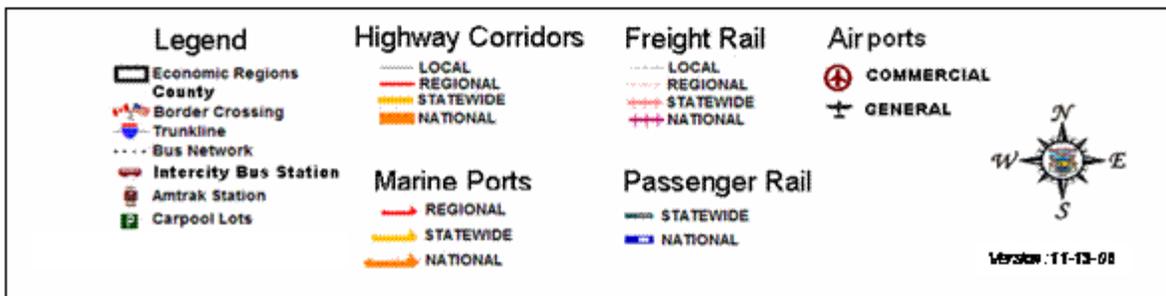
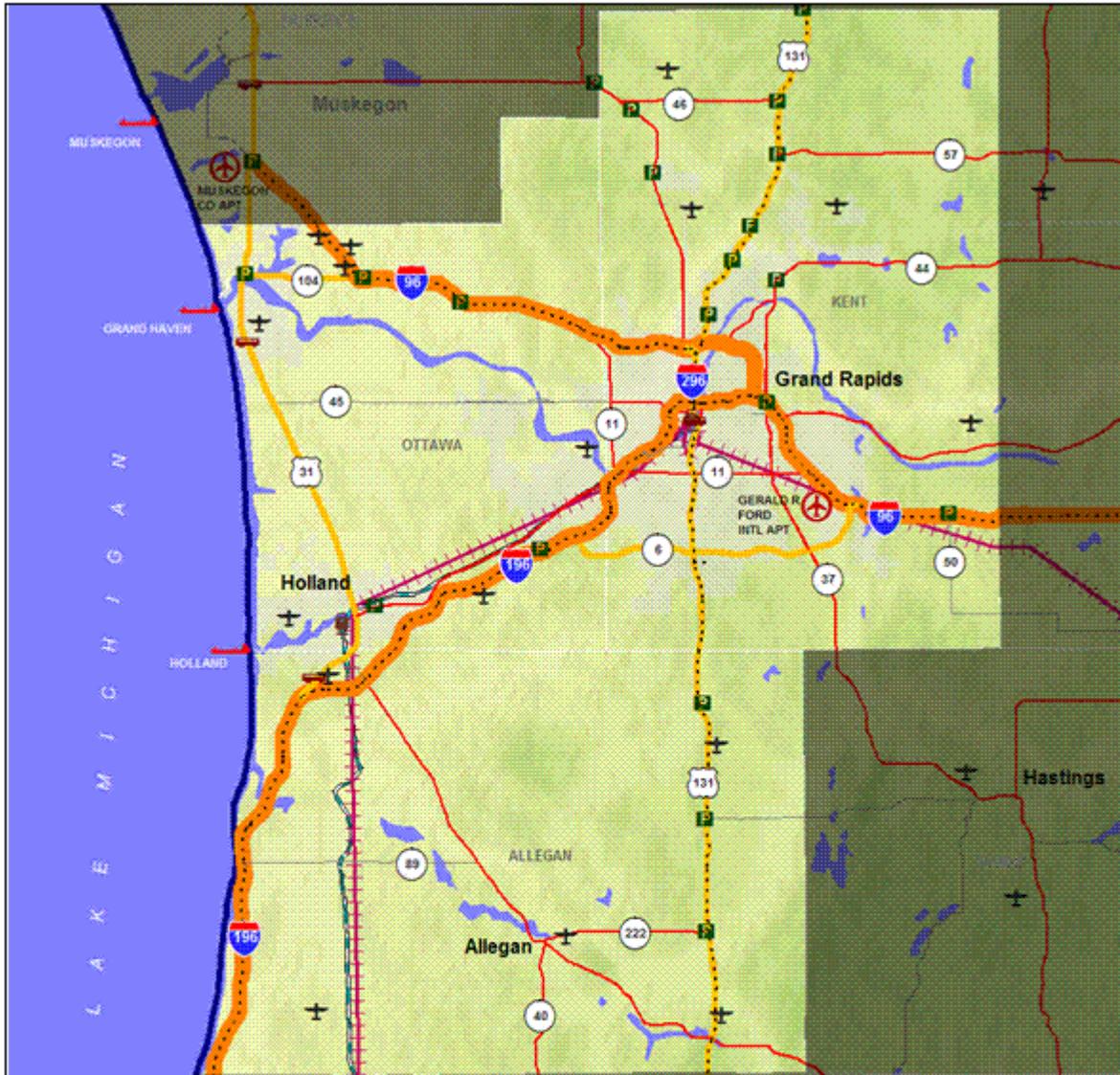


8B Greater Grand Rapids Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

- Retail, service industries, and administrative and support services provide the region's primary job base.
- 2030 growth is anticipated in retail, health care, and amusement industries.
- The per capita income of the region is about average for the state. Allegan and Ottawa (\$25-30,000), Kent (\$30-35,000) (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- Region includes part of the Great Lakes Circle tours; national forest areas; numerous state parks and roadside facilities; and attracts over 11 million visitor-days of travel/year.
- Nine medical facilities are located within the region including several nationally recognized medical-research facilities.
- The region has secondary institutions with an enrollment within the region of approximately 64,000 students.

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

- Local residents and visitors have their choice of many Interstate, state, and local routes in this region.
- The Gerald Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids serves over 1 million enplanements a year and is the second largest commercial airport in the state.
- There is Amtrak service, which links Grand Rapids with Chicago through this region. Annually, 42,000 passengers board, and 41,000 passengers deboard, in this region.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: Muskegon/Grand Rapids/Lansing/Detroit (I-96); Grand Rapids/Chicago (I-196)

Statewide Significance: Petoskey/Grand Rapids/Indiana (US-131); Mackinaw City-St. Ignace/Holland (US-31)

Counties: Allegan, Ottawa, Kent

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers: Allegan, Grand Rapids, Holland

MDOT Region: Grand, Southwest

MPO and RPA: Grand Valley Metro Council (647,446 urban pop.; 1,010 Square Mile); Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (102,218 urban pop.; 153 Square Mile); West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (RPA)

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 980,383 (9.6% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 1,243,828 (11% of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 651,434 (11.4% of MI) - Approximately 10 percent retail trade; 5 percent construction; 6 percent administrative/support services; 5 percent food service; and
- 2030 Projected Employment 810,629 (12.5% of MI) - Growth is anticipated in retail and health care industries.

Smart-Zone: Grand Rapids-Grand Valley State University and Van Andel Research Institute

Tax free Renaissance Zones: Kent

- Allegan County has countywide transit services, in addition to a community transit system.
- Ottawa Counties has two community transit systems. Kent County has a single provider serving the greater Grand Rapids area.
- The largest systems are in Grand Rapids in Kent serving 6.4 million passengers annually; Grand Haven in Ottawa County serving 180,000 passengers annually and Holland in Ottawa County serving 190,000 passengers annually.
- There is an intermodal passenger terminal and a separate rail passenger terminal in Grand Rapids. There is an intermodal passenger terminal in Ottawa County.
- Intercity bus serves Allegan, Kent and Ottawa Counties.
- The Local Rideshare Office provides information on ridesharing opportunities as well as ridematching services to link potential car and vanpool participants.

Barriers, Gaps, Missing Links

- Population and land use patterns are shifting in the region and suburban growth will stretch the capacity of the existing infrastructure.
- Intercity bus service north from Grand Rapids is dependent on state subsidy.
- Integrating long-distance freight cut-through travel with local and tourism traffic.
- Senior population is growing and will demand innovative travel options.
- Gap in US-31 freeway system between Holland and Grand Haven.
- NS and CSX selling-off lines.

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

- Freight travel is available on all modes in the region.
- Two commercial water ports handle approximately 2.3 million tons/year.
- Over 22,000 tons of air cargo is handled at the Gerald Ford International Airport, the second highest in the state.
- Freight rail service is available in all directions on multiple carriers including CSX, NS, and several regional/short-line carries.
- No major intermodal terminals are located within this region.

Corridor Value

- Some of the highest dollar values and volumes of passenger and freight travel passes through this region. The corridors serve and compliment the many industries within the 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

Linkages on all modes and directions are available on the multi-modal corridors and facilities in the region.

Opportunities

- This region offers great potential for business and industry growth. It has major universities, a strong professional and technology business climate and numerous hospital facilities and “life-science” developments conducive to supporting 21st Century jobs.
- It is home to two “smart-zones” where technology innovation can be developed and is served by several major highway and rail corridors providing good access to markets for new innovative products.
- The region is expected to grow in population and employment and the region’s per capita income is among the highest in the state.
- The region provides incentives for business and industry growth.
- Excellent access both to and around Greater Grand Rapids with the recent completion of the M-6 connector.
- Tourism and specialized agriculture (fruit-belt) industry also provide economic opportunities.
- Vacation and retirement homes are increasing along the Lake Michigan Shoreline.
- The Grand Rapid’s transit agency is nationally recognized and has a diverse set of services, including vanpool, suburban connecting service and Grand Valley State University service. The transit agency works closely with community leaders and area employers.
- Strong transit/human services coordination in both Kent and Allegan Counties.
- Grand Rapid’s transit ridership is increasing.
- Ottawa County study underway to evaluate possibility of countywide service.
- ITP transit study to access federal New Starts earmark in SAFETEA-LU for rapid transit in greater Grand Rapids area is nearing completion.
- Grand Rapids is an important connection point for intercity bus and rail, including Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach Connections.
- Grand Rapids is an important connection point for intercity bus routes for both carriers.

Regional Corridor Strategies

- Over the next 30 years the department will implement the following capacity improvements within this region:
 - Modernize urban freeways including I-196 in Grand Rapids and the East Beltline (M-37/M-44); and
 - Construct a new Grand River crossing east of Grand Haven connecting M-45 to I-96 to provide improved access between Holland and Grand Haven.
- MDOT will continue to strive to maintain good pavement conditions along all of its trunkline corridors.
- MDOT will seek opportunities and implement low-cost operational improvements to increase corridor mobility. These include but is not limited to geometric improvement, turning lanes, signal timing; visitor friendly signage, incident management; and maintenance of traffic practices during construction projects.
- MDOT will work with local governments to implement Access Management on strategic sections of the regional and local roadways.
- ITS advances will be installed and be implemented in key corridors to improve the overall operations of the region's transportation systems.
- MDOT will identify opportunities to integrate multi-modal transportation systems throughout this region including but not limited to incorporating carpool lot facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities into future projects where feasible.
- MDOT will continue to coordinate improvements and management practices with key local stakeholder groups along corridors.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Assist in local/regional efforts to advance plans for new regional, rapid transit and new downtown transit services.