



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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To: Honorable City Council of Detroit
From: City of Detroit Planning and Development Department *ABJ*
Re: Memorandum Regarding I-375 Project and City Framework Planning
(Senator Stephanie Chang letter) – Mary Waters, Councilmember At-Large
Date: April 17, 2024

Thank you for your inquiry on the I-375 project. PDD is happy to respond to your questions and the concerns raised by Senator Change in her memorandum.

How does the timing of the I-375 project compare with the City's framework planning?

The design of the I-375 project is an ongoing, iterative, process that is responding to community concerns raised in engagement. The construction of the project is scheduled to start with early work in Q4 2025 and major construction in Q1 2026, after the overall framework, including the zoning and land-use study, is completed in Q3 2025.

What communication has the Planning Department had with MDOT?

PDD is in constant communication with MDOT with weekly meetings on a variety of components relating to the I-375 project, including preparation for the land-use study and framework, stakeholder engagement, preparations for renewed and more responsive public engagement, new traffic counts and updates in the boulevard design from MDOT, infrastructure coordination through the Chief of Infrastructure's office, facilitating a peer review of the overall project, and participation on social equity initiatives.

Questions from Senator Stephanie Chang's letter:

How does the timing of the I-375 project compare with the timing of the framework planning? I encourage MDOT to delay final decisions on the design of the I-375 Project until the city's framework process has been completed?

The design of the I-375 project is an ongoing, iterative, process that is responding to community concerns raised in engagement. The construction of the project is scheduled to start with early work in Q4 2025 and major construction in Q1 2026, after the overall framework, including the zoning and land-use study, is completed in Q3 2025. The progressive design build method of delivery by MDOT allows for a more iterative approach to completing the design with input from community stakeholders and residents to ensure responsiveness to needs the project must serve. It does NOT mean the project design is completed.

Has MDOT asked for any extensions relating to federal funding it has received in order to ensure that the very best project has been built? If so, how many times and what has the federal government response has been?

The funding for the INFRA grant has statutory deadlines included in the most recent federal transportation authorization. Extensions for the grant are not typically approved and have not been requested by MDOT.

Can you share what work MDOT has done to find and work with the displaced Black Bottom residents or their descendants on gathering their input on the project?

MDOT is working with the Kresge-sponsored Restorative Roundtable to understand how to expand engagement in this area and to be responsive and sensitive to the history of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley residents and descendants. It should also be noted, MDOT along with PDD and community stakeholders and council representatives attended the inaugural Reconnecting Communities Summit in St. Paul MN last fall representing Detroit and the I-375 project. There was an exchange of ideas from other “reconnecting” examples across the country in how to capture the history and input to a project vision that we hope to use during the I-375 framework process. One thing to note, the clearing of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley began with the 1949 National Housing Act and accelerated with the 1956 National Defense Highways Act

What project design elements is MDOT considering to address the concerns regarding safety and noise level?

MDOT commissioned an updated traffic count to understand post-pandemic traffic volumes in late-Fall 2023 to understand what changes have occurred since the last count in 2017 and how the design of the boulevard is impacted. Through analysis of the data, there has been a determination the Right-of-Way width of the boulevard and the Eastern Market connections can be reduced due to a reduction in morning and evening traffic patterns, as well as a low projected population growth rate from SEMCOG, updated to project out to 2045.

A noise analysis was conducted as part of the environmental assessment and found that the project results in a slight reduction in noise for the residents to the east of the boulevard. Noise was a consideration in determining the alignment of the boulevard to the west, away from the existing residents. The land use of the excess property to the east of the proposed boulevard can further reduce noise levels to existing residents.

What support will MDOT provide to small businesses in the impacted area during and after construction?

MDOT will continue to support participation of small and disadvantaged businesses in the project. The progressive design-build team will have requirements and selection of the team will be in part based on disadvantaged business initiatives, as well as maintaining mobility during construction. There will be public engagement on the construction staging and access during construction to develop the detailed plans. MDOT is also partnering with Downtown Detroit Partnership to better understand the project impacts to small businesses and identify additional resources and best practices that can further support those businesses during construction.

I understand MDOT is currently awaiting the revised traffic study from SEMCOG and that the traffic data will be used to determine or justify the number of lanes and other design features. Will MDOT ensure the traffic is peer reviewed by a third party to ensure that we have the most validated-community centered approach possible?

MDOT is working with SEMCOG, FHWA, City of Detroit, and a diverse design team on the updated traffic analyses. SEMCOG provided some updates on the demographics and growth rates through the year 2045 and the updated traffic volumes are being modeled to inform the number of traffic lanes in the design. The analyses will be shared with the advisory committees and public once they are complete, and MDOT will continue to be transparent on the results. Current traffic data and analyses (from the environmental assessment) is on the project website and the updated work will be added to the website and accessible for review. Safety remains a top priority and MDOT is committed to balancing the pedestrian, non-motorized, and vehicular operations in the boulevard.