

FAQ

- 1. Could you provide an update on the funding mechanisms for the upcoming work? I know you mentioned some grants that DDP, MDOT, and the City of Detroit have secured. With the current flux in grant funding, can you speak to the status as far as you know?**

The funding for this project primarily comes from the Neighborhood Access and Equity grant awarded to the Downtown Detroit Partnership by USDOT, which specifically supports the feasibility study.

In addition, MDOT and the City of Detroit received a federal earmark around the same time to further advance engineering efforts related to the project. More recently, MDOT was awarded a Reconnecting Communities Program grant to support other aspects of the initiative.

However, the feasibility study itself will be limited to the funding provided through the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) grant.

- 2. This may not directly relate to this RFP, but I know there are other grants, like the Reconnecting Communities program, that are somewhat uncertain. Could you speak to how those potential funding sources might impact the project down the line?**

In terms of funding for this project, the feasibility study is fully funded and firmly in place.

To summarize the other two funding sources:

- The federal earmark came from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024, with an obligation deadline of September 2027.
- As for the pilot grant that James mentioned, MDOT received funding as part of the FY24–26 pool. While the award has been made, the grant agreement has not yet been executed. The funding is currently under review, and we have a kickoff meeting with USDOT happening now, where we hope to gain more clarity by tomorrow.

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- 3. With so many pieces to the scope, I appreciate the insight you've shared on some of the potential areas to explore. From your perspective, what do you see as the biggest challenges or key questions that need to be addressed in this phase of the project?**

I think we have a strong concept in place, but this phase is really about diving deeper into the technical and engineering aspects of the project. One of the key questions we need to answer is whether we can cap from one local street to another—for example, on the east cap, is it feasible to extend from Brush Street all the way to John R? Or would that length require additional mechanical ventilation, which could significantly impact feasibility? Determining the precise locations for these caps is a critical component of this phase.

Beyond the engineering challenges, there are also important urban design questions. DDP remains engaged because we see a significant opportunity to enhance connectivity between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods across all modes of transit. We also want to explore, in collaboration with the public, what the public space design on these caps should look like. That said, the engineering questions must be addressed first to ensure we have a solid foundation before moving forward with public space design and broader urban planning efforts.

- 4. When it comes to engineering the caps, I know some states are designing them with future-proofing in mind to accommodate structures on top. Are you partnering with anyone interested in developing infrastructure on the caps, or is this still an open concept that could be explored as the project evolves?**

We're not considering full-scale development on top of the caps—this was discussed earlier in the concept and alternatives analysis but was largely ruled out. Instead, we're approaching the caps as park or public spaces.

That said, this doesn't necessarily preclude smaller structures, such as kiosks, which MDOT and DDP are both interested in, particularly from a long-term maintenance perspective. Another key question we need to explore is what can realistically be placed on the caps given the limited clearances of the main trunk line below. For example, can trees be planted on the cap, or would structural constraints make that challenging?

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This is a very challenging corridor because you can't build lower, so everything has to be built up. That ties into the service drives and presents significant technical challenges, which the feasibility study is designed to address. These are important feasibility questions that will need to be studied further as we move forward.

5. For the presentations in the last interview, do you anticipate them being held in person or online?

I think it's flexible. We've conducted similar presentations virtually in past phases and on other projects. Given the current climate, it's probably easier for everyone, especially before a project officially kicks off, to hold them virtually. So, that will likely be the preferred format. However, it's something we can discuss with the shortlisted firms as part of the interview process to ensure it works for everyone.