



## New Policy Initiatives and Transportation Intermodal Integration

Despite a substantial shortfall in funding for transportation infrastructure, there has been a surprising amount of progress in the intermodal integration of Michigan's transportation systems since MI Transportation Plan (MITP) was issued in 2007. The following excerpt from the 2007 [Integration Technical Report](#) helps explain why transportation agencies are increasingly focused on an integrated transportation network:

*“A more fully integrated transportation system can boost Michigan’s economic vitality. An integrated variety of transportation modes will encourage the economic participation of people and businesses in a greater number and variety of activities, all of which have the potential to enhance Michigan’s economic performance. An integrated transportation [system] can also save money by reducing transportation costs or increasing efficiency. The more integrated the transportation system is the easier and more cost-effective it is for people and businesses to participate in the activities that drive Michigan’s economy.”*

Michigan's economy struggled for a decade after 2001. The problem became more severe in 2008 with the onset of the national economic recession. The lack of funding for transportation investment may actually have contributed to greater integration, as agencies across the state worked to both reduce costs and eke out the greatest benefit of every dollar invested. In some cases, having to cut service actually resulted in better coordination with other transportation providers or modes.

Of course, economic necessity is not the only reason to pursue a more integrated transportation system. A new federal focus on issues such as livability and sustainability helped accelerate the integration of transportation modes with each other and with surrounding land uses. In particular, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Transportation Investment Growing Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants provided federal assistance that helped support many projects and programs that improved transportation integration in Michigan.

More recently, the focus of state government under Gov. Rick Snyder has spurred efforts to integrate Michigan's transportation system with other government agencies. The Governor's [Special Message to the Legislature on Health and Wellness](#) in September 2011 increased the statewide focus on active transportation such as biking and walking. In October, the Governor's [Special Message to the Legislature on Transportation and Infrastructure](#) emphasized increased funding for transportation, along with recommendations to improve regional coordination, consolidate transportation agencies, improve regional transit and passenger rail, and supported continued efforts to construct a new Soo Lock and improve harbor dredging.



As a result, the list of new policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at integrating transportation systems in Michigan since 2007 is impressive. The new initiatives further the Preferred Vision of the long-range transportation plan and move the state closer to the goals established for Michigan's transportation network. The goals of the MITP are: stewardship, system improvement, efficient and effective operations, and safety and security. Each of the department actions and/or new policy initiatives listed address several of the long-range transportation plan goals, while simultaneously continuing to advance integrated transportation in Michigan. Most represent ongoing activities by the department; selected highlights appear below. Additional information can be found in the white papers related to specific transportation modes or by visiting the highlighted links:

### Strategic Planning

**Transportation Funding Task Force:** The Transportation Funding Task Force was created in response to Public Act 221 of 2007. Its purpose was to "review the adequacy of surface transportation and aeronautics service provision and finance" in Michigan, review strategies for maximizing return on transportation investment, and evaluate the potential of alternative strategies to replace or supplement transportation taxes and fees. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) staffed and facilitated the group's efforts. A major and consistent focus of the group was to support economic activity and personal mobility. The task force's recommendations supported increased investment in all modes of transportation. MDOT continues to work with the Michigan Legislature to address the need for additional revenue. MDOT staff was able to use needs analysis data created for the 2030 MI Transportation Plan to support the recommendations of the task force. This activity addresses all of the goals of the existing 2005-2030 State Long-Range Transportation Plan (MI Transportation Plan).



I-196 from US-131 to Fuller Ave., Grand Rapids

**Statewide Transportation, Distribution and Logistics Strategy:** MDOT and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are part of a statewide effort led by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to transform Michigan into a Midwestern gateway for global intermodal freight shipments. Michigan has significant assets that allow it to serve global intermodal freight traffic, including two of the country’s busiest international border crossings, four Class I railroads, several Interstate routes, the St. Lawrence Seaway, several commercial port facilities, and Willow Run and Detroit Metro airports. The state’s work will be to develop a vision for the gateway, help coordinate efforts by the wide variety of stakeholders, develop plans for implementation, and measure its success. This focus on logistics addresses the goals of System Improvement, Effective and Efficient Operations, and Safety and Security.

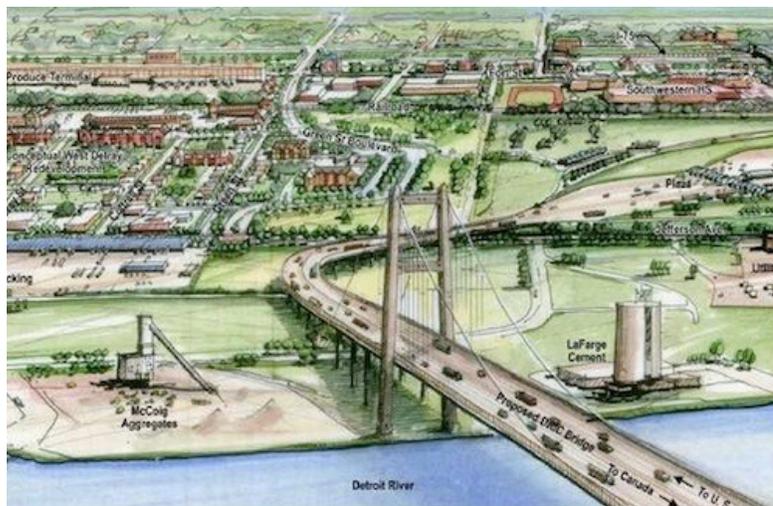
Several significant infrastructure projects are planned or underway that will further intermodal freight movements through southeast Michigan, including:

- [Blue Water Bridge Approach and Customs Plaza](#) reconstruction, which received environmental clearance in a 2009 Federal Highway Administration Record of Decision. Improvements include \$88 million in freeway upgrades to be completed in late 2012, including improved bicycle and pedestrian access across the Black River Bridge approach. The work streamlines operation of the plaza approach, separates local traffic from outbound international traffic, and modernizes interchanges and bridges. Also planned is an expansion of the customs processing plaza, which has been delayed due to a lack of federal funding. Delays to the construction of a new international Welcome Center have occurred due to shortages in state transportation funding. Should funding become available, the \$12 million Welcome Center could be completed in two years, while the customs plaza expansion will take four years at an estimated cost of \$145 million.



Blue Water Bridge, Port Huron

- [Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal \(DIFT\)](#) will create a consolidated rail yard in greater Detroit serving three of the four Class I railroads. Since the 2005-2030 MITP was completed, the DIFT’s Environmental Impact Statement has been completed, the Record of Decision has been granted, and the implementation of initial aspects of the project has begun. If all goes as planned, the \$600 million project is expected to be completed in 10 years.
  
- [New International Trade Crossing \(NITC\)](#), a planned second bridge from Detroit to Windsor, Ontario, will provide additional border-crossing capacity for passengers and freight. Since the 2005-2030 MITP, the NITC’s Environmental Impact Statement has been completed and a Record of Decision has been granted. On June 15, 2012, Gov. Snyder and Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper signed an agreement that will begin moving this project toward construction. Lawsuits from the owners of the Ambassador Bridge to attempt to delay the construction of this bridge are anticipated.



Artist’s rendering of New International Trade Crossing, Detroit

- [Continental Rail Gateway](#): This project is an international public-private effort to replace the existing 100-year-old twin rail tunnel under the Detroit River with a single high-clearance tunnel that can accommodate double-stack railcars. Work on the Environmental Impact Statement is ongoing; the \$400 million project is expected to be completed by 2015.
  
- [Aerotropolis](#): Working with the surrounding communities, Willow Run and Detroit Metro airports used the Next Michigan Development Act to create a state-designated aerotropolis development zone in 2009. The Aerotropolis Development Corporation created under the new law is a public-private economic

development agency working to attract new business to the region by leveraging the transportation assets it has to offer.

- **Soo Locks:** There has been progress on the construction of a new Soo Lock since 2007. The new lock would replace two obsolete locks now closed that were constructed during World War I. It would be capable of accommodating the 1,000 foot long vessels that account for approximately 70 percent of the U.S. Great Lakes' fleet. The construction of the project is federally funded through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Soo Locks, Sault Ste. Marie

- **Michigan Rail Plan:** MDOT completed a comprehensive plan to set forth state policy involving freight and passenger rail transportation, including commuter rail operations, in 2011. The plan presents priorities and strategies to enhance or preserve rail service that benefits the public and serves as the basis for future federal and state rail investments in Michigan for both passenger and freight rail. The rail plan addresses all of the goals in the MITP.

In addition to the DIFT and Continental Rail projects previously mentioned, two other rail-related projects warrant attention:

- Accelerated Passenger Rail: Michigan is one of a handful of states that has been able to take advantage of federal funds for development of higher speed or accelerated passenger rail systems. Improvements to the track and stations in the rail corridor between Chicago and Detroit/Pontiac are ongoing. Some recently funded improvements include the purchase and upgrade of a section of track between Dearborn and Kalamazoo; a new connection track at West Detroit providing direct access between Dearborn and the Detroit New Center stations; and as current or planned improvements to stations at Battle Creek, Dearborn, Troy/Birmingham,

Jackson, Grand Rapids, and Ann Arbor. In addition, Michigan received federal funding to complete a Corridor Investment Plan for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Corridor. This includes completing a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement and Service Development Plan. Completion of this work will enable Michigan to qualify for future federal funding for improvements to allow additional service frequencies and speeds.

- M-1 Woodward Avenue Transit Project: With the \$125 million commitment by a private sector investor group, MDOT is coordinating with M-1 Rail, the FTA, the City of Detroit and other key stakeholders on the proposal to develop a rail or streetcar transit line in conjunction with the scheduled reconstruction of Woodward Avenue from downtown to the New Center area. The proposed project will enhance connectivity between downtown employment centers and residential areas, education, health and cultural centers. It will link most major public transportation systems in southeast Michigan, intersect with the People Mover, SMART and DDOT bus routes, and run within four blocks of the new Rosa Parks transit terminal, providing access to intercity bus carriers and connecting with the riverfront pedestrian walk and marine terminal at the Detroit River and with the New Center Station serving Amtrak.



Artist's rendering, M-1 Woodward Avenue, Detroit

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans: These plans are developed by local transit agencies with the purpose of identifying the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes; providing strategies for meeting local needs; and prioritizing transportation services for funding and implementation. In Michigan, more than 50 coordinated plans have been developed and approved since being required in SAFETEA-LU. The intent of this federal



requirement is to better integrate the transportation services provided by transit and human services agencies.

[Michigan Airport System Plan \(MASP\) 2008](#): The MASP 2008 represents a unique and valuable asset management tool for MDOT staff involved in state airport system planning and airport capital development. It documents the planning process that identifies the aviation role of public-use airports in Michigan through the year 2030. MASP 2008 is the culmination of a coordinated review and modification of MASP 2000, a plan that has provided MDOT with a valuable programming tool for the development of the system of public-use airports in Michigan.

The 2005-2030 MITP included an estimate of the funding necessary to meet the capital improvement needs of Michigan's airports through 2030, as requested by individual airport sponsors. The goals described in this plan, coupled with the individual facility requests submitted to MDOT by airport sponsors, will culminate in an aviation investment strategy. This strategic plan, developed subsequent to the MASP 2008, will aid in determining project selection priorities.



Capital City Airport, Lansing

[Access Management Program Study](#): A study was completed in 2010 to assess the impact and effectiveness of the state's Access Management program. It was determined that the program should continue and more than 35 Access Management plans have been completed since 2002. These plans help guide MDOT, local municipalities, and developers in locating future access points and provide local municipalities with direction for new (or updated) ordinances. This activity addresses all of the goals of the MITP.

[Michigan Climate Action Council](#): The Michigan Climate Action Council (MCAC) is a broad-based group of Michigan stakeholders charged with making a comprehensive set of state-level policy recommendations to the Governor in a Michigan Climate Action Plan. On March 1, 2009, MCAC completed a Climate Action Plan that identifies 54



policy recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The actions to reduce GHG emissions can have positive economic and environmental benefits for Michigan including: increasing energy efficiency, conserving natural resources, improving air quality, reducing water pollution, saving costs, creating jobs, and diversifying Michigan's economy. This activity addresses the goals of stewardship and effective and efficient operations

**Complete Streets**: Complete Streets legislation signed on Aug. 1, 2010 gives new project planning and coordination responsibilities to city, county and state transportation agencies across Michigan. The legislation defines Complete Streets as "roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users...whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot or bicycle." The law further requires Complete Streets policies be sensitive to the local context, and consider the functional class, cost, and mobility needs of all legal users. Michigan leads the nation in the number of communities that have enacted Complete Streets policies. The State Transportation Commission officially adopted a Complete Streets policy on July 26, 2012, as required by PA 134 and PA 135 of 2010. The primary purpose of the new laws is to encourage development of Complete Streets as appropriate to the context and cost of a project. The focus on streets that serve all legal users is intended to increase transportation accessibility for all modes and all users without significantly impacting traffic movements. MDOT created a Complete Streets internal team to help implement the policy and work through the department's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. MDOT also participates in the statewide Michigan Complete Streets Advisory Council. This activity complements the goals of the MITP.



Cyclists riding on paved shoulders

**Guidance Documents:** **Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)**: MDOT's CSS policy was adopted by the State Transportation Commission in 2005. Since then, MDOT has provided or sponsored training in the CSS approach to project development for more than 1,000 staff, consultants, and local government officials. MDOT also has revised its project scoping manual to include a section on the policy and references a guidance



document for stakeholder engagement, which was released in 2009. The CSS guidance document explains the importance of stakeholder engagement, the level of engagement appropriate to project types, and how to conduct stakeholder engagement activities. MDOT staff regularly work with local communities to discuss future projects and obtain stakeholder input to arrive at the "best fit" for transportation facilities while addressing community needs and concerns. In 2011, MDOT was awarded national recognition by FHWA for its CSS program. MDOT is currently working on new documentation to assist staff and stakeholders with implementing CSS. This activity addresses the goals of System Improvement, Efficient and Effective Operations and Safety and Security.

[Environmental Emergency Spill Response Policy](#) (2011): The purpose of this policy is to protect the safety of MDOT workers and the traveling public when encountering a release/spill of hazardous materials in MDOT right-of-way (ROW). The policy also provides guidelines when responding to, or discovering a release/spill of hazardous materials in MDOT ROW. This activity addresses the goals of Stewardship, Efficient and Effective Operations, and Safety and Security.

[Vehicle and Equipment Engine Idling Policy](#) (2009): The purpose of this guidance document is to eliminate unnecessary engine idling of vehicles and equipment. This guidance document covers all automotive and equipment driven fleet units. Eliminating unnecessary engine idling will also reduce fuel consumption. Eliminating unnecessary engine idling will reduce harmful exhaust emissions. This activity addresses the goals of Stewardship and Efficient and Effective Operations.

[Work Zone Safety and Mobility Policy](#) (2007): This manual includes the use of work zone safety and operational data, work zone training, and work zone process reviews and project-level procedures to address the work zone impacts of individual projects. Projects that exceed the mobility analysis thresholds will require the development and implementation of a transportation management plan. These projects are considered significant in that the sustained work zone impacts may be greater than what is considered tolerable based on this policy. This activity addresses the goals of Efficient and Effective Operations and Safety and Security.

[State Rail Freight Policy](#) (2007): The department may not enter into any agreement or arrangement where the state has, or will have the potential to own or control, additional active freight rail lines, except where the facility is directly connected to an existing state-owned rail facility with active rail service, enhances the value and/or marketability of the existing state-owned rail system, and the agreement or arrangement is approved by the State Transportation Commission. This activity addresses the goals of Stewardship, System Improvement, and Efficient and Effective Operations.



### **Ongoing Activities to Improve Integration**

Transportation System Condition Report: The measures in this report support and are organized around the four major goal areas of the State Long-Range Transportation Plan - Stewardship, Safety and Security, System Improvement and Efficient and Effective Operations. This report includes pavement condition goals, bridge condition goals, local airport conditions, local transit fleet condition, passenger rail service levels, carpool lots condition and more to provide an integrated view of MDOT's multi-modal transportation system. More information regarding is available in the Performance Measures white paper available at [www.michigan.gov/slrp](http://www.michigan.gov/slrp).

Transit Centers: Improvements have been made to several transit centers to better connect multiple modes. For example, the new Rosa Parks Transit Center in Detroit provides for transfers between a number of local bus routes and the People Mover. The Rapid's LEED-certified transit center in Grand Rapids serves as a transfer point for many of The Rapid's bus routes and also serves intercity bus passengers. And a new state-of-the-art passenger facility in St. Ignace provides the first ever, permanent transfer facility between the intercity bus routes serving the lower and upper peninsulas. Transit agencies continue to look for ways to work with neighboring agencies to facilitate travel between adjacent service areas.



Transit facility, St. Ignace

Intercity Bus Service: Since 2007, three new private intercity bus services have begun serving Michigan communities. They include Miller Trailways, operating between Kalamazoo and Indiana; Megabus, operating between Detroit and Chicago with one stop in Ann Arbor; and the Michigan Flyer, which offers service between East Lansing and the Detroit Metro Airport, with two stops in Ann Arbor. In addition, existing intercity bus service to northern Michigan has been rerouted to provide comparable intercity bus access with greater efficiency.



Regional Transit Proposal: A key aspect of Gov. Snyder's Special Message on Transportation and Infrastructure was a commitment to establishing regional transit in Southeast Michigan. Legislation to create the proposed Regional Transit Authority in Southeast Michigan was introduced in 2011 and hearings have been held. To date, the bills have not been passed.

Highway Operations: Ensuring efficient operation of the highway system allows MDOT to maximize the use of existing highways without costly expansion. Since 2007, two new Transportation Operations Centers have been created in Grand Rapids and Lansing to monitor traffic and alert drivers using electronic message boards and the Mi Drive Web site. Additionally, in 2010, MDOT became involved in a multi-state/provincial effort, the Great Lakes Regional Transportation Operations Coalition, which coordinates operations on and improvements to I-94 and other major highways between Minneapolis and Toronto.

Transportation Alternatives for Commuters: In 2010, MDOT initiated the [MI Commute](#) Web site, which offers a cost-to-commute calculator and easily accessible information to help commuters identify alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle for their drive to work, including: biking, walking, public transit, carpooling and ridesharing. Other MDOT efforts to encourage alternative commuting include the release of a series of light-hearted internet videos on [carpooling](#), [transit](#) and [bicycling](#) in 2011.



Carpool Lots: In 2008, MDOT began working with the Meijer retail chain to offer carpool parking spaces in Meijer parking lots located near the highway. This public-private partnership quickly provided benefits. In one year, it created 300 carpool parking spaces in six locations around the state for just the cost of a few signs. Since then, MDOT and Meijer have continued to work together. Another 450 spaces in nine additional locations have been provided. In addition, MDOT continues its efforts to provide bike racks at carpool lots, and to attract transit service to lots where appropriate.

Regional Non-motorized Plans: When the 2007 edition of MITP was released, MDOT had developed a regional non-motorized plan only for the Southwest Region. Since then, MDOT has completed work on regional non-motorized plans for three more of its seven regions: Superior, North, and Bay. Work on the Metro non-motorized regional plan is currently under way, with work to begin on the Grand and University Region plans expected after that.



Regional Bicycle Maps: Since the release of 2007's MITP, MDOT has completed work on bicycle maps for all seven regions, and has won national awards for several of them.



Road Diets: According to a study by FHWA Michigan Division, Michigan leads the country in the number of miles of “road diets,” which restripe the road to reduce the number of lanes. This often allow for the inclusion of bike lanes in the roadway. Road diets have been shown to reduce common types of crashes. In general, MDOT will consider road diets at local request for any road with fewer than 15,000 vehicles per day on average. MDOT has reconfigured the lane markings on more than 50 road segments (over 48 miles of trunkline) in communities across the state by reducing travel lanes from four to three lanes, including a center turn lane.

U.S. Bicycle Routes: The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) officially designates U.S. Bicycle Routes to help long-distance touring bicyclists navigate their way across a state or region, similar to the interstate system. The U.S. Bicycle Route system is a numbering designation for roads, highways, and multi-use pathways that are consider suitable for experienced bicyclists. Michigan has two newly-designated U.S. Bicycle Routes: Route 20 is an east/west route (between Marine City and Ludington), and Route 35 is a north/south route (between Sault Ste. Marie and New Buffalo).

Training: MDOT continues to work with other state agencies, local units of government, and outside partners to provide training and education to facilitate the creation and sense of place within communities through enhanced walking environments and the development of on-road bicycle facilities. In addition, MDOT sponsors training and education on how to design and construct pedestrian facilities within road rights-of-way to support persons with mobility challenges. The department also has assisted in bringing a number of intermodal conferences to the state including: Transportation Bonanza (for three consecutive years), and the Building Healthy Livable Communities and Building Michigan Communities conferences.

Safe Routes To School: This federal program is intended to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make walking and bicycling to school safe and more appealing; and to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools at the local level. By 2011, this program had helped to improve safety and provide healthy walking options for more than 35,000 students in 81 Michigan schools.



Intergovernmental Coordinating Council: MDOT participates with other state agencies in an Intergovernmental Coordinating Council (created by Gov. Snyder) to ensure a greater level of coordination between state agencies intended to maximize the effectiveness of government efforts to improve Michigan's economy.

Government-to-Government Coordination: MDOT maintains ongoing government-to-government communication and coordination with 12 federally-recognized sovereign Tribal governments in Michigan. In 2007, the State Transportation Commission adopted a policy requiring the department to establish a Tribal Affairs program coordinator to facilitate these efforts. Additionally in 2007, MDOT helped conduct a biennial Intergovernmental Transportation Meeting of tribal, federal, state and local agencies. The intent of these efforts is to better coordinate and integrate tribal transportation systems with those in the areas around them.

### **Conclusion**

The desire to improve Michigan's economy, along with state and federal policy shifts, have furthered MDOT's efforts to integrate transportation systems since 2007's MITP was released. Those efforts continue and will help bring Michigan closer to meeting the goals of Stewardship, System Improvement, Efficient and Effective Operations, and Safety and Security.