

# Metropolitan Planning Organization

## Midland Area Transportation Study



January 10, 2022

Bill Mayhew, Manager  
Michigan Department of Transportation  
Mount Pleasant Transportation Service Center  
1212 Corporate Dr.  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Dear Mr. Mayhew,

The Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS) supports the request by Jerome Township for an extension of the 3-lane cross section beginning at W. Blakely Road and extending to the Public Schools complex beyond W. Barden Road. This will significantly enhance both safety and traffic access to the seven businesses, Jerome Township Fire Station, and one church along the route, as well as aid in access management for the Meridian Public Schools complex.

M-30 is a key state highway for mid-Michigan, and an important north-south connector for this region. Combined with the previous extent of M-30 now known as Meridian Road, this route connects Saginaw County, Midland County, and Gladwin County in a way no other state route does.

As has been discussed at several MATS Technical and Policy committee meetings in previous years, there is a concern over safety and traffic flow for a section of M-30 beginning roughly at W. Blakely Road and ending at the intersection of W. Barden Road and the Meridian Public Schools complex.

An on-site inspection also revealed that the Meridian Public Schools complex's southernmost approach is not yet part of the three-lane cross section as one goes north. Expanding the turn lane cross section would result in a safer, more continuous traffic pattern and increase safety.

Adding a continuous center turn lane to this remaining section of the M-30 would both enhance traffic flow and safety, reducing delays on through lanes and lessening driver confusion regarding turning movements. In a two lane segment immediately following a turning lane segment, driver danger is significantly enhanced by the lack of a turn lane. Many of these turning movements are related to the cluster of businesses located just south of Holiday Lane, on both the east and west side of the highway.

Over the past decade, there have been nearly two dozen accidents on this section of M-30, with 9 being injury accidents, and 13 being rear end collisions. This illustrates a pattern of crashes that could be related to the lack of a center turn lane in a section of the highway that is both preceded by and followed by center left turn lanes.

A significant portion of the vehicle traffic associated with the segment in question is young high school drivers arriving and departing from the school complex. As can be seen from the attached table and map, drivers under the age of 24 account for 13 of the 21 crashes in the years from 2012 to 2019. Of those, 10 are under the age of 21, and all are multi-occupant vehicle crashes.

Consistency of cross section is one way to reduce overall corridor travel times, even with slower vehicle speeds, by eliminating stops for through traffic behind left turning vehicles. This provides easier and safer access to businesses for arriving and departing vehicles. In addition, the 3 lane configuration will provide more efficient and safer access to the highway for emergency vehicles departing from the Township fire station, which serves the entire township and all of Midland County via mutual aid agreements.

We believe that a thorough examination of other funding possibilities should also be carried out. The problems with this part of M-30 start with crashes, but they extend to local population access, through-traffic efficiency, and response times for local public safety officers. This might allow access to a larger range of funding options than before.

In closing, it seems clear that the benefits of extending the 3-lane cross section to connect the Meridian Schools complex with the higher traffic segment south of W. Blakely Road would be felt by a wide range of motorists, citizens, students, and businesses. For these reasons, MATS fully supports the desire of Jerome Township to have State Highway M-30 widened over this ½ mile segment, as has been done both to the north and south.

Sincerely,

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C. Bradley Kaye, Chairman  
MATS Policy Committee

Date

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Maja Bolanowska, Director

Date

## M-30 Corridor Crashes, 2012-2019

CRASH	TYPE	HOUR	Occupants	WEATHER	DAYOFWEEK	CRASHDATE	GRTINJSEVE	INTERNAME	WHEREONRD	YOUNGDVR
1	Fixed Object	8	2	Rain	Tuesday	2011-04-26	No Injury	BARDEN	Outside of Shoulder or Curb	17 Year Old Driver
2	Misc. Multiple Vehicle	7	2	Clear	Monday	2012-03-26	No Injury	BARDEN	On the Road	17 Year Old Driver
3	Rear End Left Turn	15	6	Cloudy	Saturday	2012-12-08	Non-Incapacitating Injury	BONNIE	On the Road	No Young Driver
4	Rear End Straight	14	2	Rain	Sunday	2012-07-22	No Injury	HOLIDAY	On the Road	No Young Driver
5	Rear End Straight	13	2	Cloudy	Sunday	2012-07-22	Possible Injury	HOLIDAY	On the Road	No Young Driver
6	Side-Swipe Same	17	3	Cloudy	Wednesday	2013-06-12	No Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	No Young Driver
7	Rear End Straight	21	5	Cloudy	Thursday	2014-02-27	No Injury	MERIDIAN	On the Road	15 Year Old Driver
8	Rear End Straight	15	4	Rain	Tuesday	2014-11-04	No Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	16 Year Old Driver
9	Rear End Straight	16	4	Cloudy	Tuesday	2014-11-04	No Injury	BONNIE	On the Road	16 Year Old Driver
10	Rear End Left Turn	15	8	Cloudy	Tuesday	2014-11-04	Possible Injury	BARDEN	On the Road	16 Year Old Driver
11	Rear End Straight	7	2	Clear	Monday	2015-10-19	No Injury	BONNIE	On the Road	17 Year Old Driver
12	Rear End Right Turn	20	2	Clear	Thursday	2015-05-28	No Injury	MERIDIAN	On the Road	21-24 Year Old Driver
13	Rear End Straight	15	4	Rain	Thursday	2015-04-09	Possible Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	17 Year Old Driver
14	Side-Swipe Opposite	11	5	Clear	Saturday	2016-06-25	Possible Injury	BLAKLEY	On the Road	No Young Driver

15	Rear End Left Turn	15	8	Rain	Tuesday	2016-09-27	Possible Injury	BARDEN	On the Road	16 Year Old Driver
16	Rear End Driveway	15	7	Cloudy	Tuesday	2016-09-27	Possible Injury	BARDEN	On the Road	16 Year Old Driver
17	Rear End Straight	21	4	Clear	Wednesday	2016-07-27	Non- Incapacitating Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	21-24 Year Old Driver
18	Rear End Straight	13	6	Cloudy	Monday	2017-09-04	No Injury	HOLIDAY	On the Road	21-24 Year Old Driver
19	Head-on	21	2	Snow	Monday	2018-12-31	No Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	No Young Driver
20	Rear End Driveway	20	4	Cloudy	Friday	2019-06-28	No Injury	BLAKELY	On the Road	No Young Driver
21	Head-on	12	3	Snow	Thursday	2019-11-07	Non- Incapacitating Injury	BONNIE	On the Road	No Young Driver



