

= Michigan State Trunkline Highway System =

The State Trunkline Highway System consists of all the state highways in Michigan , including those designated as Interstate , United States Numbered (US Highways) , or State Trunkline highways . In their abbreviated format , these classifications are applied to highway numbers with an I- , US , or M- prefix , respectively . The system is maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and comprises 9 @, @ 669 miles (15 @, @ 561 km) of trunklines in all 83 counties of the state on both the Upper and Lower peninsulas (UP , LP) , which are linked by the Mackinac Bridge . Components of the system range in scale from 10 @-@ lane urban freeways with local @-@ express lanes to two @-@ lane rural undivided highways to a non @-@ motorized highway on Mackinac Island where cars are forbidden . The longest highway is nearly 400 miles (640 km) long , while the shortest is about three @-@ quarters of a mile (about 1 @. @ 2 km) . Some roads are unsigned highways , lacking signage to indicate their maintenance by MDOT ; these may be remnants of highways that are still under state control whose designations were decommissioned or roadway segments left over from realignment projects .

Predecessors to today 's modern highways include the foot trails used by Native Americans in the time before European settlement . Shortly after the creation of the Michigan Territory in 1805 , the new government established the first road districts . The federal government aided in the construction of roads to connect population centers in the territory . At the time , road construction was under the control of the township and county governments . The state government was briefly involved in roads until prohibited by a new constitution in 1850 . Private companies constructed plank roads and charged tolls . Local township roads were financed and constructed through a statute labor system that required landowners to make improvements in lieu of taxes . Countywide coordination of road planning , construction and maintenance was enacted in the late 19th century .

In the early 20th century , the constitutional prohibition on state involvement in roads was removed . The Michigan State Highway Department (MSHD) was created in 1905 , and the department paid counties and townships to improve roads to state standards . On May 13 , 1913 , the State Reward Trunk Line Highways Act was passed , creating the State Trunkline Highway System . The MSHD assigned internal highway numbers to roads in the system , and in 1919 , the numbers were signposted along the roads and marked on maps . The US Highway System was created in 1926 , and highways in Michigan were renumbered to account for the new designations . Legislation in the 1930s consolidated control of the state trunklines in the state highway department . During the 1940s , the first freeways were built in Michigan . With the introduction of the Interstate Highway system in the 1950s , the state aborted an effort to build the Michigan Turnpike , a tolled freeway in the southeast corner of the LP . Construction on Michigan 's Interstates started in the latter part of that decade and continued until 1992 . During that period , several freeways were canceled in the 1960s and 1970s , while others were delayed or modified over environmental and political concerns . Since 1992 , few additional freeways have been built , and in the early years of the 21st century , projects are underway to bypass cities with new highways .

= = Numbering = =

= = = Usage = = =

The letter M in the state highway numbers is an integral part of the designation and included on the diamond @-@ shaped reassurance markers posted alongside the highways . The state 's highways are referred to using an M @-@ n syntax as opposed to Route n or Highway n , which are common elsewhere . This usage dates from 1919 , when Michigan 's state trunklines were first signed along the roadways , and continues to this day in official and unofficial contexts . Michigan is one of only two states following this syntax , the other one being Kansas .

Although M @-@ n outside of Michigan could conceivably refer to other state , provincial , local , or national highways , local usage in those areas does not mimic the Michigan usage in most cases . In

countries like the United Kingdom , M refers to motorways , analogous to freeways in the United States , whereas M @-@ numbered designations in Michigan simply indicate state trunklines in general and may exist on any type of highway . M @-@ numbered trunklines are designated along a variety of roads , including eight @-@ lane freeways in urban areas , four @-@ lane rural freeways and expressways , principal arterial highways , and two @-@ lane highways in remote rural areas . The system also includes M @-@ 185 on Mackinac Island , a non @-@ motorized road restricted to bicycles , horse @-@ drawn carriages and pedestrians .

The highest numbers used for highway designations include M @-@ 553 in the UP and Interstate 696 (I @-@ 696) running along the northern Detroit suburbs . The lowest numbers in use are M @-@ 1 along Woodward Avenue in the Detroit area and US Highway 2 (US 2) across the UP . Most M @-@ numbered trunkline designations are in the low 200s or under , but some have been designated in the low 300s . MDOT has not assigned a designation outside the Interstate System in the 400s at this time . No discernible pattern exists in Michigan 's numbering system , although most of the M @-@ numbered routes lower than 15 are typically located in or around the major cities of Detroit and Grand Rapids .

= = = Numerical duplication = = =

Unlike some other states , there are no formal rules prohibiting the usage of the same route number under different systems . Motorists using Michigan 's highways may encounter I @-@ 75 and M @-@ 75 , as well as both US 8 and M @-@ 8 . Many of the state 's US Highways were assigned numbers duplicating those of state trunklines when the US Highway System was created in 1926 . The introduction of the Interstate Highway System in the late 1950s further complicated the situation , as each mainline Interstate designation has an unrelated M @-@ n trunkline counterpart elsewhere in the state .

Many former US Highways in Michigan have left an M @-@ numbered highway with the same number as a relic of their existence . For example , M @-@ 27 runs along a portion of former US 27 . In addition , there are two occurrences of original M @-@ numbered state routes which became US Highways with the same designations : all of M @-@ 16 became US 16 and most of M @-@ 10 from Detroit to Saginaw was assumed into the route of US 10 in 1926 . In fact , each iteration of M @-@ 10 has existed in whole or part along a former or future alignment of US 10 .

There are also instances of M @-@ numbered state highways that once existed as extensions of US Highways . M @-@ 25 was originally an extension of US 25 before the latter was decommissioned in Michigan , and M @-@ 24 was once an extension of US 24 before routing changes separated the two highways . M @-@ 131 was an extension of US 131 until US 131 was routed onto the former M @-@ 131 . There was also once an M @-@ 112 that served as an alternate routing for US 112 (both have since been changed to I @-@ 94 and US 12 , respectively) .

= = Highway systems = =

There are four types of highways maintained by MDOT as part of the overall State Trunkline Highway System . In addition , there are systems of roads maintained by the federal government and local counties . There are frequent overlaps between designations when different types of highways share the same stretch of pavement in concurrencies . As just one example of the phenomenon , the freeway between Flint and Standish carries both the I @-@ 75 and US 23 designations for around 75 miles (121 km) .

= = = State Trunkline Highways = = =

The State Trunkline Highway System comprises four types of highways : Michigan 's portions of the Interstate Highway System and United States Numbered Highway System (US Highways) , and the regular state trunklines ; the fourth type , special routes , are variations of the other three types

of highway , and are distinguished by special plates placed above the route marker . The plates indicate the routes as business or connector routes . Business loops and spurs of the Interstate Highway System use a special green version of the standard Interstate marker which places the word " Business " at the top where " Interstate " would otherwise appears . These business loops and spurs connect downtown districts to main highways after realignments and bypasses have routed the main highway out of the downtown area . Another category , connector routes , serve to connect two highways as their names suggest ; most of these connectors are unsigned . The highways names for special routes are formulated by prefacing the parent highway with the type of special route . The full names are commonly abbreviated like other highways : Business Loop Interstate 196 (BL I @-@ 196) , Business M @-@ 60 (Bus . M @-@ 60) or Connector M @-@ 44 (Conn . M @-@ 44) . As of 2010 there are 9 @,@ 669 miles (15 @,@ 561 km) of state trunklines in Michigan , making up about eight percent of the state 's roadways . Of that mileage , some 4 @,@ 415 miles (7 @,@ 105 km) of state @-@ maintained highways are included in the National Highway System , which are highways selected for their importance to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility . The state trunkline highways in Michigan carry approximately 51 percent of the state 's traffic , as of 2007 .

The highways in the system range in length from the unsigned Business Spur Interstate 375 (BS I @-@ 375) at 0 @.@ 170 miles (0 @.@ 274 km) and signed M @-@ 212 at 0 @.@ 732 miles (1 @.@ 178 km) to I @-@ 75 at 395 @.@ 40 miles (636 @.@ 33 km) . Some trunklines in Michigan are maintained by MDOT but bear no signage along the route to indicate so . These unsigned trunklines are mostly segments of former highway designations that have been moved or decommissioned . They remain under state control until their respective city or county accepts jurisdiction of the roadway from the state .

Highways in the state maintained by MDOT range from two @-@ lane rural highways up to 12 @-@ lane freeways . In addition to the Interstates , other trunklines are built to freeway standards . Sections of US 10 , US 23 , US 31 , US 127 and US 131 have been upgraded to freeway standards . All or part of several state trunklines are also freeways . In the Metro Detroit area , M @-@ 5 , M @-@ 8 (Davison Freeway) , M @-@ 10 (Lodge Freeway) , M @-@ 14 , M @-@ 39 (Southfield Freeway) , M @-@ 53 (Van Dyke Freeway) , and M @-@ 59 have such sections . In the rest of the state , M @-@ 6 near Grand Rapids , Conn . M @-@ 13 near Bay City , M @-@ 47 near Midland , M @-@ 60 near Jackson , and Bus . US 131 near Kalamazoo are also freeways , for all or part of their respective lengths . Sections of US 12 , M @-@ 20 , M @-@ 37 , M @-@ 46 , M @-@ 55 , M @-@ 66 and US 223 have been routed to run concurrently with other freeways as well .

As of January 2013 , there are three sources of revenue that contribute to the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) : fuel excise taxes , vehicle registration fees and federal aid . Michigan levies an excise tax of 18 @.@ 7 cents per gallon on gasoline and 15 cents per gallon on diesel fuel to generate approximately \$ 955 million in revenue per year . Vehicle registrations account for about \$ 868 million while federal aid from federal fuel taxes accounts for the last third of funding in Michigan . Money from the MTF is distributed between MDOT , county road commissions , city or village street departments and local public transit agencies . For fiscal year 2013 , MDOT has budgeted approximately \$ 1 @.@ 2 billion on the highway system , including \$ 273 @.@ 4 million in routine maintenance . The remainder financed major projects in terms of planning , right @-@ of @-@ way acquisition or construction . In terms of winter maintenance , MDOT classifies all state highways into two priority levels for snow removal , authorizing overtime to clear some highways in the state .

= = = County roads and other systems = = =

MDOT assigns the numbers for a parallel system of county @-@ designated highways in the state ; the numbers are assigned in a grid system by the department . These highways , while signed from connecting trunklines and shown on the official MDOT map , are maintained by the various counties . They were started in 1970 as a supplement to the main trunkline system and carry a letter @-@ number combination on the national standard pentagon @-@ shaped marker in blue and yellow .

The letter component of the name corresponds to a zone of the state ; zones A ? F are in the Lower Peninsula while G and H are in the Upper Peninsula . The numbers correspond to a numbered grid within each lettered zone . Other county systems are designated and maintained in each of the 83 counties , and signage and numbering practices vary . The state 's 533 incorporated cities and villages also maintain their own street networks , but townships in the state have no jurisdiction over roads .

The U.S. Forest Service and Federal Highway Administration designate Federal Forest Highways providing access to the handful of National Forests in the state . In addition , Michigan participates in the Great Lakes Circle Tour program , signing tours along the state @-@ maintained highway closest to Michigan 's Great Lakes shorelines . The Michigan Heritage Route System was created in 1993 to highlight trunklines with historic , recreational or scenic qualities ; the name was changed to Pure Michigan Byway on December 30 , 2014 .

= = History = =

= = = 19th century = = =

The history of the highway system in Michigan dates back to the old Native American trails that crossed the state . These trails were pathways no wider than approximately 12 ? 18 inches (30 ? 46 cm) , permitting single @-@ file traffic . Many of the modern highways in the state follow the path of these old trails , including the Great Trail from Fort Pitt to Fort Detroit which is now US 24 from Detroit to Toledo , Ohio . This trail connected with Braddock 's Road which led to the Atlantic Coast .

The Michigan Territory was established in 1805 , and the territorial governor established the first road districts . The districts built farm @-@ to @-@ market roads to serve the agricultural needs of the farming population of the area at the time ; they connected farmers with markets in their local communities . The local streets in the individual communities were the responsibility of those communities . At the same time , Detroit created 120 @-@ foot @-@ wide (37 m) rights @-@ of @-@ way for the five great avenues in the city following a fire .

Outside of Detroit , the situation was quite different . Maps of the territory were printed with the words " interminable swamp " across the interior until 1839 . Reports of the first explorers and government surveyors crossing the future state only seemed to confirm the assessment that Michigan land was unsuitable for agriculture or other productive activities . The few roads in the area were impassable for half of the year . The poor quality of the early roads meant that most transportation in the state was by way of the lakes and rivers at first . Commerce was limited to trade to and from Canada .

These roads proved inadequate to the needs of the military during the War of 1812 . Territorial Governor Lewis Cass lobbied the federal government for road construction funding to bolster defensive needs as well as aid in settlement of the territory . Military roads debuted in 1816 with the construction of the Detroit ? Fort Meigs Road to Toledo as a response to transportation needs . More roads were built with Congressional appropriations in the 1820s and 1830s connecting Detroit to Port Huron , Saginaw , Grand Rapids and Chicago .

Townships were given authority to construct roads under the supervision of county commissioners in 1817 . This supervision was difficult since in one case , one county covered all of the Upper Peninsula and several of today 's counties in the Lower Peninsula . Direct supervision over construction was granted to the townships in 1827 , and federal involvement in road building ended with the 1837 grant of statehood .

The first state constitution encouraged state involvement in internal improvements like roads . The Panic of 1837 devastated the new state 's efforts , and the government defaulted on bond payments . Private construction companies built roads starting in 1844 to fill the void in long @-@ distance road construction left by the departure of the federal government . The first roads were corduroy roads ; to build these , logs of all sizes were placed across the road . The gaps between the logs

were filled in with smaller logs or earth . In swampy or marshy areas , brush was laid down first for drainage . In time , the logs would rot , leaving large gaps to the roadway that would catch wagon wheels or draft animal feet . Later , roads were built with oak planks . The plank road companies had to be chartered by the state after passage of legislation in 1848 . According to the plank road law , these companies had to build their roads to a set of minimum specifications . These specifications included 2 ? 4 rods (33 ? 66 ft ; 10 ? 20 m) in total width , a road surface 16 feet (4 @. @ 9 m) wide with at least 8 feet (2 @. @ 4 m) made of 3 @-@ inch (8 cm) planks . Later amendments to the law allowed the companies to substitute gravel for the planks . Starting with the enactment of a new state constitution in 1850 , the state was prohibited from being " a part to , or interested in , any work of internal improvement " ; this provision ended the state government 's involvement in Michigan 's roads .

The early plank roads were funded by tolls ; these fares were collected at turnstiles every few miles along the roads , at rates of \$ 0 @. @ 02 / mile for wagons pulled by two animals (equivalent to \$ 0 @. @ 57 in 2015) . As time passed , the planks would warp and rot . The tolls were insufficient to fund the maintenance necessary to keep the roads in good repair . Even Mark Twain remarked , " The road could not have been bad if some unconscionable scoundrel had not now and then dropped a plank across it , " after a trip to Grand Rapids . The planks were removed over time and replaced with gravel roads . The longest chartered road was a distance of 220 miles (350 km) from Zilwaukee to Mackinaw City by way of Traverse City ; the shortest was a mile (1 @. @ 6 km) near Sault Ste . Marie .

Townships continued to maintain and build local roads using the " statute labor system " . An able @-@ bodied man residing in a local road district was expected to pay his road taxes by performing 30 days of labor on the roads in his district . If he was unable to work off the tax , a rate of \$ 0 @. @ 625 / day was assessed (equivalent to \$ 17 @. @ 78 in 2015) . This road maintenance was performed under the guidance of the township road overseer , a separate elected township official , according to the wishes of his constituents , often without any county @-@ level planning or coordination . Often the " improved roads " were in worse condition than unimproved roads due to the amateur nature of the maintenance .

An early form of federal aid contributed to the road network in the state starting in the 1850s . Congress granted certain forest and swamp lands to the state in 1850 . A stipulation on the grant stated that the proceeds from the lands would be used to reclaim them for use . The Michigan Legislature established several roads to be built by contractors , paid with the proceeds from the sale of the land adjoining the roads , or with land itself . Despite these efforts , only 1 @, @ 179 miles (1 @, @ 897 km) of the 5 @, @ 082 miles (8 @, @ 179 km) of plank roads authorized by the state were ever built by 89 of the 202 chartered plank road companies .

The tax system was partially reformed in 1881 , allowing for direct payment of road taxes instead of relying totally on the statute @-@ labor system . The first road district larger than the township level was created in Bay County in 1883 under Public Act 278 . This road district encompassed eight townships and provided for better coordination and planning of road construction . Other county systems were created in 1893 with passage of legislation which allowed other counties to follow the lead of Bay County . By 1900 , the plank roads were generally abandoned . While a few were still in good repair , most consisted of rotting logs with intermittent patches of gravel . Toll houses were empty shacks , and the ditches were clogged with duck ponds . Only 23 of the original 202 plank roads chartered by the state were still in operation .

The Good Roads Movement , borne out of the needs of the bicycle craze of the 1880s and 1890s , turned its attention towards the needs of automobiles at the turn of the century . Horatio S. " Good Roads " Earle , a state senator from Detroit was elected national president of the League of American Wheelmen in 1901 . Earle worked on a committee report that called for the removal of the prohibition on road improvements from the state constitution . That report also recommended the creation of a commission and system for state highways .

= = = Early 20th century = = =

The first state road agency , the Michigan State Highway Department (MSHD) , was created on July 1 , 1905 . At first the department administered rewards to the counties and townships for building roads to state minimum specifications . In 1905 , there were 68 @, @ 000 miles (110 @, @ 000 km) of roads in Michigan . Of these roads , only 7 @, @ 700 miles (12 @, @ 000 km) were improved with gravel and 245 miles (394 km) were macadam . The state 's statute labor system was abolished in 1907 . Instead , a property tax system was instituted with the funding only for permanent improvements , not maintenance . Rural farmers opposed the state 's efforts , and even Henry Ford was against the idea of reforming road construction and maintenance . In response to this opposition , the department 's work was decentralized ; standards for road improvement came from the state , but work was carried out by the townships and counties . The nation 's first mile of concrete roadway was laid along Woodward Avenue in 1909 between Six Mile and Seven Mile roads in Detroit ; this section of street was 17 feet 8 inches (5 @. @ 38 m) wide and cost \$ 14 @, @ 000 (equivalent to \$ 2 @, @ 171 @, @ 400 in 2015) .

Passage of the State Reward Trunk Line Highways Act on May 13 , 1913 , provided for 3 @, @ 000 miles (4 @, @ 828 km) of roadways in a state @-@ financed system . The system comprised 10 divisions , several of which had associated branches , that ran along existing roads throughout the state . After the creation of the system , the Huron Shore Road Association scheduled a Road Bee Day on June 13 , 1913 ; some 5 @, @ 000 men , 200 women , 3 @, @ 000 teams of horses and 750 automobiles participated in the effort that improved 200 miles (320 km) of roads in the state . Further legislation at the time allowed for special assessment taxing districts for road improvements , taxation of automobiles based on weight and horsepower , and tree @-@ planting along highway roadsides . Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 , and the state passed a constitutional amendment in 1917 to qualify for federal aid with state funding matches .

The first centerline was painted on a state highway in 1917 along the Marquette @-@ Negaunee Road which was designated Trunkline 15 , now County Road 492 in Marquette County . Winter maintenance started during World War I to keep 590 miles (950 km) of strategic highways clear ; some \$ 13 @, @ 200 (equivalent to \$ 1 @, @ 005 @, @ 300 in 2015) was appropriated with partial funding from the War Loan Board .

In 1919 , the legislature passed the Aldrich Act ; combined with the approval of the Bond Issue Act during an election that April , the MSHD was authorized to assume responsibility over the roadways that composed the State Trunkline Highway System . The state highway commissioner was required to sign the state trunkline highways , and Michigan become the second state after Wisconsin to do so . Alan Williams , Ionia County engineer , helped to design the diamond marker used to sign the highways ; he is also known for placing a picnic table alongside US 16 (Grand River Avenue) in 1929 south of Saranac , considered the first in the country . Other sources say that the first roadside park in the country was created by Herbert Larson near what is now US 2 near Iron River in 1919 ? 20 . The first crows nest traffic tower in the US was installed at the intersection of Woodward and Michigan avenues in Detroit on October 9 , 1917 . The tower elevated a police officer above the center of the intersection to direct traffic before it was replaced in October 1920 with the world 's first four @-@ way traffic light .

While Michigan was the second state to post route designations along its highway system in 1919 , Michigan actually began assigning internal trunkline designations for internal inventory purposes as early as 1913 . From 1918 to 1926 , only the M @-@ numbered highway designations existed on state highways throughout Michigan , while the creation of the US Highway System in 1926 caused several existing designations to be either reassigned or retired altogether . Public Act 131 of 1931 allowed the MSHD to take control over the city and village streets that carried state highways through cities and villages in the state . The 1932 McNitt Act consolidated all of the township @-@ controlled roads into 83 county road commissions . On May 4 , 1935 , the state opened the first highway welcome center next to US 12 in New Buffalo near the Indiana state line ; Michigan was the first state in the country to do so at the time .

= = = Mid @-@ 20th century = = =

The state passed legislation in 1941 that authorized the creation of limited @-@ access roadways ; the MSHD could prohibit access to a state trunkline from the adjacent properties . Around the same time , single @-@ digit highways like M @-@ 9 were renumbered to set aside those numbers for future freeways in the state . During World War II , the Willow Run Expressway , the Detroit Industrial Expressway and the Davison Freeway were built , ushering in the beginnings of the state 's freeway system . These highway improvements were financed by the Defense Highway Act of 1941 to aid in national defense . After the war , the MSHD and the Good Roads Federation studied the highway needs of the state . Their study reported that road maintenance and improvement deteriorated since the Great Depression . It also stated that funding needed to be increased to deal with pressures from traffic increases after the war .

Public Act 51 of 1951 amended and clarified the current system of jurisdiction over roads in the state . The existing tri @-@ level system was maintained , splitting road jurisdiction between the state , counties and cities , as well as subdividing each level into several classifications . Further legislation redefined the exact distribution , but Act 51 set up a system to distribute road funding from gas taxes from a single funding source , currently the Michigan Transportation Fund . Funding was increased during the 1950s as the fuel taxes were increased . Whereas those revenues during the war dropped to levels barely sufficient to keep existing highways in usable condition , they were increased during the following decade to deal with increasing traffic . The state highway department was also authorized to sell bonds to provide funding for the proposed road improvements .

The Michigan Turnpike Authority (MTA) , an agency created in 1951 , proposed the construction of a toll freeway to run north ? south in the state . The original termini for the Michigan Turnpike were Bridgeport and Rockwood . The state highway commissioner at the time , Charles Ziegler , distrusted a separate agency dealing with statewide road building at the time and worked to stall progress on any proposed turnpikes . He also opposed the idea because the state had three freeways under planning or construction . Ziegler and the MSHD announced plans for a full freeway to run north through the Lower Peninsula and continue across to the Upper Peninsula . This announcement derailed the efforts to build the Michigan Turnpike . The Interstate Highway System was authorized by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 , and the state had already designed several freeways for its portion of that system . Seizing the opportunity brought by a 1957 state law , the department sold \$ 700 million in bonds (equivalent to \$ 14 @. @ 1 billion in 2015) in the late 1950s and early 1960s to finance land purchases and construction of the new freeways . The first Interstate Highway in the state was signposted in October 1959 when I @-@ 75 signs were first installed along the Detroit ? Toledo Expressway . These signs replaced US 24A signage in the Monroe area , after the state received final approval for the numbering system to be used in the state . Michigan was the first state to complete a border @-@ to @-@ border Interstate Highway in 1960 with the completion of I @-@ 94 . The last gravel state highway was paved in the early 1960s as well ; bids were let in March 1962 to finish paving M @-@ 48 in Chippewa County .

The original goal of Michigan 's freeways was to connect every city with a population of more than 50 @, @ 000 people with a network of roads that would accommodate traffic at 70 mph (110 km / h) . Following the start of these highway improvements , the MSHD adopted a policy to allow traffic to use the state 's trunklines every day of the year regardless of the weather . The state also invested in improving non @-@ freeway roads in the highway system ; better materials and construction methods were used to improve safety and traffic flow throughout the state .

The post @-@ war years were also a period of major bridge building in the state . The Mackinac Bridge opened on November 1 , 1957 , the Portage Lake Lift Bridge , the largest double @-@ deck lift bridge was completed in August 1959 , and the International Bridge opened across the St. Marys River three years later on October 31 , 1962 . The State Highway Department started erecting mileposts along the Interstates in 1963 , and later expanded the practice to other freeways and used the mileages to number the interchanges along I @-@ 94 .

= = = Late 20th century = = =

Freeway construction continued through the 1970s . On April 6 , 1972 , the New Buffalo Welcome

Center was relocated from its previous location next to US 12 to one adjacent to I @-@ 94 . Later that year , the state switched paint colors for its centerlines ; yellow was used for the lines separating directions of travel and white for lines separating lanes traveling in the same direction . Also in 1972 , a gas tax increase was passed to facilitate US and state highway improvement projects . The final section of I @-@ 75 between Alger and Roscommon was opened on November 1 , 1973 , in a dedication by Governor William G. Milliken , completing the longest highway in the state . In 1974 , the state implemented mileage @-@ based exit numbers along the remaining Interstates in Michigan . By late 1977 , the state highway department shifted its focus from construction of new highways to improvements of the existing system .

During the 1960s and 1970s , various freeway projects in the Detroit area were cancelled or scaled back in scope . The route of I @-@ 96 along Grand River Avenue was cancelled in response to freeway revolts in the city , and a new routing along the C & O Railroad right @-@ of @-@ way in Livonia was used instead . Plans to transfer the Davison Freeway in the 1970s to state control and extend it west to I @-@ 96 (Jeffries Freeway) and east to a Van Dyke Freeway (extended M @-@ 53) were dropped . Another freeway project near Lansing , the Van Atta Connector , was proposed in 1961 to provide an eastern freeway beltway around East Lansing , but by 1981 the highway 's impact to neighboring elementary schools along with larger economic impacts led to the project 's cancellation .

The Michigan Highway Commission canceled the northern section of I @-@ 275 on January 26 , 1977 , after it spent \$ 1 @. @ 6 million (equivalent to \$ 10 @. @ 4 million in 2015) the year before purchasing land for the roadway . This northern section was not planned as an Interstate Highway at that time , bearing the designation M @-@ 275 instead . Opposition to construction came from various citizen 's groups , different levels of local government , and both The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press . The Detroit City Council , led by then @-@ Chairman Carl Levin , opposed the plan as well . Levin said at the time , " At last I think people are waking up to the dangers of more and more expressways . At some point we 've got to say enough . And I think we 've reached it . " The United States Department of the Interior reviewed the state 's environmental impact study of the project and stated the project " will cause irreparable damages on recreation lands , wetlands , surface waters and wildlife habitat . " The total project to link Farmington Hills with Davisburg with the 24 @-@ mile (39 km) freeway would have cost \$ 69 @. @ 5 million (equivalent to \$ 409 million in 2015) and saved drivers an estimated eight minutes off travel time around the city of Detroit . Other freeway projects cancelled during the 1970s included an extension of the US 131 freeway northward to Petoskey , an extension of the US 23 freeway from Standish to Alpena , and a freeway running across the southern Lower Peninsula toward Chicago . These ventures , along with the I @-@ 275 extension , were dropped over concerns related to rising construction costs , the environment and the Arab Oil Embargo . Even with these cancelled highways , several proposals were left to be completed .

At the end of the 1970s , MDOT took part in a FHWA @-@ backed initiative called the Positive Guidance Demonstration Project , and the two agencies audited signage practices in the vicinity of the I @-@ 96 / M @-@ 37 and I @-@ 296 / US 131 interchange in Walker near Grand Rapids . MDOT determined that usage of the I @-@ 296 designation was " a potential source of confusion for motorists . " FHWA agreed with the department 's proposal to eliminate all signage and public map references to the designation in April 1979 . MDOT then received permission from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on October 13 , and from the FHWA on December 3 , 1979 , on the condition that MDOT would continue to use the designation on official documents . The approval explicitly retained the highway in the Interstate system for funding and other purposes . The last state map to show the I @-@ 296 designation was published in 1979 , as the 1980 map lacks any reference to the designation .

Following this program , the Reflective Systems Unit at MDOT reviewed the state of two- and three @-@ way concurrencies along the highway system in Michigan . They approached the department 's Trunkline Numbering Committee and the district traffic and safety engineers on October 19 , 1982 , for proposals to reduce or eliminate the various overlapping designations to " avoid driver confusion and save funds " . When the unit released its final recommendations on March 17 , 1983 ,

the memo recommended 19 changes to eliminate various concurrent routings , including the truncation of US 2 to St. Ignace , changes to the routing of US 10 , and the removal of US 33 from the state . These changes were implemented October 1983 , 1985 , and 1986 , respectively . Other changes recommended at the time , like the truncation of M @-@ 54 to remove it from the wrong @-@ way concurrency with M @-@ 83 near Birch Run , has never been implemented .

= = = Into the 21st century = = =

The final section of the controversial I @-@ 696 opened at a cost of \$ 436 million (equivalent to \$ 1 @. @ 06 billion in 2015) on December 15 , 1989 ; the freeway 's central segment was delayed over concerns related to its routing through Detroit 's northern suburbs . The 1 @, @ 241 @-@ mile (1 @, @ 997 km) Interstate Highway network in Michigan was completed in 1992 with the last four miles (6 @. @ 4 km) of I @-@ 69 near the Lansing area . Since the completion of these freeways , a handful of major projects have added to the trunkline system and the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st centuries . A bypass of St. Johns along US 27 (now US 127) opened on August 31 , 1998 . M @-@ 6 , a southern freeway bypass of Grand Rapids first proposed in the 1960s , was built between 1997 and 2004 ; that freeway was controversial based on the choice of a minority @-@ owned subcontractor and route location . Bypasses of Cadillac and Manton opened in 2001 and 2003 , extending the US 131 freeway northward . The final segment of the M @-@ 5 Haggerty Connector opened to traffic on November 1 , 2002 . Another venture was the construction of a new bridge over the Grand River in Ottawa County for a highway designated M @-@ 231 ; that highway opened in October 2015 .

= = Future = =

There are several future highway projects current in stages of planning or construction . One is looking at improvements to US 131 in St. Joseph County , which includes the bypass of Constantine that opened in October 2013 . MDOT continues to purchase parcels for right @-@ of @-@ way to be used for future upgrades of US 127 along the expressway section between Ithaca and St. Johns .

One project currently on hold would complete the St. Joseph Valley Parkway , a section of US 31 in Berrien County . The original plan for the freeway would have routed US 31 to connect directly into the I @-@ 196 / US 31 interchange on I @-@ 94 . Concerns over the habitat of the Mitchell 's Satyr butterfly meant this routing would need to be redesigned with a set of bridges to cross the habitat unobtrusively in the Blue Creek Fen . In 2001 , MDOT began a study of a new design alternative to route the US 31 freeway to connect with I @-@ 94 at the BL I @-@ 94 interchange just south of the I @-@ 196 / US 31 interchange . In the interim , MDOT built a 9 @. @ 1 @-@ mile (14 @. @ 6 km) freeway segment north to Napier Avenue that was opened on August 27 , 2003 , at a cost of \$ 97 million (equivalent to \$ 137 million in 2015) .

The United States Congress legislated a highway proposal in 1991 known as I @-@ 73 . Originally set to run along I @-@ 75 to Detroit , the definition was amended in 1995 to include a branch that would run along US 223 and US 127 to Grayling , then on a continuation along I @-@ 75 to Sault Ste . Marie . MDOT examined three options to build the freeway , but abandoned further study after June 12 , 2001 , diverting remaining funds to improvement of safety along the corridor . The department stated there was a " lack of need " for sections of the proposed freeway , and the project 's website was taken offline in 2002 . According to 2011 press reports , a group advocating on behalf of the freeway is working to revive the I @-@ 73 proposal in Michigan , but state and local governments continue to express disinterest in resurrecting the freeway .