EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DRAFT ECORSE ROAD TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, MI

Cincar Consulting Group, LLC
17199 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 204
Livonia, MI 48152

March 2026

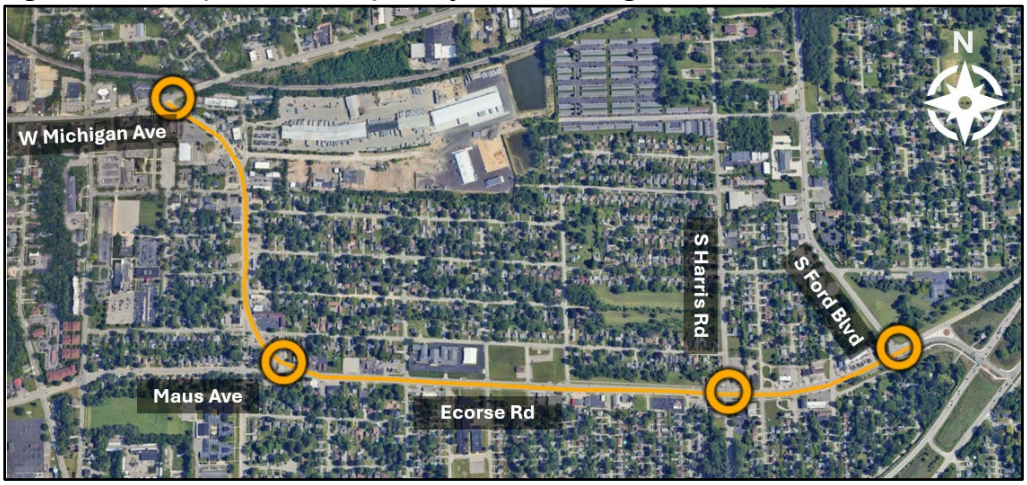
Executive Summary for Ecorse Road – Transportation Analysis

A transportation analysis was conducted providing a planning and traffic assessment of M-17 (Ecorse Road) in Ypsilanti Township and the City of Ypsilanti. The approximately 1.5-mile segment of M-17 (Ecorse Road) studied extends from West Michigan Avenue to approximately 950-feet east of the Ecorse Road/M-17 intersection with South Ford Boulevard, as shown in **Figure 1**. Ecorse Road serves as the primary commercial corridor connecting US-12 (Michigan Avenue) with I-94. Various businesses line the road, that also enjoy the easy access to I-94. Residents from the surrounding neighborhoods travel along the road and patronize the business and institutions.

The four signalized intersections in the study area are (**Figure 1**):

1. Michigan Avenue and Ecorse Road and Center Street
2. Maus Avenue and Ecorse Road
3. South Harris Road and Ecorse Road
4. South Ford Boulevard and Ecorse Road

Figure 1: M-17 (Ecorse Road) Study Area and Signalized Intersections



This study, prepared by Ypsilanti Township with input from MDOT, includes the following:

- Review of the existing planning, zoning, traffic, and safety conditions
- Review of past planning efforts
- Future year (2050) background conditions
- Evalutation of future year (2050) potential roadway alternatives for the corridor, including the viability of a road diet.

A road diet has been considered in previous plans by the Township. A road diet was proposed as part of the 2018 Placemaking Plan and the Township's 2040 Master Plan to meet the goals for a safer street, be easier for pedestrians to cross, lower traffic speeds, and help efforts to redevelop land uses along the road.

Ecorse Road is an MDOT route, so their approval is needed for any changes to the road. For the road diet evaluation, this report used the MDOT/SEMCOG road design toolkit (Multimodal

Tool). This toolkit helps test different alternatives for their impact on travel by autos, trucks, transit, and non-motorized travelers. The MDOT Road Diet Checklist criteria was also considered.

Planning

The Township has long planned for changes to the land uses and roadway design along the corridor. The recommendations have included consistent sidewalks, more pedestrian amenities, reducing the number of lanes (a "road diet"), and lowering traffic speeds. Some of the long-term land uses are auto-oriented or industrial and trucking in nature, which conflicts to a degree with the Township's long-term plan for a more walkable roadway and pedestrian-oriented design. As a result, there is not a cohesive design amongst the developments in terms of setbacks and design.

Various Township Plans, including the Ypsilanti Township 2040 Master Plan and the 2018 Placemaking Plan, have laid the groundwork and proposed to transform Ecorse Road into a safer, multimodal, and more beautiful corridor that entices quality, denser mixed-use development, that can also help revitalize the adjacent neighborhoods. The goal is to support existing businesses and institutional anchors, as well as attract new businesses to the corridor. The common vision and recommendations of past planning efforts are aimed at transitioning the corridor to serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood and the greater community by being a more vibrant, walkable, people-oriented mixed-use corridor.

The missing ingredient of the previous plans was a more detailed evaluation to determine if a road diet was practical and could be supported by MDOT (MDOT has jurisdiction over the road and its right-of-way). Thus, this study was conducted to analyze the traffic conditions, explore different cross sections in terms of safety and traffic operations, and work with MDOT to determine how the roadway can be redesigned in the future. With that blueprint for the road, the Township can then work with the property owners and future businesses to complement the design of the road.

Existing Traffic Operations and Safety

New traffic counts were taken as part of this study. All four of the intersections operate at what MDOT defines as "acceptable levels of service" in both the morning and afternoon periods. Level of Service (LOS) is a mathematical calculation, ranging from A-F, of the delay for a typical vehicle. A LOS D or better is acceptable to MDOT, though some urban areas of MDOT allow a LOS E in the AM or PM peak hours of the day. There are two movements in the evening that operate at a LOS E or F; westbound left-turns on Michigan Avenue to Center Street and Ecorse Road, and northbound left-turns on Ecorse Road to Michigan Avenue.

Safety: This section of Ecorse Road had 159 crashes evaluated over a five-year period. Many of those crashes were classified as severe, involving angle or head-on collisions, and non-

motorized users. Fortunately, there we no fatalities and only 3% resulted in serious injuries. The full study has detailed descriptions.

Future Alternatives Considered: The study also projected future volumes for the year 2050. The corridor was looked at without any changes (Background Conditions) and with several alternatives (Future Alternatives Conditions). Five alternatives were analyzed and compared to the existing five lane road. Different alternatives were considered including a median, bike lanes, on-street parking, wider sidewalks, and a shared-use pathway along both sides of Ecorse Road to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles. The analysis showed that the three lane option will work today and into the future, even with potential growth from new businesses, with some changes to traffic signal timing.

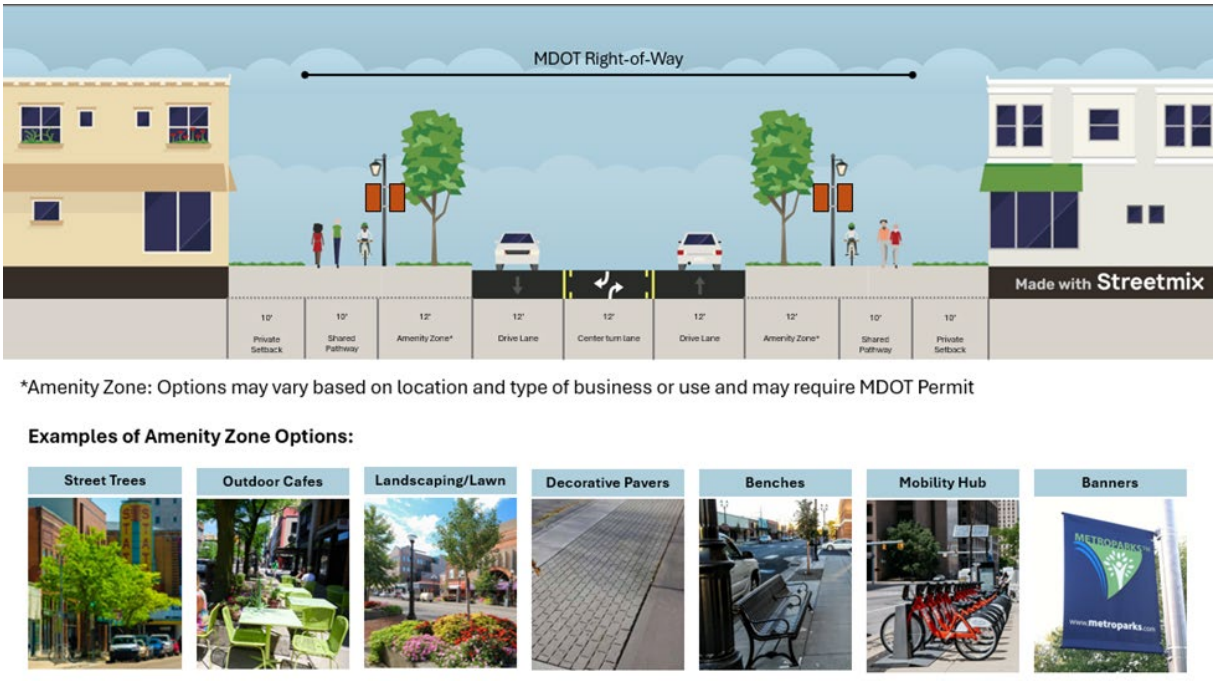
Recommendation

The preferred alternative is three lanes (one through lane in each direction and a center-turn lane) with a wider sidewalk/shared-use path along each side of the roadway, plus a raised center median in select locations along the corridor to improve safety (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The assumptions for the recommended alternative within the MDOT right-of-way includes:

- 12-foot wide lanes
- 12-foot wide amenity zone on both sides of the roadway
- 10-foot wide shared pathway on both sides of the roadway

Figure 2 also provides examples of uses that could be looked at for the amenity zones.

Figure 2: Recommendation - Three Lane Roadway, With a Raised Center Median in Select Locations, and a Shared-Use Path for Bikes and Pedestrians



Enhancements – things to make the road diet perform even better

The three-lane alternative will work even better with the following improvements:

- Add a short center median where the crashes are highest, along the curve where driver's sight distance is compromised between Davis Street and Maus Avenue. This median can also serve as a refuge for pedestrians trying to cross Ecorse Road.
- Close some of the closest spaced driveways. An excessive number of driveways can cause crashes. Too many driveways also makes the corridor more complex for drivers and pedestrians trying to cross Ecorse Road.
- An additional mid-block pedestrian crossing with marked crosswalks and signs to alert the driver around Maplewood Avenue.
- Add a shared-use path along both sides of the road, to fill in the gaps and make it more pleasant to walk the street. Initially focusing on new sidewalks to connect with bus stops. Add amenities along the shared-use path or sidewalks, including street trees, lighting, benches, and low-level landscaping.
- Close Davis Street between Emerick Street and Ecorse Road. Keep Emerick Street one-way between Ecorse Road and Davis Street (work with the City of Ypsilanti).
- Build a raised median on Ecorse Road south of Davis Street to Maus Avenue.
- Allow left-turns from Maus Avenue to Ecorse Road.
- Add protected left-turn phases at Ecorse Road and Harris Road.
- Have the Township apply its form-based code to gradually allow redevelopment with buildings closer to the road, with parking on the sides or the rear. The Township's reduction in the number of parking spaces required for businesses also provides more room to add green space and stormwater detention.

Please refer to the full study and the various prior Township Plans for additional information.

The recommendations are in draft form. There will be a public workshop held in the Spring 2026, where people can ask questions or express their opinions. After that workshop, refinement can be made prior to the Township Board taking action to endorse the design. Then the Township will work with MDOT, the City of Ypsilanti, and various funding agencies toward implementation.