

= Interstate 496 =

Interstate 496 ( I @-@ 496 ) is an auxiliary Interstate Highway that passes through downtown Lansing in the US state of Michigan . Also a component of the State Trunkline Highway System , the freeway connects I @-@ 96 to the downtown area . It has been named the R.E. Olds Freeway ( sometimes just Olds Freeway ) for Ransom E. Olds , the founder of Oldsmobile and the REO Motor Car Company . I @-@ 496 runs east ? west from I @-@ 96 / I @-@ 69 near the downtown area and north ? south along a section that runs concurrently with US Highway 127 ( US 127 ) . The trunkline also passes a former assembly plant used by Oldsmobile and runs along or crosses parts of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers .

Construction of I @-@ 496 started in 1963 , and the freeway opened on December 18 , 1970 . Segments of the freeway south of downtown Lansing were built in the location of a historically black neighborhood . This neighborhood was formed based on the segregationist practices of the early 20th century . Community leaders worked for different housing opportunities for the black residents displaced by I @-@ 496 rather than fight the freeway . As the trunkline neared completion , competing proposals to name it resulted in two similar , but separate designations applied to I @-@ 496 . The city originally approved one name in honor of a former mayor . The local historical society proposed that the state name it as a memorial to Olds after the demolition of the Olds Mansion . The city renamed it the Oldsmobile Expressway , the name under which it opened in December 1970 . Two years later , the Michigan Legislature restored its preferred name and it has been the Olds Freeway since .

= = Route description = =

I @-@ 496 starts at an interchange with I @-@ 96 / I @-@ 69 at that freeway 's exit 95 in Delta Township in Eaton County . The freeway runs eastward through suburban areas of the township adjacent to some residential subdivisions . Continuing eastward , there is an interchange for Creyts Road before I @-@ 496 angles to the northeast . At the interchange with Waverly Road , I @-@ 496 crosses into Ingham County . The freeway then runs parallel to the Grand River . Near a partial interchange with Lansing Road ( old US 27 ) , the freeway gains a pair of service drives : St. Joseph Street runs one @-@ way westbound on the north side , and Malcolm X Street runs eastbound to the south . The next interchange is for the connection to the Capitol Loop and M @-@ 99 , both of which run along Martin Luther King Boulevard . The Capitol Loop , also internally numbered Connector 496 , is a signed connector that provides access to various state government buildings like the Michigan State Capitol . South of this interchange , M @-@ 99 connects to the Lansing Car Assembly plant , a former facility for Oldsmobile .

Continuing eastward , I @-@ 496 passes north of the assembly plant complex and south of the central business district . East of a partial interchange with Walnut Street , the freeway passes the Michigan Women 's Hall of Fame , which is located on I @-@ 496 's southern service drive . The south side of the freeway is adjacent to Cooley Gardens near the confluence of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers . I @-@ 496 crosses the Grand River downstream from the confluence and meets the eastern terminus of the Capitol Loop . This interchange with Cedar and Larch streets is also a connection to Business Loop I @-@ 96 ( BL I @-@ 96 ) and Pennsylvania Avenue . St. Joseph Street ends after the connection to Pennsylvania Avenue . The main freeway crosses a rail line owned by CSX Transportation . I @-@ 496 runs parallel to the north side of the rail line while Malcolm X Street follows to the south as far as the Clemens Avenue overpass . The freeway then crosses into East Lansing near the Red Cedar Natural Area .

After crossing the city line , I @-@ 496 turns southward and merges with US 127 . The two highways run concurrently , and they cross a line of the Canadian National Railway . The freeway runs along the western edge of the campus of Michigan State University . South of campus , I @-@ 496 / US 127 crosses back into Lansing and has an interchange with Jolly Road before entering Delhi Township . About two @-@ thirds of a mile ( 1 @-@ 1 km ) south of Jolly Road , I @-@ 496 meets I @-@ 96 and terminates ; US 127 continues southward as a freeway toward Jackson .

Like other state highways in Michigan , I @-@ 496 is maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation ( MDOT ) . In 2011 , the department 's traffic surveys showed that on average , 61 @,@ 082 vehicles used the freeway between BL I @-@ 96 and the Trowbridge Road interchange south of US 127 , the highest traffic count along I @-@ 496 . West of Creyts Road , 17 @,@ 600 vehicles did so each day , which was the lowest count along the trunkline . As an Interstate Highway , all of I @-@ 496 is listed on the National Highway System , a network of roads deemed important to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility .

= = History = =

An east ? west freeway was originally planned as an Interstate Highway allowing traffic to access downtown Lansing in the 1955 General Location of National System of Interstate Highways ( Yellow Book ) , an early proposal for what would become the Interstate Highway System . As originally proposed by the Michigan State Highway Department in 1958 , the freeway was to be called I @-@ 296 . The department was waiting on approval of a final numbering scheme the next year , before the first Interstates were signed in the state in 1959 . By the time construction started on the Lansing freeway , it was numbered I @-@ 496 .

The section near downtown was to be built through a historically African @-@ American neighborhood . The neighborhood was formed through " unwritten rules of segregation " as real estate agents and mortgage brokers guided black residents to the area when they were looking to buy homes . When the state and federal governments were planning the freeway , the area was chosen for the path of I @-@ 496 . The neighborhood boasted a community center and several businesses that catered to the black population of Lansing , including the only record store that sold rhythm and blues music . Community leaders did not fight the freeway and instead lobbied for affordable housing and relocation assistance . The construction spurred integration of blacks into the wider community ; some were able to move into neighborhoods previously closed to them , purchasing " newer houses near better schools . " In total , the construction of the freeway required the demolition or removal of nearly 600 homes , 60 businesses , and 15 farms .

The first section of I @-@ 496 was opened in December 1963 , and ran from I @-@ 96 northerly to M @-@ 43 / M @-@ 78 ( Saginaw and Kalamazoo streets ) between Lansing and East Lansing . The freeway , comprising the southern two @-@ thirds , was designated I @-@ 496 / M @-@ 78 / BL I @-@ 96 while the northern portion was on city streets as M @-@ 78 / BL I @-@ 96 . Some 50 men completed the work by year 's end ; they went entirely without vacation time to accomplish the feat . Another section of freeway was opened in 1966 , and US 127 was rerouted to follow I @-@ 496 / M @-@ 78 . BL I @-@ 96 was removed from I @-@ 496 / US 127 / M @-@ 78 and routed along the former US 127 . The freeway segment north of the Trowbridge Road interchange continuing northward as part of US 127 was opened in 1969 . Another section opened at the same time was the western section from I @-@ 96 to Lansing Road ( then US 27 ) in 1969 . The remaining section between M @-@ 99 ( then Logan Street , now Martin Luther King , Jr . Boulevard ) and I @-@ 496 / US 127 opened on December 18 , 1970 , completing construction .

The freeway underwent a \$ 42 @.@ 4 million reconstruction ( equivalent to \$ 63 @.@ 5 million in 2015 ) between April and November 2001 which included the rehabilitation or reconstruction of 35 bridges , 8 @.@ 5 miles ( 13 @.@ 7 km ) of freeway , and the addition of a weave @-@ merge lane between Pennsylvania Avenue and US 127 . Speed limits were raised along I @-@ 496 from 55 to 70 miles per hour ( 89 to 113 km / h ) in 2007 to reflect the speeds motorists were driving during studies conducted by MDOT and the Michigan State Police .

The name applied to the freeway was not without controversy . The Lansing City Council named it in September 1966 after Ralph W. Crego , a former city council member and the longest @-@ serving mayor in the city 's history . The Historical Society of Greater Lansing wanted it named the " R.E. Olds Expressway " , in part because the new road brought about the demolition of the Olds Mansion , which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places , and to " recogniz [ e ] the contributions of R.E. Olds to the industries of the city . " The society approached the Michigan Legislature , which introduced House Resolution 48 in February 1970 using the historical society 's

preferred name . The city council realized that they had been bypassed and conveniently discovered that their original resolution was not " formally adopted " . They named a park for Crego instead in October 1970 and adopted a resolution to name I @-@ 496 the " Oldsmobile Expressway " . The Legislature approved its resolution resulting in two names , one for the founder of the car company , and one for the company itself . The council member who introduced the city 's resolution criticized the Legislature for taking action without consultation . The state resolution was intercepted before it could be sent to the Michigan Department of State Highways , and the freeway opened on December 18 , 1970 , with the " Oldsmobile Expressway " name . On August 21 , 1972 , during the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of Oldsmobile , Senate Concurrent Resolution 345 renamed I @-@ 496 the " R.E. Olds Freeway " .

= = Exit list = =

= = Related trunkline = =

The Capitol Loop is a state trunkline highway running through Lansing that was commissioned on October 13 , 1989 . It forms a loop route off I @-@ 496 through downtown near the Michigan State Capitol complex , home of the state legislature and several state departments . 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 highway 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 composing 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 . The first was related to suggestions by community leaders to rename city streets in honor of Martin Luther King , Jr . Another controversy dealt with rebuilding the streets as part of a downtown beautification project ; 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 . 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 .