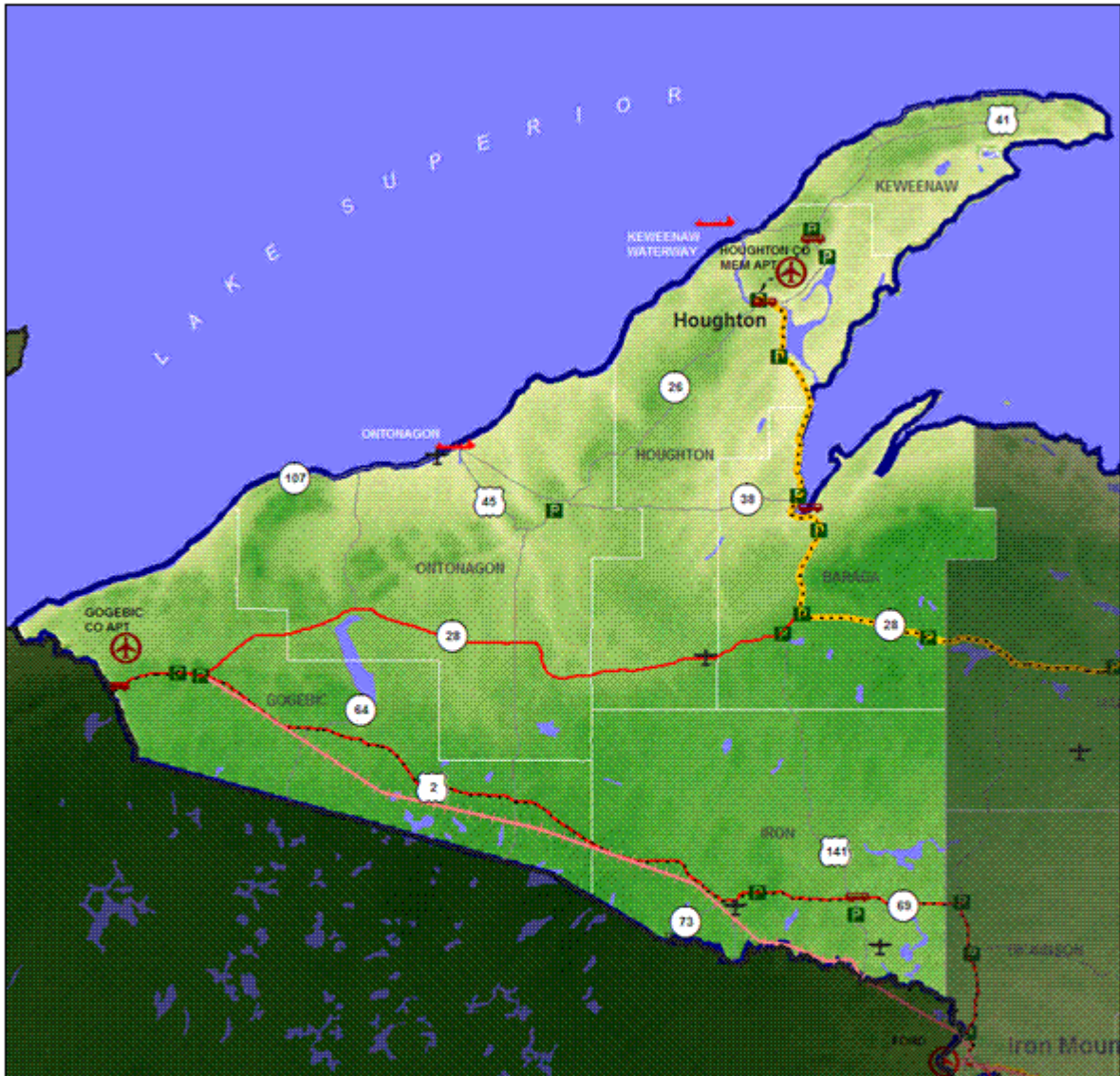


13 Western Upper Peninsula Michigan Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

The Superior-West Michigan region is rural and heavily forested with numerous small inland lakes. The Upper Peninsula has 8.7 million acres (or 80%) of the forested acres in Michigan. Houghton with a population of 14,000 is the largest urban area.

- Tourism, service industries, mining, and forest based/timber industry provide the region's primary job base.
- 2030 employment growth is projected within the health care services.
- The region is one of the poorest in the state with all counties well below the state average per capita income. Baraga County is the poorest with a \$16-20,000 average annual per capita income; Gogebic, Ontonagon, Keweenaw, Houghton, and Iron are \$20-25,000 (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- The region includes part of the Great Lakes Circle tours; national forest areas; numerous state parks and roadside facilities; and attracts over 2 million visitor-days of travel/year.
- One hospital serves the area.
- The region has several post secondary institutions including the Michigan Technological University. The region's total enrollment is estimated at approximately 7,000.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: None

Statewide Significance:

Houghton/Marquette/Sault Ste. Marie

Counties: Gogebic, Ontonagon, Keweenaw, Houghton, Baraga, Iron

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers:

Houghton

MDOT Region: Superior

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

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 84,797 (0.8% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 87,411 (0.8% of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 41,545 (0.7% of MI) - Approximately 12 percent in retail trade; 7 percent food services; 6 percent construction; and
- 2030 Projected Employment 46,465 (0.7% of MI) - Growth expected in health care services.

Smart-Zone: Houghton Michigan Tech Enterprise – Michigan Technology University

Tax free Renaissance Zones:

Gogebic, Ontonagon, Houghton, and Iron Mountain

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

- Local residents and (seasonal) tourist from inside and outside Michigan travel on state and US routes.
- No interstates or passenger rail services are in this region.
- Three commercial passenger airports at Ironwood, Ontonagon, and Houghton (with 28,000 enplanements/year) primarily serving tourism industry and local personal travel.

- Ontonagon and Gogebic Counties have countywide transit services.
- Keweenaw, Baraga, and Iron Counties have specialized transit services.
- Houghton County has two community transit systems.
- Intercity bus serves Gogebic, Houghton, Baraga, and Iron Counties.
- Intermodal passenger terminal in Gogebic County.
- The Local Rideshare Office and MichiVan provide information on ridesharing opportunities as well as ridematching services to link potential car and vanpool participants.
- There is no passenger rail service in this region.
- Two private passenger ferries to Isle Royale National Park.
- Numerous recreational based trails; snowmobile trails are also used for travel during the winter months.

Opportunities

- The region provides incentives for business and industry growth - it has three of the state's 24 tax-free zones.
- Growing tourism industry also provides economic opportunities.
- Rail short-line.

Barriers, Gaps, Missing Links

- Integrating long-distance freight cut-through travel with local and tourism traffic.
- Speed differential tourist traffic with logging trucks for timber industry.
- Hills and terrain.
- Senior population in Michigan is growing and will demand innovative public transportation options for local and intercity travel.
- 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.

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

- Two commercial water ports including the port near Houghton that handles approximately 230,000 tons/year.
- Rail service, east west, on CN and Escanaba Lake Superior (ELS) primarily for timber, paper mills, and iron ore industries.
- Region carries Canadian truck traffic passing through the area to get to western Canada and Wisconsin.
- No major intermodal terminals are located within this region.

Corridor Value

- Corridors in the region primarily 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. Serve 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.
- Passenger air service is connects with major Airports hubs.
- Rail lines connect to CN and Wisconsin Central.
- ELS connects the mines to the water ports and larger rail network.

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.
- MDOT will continue their program to add hill-climbing and passing relief lanes as needed.

- Add or enhance long-distance bicycle trails; continue to provide and improve snowmobile crossings; improve coordination with other state agencies.
- MDOT will continue to coordinate improvements and management practices with key local stakeholder groups along corridors.
- 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.