

= Capitol Loop =

The Capitol Loop is a state trunkline highway running through Lansing , Michigan , in the United States that was commissioned on October 13 , 1989 . It forms a loop route off Interstate 496 (I @-@ 496) through downtown near the Michigan State Capitol complex , home of the state legislature and several state departments . The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has labeled it as Capitol Loop I @-@ 496 or CL I @-@ 496 on some maps , similar to the Business Loop Interstate nomenclature . However , unlike other business loops in Michigan , it has unique reassurance markers ? the signs that serve as regular reminders of the name and number of the highway . It is known internally at MDOT as Connector 496 for inventory purposes . The route follows a series of one @-@ way and two @-@ way streets through downtown Lansing , directing traffic downtown to the State Capitol and other government buildings . Unlike the other streets downtown , the seven streets comprising the Capitol Loop are under state maintenance and jurisdiction .

The loop was originally proposed in 1986 as part of a downtown revitalization effort . Almost from the beginning before the highway was commissioned in 1989 , it was affected by controversial proposals . Several suggestions by community leaders to rename city streets in honor of Martin Luther King , Jr. were rejected . In the end , Logan Street was given a second name , Martin Luther King , Jr . Boulevard , and the original name was eventually dropped .

Meetings beginning in 1999 dealt with rebuilding the streets as part of a downtown beautification project . The project was delayed to accommodate replacing the sewer system under the roadway at the same time as the streetscaping . The downtown business community protested the original scope of construction , and the Lansing City Council threatened to cancel the project in response to the controversy . Instead of losing the investment in the downtown area , the scope of the project was reduced in scale , and the project was completed in 2005 , three months ahead of schedule . In 2010 , additional controversies surfaced regarding the posting and enforcement of speed limits on city streets in Michigan , including the streets that make up the Capitol Loop . The newest controversy over speed limits is related to compliance with a 2006 state law aimed at eliminating speed traps .

= = Route description = =

The Capitol Loop serves as a connection between the other state highways in Lansing and the Michigan State Capitol complex . The trunkline starts at the northern end of M @-@ 99 at exit 5 on I @-@ 496 . It runs north on Martin Luther King , Jr . Boulevard , where the street is divided into north- and south @-@ bound sections , each three lanes wide , separated by the Union Missionary Baptist Church off St. Joseph Street . A block north of the church , the sections of the street are divided by a central median north of Lenawee Street .

At Allegan Street , the Capitol Loop becomes a one @-@ way pair . Eastbound traffic continues on Allegan Street , passing to the south of the Hall of Justice , home to the Michigan Supreme Court . Westbound traffic is carried on Ottawa Street , one block to the north of Allegan Street . The Hall faces Butler Boulevard , which provides access from Allegan and Ottawa streets . Past Butler Boulevard , traffic passes the north side of the Library of Michigan and Historical Center complex . Between Pine Street and Capitol Avenue , Allegan Street continues south of the Michigan State Capitol . Allegan Street ends at a one @-@ way street , Grand Avenue , and eastbound Capitol Loop turns north on this three @-@ lane street .

The two directions of traffic on the Capitol Loop are reunited at the two @-@ way Michigan Avenue . Eastbound traffic turns east along Michigan Avenue ; westbound traffic turns north off Michigan onto Grand Avenue . Michigan Avenue runs with two lanes in each direction and a center turn lane , crossing the Grand River . East of the river , it approaches a complex of museums on Museum Drive , including the Michigan Museum of Surveying , R.E. Olds Transportation Museum (named for Oldsmobile founder , R.E. Olds) and the Impression Five Science Museum south of Riverwalk Park .

The Capitol Loop meets the one @-@ way pairing of Cedar and Larch streets on Michigan Avenue near Cooley Law School Stadium , home of the Lansing Lugnuts minor league baseball team . Cedar and Larch carry Business Loop Interstate 96 (BL I @-@ 96) . The two highway designations merge and run concurrently along the pair of streets . Eastbound Capitol Loop and eastbound BL I @-@ 96 follow Cedar Street southerly ; westbound Capitol Loop and westbound BL I @-@ 96 are routed northerly on Larch Street . Cedar Street runs southeasterly along the Grand River angling toward Larch Street . The two streets merge where they meet I @-@ 496 . This interchange at exit 7 along I @-@ 496 marks the eastern end of the Capitol Loop , but BL I @-@ 96 continues south of I @-@ 496 on Cedar Street . No part of the Capitol Loop is included on the National Highway System , a system of roads important to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility .

= = = Traffic counts = = =

In 2009 , MDOT conducted one of its annual surveys to measure the traffic levels on Michigan trunklines . These surveys calculate the average annual daily traffic (AADT) , which is a computation of the average traffic levels for a segment of roadway on any given day of the year . Along the Capitol Loop , the highest traffic counts were measured on Martin Luther King , Jr . Boulevard . A daily average of 25 @,@ 513 vehicles used that section of the route . This figure included an AADT of 619 commercial vehicles . Traffic volume drops along Allegan and Ottawa streets , where 2 @,@ 687 and 1 @,@ 499 vehicles used those streets , respectively . The second highest traffic counts were on the section concurrent with BL I @-@ 96 on Cedar and Larch streets . There , 17 @,@ 682 vehicles and 547 trucks used the streets .

= = History = =

= = = Proposal and creation = = =

MDOT proposed the Capitol Loop in 1986 . The highway designation was part of a partnership between the State of Michigan and the City of Lansing to revitalize the downtown area . The designation of this highway provided drivers with a signed route to various attractions in the downtown Lansing area . MDOT started implementing plans for the Capitol Loop in May 1986 with improvements to Michigan Avenue . This project included an initial \$ 80 @,@ 000 investment (equivalent to \$ 234 @,@ 000 in 2015) to streetscaping between the State Capitol and the Grand River . The City of Lansing transferred jurisdiction over the streets involved to MDOT on October 13 , 1989 , allowing the state to commission the trunkline .

The route serves the Capitol Park , which was created by an act of the Michigan Legislature in 1984 with the boundaries of Ottawa , Allegan and Logan streets . The fourth side is the vacated section of Sycamore Street between Ottawa and Allegan . The current Library of Michigan building was opened in 1989 . The State Capitol , previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 25 , 1971 , was renovated as part of this revitalization effort . The extensive , three @-@ year renovation of the Capitol was completed in 1992 , the same year in which it was designated as a National Historic Landmark . The Hall of Justice was opened in October 2002 , giving the Michigan Supreme Court a permanent home for the first time since the court had vacated the Capitol in 1970 .

= = = Street name changes = = =

Various proposals to honor Martin Luther King , Jr. in Lansing were floated around 1986 . The Pastor 's Conference of Lansing put forward renaming Logan Street in honor of the civil rights leader , but residents were not supportive of this idea at the time . Another proposal in October 1988 would have renamed Allegan Street because it was shorter and would affect fewer residents . Allegan Street also passes through the city 's black community . Residents objected because the city 's east

? west streets were all named for the counties in the state when the city was platted in 1847 . The last failed proposal would have renamed the entire Capitol Loop in King 's honor . This idea failed because the route 's unique markers had already been designed , made and were about to be installed .

The conference proposed renaming Logan Street again in 1989 . This time residents objected over the \$ 32 @, @ 000 (equivalent to \$ 78 @, @ 000 in 2015) to replace the signs . Logan Street was already named for Gen. John A. Logan , who served as a colonel with a Michigan regiment and later as a general in the American Civil War . A compromise by the mayor was adopted by the city council on April 24 , 1989 , to allow both names to be used on the street . This dual @-@ naming arrangement was dropped by the city council on March 28 , 1994 , removing the " Logan Street " name from the street after two years of debate .

= = = Reconstruction controversy = = =

Officials from the City of Lansing and MDOT announced a two @-@ year , \$ 22 million project (in 2003 , equivalent to \$ 31 million in 2015) to reconstruct the Capitol Loop on May 22 , 2003 . The project would have closed downtown streets in 2004 and 2005 after preparatory work in late 2003 . MDOT was seeking to rebuild the streets to improve the downtown area around the State Capitol , adding decorative sidewalks , lighting and planting new trees . The city planned to upgrade the sewer system at the same time as part of a 30 @-@ year project to separate the storm and sanitary sewers . MDOT stated that the project would completely close streets along the loop , with the exception of one lane of traffic in each direction along Michigan Avenue . The project was called the " most ambitious since the Interstate 496 construction project in 2001 " by the Lansing State Journal .

In the weeks leading up to the November 3 , 2003 , Lansing City Council meeting , businesses that would be affected by the project raised objections to the scope of the project . One business owner circulated a petition signed by 23 businesses asking the city to delay part of the overall project . The project was nicknamed in the press " Lansing 's ' Big Dig ' " because the sewer and utility work required 30 @-@ foot (9 @. @ 14 m) excavations in the streets downtown . Some initial opposition was based on a false assumption that the project would close the entire length of the streets at once , instead of in stages . MDOT 's original beautification project was delayed five years , and the city 's mandated sewer separation project was fast @-@ tracked . This combined project , planned for 2004 ? 05 , was planned to prevent digging up the same streets twice within 10 ? 15 years . Most of the business owners expressed concerns that at the end of the project their businesses might not survive to enjoy the benefits of the downtown beautification . The mayor attempted to get the city council to postpone a vote to stop the issuance of bonds for the city 's portion of the overall project . City council members criticized MDOT 's " [inflexibility] about changing the plans to accommodate businesses . " MDOT replied that the contract bids were already out and that it was too late to change the scope of the project .

The city council tabled the project , postponing a final decision on approving it until the businesses ' concerns could be addressed . City officials stated a need to redesign the project to accommodate the business community downtown . The project was originally planned in 1999 with votes and hearings by the city council starting in 2001 . The city did not kill the project outright which would have risked the city losing the investment in the downtown infrastructure . Instead , the final decision was delayed for two weeks . Had the project been killed outright , MDOT could have reallocated the funding to any project elsewhere in the state . After the decision to delay the project , Mayor Tony Benavides appointed a task force to work with the businesses to address their concerns . Even the local papers pushed all parties concerned to solve the issues and salvage the project . The city announced a revised plan on November 19 , 2003 , to move parts of the sewer project to a separate timeline so that they would take 16 years to complete . The original 2004 ? 05 project was scaled down to encompass the sewer and water main work with the beautification project on Ottawa , Allegan , Pine and Walnut streets with additional work possible on Capitol Avenue . The revised plan drew praise from members of the business community . The revised project , now budgeted at \$ 12

million (in 2003 , equivalent to \$ 16 @. @ 9 million in 2015) involved work on 14 fewer blocks of the downtown area . The project was approved on December 13 , 2004 . The bids on the contract work were opened on January 21 , 2004 , with the bid awarded to E.T. MacKenzie Company of Grand Ledge .

= = = Reconstruction project = = =

Work on the scaled @-@ down Capitol Loop reconstruction project started on April 5 , 2004 . Area businesses prepared in advance of the project for disruptions . The Michigan Supreme Court distributed color @-@ coded brochures to alert employees of changes as a result of the project . The Central Methodist Church at the corner of Capitol Avenue and Ottawa Street lost access to its parking lot , but the city reserved on @-@ street parking for parishioners . The initial stage of the project closed Ottawa Avenue in stages and converted adjacent one @-@ way streets to two @-@ way traffic to accommodate state employees working next to the construction zone . Several sidewalks were closed on one side of affected streets , while the opposite sidewalks remained open . The revised project earned praise in newspaper editorials after construction started . This praise was tempered with caution to motorists and the officials in charge of the project . The former were advised to remember that the scaled @-@ down project was redesigned to accommodate them ; the latter were reminded to get the job done as soon as practical .

Business reported that the project did not affect them as much as they had feared before the project . Minor inconveniences were reported , with some commuters recounting only minor delays in trips downtown . The noise was cited as the worst side effect of the project by several residents in media reports . The work on Allegan Street that was originally planned for 2005 was scheduled by MDOT for the 2004 construction season . The project wrapped up for the year in November . Construction resumed on the remaining sections of the project on March 14 , 2005 . This phase included the remaining work on Allegan and Walnut streets . By May , the affected streets were reduced to gravel and completed streets had been reopened . Additional work scheduled for 2005 included streetscaping improvements to Cedar and Larch streets .

The project wrapped up three months ahead of the original October completion date . The project cost MDOT \$ 15 @. @ 4 million (in 2005 , equivalent to \$ 19 @. @ 4 million in 2015) with an additional \$ 5 @. @ 6 million paid by the City of Lansing for the sewer work (in 2003 , equivalent to \$ 7 @. @ 06 million in 2015) . Lansing 's share of the costs included the reconstruction costs for Walnut and Pine streets , since those streets are not part of the state trunkline system . The completion of the project was marked with a ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony to open the streets to traffic on June 30 , 2005 .

= = = Speed limit controversy = = =

A 2006 Michigan law was enacted to reform how cities in the state set speed limits . Under this law , the streets that comprise the Capitol Loop were mismarked according to the Michigan State Police (MSP) . The law was designed to eliminate speed traps in the state by basing the determination of speed limits on scientific criteria . Unless a roadway is in a downtown business district or subdivision , the limit is based on the number of access points , either cross streets or driveways , along the roadway . Exceptions to these classifications can be made based on a technical study by traffic engineers . Lansing city officials stated in March 2009 that by adopting the Uniform Vehicle Code instead of the state 's Motor Vehicle Code , Lansing is immune from the change in law and can enforce the 25 @-@ mile @-@ per @-@ hour (40 km / h) limits .

The Lansing city attorney was dismissing speeding tickets issued on the Capitol Loop in June 2010 . The loop was not signed with speed @-@ limit signs , making the tickets unenforceable . The city cannot install the signs on its own because of the state trunkline status of the streets that make up the Capitol Loop ; the MSP and MDOT are in charge of setting and signing the speed limits on state trunklines in Michigan . City Attorney Brig Smith stated that until the state agencies complete the speed study and erect the signs , he cannot enforce any tickets for speeding on the Capitol Loop .

MSP and MDOT officials stated that the study is complete and the new signs are on order . The limits were raised from 25 to 30 mph (40 to 48 km / h) on the eastern half of the loop and 35 mph (56 km / h) on the western half as a result of the MDOT and MSP speed studies . State Representative Rick Jones from Grand Ledge has been pushing for scientifically set speed limits in the state to limit speed traps , and he has proposed new legislation to force cities to comply with the 2006 law , ending any loopholes used by cities to set lower limits . As Jones explained to reporters , the current situation is one where " ... streets are artificially posted too low for the purpose of writing tickets . "

= = Major intersections = =

The entire highway is in Lansing , Ingham County .

Eastbound

Westbound