



Legislation Text

File #: 24-1461, **Version:** 2

Resolution Directing the City Administrator to Negotiate the Transfer of All State-Owned Trunklines within the City of Ann Arbor to the City of Ann Arbor

Reviewed by: Nicholas Hutchinson, City Engineer
Tim Wilhelm, Deputy City Attorney

Whereas, State trunklines -- North Main Street and the Washtenaw Avenue/Huron Street/Jackson Avenue corridor -- bisect the City of Ann Arbor and are owned, operated, and controlled by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT);

Whereas, MDOT's control over these roads has resulted in design and operations that prioritize motor vehicle throughput volume and minimizing travel times through these trunklines with limited consideration of other modes of transportation, access, and the safety and comfort of other users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users;

Whereas, MDOT's control of these roads has hindered the City's ability to make desired improvements to these corridors consistent with its adopted policies, such as Vision Zero, carbon neutrality, and reduced vehicle miles traveled, as evidenced by a long history of unsuccessful engagement with MDOT to make improvements to advance the City's for these corridors;

Whereas, Ann Arbor's 2021 Vision Zero-focused Transportation Plan lists MDOT-controlled roads as among the most dangerous in the City, with the top four "focus" intersections under MDOT control;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor and MDOT have differing goals for their respective transportation networks, which has led to different visions for how these trunklines should be designed and operated;

Whereas, Michigan Public Act 296 of 1969 provides that jurisdiction of a highway may be transferred from the state to a city jurisdictions and a "state of good repair" stipulation for jurisdictional transfers, which requires determining the current state of the roadways and estimating the cost of bringing the roads to a state of good repair for the next five years;

Whereas, In 2022, City Council approved R-22-391, to commission a State Trunkline Jurisdiction Transfer Study (Transfer Study) to evaluate the costs and benefits of assuming jurisdiction of these critical corridors;

Whereas, Since the time the Transfer Study was commissioned to the present time, one-third (12 out of 36) of all serious and fatal injury crashes in Ann Arbor have occurred on state trunklines, with six (out of 17) involving vulnerable road users;

Whereas, The Transfer Study enumerated many benefits, including better transit connections, safer streets, reduced pollution, and creating lower stress areas to walk and bike;

Whereas , The Transfer Study, referencing current US Department of Transportation guidance, showed that the transit, safety, economic, health, and environmental benefits to the people of Ann Arbor are greater than the costs of rebuilding and redesigning the corridors to align with the goals of Vision Zero safety and A²ZERO carbon neutrality;

Whereas, The Transfer Study finds a number of benefits that could not be quantified including, but not limited to, enabling the City to better align future development and land use with roadway design, enabling the implementation of the Downtown Street Guide which would in turn contribute to the economic vitality and improved character of downtown, allow for operational improvements to aid transit service, and provide for a more equitable and accessible transportation system overall;

Whereas, Jurisdictional Transfer of MDOT-controlled trunklines within the City's limits will facilitate inclusive placemaking, enabling these areas to more easily establish business improvement zones, enhance tourism attractions, and create vibrant, accessible, and community-oriented spaces that support local businesses and residents;

Whereas, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids previously negotiated the transfer of jurisdiction of state trunklines, and the Transfer Study found ongoing satisfaction with those decisions and that the transfers allowed the communities to make notable quality of life, public safety, and multimodal improvements (Kalamazoo) and advance development goals (Grand Rapids);

Whereas, In February 2024, the Ann Arbor Transportation Commission recommended City Council initiate negotiations with MDOT for a trunkline transfer;

Whereas, The State Trunkline Transfer Study estimated that the cost MDOT would incur to bring the roadways up to a state of good repair is \$82,083,000;

Whereas, City Council commits to exploring diverse funding sources to cover expenses related to transferring and enhancing state trunklines and identify the most financially prudent option for the city and its residents; and

Whereas, City Council acknowledges financial constraints that hinder many communities from transferring state trunklines, and urges MDOT to partner with all communities to improve their trunklines, in turn furthering the state's statewide transportation equity and safety goals;

RESOLVED, City Council directs the City Administrator to negotiate with MDOT to transfer jurisdiction of all MDOT-controlled trunklines within the City's limits to the City of Ann Arbor, while considering the cost to bring the trunklines up to a state of good repair, with an initial prioritization of North Main Street since MDOT has programmed a project on this corridor in the near future; and

RESOLVED, City Council directs the City Administrator to notify Ann Arbor-area state legislators of the passage of this resolution, and to engage with them, as appropriate, to collaborate toward negotiating a transfer of state-owned trunklines.

As Amended and Approved by Ann Arbor City Council on August 8, 2024

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Akmon, Briggs, Cornell, Ghazi Edwin, Harrison, and Disch