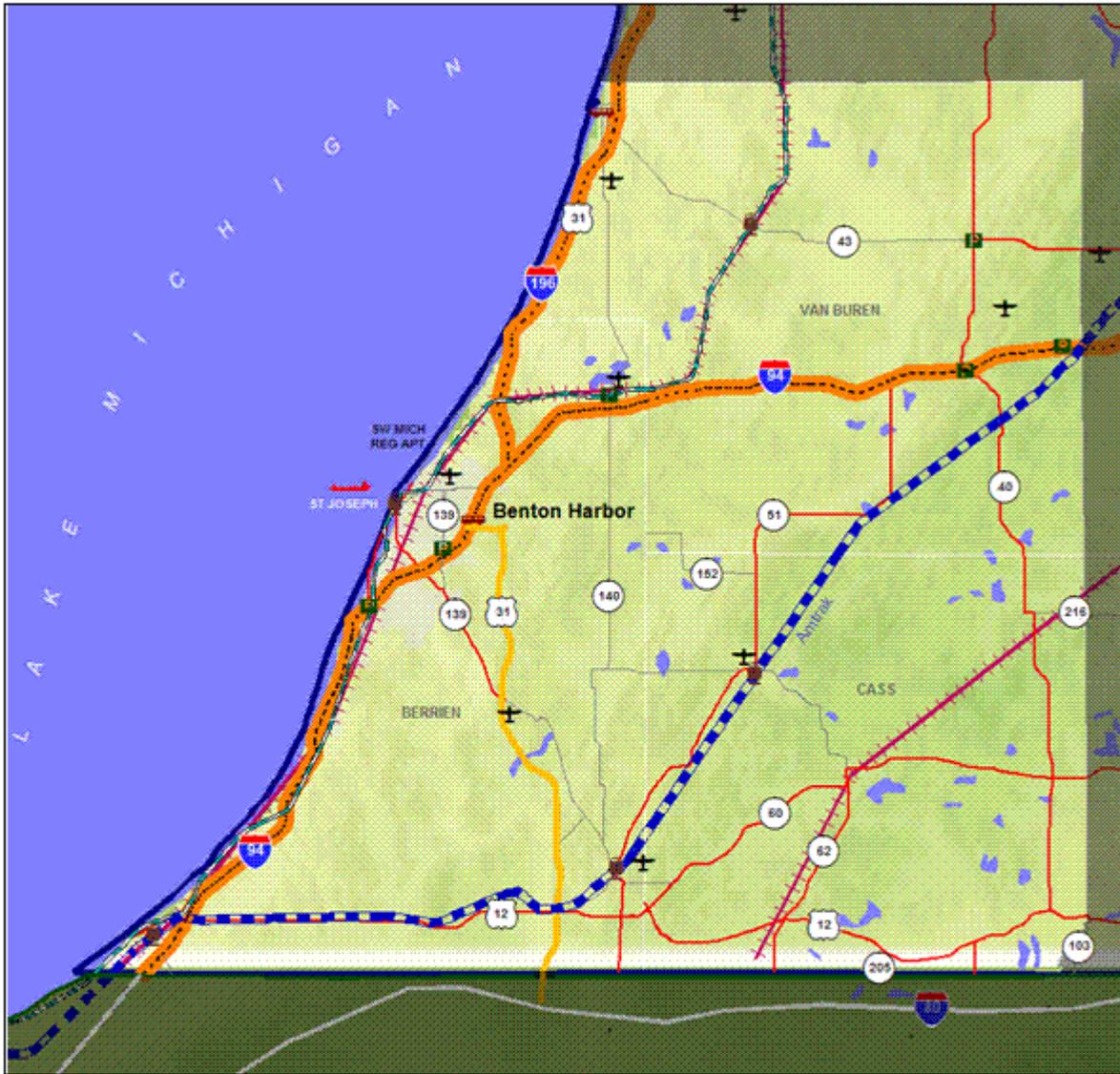


4 Greater Benton Harbor Economic Region Corridor Summary



Regional Economic and Travel Profile

Key Economic Activities in the region

The Lower Greater Benton Harbor/Southwest Michigan region is primarily rural.

- Tourism, retail trade and service provide the region's primary economic base.
- This region is the headquarters for Whirlpool International.
- 2030 growth is anticipated in the health care, education, and administration industries.
- The per capita annual income of Van Buren County is \$20-25,000 Berrien and Cass are \$ 25-30,000 (Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis - Michigan's 2003 average annual per capita income is approximately \$31,600).
- Over 3 million visitor days of travel are provided in the region.

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

- Local residents and (seasonal) tourist travel on Interstate, US and state routes.
- There is Amtrak service with links to Detroit, Chicago, Grand Rapids, and Port Huron through this region. Annually 16,000 passengers board and 18,000 passengers deboard, in this region.
- All counties have countywide transit services. In addition, Berrien has three community transit systems.
- Benton Harbor is the largest transit system serving 155,000 passengers a year.
- There is one rail passenger terminal in Berrien County, one in Cass County, and one in Van Buren County. There is an intercity bus terminal in Berrien County.

Corridors of Highest Significance

National/International: Grand Rapids/Chicago; connecting to (I-196/US-31/I-94) Detroit/Chicago (I-94) Port Huron/Chicago (I-69/I-94)

Statewide Significance: Benton Harbor/Indiana (US-31)

Counties: Berrien, Cass, Van Buren

MI Transportation Plan Activity Centers: Benton Harbor

MDOT Region: Southwest

MPO and RPA: Southwestern Michigan Commission (Benton Harbor area 109,127 urban pop.; 262 Square Mile); Niles Cass Area Transportation Study – Twin Cities Area Transportation Study; Southwestern Michigan Commission (RPC).

Quick Facts:

- 2005 Estimated Population 293,730 (2.9% of MI);
- 2030 Projected Population 321,183 (2.8 % of MI);
- 2005 Estimated Employment 138,717 (2.4% of MI) Approximately 11 percent retail; 6 percent food service; 5 percent construction; 8 percent admin. Professional, technical services; 4 percent motor vehicle; and
- 2030 Projected Employment 148,710 (2.3% of MI) - Growth anticipated in health care, education, and administration.

Smart Zones: none

Tax-free Renaissance Zones:
Berrien, Van Buren

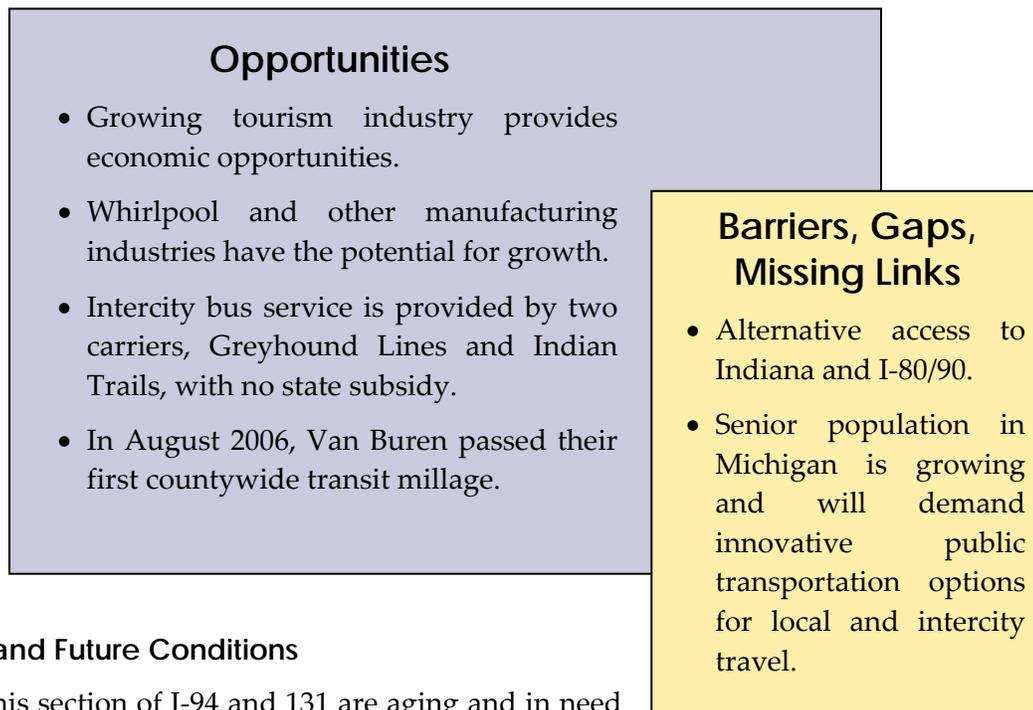
- Intercity bus services are available in Berrien and Van Buren Counties.
- The Local Rideshare Office and MichiVan provide information on ridesharing opportunities as well as ridematching services to link potential car and vanpool participants.
- There are numerous bicycle and pedestrian trails, primarily for recreational use.

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

- Rail freight service exists including connections to the marine port at Benton Harbor.
- Marine services are available in Benton Harbor and handles close to 800,000 tons per year.
- The general aviation airport at Benton Harbor is expanding its runway to allow for large planes and jets and expanded service for Whirlpool, headquartered in this region.
- No major intermodal terminals are in this region.

Corridor Value

- All modes of transportation support Whirlpool manufacturing and other manufacturers in the region.
- Rail freight traveling on CSX and truck freight on I-94 is some of the busiest and highest dollar values in the state. Approximately 10,000 trucks /day travel on this section of I-94.



Existing and Future Conditions

- This section of I-94 and 131 are aging and in need of modernization and reconstruction.

Linkages

- Statewide and regional corridors within the region connect to the Detroit/Chicago and the Chicago/Grand Rapids corridors. Additionally, the Benton Harbor/South Bend

corridor (US-31) provides key statewide linkages between the Indiana Toll Road to the south and I-94 and activity centers to the north.

- Rail service is provided by CSX and connects to Chicago, Port Huron and Detroit.

Regional Corridor Strategies

- Over the next 30 years, the department will implement the following capacity improvement within this region - complete US-31 between Napier Road and I-94/I-94BL in Benton Harbor.
- MDOT will continue to strive to maintain good pavement conditions along all its trunkline corridors.
- Improve overall corridor condition and operation for all modes.
- MDOT will seek opportunities to implement low-cost mobility improvements such as geometric improvement, turning lanes, etc.
- Opportunities to integrate multi-modal transportation systems throughout this region will be sought including but not limited to increase/improve carpool lot facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be incorporated into future projects where feasible.
- Operational strategies such as visitor friendly signage, incident management and maintenance of traffic practices during construction projects will be utilized.
- The department will continue to coordinate improvement and management practices with key local stakeholder groups along corridors with unique historical characteristics, such as the US-12 Heritage route, which runs through this region.
- MDOT will seek to provide additional linkages from the region to the Indiana toll road.
- 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.
- 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.