construction. You reconstructed a major intersection a mile and a half from my house, Marsh Road in Saginaw. You left it so that it works very well for commuters twice a day but you left it extremely dangerous for pedestrians and other nonmotorized transit. The nonmotorized community tried to talk with MDOT about this and you did various dances, hiding the plans, announcing, "Oh, that's an old plan." And then suddenly announcing, "Well, the plan is final. You can't change it." We need a better process. Do we need a law that says that you have to prioritize pedestrian lives above commuter convenience? Thank you.

Josh DeBruyn: Thanks for your question, Bob. I'm not going to speak to the specifics of that project. However, I can say that the Transportation Service Center, the local individuals working there, typically follow up and contact some sort of solutions process, engaging all users of the transportation network to find a solution that is most accommodating to the majority of the users in that area. It is difficult to speak to the specifics of that at this time. Thank you for your question.

Ivan: Now we have Kami calling in from Ithaca. Go ahead, Kami.

Kami: Hello.

Ivan: Hi, Kami, can go ahead with your question please?

Kami: Oh, yes. Not knowing where to turn to at times as a new disabled person, how can I get ahold of the transit companies to come get me when I'm too far out of reach for them? Is there an in-between?

Janet Geisler: Hi, Kami. This is Janet from the Office of Passenger Transportation. So it looks like you're in Gratiot County. Alma Dial-A-Ride is the transit provider in the city

of Alma and some of the communities in Gratiot County. I don't know that they serve your area specifically but they are considering implementing countywide transportation. So I would encourage you to contact Alma Dial-A-Ride to find out more about those efforts and how you can encourage them to expand their service, how you can get involved in that effort. Also, the Gratiot County Commission on Aging does provide some service for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. So I suggest you also contact them.

Ivan: We're going to take another survey question folks, if you'd vote on your keypad. The question is, where do you go to obtain transportation issues in Michigan? Press one if it's television and radio, press two if it's the newspaper, press three for Internet websites and applications, press four for social media, and press five for other. Again, the question is, where do you go to obtain transportation issues in Michigan? Press one for television and radio, press two for newspaper, press three for Internet website and applications, and press four for social media, and press five for other. And folks, go ahead and vote it again if you voted earlier. We had a little technical issue, right at the beginning of the question. So go ahead and press your number now again, if you wouldn't mind. And with that, we're going to take our next question while you continue to vote. And this next question is going to come from Caz in Garden City. Please go ahead with your question.

Caz: Yeah, the number one question of the day was, the roads in Detroit seem to be worked on every three years, should we put our civil engineers together and maybe construct a road so they last longer? That way the amount of cash and revenue will be available for other communities and other roads to be done?

Brad Sharlow: Thank you, Caz. Yes, we try to have an asset management type of policy where we look at coordinating with our other utilities and services when we do fix our roads and bridges. The biggest challenge we have right now is we do understand there's the need to fully reconstruct many of our roads out there, but our available funding right now does not allow us to be able to reconstruct things fully, because then the rest of the system will basically have nothing happen. So we really have to find ways where we can keep as many of our roads in fair condition as possible. And yes, sometimes we're doing some preventive maintenance work out there to try to keep the road going as long as we can before it needs to go to a full reconstruction. But yes, we certainly understand and with additional funding long-term, we really hope we can truly reconstruct some of these roads that are in dire need.

Ivan: Okay, I want to share the results with you. The question was, where do you go to obtain transportation issues in Michigan? Forty-nine percent of you that voted said Internet websites and applications; 25 percent of you said television and radio; 14 percent are going somewhere other than the four categories we mentioned; 10 percent are going to the newspaper; and 2 percent to social media. Thank you very much. We appreciate you voting in these questions. Just a reminder that if you'd like to submit your e-mail address, we have operators standing by. We also can take some more questions if you press zero on your

keypad. So press seven to give your e-mail address, press zero if you have additional questions. Next we're going to take Tom. Tom, can you please tell us where you're calling from and then go ahead with your question?

Tom: Hi, my name's Tom, I'm from Ypsilanti. I was wondering about the flex lane that goes from just on US-23, north of Ann Arbor up almost all the way to Brighton. They did a lot of work expanding a flex lane to allow for congestion during rush hour but it seems like the flex lane is hardly ever open. And it seems like a waste of resources. Is there any plan or what's the protocol for opening up that flex lane just north of Ann Arbor going up towards Brighton on US-23? Thank you.

Brad Sharlow: Tom, thank you for your question there. Yes, the Flex Route has been very successful in terms of helping to alleviate congestion during the rush hour and during the morning and evening commutes. I believe also the Flex Route is often used also when there is college football games and others major events that are going on on the event campus, so it does get used for special events as well. In terms of being able to have it, what it came down to is the cost of being able to establish a full third lane, that would be at full capacity, which would have been astronomically higher cost-wise. And this was really the most cost-efficient way that we could construct this route in order to alleviate the traffic congestion within that area. And so, at this time, in order to have that route open full-time, I believe the shoulder would have to be widened and there have to be some additional improvements made to that stretch. So, right now, I will coordinate and get a stronger response from our region engineers and University Region to try to ensure that we can get a follow-up to this question answered for you. But overall, yeah, this project has been very successful and we're looking at different options moving forward.

Ivan: Thank you, Brad. Up next we have Ellen. Ellen, go ahead with your question, and can you tell us where you're calling from, Ellen?

Ellen: Thank you. I am calling from Kalamazoo. And I wanted to ask a question related to funding. So with COVID times in 2020, we've seen the economy be very volatile. I mean, gas prices are down. Also, a long-range funding proposition has not been approved, the bond money went through but there's not actually a long-term plan. So how do you anticipate this occurrence affecting the long-range plan?

Brad Sharlow: Yes, thank you for that. And as a result of COVID-19, Michigan, along with the nation, are seeking to recover from one of the largest disruptions to our economy since the Great Depression. Michigan relies on a gas tax to generate revenue to fund our system. And during the pandemic, people were staying home and not buying gas at the pump. At the most extreme times, traffic volumes were down by over 60 percent, which resulted in less gas being purchased and subsequently less revenue being provided to our agencies to fund transportation projects. At this point, MDOT and it's partnering agencies are still trying to determine the full effects of the funding shortfalls. And we are currently working with our Department of Treasury, our economic forecasters,

our elected officials, and other experts in the field to understand next steps and how to proceed. A revenue conference is being scheduled in late August to understand the impacts to the budget for the foreseeable future. What we can say is that even prior to COVID-19, there was not enough transportation funding to meet our needs, and this situation has gotten even worse since then.

We will, however, do our best to maximize the use of our available funding and priorities decisions, and to continue to be efficient with our investments in order to address the goals and strategies of the long-range plan. A couple of things, too, I want to also highlight, for more information on the long-range plan, as well as what our vision, goals and objectives are, is our website, www.MichiganMobility.org, has all kinds of information out there. I also want you to weigh in because we will have an online survey showing up on that website in the next few days under a Metroquest link, and we are going to ask that you help us. We'll be asking questions, asking you to rate potential strategies as well in terms of what we're looking at for the future of transportation. In addition, I also want to remind folks that if we don't get to your questions this morning, we will make sure that we have a response to all of your questions on our website within the next couple of weeks so that we can ensure that all of your questions get addressed, even if they can't be answered this morning.

Ivan: Jesse, go ahead with your question. And please tell us where you're calling from Jesse?

Jesse: Hi, my name is Jesse. I'm from Lapeer. My question is, while we know that there's weight limits on roads, and as we know, truckers have heavy vehicles. And I was wondering if you guys are gonna review the weight limits because a lot of times, truckers when they go to make deliveries, they have hard times to access where to get in for their deliveries because of these weight limits. And that does make it hard for them to be compliant. So if you guys are going to review for easier access for them because that does cause wear and tear on the road for them. Maybe if you could, I don't know, go with the companies and [unknown word] with that to work on the roads in front of those, if that can help with the truckers so that they can do their job to deliver?

Elisha: Hey, Jesse, that's a great question. This is Elisha with MDOT, thanks so much for asking that. So often when we're talking about those local deliveries by truckers, we're talking about local roads, so allowable weights on local roadways must be consistent with our state laws. But the final weight determinations are the responsibility of the local jurisdictions. But you're absolutely right. Trucking is essential to our economy as the trucks carry about two-thirds of the freight tonnage moving in Michigan, and our Michigan industries and businesses are more competitive due to our higher truck weight laws for interstate. Freight rates are actually lower in Michigan for commodities that can use our heavier vehicles because fewer vehicle drivers and trips are required. Thanks so much.

Ivan: Now we have Justin calling in from Traverse. Justin, go ahead with your question please?

Justin: Yes, my question has to deal with rail in Michigan. I am in the Grand Traverse area. Grand Traverse County is a population that has been expanding. And with that population has come congestion and I know in the 2011 study there was mention about a passenger train coming from Ann Arbor up to Travers City and that was the most requested item on that study. I know that Michigan has three subsidized Amtrak routes throughout the state. I am wondering if there has been any talk about maybe having a passenger train coming from Ann Arbor up to Traverse City, or a shorter passenger train system that goes from Petoskey down to Cadillac and up to Traverse City. Thank you.

Sarah Moore: Hi, Justin. Thanks for the question. This is Sarah Moore, with the Office of Rail. And you are correct, that was one of the most requested routes. We have been working with the Groundwork Center in Ann Arbor to study the feasibility for that passenger rail route from Ann Arbor to Traverse City. There was the beginnings of that study released in 2018. And we are continuing to work on that looking at the economic feasibility and things because there would need to be a lot of improvements made to the existing rail line that runs from Ann Arbor to Traverse City. So, if we can manage the ridership and the economic feasibility, then it's definitely something we would consider in the future. And it is something that we are looking at through this long-range planning process.

Ivan: Our next question came in and asked to be read. And the question is, how will the State Long-Range Transportation Plan, Michigan Mobility 2045, address COVID-19?

Brad Sharlow: And thank you very much for that. And this pandemic certainly has caught everyone off guard and we are working hard to update our data and analysis tools to incorporate the impacts of this pandemic to the plan. We are studying and incorporating new trends as a result of this, as well as understanding acceleration of existing trends and looking to incorporate new economic forecasts into the plan. A few examples of accelerated trends that we have obviously all been seeing is the increase in teleworking, an increase of online shopping, and retail. New trends that may involve the reduction of capacity for indoor facilities to promote social distancing, as well as if more people are working from home will the need be there for larger office buildings and stuff. So all of that type of stuff is going to be looked at further in this plan.

As we look at the future travel characteristics and impacts to how people travel as a whole, another thing we're going to be doing is a scenario-planning exercise this summer, which will be performed to understand the different options for how the future may look based on growth in the economy versus technological growth. In addition, we're going to be working hard as in the prior question that was asked to update our revenue and economic forecasts were like the changes in our budget. And we anticipate that this pandemic, however, will probably have a greater impact on our short-term trends but hopefully for our long-term

vision, goals and objectives that things will work themselves out over the long term.

Ivan: And this is Teresa calling in from Royal Oak. Go ahead, Teresa.

Teresa: I was just wondering how the planning processes are kind of communicating with the other sectors, particularly in housing, as you heard a lot about how the transportation funds are limited, but as people move to new areas, we need to create new transportation networks, just spreading out that funding even further. So I was wondering how the plan is communicating with other sectors.

Brad Sharlow: Teresa, thank you very much. Yes, as part of this long-range plan effort, we've developed an extensive stakeholder outreach group who has been involved with us from day one, in terms of helping us establish the vision and goals and objectives. Also, the different engagement methods that we're talking about here, in terms of reaching out to the public and our stakeholders. I mentioned that there will be an online survey on our website over the next week to ask folks on their priorities. But also as part of our freight and rail plans, we are doing some additional surveys to reach out to our freight and logistics industries, as well as to our business sectors, in order to try to understand what their needs are and to understand how we can partner with them. But, really, the thing that's going to make this plan successful is to have successful partnerships with the business communities in these different sectors so that we can grow and develop together.

Ivan: Thank you very much. Unfortunately, we've reached the allotted time we have for this morning's call. Thank you everyone who's participated, we'll now turn the call over to Brad Sharlow from Michigan Mobility 2045 to wrap up our call.

Brad Sharlow: Thanks, Ivan. Again, I want to thank everyone for their participation and attending our Telephone Town Hall this morning. I want to remind you that if we did not have time for your questions today, we will be answering those questions in a document, a Frequently Asked Questions document, which will be posted on our website, www.MichiganMobility.org, over the next couple of weeks. Also, we also remind you there are many more opportunities that you can participate as we work on the development of this plan over the next year. As I mentioned, we will have our survey online here over the next couple days, as well as we will be doing additional outreach. And we encourage you to visit our website, which also has an opportunity if you want to provide comments that way as well. And again, I want to thank everyone. Our timeline for finishing this is we hope to have a draft plan ready for your review within a year from now, and we hope to have this adopted and moving forward in the summer 2021. So again, I want to thank you today for your time, and we look forward to working with you as we move forward in the development of this plan. Have a good day.