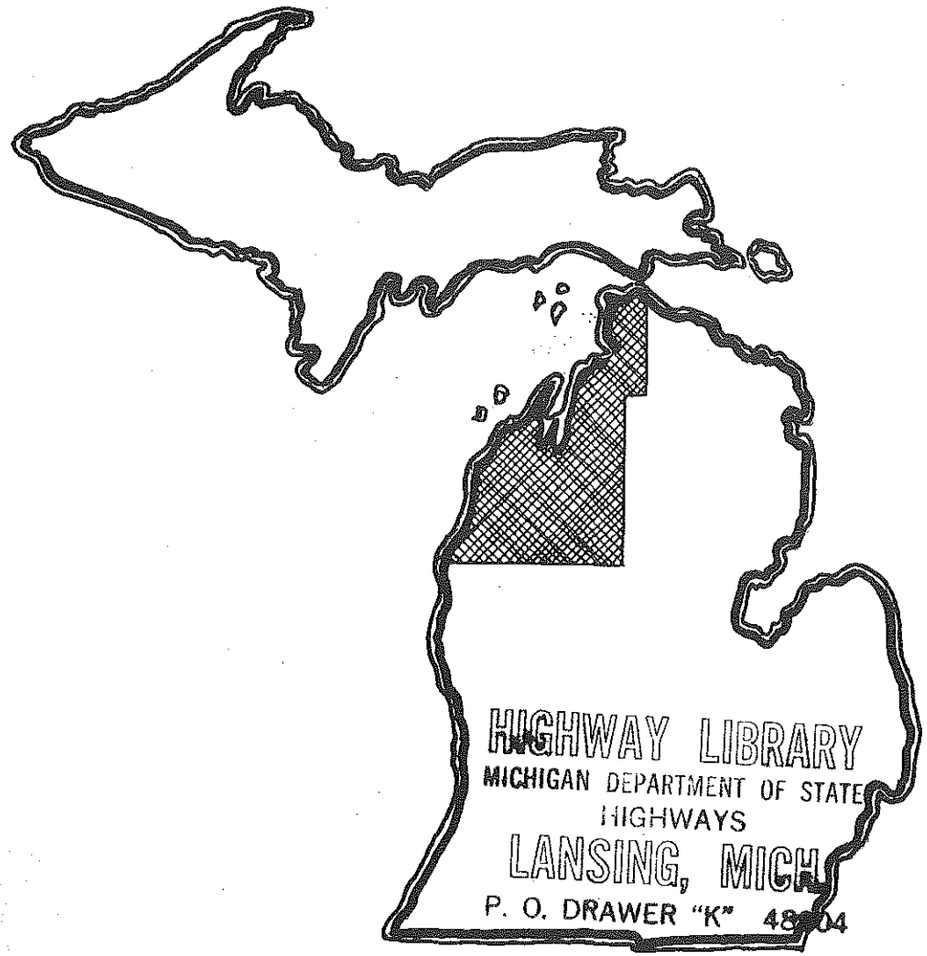


INITIATING A TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE NORTHWEST MICHIGAN REGION

PRESENTED BY THE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE HIGHWAYS

INTRODUCTION

10035

By the Constitution and Statutes of the State of Michigan, the Department of State Highways has a responsibility to build and maintain a highway system for our state.

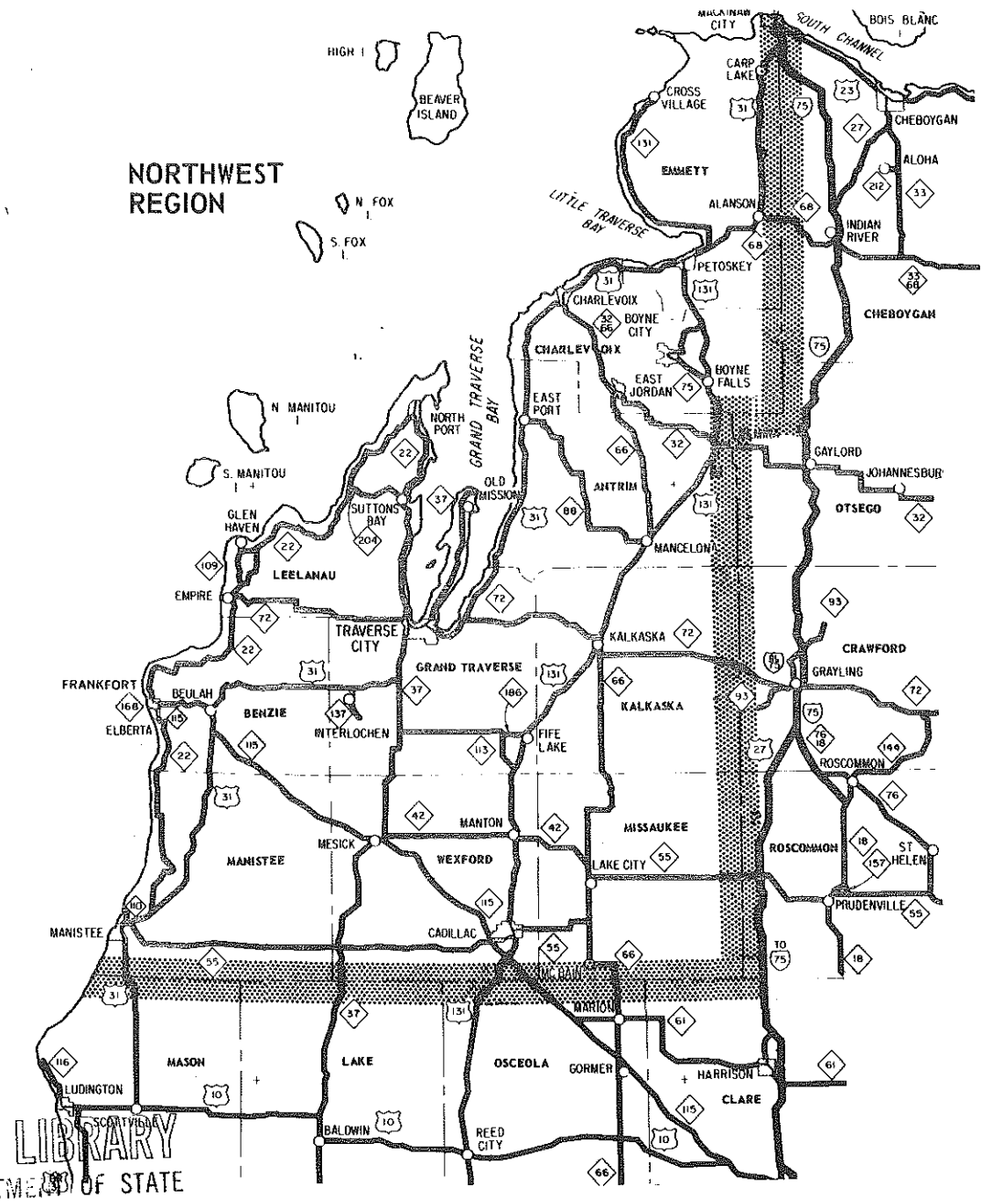
In fulfilling this responsibility the Department has developed a pre-construction planning process which assures the continuing provision of an efficient state trunk line system within the limits of available financing.

The process involves Functional Highway Classification which establishes the relative importance of each segment of the entire state road network and assigns each route to the jurisdiction of the appropriate level of government; Highway Needs Studies which establish the monetary requirements to meet the needs of the various road agencies; Construction Programming which evaluates and compares the service function and physical deficiencies of the various trunk line routes and establishes a priority schedule for improvements; and Planning and Engineering Studies which determine the precise nature of improvements to be accomplished.

Recognizing the impact that new highway developments may have on all residents of a region the Michigan Department of State Highways has scheduled a series of public meetings. These meetings provide a ready opportunity for public agencies, private groups and individual citizens to assist in making the necessary decisions early in the decision making process. However, to make more meaningful contributions, the public must know how the Department makes decisions, what is studied and what the issues will be.

In presenting this material, attention will be directed toward the major issues that must be considered by the individual citizens, local planning agencies and the Department. These include:

* Should the Region adopt a growth or no-growth policy?
* Should a mode of transportation other than highway be utilized?
* Should the Region adopt a "no-build" policy?
* Should the Region support a policy to improve and/or expand the existing highway system?



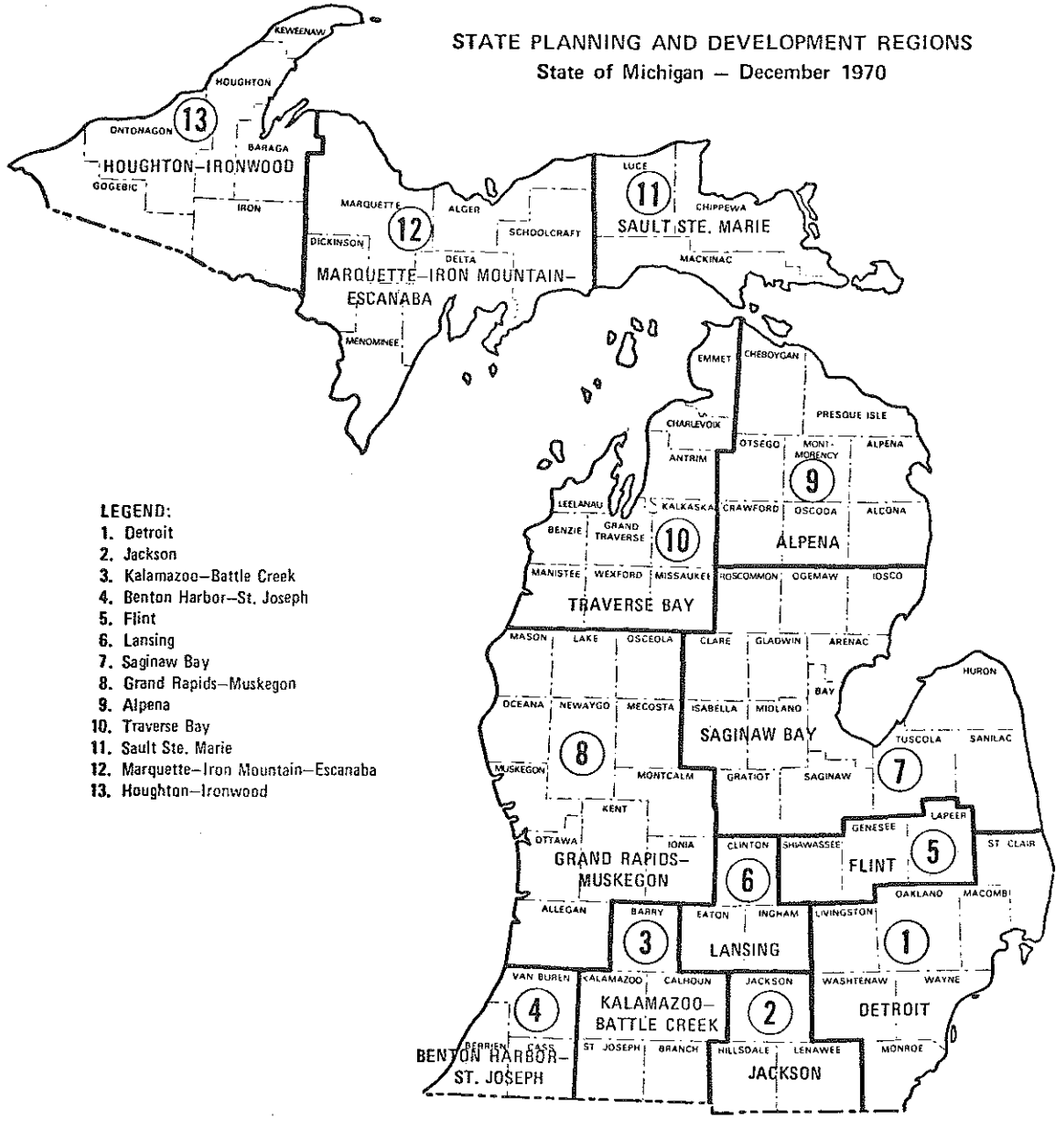
REGIONAL HIGHWAY PLANNING

An important ingredient of the planning studies is the development of regional trunk line highway plans. The goal of the Department is to provide a transportation system that will facilitate the movement of people and goods into, within and through the region and between the region and other areas of the state. In achieving this goal it is recognized that decisions made about highways in one part of the region will affect other parts of the region and the state as a whole. It is also essential that the plan be developed in consonance with the development goals and objectives of the region. Thus the state highway plan provides one important ingredient to a series of regional plans, which, in combination comprise the comprehensive regional development plan.

To accomplish this objective, numerous alternatives must be considered ranging from reconstruction of existing highways to the development and construction of a backbone freeway system. In this context it is important to note that various highways serve distinctly different functions. Interstate and Arterial Highways (US-31 and US-131 are Arterial Highways) are designed to provide for long distance through trips and interconnect major communities. Area Service Highways, such as M-66 and M-72, provide for those who wish to travel to a specific location within an area. When a highway becomes overcrowded or is in poor structural condition and must be rebuilt, a number of decisions must be made including: 1) should the new road be in the same location as the old or should it be in another area, 2) how many lanes should be provided, and 3) should access to the new highway be controlled. To make these decisions, we must study a large enough area and consider a wide variety of interests. This can be most easily accomplished on a multi-county or regional basis.

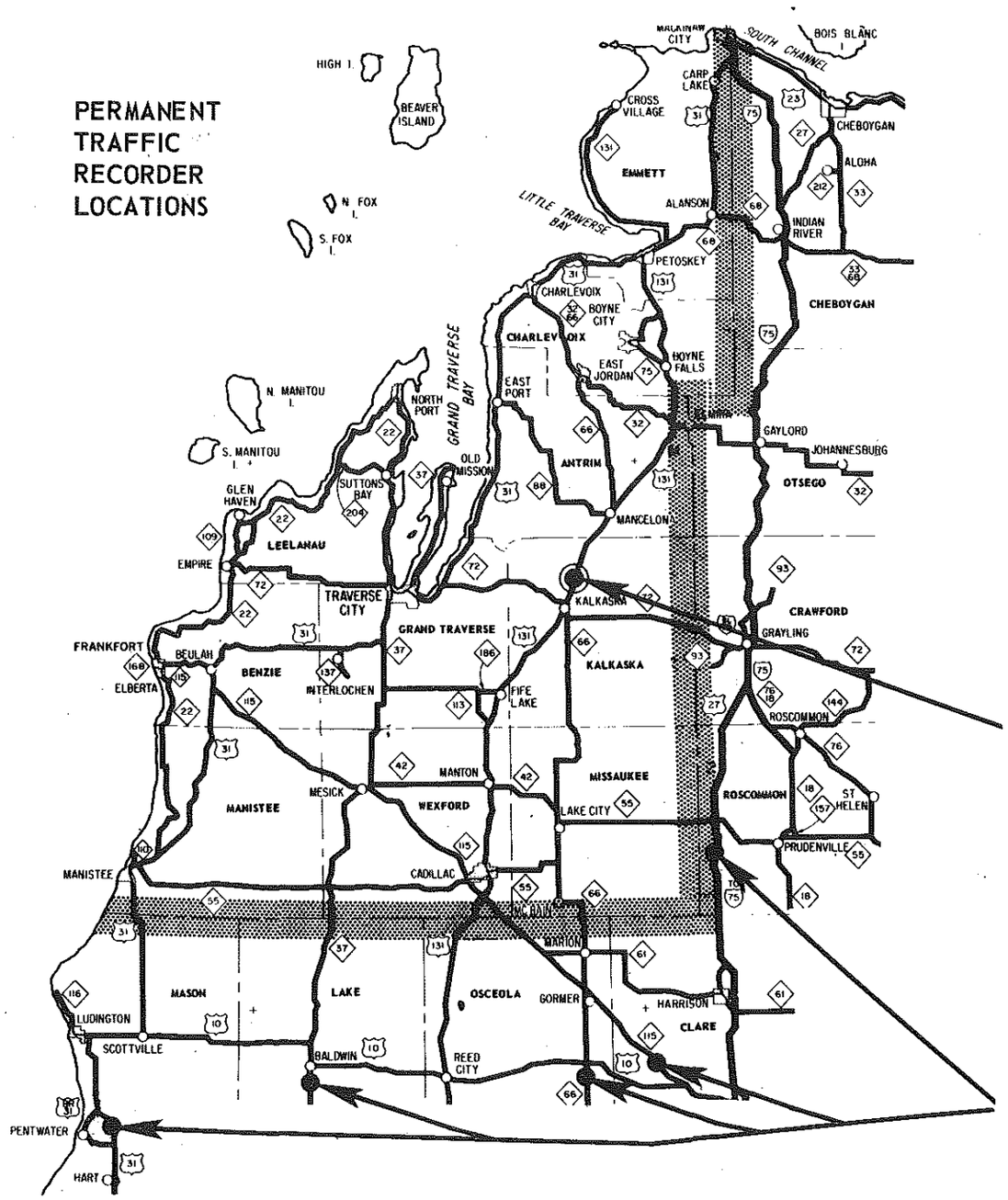
Since the regional type of decision-making base is important to a number of other public programs besides highways, the Governor and the Federal Government have stressed the need to develop public programs on a regional basis. To further this, the executive office has designated planning regions for the entire state. The Northwest Michigan Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission has been designated by the Governor's office as the multi-county regional planning agency for this area. In so doing, the

STATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS
State of Michigan — December 1970



LEGEND:
1. Detroit
2. Jackson
3. Kalamazoo–Battle Creek
4. Benton Harbor–St. Joseph
5. Flint
6. Lansing
7. Saginaw Bay
8. Grand Rapids–Muskegon
9. Alpena
10. Traverse Bay
11. Sault Ste. Marie
12. Marquette–Iron Mountain–Escanaba
13. Houghton–Ironwood

Governor has requested that all State agencies cooperate with the Regional agency when planning various programs and to develop those programs to be consistent with regional goals and objectives. The Department of State Highways is pledged to meeting this objective.



US-131/M-66 PTR STATION

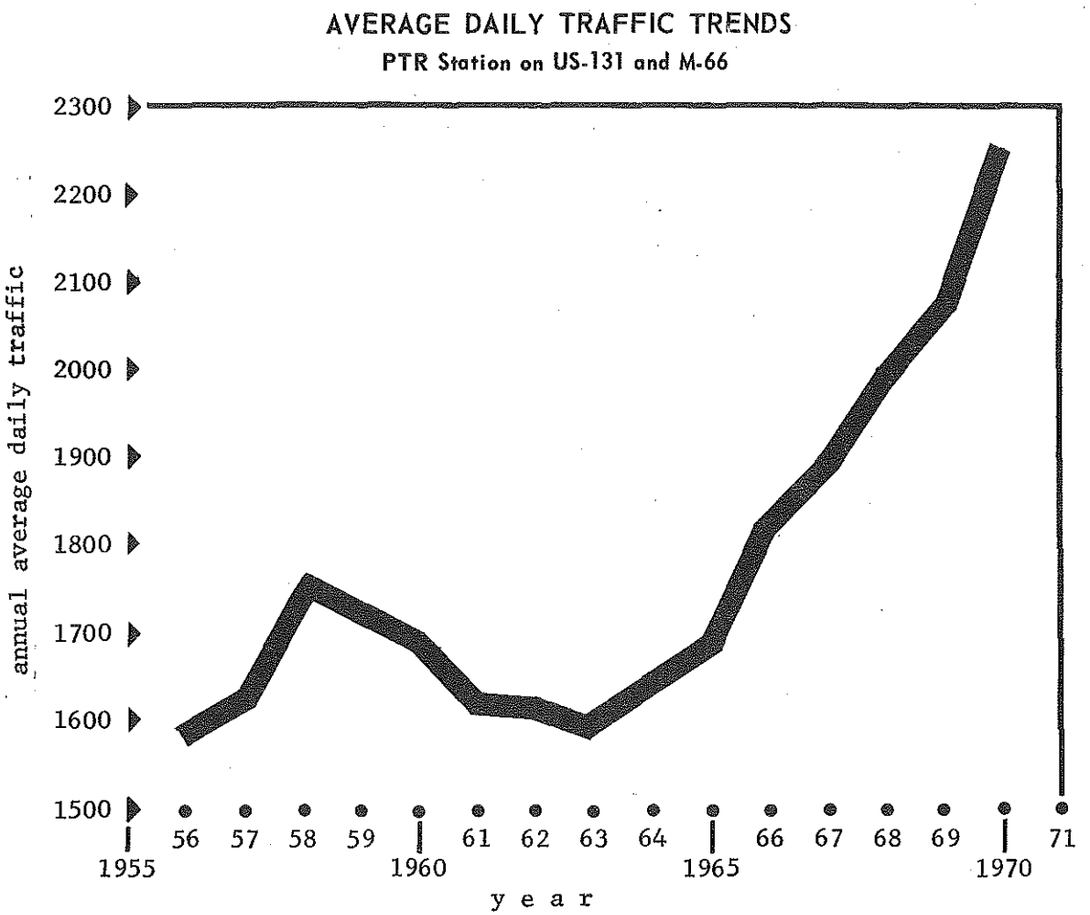
PTR STATIONS

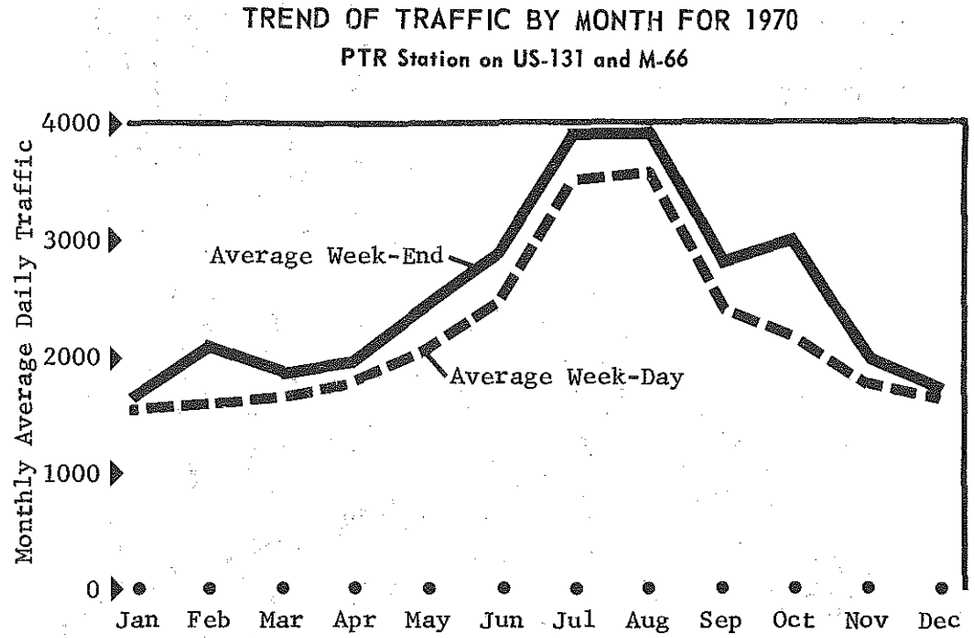
TRAFFIC TRENDS

Traffic monitoring is an essential process that provides data relating to the ability of the highway system to safely and efficiently accommodate traffic volumes and allows highway problems to be identified. To insure reliability of information, the Michigan Department of State Highways maintains permanent traffic recorders (PTR's) on state trunk lines at key locations throughout the state. PTR's are stationary devises below the highway surface which count vehicles 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Six such stations are located in or near the Northwest Region. One of these, located on US-131 and M-66 north of Kalkaska has been selected for demonstration purposes.

Shown below are traffic volumes recorded at the PTR station located on US-131/M-66. The plot represents average daily traffic by year for each year the PTR has been operational.

As indicated, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of traffic using this route over the past several years. With the attraction that the region has for fishermen, skiers, hunters, vacationers, snow-mobilers, and just-plain-sight-seers, this same surge has occurred on many highways in this area.





The permanent traffic recorder also points out the peak traffic periods throughout the year. As shown, traffic peaks occurred during the summer months, between June and September. Average week-day traffic peaks rose to approximately 3,500 vehicles in July and August whereas weekend peaks reached nearly 4,000 vehicles during these same months. Peaks at some of the other stations rose as high as 7,000 on normal summer weekends and as high as 10,000 on holiday weekends.

Based upon anticipated statewide traffic increases, we can assume that these trends will continue, thereby compounding traffic problems already in existence.

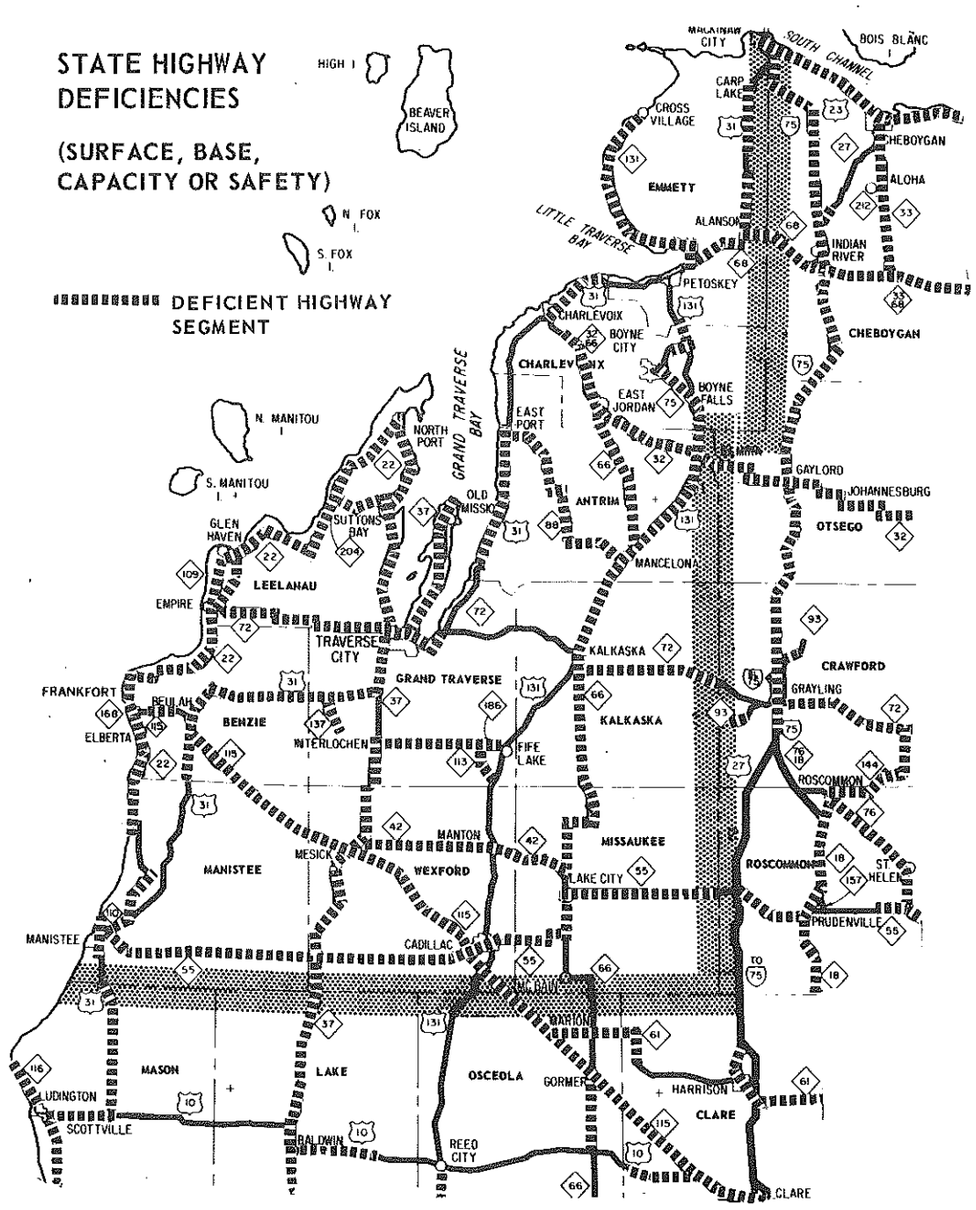
HIGHWAY DEFICIENCIES

When considering the consequences of the increasing volumes of traffic using the highways, these volumes must be related to the condition of the existing highway system. To make this type of analysis possible, the Michigan Department of State Highways annually rates the condition of all state trunk line highways relative to an established set of standards. Individual segments of each trunk line are given a numerical rating on each of four separate factors - traffic carrying capacity, surface condition, base condition, and degree of safety. The numerical aggregate of each of these four separate ratings is the sufficiency rating for that segment of route. Any segment receiving a rating below an accepted minimum tolerable condition on any of these four factors is considered to have a critical deficiency with respect to that factor.

As shown, many miles of state trunk line in the region are rated as being deficient in one or more of the categories. It should be noted that most of the critically deficient mileage is substandard with respect to traffic carrying capacity and/or safety, the two factors most directly affecting the motoring public. I-75, for instance, is rated as critical in safety only based upon highway safety standards developed by the Traffic Safety Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials. These standards call for such things as break-away sign posts, removal of fixed objects within 30 feet of the roadway, tapered and buried guard rail ends, and wrong-way signs on exit and entrance ramps. Because segments of I-75 have not, as yet, been brought up to all of these latest standards, the route appears deificent.

It should also be understood that this situation is not unique to this Region. In fact, 66 percent of the State's 9,435 miles of trunk line have deficiencies which require improvement within the next five years.

Recognizing that this is not an absolute system but rather an indicator of problem or potential problem areas, this data proves extremely useful in understanding the condition of our existing system of highways so that we can more accurately assess future conditions and remedial measures. Some of these problems will be resolved through minor repairs to the existing roadway. Others may require complete reconstruction on a new location to safely accommodate future traffic volumes.



ALTERNATIVES

There are several alternatives that must be considered in the face of the increased travel demand on the already overcrowded existing transportation network. Included are: 1) Stop, or attempt to suppress, the growth rate, 2) Consider a mode of transportation other than highways, 3) Do nothing, or the "no-build" approach, or 4) Improve and/or expand the existing highway network. Which of these, or other alternatives, will best satisfy the goals and objectives of the Region and the State?

Growth versus No-growth

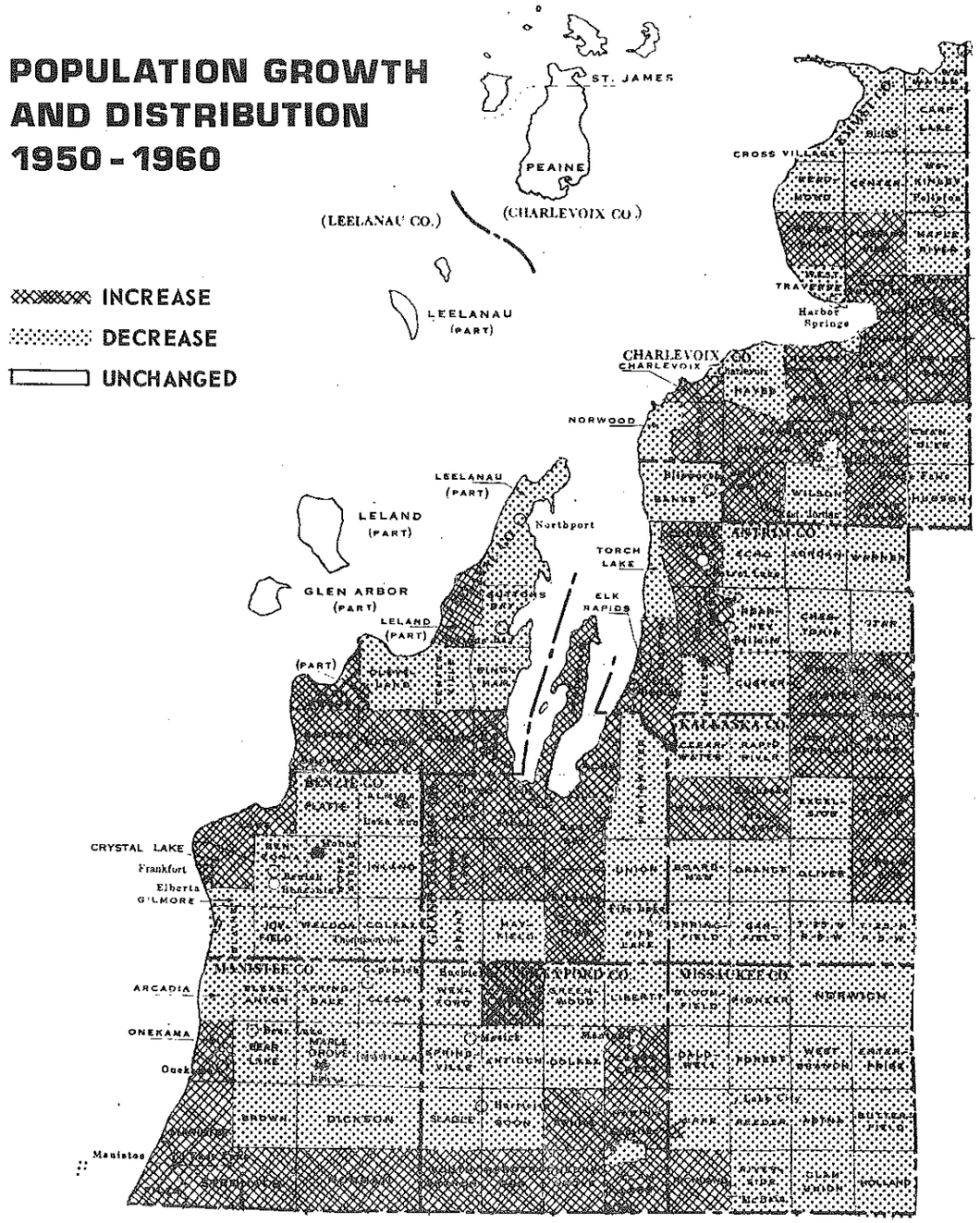
One of the functions of highway planning is to attempt to coordinate highway system development, corridor selection, route location, and construction scheduling of highway projects to be consistent with regional and community goals and objectives. Increasingly, this effort must be viewed from the perspective of the controversy between those who advocate growth versus those who call for a "no-growth" policy.

Based upon a review of information regarding economic and social activities, a comparison can be made between the Northwest Region and the remainder of the State.

As an example, the accompanying illustrations depict population changes which have taken place in the Region from 1950 to 1960 and from 1960 to 1970.

In the decade of the 1950's, growth occurred primarily around urban centers such as Traverse City, Manistee, Cadillac, Petoskey and Charlevoix. In all instances, the townships surrounding the centers gained population and in three instances, the city itself lost population.

During that time period, growth also occurred in a lineal pattern, especially along the Lake shoreline and in proximity to US-131 and M-55. This pattern is expressive of the increase in rural population having easy access to urban centers both within and beyond the Region.



In the decade of the 1960's, population growth was more widespread throughout the Northwest Michigan Region. As shown in the second illustration, most of the townships increased in population, rather than primarily just those surrounding the major cities, as occurred in the preceding decade. For the most part, the major cities continued their population trends of the 1950's. Notable exceptions are Traverse City, which grew from 1950-60 and then declined the following decade, and Harbor Springs and Petoskey, which reversed this pattern.

Based upon a review of population and other socio-economic data, several observations are clear:

1. The Northwest Region has been developing at a slower pace than regions in southern Michigan.

2. Population is increasing at a slower rate.

3. Population growth is occurring around the major centers with:
   A. Losses occurring within the urban centers themselves, and
   B. Increases occurring in the surrounding townships.

4. There is an out-migration of the young and an in-migration of retirees.

5. Employment is shifting away from agriculture but maintains high seasonal variability.

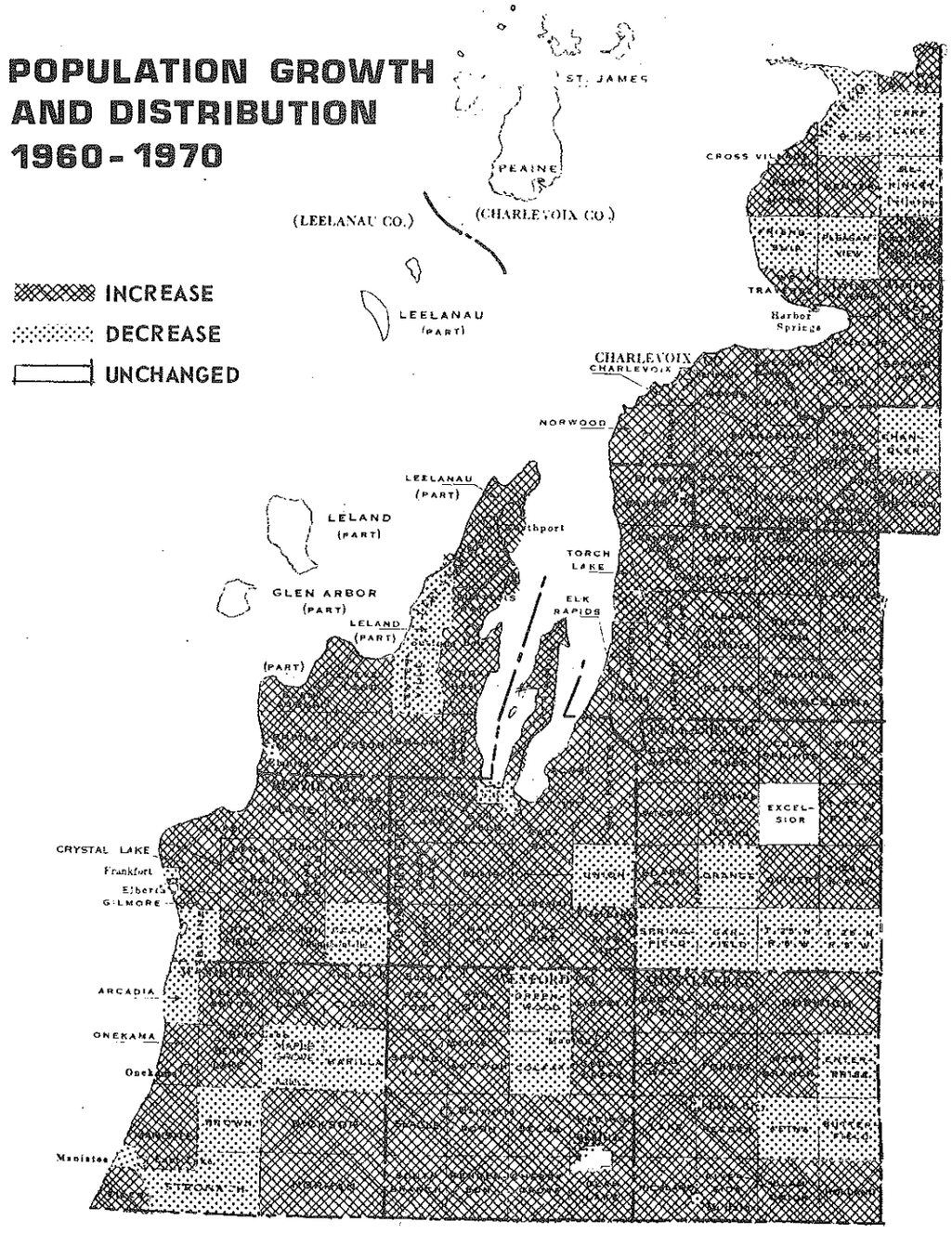
6. Trade and service employment is rising and tends to be low income.

These trends suggest that the Northwest Region is encountering specific problems common to most of Northern Michigan; these include:

1. Substantial unemployment, related to a relatively low level of industrial development.

2. Low family income.

3. Out-migration of the young.



In addition to these problems is the concern of many for the possible adverse affects increased population, tourism and industrial/commercial development could have on the environment and general quality of life in the region. Solutions to the economic problems may very well generate new problems in other areas.

This situation, to which there is no simple solution, presents a dilemma in which the Department of State Highways finds itself involved. On one hand, those who support development view improved highway service as the necessary ingredient to a growth situation. On the other hand, those who oppose development view these improvements as the path to environmental degradation.

The more vocal members of this latter group have been stating the proposition that the best way to implement a no-growth policy is to stop public actions that contribute to economic development. This particularly includes the construction of improved highway facilities. It is their contention that growth can be controlled if the Highway Department will improve the roads that are unsafe or in bad structural condition -- but not add to their capacity.

Importantly, it must be recognized that the issue of how highway planning fits into regional planning is not simplistic. For example, many, if not most, of the direct decisions that affect growth are made by the private sector of our society rather than the public sector.

Private investment decisions, including marketing of a new product such as the snowmobile are made by the private sector. As we are all aware, the development of the snowmobile has had a profound effect on the entire Northern Michigan area.

Short of changing governmental structure to require some new kind of license or permit to market a new product or develop land use, we will always be confronted with potential new machines or activities that will again alter the living patterns and interests of the population and have a secondary effect on the growth or no-growth of an area.

Alternative Modes

Another method being proposed to avoid the perceived detrimental conditions caused by new highway facilities is the use of alternate modes of transportation. This could be either non-highway types of land transportation or air. The question is often raised as to why, in lieu of building additional highway facilities, do we not build or improve rail facilities. This type of alternative should not be discounted as a long-range solution to some of our transportation problems, and certainly the Department of State Highways does not take the position that improved rail facilities could not conceivably reduce traffic on the existing highway system.

There are several apparent disadvantages to the use of rail in lieu of improved highway facilities. Foremost among these is the fact that traffic to areas such as the Northwest Region on the peak weekend periods includes one recreation vehicle out of three. This reflects an economic reality; that is, many people making use of the recreation values of the state could not afford to do so were it not for the self-contained recreation or camping type vehicle. These people cannot afford to utilize motel or hotel facilities and would not, therefore, be interested in taking a mass transit type of transportation mode.

Much has been said recently about autotrains which could be a solution to this problem, although again, there is an apparent disadvantage. Autotrains are a very efficient transportation tool for relatively long hauls and for the kinds of trips from Washington to Florida where the cost of transporting one's car and family is not out of line with the total expediture for that type of vacation. This is not the kind of facility that lends itself to weekend trips, which are the peak travel periods in Michigan.

Beyond these questions is the issue of whether or not those who are concerned about freeways and their impact on the environment are ready to accept the potential of high-speed trains which, combined with the four day week, could make it possible for people to commute from the northern areas to employment centers in Southern Michigan.

No-Build Policy

Basic to the consideration of environmental considerations and part of the issue of growth or no-growth, as far as the Department is concerned, is the null or do-nothing alternative.

The basic implication of this alternative is that the Department would do practically nothing except normal maintenance. This also implies a lesser impact to the natural environment, and for this reason is preferred by the no-growth advocates. The theory is that a no-build alternative will deter additional population and tourism growth.

In considering the no-growth alternative the Department recognizes that improved transportation will tend to stimulate economic activity. However, improved transportation does not insure or guarantee increased economic growth; it is rather only one part of a complex set of public and private decisions that dictate how a region will develop.

Equally true is that even without expanding or improving the highway system, maintenance of a "status quo" condition cannot be guaranteed. There are those who contend that such a no-build program will reduce migration to the north; however, the facts of past experience do not bear this out. While the lack of good highway facilities may deter some individuals from acquiring residential property in the north, or a recreation vehicle, it is equally true that more than enough individuals are making those decisions to make present traffic volumes unacceptable on many of our obsolete two-lane highways. Even faced with nearly intolerable driving situations, more and more individuals are making decisions that require traveling the highways. This increasing traffic brings into focus the problems of the no-build approach.

Since each weekend of the year has its own illustration that obsolete two-lane highways and high traffic congestion will not deter many people from attempting to enter the region, what will the consequences be? We can quite safely predict that:

1. Congestion will increase on state highways.

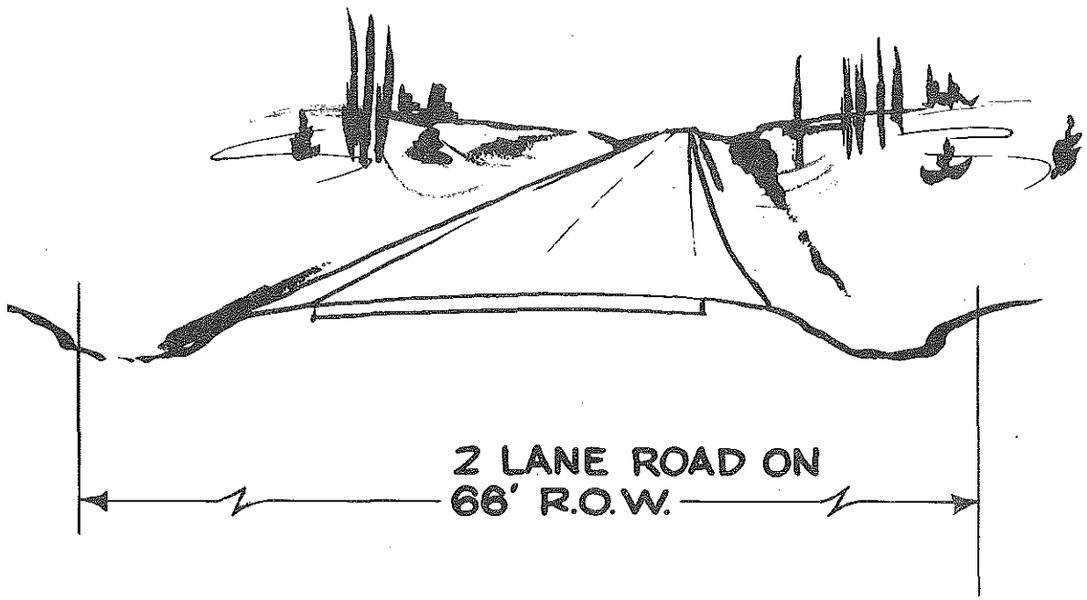
2. People will change the timing of their trip in an attempt to avoid congestion. (The increased volumes will start earlier on Friday and extend into Monday morning.)

3. Accident rates will increase for both <u>tourists</u> and <u>residents</u>.

4. Travelers will seek out alternative routes utilizing county roads. This will likely result in an increasingly undesirable situation for local residents who will be deprived of an efficient level of service from their local road system.

Highway Facilities

Existing highway facilities in the Northwest Region are for the most part improvements to the original basic highway system developed after the turn of the century. This system has as its most prevalent highway type, a two-lane roadway on a free access right-of-way, varying from a 66-foot minimum to over 100-feet in width. In areas through and around communities, there are sections that have been widened, in some cases with boulevard sections and other cases with up to five lanes with a center lane for left turns.



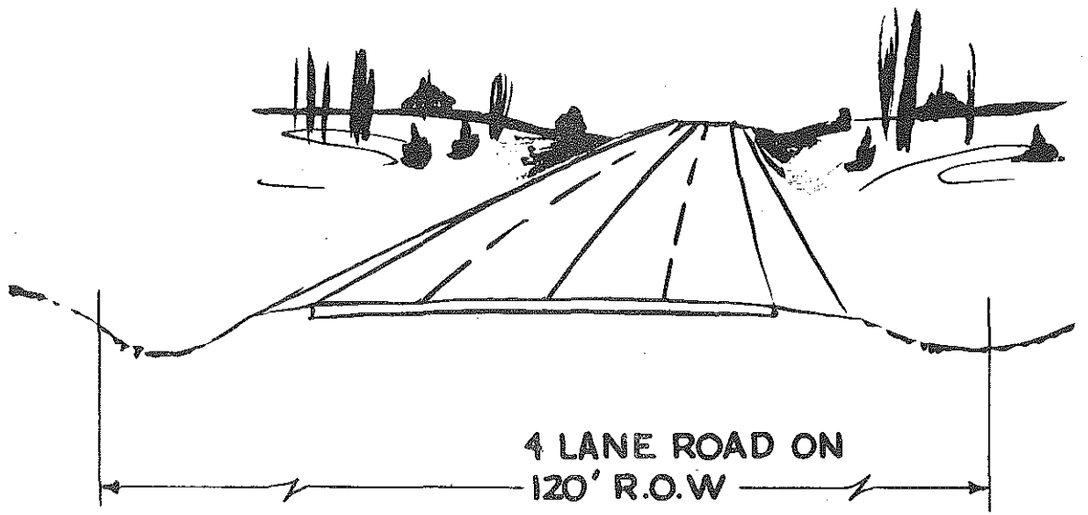
The basic highway, developed when we first began paving highways, was a surface with two side by side lanes to handle traffic traveling in opposite directions. The roadways were located on easements across the land that were wide enough to permit the construction of the two lanes with a narrow refuge area on either side (shoulders) and a drainage ditch to pick up the water that ran off the surfaced part of the highway. In areas with low traffic volumes, this two-lane highway is still the basic highway form throughout the state. However, in many instances two-lane roadways have proven inadequate.

As the volume of traffic increases, it becomes difficult and unsafe to try to carry it on just two lanes. The reason for this is obvious. If you approach a slower vehicle, it is necessary to occupy the opposing lane of traffic in order to pass. Thus, the capacity of a two-lane highway would be very high if all vehicles were traveling at the same speed; but since many motorists wish to travel at a slower speed than the upper limit, those who wish to travel at the limit must make a passing maneuver. Since the vehicle making the maneuver occupies the lane reserved for oncoming traffic, there is a potential conflict. As the traffic volume increases, an ever-larger number of passing maneuvers are required and the conflicts become more critical.

This problem would be simplified if the ground were perfectly flat. However, this is not the case and in many areas the highway passes over hills and through valleys thereby creating situations where one cannot see far enough ahead to safely make the passing maneuver.

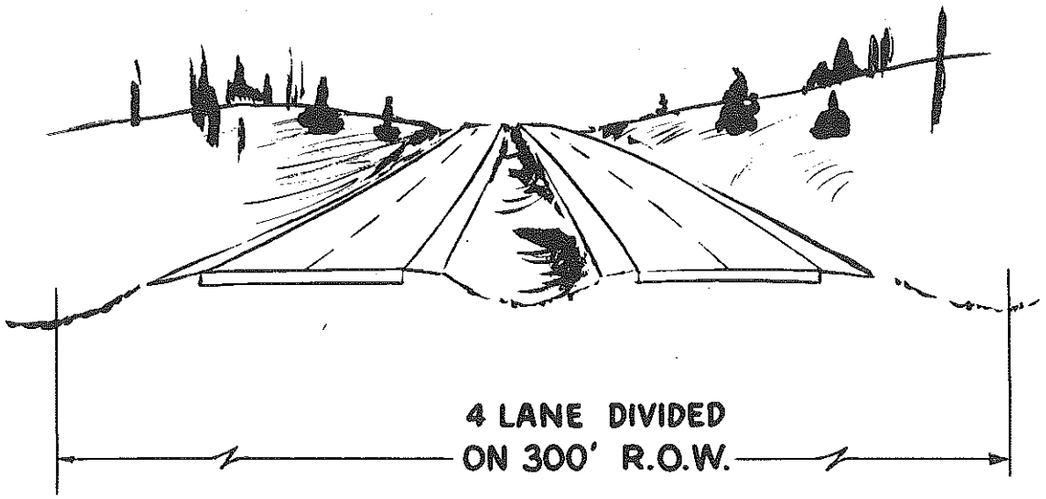
One of the methods to avoid this problem is to construct the highway so it is basically straight and flat, but this is often very expensive and results in a high degree of environmental damage.

Another method is to build more than one lane in each direction. This approach permits the faster vehicle to pass in a lane that is reserved for cars going in the same direction. Thus, one solution to the problem is to build a four-lane highway, and this could be done by widening the



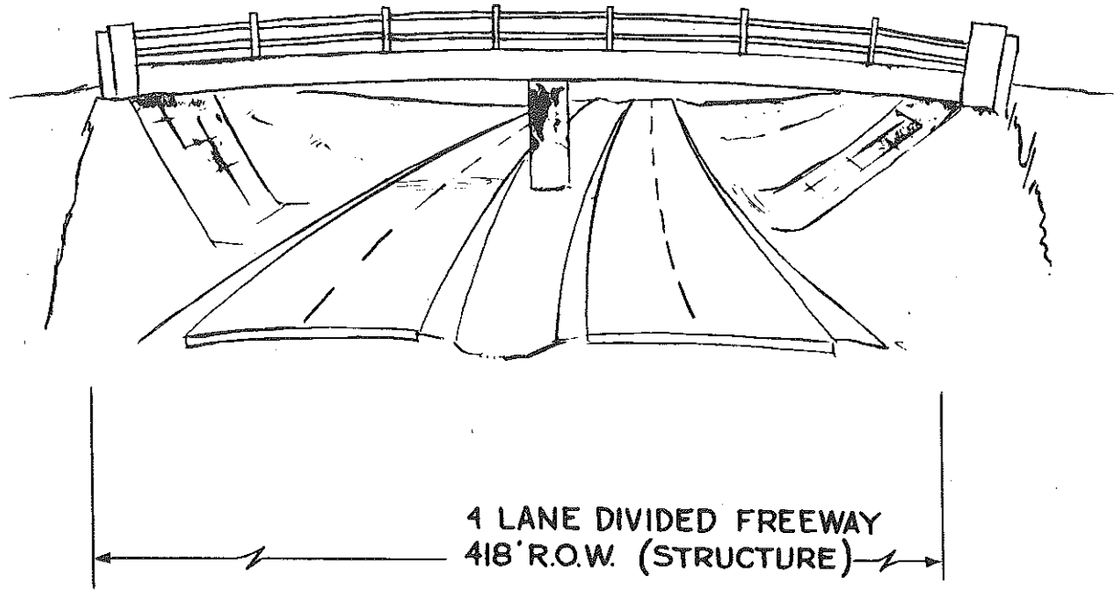
existing roads into four lanes. Unfortunately, this does not provide all of the solution. Other basic problems exist. Cars on the inside lanes still must travel close to traffic going in the opposite direction at speeds as high as 70 plus miles an hour, literally within inches of each other. There arises occasions, a number of which are no fault of the driver, when he swerves and inadvertently occupies the oncoming lane. This causes an extremely unsafe condition and often results in accidents and death.

Another problem results from cars crossing or entering the highway from the land areas adjacent to it. These crossing or entering maneuvers create problems of safety. As development adjacent to the highway increases, the problem increases. This is termed "side friction." Experience has shown that on older highways, when development builds up, the resulting increased side friction will reduce safety, decrease capacity, and cause a general decline in the overall efficiency of the highway.



The problem of opposing traffic can be improved by separating the lanes and providing an area between them which we call a median. Increased traffic and side friction can also cause this method to "breakdown" in terms of safety.

The most practical technique for reducing both the problem of opposing traffic and side friction is to separate the lanes with a median and limit the areas of access. When the highway has four lanes, with two lanes in one direction divided from the two lanes in the other direction by a median, with side friction eliminated by controlled access, and the conflict of traffic crossing the road eliminated by putting them on a separate level from the highway being built -- the result is a freeway.



There are many people, certainly those who are critics of highways, who believe that the only purpose of a freeway is to provide the fastest possible highway that will handle the greatest number of cars. However, there are important advantages beyond convenience and capacity that are inherent in a freeway. Safety is a main factor but integrity is also vital. The intent of this review is simply to illustrate how the concept of a freeway was developed.

In many parts of the country and in parts of the State of Michigan there exists places where 1) there was once a two-lane highway which, having become congested, was rebuilt as a four-lane highway, or 2) a new four-lane highway was built and access to the land adjacent to the highway was not limited or controlled. In both instances, over time, adjacent commercial developments generated such high volumes of traffic that the new highwaysalso became obsolete and it was again necessary to build still another highway to safely accommodate the traffic.

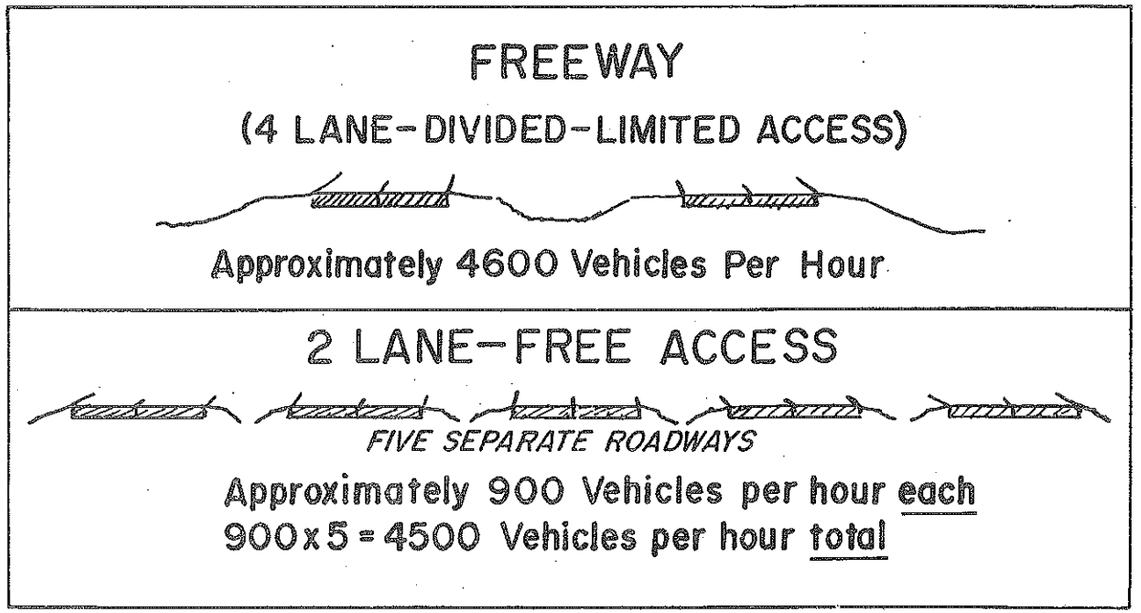
The provision of limited access right-of-way, the purchasing of the land upon which the highway is built rather than acquiring it in easement, and the restricting of people's right to get onto the highway by buying that right, guarantees that the highway will not become obsolete because of development along its length. Beyond the economic and environmental benefit of not needing to build another highway, is the benefit of providing for those people who wish to drive to or through an area on a highway that will maintain its service potential.

Safety must also be a primary consideration. Records indicate that freeways average approximately 70 percent fewer accidents than free access highways.

Also important is the consideration of the potential capacity of a highway. This is a major consideration from the standpoint of providing for more vehicles and also when considering that without the freeway many more lanes of free access highways would necessarily have to be built to accommodate the existing, as well as future, traffic volumes.

The accompanying exhibit illustrates this comparison of traffic carrying capacity. As shown, a 4-lane, rural freeway can adequately accommodate approximately 4,600 vehicles per hour. To accommodate nearly the same number of vehicles on 2-lane, free access highways -- at the same level of service -- would require five individual roadways.

CAPACITY COMPARISON



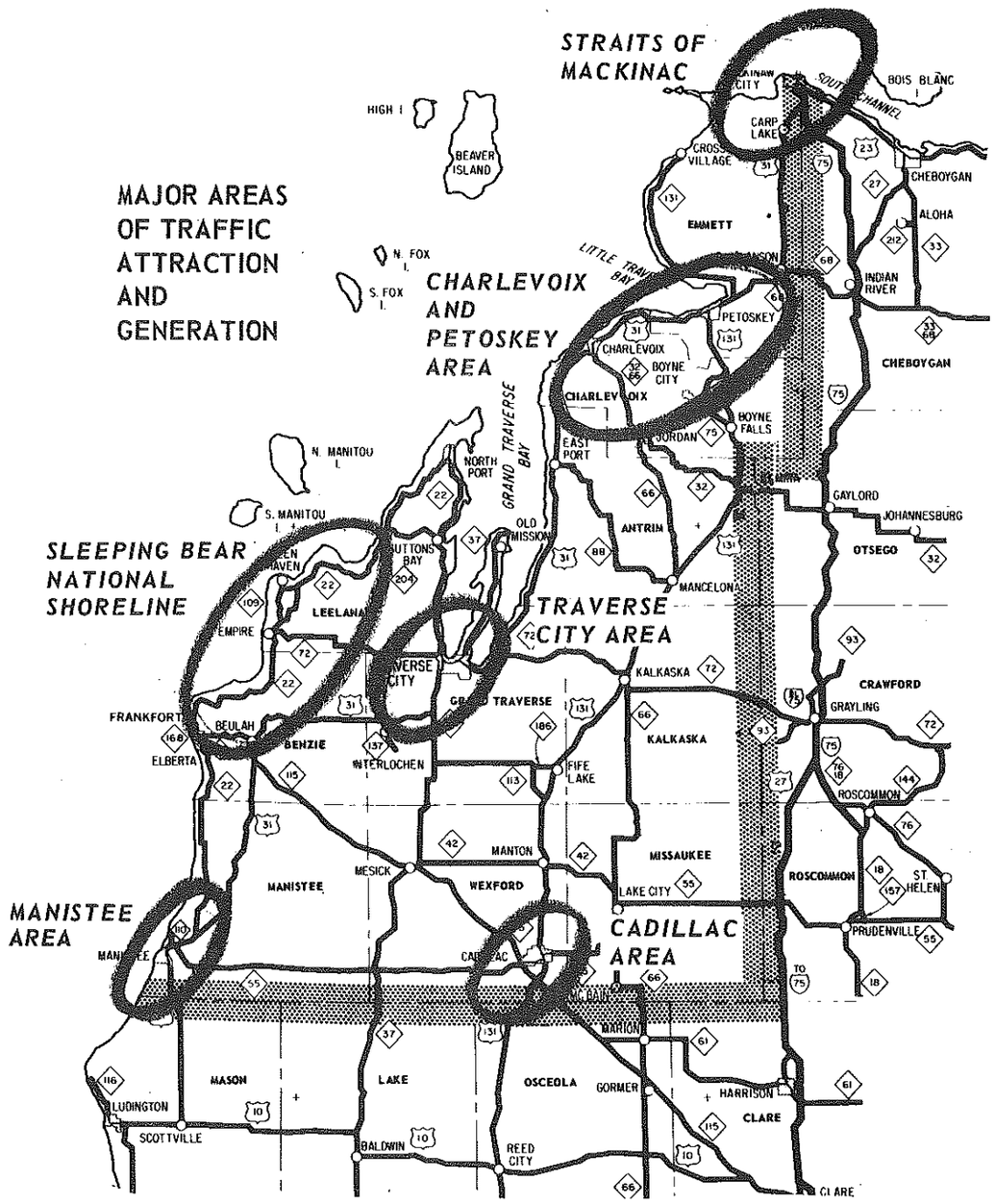
SYSTEM ANALYSIS

There are a variety of potential highway systems which could be developed in the Northwest Region. These range from making minimal repairs to the existing system to developing a network of improved existing highways with newly constructed freeways forming a "backbone." Naturally, the level of service and degree of safety would vary with the extent of improvements provided.

Although this variety of alternatives exists, discussion will center around a system wherein US-31 and US-131 would be established as freeways thereby demonstrating some of the anticipated impacts that must be considered in selecting a final plan.

Within this system -- developing US-31 and US-131 as freeways -- there also exists several alternatives. Development of any one of these would have many and far-reaching ramifications, depending on the final specific location and design features. Without detailed study, it is impossible to determine the specific effects of each. However, it is possible to make reasonable assumptions as to their probable, or at least potential, general effects.

To evaluate these effects, it is necessary to recognize the major areas of traffic attraction and generation in the region. These include the Manistee area, the Cadillac area, the Sleeping Bear National Shoreline, the Traverse City area, the Charlevoix-Petoskey area, and the Straits of Mackinac. Service to these areas will be a major consideration in selecting an efficient network.

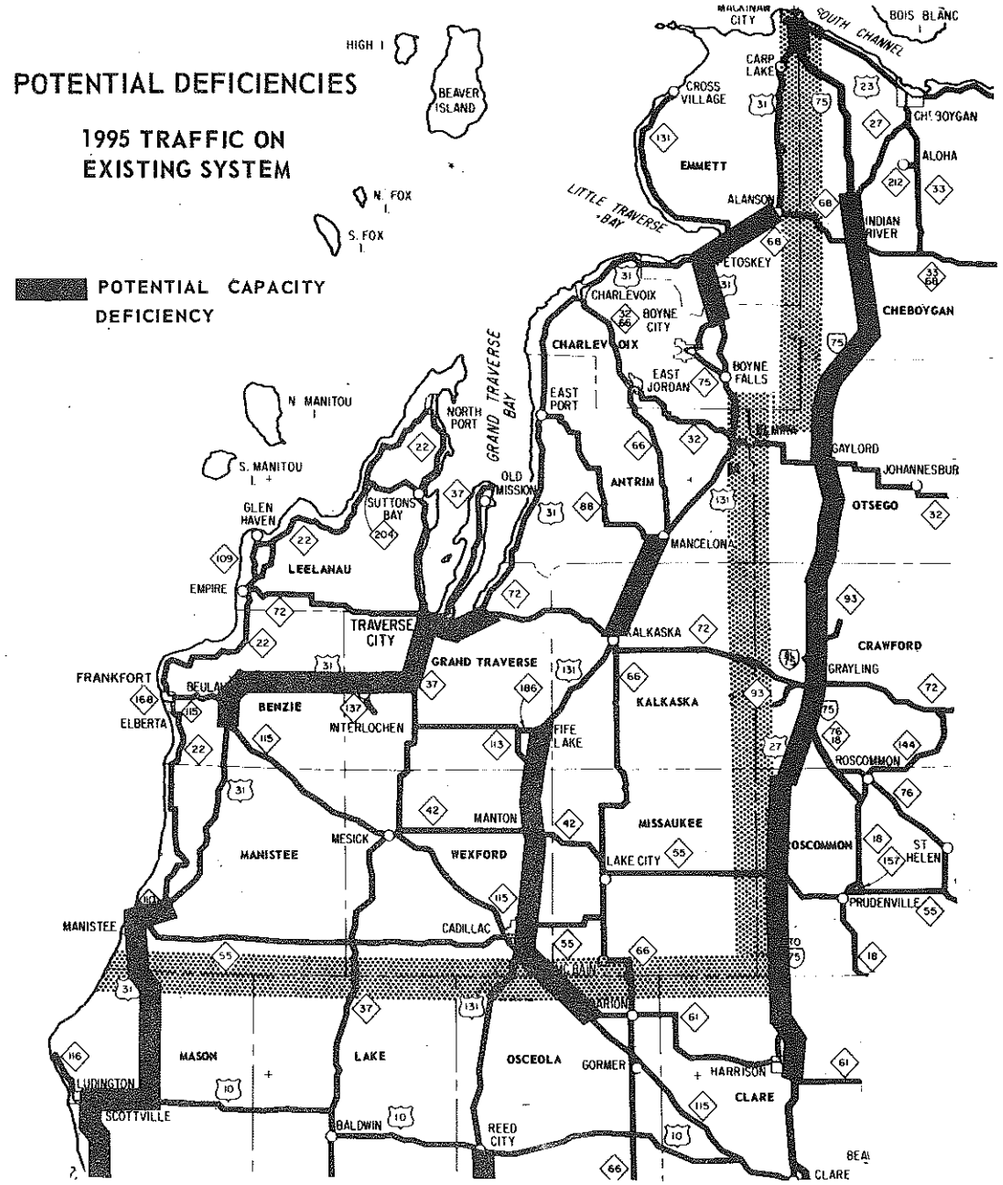


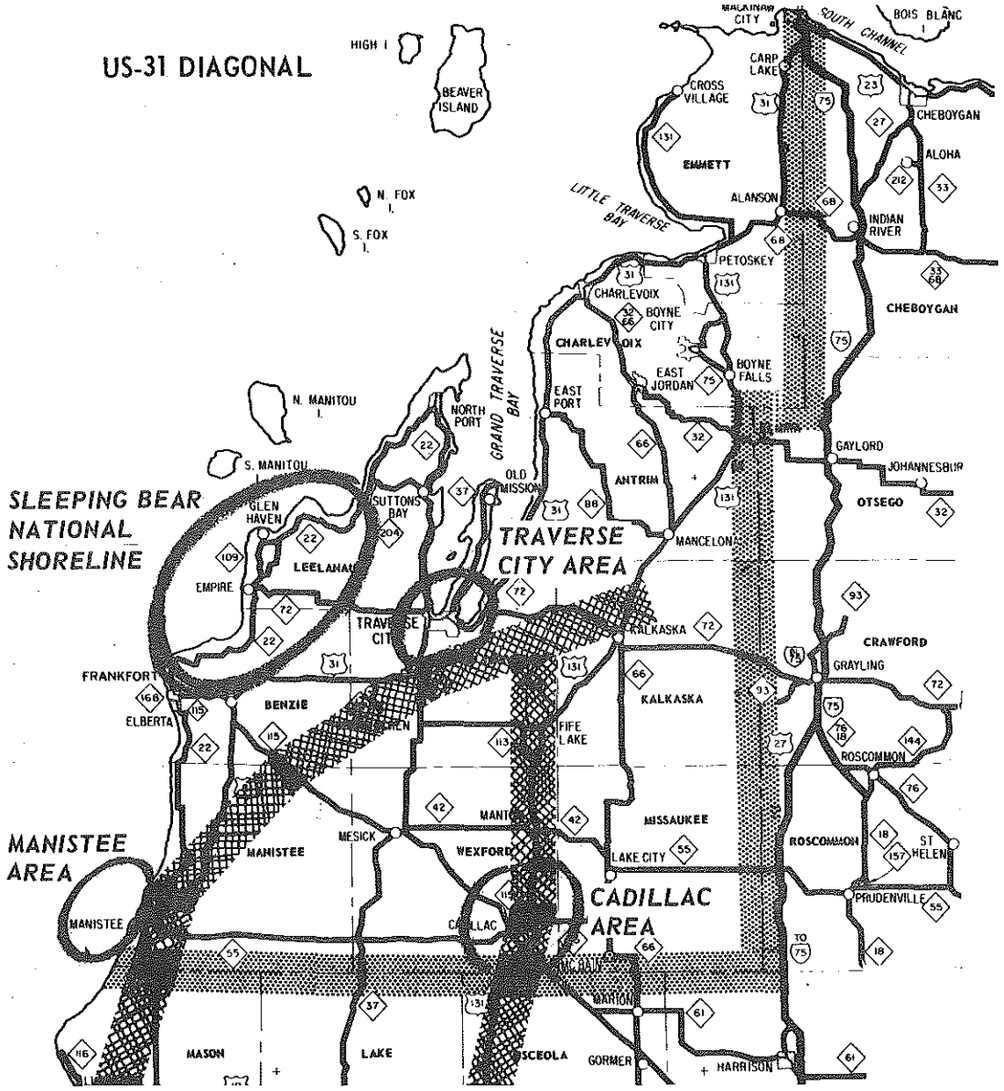
The following series of exhibits show various types of alternatives which will be considered in the detailed regional study. This does not mean that other alternatives could not, or will not, be considered when a detailed study is begun. These are only shown to indicate the types of solutions which will be considered and the expected effects that each would have on other trunk lines in the region.

On these exhibits, highway deficiencies are represented in terms of vehicle volumes compared to the highway's rated capacity. Where a wide black line appears on a facility it means that the road's rated capacity has been exceeded.

Forecasted 1995 vehicle movement is for a summer weekday. These summer weekday volumes were compared to capacity as just mentioned. Weekend traffic was not used. This, then, would be somewhat of a "lesser" situation since weekend traffic in a recreational area such as this would be higher. Therefore, when observing the deficiencies, it should be remembered that weekend traffic would yield more deficiencies.

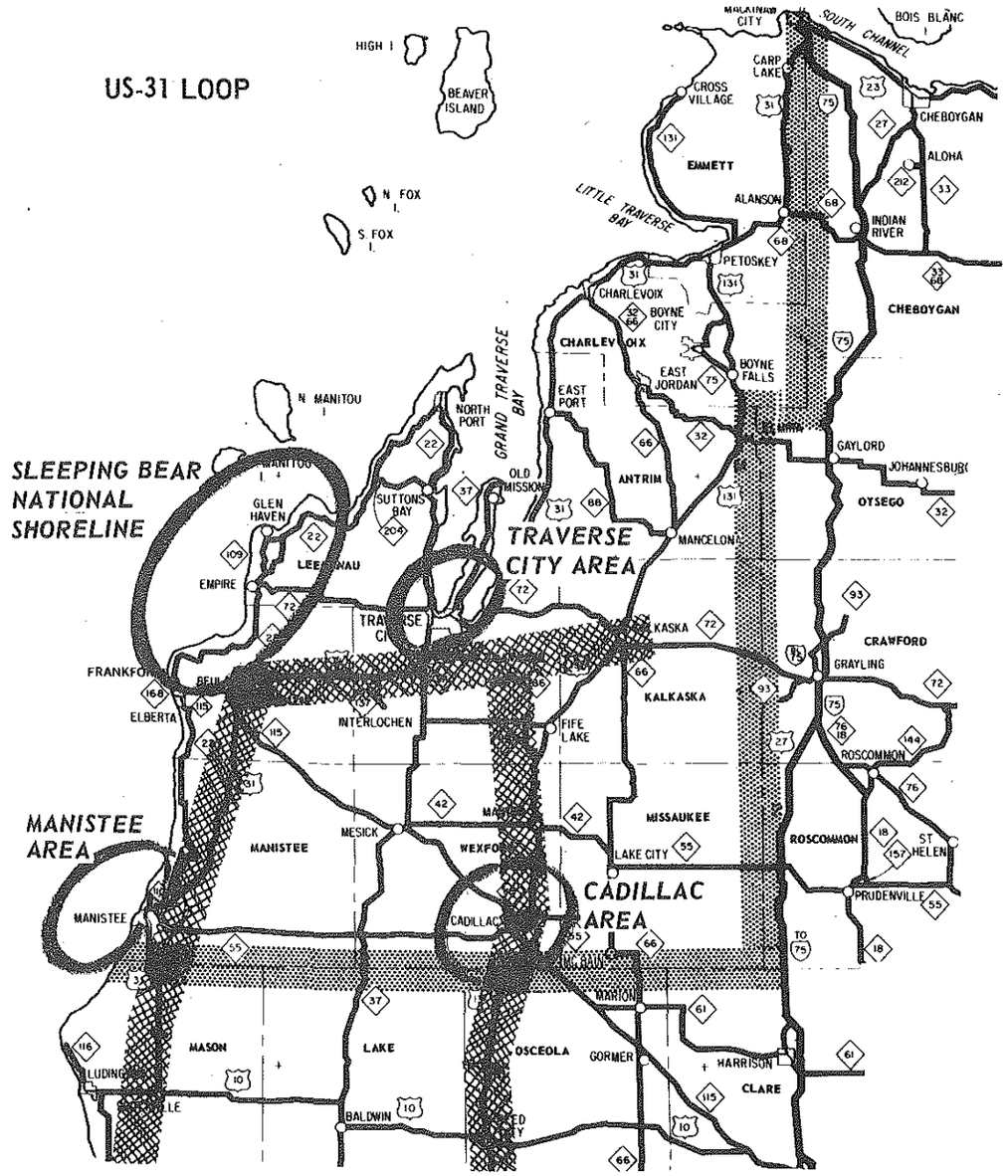
To properly evaluate the effects of each alternate, 1995 summer weekday traffic was also assigned to the existing highway system. This information, shown on the accompanying exhibit, represents the deficiencies that will likely be experienced in 1995 if a "no-build" policy is adopted. These deficiencies occur along large segments of US-31, US-131 and I-75.





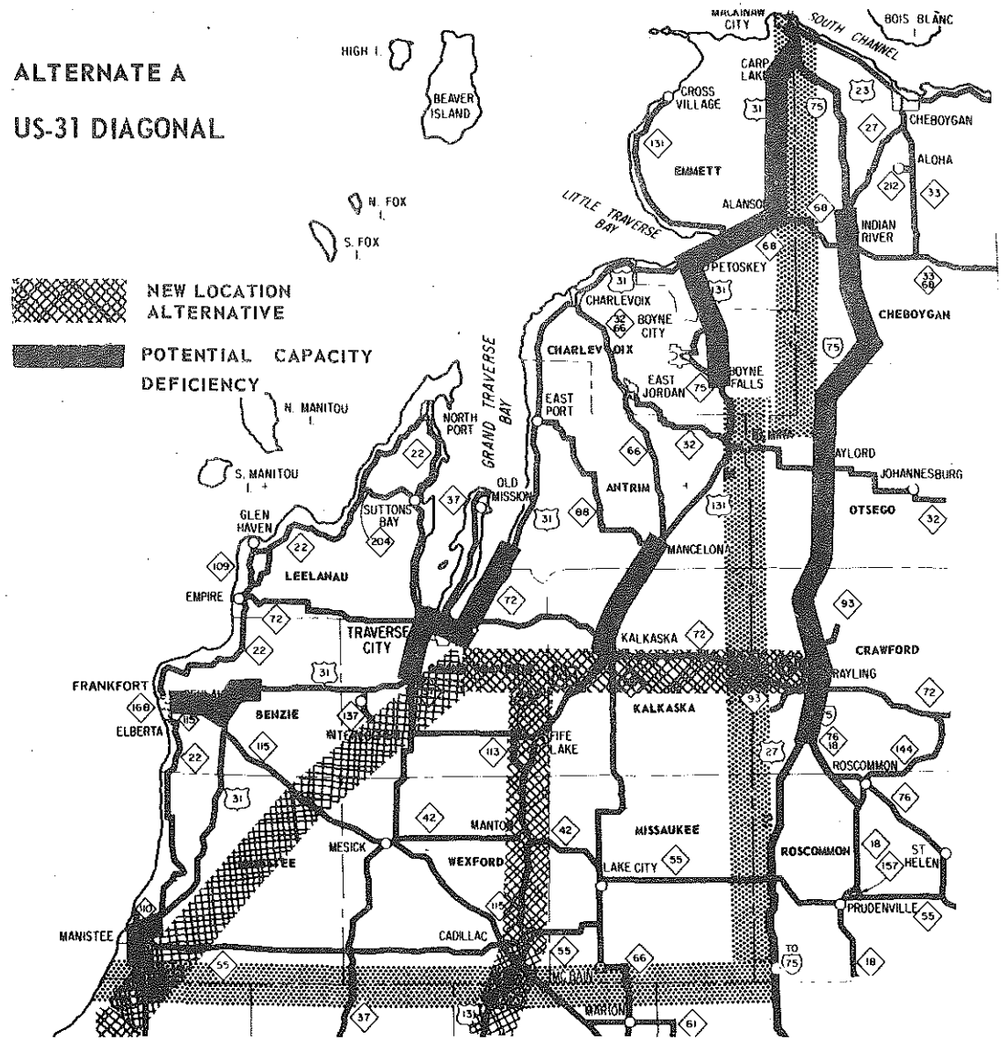
South of Traverse City, two distinct deviations from the existing system include:

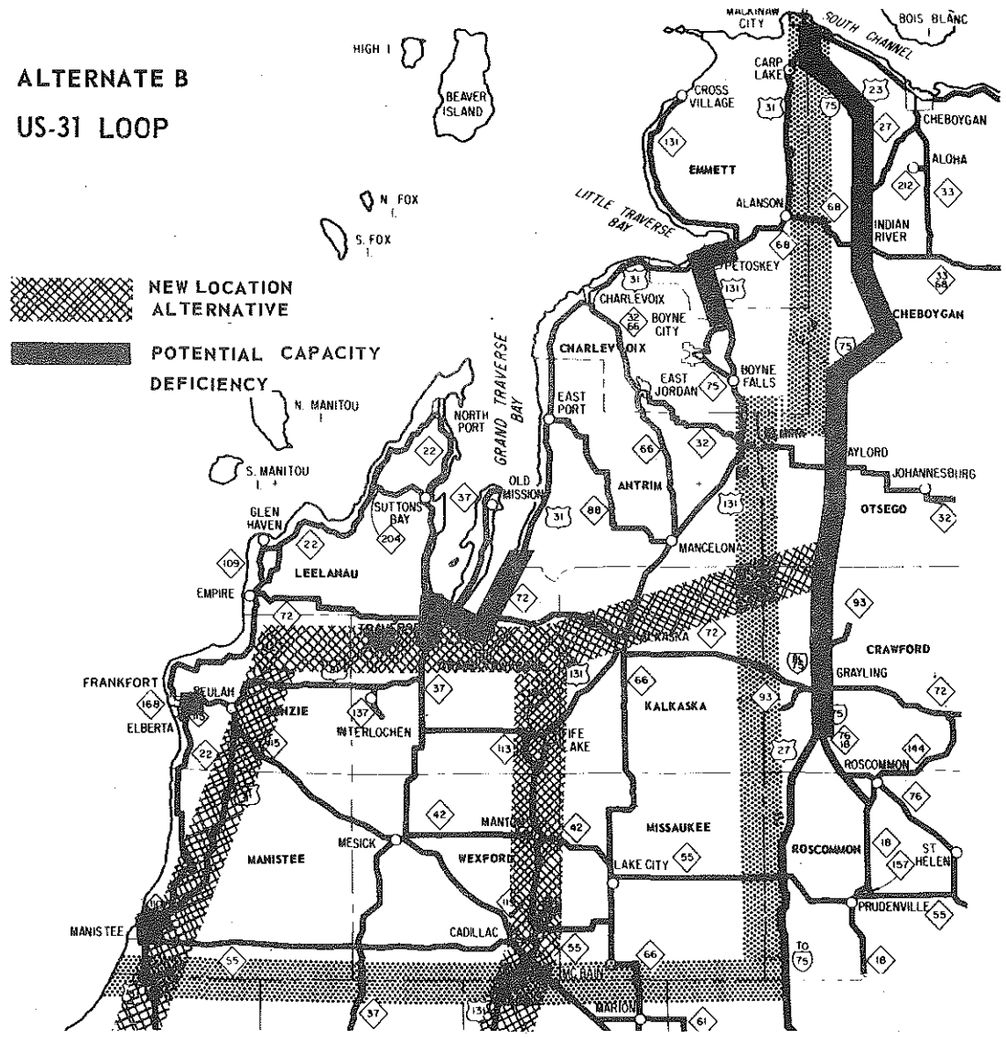
1. A network with US-31 and US-131 relocated and constructed to higher design standards, with US-31 relocated on a diagonal between Manistee and the Traverse City area, and



2. A network similar to the foregoing, but with US-31 forming a loop to closely serve the shoreline recreational areas of Manistee, Benzie and Leelanau Counties.

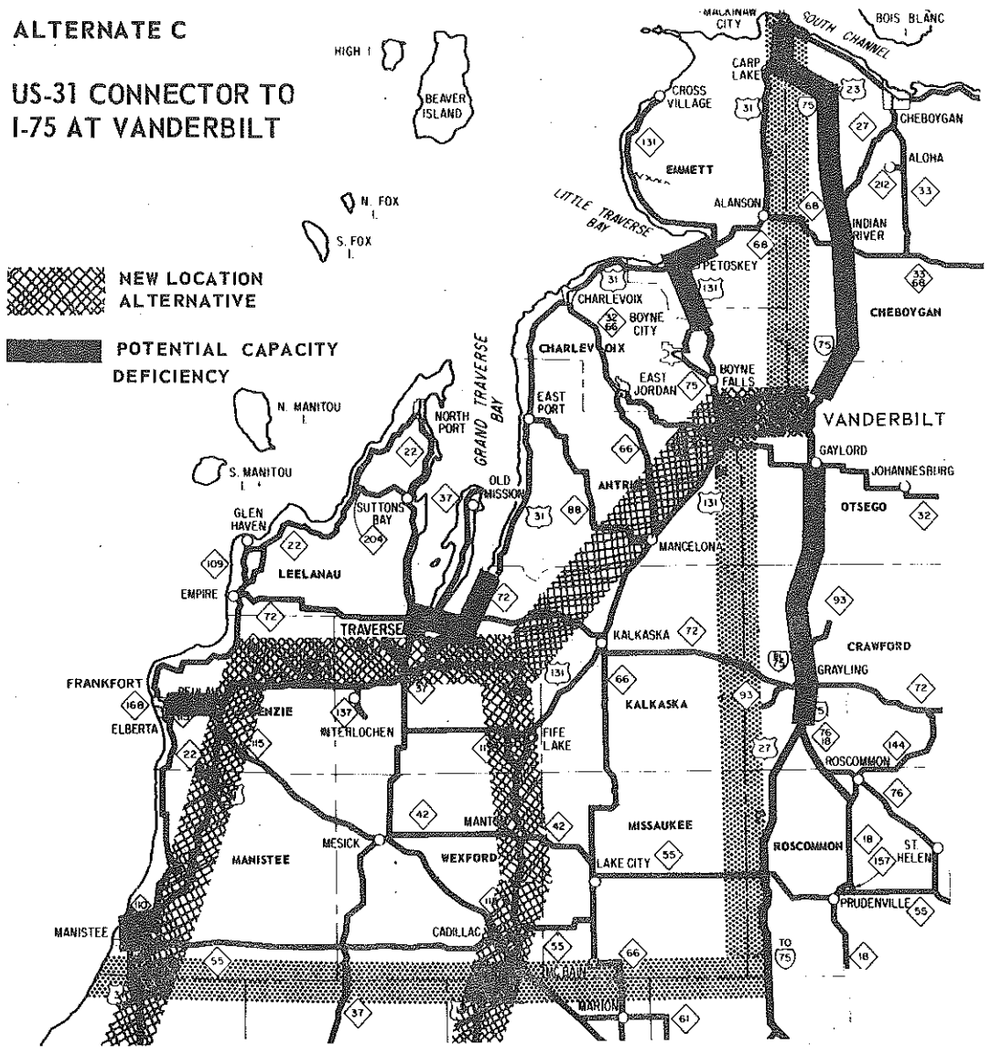
A closer look at the first of these systems, Alternate A, indicates that some of the deficiency problems experienced on the existing system south of Traverse City have been removed. Critical segments still occur between the proposed facility location and the larger cities along the shoreline: Ludington, Manistee, Frankfort and Traverse City.



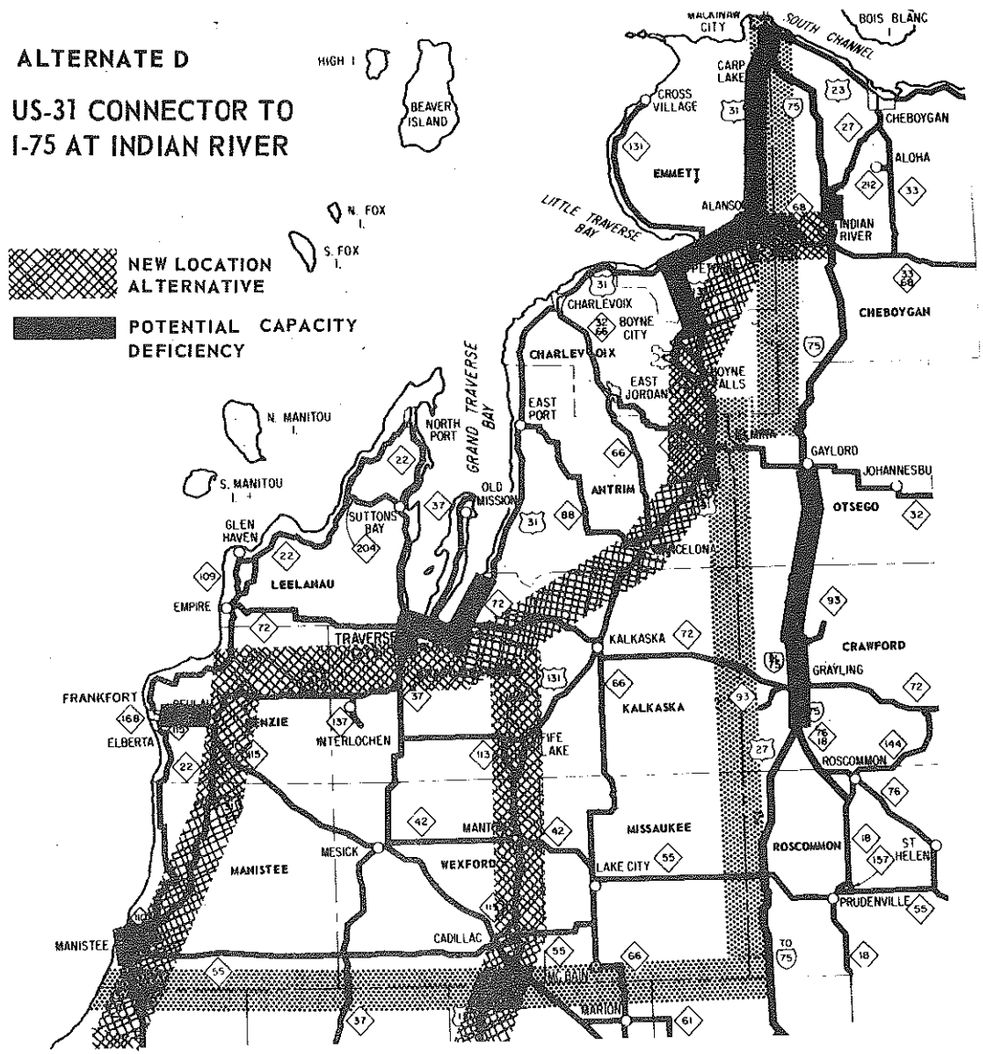


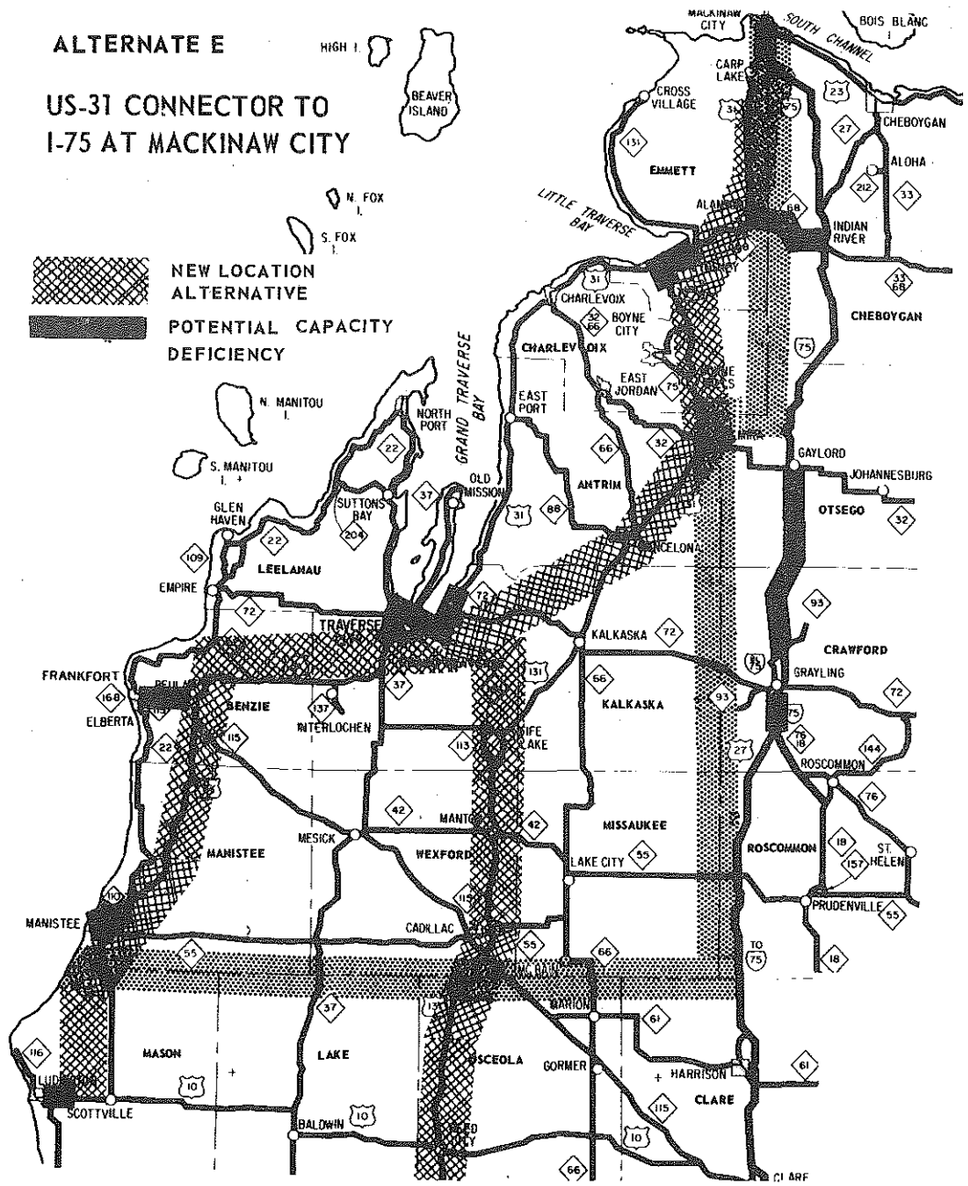
A slight variation of this scheme, Alternate B, more closely following the existing alignment of US-31 in the Frankfort area and connecting with I-75 somewhat farther north, eliminates even more of the deficiencies. As can be seen, however, major deficiencies still exist into the shoreline cities and north of the Traverse City area.

To help remedy the situations north of Traverse City, three schemes are offered as possible solutions for the area. The first, Alternate C, suggests a freeway extending generally along US-131, connecting with I-75 in the vicinity of Vanderbilt. This scheme would offer improved service to the Charlevoix-Petoskey area and relieve some congestion therein but would not substantially improve conditions on I-75.



By extending the freeway further north along US-131 and connecting near Indian River, as shown by Alternate D, excellent service is provided to the Charlevoix-Petoskey area and considerable relief is offered to I-75. However, additional deficiences appear on existing US-31 north of Petoskey.





Another scheme, Alternate E provides an extension of the US-131 freeway all the way to the Straits. Noticeable decreases in congestion occur on all major routes while a high degree of service to the major areas of traffic attraction is maintained.

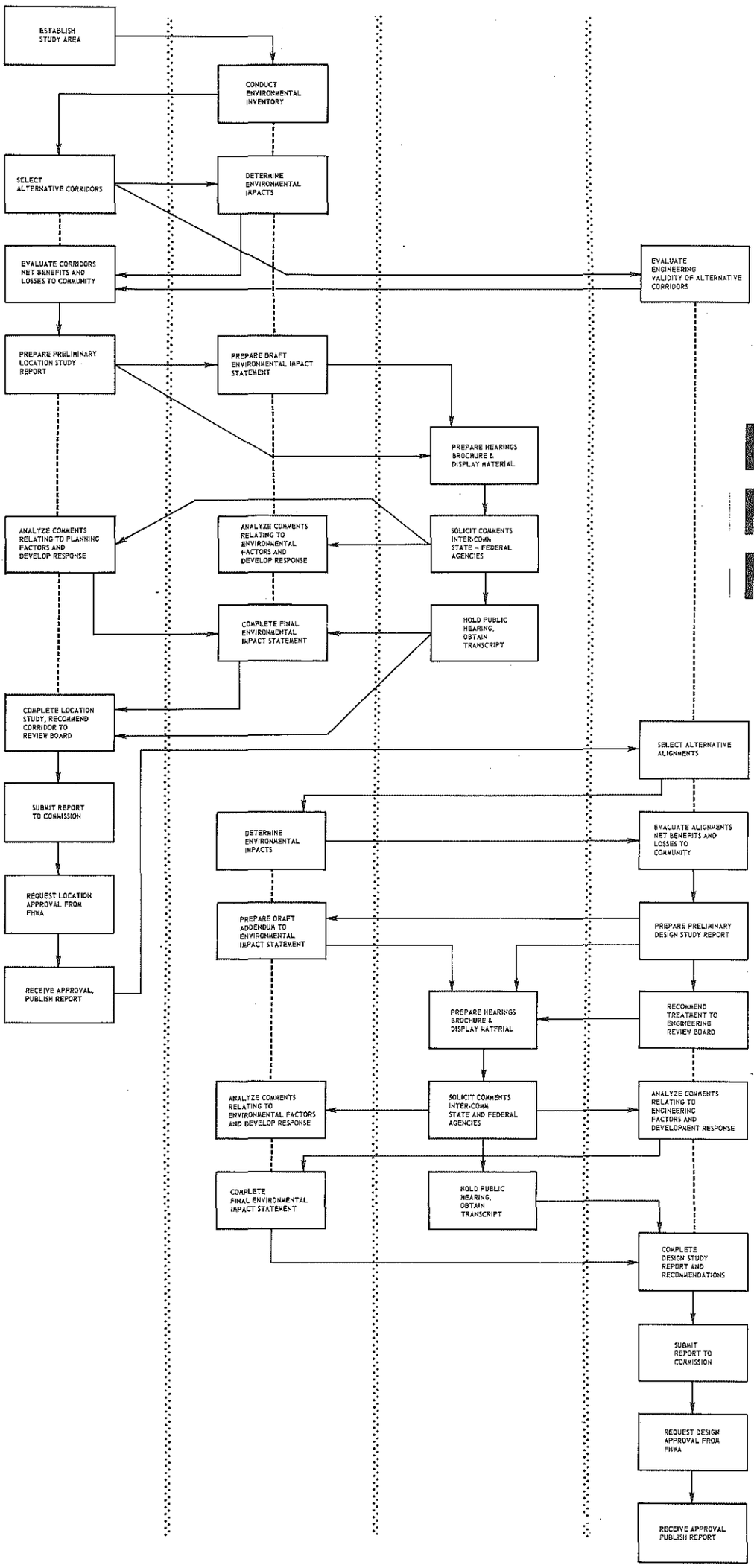
As previously indicated, this series of alternatives are not necessarily all of those which will be considered when conducting the actual study of the region. They are shown to portray the types of alternatives which will likely be considered and to show the far reaching effects that slight variations in a corridor location could have on the entire region.

THE HIGHWAY PLANNING PROCESS

The evaluation of numerous potential alternatives, involvement of governmental and public groups and individuals, and consideration of a multiplicity of factors that influence the decision making process could make highway planning extremely complex. To make the task more manageable, the Department has developed a procedural guideline by which our studies are conducted.

The four basic elements of the specific highway planning process are: 1) planning, 2) environmental evaluations, 3) public involvement through hearings, and 4) route location. These basic components are shown on the following chart. Although separated for clarification purposes, extensive interaction (shown by connecting lines and arrows) is imperative to sucessfully achieve their individual objectives and ultimately, the objectives of the Department.

HIGHWAY PLANNING PROCESS



ROLE OF THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Prepared by: The Northwest Michigan Economic Development District
and Regional Planning Commission

The Northwest Michigan Economic Development District was established several years ago, with its purpose being generally centered on the goals of economic expansion.

The position and function of the Commission has gradually changed so that today the Agency is involved in both planning and development, being also organized under state enabling legislation as a regional planning commission. The commission is currently reviewing proposed modifications in its structure which would result in an expanded membership, and a broader base of citizen participation through the appointment of advisory committees in various areas of concern, such as the recently created Transportation Advisory Committee.

One of the basic functions of a multi-county regional planning commission is to prepare a regional comprehensive development plan to serve as a guide for counties, cities, villages, and townships in their day-to-day decisions which involve development of many types.

While planning is being done under several federally assisted programs, the end product will be a regional comprehensive development plan. Part of this overall plan will be concerned with development of a regional transportation plan, including but not limited to highway transportation. Although a transportation study includes more than highway travel, this mode of travel is the one most people utilize, and the one which can have the greatest effect on the natural and man-made environment. In this regard the regional commission and the county planning commissions have endorsed, in the Commission's adopted Regional Sketch Plan, a goal and certain policies on highway transportation development.

"The Transportation goal is: Improve the transportation system to facilitate the movement of people and goods within the District and with points outside the District.

The policy proposals established by the commission are:

1. Recognize transportation and land use planning as contemporary and inseparable functions. The District's transporation system should be designed and constructed to serve travel needs and to achieve a desired pattern of urban and rural development.

2. Access to major arterials should be limited through more tightly controlled curb cuts, greater spacing of intersections and use of frontage roads.

3. Promote logically planned land development around major road intersections and in keeping with the policy concerned with research and industrial land near proposed freeways.

4. Until the Comprehensive Regional Plan is available, the transportation corridor routes developed by the Highway Department will serve as the guide for the District.

   A referral process should be organized in which all proposed transportation improvements in the District would be referred to the District commission and the appropriate local planning and development agencies for review of conformance with the short-range plan and local comprehensive plans.

5. The various existing types of transportation - truck, auto, bus and pedestrain - should be separated or at least made compatible and noninterfering.

6. Consistent right-of-way standards should be adopted by all local jurisdictions and implemented through required street dedications and governmental improvements to the street system.

7. Scenic highways for the area should provide access between scenic attraction areas. Highway or waterway corridors should be developed connecting these high quality scenic areas.

8. Trunk line improvements presently programmed in the area should be adhered to by the Department of Highways in keeping with the above guidelines."

The relationship of the Multi-County Regional Planning and Development agency to the Highway Department is similar to that of other State Departments, and is an evolving position of greater responsibility, according to the governor's plan to have many local decisions being made on a Multi-County regional basis, by people fairly close to the situation. More specifically, at this time the Commission and staff are cooperating in the collection of basic information necessary to the development of a highway-system plan. The impact of the position and recommendations of the Commission on the Highway Department's plan is yet to be seen since this is, in some respects, a pilot-program effort in northern Michigan. Whatever the outcome, the regional Commissions' recommendations in regard to US-31 and US-131 will be based on the overall interests of the region.

REGIONAL, COUNTY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Prepared by: The Northwest Michigan Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission

The regional planning commission is composed of representatives from each of the counties, and each county now has a county-wide planning agency as well. This is desirable and has been encouraged by the regional commission.

According to the proposed reorganization of the regional Commission, each county Board of Commissions would, in addition to current representation, appoint a member from its County Planning Commission to serve on the regional commission. In addition, counties having an urban population of 9,000 or more (1970 census definition) would be allowed added representation. Thus, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Manistee, and Wexford Counties would be allowed added urban-population representatives, and total commission membership would rise from the current 14 to 26.

As a means of increasing citizen participation, the regional commission will appoint Citizen Advisory Committees, such as the Transportation Citizen Advisory Committee whose membership was drawn from the 10 County Planning Commissions. Their general purpose is to aid in the study and development of the transportation plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The goals and objectives of villages, cities, and multi-county regions must be resolved and clearly defined if we are to cooperatively develop an efficient transportation network consistent with those goals.

The following summary of issues and alternatives are major considerations to which attention should be directed when you, as a private citizen or member of a planning agency or committee, wish to participate in this decision-making process.

Summary of Issues and Alternatives

1. Should the Region adopt a growth or no-growth policy?
   Possible results:

   A. Growth
      1. Provide jobs to revitalize economy and halt out-migration.
      2. Improve education and health facilities.
      3. Provide adequate housing for area residents.
      4. Increase recreation and tourist trade.

   B. No-Growth
      1. Protect the environment.
      2. Protect agriculture, recreation and open land resources from suburban sprawl.
      3. Preserve life-style by discouraging influx of tourist.

2. Should an alternative mode of transportation be utilized:
   Possible results:

   A. Air - not feasible

   B. Rail
      1. Could reduce traffic on highways.
      2. Good for long hauls.
      3. Does not lend itself to weekend camping excursions.
      4. Would make it possible for more people to commute from homes in the north to jobs in the south.

3. Should the Region adopt a no-build policy?
   Possible results:

   A. Possibly will keep tourism and population growth rate down.

   B. Environmental damage from highway construction will be minimized.

   C. Congestion will increase.

   D. Timing of trips will change.

   E. Accident rates will increase

   F. County and local roads will be used as alternate routes.

4. Should the Region support a policy to improve and/or expand the existing highway system? (Specifically, US-31 and US-131 as backbone freeways)

   Major issues to consider:

   A. Effects on development

   B. Effects on environment

   C. Service to through traffic

   D. Effects on other highways

   E. Areas to be served

   F. General location

You are urged to utilize your regional committees and commissions as a line of communications in making your thoughts and reasoning known. A brief note or letter will be most appreciated by your representatives on these commissions and advisory committees as they consider their decisions and recommendations. It would also be appreciated if a copy of your comments were sent to the regional commission's office in Traverse City. In that way your comments will be assured of receiving proper consideration in the decision-making process and, if necessary, direct reverse-communications can be made.

Comments should be addressed to:

Northwest Michigan Economic Development District
and Regional Planning Commission
120 West State Street
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

or forwarded directly to:

G. Robert Adams, Public Hearings Engineer
Michigan Department of State Highways
Transportation Planning Division
Post Office Drawer K
Lansing, Michigan 48904