

Talking Points



The goal of these talking points is to help maintain excitement for long-term prosperity in the face of short-term inconvenience!

Q: What is Kalamazoo Streets For All?

A: A lane conversion project years in the making that will create a connected city by transforming downtown Kalamazoo into a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant destination that offers safe travel for all modes of transportation. This includes pedestrians, drivers and bicyclists. A lane conversion involves modifying the number of travel lanes and redesigning space from vehicle lanes to other uses, such as bike lanes, pedestrian walkways or bus or transit lanes.

Additional information: Kalamazoo Streets For All uses an approach to transportation policy and design that emphasizes creating streets made for all users and all modes of transportation! This can look like inclusive design that considers all ages and abilities and all modes of transportation (ex: walking, biking and bus or rail transit) and focuses on flexibility and safety for all.

Q: Why has the city decided to do this?

A: Kalamazoo's neighborhoods, university campuses and downtown are currently divided by several wide, high-traffic one-way streets. This creates barriers for pedestrians, drivers and bicyclists. Converting to a two-way street will calm the speed of vehicles to make room for other modes of transportation and cultivate a community that can be enjoyed by all.

Q: When will construction start?

A: The first step in shifting downtown Kalamazoo's traffic flow will begin on Michikal Street, with construction starting in June 2024. Updates will include:

- Reconstruction of the street, which will remain a one-way in the immediate future. Once it's able to be converted to a two-way, it will have two lanes of traffic heading south toward West Main Street and one lane heading north toward Kalamazoo Avenue.
- Sidewalk will be added to the east side of the street.
- A nonmotorized trail will be added to the west side of the street.
- Water infrastructure will be updated at the intersection of West Main Street, Michikal Street, Michigan Avenue and Stadium Drive.

We will continue to provide updates on social media as they become available.

Q: What are the benefits?

A: Enhances Safety: By reducing the number of lanes, lane conversions can decrease vehicle-to-vehicle conflict points, leading to fewer crashes.

Improves Livability: Creating space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation users.

Calms Traffic: Slowing down vehicle speeds and making streets more pleasant for residents and visitors.

Q: Will this improve safety?

A: Yes! Did you know? Roads have become more dangerous for pedestrians. From 2010 to 2019, there was a 45% increase in pedestrian deaths. Additionally, there has been a 15% increase in the number of pedestrians involved in traffic deaths in the last 30 years. Lastly, 2 in 5 households are likely to use forms of transportation other than a personal vehicle, like walking, biking or public transportation. *

Kalamazoo Streets For All is committed to improving safety for all and promoting safe travel for all modes of transportation!

Fewer lanes means fewer conflict points for vehicles, reducing the risk of crashes. Additionally, it will create safer pedestrian crossings and improved visibility at intersections.

Q: How does this enhance quality of life?

A: There are so many ways!

1. Reduced traffic lanes can lead to less noise pollution and quieter streets.
2. It creates more green space that can be used for landscaping, trees and gardens.
3. Less congestion and fewer idling vehicles contribute to improved air quality and reduced emissions.
4. Slower speeds and calmer traffic create a friendlier environment for residents.
5. More pedestrian-friendly areas increase opportunities to socialize.

Q: How will this support the local economy?

A: Overall, well-designed streets can attract visitors and boost economic activity. Easier access to local shops and restaurants encourages foot traffic.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: For additional updates, we recommend you sign up for the newsletter, follow the City of Kalamazoo on Facebook and X (Twitter) and/or visit KalamazooCity.org/Community/Projects/StreetsForAll.

* Sources: National Safety Council; Smart Growth America, "Dangerous by Design 2021"; Forbes Advisor

