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# State Highway Plan

Planning Division , Office of Planning  
Michigan State Highway Department  
John C. Mackie , Commissioner

## STATE OF MICHIGAN



## HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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FOR ADMINISTRATION

July 10, 1963

Mr. E. A. Bellenbaum  
Chief Planning Engineer  
Office of Planning

Dear Mr. Bellenbaum:

This letter presents the Frankenmuth State Highway Plan. The study was initiated to improve or relocate M-83 on the south side of Frankenmuth. The sharp curve in the vicinity of the junction of Jefferson and Weiss Streets, and the right-angle turn at the intersection of Jefferson and Main Streets, create serious safety hazards and impede traffic flow.

After studying the feasibility of various alternate treatments for M-83, the Urban Planning Section prepared this plan. It was formulated with the assistance of the Route Location Division of the Michigan State Highway Department. Preparation of this plan resulted from the coordinated, cooperative efforts of other divisions of the Highway Department, the Bureau of Public Roads, U. S. Department of Commerce, and city and other local officials.

Implementation of the recommendations presented in this plan will encourage community growth and economic vitality. It is, therefore, respectfully suggested that these proposals be submitted to the Programming Division for scheduling of construction.

Sincerely,

*Robert S. Boatman*

Robert S. Boatman, Director  
Planning Division  
Office of Planning

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MICHIGAN STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

John C. Mackie, Commissioner

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Prepared in Cooperation with the City of Frankenmuth Planning Commission  
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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of relocating the portion of M-83 on the south side of the City of Frankenmuth. In the 1930's, the Michigan State Highway Department acquired right-of-way easements for relocating M-83 to avoid sharp turns on the present alignment. Money has been allocated for this improvement under the 1962-67 highway program; however, certain problems exist concerning the proposed relocation and improvements.

The Highway Department has been aided in its re-examination of Frankenmuth highway needs by the availability of information resulting from the current preparation of a master plan for this community. As a result, highway recommendations based on a more comprehensive understanding of Frankenmuth can now be formulated.

This study is an analysis and presentation of various alternatives which were considered in preparing a solution to Frankenmuth's traffic problems. The implementation of this plan should help to insure continued community vitality and add a valuable improvement to the overall state highway system.

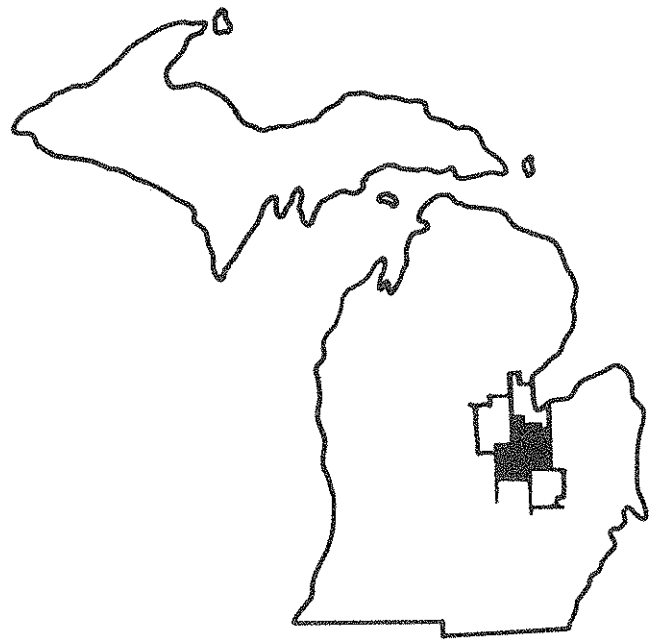
## REGIONAL LOCATION

The City of Frankenmuth is situated in the eastern part of Saginaw County in the Saginaw Bay region of Michigan. It is located on state highway M-83, twelve miles southeast of Saginaw and twenty-two miles north of Flint (See Map 1). The city lies in the Saginaw Lowland; a smooth plain formed by the glacial lakes which preceded Lake Huron. The Cass River bisects the city in an east-west direction and serves as the source of water.

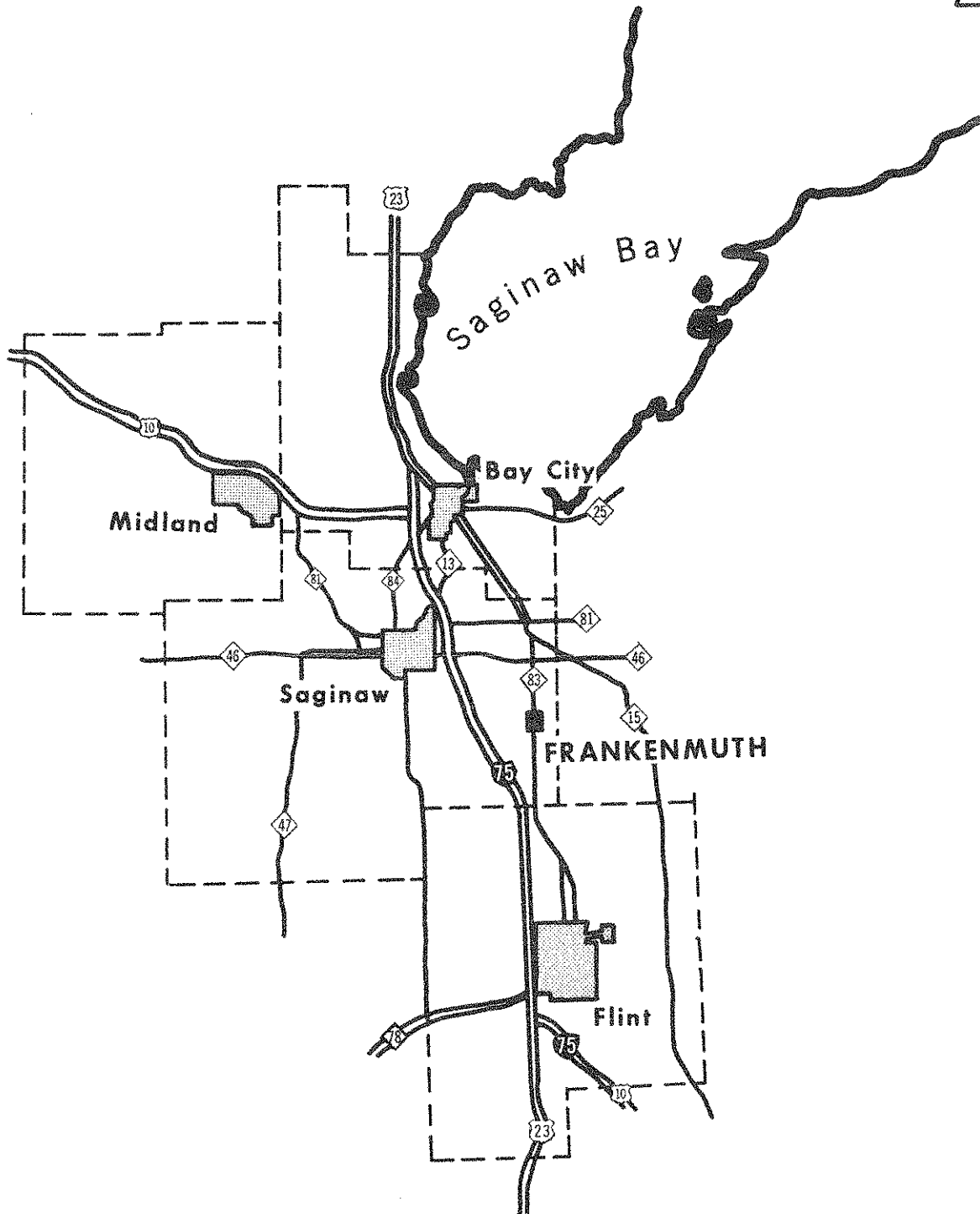
## HISTORY

Frankenmuth was settled in 1845 by a group of Franconians from Bavaria who were soon joined by refugees fleeing Germany after the unsuccessful revolution of 1848. Many of the inhabitants are descendants of the original settlers and some still speak the German language. The city architecture is characterized by an Old World flavor and the community is known throughout the state for its chicken dinners and locally brewed beer, both of which are important elements in its economy. On October 1, 1959, the Village of Frankenmuth was incorporated as a city.

# Regional Location



Key Map



Map 1

## ECONOMICS AND POPULATION

Frankenmuth is experiencing a steady rate of economic growth and population increase. Employment figures for the larger industries indicate an average annual employment of 850 persons. Approximately 35 percent, or 300, reside within Frankenmuth. Universal Engineering Company, the city's largest manufacturing firm, employs an average of 400 persons. Carling Brewing Company, which has approximately 250 employees, provides the second greatest number of jobs. Zehnder's Chicken Products Company has an average of 100 employees. The remainder of the labor force is employed by other industrial and commercial establishments within the city and in the surrounding area. Expansion plans for Carling Brewing Company, the creation of greater potential tourist trade by the Interstate Highway System and the stability of local business, indicate that the area's economy will continue to expand at a steady rate.

Population in the Frankenmuth area has increased from 2,380 in 1940 to 3,250 in 1960, representing a 20.4 percent increase per decade. With the improvement in employment opportunities and the existence of available land, it appears that this increase in population will continue into the future. The city master plan indicates that the 1980 city population alone will increase from 1,728 to about 3,000 people.

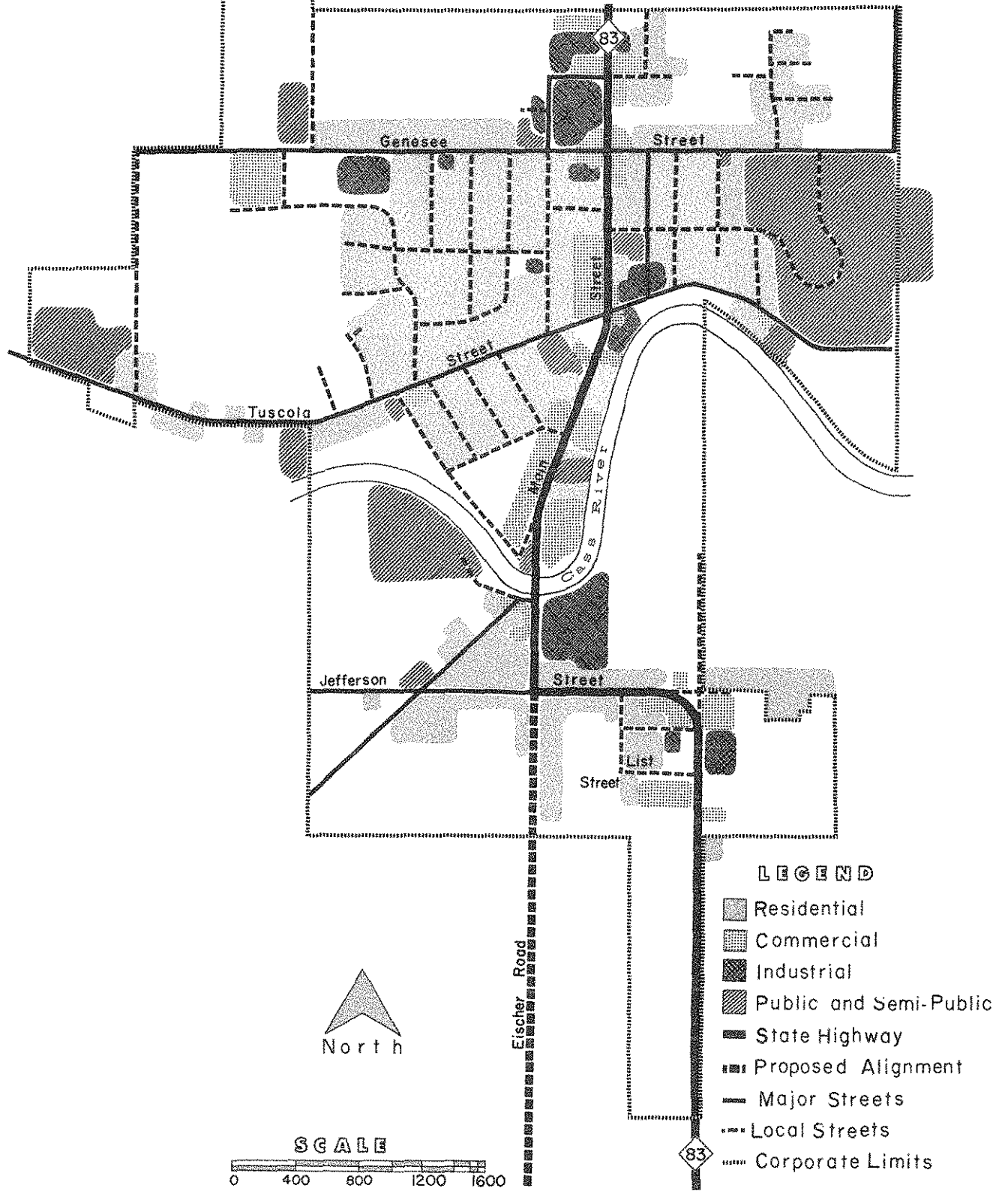


## LAND USE

Land use within the Frankenmuth area has a direct bearing upon the origins and destinations of vehicular movement and upon the number of trips made. Developed land can produce congestion, which interferes with the smooth and efficient flow of traffic, by requiring turning movements from urban highways, which necessitate the starting and stopping of traffic, and by not including adequate terminal parking facilities.

Land-use planning can guide the development of the community, provide protection for existing land values, and encourage compatible use of land. Land-use patterns result from the functional location which establishments choose in relation to one another. Interaction between various land uses is facilitated by highways which provide communication between them. New highways often provide access to relatively undeveloped areas and encourage new uses as well as intensifying the land uses already developed. The original development of Frankenmuth's central business district and industrial sites illustrates the importance of a highway facility (See Map 2). The central business district is located along M-83 in the form of strip development, with industries located adjacent to it at the northern

# City of Frankenmuth Generalized Land Use



Prepared by the Planning Division  
Michigan State Highway Department  
John C. Mackie, Commissioner

Map 2

and southern extremes of the city. Existing residential land within Frankenmuth is situated primarily in the northern part of the city and has retained a very pleasant character. The bulk of recreational land in Frankenmuth is located in the northeastern section of town - north of the Cass River.

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Present residential land development trends within Frankenmuth indicate that growth will probably continue to occur in a northerly direction. This contention is supported by the fact that open land in the extreme southern portion of the city, although offering good potential for residential use, will not develop because much of the area is zoned for commercial use. Other possible areas for residential construction are located south of the city. However, the impetus of development to the north will probably act as a strong influence on people considering the construction of homes.

With the exception of one large industry within the city, industrial expansion has been modest. Carling Brewing Company, located in the southern portion of the city, has recently undertaken a vigorous expansion program. This expansion will probably not increase employment opportunities substantially because of new automation techniques that are being utilized by the company. The land use in the peripheral area of the brewery will not be greatly affected by this expansion since most of the land to be used is presently owned by the company.

Land in the southeastern part of the city has been zoned for an industrial park. For this proposed industrial area to be of any consequence to the city, considerable development and promotion will be required. Master plan market area studies indicate a good potential for commercial expansion within the city. Such expansion will probably occur in the retail and service field and further growth of restaurant establishments. Additional job opportunities in commerce will be related to this growth.

## EXISTING TRAFFIC

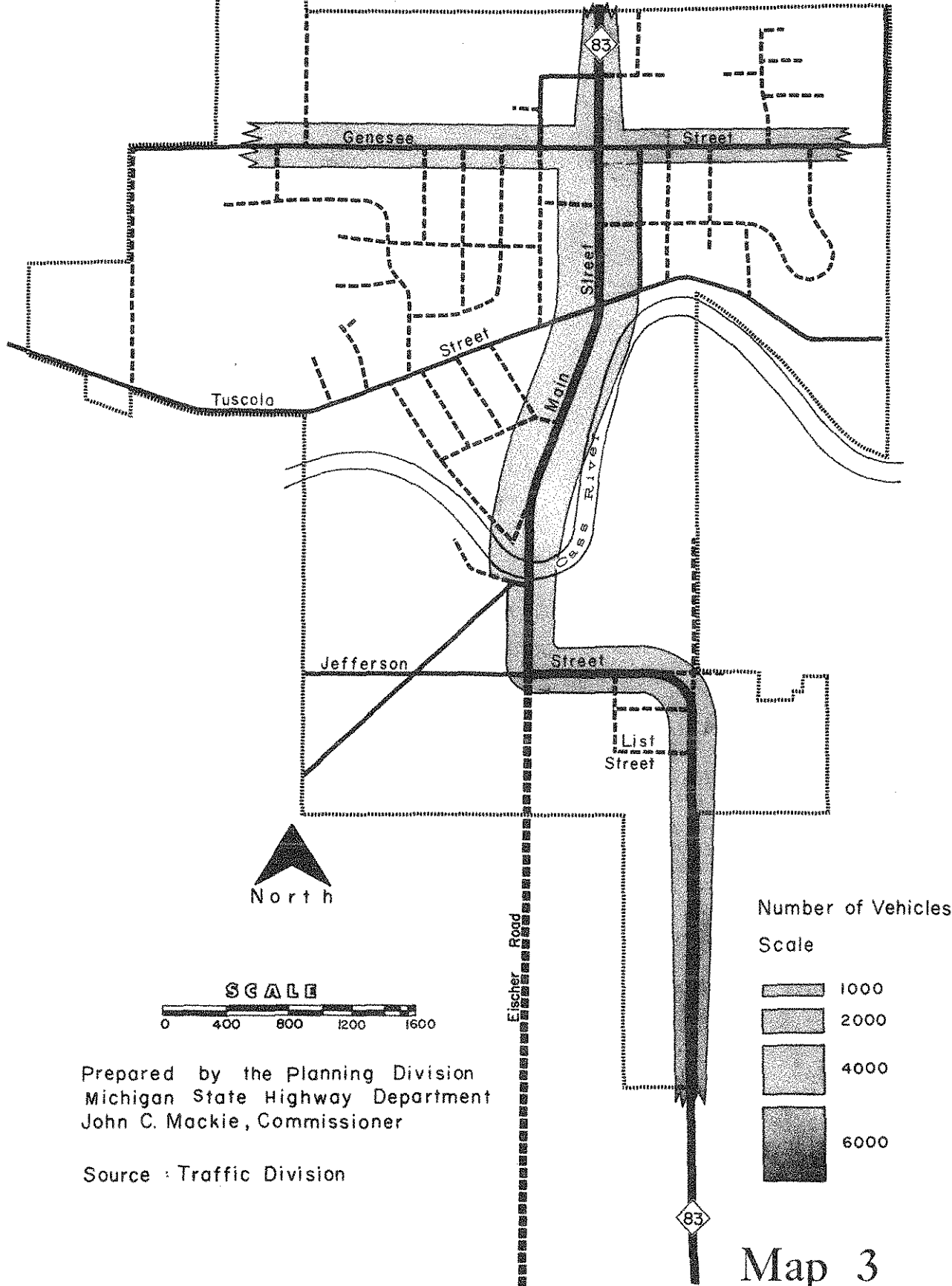
In analyzing the existing traffic on M-83 through the city, several points should be mentioned. Truck traffic in the city is generated largely by distribution of Carling's products. The greatest amount of this traffic is oriented to the south. Two large restaurants, located on Main Street (M-83) north of the Cass River, generate a significant volume of traffic. Their excellent food and continental atmosphere attract customers from throughout the state. This accounts, to a great extent, for the heavy traffic that enters the city from both the north and the south. Much of this traffic occurs on weekends and diminishes considerably on weekdays. Residential traffic accounts for a considerable portion of the city's vehicular movement. Home-to-work patterns indicate that approximately two-thirds of this traffic is oriented to the north. Minor commercial traffic generation is created by the local merchants whose supplies are shipped into the city from the southern regions of the state. The feed and mill industry within the city generates a small amount of traffic by the shipment of goods to the south. Through traffic needs are, for the most part, accommodated by Interstate 75, located about six miles west of the city.

## FUTURE TRAFFIC

Future traffic volumes on M-83 within the corporate limits of Frankenmuth are expected to increase substantially by 1980. According to the projections made by the Traffic Division of the Michigan State Highway Department, the 1960 traffic volumes (See Map 3) are expected to increase by 4,400 vehicles in the southern portion of the city, an increase from 2,600 to 7,000 vehicles. Traffic volumes in the northern part of town are expected to increase from 2,525 to 8,000 vehicles. Although this appears to indicate sizable increases, it must be realized that the present volumes are not particularly high. Consequently, the traffic anticipated will not become a problem to the capacity of the present system until 1980.

Consideration should be given to providing a highway system which will satisfy the long-range requirements of the community. Looking at the proposed alignment from this viewpoint requires the analysis of various alternatives to determine a solution which will best meet these requirements. The following pages present the most feasible alternatives.

# City of Frankenmuth 1960 Traffic Volumes



Prepared by the Planning Division  
Michigan State Highway Department  
John C. Mackie, Commissioner

Source : Traffic Division

Map 3

## ALTERNATIVES

The three alternatives to be considered basically involve either relocating M-83 to Eischer Road or maintaining the present alignment. A comparison of the benefits and disadvantages is presented to serve as the basis for decisions by officials of the Highway Department and the community.

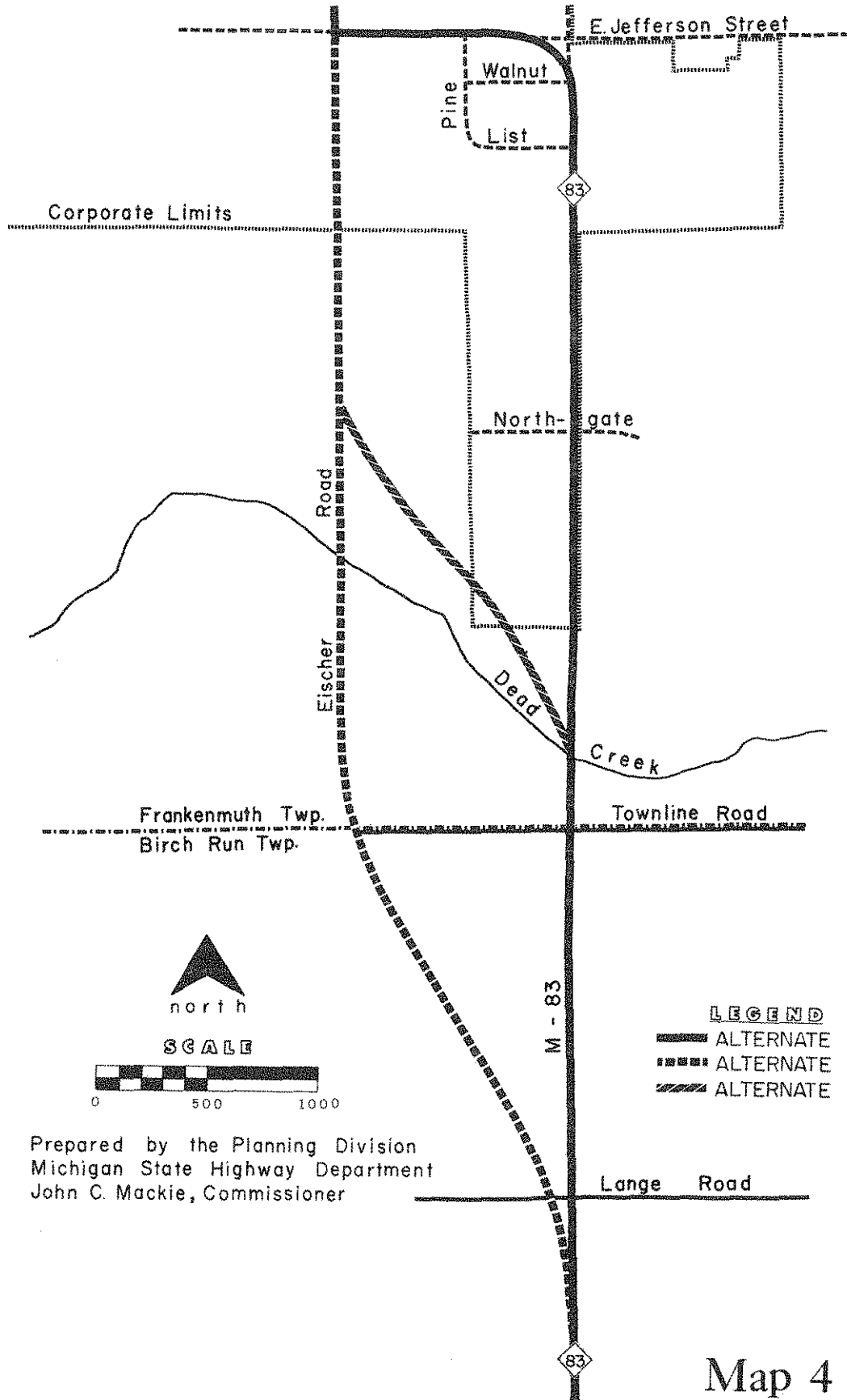
### Alternate 1 - Maintaining the Present Alignment (See Map 4)

#### Benefits

1. There would be no adverse economic effects upon existing land uses adjacent to the present alignment.
2. The cost of improving the present location of M-83 would be considerably less than the cost of relocating the route to Eischer Road.
3. The existing facility can accommodate present traffic volumes and, with widening in the city, projected 1980 traffic volumes.
4. The existing bridge on M-83 at Dead Creek could be used, thus avoiding the expense of constructing a new bridge as required by Alternate 2.



# Frankenmuth Area M-83 Relocation



Prepared by the Planning Division  
Michigan State Highway Department  
John C. Mackie, Commissioner

Map 4

#### Disadvantages

1. Requirements for four-lane construction within the city limits reinforce and promote further commercial development along the existing alignment south of the city. This is not compatible with master plan objectives.
2. As commercial establishments, which are highway-oriented, are allowed to develop along the present location, relocation of M-83 will become increasingly difficult.
3. Extensive channelization improvements would be required to improve the operational and safety characteristics of the present alignment.
4. This solution would not alleviate the problem caused by the sharp turns, presenting safety hazards.

#### Alternate 2 - Relocation of M-83 to Eischer Road South of Dead Creek (See Map 4)

##### Benefits

1. Construction of the proposed alignment, at this time, would cause less disruption of commercial land use than it would

if construction were done at a later date after land use along the present alignment is allowed to develop beyond existing patterns.

2. Commercial traffic would have two all-weather road entrances to their attractors in the southern portion of the city, improving efficiency of traffic movement.
3. It would be capable of handling any increased traffic should development occur in the area designated as an industrial park.
4. It would not require any right-of-way acquisition since the Highway Department acquired easements to this property several years ago.
5. It would permit better traffic flow and increased capacity by avoiding existing sharp turns on the present alignment.
6. Daily and weekend traffic entering the city from the south would not be detained by the existing stop at Jefferson and Main Streets, permitting a more efficient approach into the city.

#### Disadvantages

1. It could have slight detrimental economic effects upon commercial establishments on the present alignment because of some dependence upon highway traffic for business.
2. Widening of Eischer Road would temporarily inconvenience residents living along this roadway.
3. Construction cost of this new alignment would be higher than for the other alternatives.
4. It would require the expense of constructing a bridge at Dead Creek.

#### Alternate 3 - Relocation of M-83 to Eischer Road North of Dead Creek (See Map 4)

##### Benefits

1. This proposal is compatible with master plan proposals for development of the community.

2. Construction of the improvement, at this time, would probably cause less disruption of commercial land uses than if construction were done at a later date.
3. Commercial traffic would have two all-weather entrances to attractors in the southern portion of the city, improving efficiency of traffic movement.
4. Implementation of this proposal would be less expensive than for Alternate 2, and its cost would be within the limits of funds programmed for the M-83 improvement.
5. It would permit better traffic flow and increased capacity by avoiding existing sharp turns on the present alignment.
6. Traffic entering the city from the south would not be detained by the existing stop at Jefferson and Main Streets.
7. Sufficient funds are now available to permit improving M-83 to meet state highway standards, from Genesee Street to the north city limit.
8. The existing bridge on M-83 at Dead Creek could be used, thus avoiding the expense of a new bridge as required by Alternate 2.

#### Disadvantages

1. A few commercial establishments along the present alignment, which are dependent upon highway traffic for business, may be adversely affected to a slight degree.
2. Construction costs of this alternative would be higher than for improving the existing facility.
3. Widening Eischer Road would cause some temporary inconvenience for residents living along it.

#### SUMMARY

Under the 1962-1967 highway program, funds have been allocated for improving M-83 in the Frankenmuth area. Right-of-way for Alternates 1 and 2 is presently controlled by the Michigan State Highway Department. Through the study and analysis of economic, population, land-use and traffic factors, benefits and disadvantages were listed for maintaining the present alignment and for two relocations of the route to Eischer Road.

Merely widening the present alignment from two to four lanes would not eliminate traffic conflicts caused by the existing sharp turns. Furthermore, this treatment would encourage additional commercial development along M-83, making eventual relocation extremely difficult.

Relocation of M-83 to Eischer Road south of Dead Creek would exceed programmed funds. It is, therefore, recommended that M-83 be relocated north of Dead Creek since this treatment will be compatible with master plan proposals for the community, will alleviate the sharp curves, and will be economical enough to also permit the improvement of M-83 to state highway standards, from Genesee Street to the north city limits.

# OFFICE MEMORANDUM



MICHIGAN  
STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
JOHN C. MACKIE, COMMISSIONER

June 26, 1963

File: 73131 C-15 (1)  
73131 C-15 (2)

To: R. S. Boatman, Director  
Planning Division

From: H. H. Cooper, Director  
Traffic Division

Subject: Review of Proposed State Highway Plan, City of Frankenmuth

We have reviewed the proposed highway plan in which three alternate treatments for the alignment of M-83 south of Jefferson Street are considered. We concur in the relocation recommended. Its principal advantage over the existing M-83 alignment is the elimination of the two right angle trunkline turns on Jefferson Street. The relocation will provide the City of Frankenmuth with a highway facility built to today's standards and capable of handling safely and efficiently today's and tomorrow's traffic.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. H. Cooper".

H. H. Cooper, Director  
Traffic Division

HHC:EAD:mjh

cc: L. J. Mikulich



# CITY OF FRANKENMUTH

FRANKENMUTH, MICHIGAN

## RESOLUTION of the CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

"WHEREAS: The city of Frankenmuth has a 'recognized' Planning Commission 'duly constituted according to existing planning enabling legislation', which Planning Commission has been given the responsibility for the preparation of a Master Plan for the city, and;

"WHEREAS: The Planning Commission, in pursuance of this delegated responsibility, has caused to be made detailed and comprehensive studies of existing conditions and development trends, and on the basis of these studies, made projections of the future development of the community, part of parts of which have been adopted as elements of a Master Plan of community development, and;

"WHEREAS: The Planning Division of the Office of Planning of the Michigan State Highway Department has been delegated the responsibility of preparing, in cooperation with local planners, a trunkline plan, which plan represents the level of agreement which has been reached on long-range planning objectives, and;

"WHEREAS: The City Planning Commission and representatives of the Planning Division have cooperatively studied this problem and have prepared such a trunkline plan, now:

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the plan entitled 'State Trunkline Development Plan for Frankenmuth', as presented, is consistent with and compatible to the planning and development objectives of the city of Frankenmuth, and;

"THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the said trunkline plan as cooperatively developed and presented herewith be approved for presentation to the State Highway Department for programming.

"Moved by Koch, supported by Zeilinger that the above resolution be adopted. Motion carried unanimously."

### CERTIFICATION OF SECRETARY:

I, Irene C. Zeilinger, secretary of the Frankenmuth City Planning Commission, do herewith attest that the above resolution is an exact excerpt of same taken from the minutes of the City Planning Commission meeting held on the 17th day of June, 1963, at the Council Room of the City-Township Building and that the motion as indicated above was unanimously passed by the members of said commission by voice vote,

In witness whereof, I do hereby subscribe my hand this 22nd day of June, 1963.

*Irene C. Zeilinger*  
Secretary  
Frankenmuth Planning Commission

Sworn and subscribed to before  
me, a Notary Public in and for  
Saginaw County, Michigan, this  
24th day of June, 1963.  
My commission expires 9-25-65