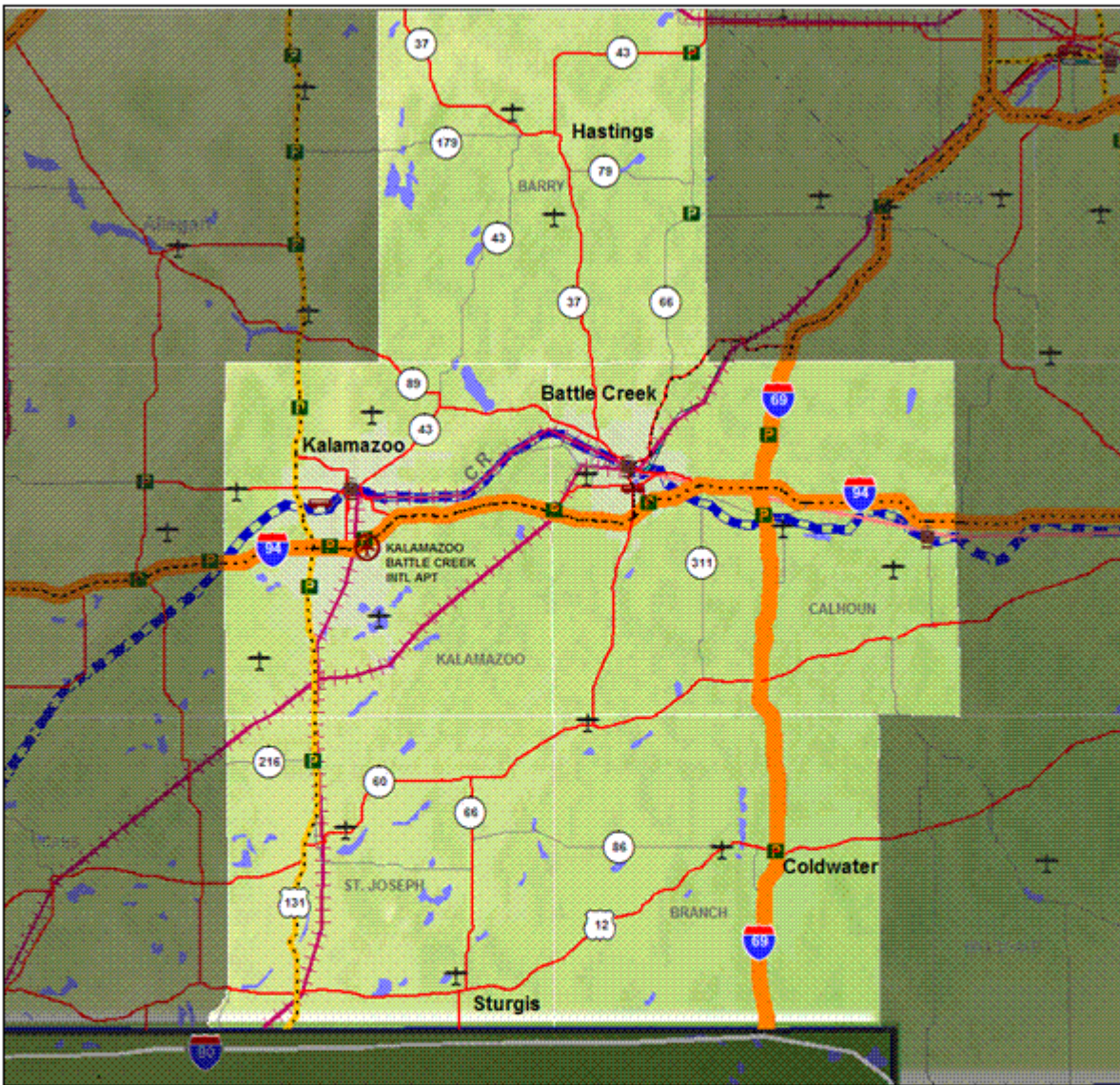


3 South Central Michigan Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

- Agriculture, retail trade and service provide the region's primary economic base.
- Per capita income in Kalamazoo County is the highest in the region at \$30- \$35,00; Calhoun and Barry County are \$25 – \$30,000; Branch and St. Joseph Counties have a per capita income of \$20-25,000 (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- Two state parks and numerous roadside facilities are in the region.
- Approximately 12.3 million visitor-days of travel are supported by the region.
- Eight hospitals and medical facilities serve the area.
- The region has secondary institutions with an enrollment of approximately 49,000, including Western Michigan University.
- The Battle Creek Airport is home to Western Michigan University's Aviation Program with over 900 students working to become professional pilots.
- A joint use general aviation/military airport is in Battle Creek. It is used for military flight training.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: Detroit/Chicago; Port Huron/Lansing/Indianapolis; Port Huron/Chicago

Statewide: Petoskey/Grand Rapids/Indiana

Counties: Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers: Battle Creek, Coldwater, Kalamazoo, Sturgis-Three Rivers

MDOT Region: Southwest

MPO and RPA: Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (90,654 urbanized pop, 169 Square Mile); Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study 238,603 urbanized pop, 579 Square Mile); Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (RPC).

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 554,960 (5.5% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 619,386 (5.5% of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 314,449 (5.5% of MI);

Approximately 12 percent retail trade; 5.5 percent food; 5 percent construction; 5 percent administrative; 3.7 percent motor vehicle; and

- 2030 Projected Employment 346,990 (5.4% of MI). Anticipated growth in health services and administration; anticipated 18 percent loss in motor vehicle manufacturing jobs.

Smart Zones: Battle Creek Aviation-Western Michigan University and Kellogg Community College
Tax-free Renaissance Zones: Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo

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

- Local residents and (seasonal) tourist travel on Interstates, state, and US routes.
- Air passenger service is provided at Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport with 237,000 enplanements a year.
- There is Amtrak service with links to Detroit, Chicago and Port Huron through this region. Annually, 72,000 passengers board, and deboard in this region.
- All counties have countywide transit services except Calhoun, which has two community transit systems.
- The two largest transit systems are Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, which serve 530,000 and 3 million passengers annually, respectively.
- Intermodal passenger terminals are in Kalamazoo and Battle Creek.
- Calhoun and Kalamazoo Counties are served by intercity bus.
- The Local Rideshare Office and MichiVan provide information on ridesharing opportunities as well as ridematching services to link potential car and vanpool participants.

Opportunities

- The region is one of the wealthiest in the state with a growing economy and continues to offer potential for business and industry growth.
- The tourism industry also provides economic opportunities.
- Intercity bus service is provided by two carriers, Greyhound Lines and Indian Trails, with no state subsidy.
- The passenger terminals at Kalamazoo and Battle Creek are important points of connection within the intercity network, with connections between intercity bus routes and between intercity bus and passenger rails.
- In Kalamazoo County, recent consolidation of city and county transit service with movement toward creating a new countywide millage.

Barriers, Gaps, Missing Links

- Access to Indiana and I-80/90 could be improved by providing an improved direct connection.
- Opportunities for operational management through ITS.
- Senior population in Michigan is growing and will demand innovative public transportation options for local and intercity travel.

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

- Freight services include agricultural and manufacturing production in the area shipped both by motor vehicle and on rail.
- There is no significant air cargo and no marine port in the region.

- No major intermodal terminals are in the region.

Corridor Value

- The corridors in the region serve passenger travel and the area's manufacturing and agricultural base.
- I-94 and I-69 carry the highest dollar values and volumes of passenger and freight travel.

Existing and Future Condition

- Except for I-69, which has recently been improved, the roadway corridors are aging and in need of modernization and reconstruction.
- Operational improvements are also needed.

Linkages

- The region has roadway access and connections for longer distance east west via I-94 and north south via US 131.
- Passenger air service with scheduled flights is available at the commercial airport in Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International airports.

Regional Corridor Strategies

- Widen I-94 from US-131 to Sprinkle Road through Kalamazoo.
- Implement ITS throughout the corridor.
- Improve overall corridor condition and operation for all modes.
- Look for and implement operational improvements to improve roadway corridor mobility.
- 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.
- 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 communication and coordination between local transit systems and between transit and intercity modes to improve connectivity.
- Support coordination of transportation services and funding between local human service agencies and local transit agencies.
- 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.

- Promote intercity high-speed rail as a key component of a balanced transportation system by expanding the coverage of the Incremental Train Control System (ITCS) in the corridor.
- Continue to provide financial assistance to help preserve existing state subsidized passenger rail service.
- Identify ways passenger rail service can alone or in coordination with intercity bus and/or local transit, be used to assist workforce commuters and business trips in regional efforts.
- Work with intercity carriers and Travel Michigan to promote Michigan as a travel destination.
- Encourage opportunities for infrastructure improvements between rail freight and rail passenger that reduce congestion and provide for improved on time performance.
- Continue to support the MichiVan program to provide commuter alternatives.