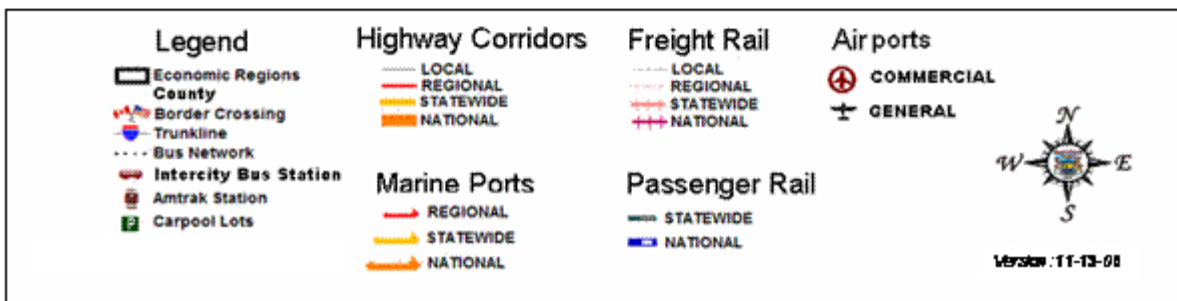
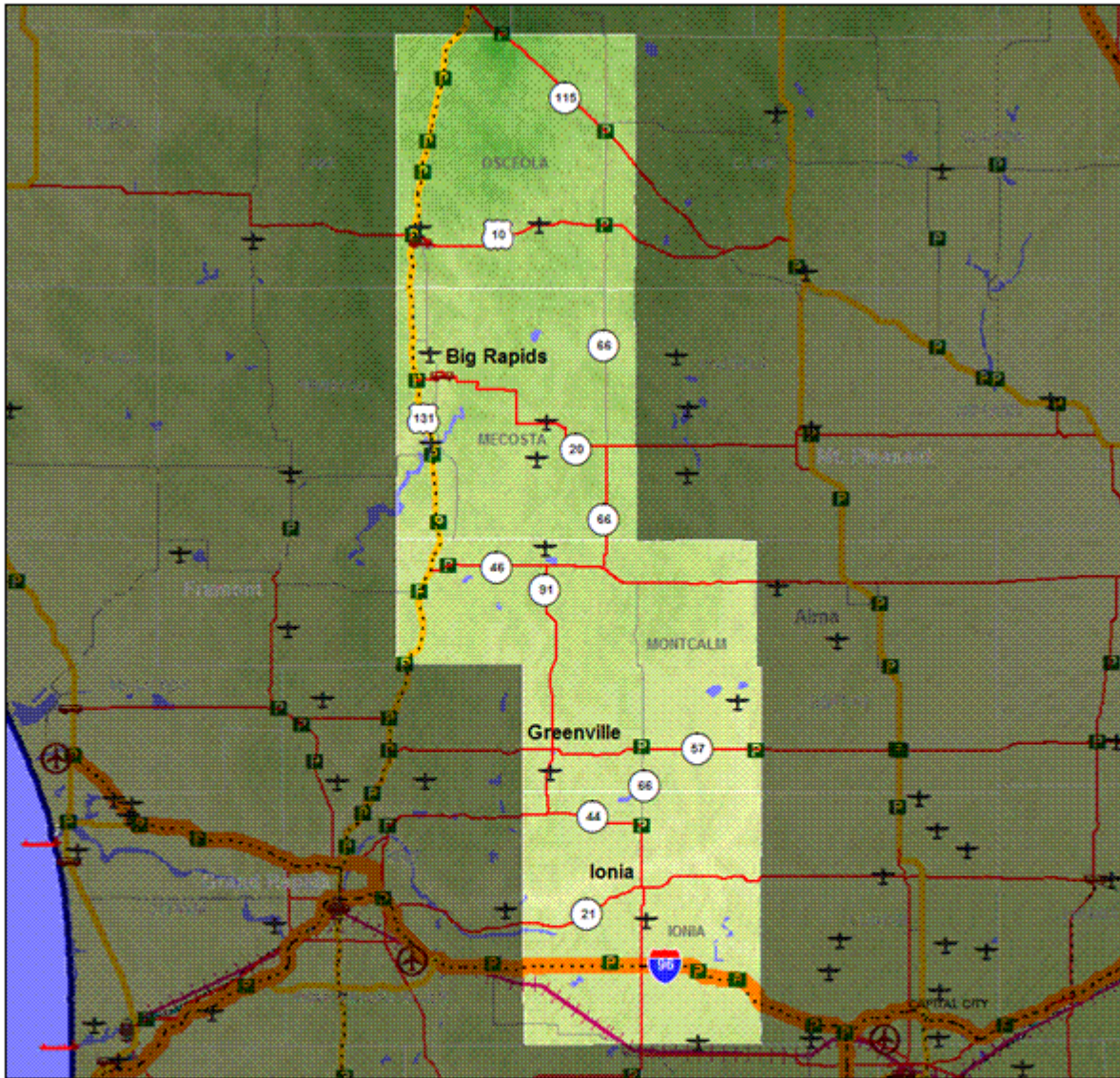


8A Greater Big Rapids Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

The region is rural.

- Retail trade and service industries provide the region's primary job base.
- 2030 projections predict an overall drop in employment however; a slight increase in health service industries is anticipated.
- The per capita income of all four counties is \$20-25,000. This is lower than the state average. (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- One primary medical facility and several smaller facilities serve the area.
- Ten prisons are located in the region.
- The region has several post secondary institutions including Ferris State University. Total enrollment within the region is approximately 14,000.

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 commercial air or passenger rail services are in this region.
- Osceola and Mecosta Counties have countywide transit services in addition; Mecosta has a community transit provider.
- Montcalm County has one and Ionia County has two community transit systems.
- All four counties are served by intercity bus.
- No passenger terminals.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: Muskegon/Grand Rapids/Lansing/Detroit (I-96) in southern Ionia County

Statewide Significance: Petoskey/Grand Rapids/Indiana (US-131)

Counties: Mecosta, Osceola, Montcalm, Ionia

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers: Ionia, Greenville, Big Rapids

MDOT Region: North, Grand

MPO and RPA: No MPO; West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (RPA).

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 195,076 (1.9% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 210,026 (1.9% of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 78,523 (1.4% of MI)
- Approximately 12.6 percent retail trade; 6 percent construction; 4 percent food services; 4 percent motor vehicle; Hospitals 3 percent; and
- 2030 Projected Employment 85,415 (1.3% of MI)
- Overall drop in employment is anticipated with a slight increase in health services industries.

Smart-Zone: none

Tax free Renaissance Zones:
Mecosta, Osceola, Montcalm, Ionia

- The Local Rideshare Office and MichiVan provide information on ridesharing opportunities as well as ridematching services to link potential car and vanpool participants.

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

- US-131 carries is the primary truck freight route in the region.
- Two small regional rail companies serve the region. CSX touches the southern portion of Ionia County along the I-96 corridor.
- No major intermodal terminals are located within the region.

Corridor Value

- Corridors in the region primarily serve the local region.

Existing and Future Conditions

- The roadway corridors that pass through this region are aging and in need of modernization and will need rehabilitation over the next 20 to 30 years.
- Freight service is adequate for the need of this region.

Linkages

- US-131 links the region to Cadillac to the North and Grand Rapid to the south.
- East west connectivity is limited.

Barriers, Gaps, Missing Links

- Limited east/west linkages exist.
- Millage support has been difficult to obtain for Osceola/Mecosta County transit services.
- Intercity bus service in all but Ionia County is dependent on state subsidy.
- Senior population is growing and will demand innovative options for local and intercity travel.

Opportunities

- Tourism and agricultural industries.

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.
- Operational strategies such as increased incident management, and maintenance of traffic practices during construction projects, will be utilized.
- Access Management on strategic sections of the regional and local roadways.

- 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.