

City of Grand Haven, November 19, 2001

A number of refinements were made in Grand Haven to address the City of Grand Haven's concerns. These are documented in a letter prepared by MDOT to the City of Grand Haven City Manager dated October 25, 2001. This letter is located within this chapter. The refinements are summarized below:

- The additional through-lane was relocated from the outside of the roadway section to the median side of US-31 to keep the improvements within the existing right-of-way.
- Side streets previously proposed to be cul-de-sacs were left open to maintain local access.
- MDOT continues to coordinate with the City of Grand Haven on this issue to minimize impacts, while maintaining access to Harbor Island. A Resolution to Accept Statement of Understanding GrandWater Jurisdiction Transfer dated March 15, 2004 describes the agreements reached, and is included on the following page.



City of Grand Haven

April 22, 2004

Ms. Vicki Weerstra
Michigan Department of Transportation
1420 Front Street NW
Grand Rapids MI 49504

Re: Jurisdiction Resolution

Dear Vicki:

Hank VanderWerp recently informed me that you had requested documentation of the above mentioned. Enclosed is a copy of a resolution passed on Monday, March 15, 2004 by the Grand Haven City Council.

Please let me know if there is anything else needed to assist in this matter.

Sincerely,

Patrick McGinnis
City Manager

enc.

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING
GRANDWATER JURISDICTION TRANSFER

Resolution accepting the following statement of understanding between the City of Grand Haven and the Michigan Department of Transportation regarding the City's acceptance of future improvements to be constructed by the State.

MDOT/Grand Haven GrandWater Jurisdiction Transfer

As a component of future improvements planned for US-31 (Beacon Boulevard) and the South Channel/Grand River crossings north of Jackson Street in the City of Grand Haven, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall construct and modify local streets within the GrandWater Development area including the unnamed street and future bridge between the limits of Adams Street and Coho Drive. These modifications are for the purpose of providing local access within the GrandWater Development area, and between the GrandWater Development, US-31, Jackson Street, Coho Drive and other adjacent local streets and properties in the area.

The new and/or modified local streets will improve access to and within the GrandWater Development area. Once constructed by MDOT, these new and/or modified facilities will function as city major or local streets, with no remaining state trunkline function. As such, MDOT desires to retain no ongoing interest in or jurisdiction over these facilities. To facilitate local city use and provide for the necessary city control of these new and/or modified facilities, jurisdiction will be transferred from MDOT to the City of Grand Haven, upon completion of the improvements by MDOT. City jurisdiction and control will include all aspects of routine maintenance, traffic control, future rehabilitation or improvements, and other operational issues, per Michigan Act 51.

An agreement will be developed between MDOT and the City to facilitate this transaction, once US-31 improvements are scheduled or programmed.

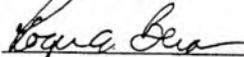
YEAS: FRITZ, MCCALED, NIEUWENHUIS, TAMMEN

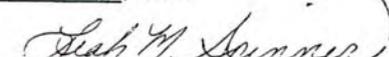
NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: BERGMAN

APPROVED: MARCH 15, 2004

I, Leah M. Spinner, City Clerk of Grand Haven, Ottawa County, do certify that the above is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the City of Grand Haven City Council at a regular meeting held on MARCH 15, 2004


Roger A. Bergman, Mayor


Leah M. Spinner, City Clerk

City of Grand Haven, April 22, 2004

Comment acknowledged, no response required.



4814 Henry Street
Norton Shores, Michigan
Phone (616) 798-4391
Fax (616) 798-7103

January 20, 1999

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

The City Council of the City of Norton Shores at its meeting of January 19, 1999 adopted a resolution endorsing the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee's position on the recently completed Draft Environmental Impact Statement for US-31 in Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon counties. Please enter the enclosed resolution into the record of public comments.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne A. Mahan".

Lynne A. Mahan
City Clerk

LAM/jab

Enclosure

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has recently completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US-31 in Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties to determine the preferred alternative(s) for addressing traffic congestion on US-31, and

WHEREAS, US-31 is a vital transportation corridor for Muskegon County; serves a significant number of commercial and industrial enterprises in the county, and will continue to be an important north-south corridor in the economic development of the West Michigan Region, and

WHEREAS, community leaders in Muskegon County representing business, industry, tourism, government, financial institutions, and other interests have organized under the umbrella of a Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee to review the Environmental Impact Study and formulate a Muskegon County position regarding the alternatives under consideration, and

WHEREAS, the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee is summarized in a position paper, which was unanimously adopted by the committee on November 16, 1998;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Norton Shores hereby endorses the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee, and requests the Michigan Department of Transportation enter this resolution into the record of public comments.

At a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Norton Shores, held at the Norton Shores Branch Library, 705 Seminole Road, on the 19th day of January, 1999, the foregoing resolution was moved for adoption by Council Member Beecham. The motion was supported by Council Member Kinney.

Ayes: Mayor Crandall, Council Members Broge, Beecham, Dolack, Kinney, McCartney, Scolnik and Waldo

Nays: None

Excused: Council Member Wiersma

Resolution declared adopted.


Lynne A. Mahan, City Clerk

City of Norton Shores, January 20, 1999, Resolution

Acknowledge receipt of the City of Norton Shores resolution supporting Alternative A. This alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**.

City of Zeeland

21 South Elm Street
Zeeland, Michigan 49684

(616) 772-0070
FAX (616) 772-0880

January 18, 1999

Mr. Robert Den Herder, Chairman
MACC Policy Committee
400 136th Avenue, Suite 416
Holland MI 49424

Dear Bob:

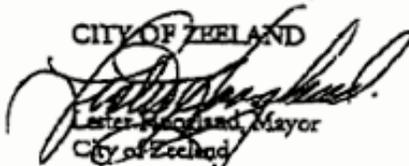
The Zeeland City Council appreciates the efforts of the MACC's Technical Committee and it's Ad Hoc Committee on the US-31 study. The Council recognizes the difficulties in assimilating the diverse issues associated with the US-31 study into a recommendation to the MACC Policy Committee.

After review and discussion of the issues, the Zeeland City Council finds itself concurring with the recommendation of the Technical Committee to the Policy Committee. The recommendations show a high degree of understanding of the issues facing the MACC and present a plan for improving safety along US-31 while managing area wide growth. This will ultimately provide a way of linking the federal highway system through our part of the state.

I regret not being able to have a City representative at the Policy Committee meeting to speak for the City of Zeeland. I trust that this letter will serve to represent the City of Zeeland and our support of the Technical Committee in their January 11, 1999, statement of Recommended Future Improvements to the US 31 Corridor.

Sincerely,

CITY OF ZEELAND



Lester MacGilland, Mayor
City of Zeeland

LH:rb

1

City of Zeeland, January 18, 1999

1. Acknowledged receipt of their letter of support for Alternative F/J1. The current PA includes critical segments of F/J1.



102 W. SAVIDGE ST. • SPRING LAKE, MI 49456 • PHONE 616-842-1393
FAX 616-847-1393

January 25, 1999

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: US-31 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
STATE PROJECT NUMBER: 33955
FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER: DPR 0045 (001)

Dear Mr. Lopez:

This letter is written to communicate the Spring Lake Village Council's comments on the alternatives presented in the US-31 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Spring Lake Village Council has concluded that the problems that currently exist in the US-31 Corridor could best be resolved by implementing a three-phased plan comprised of 1) improvements to US-31, 2) construction of a local Grand Haven area bypass and 3) construction of a regional bypass.

Transportation System Management:

The Michigan Department of Transportation has already begun improving the ability of US-31 in the Grand Haven Corridor to handle existing and future traffic by installing "Michigan turns". In addition to these improvements, closing select intersections and better coordination of signaling should be pursued immediately to address existing transportation needs.

Local Grand Haven Bypass (Plr):

The Village Council supports the concept of constructing a local Grand Haven area bypass, including a Grand River crossing, to address both existing transportation needs as well as those created by anticipated growth in the townships surrounding the Tri-Cities (Grand Haven, Ferrysburg and Spring Lake). The bottleneck at the US-31 Bascule Bridge and the M-104 Bridge will not be resolved solely by constructing a regional bypass (Alternative F) or expanding the capacity of US-31 (Alternative A). Local traffic circulating among the communities, as well as traffic using US-31 and M-104 to access the Grand Rapids area, contribute significantly to the

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
January 25, 1999
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traffic problems in Grand Haven and Spring Lake. Although we are aware that M-104 will not be considered by MDOT officials when selecting a preferred alternative, we believe that M-104 will have a significant impact on US-31 as it continues to act as a conduit for traffic heading to Grand Rapids and throughout northwest Ottawa County.

3

This mid-term goal (5-10 years) does not need to be constructed as a controlled access boulevard as proposed in the DEIS. A bypass constructed as a local road with a bridge that presents fewer engineering challenges would address the needs of the US-31/M-104 interchange, reduce the cost of constructing a local bypass and mitigate some of the negative impacts in both Grand Haven Township and the Grand River basin. Additionally, the local bypass should be located east of 144th Avenue in to avoid conflicts with the new Spring Lake Senior High School.

Regional Bypass (F/J1):

Unlike expanding the capacity along the existing US-31 Corridor, construction of a regional bypass can address the need for limited access freeway that will move north-south traffic efficiently and safely while mitigating the potential negative impacts. This long-term solution (10-15 years) is required to respond to the transportation needs of Ottawa County in the future.

4

This option is also important as it will provide for the replacement of the existing bascule bridge with 40' clearance. A fixed-span bridge with a clearance of 65' would be unacceptable at this location due to the negative impact on the cities of Grand Haven and Ferrysburg.

Summary:

These comments reflect the statements made in a resolution adopted by the City of Grand Haven, the City of Ferrysburg and the Village in October, 1994. The Village Council believes that the recommendations contained within this resolution are valid today based upon the findings in the DEIS. Based upon the traffic origin/destination studies, more traffic will be diverted from US-31 in the Grand Haven area by a local bypass. 2020 projections indicate that the ADT at the US-31 Bridge will be reduced 13,400 vehicles by Alternative F/J1, while the ADT will be reduced 17,400 vehicles by Alternative P1r.

Anticipated growth patterns in Ottawa County create a compelling need for the regional bypass. While the regional bypass is necessary to address future growth, this should not preclude the need for a local bypass of the Grand Haven area.

On behalf of the Spring Lake Village Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS.

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
January 25, 1999
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew D. Lukasik". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Andrew D. Lukasik
Village Manager

encl.

cc: State Senator Leon Stille
State Representative John Jellema
Leon Langeland, Ottawa County Commissioner
Ryan Cotton, Grand Haven City Manager
Dennis Craun, Ferrysburg City Manager
James Jeske, Spring Lake Township Supervisor
Bill Cargo, Grand Haven Township Manger
Larry Mason, Spring Lake Public Schools Superintendent



102 W. SAVIDGE ST. • SPRING LAKE, MI 49456 • PHONE 616-842-13

FAX 616-847-1393

EXCERPTS OF MINUTES

At a regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Spring Lake held at 102 West Exchange Street, Spring Lake, Michigan, on the 3rd day of October, 1994, at 7:30 p.m., local time.

PRESENT: Bolthouse, Fonte, Fischer, Donner, MacLachlan, Ruiter

ABSENT: Verplank

The President Pro-tem advised the Council that the next order of business was the consideration of a resolution establishing a joint recommendation of the five Northwest Ottawa County communities regarding the solution of present and future transportation needs.

After completion of discussion, the following resolution was offered by Bolthouse and supported by Fischer:

"RESOLUTION"

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has initiated a study commonly known as the US-31 Corridor Study (the Study) and said Study is intended primarily to develop solutions for the improvement of traffic flow along the US-31 corridor in Ottawa County; and,

WHEREAS, MDOT has appointed Greiner Incorporated as project engineer and has assigned them the task of developing a recommended solution based upon the best available traffic, social, environmental and economic data; and,

WHEREAS, Greiner has proceeded to identify three corridors for further study and these corridors have been identified as West (existing US-31), Central (120th Avenue vicinity) and Eastern (84th Avenue vicinity); and,

WHEREAS, the Study was initiated at the request of local units of government and Ottawa County in recognition of the fact that the prosperity and vitality of Ottawa County are threatened by traffic impacts which exceed or soon will exceed the capacity of the existing state and local roadway network; and,

WHEREAS, to the extent traffic exceeds the capacity of our state and local bridge and roadway system, it is a detriment to the quality of life of each of our residents and a threat to the prosperity and economic vitality that is our hallmark; and,

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Resolution

Page 2

Whereas, each of the five units of government in Northwest Ottawa County, including the City of Ferrysburg, the City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, Spring Lake Township and the Village of Spring Lake, all recognize that inasmuch as each community and its residents share in the prosperity of our economy and the benefits of our quality of life, each community must also share responsibility for solutions to regional problems; and,

Whereas, our area has a proven track record of cooperative regional successes that include the North Ottawa Water System, Grand Haven/Spring Lake Sewer Authority, Harbor Transit and economic development; and,

Whereas, it is clear that if our five communities cannot reach a consensus on this critical regional transportation issue, MDOT may defer this project indefinitely to work in areas of the State where there is clear consensus or MDOT may elect to construct improvements that do not meet our collective needs; and,

Whereas, the ACI convened a committee consisting of representatives of the five Northwest Ottawa communities to share thoughts and information concerning the Study, to meet with MDOT officials and to meet with Greiner officials, all with the purpose of determining if some effective regional consensus could be developed regarding both present and future transportation issues and the Study; and,

Whereas, major findings of the committee include the following:

- a) MDOT will work more speedily in regions where there is clear agreement on the transportation objective to be achieved;
- b) Environmental impacts are key considerations in the decision making process and may preclude otherwise desirable options;
- c) The time line for the US-31 Corridor Project will be very long. It is very likely that no construction will begin for 15 years from the date of completion of the Study on an expressway bypass option.
- d) We now face the most severe transportation problems in our history. The US-31/M-104 highway system is over capacity now. The US-31 Bascule Bridge has demonstrated its ability to severely disrupt our region.
- e) Traffic will only get worse. Based on traffic projections prepared by Greiner, our area will become progressively more clogged and congested.
- f) This problem is a threat to the quality of life of the residents of our region. If it is not addressed systematically and on time, our residents, businesses and visitors will suffer;
- g) It is clear that we need to develop a regional consensus where we all share in the solution or we will suffer the inevitable consequences;
- h) Our area requires at least a second local bridge to provide local traffic relief and ensure that emergency services are not interrupted; and,

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Resolution
Page 3

Whereas, the ACI Committee has worked to develop a comprehensive recommendation for consideration by each of the five communities and is prepared to do so in the form of this resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The ACI study committee has recommended a phased approach to address our regional traffic problem which includes the following stages:

a) **Short Term Goal - to be accomplished in three to five years:** Request immediate US-31 improvements in the Grand Haven Corridor that could include intersection closings, signal removals, installation of "Michigan turns" and widening and recommend to MDOT that a fixed-span bridge with 35 feet of clearance be constructed over the Grand River.

b) **Mid Term Goal - to be accomplished within five to 10 years:** That support be given to the creation of a local, "ring-road" system (not an expressway) that adds a local bridge with 35 feet of clearance or a bascule bridge in the most appropriate location when considering all factors in order to handle increased local traffic north and south across the Grand River. The location of the "ring road" would be determined by further study; but it would link M-104 and US-31 and would probably do so in a corridor further South of the currently proposed Robbins Road location. This alternative is not in lieu of, nor can it preclude, the construction of the expressway bypass contemplated in the long-term goal detailed below.

c) **Long Term Goal - to be accomplished in 15 to 20 years:** That the US-31 bypass should be in a corridor west of 84th Avenue in the vicinity of 120th Avenue. This bypass should link I-96 to the North with either US-31 or I-196 to the South.

2. That this unit of local government hereby accepts and endorses this recommended conceptual plan.

3. That ACI and the ACI Committee are directed to join this unit of government in advocating this concept to MDOT, State and Federal legislators, the Study team and other appropriate audiences. Furthermore, the ACI committee is directed to monitor the Study process and report periodically to member units.

4. That all resolutions in conflict herewith in whole or in part are hereby revoked to the extent of such conflict.

5

Resolution
Page 4

YES: Fischer, Donner, Bolthouse, Fonte, Ruiter, MacLachlan

NO: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED APPROVED DATED Oct. 3, 1994

Victoria Verplank
ITS Village President

R. S. Ludwig
ITS Village Clerk



102 W. SAVIDGE ST. • SPRING LAKE, MI 49456 • PHONE 616-842-1393

FAX 616-847-1393

RECEIVED
FEB 7 1997

CITY OF FERRYSBURG

EXCERPTS OF MINUTES

At a regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Spring Lake, Ottawa County, Michigan, held at the Barber School Community Building, 102 West Exchange Street, on the 3rd day of February, 1997, at 7:00 p.m., local time, a quorum being present:

PRESENT: Bolthouse, Fischer, James, VanStrate, Draeger

ABSENT: Hall, Hammond

The President of the Village advised the Village Council that the next order of business was consideration of a resolution indicating the Village's commitment to a long-term solution to the U.S. 31 problems.

After completion of the discussion, the following resolution was offered by Councilperson Fischer and supported by Councilperson Bolthouse.

"RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the communities of Ferrysburg City, Grand Haven Charter Township, Grand Haven City, Spring Lake Township, Spring Lake Village and the surrounding environs will be significantly impacted by the eventual location of the U.S. 31 improvements; and

WHEREAS, creation of an elevated freeway, surface freeway, or an expanded boulevard through the communities where the existing U.S. 31 now exists will eliminate jobs, impact churches, weaken neighborhoods, threaten park areas, affect community heritage, and reduce property values in amounts totally unacceptable to the 30,000-plus area residents; and

WHEREAS, the governing bodies of Ferrysburg City, Grand Haven Charter Township, Grand Haven City, Spring Lake Township, and Spring Lake Village have each gone on record requesting a U.S. 31 by-pass with a Grand River crossing elsewhere so as to provide an alternate route across the Grand River to more effectively carry the current 58,000 daily vehicles and the 40,000 additional vehicles expected in the next twenty years; and

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WHEREAS, such alternate route will protect the lives of our citizens, protect the economic viability of our employers, improve traffic flow for regional and state travelers alike and preserve our communities' neighborhoods, institutions and history;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Village of Spring Lake is committed to a long-term solution to the U.S. 31 problem, specifically:

1. The Village of Spring Lake continues to support the construction of a by-pass at, or near, 120th Avenue with a Grand River crossing in a manner which most effectively connects the Holland region to the Muskegon region such that regional and state traffic can quickly, safely, and less obtrusively reach their destinations. (Any other solution short of the above, will prove to be obsolete and ineffective in the long term.)
2. The Village of Spring Lake is disturbed about the unilateral action by MDOT and MDEQ to eliminate the southern spur of former Alternative F that crosses the Pigeon Creek prior to a review in the Environmental Impact Statement due later in 1997, and we hereby request reinstatement of Alternative F as a full option to be researched just as thoroughly as any other option in the Environmental Impact Statement.
3. The Village of Spring Lake is of the opinion that the best long term option, with the greatest transportation benefits, is the July, 1996 version of Alternative F coupled with Alternative J1, to provide a direct interstate link along the shortest route possible between I-196 in Zeeland and I-96 in Nunica. Such transportation benefits justify the increased environmental mitigation costs associated with crossing the Pigeon Creek.
4. The Village of Spring Lake continues to support the concept of a second local crossing in addition to the above, to provide improved access to neighboring communities, to provide emergency access when the bascule bridge malfunctions, and to reduce traffic on M-104 through the Village of Spring Lake.

AYES: Bolthouse, Fischer, VanStrate, James
Draeger

NAYS: None

Resolution declared APPROVED

Dated this 3rd. Day of February, 1997.


Judith VanBemmelen, Deputy Clerk

Village of Spring Lake, January 25, 1999

1. Acknowledged receipt of the Village's letter of support for a three-phased approach: 1) improvements to US-31, 2) construction of a local Grand Haven bypass, and 3) construction of a regional bypass. The Preferred Alternative includes improvements to US-31 and a new regional Grand River crossing, but not a local Grand Haven bypass due to environmental impacts, costs and not addressing the purpose of and need for the project.
2. Acknowledged receipt of support for TSM improvements. MDOT has continued to maintain and improve US-31 with projects such as pavement repairs, intersection reconfigurations, turn lane improvements, and traffic signal optimizing upgrades. As a result, most of the TSM improvements noted have been made.
3. Alternative P1r had many social and environmental impacts and was not chosen as the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, a local bypass is not part of this project.
4. Acknowledged receipt of support for Alternative F/J1 and the replacement of the existing bascule bridge. The replacement of the existing bascule bridge is not part of the current PA. See response #1 above.
5. Acknowledged receipt of resolution dated October 3, 1994. See response 1.
6. Acknowledge receipt of resolution dated February 3, 1997 in support of Alternative F/J1. The current PA includes critical segments of Alternative F/J-1.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has recently completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US-31 in Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties to determine the preferred alternative(s) for addressing traffic congestion on US-31;

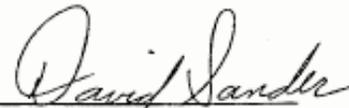
WHEREAS, US-31 is a vital transportation corridor for Muskegon County; serves a significant number of commercial and industrial enterprises in the county, and will continue to be an important north-south corridor in the economic development of the West Michigan Region;

WHEREAS, community leaders in Muskegon County representing business, industry, tourism, government, financial institutions, and other interests have organized under the umbrella of a Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee to review the Environmental Impact Study and formulate a Muskegon County position regarding the alternatives under consideration;

WHEREAS, the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee is summarized in the enclosed position paper, which was unanimously adopted by the committee on November 1, 1998;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Roosevelt Park hereby endorses the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee, and requests the Michigan Department of Transportation enter this resolution into the record of public comments.

Resolution Adopted by City of Roosevelt Park on January 18, 1999.



David Sander
Mayor



Ann Marie Cummings
City Clerk

City of Roosevelt Park, January 18, 1999

Acknowledge receipt of resolution supporting the position of the Muskegon County Blue Ribbon Committee supporting Alternative A. This alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**. In addition, please refer to responses provided for the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission on pages C-112 and C-113.



NUNICA, MICH. 49448

A Recognized Bicentennial Community

January 7, 1999

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning, MDOT
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

We, as Crockery Township's governing body have, along with Robinson, Olive, and Zeeland Townships, expressed our collective opposition to any 'alternative' to the US 31 traffic problem that places a bypass through the center of Ottawa County.

Our collective position deals with the overall negative effect of a bypass and the reasons we believe the US 31 problems would be best solved by utilizing the existing route. That correspondence, signed by the township supervisor from each of the four townships, is being forwarded to your office under separate cover.

We, the Crockery Township Board of Trustees, would like to address additional concerns regarding present traffic on M-104 (Cleveland Avenue) and any 'bypass' solution proposed along the 120th Avenue route in our township.

HISTORY

When I-96 was extended west from Grand Rapids to Muskegon the highway geographically cut Crockery Township in half. This severed all north/south roads within the township, except 112th Avenue. As a result 112th Avenue has become the 'cross over' location for north/south traffic within the township. Also as a result of this same action, M-104 became the main route of travel for east/west traffic to and from the Grand Haven tri-city area.

M-104 is the only east/west highway for traffic on and off I-96 with a destination of the Grand Haven tri-city area. The combination of local and other traffic has M-104 at or exceeding full capacity. It is most common during the summer months to have traffic in a 'stop and go' condition in the Spring Lake area, for a distance of up to three miles on M-104.

1

Lopez letter, cont., pg. 2

FUTURE CONCERNS

The DEIS supports our contention that most traffic on US 31 in Grand Haven is 'local destination' traffic. We continue to believe that a bypass on 120th Avenue will not give sufficient relief to Grand Haven's traffic problems.

We do believe that a bypass on 120th Avenue will have some adverse effect on traffic distribution attempting to get to the Grand Haven tri-city area from the east and south.

At the present time traffic, destined for the Ottawa County lakeshore area, use four basic routes:

1. M-45 from Grand Rapids to US 31 south of Grand Haven.
2. I-96 to M-104 and west to Spring Lake.
3. US 31 north from Holland.
4. US 31 south from Muskegon.

We expect that people not familiar with the area will conclude that the best and shortest route to the Grand Haven area will be by jumping onto this bypass at some point and taking it to M-104.

We also expect that local traffic from Grand Rapids area will select a route west on M-45 to the bypass north to M-104, and west into Spring Lake.

None of these projected traffic patterns will do anything to solve the existing US 31 problems, but they will have a tremendous negative effect on those communities along M-104 from I-96 west to US 31.

While the city administration of Grand Haven has repeatedly insisted that the bypass option is for the 'through traffic,' their correspondence on this issue would indicate that they expect traffic to use the bypass and M-104 as a route to and from their city. They have in fact pointed out what they consider a design flaw in the DEIS that they feel is detrimental to this pattern and have requested that it be corrected. (Letter dated 12-8-98 from the City of Grand Haven to your office.)

INTERCHANGE EVALUATION – I-96 and 120th Bypass

In the event that a bypass on 120th Avenue was to be selected, we find the engineered design as shown in the DEIS for Crockery Township unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The current traffic capacity for 112th Avenue (Main Street) does not allow for additional traffic, in the volume the bypass is expected to generate. Particularly traffic attempting to go west on M-104.
2. The merging of traffic on the west bound M-104 and exit ramp #9 of west bound I-96 onto M-104, is already considered the most dangerous intersection within the township. It is in need of additional engineering as it exists today.
3. Any attempt to route traffic from a bypass into M-104 will require a major interchange that has not been considered in the DEIS. This additional cost would further reduce the 'dollar return value' of this alternative.

Lopez letter, cont., pg. 3

In summary, it would appear that the desires of the Grand Haven City Officials to have a bypass on 120th Avenue would, at best, take a north/south problem through Grand Haven and further complicate it with an east/west problem on M-104 through Crockery Township, Spring Lake Township, and the Village of Spring Lake. It also appears that Grand Haven officials are aware that additional traffic is likely to use M-104 to arrive at their city.

It is also likely that realignment of the traffic with a destination to the Grand Haven area is likely to adversely effect those businesses along the existing route of US 31 without subsequently improving the problems existing on US 31 in Grand Haven. An attempt to dump traffic from two interstate highways onto a two lane state highway is not realistic considering the volume of traffic projected to use this route. Major traffic problems in the future on M-104 will present fewer options for a solution that the US 31 route through Grand Haven offers at this time.

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Thank you for taking the time to review our concerns. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Fortenbacher
Supervisor



Rex Burkall
Trustee



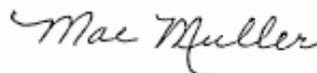
Tom Holmes
Trustee



Larry VanDussen
Treasurer



Mae Muller
Clerk



Copies of this letter have been sent to the following individuals or organizations:

City of Grand Haven
Spring Lake Township
Village of Ferrysburg
Village of Spring Lake
R. Christopher Byrnes, Ottawa County Planning Commission
Betty Gajewski, Ottawa County Planning Commission
Ed Hanenburg, Ottawa County Planning Commission
Joseph Haveman, Ottawa County Commission/Land Use Committee
Luciano Hernandez, Ottawa County Commission
Michael Jaeger, URS Greiner
Jon Jellema, Michigan House of Representatives
Robert Karsten, Ottawa County Commission
Jim Kirschensteiner, Federal Highway Administration
Mark Knudsen, Ottawa County Planner
Leon Langeland, Ottawa County Commission/Land Use Committee
D. Dale Mohr, Ottawa County Commission
Robert Rinck, Ottawa County Commission/Land Use Committee
Roger Rycenga, Ottawa County Commission/Land Use Committee
Jeff Saxby, MDOT
Harris Schipper, Ottawa County Commission
Gordon Schrottenboer, Ottawa County Commission/Land Use Committee
Robert Sewick, Ottawa County Planning Commission
Leon Stille, Michigan State Senate
Dennis Swartout, Ottawa County Commission
Cornelius Vander Kam, Ottawa County Commission
Frederick Vander Laan, Ottawa County Commission

Crockery Township, January 7, 1999

1. Acknowledged receipt of the township's concerns regarding traffic on M-104 and its opposition to a 120th Avenue bypass. Traffic modeling projections for the year 2030 show that volumes on M-104 will actually decrease with the construction of the Preferred Alternative. In addition, the Preferred Alternative includes widening on M-104 to five lanes from 130th Avenue to I-96. Since this letter was written, MDOT has met with and received support for the Preferred Alternative.
2. Traffic volumes on 112th Avenue are expected to decrease as a result of the Preferred Alternative.
3. The westbound I-96 to westbound M-104 ramp has been upgraded since 1999, and now includes a deceleration lane that allows ramp traffic to slow and then merge with M-104 traffic. The Preferred Alternative converts this deceleration lane into a new through lane that extends to 124th Avenue.
4. The Preferred Alternative has an at-grade intersection with M-104 rather than an interchange, and is included in cost estimates for this project.
5. The Preferred Alternative includes improvements on existing US-31 in Grand Haven.

The Joint Township Committee Against the Bypass
c/o Robinson Township Hall
12010 120th Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

January 22, 1999

Mr. José A. López
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department Of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: FHWA-MI-EIS-98-01-D -- US31 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. López:

In attending meetings, reading news quotes attributed to local elected officials, and reviewing copies of letters addressed to your office from local government units, it is apparent to us that the following is true:

1. Officials of the City of Grand Haven, as well as most Ottawa County Commissioners, have not formulated a total plan that is acceptable to them to handle the traffic problem within the City of Grand Haven on US31.
2. They continue to push for a bypass along 120th Avenue while ignoring a great amount of evidence that indicates this will not solve a sufficient amount of the existing and projected traffic problems on US31. They also have refused to present a traffic plan for the City of Grand Haven except for a suggested detour of some traffic within the City. To our knowledge, no traffic engineering study has been done to provide any evidence this suggested detour will be of any real value if implemented. Their suggestion also fails to address the negative impact on the myriad small businesses and homes along this possible internal bypass route.
3. It has been repeatedly suggested by some Grand Haven officials that a bypass on 120th Avenue or at least a bridge over the Grand River on 120th Avenue should be built regardless of the information provided by the DEIS that does not support this as a total solution. These comments go on to suggest that if this "does not work within a year or so", then they would consider doing something in Grand Haven. We have heard no mention of duplication of costs if the plan does not work.

As you are well aware, there are additional problems and considerations associated with the traffic problems on US31 in Grand Haven which make this attitude unacceptable. The traffic on M104 from I-96 west through Crockery Township, Spring Lake Township, and the Village of Spring Lake is already a problem which must be addressed at some point. Without some increase in the efficient movement of traffic on US31, there are not a lot of options to address the M-104 problem.

Even a second bridge over the Grand River on 120th Avenue is likely to do little to help under these conditions. Without an infrastructure of county roads to this new bridge, it will be of no value.

Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
An "Alternative Modification" Suggestion
1/22/99

A Reconstructed Alternative

We would like to offer this as a possible "phase-in alternative". We are offering this in view of the fact that both Grand Haven and Holland have been reluctant to accept Alternative A at this time.

1. Complete the Alternative A from the north city limits of Holland to the south city limits of Grand Haven.
2. Incorporate into this modified Alternative A the controlled access boulevard as suggested in P/P1r from the expressway on the south side of Grand Haven in the area of Comstock Street, around Grand Haven, across the river (an additional bridge), and around Spring Lake, following the route drawn in your DEIS to I-96 in Crockery Township.
3. Allow Grand Haven to try those adjustments within their city that they think will work. The City of Grand Haven should agree that if their plans do not prove efficient that work would begin to complete the expressway to M-104 on the existing route. Holland should be offered a similar agreement.

Supporting Facts

1. Large retail stores, car dealerships, new housing, and industrial businesses are moving in a consistent pattern south out of Grand Haven toward Holland.
2. Spring Lake Village, Spring Lake Township, and Crockery Township residents who shop locally have and will continue to drive south through Grand Haven to shop and work.
3. A bypass around Spring Lake and Grand Haven to an area south of Robbins Road will give Grand Haven relief with through traffic to Holland and points south which originates north and east of the Grand River.
4. This will give Ottawa County the second bridge they want in a location which will much better serve the heavy population areas on both sides of the river. This is more realistic for emergency purposes.
5. This solution will address the problem of what to do with the M-104 traffic between I-96 and US31.
6. A large amount of the truck traffic on M-104 is going to shops, stores, and factories south of Grand Haven. (Our survey shows tractor trailer trucks on M-104 passing an observation point at the rate of one each minute and a half during the working day.)
7. Both Grand Haven and Holland will have the time to fully evaluate what they want for their city.
8. We believe that as the highway is built between the cities, the factories, shops, stores, and new homes will continue their steady move to the south and north. We also think that trend will put to rest the concern that local business and residential tax base will be lost to the County or the State.

Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
An "Alternative Modification" Suggestion
1/22/99

Negative Considerations

1. We are aware that any alternative must ultimately meet the criteria of the Federal Highways program. We feel that this particular highway problem may be unique enough to give justification for adjustment in the rules.
2. This highway will not connect directly to any interstate freeway at this time. It could be argued that the alignment is present for that connection at some future time if needed. (Or, possibly, consider making the Cornstock bypass and river crossing a freeway instead of a boulevard, which would achieve a connection at one end.)
3. Without being completed through the Cities of Holland and Grand Haven, this revised alternative may not meet the need for traffic relief through 2020. It would, however, provide immediate relief at two critical points - M-104 and US31 through Grand Haven.

Summary

We are presenting this in an effort to find something which is acceptable to the Cities of Grand Haven and Holland which also addresses several related needs.

We are concerned that this opportunity to solve a major traffic problem in Ottawa County may not present itself again in the near future. We would hope that some adjustment could be made that would not allow this one short section of highway through Grand Haven to scuttle the entire project.

We have also taken into consideration the recent indication that the Village of Spring Lake shows a desire for the P/P1r bypass around its Village.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,



Ray Masko
Supervisor, Robinson Township
On behalf of the Joint Township Committee Against the Bypass - Robinson, Zeeland Charter,
Olive, and Crockery Townships

cc: Ottawa County Planning Commission
Other Involved Units, Institutions, and Individuals

JOINT RESOLUTION of OLIVE, ROBINSON, & CROCKERY TOWNSHIPS

Submitted to Michigan Department of Transportation, March 25, 1997
With references to MDOT's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, November 5, 1998

1. WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality previously stated that the 120th Avenue corridor should be excluded from consideration; and
[DEIS p.9-5, statement from MDEQ.]
2. WHEREAS, freeway construction will have detrimental effect on the Pigeon River watershed and vast additional areas of wetlands; and
[DEIS p.5-65, table 5.7.3-2b, Alt F = 89.96 acres, most among 8 alternatives.]
3. WHEREAS, archeologists working for MDOT have discovered Native American burial sites within the 120th Avenue corridor north and south of the Grand River and have properly concluded that these sacred sites should not be disturbed; and
[DEIS p.5-88, MDOT shifted the alignment, but see also p.6-51 and p.5-31.]
4. WHEREAS, a freeway along the 120th Avenue corridor, like other proposed rural corridors, will take thousands of acres of farmland out of production in the #1 agricultural county in the state, to the economic detriment of family farms as well as the county and the state; and
[DEIS p.5-36, prime, unique, and locally important farmlands impacted: Alt F = 1,940 acres, Alt F/J1 = 2,040 acres; see also p.5-31, Robinson Twp would lose an additional 1,600 acres due to secondary impacts.]
5. WHEREAS, the land taken out of production along the 120th Avenue corridor, or other proposed rural corridors, will be taken off the property rolls to the further detriment of the region; and
[DEIS p.5-6 and table 5.1-4, Alt F = \$218,900; see also p.6-4, no relocation assistance for agricultural property.]
6. WHEREAS, secondary development near any freeway proposed for this or other rural corridors will cause unwanted and uncontrolled growth - urban sprawl - with increased traffic at interchanges that will require road improvements without providing the funding for such improvements; and
[DEIS p.5-21 for discussion of Ottawa County Development Plan, 1992, see figure 5.2-3.5.]
7. WHEREAS, a new freeway along the 120th corridor or any other proposed corridors, rural or urban, will create a major noise pollution problem for residents, resulting in a loss of peace and quiet; and
[DEIS pp.6-16 to 6-18, and note that noise impacts will not be abated unless townships pay, p.6-9.]
8. WHEREAS, there will be a variety of additional negative impacts of the freeway on existing land use proximate to the proposed freeway, such as dead ending roads, and denying access to part of an owner's property due to the freeway cutting through that property; and
[DEIS Appendix A, aerial photos of freeway and boulevard alternatives for dead end roads and fragmented farms.]

9. WHEREAS, a new freeway along the 120th corridor, or other proposed rural or urban corridors, will eliminate neighborhoods, split communities, and negatively impact the quality of life; and

[DEIS p.6-61 reminds us that land use planning is up to local townships.]

10. WHEREAS, federal law prohibits the construction of transportation projects that decrease air quality in areas that are technically categorized as having air quality problems having to do with moderate non-attainment for ozone; and

[DEIS p.5-39 notes that the conformity determination will be made after an alternative has been selected.]

11. WHEREAS, the proposed bypass will not alleviate traffic congestion along US-31 since the majority of the congestion is south of New Holland Street or north in Grand Haven; and

[DEIS p.3-7, "The new-alignment freeway does not decrease demand on existing US-31 enough to attain acceptable LOS (Level of Service) on existing US-31. Existing US-31 would require capacity increases in order to attain an acceptable LOS."]

12. WHEREAS, the old highway will still have to be improved if a new one is built, and both new and old roads will have to be maintained; and

[DEIS p.3-9.]

13. WHEREAS, while western Ottawa County may well be significantly and negatively impacted by the suggested US-31 improvements, a new highway will not solve growth and traffic problems but rather will be the agent for even more rapid and excessive growth in the county that will lead to far greater problems; and

14. WHEREAS, there have been no other models studied except construction of a new freeway;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT JOINTLY RESOLVED, that the Townships of Crockery, Olive and Robinson, County of Ottawa, State of Michigan are committed to a long-term solution to the transportation problems of west Michigan, specifically:

1. The 120th Avenue corridor is an unacceptable alternative and should be dropped from further consideration for the US-31 bypass. This reaffirms prior decisions and procedures of MDOT and MDEQ, the state agencies having authority in these matters.
2. The proposed new freeway will add to the economic and social problems of the Lakeshore region, rather than alleviating them, so it is not an appropriate investment for the State of Michigan in any west Michigan location.
3. Other alternatives to improving transportation in the area deserve careful consideration on the part of suitable official state agencies, beginning immediately.

The Joint Township Committee Against the Bypass
c/o Robinson Township Hall
12010 120th Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

January 6, 1999

Mr. José A. Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department Of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: FHWA-MI-EIS-98-01-D – US31 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Lopez:

As Township Administrators, we recognize the difficulty in interpreting the many emotional responses from those concerned with all the possible solutions to the US31 problem. Because the alternatives affect our county, townships, citizens, and future, we share many of those same concerns.

We have individually, within our Townships, as well as within our Joint Committee Against the Rural Bypass coalition of Townships, reviewed the DEIS in great detail. A summary of our findings and views are as follows:

1. This study **very accurately defines the existing traffic problems** as we see them at present. It also gives a complete projection of what the future could hold for this highway, based on data provided to MDOT and Greiners by the City and County Planners in Ottawa County. We find no reason to doubt those projections.
2. This study shows that the existing traffic problems must be **dealt with at their present location**. Also, that any attempt to **relocate** this traffic is **not going to be sufficient** to solve the traffic problems, now or in the future.
3. The City of Grand Haven has stated that a limited access highway will cause an excessive loss of homes, businesses, and boulevard median. However, this loss will not be any more drastic than will be required with any **sufficient improvement** to the existing route as a boulevard, as pointed out in the DEIS. The City of Grand Haven will be required to lose some land with every **viable** solution to their traffic problem.

(cont'd)

Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
DEIS Response Position and Fact Sheet
1/6/99

4. The study shows that a bypass placed in the center of Ottawa County **will change the development pattern drastically, while not necessarily changing the growth of Ottawa County.** It would likely lead to the relocation of existing families and businesses in a pattern consistent with any new roadway, further encouraging sprawl and the **loss of much more farmland** than the original right-of-way acquisition would consume.
5. The primary and secondary effects of a bypass on farmland in Ottawa County will result in a **loss that is irreplaceable.** Any loss of homes, businesses, and shops in the urbanized areas will not be permanent, as they can be relocated. The study shows sufficient land available for these relocations in the immediate area affected. However, once gone to development, farmland cannot be replaced and farms cannot relocate.
6. The total dollar return value is **considerably higher on the existing route.** The **negative impact is higher** on all factors involving a **rural bypass solution** or alternative.

While understanding the concerns of Grand Haven City Administrators in fearing any change to the esthetics of their boulevard, the fact is that this corridor through Grand Haven has been going through constant transition for at least thirty years. Homes have been removed or turned into offices, chain stores have closed or moved, and shops have relocated. Even at the present time major changes are taking place.

The disruptions caused by doing what is necessary in Grand Haven will be offset by the long-range and immediate advantages to the City.

Growth along the existing route of US31 is likely to continue in the future with or without a new highway. The problems with traffic on this route will have to be addressed in the near future.

By placing a bypass through the center of our county, we will be starting **another major line of development parallel** to the existing route. This will call for a **grid of east/west roadways**, developing a "ladder effect" of primary county roads/highways through the county to connect the two highways. Those connecting roadways will also call for improvement and upgrade, putting an **unbearable financial burden** on the residents of the rural townships.

This grid of improved east/west roads will, further, bring tremendous pressure to develop the farmlands in those areas and **lead Ottawa County to suffer the sprawl** that other areas of the state have experienced, as demonstrated in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties.

As Township Administrators in Ottawa County, we have, along with County Planners, given considerable thought and effort to planning for our future. We have given a priority to preserving those irreplaceable resources that are vital to our future prosperity, as documented in the 1992 Ottawa County Development Plan as well as in several Township Master Plans.

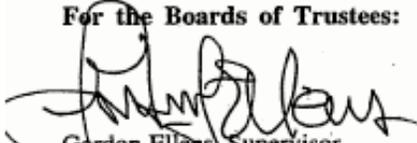
We request that the Michigan Department of Transportation take into consideration this statement, as well as the attached data sheets which are comments on excerpts directly from the DEIS. We realize that members of your staff are also evaluating the information in the DEIS, but perhaps our list of reference materials will make a contribution to the effort.

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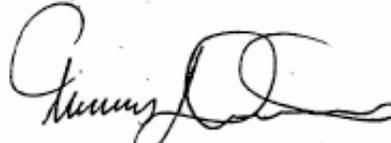
Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
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In light of all the information we've gotten from the DEIS, as a Joint Committee, and as individual Townships, we support Alternative A, the freeway on the existing route, as the only solution for the traffic congestion on US31. Please feel free to contact any of us should you have questions.

For the Boards of Trustees:



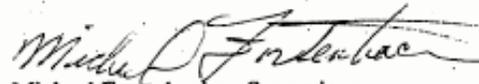
Gordon Ellens, Supervisor,
Zeeland Charter Township
6582 Byron Road
Zeeland, MI 49464
(616) 772-6701



Tim Dykstra, Supervisor,
Olive Township
6480 136th Avenue
Holland, MI 49424
(616) 786-9996



Ray Masko, Supervisor,
Robinson Township
12010 120th Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
(616) 846-2210



Michael Fortenbacher, Supervisor,
Crockery Township
17431 112th Avenue
Nunica, MI 49448
(616) 837-6868

cc: Ottawa County Planning Commission
Ottawa County Commission Land Use Committee
Other Involved Units, Institutions, and Individuals

Following: DEIS Facts (2 pgs.)

Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
DEIS Response Position and Fact Sheet
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1. Grand Haven has a traffic problem on US 31 at the present time that must be addressed. (DEIS page 2-5)
2. That traffic problem will remain and continue to increase in the future unless action is taken. (DEIS page 2-14)
3. **No local or regional bypass is going to give sufficient relief to the traffic problem on US31 at the Grand River without an increase in the capacity or a decrease in the demand on the existing US 31.** (DEIS page 3-7) [A look at the traffic projections will tell you that a bypass solution is not the most effective way to decrease demand on the US 31 route.]
4. **Beacon Blvd. is going to be changed no matter which alternative is selected. If the Comstock Bypass (boulevard bypass) is selected, Beacon is slated to become a 6-lane boulevard (DEIS 3-22). If Alternative F (one Central Bypass option) is selected, Beacon is slated to become an 8-lane boulevard (DEIS figure 3.3-5b)**
5. The total number of bridge malfunctions from 1988 through May 15, 1997 was ten. One failure resulted in 18 hours, 15 minutes of down time for the bridge. This does not list those incidents which stopped traffic due to accidents on or near the bridge resulting from **bridge openings.** (DEIS page 2-14) [The problem is not just malfunctions. Any mechanical bridge is subject to high maintenance needs and failures, and contributes to traffic congestion.]
6. All 2020 alternatives except the No Action Alternative **would take approximately the same amount of land through Grand Haven** to increase traffic volume. (Appendix A – Plans of Practical Alternatives)
7. The **rate of return on dollars invested** varies widely: for example, Alternative A (limited-access highway on the existing route) returns \$2.78 for every dollar spent; Alternative F (one central bypass limited-access option), returns \$0.98; and Alternative P (boulevard option on existing route), returns \$0.42. (DEIS page 5-106) [Note: any return of less than \$1.00 means the construction costs on the option exceed the benefit provided.]
8. A central bypass would be directly contrary to the **1992 Ottawa County Development Plan** adopted by the County Planning Commission on December 22, 1992. This Plan relegates Agricultural and Rural Preservation Land to their defined "Tier B". One of the stated goals of this Plan is "to maintain the rural character of Tiers A and B". (DEIS page 5-20 and 21, and Figure 5.2-2)
9. Ottawa County is the **leading county** in Michigan in the market value of agricultural products sold (DEIS 4-4).

(cont'd)

Joint Township Committee Against a Rural Bypass
DEIS Response Position and Fact Sheet
1/6/99

1. Relating to "Community Cohesion": the F and F/J1 (rural freeways) would divide the communities of Zeeland, Olive, and Robinson Townships due to closure of roads in the local road system, causing longer travel distance for accessing community facilities, for farmers traveling to separated fields, and for police, fire, and EMT services. Alternatives F and F/J1 would also have adverse impacts within Grand Haven, since the rural freeway alternatives would still result in either a 6-lane or an 8-lane boulevard in Grand Haven. (DEIS 5-2 and 5-3)
2. Alternatives F, F/J1, and J1 have high numbers of major agricultural displacements. Major agricultural displacements are properties in which the homestead or over 50% of the property is acquired. The majority of these displacements are cropland concentrated along the proposed freeway at 120th Avenue. (DEIS 5-17)
3. Alternatives J1, F/J1, and F have the most major industrial displacements. Major industrial displacement are properties where the main building or over 50% of the property is acquired. (DEIS 5-17)
4. Some shift in land use and development patterns would be expected to occur within Ottawa County with any of the build alternatives, and especially with alternatives utilizing a bypass. Secondary and cumulative impacts projected through 2020 on land use is greatest on all alternatives that involve a new alignment freeway [rural bypass]. (DEIS 5-26 and 5-27)
5. J1, F/J1, and F conflict the most with the Ottawa County Development Plan as outlined based on Policy Tiers, developed in December of 1992. Alternatives A, P, and P1r are the most compatible with these policies. One of the stated goals of this plan is to maintain the rural character of Tiers A and B and preserve farmland. (DEIS 5-20 and 5-21)
6. Alternative J1 would not contain urban sprawl to the south and west of the freeway in the Holland and Zeeland area, as was hypothesized during the public involvement process. (DEIS 5-30)
7. The bypass portions of Alternatives F, F1/F3, F/J1, and J1 would have the most direct impact on farmlands. (DEIS 5-34)
8. Indirect Impacts: "... design of alternative alignments (bypasses), interchanges, and cul-de-sacs of local roads has focused on minimizing the land-locking of farm parcels, parcel fragmentation, i.e., leaving uneconomical remainders, and adverse travel distances due to access changes" ... especially along alternatives F, F/J1, and the bypass portions of F1/F3 and J1. (DEIS 5-34)

Joint Resolutions of Olive, Robinson, Zeeland and Crockery Townships, January 6 & 22, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of letters and resolutions in support of Alternative A. This alternative was not selected for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**. Since the release of the DEIS, MDOT has met with representatives of these townships on the following occasions in order to involve them with the planning process:

- September 8, 1999
- February 25, 2000
- May 3, 2000
- August 21, 2000
- October 16, 2000
- October 18, 2000
- October 24, 2000
- December 12, 2000
- January 5, 2001
- August 23, 2005
- September 1, 2005
- September 13, 2005
- September 16, 2005 – City of Ferrysburg
- September 16, 2005 – Spring Lake Township
- September 16, 2005 – Spring Lake Village
- September 21, 2005 – WestPlan (Muskegon) MPO Technical and Policy Committees
- September 28, 2005 – Ottawa County Road Commission
- September 28, 2005 – City of Wyoming Water Service District
- September 29, 2005 – Grand Haven Township
- October 1, 2005 – City of Grand Rapids Water Service District
- August 23, 2006 - Ottawa County Board and staff and State Legislators, with MDOT Director and staff
- March, 2006 - Ottawa County Planning Department
- October 1, 2006 – North-Bank (Grand River) Committee
- February, 2007 – Ottawa County Planning
- April 18, 2007 - Ottawa County Planning, Board members and property owners
- May 22, 2007 – Ottawa County Non-Motorized Trail group
- September 5, 2007 – Ottawa County Road Commission and Planning Department staff

(Several additional MPO, local community and property owner meetings we also held in 2006 and 2007, others are planned later this year, related to the project.)

There are many points made in these resolutions. The following is a summary of their concerns and the response to the concern.

The townships were concerned that City of Grand Haven officials had not determined how they wanted to address traffic issues on US-31 through the City.

1. Since the DEIS was released, MDOT has worked closely with City of Grand Haven officials to develop a solution with improvements along US-31 through the City. The results of these meetings and the resulting agreements are contained at the end of this chapter in the following two letters:
 - MDOT letter from the City of Grand Haven dated October 25, 2001.
 - City of Grand Haven letter to MDOT dated November 19, 2001.

Subsequent meetings further refined the issues and led to the conclusion of improvements on existing US-31 that are part of the Preferred Alternative. The townships were concerned that a second Grand River crossing at 120th without infrastructure of county roads would do little to alleviate traffic issues.

The following improvements were included in the Preferred Alternative to address the township's concerns:

- The construction of a new 2-lane bridge over the Grand River near 120th Avenue.
- The construction of a two-lane roadway connecting the bridge over the Grand River to M-45 and M-104.
- Improvements to M-104 include a five-lane reconstruction on existing M-104 between 124th Avenue and I-96 in Crockery Township.
- New ramps at 112th/I-96 to complete the existing partial interchange.

The townships cite the 1992 Ottawa County Development Plan which has a stated goal "to maintain the rural character" of portions of Ottawa County.

2. Since the DEIS was released, the Ottawa County Planning and Grants Department issued a report titled "US-31 Staff Position Paper" dated January 22, 1999. The report concludes "By carefully analyzing each of the Alternatives by category, it is clear that the best choice to alleviate traffic and safety problems is Alternative F/J1." In addition, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners approved a motion "To approve the US-31 Staff Position Paper and its recommendation for a F/J1 alignment and forward a copy of this resolution to the Michigan Department of Transportation" on January 27, 1999. The current PA includes critical segments of F/J-1.

The townships were concerned with dividing the townships due to the closure of roads in the local road system.

3. MDOT has worked with the townships since the release of the DEIS to minimize this to the greatest extent possible. The proposal alignment, which is a new route (M-231) has intersections with all the cross streets along the new alignment except for North Cedar Drive and Leonard Street where bridges will be constructed and Johnson Street which will be reconstructed as a cul de sac.

The townships were concerned with the number of direct impacts to farmland and the amount of urban sprawl that may result from a rural bypass. Since the DEIS was released, the amount of direct impacts to farmland is 115.8 acres.

4. MDOT commissioned MSU to perform a land use study to address these concerns. The US-31 Land Use Study is included under a separate cover. The US-31 Land Use Study

conducted by MSU concluded that the conversion of land from open/agricultural to built areas has in the past without M-231 and will continue to occur in Ottawa County due to the economic climate of the area and access to Grand Rapids. The proposed road location has little effect on the location of potential new built areas.

The construction of the Preferred Alternative's new alignment will require 53 full parcel acquisitions and 25 partial parcel acquisitions. The design of the Preferred Alternative has focused on minimizing the landlocking and fragmentation of parcels to the greatest extent possible.



A Recognized Bicentennial Community

Mr. Mike Jaeger, Project Engineer
URS Greiner, Inc.
3950 Sparks Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

November 27, 2000

Dear Mr. Jaeger,

On behalf of the Crockery Township Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission and myself, I would like to thank you for appearing, along with MDOT officials, to further explain the proposed F/J1 Bypass alignment in Crockery Township.

For your files we are submitting a list of our objections that continue to stand following that meeting. We are particularly concerned with the designed interchange for I-96, M-104 and the proposed bypass. The statement from one MDOT official that it “meets minimum standards” would give it an even higher rating than we would have judged. Factor in a realistic evaluation of the existing traffic conditions and problems and it would be further lowered in its standards of an acceptable design. We believe an interchange of this importance should start off by meeting the maximum standards as time and traffic growth will continue to reduce its effectiveness.

As we acknowledged in this meeting, you and your company are limited by the amount of usable space in which to place this interchange. We, as Township officials, would be remiss in allowing this to proceed without objecting on behalf of those citizens whose lives and safety will be endangered.

CROCKERY TOWNSHIP’S ORIGINAL OBJECTIONS TO THE BYPASS

1. It will not fulfill the purpose and need of the project.
2. It will destroy too much farmland, damage the environment, and encourage sprawl.
3. It will greatly increase traffic on M-104 through Crockery Township, Spring Lake Township, and the Village of Spring Lake. This roadway is already identified as the second most highly traveled roadway within the study area for traffic accidents behind US-31, which is number one.

CROCKERY TOWNSHIP’S OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW ALIGNMENT MAP

1. It will not fulfill the purpose and need of the project.
2. It will destroy too much farmland, damage the environment, and encourage sprawl.

1a
1b

Objections-New Alignment-continued

- | | |
|---|----|
| 3. The new alignment disrupts one of the last undisturbed marshlands in West Michigan. Any structure of this type will do major and permanent damage to this environmentally sensitive area. | 1c |
| 4. The proposed bypass will increase traffic on the M-104, I-96, and the proposed US-31 bypass has a number of design features that are unacceptable for Crockery Township, for safety reasons. We question whether the design features are taking into account the present traffic volume, along with the history of fatal and personal injury accidents at this location. This design not only does not address those conditions, but proposes to add additional traffic, entrance ramps and cross-over turns with some additional visual obstructions. | 1d |

CROCKERY TOWNSHIP'S SAFETY CONCERNS FOR THE NEW PROPOSED US-31 BYPASS.

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. The entrance ramp from northbound US-31 bypass for west bound M-104 is too close to the exiting ramp of I-96 onto westbound M-104. We continue to have accidents related to high speed traffic coming off this ramp onto M-104. | 2a |
| 2. Additional problems arise when other traffic from the eastbound lanes of I-96 exit onto westbound M-104 must also enter this high speed lane within a short distance. | 2b |
| 3. While the merge problem would normally be solved with the M-104 and the westbound I-96 ramp onto M-104 by providing two lanes, the placing of two or more entrance ramps onto this same lane in the very short distance will ultimately result in rapid land changing thereby giving us the same problem with even more traffic. | 2c |
| 4. It appears that some obstruction of view will occur by bridge abutments where the eastbound I-96 ramp onto westbound M-104 takes place into this same high speed land. | 2d |
| 5. The northbound interchange of 120 th Ave. is also too close to these same entrance ramps, particularly in view of the fact that two businesses have a continuous flow of double bottom semi trucks involved in the business. | 2e |
| 6. These same double bottom, gravel hauling, semi trucks would be required to make a "Michigan turn" or U-turn between the two bridges and cross two lanes of traffic to go to and from their terminal. | 2f |
| 7. Any traffic using this cross over to go north on 120 th Ave. in an improper manner would leave drivers on westbound M-104 with no chance to take evasive action due to the bridge abutments. | 2g |
| 8. Traffic leaving the Nunica Cemetery and desiring to go east would have to go west and make a U-turn someplace beyond the boulevard area. This would also apply to two homes and five businesses on the north side of M-104. | 2h |

Safety Concerns-continued

- 9. We consider the exit ramp from northbound US-31 bypass onto M-104 to be of an unsafe design for this particular area due to the continued "lake effect" snow that continues during the winter months. "Whiteouts" and icy bridges are a common condition. This design requires braking for a 200 degree ramp that has a steep decline while on the bridge overpass of M-104 and we feel this will lead to many accidents.
- 10. We also question the location of the "Park & Ride" because it requires cross traffic at poor locations. It will also be used most often when M-104 is at its peak traffic hours.
- 11. For reasons we do not understand, the section of I-96 from the entrance ramp of east bound M-104, to approximately the Crockery Creek bridge, has an unduly large number of accidents during the winter months. Most are loss of control with many roll over accidents. While this is not of your making, it is a fact that can be substantiated and should be factored into your construction safety design. We question the use of a cross over design for this location with "on traffic" being required to cross through "off traffic". While this over on/off ramp is used a lot in your designs in Michigan, most drivers consider them a poor design.

2i

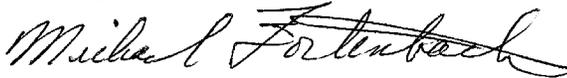
2j

2k

Crockery Township has and will continue to oppose this proposed bypass for the previously listed reasons. Our overall view continues to be that this is not an area suited with enough land to be able to place this number of ramps and other traffic configurations with sufficient distance for a reasonable factor of safety in a new highway interchange. On behalf of our residents we will work with you to provide whatever assistance possible to assure that any bypass that is built would provide the best design possible for our needs and safety.

Please feel free to call upon myself or any Crockery Township Board Member at any time.

Sincerely,



Michael Fortenbacher, Supervisor
Crockery Township

Crockery Township, November 27, 2000

1. Crockery Township's Objections to the New Alignment Map
 - a. The Preferred Alternative modified from F/J1 meets the Purpose and Need of the project, in that it reduces traffic congestion and the safety issues associated with congestion along US-31, and improves access within the study area.
 - b. The Preferred Alternative has been modified and will minimize impacts to farmland and the environment. M-231 will be limited access, with controlled access at the intersection which means that driveways and new cross streets will not be allowed on it. This will minimize opportunities for new development (sprawl) along M-231.
 - c. Impacts to wetlands have been minimized as part of the FEIS, and are now less than three acres.
 - d. The proposed M-231 is projected to lead to an increase in traffic on I-96, and a small decrease on M-104. See reply two for the design feature discussion.

2. Crockery Township's Safety Concerns for the New Proposed US-31 Bypass – the proposed I-96/M-231/M-104 interchange has been revised since the DEIS, and many of the Township's concerns have been addressed:
 - a. The interchange proposed at the DEIS did not include a northbound bypass to westbound M-104 movement. This interchange has been revised in the Preferred Alternative to a signalized intersection.
 - b. The existing eastbound I-96 off ramp to Cleveland Road will be eliminated and replaced with a new off ramp to M-231.
 - c. A merge lane was constructed after the DEIS for the westbound I-96 to westbound M-104 movement. Additional lanes on M-104 west to 124th Avenue as part of the Preferred Alternative.
 - d. The proposed M-231 will not bridge over M-104. Instead, the eastbound off ramp will terminate on M-231 and then lead to a signalized intersection at M-104.
 - e. The north leg of 120th Avenue will not be relocated. It will be improved and included in the new M-231 connection to I-96.
 - f. M-104 will be widened to a five-lane road rather than a boulevard. There will not be any U-turn movements needed.
 - g. See previous reply.
 - h. See previous reply.
 - i. This ramp is not a part of the Preferred Alternative. See reply 2a.
 - j. The park & ride lot will remain in its existing location.
 - k. As part of the Preferred Alternative, the eastbound I-96 left off ramp will be eliminated and replaced with two new right off ramps – one to the new M-231, and one to 112th Avenue, which is currently a partial interchange. The westbound Cleveland Road to westbound I-96 ramp will also be eliminated and replaced with two new ramps – one from the new M-231, and one from 112th Avenue.

FRUITLAND TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION 99-1

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has recently completed a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US-31 in Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties to determine the preferred alternative(s) for addressing traffic congestion on US-31; and

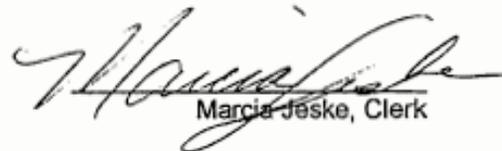
WHEREAS, US-31 is a vital transportation corridor for Muskegon County; serves a significant number of commercial and industrial enterprises in the County; and will continue to be an important north-south corridor in the economic development of the West Michigan Region; and

WHEREAS, the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee is summarized in the enclosed position paper, which was unanimously adopted by the committee on November 16, 1998.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

That the Township of Fruitland hereby endorses the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee, and requests the Michigan Department of Transportation enter the resolution into the record of public comments.

Moved by Jeske, supported by Broner, and thereafter acted upon by the Fruitland Township Board at a Regular Meeting held on January 12, 1999.
5 yeas, 0 nays, 0 absent


Marcia Jeske, Clerk

Fruitland Township, January 12, 1999, Resolution

Acknowledge receipt of resolution supporting the position of the Muskegon County Blue Ribbon Committee, which supports Alternative A and opposes bypass alternatives. This alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**. In addition, please refer to responses provided for the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.

Fruitport Charter Township
6543 Airline Road
Fruitport, Michigan 49415

Office of the Supervisor
Ron Cooper

Telephone (616) 865-3151
Fax (616) 865-3118

January 25, 1999

Mr. Jose A Lopez, Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Regarding US31 improvements

Dear Mr. Lopez:

Bringing US31 into our township via 120th Ave. will not only create problems for the residents along that road in Ottawa County, but will create problems for us also.

We are trying to contain urban spread along the present US31. By changing US31's course it will make it difficult for the developers along the current US31 to realize the necessary return on their investment. It will encourage development along its route on I96 in areas that contradict the desires of the people living in that area and the township in general.

It will necessitate an interchange at Sternberg and raise more havoc and our quality of life for the residents in that area as those people find businesses being built next to them and around the interchange. If you keep US31 where it is, only a off and on from the east will be needed on Sternberg Road.

The exit ramp of I96 merging onto US31 north already is becoming a problem and won't be able to handle the added flow from a rerouted US31.

I believe you should keep US31 through Grand Haven on its current road bed. I believe you should take a good look at making it an elevated road bed as it comes in to Grand Haven for through traffic and put in ramps for local traffic. When the road gets close to the current bridge on the Grand River then run the elevated road just to the west. The old bridge can continue to be used for local traffic. When the current US31 was built it was planned to go around Grand Haven. The Grand Haven residents argued to have it go through Grand Haven. They have their

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road where they wanted it. Now it needs to have added capacity and they need to accept it as the consequence of their previous desires.

As the Fruitport Township Supervisor I strongly recommend keeping US31 on its present right-a-way.

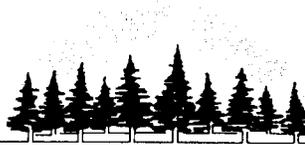
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Cooper". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "R" and a cursive "C".

Ron Cooper
Fruitport Charter Township, Supervisor

Fruitport Charter Township, January 25, 1999

2. Acknowledged receipt of comments and concerns, and support for improving US-31 (Alternative A) over creating a bypass. This alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**.
3. Refer to **Section 4.1** for a discussion of the land use impacts.



GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

13300 168TH AVE. • GRAND HAVEN, MICH. 49417 • 616/842-5988
Fax No. 616/842-9419

February 2, 2001

Greiner Engineering, Inc.
Mr. Mike Yeager, Project Planner
3950 Sparks Drive, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Re: US-31 Study; Beacon Boulevard and Six Lanes

Dear Mike:

Because of certain proposals that have been discussed to eliminate or postpone the need for widening Beacon Boulevard and US-31 within the township (e.g., constructing a bridge at the Comstock Street location or using 168th Avenue as a major traffic route), the township finds it necessary to become more involved in the US-31 Study process.

To make sure there are no misunderstandings, the township remains opposed to the construction of a bridge at Comstock Street as any part of the solution to the traffic issues associated with US-31. As you are aware, over 400 letters were forwarded to the US-31 Study Process in opposition to the use of Comstock Street as part of the solution. Moreover, a new subdivision has since been platted along the necessary route of any Comstock Street bridge proposal.

In addition, although the problems associated with the idea to use 168th Avenue as a north route to delay or eliminate the need of six lanes along US-31 and Beacon Boulevard seem obvious and numerous, I believe it is necessary to state opposition to this proposal. Specifically, the following problems and issues exist with this newly proposed north route:

- ✓ 168th Avenue is inappropriate for a north route since the city's Master Airpark Plan calls for 168th Avenue to be closed between Hayes Street and Comstock Street when the east/west runway is expanded.
- ✓ The proposal would bring a major thoroughfare into existing residential neighborhoods.
- ✓ The proposal would require major realignments within the city to avoid 90 degree turns when the route moved from 168th/Beechtree to Fulton Street and from Fulton Street to Beacon Boulevard.
- ✓ This proposal might also have a major impact on the current land use resulting in pressures to amend the township's and city's Master Plan.

Other problems might also exist which I have not yet considered.

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As a result of the aforementioned proposals, the Grand Haven Charter Township Board may determine it is appropriate to adopt a resolution supporting MDOT's proposal to widen US-31 and Beacon Boulevard. However, before this type of resolution can be considered, I would request the following information:

- ✓ The new traffic counts and projections that are being completed by your firm.
- ✓ The projected LOS at the following intersection both with and without the six-lane widening of Beacon Boulevard and US-31:
 - ▶ Ferris Street
 - ▶ Hayes Street
 - ▶ Comstock Street
 - ▶ Robbins Road
 - ▶ Taylor Avenue
 - ▶ Grant Street
 - ▶ Washington Street
 - ▶ Fulton Street, and
 - ▶ Jackson Street
- ✓ A brief statement on the required takings within the City of Grand Haven with a emphasis on whether any of these takings are the result of self-induced hardships resulting from Zoning Ordinance language rather than practical difficulties for the property or business owner.
- ✓ A brief statement on whether you believe that Ottawa County should create a regional traffic model for the county to assist in finding local solutions to some of these traffic issues not directly related to US-31.

I suspect that the Township Board may request a presentation from you after we have received and reviewed the aforementioned information. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at your convenience.

Warm Personal Regards,



WILLIAM D. CARGO

Township Superintendent/Manager

c: Correspondence File

Grand Haven Charter Township, February 2, 2001

1. The Preferred Alternative does not include a new route along 168th Avenue.

Mr. Mike Jaeger
URS Greiner Woodward Clyde
3950 Sparks Drive, SE
Grand Rapids, Mi. 49546

December 12, 1998

Dear Mr. Jaeger:

The Holland Charter Township Planning Commission would like to go on the record in the interest of the location of US-31.

We feel that there are very compelling reasons for leaving it in its' current location, with some upgrades. Either a freeway as proposed in Alternate "A", or some other design that would limit the number of access points, would be acceptable to us.

We have just completed an upgrade of the Holland Charter Township Master Plan and feel that any change in location of US-31 would do more economic harm than good to the entire area. Some of the detrimental effects we see are:

1. Good agricultural land taken for roadway, plus the excess pieces of property that will not be needed for the roadway will become waste land as it is no longer accessible for farming.
2. The amount of traffic diverted by a bypass will not be sufficient enough to have any major impact on the existing US-31 traffic.
3. If we build anything else, we will have another roadway to perform maintenance on and the added expense in the years to come. We don't keep the current roads in adequate repair so this will cause even more problems.
4. Environmental impact - this approach will have very little to worry about as you will not encroach into any new areas.
5. Your economic impact statements and cost analysis do not and cannot consider all the loss of business losses and closing that may occur if we divert traffic to other areas.
6. New roads will give added interchanges in other areas of the county. This will create pressure on those areas to develop into commercial and industrial zones, once again taking away good farmland and adding cost to the local governments budgets.
7. US-31 will have to be upgraded no matter what proposal is eventually adopted. Why not choose this alternative and have savings of millions of dollars as well.

These are just a few of the reasons that the Holland Charter Township Planning Commission has instructed me to write to you, stating our opposition to any plan that would move US-31 from its' current route.

Sincerely,



Mr. Marion Hoeve, Chairman
Holland Charter Township Planning Commission

Holland Charter Township, December 12, 1998

The Preferred Alternative only includes improvements along existing US-31 in Holland Township. It does not include any work on a new alignment in Holland Township.



CHARTER

Resolution No. 99-

TOWNSHIP OF MUSKEGON

1990 APPLE AVENUE
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN 49442-4247

Phone: (616) 777-2555
Fax: (616) 777-4912

RESOLUTION
IN SUPPORT OF US-31 POSITION
OF
MUSKEGON COUNTY US-31 BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has recently completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for US-31 in Allegan, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties to determine the preferred alternative(s) for addressing traffic congestion on US-31;

WHEREAS, US-31 is a vital transportation corridor for Muskegon County, serves a significant number of commercial and industrial enterprises in the county, and will continue to be an important north-south corridor in the economic development of the West Michigan Region;

WHEREAS, community leaders in Muskegon County representing business, industry, tourism, government, financial institutions, and other interests have organized under the umbrella of a Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee to review the Environmental Impact Study and formulate a Muskegon County position regarding the alternatives under consideration;

WHEREAS, the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee is summarized in the enclosed position paper, which was unanimously adopted by the committee on November 16, 1998;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Charter Township of Muskegon hereby endorses the position of the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee, and requests the Michigan Department of Transportation enter this Resolution into the record of public comments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to the Bureau of Transportation Planning Michigan Department of Transportation.

A motion was made by Bartos, seconded by Patton to adopt the foregoing Resolution.

AYES: Aley, Bartos, Patton, Chaney, Ream, Rusch, and Timmer.

NAYS: None.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.



Darryl Bartos
Muskegon Charter Township Clerk
Date January 19, 1999

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Board of the Charter Township of Muskegon, County of Muskegon, State of Michigan, at a regular meeting held on January 18, 1999, and that public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to Act No. 261, Public Acts of Michigan, 1968.



Darryl Bartos
Muskegon Charter Township Clerk
Date January 18, 1999

dc-us31resolution.wpd
01/14/99

**MUSKEGON AREA RESPONSE
TO THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)
FOR US-31 IN ALLEGAN, OTTAWA,
AND MUSKEGON COUNTIES**

Prepared for
**Muskegon Area Community Leaders meeting as the
Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee**

by the
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

December 1998

Muskegon Township, January 18, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of resolution of support for the Muskegon County US-31 Blue Ribbon Committee's recommendation, Alternative A, and opposition to bypass alternatives. The Committee's recommendation is presented in a report titled "Muskegon Area Response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for US-31". Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**. The current PA is included in the approved Muskegon Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.

TOWNSHIP OF OLIVE

TOWN 6 NORTH - RANGE 13 WEST

OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

January 26, 1995

Grainger, Inc.
1950 Sparks Dr., SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Dear Griener Associates,

Like everyone in the US 31 By-Pass proposed route, we, the Olive Township Board of Trustees have a concern and wish to voice our opinion in regards to the US 31 By-Pass impacting Olive Township.

At our last meeting we reviewed the drawings, studied the layout of the land and considered comments from our residents. In conclusion we would like to recommend this proposal to you:

"We recommend that the US 31 By-Pass start angling off just north of Stanton Street, and tie up with the proposed alternative F route and follow through with it over the Grand River with a much needed bridge at that point."
(A map is enclosed and is marked out).

This alternative route would eliminate eight issues of concern for you, as well as, for our township.

It will:

- 1) Eliminate the impact of crossing the Pigeon River and disrupting a one mile stretch of wetlands along 116th Avenue.
- 2) Eliminate the cost of going through the wetlands and possibly replacing them, and the cost of building and maintaining another bridge over the Pigeon River.
- 3) Eliminate the impact on 35 households and the cost of purchasing these homes, as well as, the land involved along the route.
- 4) Eliminate the impact of disrupting farms that are presently being farmed.
- 5) Eliminate the impact of having two highways running parallel to each other and having a four mile length of land disrupted between the two.
- 6) Eliminate the fact that a highway will split our township, allowing for only 3 open roads to cross from one side of the township to the other for Emergency and Fire Protection.
- 7) Eliminate the cost of maintaining two highways. By using the existing road bed for an additional four miles a great savings is seen.
- 8) Eliminate the fact that our Master Plan for Industry along the existing US 31 will not be disrupted and water and sewer for additional industry will be put on hold.

Lastly, we would like to add that we are a small rural community with four churches and two private schools at each end of the township. We are proud of our heritage and are very family oriented. We would like to see our township remain as a whole, with unity and opportunity for everyone. With the plan as you have proposed going right through our township, it would split that community right in half.

Thank you for listening and if you have any comments or questions please feel free to give us a call.

We are looking forward to meeting with you and discussing these proposals.

Sincerely,

The Olive Township Board
Beverly Jaarsma, Clerk
875-8900 or 875-8491

Olive Township, January 26, 1995

Acknowledged receipt of letter suggesting a modified Alternative F1/F3. Alternative F1/F3 was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for reasons documented in **Chapter 3**. Subsequent letters from the Joint Township Committee against a Rural Bypass have also been addressed in this chapter. As the Preferred Alternative does not include the segment J1 that traverses Olive Township, there are no wetland, agricultural or residential land impacts in the township. As per the response to the Joint Township Committee against a Rural Bypass letters, Olive Township has since changed its position and currently supports the preferred alternative.



Olive Township

6480 - 136th Ave.
Holland, MI 49424

Phone (616) 786-9996
FAX (616) 786-3133

October 20, 2000

Department of Transportation
Jeffrey R. Saxby
425 West Ottawa
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. Saxby,

The Olive Township Board of Trustees met in Regular Session Thursday, October 19th at 7:00 p.m.

At that meeting your letter dated September 27, 2000, requesting a response to the question of Tim Dykstra's ability to duly represent both his Supervisor position and the Executive Director for the Coalition for Sensible Transportation was presented and read. A time for discussion between Board members, as well as, some input from residents in attendance took place.

Following the discussion it was decided by the Board that Tim Dykstra, as Olive Township Supervisor and Executive Director for the Coalition for Sensible Transportation could in fact represent both positions, due to the fact that the Mission Statement of the Coalition is as follows:

"The Coalition for Sensible Transportation Solutions is an alliance of local governments working together with farm, environmental, business, and civic organizations to protect agricultural land, open space, fishery and wildlife habitat, and the environment. The Coalition will achieve its goals by developing a credible, reasoned, and consensus-based alternative to the proposed US-31 bypass in Ottawa County, and by establishing a highly visible and influential public education and communications program to build public support for that alternative."

The Coalition is not saying:

"No by-pass", they are saying "a Sensible Solution".

Thank you for your concern in this matter, and I hope that this letter will clear up any misgivings you may have had.

Also, a letter will be forthcoming listing our recent requests that were discussed at the October 16th meeting and a few new issues we have thought of since then.

Sincerely,


Beverly Jaarsma, Clerk

Olive Township, October 20, 2000

Letter acknowledged. No comment needed.



Olive Township

6480 - 136th Ave.
Holland, MI 49424

Phone (616) 786-9996
FAX (616) 786-3133

E-Mail: Olivetownship@wmol.com

October 27, 2000

Mr. Jeffery R. Saxby
Michigan Dept. of Transportation
Transportation Building
425 West Ottawa P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Saxby,

Thank you for your visit on October 16, 2000 to review the recent changes to the US-31 F/J1 proposal. We also appreciate the engineers from URS Greiner attending so that they could hear our concerns first hand.

As a re-cap, we would like to reiterate the issues discussed at that meeting.

1. We appreciate the tightening of interchanges at Port Sheldon and 96th Ave.
2. The interchange at the north/south and east/west, at approximately 120th Ave and Van Buren, remains excessive. Suggest tightening the interchange a bit and moved east so that 120th Ave is not impacted. 120th Ave. must remain a straight road. This could also help in saving some of the land on the farms impacted by this interchange.
3. We would like an explanation on why the north/south portion was moved west from its prior location, particularly south of Polk Street.
4. There is a development in process along 116th Ave. between Tayler and Polk on the parcel with the pond. This development will have a 20-acre lake and a number of homes.
5. The Pigeon River is being bridged. We would like additional studies on impacts if the bridge were higher to provide an overpass at Stanton Street.
6. A number of P.A. 116 properties are being effected either directly or as wetland reconstruction. Please advise us as to which P.A. 116 properties are affected and where all wetlands will be mitigated.
7. How will capital gains taxes effect those who owned properties for a number of generations? Will this tax liability be avoided or covered by the State? This was not answered from our last correspondence.
8. We've heard that there could be an interchange built at Fillmore Street. We must know if this will be the case.
9. The historic Ottawa Station area is being impacted at Stanton Street. This must be included in the EIS. A question of impact was asked in our letter dated January 5, 2000. We are still waiting for a response.
10. In discussion about development pressures, especially from the south, we asked that the east/west portion be moved to within ¼ mile of New Holland Street. URS Greiner engineers, at that meeting, agreed this would be an effective way to control development pressure. We realize the interchange at the current US-31 will be a challenge, but believe that, with all the expertise at URS Greiner and M-DOT, this can be overcome. This revision is necessary.

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Please respond to these issues soon. We are currently in the process of updating our Master Plan. These issues will cause a major impact on our planning process and the ordinances necessary to be effective as a township.

In closing, we wish to reiterate our continued displeasure and opposition to the F/J1 proposal. It is important, however, to continue to work with M-DOT so as to limit the negative impacts our community will experience in the unlikely event it is built.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. I will be happy to discuss these issues further with you.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Dykstra, Supervisor

Olive Township, October 27, 2000

1. The current PA does not include any work in Olive Township.

January 7, 1999

To: Jose A. Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
M.D.O.T. Bureau of Transportation Planning
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Mi. 48709

From: The Robinson Township Planning Commission

Subject: Position Statement Regarding the Proposed Improvement/Relocation of US-31.

After careful evaluation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, M.D.O.T. literature, Greiner Engineering publications, and other considerations, the Robinson Township Planning Commission endorses those Alternatives which utilize the existing US-31 location and opposes all alternatives that involve the creation of a rural bypass or the improvement of 120th Ave. The following are offered in support of this position.

1. Traffic study data indicates that more than 80% of the subject traffic is local traffic between Holland and Muskegon. A rural bypass represents an indirect route and will not significantly reduce the traffic volume and congestion on the existing US-31. Only increasing the capacity of the existing US-31 in its present location will help.
2. It is recognized that Grand Haven has a traffic problem and that the problem has been amplified through Grand Haven's commercial development along Beacon Boulevard, promotion of industrial development, and by extensively promoting tourism. The existing US-31 route through Grand Haven needs to be improved to reduce the congestion caused by Beacon Boulevard and the bridge over the Grand River.
3. If any option, other than the "No Action Alternative" is selected, land will be lost in Grand Haven to improving Beacon Boulevard anyway.
4. The Robinson Township Planning Commission has been actively trying to preserve farmland and open spaces. All rural bypass options will be in direct opposition to the Robinson Township Master Land Use Plan, The Robinson Township Zoning Ordinance, and the Ottawa County Development Plan. Ottawa County is the number one county in the State in agricultural production. Robinson Township and Ottawa County residents are and all Michigan residents should be proud of and preserve this distinction instead of considering traffic alternatives that would negatively impact upon this resource.

5. The United States Department of Agriculture supports Alternative A and opposes any alternatives utilizing a rural bypass.
6. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, all Alternatives except "No Action" will involve approximately the same amount of land conversion in Grand Haven for road improvement. Any rural bypass however, will negatively impact wetlands, wildlife, and the preservation of farmland and rural land.
7. The Robinson Township Planning Commission conducted a Land Use Survey of all property owners in Robinson Township. In response to a direct question, the majority of responses were in opposition to a rural bypass.
8. The most cost effective Alternatives involve the improving the existing US-31 in it's present location. M.D.O.T., as stewards of taxpayer dollars, should select cost effective alternatives.
9. A rural bypass would divide Robinson and other rural townships, destroying communities and adding life-threatening time to emergency responses. The majority of responses by the Robinson Township Fire/Rescue Department are West from the Fire Station located at 120th Ave. The limited crossings resulting from a limited access freeway would greatly increase the emergency response time. This problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of Township fire/emergency personnel would reside on the opposite side of the bypass from the fire station at which all equipment is located.

For these reasons, the Robinson Township Planning Commission opposes any rural bypass Alternatives and improvements to the 120th Ave. corridor.

Robinson Township Planning Commission


Gloria Burkhart, Chair

CC: See attached list.

cc: Governor John Engler; Jeff Saxby, Project Engineer, MDOT; Jim Kirschensteiner, Federal Highway Administration; Ed Hanenburg, Chairman, Ottawa County Planning Commission; Mark Knudsen, Ottawa County Planner; R. Christopher Byrnes, Ottawa County Planning Commission; Betty Gajewski, Ottawa County Planning Commission; Robert Sewick, Ottawa County Planning Commission; Roger Rycenga, Ottawa County Commission / Land Use Committee; Gordon Schrottenboer, Ottawa County Commission / Land Use Committee; Robert J. Rinck, Ottawa County Commission / Land Use Committee; Joseph Haveman, Ottawa County Commission / Land Use Committee; Leon Langeland, Ottawa County Commission / Land Use Committee; Dennis W. Swartout, Ottawa County Commission; Luciano Hernandez IV, Ottawa County Commission; Harris Schipper, Ottawa County Commission; Frederick Vander Laan, Ottawa County Commission; Cornelius Vander Kam, Ottawa County Commission; D. Dale Mohr, Ottawa County Commission; Robert W. Karsten, Ottawa County Commission; Mr. Lou Lambert, Bureau of Transportation Planning, MDOT; Sue Higgins, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council; Steve Bulthuis, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council; Rep. Jon Jellema; Rep. Peter Hoekstra; Rep. Ken Sikkema; Sen. William Van Regenmorter; Sen Leon Stille; Michael Jaeger, URS Greiner; Gord Ellens; Tim Dykstra; Ray Masko; Michael Fortenbacher; Cliff Murray; Conni Schaftenaar; Nancy Zennie; Thom Peterson; Jack Fisher; Tom Mellema.

Robinson Township Planning Commission, January 7, 1999, “Position Statement”

Acknowledged receipt of the Township’s “Position Statement” opposing a rural bypass. **Chapter 3** includes the reasons for selecting the current PA, which addresses the purpose of and need for the project. Improvements made to existing US-31 will be done to the median side of the roadway within existing right-of-way, with the exception of US-31 north of Jackson Street. Increasing capacity on the existing US-31 Boulevard does not address the long-term needs in the study area.

1. The Preferred Alternative includes upgrades to existing US-31 in order to improve capacity. Additional access across the Grand River in Ottawa County is needed for the areas that have grown and continue to grow east of existing US-31. **Chapter 3** discusses the Preferred Alternative in detail and a detailed design is included in **Appendix A**.
2. Modifications to existing US-31 are included in the Preferred Alternative to address remaining congestion in the City of Grand Haven.
3. Improvements made to existing US-31 in Grand Haven will be done to the median side of the roadway within existing right-of-way, with the exception of US-31 at the intersection of Jackson Street. Three parcels will have partial impacts. The “No-Action Alternative” will not address any of the long-term transportation needs of the study area.
4. MDOT commissioned MSU to perform a land use study to address these concerns. The US-31 Land Use Study is discussed in **Section 2.2**. The US-31 Land Use Study conducted by MSU concluded that the conversion of land from open/agricultural to built areas has in the past and will continue to occur in Ottawa County due to the economic climate of the area and access to Grand Rapids. The proposed road location has little effect on the location of potential new built areas. Impacts to farmland will be approximately 115.8 acres.
5. Comment acknowledged. Please see response to United States Department of Agriculture.
6. A discussion of environmental resources and mitigation is contained in **Chapter 4**. All of the build alternatives have some environmental consequences. Unfortunately, the “No-Action Alternative” will not address any of the long-term transportation needs of the study area.
7. Comment acknowledged.
8. The construction of Alternative A was estimated to be the highest priced alternative of all of the Practical Alternatives.
9. The new route (M-231) will be a two-lane limited access facility rather than a full freeway. **Chapter 3.5** discusses the Preferred Alternative.

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP

Ottawa County

110 - 120th Avenue

Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

(616) 846-2210

FAX: (616) 846-2389

January 21, 1999

To: Jose A. Lopez, Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, Mi. 48909

From: The Robinson Township Planning Commission

Subject: Response to the Ottawa County Planning Commission Position Paper on US-31

The Ottawa County Planning Commission has opposed urban sprawl and has for many years advocated preservation of irreplaceable farmland. Their endorsement of a Position Statement that is contrary to some of their fundamental beliefs is a shock to the entire rural community. Although we were surprised by this County Planning Commission action, we are not so naïve as to expect everyone to agree with us. However, this Position statement prepared by Mr. Knudsen and his staff is so slanted toward Alternative F/J1 that the inconsistencies and contradictions of the D.E.I.S in it are unacceptable to us and we trust they will be equally unacceptable to M.D.O.T. and Greiner Engineering.

For the sake of brevity, we will not point out every exaggeration and false statement in the County Position Paper; we will however touch on some of the more glaring ones.

1. The County Position Paper neglects to mention that every alternative but the "No Action" alternative requires changes and improvements to the existing U.S.-31 roadway. | 1
2. All through their Position Statement, Mr. Knudsen and his staff project thirty to fifty years into the future. No one, including M.D.O.T. and Greiner Engineering, will even attempt to project beyond twenty years. | 2
3. In 1992, The Ottawa County Development Plan was adopted and discouraged major road improvements in rural areas. Since the U.S.-31 Staff Position Paper prepared by Mr. Knudsen and his staff is a direct contradiction of the County Development Plan, they rationalize their action by saying the 1992 Plan was conducted 7 years ago based upon the best information that was available at the time and as such is obsolete. Yet their projections up to 50 years in the future in their Position Statement they maintain are accurate. | 3
4. The adoption of Alternative F/J1 would place two major divided highways several miles apart from each other. Has the standard maintenance plus periodic resurfacing costs of this situation been addressed? | 4
5. For complete details regarding discrepancies in the County Position Paper, please refer to the January 18, 1999 submission by the Homestead Trout Farm and Hatchery. | 5

WE FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT THE MOST LOGICAL AND COST EFFECTIVE OPTION IS "ALTERNATIVE A", COUPLED WITH A TWO LANE BRIDGE OVER THE GRAND RIVER AT 104TH AVE.

William Maschewski
Wm. Maschewski, Secretary/Treasurer

and
Bernice Berens
Bernice Berens, Commissioner

Robinson Township Planning Commission

CC: USR Greiner Woodward Clyde
3950 Sparks Drive SE
Grand Rapids, Mi. 49546

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP

Ottawa County

2010 - 120th Avenue

Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

(616) 846-2210
FAX: (616) 846-2369

POSITION STATEMENT OF THE ROBINSON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES regarding the proposed improvements and/or relocation of US-31 from I-196 north to I-96.

All comments, data and evaluations are drawn from the D.E.I.S. and literature and newsletters published by Greiner Engineering and M.D.O.T.

1. Grand Haven has a traffic problem on US-31 that will remain and continue to worsen unless some action is taken.
2. A regional by-pass will not significantly reduce the congestion on the existing US-31. Only increasing the capacity of US-31 will reduce this congestion.
3. Regardless of which alternative is selected, Beacon Boulevard is slated to be improved and expanded to eight lanes.
4. No matter which alternative is selected, except the No Action Alternative, the same amount of land through Grand Haven would be used.
5. The single most important issue facing the Ottawa County Planning Commission and also all Township Planning Commissions in the county is the preservation of irreplaceable farmland.
6. The facts presented in the D.E.I.S. clearly address the negative impact a regional by-pass will have on wetlands, wildlife, prime farmland and the preservation of rural land, and it further states in the D.E.I.S. that the same amount of land through Grand Haven will be used regardless of which alternative is selected.
7. Therefore, the Board opposes establishment of any regional by-pass because of the unavoidable negative effect of such a by-pass.

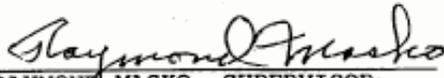
PAGE 2

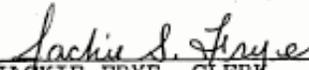
Based upon the above stated facts, the Board of Trustees of Robinson Township endorse Alternative A.

It is not only the most environmentally safe alternative, but overall the most cost effective.

Respectfully,

Robinson Township Board of Trustees


RAYMOND MASKO, SUPERVISOR


JACKIE FRYE, CLERK


DONNA STILLE, TREASURER


EARL RALYA, TRUSTEE


JOHN KUYERS, TRUSTEE

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP

Ottawa County

12010 - 120th Avenue

Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

(616) 846-2210

FAX: (616) 846-2369

January 22, 1999

Mr. Jose Lopez
MDOT
State Transportation Building
P.O. Box 30050
425 W. Ottawa Street
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

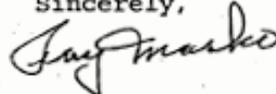
The loss of irreplaceable farmland is a primary concern to us all. Once it is gone, it is gone forever.

Please find enclosed a document showing the financial loss to only one nursery man on only two farms. Add to this all of the farmland that will be impacted by Alternative F/J1 and the figures will be staggering.

We assert, as we have in our previous comments that Alternative F/J1 will negatively impact our fragile environment, cause harm and loss to agriculture that is unrecoverable, and will not accomplish the goal of significantly reducing traffic on existing US-31.

The only logical and cost effective alternative is "A". We must protect our farmland and our environment.

Sincerely,



Ray Masko

RM/mlr

Enclosure

Robinson Township, January 21, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of the Township's opposition to the bypass alternatives and support for alignment alternatives such as Alternative A. This alternative was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**.

All reasonable measures were taken to reduce impacts to farmland. Refer to **Section 4.2** for additional details on this subject.

1. Existing system improvements alone do not address the long-term needs of the US-31 Study Area.
2. Comment acknowledged.
3. Comment acknowledged.
4. The Preferred Alternative includes a two-lane roadway on a new alignment. Maintenance has been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.
5. Comment acknowledged. Discussions with Robinson Township subsequent to the publication of the DEIS resulting in its support of the current PA.

Please refer to the response to those issues raised in the Robinson Township Position Statement dated 1/21/99.

B3

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP

Ottawa County

12010 - 120th Avenue

Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

(616) 846-2210
FAX: (616) 846-2369

October 24, 2000

Mr. Mike Jaeger, Project Engineer
URS Greiner, Inc.
3950 Sparks Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Dear Mr. Jaeger:

Thank you, your engineering staff, and the MDOT personnel for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and discuss with us the changes to the proposed FJ-1, 120th Avenue Bypass alignment.

Your efforts to protect farmland such as the nursery at M-45 and the trout farm at North Cedar Drive are appreciated, however, in so doing you have impacted other farmland and endangered even more wetlands by shifting the alignment to the west.

1

Providing Robinson Township with four overpasses, those being at Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan and North Cedar may on the surface appear to be adequate, but in order to accommodate emergency vehicles, fire trucks, school buses and agricultural traffic, we must insist that all east/west streets be provided with overpasses.

2

When we asked about pollution of wetlands caused by runoff from the bridges, we were told that the runoff would be channeled to either end of the bridge into holding tanks and/or retention ponds. We ask for a clearer definition of how the runoff will be handled and where it will eventually settle.

3

We are enclosing an article that contradicts some of what we were told and addresses our concerns.

Our final request is for a map of the entire proposed FJ-1, 120th Avenue Alternative because if this freeway becomes a reality, we will not be affected by only the segment through Robinson Township, but by the entire length, from I-196 to M-104.

In closing, we reiterate that Robinson Township remains opposed to this bypass not only because of the loss of valuable farmland and the threat to and destruction of irreplaceable wetlands, but

4

1.

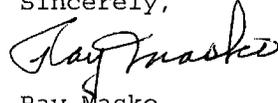
2

because of the waste of over 500,000,000 taxpayer dollars on a freeway that is projected to accommodate less than 18,000 vehicles a day when we are convinced that a two lane bridge along with existing two lane roadways will accomplish the same.

4

An example would be the amount of traffic on M-104 between I-96 and Spring Lake. In 1995, this count was 18,000 vehicles per day and has increased significantly since. Although this is an exaggerated example and we realize that M-104 traffic is at times too heavy, it does show how much traffic a two lane road can handle.

Sincerely,



Ray Masko

RM/mlr

Robinson Township, October 24, 2000

1. Impacts to farmland have been minimized by locating the Preferred Alternative along property lines. The wetland impacts were similar at both locations, and have been minimized.
2. All existing cross streets in Robinson Township will be maintained with either overpasses or intersections, except Johnson Street, which will be cul-de-saced.
3. Runoff from the bridge will be directed to detention basins, where sediment and other pollutants will settle prior to being discharged to the river.
4. The Preferred Alternative is a two-lane road and bridge on a new alignment extending from M-45 to M-104/I-96.



Spring
lake
township

"WHERE NATURE SMILES FOR SEVEN MILES"

106 South Buchanan, Spring Lake, Michigan 49456

Phone: (616) 842-1340

Fax: (616) 842-1546

January 5, 1999

Joseph A Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI

Dear Mr. Lopez:

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of our Township Board Minutes from December 13, 1993 where our Township Board went on record as opposing any Bypass Corridor for US 31 in the area of 144th Ave and 148th Ave (Denoted as Corridor B in 1993). This corridor is now denoted as P/ P1r.

I am also enclosing a copy of a letter which I sent to our State Representative John Jellema on July 6, 1995, indicating why I believe what is now designated as the F/J1 Corridor would be the best alignment to utilize. The rationale in that letter remains as convincing now as it did in 1995 when the letter was originally written.

The P/P1r alignment can still only be recognized as a band aid approach to resolving the US31 traffic problem. After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement it becomes obvious that any alignment on the P/ P1r Corridor is the least cost effective (see pages 5-105 to 5-108 of Draft Environmental Impact Statement).

It should be further pointed out that the P/P1r B2a, B3 Corridor Proposal passes between Jeffers Elementary School and the currently under construction 24 million dollar Spring Lake High School. To locate a highway between these two facilities would be dangerous and beyond reason. The cost of purchasing right of way from the school district would also be prohibitive. Also please note on page 10-8 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement the impact that P/P1r would have on the Grand Haven State Game Area .

It is not my intention here to point out those factors which have been so exhaustively detailed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, suffice it to say the Draft Environmental Impact Statement itself shows that any of the freeway alternatives better handle the long term traffic problem in a cost effective way than the band aid approach of a P/P1r "local by-pass". Engineering traffic and cost analysis all indicate that the P/P1r local by-pass in the area of Comstock and 144th - 148th Avenues are the least viable.

For your use I am also enclosing a copy of a Joint Resolution dated February 10, 1997 concerning our community consensus on the preferred alignment of US 31.

Sincerely,



James A. Jeske II
Spring Lake Township Supervisor

Spring Lake Township, January 5, 1999

Acknowledge receipt of letter opposing a local Grand Haven bypass in the 144th and 148th Avenue area of the Township. No response required. The option was not selected as the PA.



Spring
lake
township

"WHERE NATURE SMILES FOR SEVEN MILES"

106 South Buchanan, Spring Lake, Michigan 49456

Phone: (616) 842-1340

Fax: (616) 842-1546

January 25, 1999

Mr. Jose A. Lopez, Public Hearings Office
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

I am enclosing a letter which was sent to you on January 22, 1999 which was signed by the Mayor of Grand Haven. The letter refers to the enclosed letter of May 18, 1998 which was sent to Jeff Saxby. This letter is to advise you that the letter of January 22, 1999, was sent without the knowledge or the consent of Spring Lake Township.

The May 18 letter was sent before the DEIS was even released. I sent you a letter on January 5, 1999, which included Resolutions setting forth Spring Lake Township's official position. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James A. Jeske II
Spring Lake Township Supervisor

Spring Lake Township, January 25, 1999

Acknowledge receipt of letter that Township was included on a letter dated January 22, 1999, by the City of Grand Haven without the township's consent. No response required.

Zeeland
Charter
Township

6582 Byron Road
Zeeland, Michigan 49464

Phone (616) 772-6701
FAX (616) 772-1857

December 8, 1998

Mr. Jose A. Lopez, Acting Public Hearing Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: US-31 Study & Route Selection

Dear Mr. Lopez:

At last we have seen the DEIS on the proposed US-31 location. I think that all of us who have read and studied it would say that it does represent an in depth analysis, is professional and is a remarkable objective piece of work.

It is obvious, that from all aspects of the study (environmental impact regarding farm land loss and wetland mitigation, return on investment, cost of construction, producing the hoped for result of improving traffic flow and safety) point to the selection of a freeway on the existing route. If the remaining parts of this long process of route selection truly have integrity it is our opinion that this will be the decision of the MDOT.

Thank you for taking the time to study this issue as completely as you have and thank you for listening.

For the Zeeland Charter Township Board.

Sincerely,



Gordon J. Ellens, Supervisor

vz

cc: Township Board

Zeeland Charter Township, December 8, 1998

Acknowledged receipt of their December 8, 1998 letter of support for Alternative A. Alternative A was not selected for the reasons documented in **Chapter 3**.

In a letter dated January 25, 1999, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC), including representatives from Zeeland Charter Township, voted unanimously to support Alternative F/J1. The January 25, 1999 letter can be found in this Chapter 3. The PA includes critical segments of F/J-1.

Zeeland
Charter
Township

6582 Byron Road
Zeeland, Michigan 49464

February 12, 2001

Phone (616) 772-6701
FAX (616) 772-1857

Mr. Jeff Saxby, Project Manager
Michigan Department of Transportation
PO Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: US-31 Bypass Project

Dear Jeff:

Following the recent adjustment to the US-31 Bypass alignment in Blendon Township, a number of Zeeland Township residents have come into the township office with questions and ideas.

Our position on the bypass remains unchanged and we appreciate the work MDOT has done to accommodate our concern. We are now asking for two additional things.

1. With both Felch Street and Riley Street cut off a real problem is created for agricultural business. We would request a design which would allow Riley Street to remain open.
2. Could an overpass be built over I-196 at 72nd Avenue? The existing grades at this point would seem to lend themselves to this overpass.

I would direct your attention to the enclosed position statement adopted by the MACC. Again, we appreciate your co-operation and request that you review the issues identified in this letter.

Sincerely,



Gordon J. Ellens, Supervisor
ZEELAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP

cc: Board Members
Steve Bulhuis, MACC

Recommended Future Improvements
to the
US 31 Corridor

Post-It® Fax Note	7671	Date	2/1/00	# of pages	2
To	Gerd Ellert	From	Steve Bultman		
Co./Dept.	Zealand Twp	Co.	MACC		
Phone #		Phone #			
Fax #	772-9857	Fax #	395-9411		

Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

January 25, 1999

Ottawa County should institute a proactive program to provide assistance to individual units of government, as well as property owners and developers, to encourage growth that is consistent with these recommendations and which minimize impacts of the infrastructure on both urban and rural areas. Such a program might appropriately be referred to as "Sensible Growth" and should utilize lessons learned from other areas (e.g., Peninsula Township in the Traverse City area) while being developed to specifically meet the unique needs of this study area and the long-term growth philosophies of each affected unit of government.

Holland-Zeeland Bypass (F/J1)

The preliminary engineering of a freeway bypass following the F/J1 alignment from I-196 to 120th Avenue is recommended. The specific alignment of this component of the recommendations should be identified as soon as possible, and development controls should be implemented, in order to preserve the corridor and protect it from future development that would impede the actual construction of the bypass. Construction is viewed as a possible future need to occur when funding becomes available. Additional overpasses should be included in order to provide good connectivity of the local roadway network. Interchange types and right-of-way widths should be examined to safely minimize impacts to agricultural areas and manage development.

Comments: Current and future development in the northern portion of the MACC and eastern Ottawa County, and the anticipated travel demand from that development, requires a long term transportation improvement. The bypass option would allow for a roadway that would facilitate goods and people movement, in primarily an east/west direction, between the Holland/Zeeland and Grand Rapids metropolitan areas, a traffic flow that continues to increase. At the same time, it would provide a safe and convenient route, along with the freeway option noted below, for through north/south traffic along a freeway system that is continuously connected from the Indiana state line to the areas north of the study area. To preserve community cohesion, additional overpasses (e.g. Ransom Street) should be included. Construction of this segment, along with the F/J1 freeway recommendation, closes the freeway gap in US-31. Conducting preliminary engineering to delineate the alignment of this improvement can greatly assist in preservation of the corridor and acquisition of right-of-way as it becomes available. Appropriate right-of-way should be set aside and protected, as soon as possible, in order to best implement this component of the recommendations.

Zeeland Charter Township, February 12, 2001

The Preferred Alternative does not include any work in Zeeland Township.

Spring Lake



Public Schools

345 Hammond Street
Spring Lake, MI 49456-2096

Central Office: (616) 846-5500
Superintendent: (616) 847-7919
Fax: (616) 846-9830

November 18, 1998

Mr. Jose A. Lopez, Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

We are in receipt of your information package detailing the US 31 bypass options being considered for future construction. The Board of Education of the Spring Lake Public Schools unanimously opposes Options P1, and P1r, which cross the Grand River at Boom Road and then proceed north to Route 104.

Either segments B2a or B2b, if constructed, would be a disaster for the students of Spring Lake Public Schools. B2a goes north, contiguous to the site on which a new \$24 million high school is under construction and within 300 feet of the property on which Jeffers Elementary School is located.

Page 5-12 of your Draft Environmental Impact Statement Section 4(f) Evaluations states that "using segment B2a would require acquisition of the entire parcel including buildings" referring to the new high school. The reason the voters approved the construction of a new high school was the obvious overcrowding of the current facilities. To acquire our new building and site for over \$24 million would be a waste of money and would obviously extend our overcrowding for many years. With all of the other options being considered, it seems ridiculous for this to even be a possibility.

Segment B2b, while not adjacent to our two schools, would still have an adverse effect on the students attending them. It would be close enough to create safety concerns for elementary students and obvious noise and congestion problems in the vicinity.

While we applaud your efforts to find a viable solution to the US 31 traffic problems, we believe the adverse consequences of P1 and P1r make it imperative to choose one of the other options.

If you need any more information from the school district, or if either of these two options continues to be considered as a viable option, we ask that you contact us so that we might discuss the ramifications in more detail.

Sincerely,

SPRING LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Larry F. Mason
Superintendent of Schools

LFM:ac

Spring Lake Public Schools, November 18, 1998

Acknowledge receipt of their letter stating their opposition to the Local Grand Haven Bypass Alternatives using Comstock Street and its associated Grand River crossing. MDOT is no longer considering this alternative (P1 and P1r) as part of this project. The Preferred Alternative does not impact this school district. No response required.



**West Ottawa
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

294 W. Lakewood Blvd.
Holland, MI 49424
Tel. (616) 395-2300
FAX (616) 395-2391
(616) 395-2392

Administrative Cabinet

Rosemary Ervine
Superintendent

David Farabee
Asst. Superintendent
Human Resources

Larry Fegel
Asst. Superintendent
Teaching & Learning

Ray Johnson
Asst. Superintendent
Financial Services

Shirley Young
Asst. Superintendent
Pupil Services

tough-minded,
underhearted place,
focused on people,
where quality is our habit
and service to humankind
is our common vision.

November 24, 1998

Mr. Jose A. Lopez
Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

On behalf of the West Ottawa School District, I would like to comment on the alternative "R" proposal for improvements of US-31 from I-196 in Allegan County north to I-196 in Muskegon County. In alternate "R" you are proposing to use 120th Avenue as the main corridor for the by-pass.

The District has an elementary school, North Holland Elementary, located on 120th and New Holland Street. In 1990 we remodeled this building and in 1996 we added additional classrooms. This area has the fastest student growth rate of any of our schools. For the last few years, we have been receiving approximately 100 new students from the areas around Riley Street and 112th - 120th. In the next couple of years, we probably will have to build another addition to North Holland. This building will then house over 600 students.

If you were to build the by-pass along the 120th corridor, we would need to relocate the school. We are probably 75-100 feet from the roadway now; and if you were to expand the roadway, it would go through the center of the school. The state would have to buy the school, which would be costly. We have just completed a new school for a cost of \$9 million. I do not think the taxpayers of the West Ottawa School District would take kindly to paying additional money to have a pass-by along 120th.

I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the proposed by-pass. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 616/395-2311.

Sincerely,

WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ray Johnson
Assistant Superintendent for Finances

West Ottawa Public Schools, November 24, 1998

Acknowledged receipt of their letter expressing concerns for Alternative R and their North Holland Elementary School. Alternative R was not selected as the Preferred Alternative for the reasons documented in **Section 3.3.5**. The Preferred Alternative will not directly impact the North Holland Elementary School.

ZEELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 TRANSPORTATION DEPT.
 720 EAST MAIN AVENUE
 POST OFFICE BOX 110
 ZEELAND, MI 49464-0110
 (616) 749-3425 • FAX 772-7359



December 10, 1998

Mr. Jose A. Lopez, Public Hrgs. Officer
 Bureau of Transportation Planning, MDOT
 P. O. Box 30050
 Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. Lopez:

There are many proposed options in the US-31 Location Design Study by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) shows nine options under consideration. Alternatives J1, F/J1 and F would significantly impact and alter the transportation infrastructure in the Zeeland Public School District. Alternative R would also require some adjustments to our bus runs but nothing as severe as the other proposals. The alternatives to the east and north of Zeeland are not acceptable in their present recommended form for the following reasons:

- The number of roads that would be closed
- The great number of cul-de-sacs that would be created
- The DEIS conclusion, pages 3-7 states, "The new-alignment freeway does not decrease demand on existing US-31 enough to attain an acceptable LOS on existing US-31. Existing US-31 would require capacity increases in order to attain acceptable LOS."

Alternative J1 would close 11 roads, table 3.3-5 pages 3-16 roadway segment C1, C2. Alternate F/J1 would close 17 roads, table 3.3-4, pages 3-13 roadway segment C1, C6. Alternative F would close 16 roads, table 3.3-2, pages 3-7 roadway segment C1, C3. Every time you close a road you in essence have created 2 cul-de-sacs. As of today there are 7 high school routes and 10 elementary routes that would be effected by proposal F, F/J1. Therefore, 34 turn arounds created by cul-de-sacs are very dangerous bus stops. A bus needs to back up to change direction and the Michigan Department of Education recommends that school districts eliminate as much backing as possible. Cul-de-sacs are also the last parts of roadways to be plowed in the winter leaving these roads a difficult place to maneuver a bus. 96th Avenue and 72nd Avenue would be the only north south roads open to through traffic in the Zeeland Public School District. The extra time and miles needed to accommodate the proposed bypass would also lead to the need of purchasing additional busses. This problem is addressed in the study in only one sentence DEIS pages 5-10 "Access restrictions, and construction of cul-de-sacs, temporary construction impacts, and property purchase for right-of-way may be considered adverse impacts." Alternatives J1, F/J1, and F all will have adverse impacts on the Zeeland Public School district.



The other area of concern is the number of acres that will be lost in alternates F, J1/F and J1. There could be 443 acres lost to wetland mitigation in the Zeeland Public Schools boundary area. Over 2,040 acres would be lost to future development if alternative F/J1 were selected. Not all of those acres are in the Zeeland Public School District; however, the majority does fall within our boundaries.

We provide this information as a resource to be used in the US-31 Location Design Study. If further information is needed, or if we can assist you in anyway, please let us know.

Sincerely,



David J. Meeuwsen
Transportation Director, Zeeland Public Schools



Gary Feenstra
Superintendent, Zeeland Public Schools



David VanGinhoven
Assistant Superintendent of Business Services,
Zeeland Public Schools

- C: Gord Ellens
Bill Driesenga
Les Hoogland
Sen. William VanRegenmorter
Ed Berghorst
Zeeland Board of Education
Ed Hanenburg
Harris Schipper

Zeeland Public Schools, December 10, 1998

1. Acknowledged receipt of the school's concerns regarding road closures and cul-de-sacs. The Preferred Alternative does not include any work in the Zeeland school district. Only two roads will have cul-de-sacs, Johnson Street and 120th Avenue at M-104. All others will have intersections or overpasses and are not in the Zeeland school district.
2. Wetland impacts have been minimized during the study process. The Preferred Alternative impacts less than three acres in Robinson and Crockery Townships.

AGHAST

218 S. Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

January 11, 1999

Jim DeSana, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

RECEIVED

JAN 13 1999

DIRECTOR
Department of Transportation

Dear Mr. DeSana,

The Grand Haven City Council has taken the position of opposing developments to US-31 (more specifically, Beacon Boulevard in Grand Haven), that would EITHER create a freeway through Grand Haven OR expand Beacon Boulevard into a 6 or 8 lane boulevard with no median and closed side streets.

Members of AGHAST (Area of Grand Haven Against Six-lane Traffic) fully support our City Council's position in opposition of these proposed changes to Beacon Boulevard. In support of the City Council, we asked many of the local business owners if they would post the enclosed petitions in their business area and ask customers and clients to read the petitions and, if they (the customers) agree with the content, to then sign in support of the Council.

We believe it is important to note these petitions were "on the street" for only a few weeks (approximately December 18th, 1998 to January 8th, 1999) and that this time frame was during the holidays in which most business owners did not have time or resources to do much more than just set the petitions on a counter for customers to find and read as the customers might. Further, we ask that you note there were no people actively pursuing signatures (i.e., going door-to-door or standing at business entrances explaining the petition and asking for signatures). As such, we believe the number of signatures is a mere minimum of what we could have secured had we had the time and resources to do a house-to-house and person-to-person petition drive.

In light of the above, it is our belief that the number of signatures of these petitions (953) is a fair indication that the citizens of Grand Haven are in full support of the City Council's opposition to the expansion plans and, that MDOT decision makers should consider the significant majority of the citizens of Grand Haven area are in full support of the City Council and will oppose any MDOT decision to expand Beacon Boulevard to 6 or 8 lanes or turn it into a freeway.

We thank you for your attention to this letter and the enclosed petitions.

Sincerely,



Jeffery A. Terrill
Member, AGHAST

1/13/99

Petition to: Michigan Department of Transportation

We the citizens of the Grand Haven area.

OPPOSE the solution to the long term traffic issue related to the anticipated growth of Ottawa County that would mandate expanding Beacon Boulevard into a freeway **OR** a 6 to 8 lane boulevard with no median and closed side streets.

SUPPORT The solution which calls for the construction of an additional bridge across the Grand River located at or near the 120th Street corridor.

2

If you agree with the two statements, please sign the petition.

SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
<i>Kristin M. Charles</i>	Kristin Charles	1623 1/2 Fulton	850-9210
<i>Hindi B. McKay</i>	Hindi B. McKay	1327 Columbus Ave	846-8891
<i>Joel L. Schindlbeck</i>	Joel L. Schindlbeck	1126 Columbus	844-5661
<i>David Tate</i>	David Tate	17564 Whippoorwill	847-8970
<i>Kaleena Quinn</i>	Kaleena Quinn	16151 Mercury	842-3468
<i>Sarah Meinel</i>	Sarah Meinel	14629 Parkwood	846-7387
<i>Jarrod Cook</i>	Jarrod Cook	17199 Ferris	846-6892
<i>Kasey Morden</i>	Kasey Morden	14843 152nd Ave	846-3024
<i>Herbert M Blair</i>	Herbert M Blair	16173 Dawnview	842 0092
<i>Suzanne Smart</i>	Suzanne Smart	13351 State Rd.	846-3908
<i>Mary Jane McBeath</i>	Mary Jane McBeath	16245 Ferris, 611	842-0877
<i>Duane R. Sturns</i>	Duane R. Sturns	13600 Forest Park	844-6393
<i>Carolyn VanWieren</i>	Carolyn VanWieren	13534 Redbird	842-6635
<i>Jeanne Doyle</i>	JEANNE DOYLE	18940 Army Point	847-6787
<i>Shirley Baker</i>	Shirley Baker	14748 Lakeside C.	842-6243
<i>T.A. Bogzart</i>	T.A. BOGZART	17220 (2nd) Creek	842-4327
<i>Ruth Weavers</i>	Ruth Weavers	17577 Park Place Cir Spring Lake MI	842-2266
<i>William Bissell Jr</i>	William Bissell Jr	17375 Blainfield Spring Lake MI	847-0642
<i>Mike McKeough</i>	Michael A. McKeough	19064 Lowell Spring Lake MI	

SAMPLE OF PAGE OF SIGNATURES - ORIGINALS ON FILE AT MDOT

AGHAST (Area of Grand Haven Against Six-lane Traffic), January 11, 1999

1. Acknowledge receipt of letter and petition opposing a widened boulevard on US-31. Please refer to correspondence in the section between MDOT and the City of Grand Haven. The PA includes widening only between approximately Washington and Jackson Streets
2. Acknowledge support for a second Grand River crossing at or near 120th Avenue. The Preferred Alternative includes a crossing just west of 120th Avenue.

Resolution to Michigan Department Of Transportation

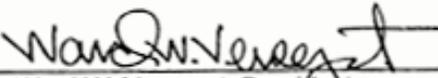
WHEREAS, the Coopersville Chamber of Commerce, Coopersville, Michigan and the surrounding environs will be impacted by the eventual location of the U.S. 31 improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Coopersville area is concerned with the possible use of the Grand River crossing at 68th Ave with connection at I-96. Knowing current traffic in excess of 58,000 vehicles daily, the U.S. 31 crossing in Grand Haven needs an alternate route to carry this and future growth;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Coopersville Chamber of Commerce does hereby support the communities of Ferrysburg City, Grand Haven Charter Township, Grand Haven City, and Spring Lake Township to find a long term solution to the U.S.31 problems, specifically:

1. We support the construction of a by-pass at, or near, 120th Avenue with a Grand River crossing in a manner which most effectively connects the Holland region to the Muskegon region such that regional and state traffic can quickly, safely and less obtrusively reach their destinations.
2. We are of like mind that the best long term option, with the greatest transportation benefits, is the July, 1996 version of Alternative F, to provide a direct interstate link along the shortest route possible between the current U.S. 31 north of Holland and I-96 in Nunica. Such transportation benefits justify the increased environmental mitigation costs associated with crossing the Pigeon Creek.
3. We believe this resolution substantially states the best long-term option desired by the region.

Respectfully submitted this the 2 day of APRIL, 1998



Ward W. Verseput, President
Coopersville Chamber of Commerce



Jan Richardson, Director
Coopersville Chamber of Commerce

COPY

Coopersville Chamber of Commerce, April 2, 1998

1. Acknowledge receipt of the City's resolution of support for a bypass at or near 120th. The Preferred Alternative includes a two-lane roadway just west of 120th Avenue that also includes a new crossing of the Grand River. Further, the Preferred Alternative no longer includes a Pigeon Creek crossing.



**OTTAWA SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

16731 Ferris St., Grand Haven, Michigan 49417
616/846-8770

January 7, 1999

SUBJECT: Proposed US-31 Improvements

Mr Jose Lopez
Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr Lopez:

The Ottawa Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors was given the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact statement for the proposed improvements to US-31 from I-196 in Allegan County to I-96 in Muskegon County.

The District Board of Directors would like to discourage adopting any of the alternatives that involve a bypass around Zeeland as these alternatives would have the greatest adverse impact on agricultural land, both at present and in the future. The Board would like to see any alternative that is adopted include a plan for future use by the County that would alleviate traffic flow problems through the year 2020.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the proposed US-31 improvements.

Sincerely,

Bill Miller /sw

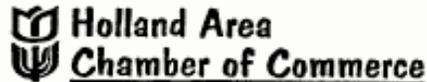
Bill Miller, Chairman
Ottawa County SWCD
Board of Directors

SOIL FURNISHES YOU WITH THE ESSENTIALS OF LIFE
CONSERVE IT



Ottawa Soil and Water Conservation District, January 7, 1999

Acknowledge receipt of their letter of opposition to alternatives including a Holland/Zeeland bypass. The Preferred Alternative does not include a segment that bypasses around the City of Zeeland, therefore agricultural impacts have been minimized.



US-31 Recommendation

January 18, 1999

BACKGROUND

US-31 is a major transportation corridor in the Holland area and transportation is a critical element for business success. At this time public input is being sought by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the alternatives that are under consideration for improvements to US-31 (maps attached). Research has been conducted on the various US-31 alternatives by the MDOT and their consultants, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, local units of government and many others. The Holland Area Chamber of Commerce Environment & Infrastructure Committee has developed priorities of Economic Impact, Transportation Demand and Smart Growth Initiatives and considered the alternatives against these priorities.

ANALYSIS

Economic Impact analysis has shown that the business displacement, tax loss and job loss is far too great with the alternatives that would put a freeway on the existing alignment. Thus, routes that do not require additional right-of-way acquisition in commercial or industrial areas have been eliminated from consideration.

Transportation Demand analysis shows that industrial, commercial and residential travel demands will continue to expand throughout the region. This supports the idea that separation of local commercial and residential traffic from long distance trucking and through-traffic will continue to be a critical factor. An improved boulevard on the existing alignment for local traffic, coupled with a by-pass around the urbanized Holland-Zeeland area for through-traffic will serve this need.

Smart Growth Initiatives must be utilized by local municipalities in order to maximize the positive impacts of development fostered by this transportation improvement, while minimizing the negative impacts. Municipalities that wish to advance their economic growth will have an opportunity to capture increased development demands, but should do so with an eye toward the ultimate impact on the character of the community. Conversely, municipalities that wish to deter growth from their area, have the ability to restrict development through effective land use planning, zoning and site plan review.

RECOMMENDATION

At its regularly scheduled meeting of January 18, 1999, the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors unanimously endorsed the Environment & Infrastructure Committee recommendation of the US-31 alternative F/J1, with additional elements as suggested, and the implementation of the following improvements to the US-31 Corridor:

- Transportation System Management Improvements - implement low cost capital improvements to ease congestion until a more permanent solution is constructed.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems Improvements - implement technologies such as demand responsive traffic signals and traveler information systems as appropriate.
- Transit Components - incorporate various transit components such as carpool lots and inter-modal facilities into other improvements as appropriate.
- ROW Acquisition and Future Development Controls - right-of-way acquisition and effectively managing development is essential in order for the timely implementation of the recommendations.
- Boulevard Improvements - construction of a narrow median boulevard through the City of Holland and Holland Township.
- Freeway Improvements - construction of a freeway north of the Holland/Zeeland area along the 120th Avenue corridor across the Grand River to I-96 with a freeway connector to existing US-31.
- Holland-Zeeland Bypass - construction of a freeway bypass from I-196 around the east side of the City of Zeeland with a connection to the freeway at 120th Avenue.

Holland Area Chamber of Commerce, January 18, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce's US-31 recommendations in support of Alternative F/J1. The PA includes critical segments of F/J-1 including improvements to existing US-31 between approximately Lakewood and Quincy.



149 MAIN PLACE
ZEELAND, MICHIGAN 49464

Phone (616) 772-2494

<http://www.zeelandcofs.org>

Fax (616) 772-0065

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 20, 1999
From: Ann L. Query, Executive Director
RE: Zeeland Chamber of Commerce Board recommendation for US 31 alignment

At their meeting on Thursday, January 14, the Zeeland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the alignment recommendations proposed by the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council's US 31 ad-hoc committee. Citing strong support for immediate improvements to the current US 31 highway, the group expressed concern over safety issues with that road at present. Continuing growth and development along that alignment and in the area in general will exacerbate the safety concerns with that highway. The 120th Avenue corridor freeway, new bridge construction, and connection to I-96 will address near-future needs for traffic congestion and safety.

The group expressed sympathy with the concerns of rural townships which will be affected by the proposed bypass to the east of Zeeland. However, the long-range projections for growth in the area, as well as a need for safe access to and from industrial areas, will mandate the building of this bypass. Growth will continue, and the best way to manage that growth is to be proactive in planning for the future. It was recommended that representatives from Zeeland Charter Township, Bledon Township, Olive Township, Zeeland Public Schools, City of Zeeland, Zeeland Chamber of Commerce, and logistics/traffic experts from local industry meet to make recommendations for interchange and overpass locations and utility access points. This will help to ensure the best possible outcome for a positive quality of life in the area.

* * *

Zeeland Chamber of Commerce, January 20, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of their support for Alternative F/J1. The PA includes critical segments of Alternative F/J-1.

November 24, 1998

An Open Letter to Ottawa County Residents:

In reviewing the long-awaited Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), we find that the following facts have been presented:

1. Grand Haven has a traffic problem on US 31 at the present time that must be addressed. (DEIS page 2-5) | 1
2. That traffic problem will remain and continue to increase in the future unless action is taken. (DEIS page 2-14) | 2
3. **No** local or regional **bypass** is going to give **sufficient relief** to the traffic problem on US 31 at the Grand River without an increase in the capacity or a decrease in the demand on the existing US 31. (DEIS page 3-7) [A look at the traffic projections will tell you that a bypass solution is not the most effective way to decrease demand on the US 31 route.] | 3
4. Beacon Blvd. is going to be changed no matter which alternative is selected. If the Comstock Bypass (boulevard bypass) is selected, Beacon is slated to become a 6-lane boulevard (DEIS 3-22). If Alternative F (one Central Bypass option) is selected, Beacon is slated to become an 8-lane boulevard (DEIS figure 3.3-5b) | 4
5. The total number of bridge malfunctions from 1988 through May 15, 1997 was ten. One failure resulted in 18 hours, 15 minutes of down time for the bridge. This does not list those incidents which stopped traffic due to accidents on or near the bridge resulting from **bridge openings**. (DEIS page 2-14) [The problem is not just malfunctions. Any mechanical bridge is subject to high maintenance needs and failures, and contributes to traffic congestion.] | 5
6. Through numerous conversations with people in and around Grand Haven, we believe many people think a boulevard option on US 31 includes a fixed-span bridge, solving the problem of bridge malfunctions. **However**, of the nine alternatives offered in this study, **only two would place a fixed-span bridge** in Grand Haven (J1 and A). Both of these place a limited access highway through Grand Haven on the existing US 31. (DEIS page 3-18 and 3-6) | 6
7. All 2020 alternatives except the No Action Alternative **would take approximately the same amount of land through Grand Haven** to increase traffic volume. (Appendix A – Plans of Practical Alternatives) | 7
8. The **rate of return on dollars invested** varies widely: for example, Alternative A (limited-access highway on the existing route) returns \$2.78 for every dollar spent; Alternative F (one central bypass limited-access option), returns \$0.98; and Alternative P (boulevard option on existing route), returns \$0.42. (DEIS page 5-106) [Note: any return of less than \$1.00 means the construction costs on the option exceed the benefit provided.] | 8
9. A central bypass would be directly contrary to the **1992 Ottawa County Development Plan** adopted by the County Planning Commission on December 22, 1992. This Plan relegates Agricultural and Rural Preservation Land to their defined “Tier B”. One of the stated goals of this Plan is “**to maintain the rural character** of Tiers A and B”. (DEIS page 5-20 and 21, and Figure 5.2-2) | 9

(cont'd. next page)

November 24, 1998

An Open Letter to Ottawa County Residents:

For several years now, we have been told by officials from many agencies and levels that no decision would be made until the DEIS was released. Now that it is available, we **strongly urge that all** involved in recommendations and decisions read and understand the facts as they are presented. We further urge all those officials not to shrug off the concerns of the central county townships and residents as being merely a case of "Not In My Back Yard". The facts presented in this study speak for themselves.

We further urge all residents in the county to take the time to find out more about the facts presented in this study – it is available in many public locations, and several townships have fact-sharing meetings scheduled. In many ways, understanding the facts presented in this study and making your opinion known will be more important to your futures than many of the elections in which you have voted.

We also call on you, the county residents, to hold all officials accountable to see that proper action is taken to solve the present and future traffic problems on US 31 while we have the resources available. Officials should focus on the US 31 issue and not attempt to divert attention or resources to solve other county road issues. Those can be addressed fully, but not as part of this issue.

Gord Ellens, Supervisor,
Zeeland Charter Township
(616) 772-6701

Tim Dykstra, Supervisor,
Olive Township
(616) 786-9996

Ray Masko, Supervisor,
Robinson Township
(616) 846-2210

Michael Fortenbacher, Supervisor,
Crockery Township
(616) 837-6868

Cliff Murray
Crockery Township Resident
15760 120th Avenue, Nunica
(616) 837-1064

Conni Schaftenaar
Zeeland Township Resident
3755 72nd Avenue, Zeeland
(616) 837-7387 (days) or 772-4660 (eves.)

Nancy Zennie
Zeeland Township Resident
7723 Quincy Street, Zeeland
(616) 875-7811

Thom Peterson
Robinson Township Resident
12134 112th Avenue, Grand Haven
(616) 846-8875

Jack Fisher
Crockery Township Resident
15385 120th Avenue, Nunica
(616) 837-6372

Tom Mellema
Crockery Township Resident
16496 124th Avenue, Nunica
(616) 837-6973

cc: all signers above, editors of regional newspapers, reporters covering US31 issue, Ottawa County Commissioners, Ottawa County Transportation & Land Use Committee, Ottawa County Planning Commission, Road Commission, other Township Supervisors, officials in affected cities/village, MACC, elected officials for area, MDOT, URS Greiner, FHWA, other interested agencies. Also will be distributed to interested citizens at township meetings throughout the comment period.

Open Letter to Ottawa County Residents, November 24, 1998

2. Comment acknowledged
3. Comment acknowledged
4. Comment acknowledged
5. The Preferred Alternative in Grand Haven includes improvements to existing US-31. These include adding a third through lane (six-lane boulevard) in Grand Haven from south of Washington Street to Jackson Street in the median and additional turning lanes north of Jackson Street.
6. Comment acknowledged
7. The Preferred Alternative does not include replacement of the existing bridge.
8. Comment acknowledged.
9. Comment acknowledged.
10. Ottawa County now supports the Preferred Alternative.



MICHIGAN UNITED CONSERVATION CLUBS

2101 Wood St. ● P.O. Box 30235 ● Lansing, MI 48909 ● 517/371-1041

November 17, 1994

Mr. Scott Cook, Environmental Planner
Greiner, Inc.
3950 Sparks Drive SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Re: Scoping Document, US-31 Location Design Study

Dear Mr. Cook:

On behalf of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, I would like to submit the following comments on the above-referenced scoping document.

In general, we concur with the list of issues you have presented. We are particularly concerned about impacts of the proposed project on the wetlands and water resources at proposed crossings of the Grand River and other watercourses. We are anxious to review the draft Environmental Impact Statement with respect to these issues.

Another area of concern is the induced development that would likely occur in rural areas adjacent to the corridor eventually selected as the preferred alternative. This issue would be assessed under the "Land Use" and "Secondary and Cumulative Impacts" categories in your list of Key Issues. We are not necessarily in agreement that these issues are of lesser significance than other impact categories you have identified. We suggest that they be given careful consideration as the DEIS is developed.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide these comments. We anticipate substantial involvement in the review process and would appreciate period updates on your progress on the DEIS as this project moves forward.

Sincerely,

Richard X. Moore
Water Resource Specialist

cc: Glenn Geerlings

1
2

Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), November 17, 1994

1. Every effort has been made to reduce impacts to wetlands and water resources related to the current Preferred Alternative. At the Grand River, the entire 100-year floodplain is spanned by a structure. Mitigation efforts for wetlands and water resources are detailed in **Sections 4.9** and **4.10** of the FEIS.
2. Indirect and Cumulative Impacts are addressed in the FEIS process. MDOT retained MSU to develop a Land Use Study Model for the study area, and the adjoining counties. The results of this Study are detailed in **Section 2.2** and at www.us31.msu.edu.



Jan 8, 1999

Jose A. Lopez
Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
P O. Box 30050
Lansing, Michigan 48909

**Comments on the US 31 Improvement Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Submitted by The Michigan Land Use Institute
to the Michigan Department of Transportation**

The Michigan Land Use Institute is an independent, nonprofit, research, educational, and service organization operating in the public interest. Our mission is to establish a fresh approach to economic development that strengthens communities, enhances opportunity, and protects the state's unmatched natural resources. The Institute's approach to land use policy reform is pro-business, pro-community, and pro-environment.

The Institute advocates relieving congestion by stopping sprawl, improving the functioning of roads, and giving people travel choices in addition to their cars. The means for this are better-designed roads, clean and convenient mass transit, safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, and strong neighborhoods and downtowns.

The Institute appreciates the effort the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have made to thoroughly evaluate the benefits and harms likely to result from various proposals to improve traffic on U.S. 31. The Institute also respects the difficulty of this endeavor and the inability of the study to identify a preferred alternative to meet the areas transportation needs.

After conducting its own review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the Institute believes it is clear that the best alternative is to improve U.S. 31 along its *existing alignment*. The Institute urges MDOT and FHWA to examine **Alternative A**—constructing a Freeway on the existing U.S. 31 alignment. This study should couple Alternative A with Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management measures given only cursory attention in the DEIS.

The Institute believes the study was conducted in a manner that understates the harm to the environment and communities caused by several other alternatives, and does not fully identify the benefits provided by

reconstructing the current U.S. 31 corridor. To guide its additional investigation, the Institute urges the MDOT and FHA to consider the following items.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE GOALS

Transportation and land use are intimately connected. Decisions about where to locate new roads determine the pattern of development of the land. Opening up land to automobile access is one of the driving forces in Michigan's loss of farmland, currently at 10 acres per hour. Stemming this loss is one of the top land use goals across the state and a high priority of the new state Legislature.

Building a new bypass through the farmland east and south of Grand Haven will cause tremendous change in land use. The DEIS confirms the bypass will result in farmland — the farmland inventoried in Section 4.3 — being converted into subdivisions and commercial and retail development. These changes in land use are well described (Sect. 5-27).

The DEIS, however, fails to acknowledge that preserving farmland is a widely supported public policy. It also does not consider that the predicted changes in land use will harm local taxpayers, who will bear the costs associated with outlying, sprawling development — namely tax money spent for more sewers, more local roads, and more municipal services.

Although some engineers argue that controlling urban sprawl is a matter for local planning and zoning, the Institute believes that MDOT has an obligation to avoid creating stresses that place undue demands on land use. MDOT is in the enviable position of having a statewide view of land use, a view that local officials often never see. When new road construction enables sprawling new land development — as happened when bypasses were built around several other Michigan cities — all of our resource-based industries suffer, from agriculture to tourism.

Wetlands losses also are understated in Section 5-65 of the DEIS. This evaluation does not appear to include the loss of wetlands from the secondary and cumulative effects, such as changes in land use resulting from building any of the bypass options. A more accurate evaluation would show that any alternative, including constructing a bypass, will be more harmful than indicated.

The Michigan Land Use Institute supports effective transportation solutions, but not those that promote sprawling development. Any improvements to US-31 should be made along the current alignment. In this way, new lands will not be opened up for development, and the existing infrastructure will be useful long into the future.

INDUCED DEMAND

Communities throughout the world are quickly learning that building more and wider roads does not eliminate congestion. Rather, new roads cause more traffic. This phenomenon is known as "induced demand."

Sprawling development far from established population centers leads to more car trips, longer trips, and more traffic as people drive farther and farther between destinations. The DEIS predicts that building any of several bypass alternatives will cause just this type of development. Alternative F is likely to cause the greatest amount of Induced Demand.

The DEIS, however, does not incorporate an evaluation of the induced demand caused by the various alternatives that include building a new bypass. Without this evaluation, the DEIS dramatically overstates the transportation benefits of these options.

If induced demand were incorporated into an evaluation, improving U.S. 31 along its existing alignment likely would be shown to be superior to other alternatives. It would reduce travel demand, decrease energy consumption relative to the other alternatives, and reduce congestion in the region more than if a bypass were built. If this vital, induced-demand evaluation were done, the various bypass alignments may no longer appear beneficial to the region, or a wise investment of taxpayer dollars.

1a
1b
1c
1d
1e
1f
2a
2b
2c

RESPECTING TAXPAYERS AND THEIR INVESTMENTS

MDOT and FHA are responsible for not only meeting the mobility needs of Michigan's residents, but also wisely investing people's tax dollars in transportation infrastructure.

U.S. 31 already has fallen into a state of disrepair, and the DEIS considers the Grand River Bridge also to be below par. Last year, the state had to raise taxes in order to maintain the existing road network. The public should be concerned that if the new bypasses are built, taxes will have to be raised again in order to maintain the expanded network. Otherwise, the region will just have more roads in poor condition.

The DEIS should evaluate the long-term costs of maintaining the road network proposed in each of the alternatives. Such an analysis would show that investing in *existing* roads, rather than new roads, is less costly over the long term and of greater benefit to Michigan's drivers.

When roads are in good condition, the driving experience is more pleasurable, individuals spend less on automobile maintenance and repair, and traffic flows more smoothly. Simply bringing the region's roads into good condition could, in and of itself, provide a tremendous benefit.

The DEIS does not fully evaluate how an investment to bring 80% or more of the region's roads into good condition would improve regional mobility. Such an alternative would have virtually no impact on land use, environment or community. It warrants further examination.

In addition, our tax dollars should be used to support the types of land use and land conservation desired by Michigan's citizens. Alternatives that result in a loss of farmland are not in the public's interest. Serious thought should be given to any decision that uses tax dollars in a manner contrary to stated public goals.

IDENTIFYING REAL NEEDS

The DEIS identifies two critical failings in the current transportation network.

One is the need for a new river crossing due to the periodic failure of the existing bridge, which lifts up to accommodate large ships on the Grand River. According the data in the DEIS, bridge failure happens less than once per year. This problem alone is not sufficient reason to embark on a road building project that will dramatically alter land use patterns in the region. Rather, the DEIS should have considered an alternative to install a new engine in the bridge mechanism.

The DEIS also acknowledges a need to relieve future traffic congestion in a rapidly growing region. Efforts to manage travel demand, however, are not seriously considered. An investment in public transportation of a similar magnitude to the cost of any of the bypass alternatives would eliminate a great number of vehicle trips. Improvements to the condition and performance of existing roads also would have great benefit, and avoid the induced demand resulting from a bypass, as discussed above. One further option that would have the added benefit of reducing congestion through Grand Haven when the bridge is drawn is the installation of an intelligent highway system that recognizes immediate and shifting demands placed on the network.

Although the bypass solution is an attractive way to sidestep the problems that precipitated the study, it is far from ideal. The real needs identified in the DEIS can be met with low cost, efficient alternatives that do not disrupt community or harm the environment.

CONCLUSION

Building a new road, even if it is a bypass, cannot solve all the region's transportation problems. Future study must seriously examine how new road building will affect land use and transportation needs in the future. The DEIS omits this important analysis, and overstates the benefits of several alternatives that involve bypass construction. The Michigan Land Use Institute believes that such analysis will show that improving the existing U.S. 31 corridor is the best alternative.

3a

3b

3c

4a

4b

5

Michigan Land Use Institute, January 8, 1999

Many of the following answers refer to the US-31 Land Use Study prepared by Michigan State University. However, the Land Use Study is not a component of the FEIS, but can be found at www.us31.msu.edu.

1. Transportation and Land Use Goals

- a. During a ten year period (1990-2000), the study area experienced growth at a rate higher than the state average. Ottawa County, in particular, had a 27% increase in population. Correspondingly, the amount of open land (farmland included) declined by 3%. This development occurred absent any major transportation improvement. The amount of direct impacts to farmland has been greatly reduced since the release of the DEIS, from 1,039.9 acres to 115.8 acres in the current PA. Land use changes are regulated by local governments.
- b. The US-31 Land Use Study concluded that development pressures will continue in Ottawa County, although at a lesser rate than that of the previous decade. The study compared the indirect land use impacts between the No-Action and the Preferred Alternative. Comparing the alternatives in 2020 shows that the difference between the acres of open land converted to built land uses is negligible.
- c. According to the US-31 Land Use Study, the number of acres classified as agricultural was 217,728 in 2001. The number of acres is predicted to decrease by approximately 4,300 acres in 2020 without the US-31/M-231 project. The number of acres is predicted to decrease by approximately 4,400 in 2020 with the Preferred Alternative.
- d. Land use development and control is ultimately a local decision. However, MDOT will work with local land use officials cooperatively in making land use decisions. The data and analysis completed for the US-31 Land Use Study provides local land use officials with tools to use in making future land use decisions. Farmland impacts were extensively considered in the DEIS and are included in **Section 4.2** of the FEIS. Every consideration was made to minimize farmland impacts through modifications to the route alignment to avoid splitting farms and maintaining access.
- e. Through the refinement of alternatives, the impacts to wetlands, farmland operations and communities were significantly reduced. (See **Table 4.1-1**) It is estimated that the Preferred Alternative will only impact less than three acres of wetland.
- f. Alternative A, which includes construction of a limited-access freeway on existing US-31 to M-104 in Ottawa County does not meet the "Purpose and Need" of the project.

2. Induced Demand

- a. Land development patterns indicated that new developments are locating east of US-31 as opposed to adjacent to US-31 by choice without any major new transportation facilities (See US-31 Land Use Study). The Preferred Alternative provides access to this development and an alternative crossing of the Grand River in addition to meeting the Purpose and Need for the project.

- b. The US-31 Land Use Study, developed after the DEIS, did consider the effects of induced demand. The amount of induced demand was measured by the forecasts of land expected to be converted from open land to built land.
- c. Alternative A was included for evaluation in the US-31 Land Use Study. In addition to not meeting the project's "Purpose and Need", it did not substantially reduce the conversion of open land to built land, because development pressures are so great in Ottawa County due to factors besides transportation.

3. Respecting Taxpayers and Their Investments

- a. Since the DEIS was published road segments on US-31 in poor condition have been repaired. Further, signals have been upgraded in the cities of Holland and Grand Haven to improve traffic flow and increase safety. Over 80% of MDOT's budget is spent on maintaining and rehabilitating existing state highways. However, safety and operational problems on US-31 exist and require improvements that are more extensive than preservation or maintenance activities. Additional access across the Grand River in Ottawa County is also important to provide an alternative to the existing crossing. Traffic generated from new growth and development will further tax the capacity of existing local roadways as well as US-31. Long-term maintenance costs for the overall transportation system in Ottawa County are expected to be similar between the alternatives.
- b. Comment acknowledged. MDOT's 2008-2012 Five Year Transportation Plan balances new construction with preservation work and increased capacity projects.
- c. Comment acknowledged. The No-Action Alternative assumes preservation of existing US-31. County roads and city streets will be maintained by their respective jurisdictions. Historic trends and forecasts indicate that travel demand will necessitate capacity improvements, regardless of road condition. The No-Action Alternative does not meet the "Purpose and Need" of the project nor the long-term transportation needs in the study area.

4. Identifying Real Needs

- a. Reconstruction and repairs to the Bascule Bridge in Grand Haven are no longer part of the Preferred Alternative. Even with mechanical and electrical repairs to the bridge, traffic volumes are expected to reach levels that will create gridlock conditions on the bridge. The need for an additional river crossing has been expressed several times during the EIS process and is detailed in **Chapter 2**. There are many elements in determining the ability of an alternative to satisfy the "Purpose and Need" of the project. The Preferred Alternative meets other needs in addition to the need for a new river crossing. The Preferred Alternative contributes to the resolution of transportation system needs and provides for a new river crossing.
- b. The Preferred Alternative does not preclude the development of transit and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) as measures to reduce demand and manage traffic flow. The success of a transit is largely dependent on local investment to provide transit services, as operating costs are primarily funded through local millages and fare box revenue. Further, it is not reasonable to expect that transit use will increase to a level necessary to offset the total additional capacity required. The US-31 Land Use Study concluded that increased travel demand in the study area will occur regardless of the transportation improvements made. The

Preferred Alternative provides an alternative route for travelers to use when there are traffic incidents on US-31 which could be communicated by an ITS system. Transit and ITS alone will not meet the “Purpose and Need” of the project.

5. Conclusion

The US-31 Land Use Study, completed after the DEIS, extensively examined the land use impacts of the alternatives under consideration. Further, design refinements made after the DEIS resulted in significant impact reductions to farm operations, wetlands and community impacts.



- First U.S. Law to Ban DDT 1969
- Michigan Environmental Protection Act 1970
- Inland Lakes and Streams Act 1972
- Sand Dune Protection and Management Act 1976
- Michigan Bottle Bill 1976
- Solid Waste Management Act 1978
- Wetland Protection Act 1979
- Michigan Used Motor Oil Recycling Program 1979
- Hazardous Waste Management Act 1979
- Pigeon River County State Forest Oil Drilling Protections 1980
- Surface and Underground Mine Reclamation Act 1982
- Great Lakes Oil Drilling Ban 1982
- Peat Mining Act 1984
- Chlordane Ban 1987
- Statewide Combined Sewer Overflow Policy 1988
- Michigan Non Point Source Water Pollution Management Strategy 1988
- Sand Dune Protection Act 1989
- Oil Dumping Ban 1990
- Grand River Citizen's Watershed Council 1990
- Adopt-a-Stream 1991
- Project Greenpace 1992
- Integrated Pest Management 1993
- West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum 1994
- West Michigan Greenway Council 1996
- Religion, Ecology & Spirituality Workshop 1997
- L.U.T.R.A.Q. Taskforce 1998

January 11, 1999

Jose A. Lopez
Acting Public Hearings Officer
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Dept. of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing MI 48909

Re: State Project Number 33955
Federal Project Number DPR 0045 (001)
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Lopez:

The following are our comments with respect to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. 31 project.

The EIS does not give a very informative or defensible basis for its conclusion that the build alternatives will reduce ozone. In fact, these conclusions are highly suppositional and oversimplified. For instance, decreases in congestion may improve air quality, or they may be canceled out by increases in vehicle miles traveled (vmt's). One way to assure this doesn't happen is to make vmt-level maintenance or reduction a project objective as transportation projects are conceived and developed. Another way might be to do projections of vmt's in project planning and calculate their effects on air quality in relation to other factors.

It is idle to anticipate ozone-reduction benefits from ridesharing or modal changes to bicycles and rail, unless you are undertaking some measure of comprehensive planning for these outcomes. Only by planning to achieve such benefits can you have some reasonable assurance of achieving them. Therefore, comprehensive TSM-type, demand-management planning should be a concomitant of all the alternatives and of any selected recommendation.

In the required regional ozone-reduction analysis to follow the recommendation of an alternative, I would like to see MDOT make use of more extensive ozone computer modeling capabilities of the type being used by the MDEQ. Actually it would make more sense to do that prior to the selection of an alternative, in case a CAAA nonconformity should be identified. The EIS seems to view this as not very likely, but I can see it possibly happening if the analysis is sufficiently detailed as to reflect fundamental realities of air quality physics.

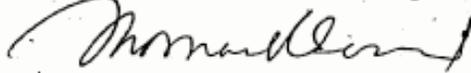
The EIS also talks a lot about carbon monoxide but not much about particulates, hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen, lead, sulfur dioxide.

It ought to be possible to provide a graphic calculus or computer model demonstrating how air pollution of various types varies with vehicle speed, distance traveled, fuel efficiency and other factors.

The DEIS does nothing along this line other than to suggest that there will be park and ride lots, bike paths, and connectivity of existing bike paths. It does not indicate or discuss any sort of rail service at all, even though a rail route already exists along the current US 31 route and might be converted readily to provide passenger service between Muskegon, Grand Haven and Holland.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Leonard
Executive Director

West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC), January 11, 1999

Acknowledged receipt of WMEAC's letter and concerns with the level of documentation included in the DEIS for:

- Air Quality
 - Transit (Park'n'Ride)
 - Non-motorized Facilities.
1. A new Grand River crossing would be provided by the Preferred Alternative, near 120th Avenue. The new river crossing is expected to reduce some trip lengths now being forced to use congested bridges on more indirect routings or long detours in the event of a closing of the bascule bridge.

Ozone level emissions are calculated with regional MPO air quality and travel demand models, **Section 4.6**. Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) projections are part of the MPO and state travel demand modeling process and were considered during the air quality conformity process, as required.

2. A comprehensive TSM analysis was completed. Some TSM improvements have already been implemented on segments of US-31 in Holland and Grand Haven. TSM improvements are short-term, low capital improvements that complement the Preferred Alternative. These will continue to be implemented as traffic conditions warrant.
3. **Section 4.6** of the FEIS discusses Air Quality. The MACC, WMSRDC and GVMC MPOs and State of Michigan all have conforming plans, which include the Preferred Alternative in the travel demand model and as required by federal regulations. Future MPO plans and TIPS will address air quality conformity as required for the project.
4. Transit is discussed in **Section 3.4**. While transit alone will not satisfy the Purpose and Need, types of transit could be implemented with or without the Preferred Alternative, including rail transit. It is however, it is neither feasible nor reasonable to expect transit ridership to completely eliminate the need for highway improvements. (MDOT will work with local agencies to identify opportunities to enhance non-motorized trails. MDOT will work with local agencies to identify the need for Park & Ride, as interest and demand warrants.)

5th floor DEQ/LJMD
 30 Years of Transitioning
 Concern into Action

Fax: 517-373-9965

Dec 28 '00 13:46 P.02



Fed U.S. Lawless to Ban
 DDT 1980

Michigan Environmental
 Protection Act 1970

Inland Lakes and Streams
 Act 1971

State Dam Protection
 and Management Act
 1976

Michigan Basin BUI 1974

Solid Waste Management
 Act 1978

Wetland Protection
 Act 1979

Michigan Used Motor Oil
 Recycling Program 1979

Hazardous Waste
 Management Act 1979

Pigeon River Corridor
 State Forest Oil Drilling
 Provisions 2000

Surface and Underground
 Mine Reclamation Act
 1982

Open Lakes Oil
 Drilling Ban 1982

New Mining Act 1984

Charter Ban 1987

Statewide Combined
 Sewer Overflow Policy
 1988

Michigan Non Point
 Source Water Pollution
 Management Strategy
 1988

State Dam Protection
 Act 1987

Oil Dumping Ban 1990

Grand River Citizens's
 Watershed Council 1990

Adopt-a-Stream 1991

Project Overpass 1992

Integrated Pest
 Management 1993

West Michigan
 Sustainable
 Business Forum 1994

West Michigan
 Overway Council 1996

Religion, Biology & Spirituality
 Workshop 1997

L.U.T.R.A.O. Talkbox 1998

Lakeview 1999

Brown Patch 2000

Post-It® Fax Note	7671	Date	12/21/01	# of pages	3
To	Theresa Petko.	From	Mike O'Malley		
Co./Dept.	VPS	Co.			
Phone #		Phone #	517/335-2634		
Fax #		Fax #			

December 22, 2000

Gerald Fulcher, Jr. P.E. Chief
 Transportation and Flood Hazard Management Unit
 Land and Water Management Division
 Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
 P.O. Box 30458
 Lansing, MI 48909-7958

Dear Mr. Fulcher:

This is to formally request that Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) retract its concurrence as a party in the NEPA/404 process in the case of the US-31 expressway project in Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Counties, the so-called Grand Haven Rural Bypass.

You had indicated to me in a phone call early this year that the MDEQ would cease to oppose the bypass construction along the route of alternative F/J1 inasmuch as Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) had agreed to elevate the expressway through the wetlands feeding into Pigeon Creek.

I remain unclear as to whether this concurrence was expressed to The Federal Highway Administration in writing, or whether it was made tacitly; and upon what scientific basis it was made.

Since then, there have been new developments and refinements in the alignment plan for F/J1. It now appears that the expressway will pass directly through a regionally significant regulated wetland known as Bruce's Bayou or Bruce's Marsh, in the area of the proposed Grand River crossing, directly eliminating over thirty acres and endangering the rest.

The most recent alignment maps published this month by MDOT show also that the specific route through the Pigeon River wetlands area has also been altered, with the possible result of a greater acreage being impacted.

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These decisions were not made or foreseen at the time of MDEQ's apparent concurrence with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released by MDOT for this project. However, now that the alignment has been adjusted with these results, it seems clear that MDEQ's concurrence is no longer appropriate and needs to be retracted.

WMEAC believes that because of the unique character and rare, pristine condition of Bruce's Bayou, the fact that it retains characteristics dating back before European settlement, and because it contains species of special interest and concern including rare and state-threatened species, it should not be considered a candidate for mitigation but should be AVOIDED. No mitigation plan can hope to duplicate or replace this remarkable natural area.

WMEAC also believes that it is the obligation of MDEQ under the Clean Water Act not to allow this project to proceed along these current lines, without refusing its concurrence and requiring a full and public discussion of the environmental costs now being contemplated, as well as formally justifying its position for public scrutiny.

WMEAC is requesting specifically the following:

1. MDEQ should declare its retraction of concurrence in the F/J1 alignment pending further discussion of the environmental consequences.
2. MDEQ should withhold concurrence in the F/J1 or any other alternative pending the emergence of a clear consensus, and a greater measure of finality about the route and its environmental consequences.
3. MDEQ should explain how the elevated causeway over the (currently) wooded wetlands of the Pigeon Creek—between 120th and 116th avenues, just south of Stanton—make acceptable this proposed incursion into this regulated wetland—including addressing such questions as: Is there a thermal pollution impact on this cold water fishery? How does one mitigate this impact? What about the impact of salt, sand, contaminated rubber dust, oil, heavy metal, and other runoff pollution from the quarter-mile-long elevated roadway? Has that impact been modeled? MDEQ should essentially commit to paper its scientific analysis of MDOT's mitigation plan related to the elevated roadway over Pigeon Creek.

5th floor DEQ/LUMD

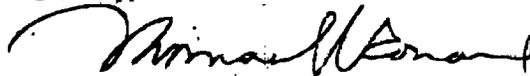
Fax: 517-373-9965

Dec 28 '00 13:47

P.04

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important regional issue.
I look forward to your earliest possible response.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Leonard
Executive Director

Cc: Thom Peterson, President, WMEAC
Alan Bennett, Vice President, WMEAC
Dan Vogler, Chairman, CSTS
Timothy Dykstra, Executive Director, CSTS
Jeffery Saxby, MDOT
Sherry Kamke, EPA
Gary Mannesto, Army Corps of Engineers
Willie Taylor, U.S. Dept of Interior
James Kirschensteiner, FHWA
The Hon Senator Ken Sikkema
The Hon Senator Glen Steil
The Hon Rep. Patricia Birkholz
The Hon Rep. elect Barbara Vanderveen
The Hon Senator Leon Stille
Julis Stoneman, Land Conservancy of West Michigan
Norm Spring, Spoonville Gun Club
Congressman Vern Ehlers
Congressman Pete Hoekstra

West Michigan Environmental Action Council, December 22, 2000

Letter acknowledged. MDOT continued to work with agencies, including the DEQ and local units of government to revise the F/J1 Alternative and address concerns. The Preferred Alternative affects less than three acres areas in the vicinity of the bridge. There are no wetland impacts to the Pigeon River watershed. Please see **Section 4.9** for additional information on wetland impacts.