

11 East Upper Peninsula Michigan Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

The region is rural and heavily forested. The Upper Peninsula has 8.7 million acres (or 80%) of Michigan's forested acres.

- Tourism, service industries, and forest based/timber industry provide the region's primary job base.
- 2030 growth is anticipated in health care and education.
- Per capita income is close to the state average in Mackinaw County were many of the major tourist attractions are (\$25-30,000) and among the lowest in the state in Luce and Chippewa Counties (\$16-20,000) (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- Region includes Mackinac Island, the Sault Locks, an international border crossing, and attracts over 5 million visitor-days of travel/year.
- The region has several post secondary institutions including Lake Superior University at Sault Ste. Marie. Total enrollment within the region is approximately 3,300.

Passenger Travel (personal vehicle, air, transit, bicycle and pedestrian)

- Local residents and (seasonal) tourist from inside and outside Michigan travel on Interstate, US, and state routes.
- No passenger rail services is available this region.
- A commercial airport at Sault Ste. Marie provides service to over 15,000 passengers/year.
- Luce and Chippewa Counties have countywide transit.
- Mackinac County has specialized transit services.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: Mackinaw City–St. Ignace/Wisconsin (US-2); Sault Ste. Marie/Bay City (I-75)

Statewide Significance: Houghton /Marquette/Sault Ste. Marie (M-28)

Counties: Luce, Chippewa, Mackinac

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers: Mackinaw City-St. Ignace, Sault Ste. Marie

MDOT Region: Superior

MPO and RPA: Eastern Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission.

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 57,600 (0.6% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 61,376 (0.5% of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 30,366 (0.5% of MI)
- Approximately 11 percent in retail trade; 7 percent in food service; 5 percent in accommodations; 5 percent construction; and
- 2030 Projected Employment 34,121 (0.5% of MI)
- Growth is anticipated in health care and education.

Smart Zones: None
Tax-free Renaissance Zones: None

- Intercity bus serves Mackinac County. Private demand response service connects Sault Ste Marie to intercity bus service in St. Ignace.
- There is no passenger rail service in this region and no passenger terminals.
- Three private passenger ferries carry tourists and travelers to Mackinac Island and the UP transit authority provides public passenger and automobile service from Chippewa County to Sugar Island, Nebish Island, and Drummond Island.

Freight Travel Character (truck, rail, air, water, intermodal terminals)

- Four commercial water ports handle approximately 5.8 tons/year.
- Rail service is available on CN, east west through the central part of the region.
- Region carries Canadian truck traffic passing through the area to get to western Canada and Wisconsin.

Intermodal Centers

- No major intermodal freight facilities are located within this region.

International Border Crossings

- The International Bridge at Sault Ste. Marie; rail bridge at Sault Ste. Marie;
 - The International Bridge is the only vehicular crossing for a 340-mile distance.
 - The International Bridge connects the two cities of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (pop. 75,000) and Michigan (pop. 16,000).
 - Based on a 2000 study by the Ministry of Transportation, between 66 and 70 percent of the crossings were by people from the local area crossing for work, recreation and shopping purposes. The bridge also serves the steel, paper and forestry industries and regional tourism.

Corridor Value

- Corridors in the region serve passenger travel and a significant amount of tourism travel from both in-and out-of-state.
- Corridors also serve timber and paper mill industries. This includes a portion of the Upper Peninsula's economic base that includes the \$720 million timber industry with 16,020 jobs statewide.

Existing and Future Conditions

- Corridors are in adequate condition and primarily need continuing maintenance and preservation.

Linkages

- Statewide and regional corridors within the region continue east west and connect to north south corridors at I-75 for longer-distance travel.
- Commercial air service provides connections with major airports hubs.
- Rail lines connect to CN and Wisconsin Central.

- Automobile and passenger ferries connect to the islands.
- The five-mile long, Mackinaw Bridge provides the only automobile or truck crossing connecting the Upper and Lower Peninsula's of Michigan.

Barriers, Gaps, Missing Links

- Integrating long-distance Canadian freight traffic passing through the region with local travel and tourism traffic.
- Speed differential between tourist traffic wanting to "see the sights" and long-distance and logging trucks for timber and paper mill industry wanting to move quickly.
- Funding for transit service across the International Bridge has been problematic.
- Intercity bus service is dependent on state subsidy. Greyhound Lines serves the Upper Peninsula via state subsidy but has opted to no longer provide this service as of January 2007. Adjustments to Upper Peninsula service are likely with a new carrier.
- Senior population in Michigan is growing and will demand innovative public transportation options for local and intercity travel.

Opportunities

- The tourism industry provides opportunities for economic growth.
- St. Ignace is a connection point for intercity bus routes serving the Northern Lower Peninsula to routes serving the Upper Peninsula and lacks a permanent terminal. A permanent intercity bus terminal is under development.

Regional Corridor Strategies

- MDOT will continue to strive to maintain good pavement conditions along all of its trunkline corridors within this region.
- Opportunities to integrate multi-modal transportation systems throughout this region will be sought including increased/improved carpool lot facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be incorporated into future projects where feasible.
- The department will continue to coordinate improvement and management practices with key local stakeholder groups along corridors with unique recreational characteristics such as the heritage routes, which run through this region.
- Access Management on strategic sections of the regional and local roadways.
- Highway Strategies including safety continue the program for adding hill-climbing, passing relief lanes.
- Add or enhance long-distance bicycle trails; continue to provide and improve snowmobile crossings; improve coordination with other state agencies.
- Continue to provide financial and technical assistance to local agencies to help them preserve existing transit and specialized services.
- Develop strategies that can be implemented at the local level to innovate public transportation services to meet the unique needs/demands of the aging population.
- Support communication and coordination between local transit systems and between transit and intercity modes to improve connectivity.
- Encourage local transit agencies to evaluate the potential to expand to countywide service to increase service availability, increase opportunities for transfer to transit systems in neighboring counties for trips that need to cross county lines, and to increase opportunities to transfer to intercity bus and passenger rail.
- Support coordination of transportation services and funding between local human service agencies and local transit agencies.
- Continue to provide financial assistance to help preserve existing state subsidized intercity bus service.
- Encourage intercity passenger carriers to evaluate and implement improvements in the areas of service coordination and use of technology to provide better information for users and potential users.