

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



**State Long-Range Transportation Plan  
2005-2030**

**Government-to-Government  
Consultation with  
Native American Tribes**

**February 2007**



*Prepared by  
The Michigan Department  
of Transportation*

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## Executive Summary

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), in accordance with state and federal regulation, fully supports the government-to-government relationship that exists between the state of Michigan, its departments and agencies, and the federally recognized Indian Tribes of the state of Michigan. Government-to-government consultations between MDOT and the Michigan Indian Tribes include such areas as MDOT programs and projects (state and federal-aid); proposed and/or implemented legislation, regulations, policies; and any other departmental interaction that affects Michigan Indian Tribes as may be further identified. Consultations are formal discussions regarding those actions or plans by, or concerning interface points between, the department and the federally acknowledged Indian Tribes of Michigan.

This report documents government-to-government consultation MDOT conducted during preparation of the State Long-Range Transportation Plan, *MI Transportation Plan*.

The consultation process resulted in common issues and expectations emerging from the sovereign tribes of Michigan. These include:

- Developing funding and partnering arrangements;
- Economic development;
- Safe and quality transportation systems;
- Pedestrian safety;
- Access to rural transit; and
- Land use and cultural preservation.

The transportation needs of American Indians today, including tribal members with disabilities, are no different from the needs of most people who live in rural areas, but they can often be more pronounced.

The tribal governments support the Preferred Vision developed through our participation process and the four goal areas. Of particular concern is connecting the system to support economic growth and making the transportation system physically and economically accessible to all.

## Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview of Transportation 2030 Planning Process

State and federal regulations require the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to conduct government-to-government consultation with tribal governments of federally recognized Native American Tribes in our planning and programming activities. This report documents government-to-government consultation MDOT conducted during preparation of the State Long-Range Transportation Plan, *MI Transportation Plan*.

The *MI Transportation Plan* planning effort kicked off in December 2005. In February of 2006, MDOT began an extensive public involvement program to gather public and stakeholder input.

The planning effort occurred between February 2006 and February 2007. Activities during this period included stakeholder interviews, a formation of an Economic Advisory Group, three rounds of stakeholder workshops, 27 public meetings and extensive outreach to the citizens of Michigan for inclusion in *MI Transportation Plan*. MDOT staff worked closely with a variety of stakeholders to ensure inclusion in the planning process.

## Chapter 2. Government-to-Government Consultation for *MI Transportation Plan*

In 2006, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) embarked on outreach efforts to each of Michigan's 12 federally recognized tribes to initiate government-to-government consultation. The purpose of the government-to-government consultation was to seek each tribes input into the update of MDOT's State Long-Range Plan, *MI Transportation Plan*. MDOT initially sent out a formal letter in February 2006, which extended an invitation to each tribal government to establish a consultation time frame supporting the schedule deadlines for the plan update. We respectfully requested the following:

- Identify the tribal governmental people (and their positions) you wish to participate on behalf of your government, as well as a governmental contact person with whom we can make the consultation meeting arrangements.
- Provide such tribal cultural protocols that you wish to be included in the structure of our consultations.
- Provide an estimate of the total number of people you expect to attend *MI Transportation Plan* consultation meetings (including non-governmental tribal members, if any).
- List any concerns and/or issues we can address that may impede your tribe's participation.

- Provide any questions your government may have regarding the process and intended outcome of these consultations.
- Provide any preferences for our government-to-government consultation meeting place and times.
- Provide a copy of your Tribal Roads Long-Range Plan, if available.

Each tribe was provided a follow-up contact to determine if they received the initial letter and to whom would be the liaison with the MDOT project manager. Each tribe was given an opportunity to participate in a conference call to discuss how they would like to participate in the development of the plan and issues they wished to discuss. One tribe declined the conference call, requesting a meeting with their Tribal Chair and Tribal Roads and Planning staff, which was held in March 2006. Two tribes chose not to participate in the conference calls, and have not agreed to visits. The conference calls were held in May 2006. Each agreed to meet with the MDOT project manager for face-to-face discussions.

MDOT initiated this consultation meeting to open lines of communication, consider the potential to establish formal relationships between the agencies and tribal governments, and to ensure tribal transportation issues would be considered in the state transportation planning efforts, including development of *MI Transportation Plan*.

The visits were initiated in May 2006. The MDOT project manager prepared an informational packet for distribution during each visit. The project manager met with 10 tribes as of August 2006.

The visits have resulted in open communication with each of the tribes. MDOT has learned that the tribes have varying issues as it related to transportation of the state. A number of the tribes expressed that they are not offered the opportunity to participate early enough in the project or programming process.

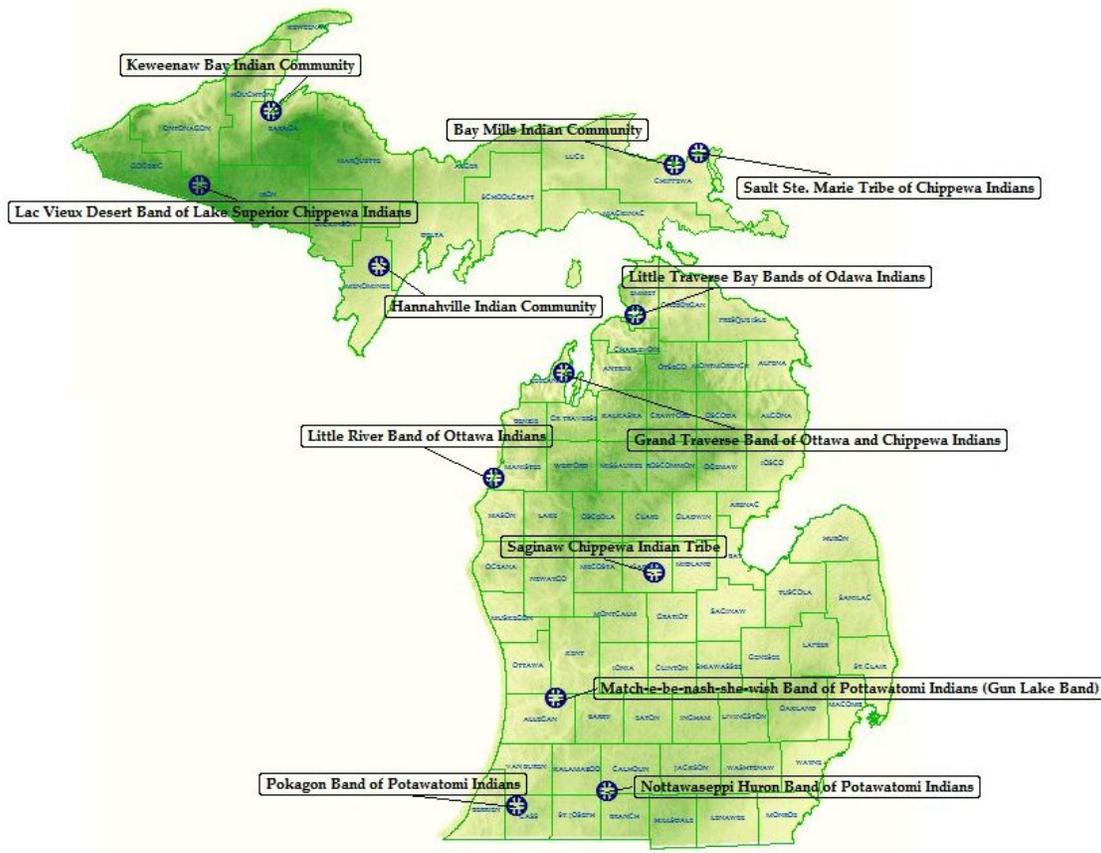
## 2.1 Profile of Tribal Governments in Michigan

The importance of transportation to Native Americans is illustrated by the prominence of trails and waterways. Michigan's first settlements were the Indian Villages of the Ojibwa, Ottawa and Potawatomi. Many roadways and river routes used today follow ancient trails first laid down by Native Americans even before the introduction of the horse, when people moved by foot over land and by canoe over water. Early trails, carved out by Native Americans and traveled by them for generations, became the skeleton of both Michigan's early pioneer roadways and its current highway system. In northern Michigan, for example, the forested roadsides between Cadillac and Traverse City are dotted with black and white concrete markers showing a route that led ancient "mound builder" Indians, and later the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi across rivers and between campsites. As early as 1822, public stagecoaches were documented as following these trails.

There are 12 federally recognized tribal governments in Michigan with a total population of 62,000.

1. Bay Mills Indian Community
2. Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
3. Hannahville Indian Community
4. Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
5. Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
6. Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
7. Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
8. Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan
9. Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians
10. Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
11. Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan
12. Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan

Figure 1: Map of 12 Federally Recognized Tribal Governments in Michigan



Source: Michigan Department of Transportation

Profile information is taken from various sources, including available Tribe Long-Range Transportation Plans, world wide web pages, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and United States Census Bureau.

### ***2.1.1 Bay Mills Indian Community***

The Bay Mills Indian Community was one of the four original reservations established in Michigan. The Bay Mills Indian Community includes descendants of the Anishinabek Ojibwa, who lived for hundreds of years on the shores of Lake Superior. They are members of the historical band of Chippewa Indians referred to as the Sault Ste. Marie Band. The Bay Mills Indian Community is located in Brimley, Michigan approximately 25 miles west of Sault Ste. Marie. The Tribe's service area consists of Chippewa County. The Tribe's reservation was officially established by an Act of Congress on June 19, 1860. The current tribal enrollment is approximately 1,500.

### ***2.1.2 Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa***

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians were officially recognized as an Indian Tribe on May 27, 1980, under the provisions of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. The members are descendants of the various Ottawa and Chippewa Villages who have inhabited northern Michigan for centuries. The Tribe has a six-county service area consisting of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Manistee Counties. The Tribe has approximately 3,985 enrolled members.

The organization structure of the Tribe's governmental services includes a governing body consisting of a Tribal chair and six other Tribal Council members, all of which are elected by the Grand Traverse Band membership.

### ***2.1.3 Hannahville Indian Community***

The Hannahville Indian Community is a federally recognized Indian Tribe residing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, approximately 15 miles west of Escanaba. The Tribe has an approximate enrolled membership of 755 people. Approximately 100 additional members live nearby and access services on the Reservation. The 12-member Tribal Council is an elected body, which has been empowered by the community, through the election process, to act on behalf of the tribal members.

### ***2.1.4 Keweenaw Bay Indian Community***

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community is located on the L'Anse Reservation, which is along the shores of Lake Superior. The towns of Baraga and L'Anse are located on the reservation. Keweenaw Bay Indian Community has a service area consisting of Baraga, Houghton and Ontonagon Counties and an enrolled membership of approximately 3,500.

### ***2.1.5 Lac Vieux Desert Band of Chippewa***

The Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians takes its name from the area where the Tribe has always lived. Initially, the Lac Vieux Desert Band was recognized by the federal government as a part of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, despite the fact that the Lac Vieux Desert Band has always maintained its presence in the Watersmeet area. In 1988, the Lac Vieux Desert Band received independent recognition. The Tribe has a tri-county service area consisting of Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon Counties. Current tribal enrollment is approximately 366, according to the latest Bureau of Indian Affairs Labor Force Report.

### ***2.1.6 Little River Band of Ottawa Indians***

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) is a sovereign and federally recognized Tribal government. The Little River Band are the descendents of and the political successors of nine of the 19 Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians in Michigan that were signatories to the 1836 and 1855 Treaties. Their governmental offices are based in Manistee, Michigan, within the boundaries of a 70,000-acre reservation along the Manistee River, established under the 1836 Treaty of Washington. The Tribe also has a Reservation encompassing two Townships in Mason County reserved by the 1855 Treaty of Detroit. The LRBOI and the United States reaffirmed their government-to-government relationship under P.L. 103-324, enacted in 1994. The Tribe's service area includes Lake, Manistee, Mason, Wexford, Ottawa, Newaygo, Oceana, Kent, and Muskegon Counties. There are approximately 3,300 enrolled members.

### ***2.1.7 Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians***

On Sept. 21, 1994, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians was federally reaffirmed with the signing of Public Law 103-324. The Tribe is governed by a seven-member Tribal Council who serves staggered terms. The Tribe has a defined reservation and a service area that includes Emmet, Charlevoix, and Cheboygan Counties. The Tribe has approximately 3,783 enrolled members.

### ***2.1.8 Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi***

The Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, commonly referred to as the Gun Lake Tribe, received their federal recognition of tribal status in August 1999. The Tribe has a designated five-county service area consisting of Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Kent, and Ottawa counties. The Tribe's current enrollment is approximately 296 members.

### ***2.1.9 Nottawaseppi Huron Pottawatomi***

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi is a Native American Tribe that was federally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1995 and presently consists of approximately 663 enrolled members. They also maintain satellite offices in Grand Rapids, 110 miles north of Fulton/Athens, which is approximately 55 miles from the Indiana border. The Tribe has a designated seven-county service area consisting of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Barry, Allegan, Kent, and Ottawa Counties.

### ***2.1.10 Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians***

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians has a 10-county service area, four being in Southwestern Michigan, which include Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. There are approximately 2,778 enrolled members.

### ***2.1.11 Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan***

The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe traces its roots to three bands of Ojibwa Anishnabek known as the Saginaw, Swan Creek and Black River Bands of Chippewa Indians. The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe is headquartered on the Isabella Reservation, adjacent to the city of Mt. Pleasant. The Tribal Council consists of 12 elected members. The current tribal membership is approximately 3,296.

### ***2.1.12 Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan***

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is a modern expression of the Anishinabeg who lived in this region of the Great Lakes for more than 500 years. The Tribe has a seven-county service area consisting of Alger, Chippewa, Delta, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette and Schoolcraft Counties. The current tribal enrollment is approximately 31,224 members.

## **Chapter 3. Findings**

The government-to-government consultations for *MI Transportation Plan* have been successful. The transportation needs of American Indians today, including tribal members with disabilities, are no different from the needs of most people who live in rural areas, but they can often be more pronounced. Conditions found on some reservations, such as immense distances across tribal lands or cumbersome administrative demands, can prove to be an additional challenge for those planning transportation for people with disabilities and other residents.

Access to reliable transportation is often the critical factor in obtaining and maintaining employment. The need for public transportation options to improve access to jobs, health care, businesses, educational opportunities and cultural activities is desired. Access to reliable transportation influences all areas of daily life for tribal members, and better access for everyone is a goal to improve the social and economic life of the tribal communities.

Pedestrian safety is a primary concern. A recent report entitled *Pedestrian Safety in Native America*, published by the Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety, published in September 2004, finds that American Indians have the highest rates of pedestrian injury and death per capita of any racial or ethnic group in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Factors such as rurality, poverty, alcohol, and lack of visibility and traffic control devices were identified as contributing to these rates. Another safety issue faced by rural communities and American Indian

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<sup>1</sup> [Pedestrian Safety in Native America](#), USDOT/FHWA, Office of Safety, FHWA-SA-04-007 Technical Report, September 2004.

reservations is the location of large interstate/state highways through small towns and reservation communities. This bisection of rural communities puts high volumes of higher speed traffic through town roads, which often serve as town centers for these communities.

Tribal governments are working towards identifying how to grow and develop strong and productive economies that mutually benefit tribes, local communities, and states throughout Michigan and the Great Lakes region. Michigan's economic decline, including loss of manufacturing jobs, is a growing urgency among tribal communities. Eleven of the federally recognized Indian tribes in Michigan are operating 17 casino locations. Tribal governments are using gaming revenues to provide essential services, such as education, health care, police and fire protection to all tribal members from toddlers in day care to the elders in elder care programs.

The consultation process resulted in common issues and expectations emerging from the sovereign tribes of Michigan. These include:

- Developing funding and partnering arrangements;
- Economic development;
- Safe and quality transportation systems;
- Pedestrian safety;
- Access to rural transit; and
- Land use and cultural preservation.

Approaches to long-range planning are diverse given the various institutional arrangements, relationships, available resources, and required procedures of a tribe or region. The tribal governments support the Preferred Vision developed through our participation process and the four goal areas. Of particular concern is connecting the system to support economic growth and making the transportation system physically and economically accessible to all.

## Appendix A: Michigan Tribe's Contacts

**Michigan Tribes' Contacts**

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# **MI**Transportation

MICHIGAN LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



*Providing the highest quality integrated transportation services  
for economic benefit and improved quality of life.*