



U.S. Department of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Record of Decision
US-31, Holland to Grand Haven, Ottawa County, Michigan
FHWA-MI-EIS-98-01-R

Decision

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 109(h), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) concurs with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in determining the Selected Alternative for US-31 from Holland to Grand Haven and a new route (M-231) west of 120th Avenue in Robinson and Crockery Townships, Ottawa County, Michigan. The Selected Alternative will:

- Make improvements to US-31 (adding a lane in each direction and intersection modifications) from East Lakewood Boulevard north to Quincy Street in Holland Township;
- Make improvements to US-31 (adding a lane in each direction and intersection modifications) from south of Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street in Grand Haven;
- Construct a new two-lane limited access roadway west of 120th Avenue from M-45 north 7.1 miles to the I-96/M-104 interchange including a new Grand River crossing;
- Acquire right-of-way (ROW) for the new M-231 roadway will also preserve the potential for expansion to a four lane divided facility when warranted in the future;
- Make improvements to M-104 near I-96 and new ramps at the I-96 and M-231 interchange; and,
- Make improvements to the I-96/112th Avenue interchange.

The Selected Alternative is identified as the environmentally preferred alternative that best:

- Meets the purpose and need for the transportation improvements;
- Meets design constraints; and,
- Protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, social, and natural resources.

FHWA has based its decision on the:

- Transportation needs of the project study area;
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS);
- Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS);
- Interagency coordination;
- Public comments received on the DEIS and FEIS; and,
- Other information in the project record.

FHWA has reviewed and considered all comments received on the project during the 30-day review period after the initial Notice of Availability of the FEIS appeared in the Federal Register on February 19, 2010. Substantive comments received on the FEIS are summarized and responded to in Section 7 of this Record of Decision. All other comments and responses can be obtained through: the MDOT Office by calling (616-451-3091), or the project website at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_11058---,00.html

APRIL 23, 2010
Signature Date

Theodore G. Burch
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RECORD OF DECISION

Proposed US-31 Improvement Study from I-196 North to I-96 (Holland North to Grand Haven) in Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Counties, Michigan

FHWA-MI-EIS-98-01-R

1.0 BACKGROUND

This Record of Decision (ROD) sets forth the basis for choosing the Selected Alternative for US-31 from I-196 to I-96 (Holland to Grand Haven) Improvements, in Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Counties, Michigan. The project will improve access, enhance safety and relieve congestion in the study area.

Federal Cooperating Agencies included:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

1.1 Project History

In the 1950s and early 1960s, US-31 was widened from two lanes to a four lane boulevard between Holland and Grand Haven, and the present bascule bridge was constructed over the Grand River between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg. During this time, US-31 in the Holland area was relocated from River Avenue and 136th Avenue east to its current location. In the Grand Haven area, US-31 was relocated from its previous route along 168th Avenue. US-31 has remained essentially unchanged since that time. This segment (from I-196 to I-96) is a gap in the US-31 limited access freeway system.

Over the past few decades, Ottawa County has experienced substantial population growth and for the past two decades has been one of the fastest growing counties in Michigan. This growth caused traffic to increase substantially in the US-31 corridor. In 1987, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) initiated "A Feasibility Study Report for the Improvement of US-31 from the City of Holland to the City of Grand Haven through Ottawa County" (Engineering Report 1932). The report was completed in 1990. It primarily examined alternatives to address traffic and traffic related issues along the existing route, but did not consider off-alignment options. The report also recommended development of a detailed study of on-alignment and off-alignment alternatives.

Based on the findings of the 1990 engineering report, MDOT began developing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in 1993. The Project's Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on May 5, 1994. Scoping meetings were held on August 30th and 31st, 1994. The DEIS was signed on October 23rd, 1998. A public hearing was held on December 8th and 9th, 1998. A 45-day comment period for was established for the DEIS, ending on January 11, 1999. Subsequently MDOT extended the comment period to January 25, 1999.

Between 1999 and 2010, MDOT took into consideration the DEIS comments and the project's financial constraints, initially determined that F/J-1 was the preferred alternative and developed priority segments and needs in partnership with the stakeholders. The modified preferred alternative (F-1a) was formally presented at a public meeting on November 8th, 2006, as well as in several meetings with individual agencies and local units of government between 2004 and 2010.

On March 16th, 2009 the MDOT re-evaluation of the DEIS was approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was signed by the FHWA on February 5, 2010; copies were distributed and a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on February 19, 2010. The waiting period was 30 days and all comments were received by March 26, 2010.

2.0 DECISION

The Selected Alternative for the US-31 Improvement Study is the Preferred Alternative F-1a, as presented in the FEIS. This section describes the selected alternative. In the event of any difference in wording, the ROD takes precedence over the FEIS.

2.1 Selection of Alternative

The DEIS evaluated 29 alternatives including the No-build Alternative and eliminated 18 alternatives. Eleven alternatives were carried forward for further analysis. Since the publication of the DEIS, six alternatives were dismissed.

In the FEIS, the remaining 5 alternatives were modified to incorporate other design elements and improvements to minimize impacts and included in the FEIS (see Section 3.3 for additional information). Of the remaining 5 Alternatives, F/J-1 was initially selected as the Preferred Alternative and further modified based on financial constraint, local priorities and State needs. The modifications and refinements of F/J-1 were designated as Alternative F-1a.

FHWA and MDOT provided opportunities for United States government agencies and public involvement in the development of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. Both the DEIS and FEIS were made available for public review. A public hearing was held for the DEIS (December 8 and 9 of 1998). Comments received on the DEIS have been addressed in the FEIS. The opportunities and methods used to involve public and government agencies in the study can be found in Chapter 5 of the FEIS. Website, local agency meetings, state agency coordination discussions, public information meetings and other means were used to solicit input. Cooperating Agency input was also sought at key milestones.

In addition, concurrence was received from the participating agencies in the Concurrent NEPA/404 Merger Process for Transportation Projects. The concurring agencies included:

- USEPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- USACE – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- USFWS – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- DNRE – Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment

Substantive comments received on the FEIS are summarized and responded to in **Section 7** of this Record of Decision (ROD). All other comments and responses can be obtained through: the MDOT Office by calling (616-451-3091), or the project website at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_11058---,00.html

2.2 Location and Description of the Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative includes: a new two-lane roadway, with a new Grand River crossing, located generally between M-45 (Lake Michigan Drive) and the I-96/M-104/112 Avenue interchange area; additional lanes on M-104 in the vicinity of the new M-104/M-231 junction; a new I-96/M-231 interchange will be constructed; and new ramps will be added to the existing I-96/112th Avenue interchange. It also includes improvements to priority congested segments of existing US-31 in Grand Haven from south of the Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street, and

in Holland from Lakewood Boulevard north to the Quincy Street **(Figure 1)**. Individual segments are shown in more detail in Appendix A of the FEIS and **Appendix A** of this ROD.

The segments of Alternative F/J-1, south of M-45 (as described on page 3-8 of the FEIS), were not included with this Selected Alternative (F-1a) because traffic issues and needs were determined to be less significant. The social, environmental and economic impacts were also not offset by the anticipated benefits derived over the FEIS 20 year planning horizon. In addition, replacement of the existing bascule bridge in Grand Haven is beyond the timeframe covered in this FEIS, based on its condition, and therefore, it is not included in the Selected Alternative.

The Selected Alternative (F-1a) meets the Project's Purpose and Need within the financial resources available, through the year 2030. More specifically, it addresses the need for a new Grand River crossing, and provides a high level of safe and efficient state trunkline service to the area.

The Project provides the following benefits:

- Improves the movement of people and goods by reducing vehicular delay and congestion along key segments of US-31 in Grand Haven and the Holland area.
- Increases transportation system capacity, addresses regional growth and enhances Grand River crossing efficiency by providing a new river crossing (M-231) approximately mid-way between the two existing crossings of the Grand River in the study area.
- The new Grand River Bridge and existing US-31 improvements will enhance safety, emergency service access, incident management and traffic flow in the study area.
- Provides north/south route continuity and connectivity in Ottawa County by creating a new state highway segment (M-231), linking three existing state highways (M-45, M-104 and I-96), as well as county primary roads (Lincoln Street and 120th Avenue).
- Minimizes impacts compared to other Practical Alternatives evaluated in the FEIS.

2.2.1 Alternative Components

The selected alternative, as depicted in figure 1 contains construction of a new Michigan route and improvement on 2 existing routes:

- New north-south M-231 Route, between M-45 and the I-96
- M-104 improvements in the vicinity of the M-104/M-231/I-96 Junction, including improvements to the 112th Ave Interchange
- US-31 Improvements in Grand Haven from south of Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street
- US-31 Improvement in Holland from Lakewood Boulevard north to Quincy Street

The following subsections describe the activities associated with these routes. Supplemental information can be found in Section 3.4 of the FEIS.

New M-231 Route

The M-231 route creates a logical trunkline segment with independent utility. The Route will be designed so as not to preclude future expansion to a four-lane divided facility between M-45 and I-96, or non-motorized facility accommodation when warranted. The new two-lane route (M-231) will:

- Be constructed as a limited access corridor with controlled access at-grade intersections to protect the corridor from development, and because it will be designated as a limited access facility, there will be no driveways or additional at-grade cross streets, beyond the intersections noted.
- Include a new M-231 Grand River crossing about a quarter-mile west of 120th Avenue. This new bridge will be about 3900' long and will span the entire 100-year floodplain and associated wetlands of the Grand River. The new M-231 Grand River Bridge design may include lengthened sub-structure (piers). The pier lengthening will allow for the potential future widening of the M-231 when needed. Pier length will be evaluated further during the subsequent design/engineering phase of the project.
- Include stream and county drain crossings along M-231: the Little Robinson Creek (Allen Pipple Drain), south of North Cedar Drive, Stearns Creek, south of Johnson Street, the North Beeline Drain, near Lincoln Street, and the Parkhurst Drain (Black Creek tributary) near M-1-04. The longest of those structures is the Little Robinson Creek Bridge, which is currently estimated at just over 500 feet (see table 4.12-1 of the FEIS).
- Provide direct access to the new M-231 alignment at the intersections as noted in Table 2.2-1 below. The remaining roadways will either be grade separated by a bridge, or cul-de-saced to prevent direct access to M-231.

Access to the New M-231 Alignment		Table 2.2-1
Intersection	Overpass	Cul-de-Sac
M-45	Rich Street	Johnson Street
Lincoln Street	Buchanan Street	Cypress Street
M-104	Sleeper Street	120 th Avenue at M-104
I-96	North Cedar Drive	
	Limberlost Lane	
	Leonard Street	

- Include some local operational improvements such as addition of turn lanes in locations such as 112th Ave at Apple Avenue, Lincoln Street at M-231, M-45 at M-231 and 120th Ave at M-45. Additional information on the proposed improvements can be found in **Appendix A** of this ROD.

In addition, the project will acquire Right of Way (ROW) to accommodate drainage, grading, structures, utilities and intersection concepts along the M-231 new route. It will also preserve ROW for future expansion when needed.

Additional engineering is needed to address all of the issues associated with the construction of a new Grand River bridge. Therefore, a Bridge Study will be completed during the subsequent design/engineering phase of the project, after this ROD is approved. The new Grand River Bridge and pier type, size, costs and impacts will be assessed in more detail, and a bridge option will be selected, based on the study findings in the final engineering phase. The Bridge Study will determine the most reasonable and practical bridge and pier configuration to accommodate the new M-231 two-lane route being cleared in this ROD, minimize Grand River and flood plain area impacts during construction, and to not prevent future expansion of the bridge and roadway when needed.

M-104/I-96/112th Avenue Improvements

M-104 will be widened to five lanes between Power Drive and I-96. The improvements along M-104 will provide a center left turn lane, and right turn lanes at 124th Avenue and M-231. Other operational improvements will be made at the intersection of M-231 and M-104, including the addition of a traffic signal and modifications to 120th Avenue to provide access to I-96 (**see Appendix A, Figure A-10**).

Improvements to I-96 will include removal of the existing abandoned railroad structures north of M-104 and placement of fill. Two new structures on I-96 will be constructed to accommodate the M-231 interchange access (**see Appendix A, Figure A-10**).

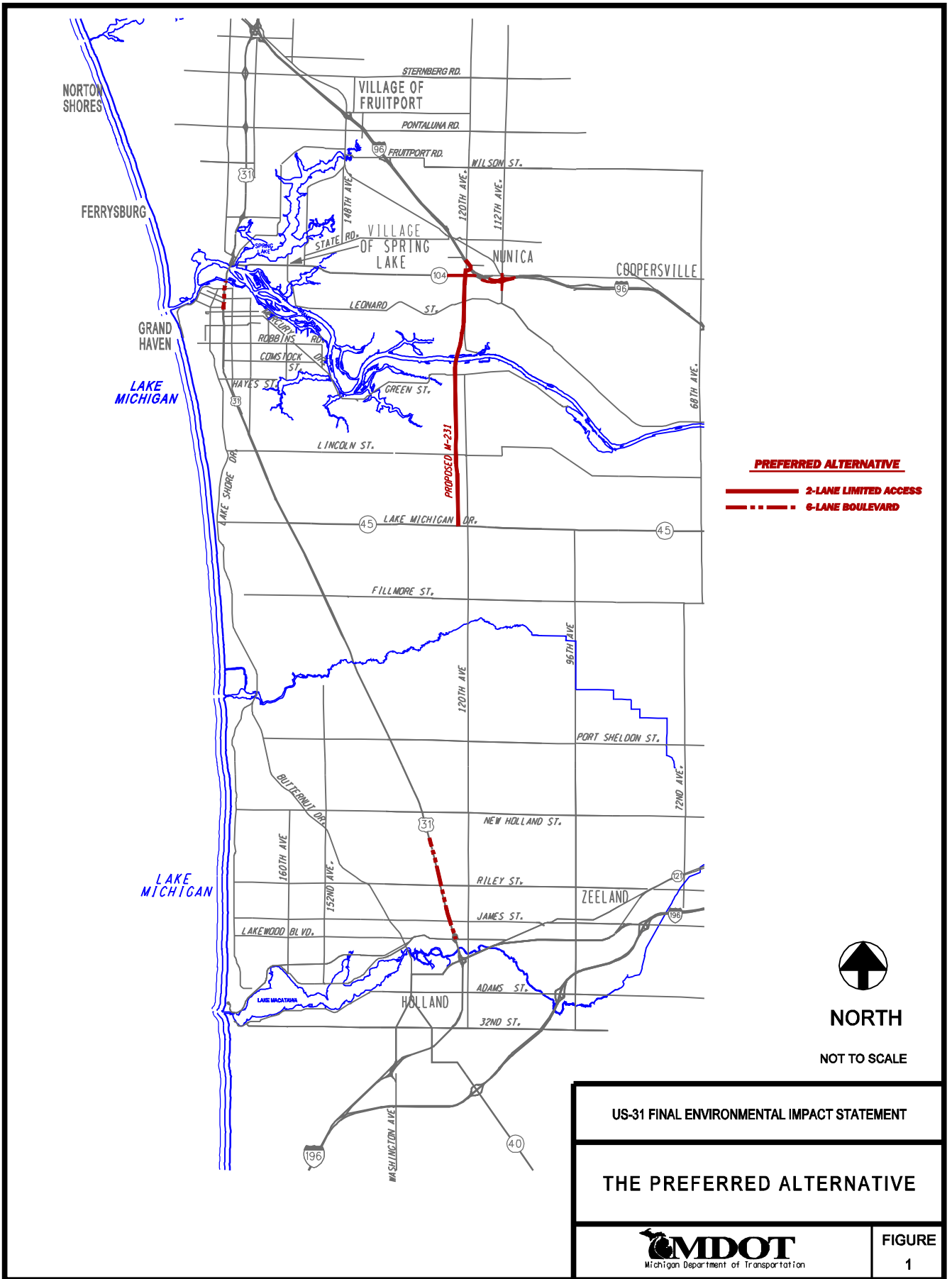
The 112th Avenue Interchange will be reconstructed and the interchange completed with all movements to and from I-96. In addition, a weave-merge lane will be constructed between M-104 and 112th Avenue (**see Appendix A, Figure A-10**).

US-31 Improvements in Grand Haven

The existing roadway will be widened to accommodate an additional thru lane from south of Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street. Modifications will also be made to the existing crossovers (**see Appendix A, Figure A-5**).

US-31 Improvements North of Holland

The existing roadway will be widened to accommodate an additional thru lane from Lakewood Boulevard to north of Quincy Street. Modifications will also be made to the existing crossovers (**see Appendix A, Figure A-1 through A-4**).



US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



FIGURE
1

2.2.2 Property Acquisition

Relocations include 51 residential, 9 businesses, and 6 agricultural displacements. A Conceptual Relocation Plan is located in **Appendix C** of this ROD and relocations are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2 of the FEIS.

2.2.3 Future Actions

Any future improvements within the US-31/M-231 corridor and FEIS study area, north or south of M-45, are beyond the scope of this NEPA evaluation, and will require additional NEPA evaluation. This includes widening between M-45 and I-96/M-104, within the proposed M-231 ROW to be purchased with the Selected Alternative. Any subsequent NEPA activities will be initiated by MDOT, when warranted by changed conditions, such as traffic levels, population growth and/or statewide financial constraints, in coordination with the affected MPO's and local officials.

2.3 Environmental Commitments (Mitigation and Enhancements)

The Federal Highway Administration, in approving this ROD, directs MDOT to implement the project and environmental commitments. Environmental commitments are those mitigation measures listed on the "Project Mitigation Summary (Green Sheet)" contained in **Appendix B** of this ROD. FHWA will support efforts, in coordination with MDOT and applicable resource agencies, to ensure timely implementation of these measures. As the project progresses through design and construction, efforts will continue to minimize harm and reduce project impacts. When possible, without reducing the performance of the Selected Alternative or increasing impacts to sensitive resources, public and agency input on mitigation measures will be considered.

2.3.1 Environmental Commitment Funding

Mitigation measures implemented pursuant to this ROD (including land acquisition) are eligible for federal funding and subject to prior approval by FHWA. Enhancement measures will be federally funded if eligible, and state or locally funded, if not eligible.

2.3.2 Environmental Commitment Tracking

Environmental impacts and environmental mitigation commitments to address the impacts identified in the FEIS, will be tracked and reported to the public, appropriate resource agencies, and local stakeholders, per existing state and federal regulations.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Twenty-nine Illustrative Alternatives were initially considered before selecting the Preferred Alternative. This section briefly describes the alternatives considered and the rationale used to analyze them.

3.1 Concurrent NEPA/404 Merger Processes

This US-31 Study was initiated by MDOT and FHWA as a NEPA 404 merger project due to the potential impacts to wetlands. The NEPA 404 Merger Process allows the NEPA requirements and the Clean Water Act 404 requirements to be addressed concurrently for this project. This combined process serves as a consensus building tool for the agencies involved and addresses the NEPA and Section 404 regulations.

The three concurrence points within the NEPA process are as follows:

- Concurrence Point 1 - Purpose and Need for the proposed action.
- Concurrence Point 2 - Alternatives Carried Forward for detailed study.
- Concurrence Point 3 - The Preferred Alternative for the FEIS.

The following state and federal agencies are participating in this process

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- United States Department of the Interior/Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE)

Concurrence on the first two points is generally obtained prior to the DEIS. However, some of the agencies deferred concurrence, pending further review of the impacts and mitigation for the alternatives. Subsequent correspondence has been received and documented in the FEIS regarding point 1 and 2. Concurrence on the third point was requested as part of the agency review and comment process for the FEIS/ROD.

Formal correspondence was received indicating formal concurrence on the first two points as follows:

- USACOE: Concurrence on point 1 and 2 (FEIS Page C-23)
- DNRE: Concurrence on point 1 and 2 (FEIS Page C-73)
- USFWS: Concurrence on point 1 and 2 (FEIS Page C-390)
- USEPA: Concurrence on point 1 and 2 (FEIS Page C-392)

Formal correspondence was received indicating formal concurrence on the third point as follows:

- USACOE: Concurrence on point 3 (Date April 7, 2010)
- DNRE: Concurrence on point 3 (Date March 22, 2010)
- USFWS: Concurrence on point 3 (Date March 22, 2010)
- USEPA: Concurrence on point 3 (Date March 17, 2010)

3.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to develop a financially feasible transportation improvement to reduce traffic congestion and delay, improve safety, and increase access to improve the movement of people and goods in the corridor study area.

Some specific objectives of the “Purpose” of the proposed project include the following:

- Improve safety
- Enhance Grand River crossing efficiency
- Increase transportation system capacity
- Reduce vehicular delay
- Reduce congestion
- Meet access needs of regional growth and development
- Improve safety, emergency service access, incident management and traffic circulation in the study area

The need for the proposed action is the following:

- To reduce existing and future traffic congestion within the US-31 study area in order to provide more efficient movement of people and goods.
- Provide efficient crossing of the Grand River to provide access options for area residents and businesses, and for the growing population and commercial areas in Ottawa County.
- Enhance safety by reducing the potential for crashes by providing additional capacity, geometric, and operational improvements on existing US-31 in the Holland area and the City of Grand Haven.

Some specific “needs” identified during the DEIS and FEIS process includes the following:

- Roadway capacity deficiencies and congestion in the US-31 corridor
- Land use and growth within the study area
- Lack of system linkages between state highways and local arterials
- Less than desirable levels of service at some intersections
- Less than desirable crash rates exceeding statewide averages at some locations
- Delay and traffic interruptions caused by unscheduled openings or malfunctions of the bascule bridge in the City of Grand Haven

Additional local needs identified in subsequent meetings with government units and as a result of public comments from the DEIS emphasized the following:

- A new Grand River crossing
- Improved emergency access
- North-south road continuity in Ottawa County
- Maintain local road access to and through US-31
- Relief of traffic growth on 68th Avenue and the existing Grand River crossing

3.3 Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives

Many improvement alternatives were considered during the US-31 DEIS and FEIS process. The Practical Alternatives considered in the FEIS are shown in the FEIS on Figure 3.2-1.

3.3.1 Illustrative Alternatives

Twenty-nine Illustrative Alternatives were considered. After analysis and comparison to the project's purpose and need, eighteen were eliminated as documented in the DEIS.

3.3.2 Practical Alternatives Carried Forward after the DEIS

Eleven Practical Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, were presented in the DEIS. Six Practical Alternatives were eliminated after the DEIS, based on the following criteria.

- The degree to which the alternative met the Purpose and Need
- Public input
- Minimize social and economic impacts
- Positive impacts of stand alone Transportation System Management improvements not sustainable

The six alternatives eliminated were:

- **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternatives:** The 2005 and 2020 TSM Alternatives were interim steps that provided for short-term and long-term, low-cost improvements to existing US-31 to increase capacity and/or safety in spot locations.
- **Alternative F - New Alignment Freeway:** This alternative included the construction of a new limited-access freeway east of existing US-31 connecting I-196 east of Zeeland to I-96 at the M-104 interchange.
- **Alternative J1 - Holland/Zeeland Area Freeway Bypass:** This alternative included the construction of a limited-access freeway bypass around the east and north sides of the Holland/Zeeland area with a freeway connecting I-196 east of Zeeland to US-31 north of Holland Township.
- **Alternative P - Wide Median Boulevard on Existing US-31:** This alternative included the construction of a wide median boulevard, including an additional lane in each direction, on existing US-31 between I-196 and M-104, and a controlled-access local Grand Haven bypass connecting US-31 and I-96. It also included a bypass crossing the Grand River near 148th Avenue.
- **Alternative P1 - Narrow Median Boulevard on Existing US-31:** This alternative included the construction of a narrow median boulevard, including an additional lane in each direction, on existing US-31 between I-196 and M-104, and a controlled-access local Grand Haven bypass connecting US-31 and I-96. It also included a bypass crossing the Grand River near 148th Avenue.

3.4 Practical Alternatives Evaluated in the FEIS

After eliminating the alternatives described above, MDOT began evaluating the remaining alternatives against the project's Purpose and Need as part of the FEIS development. Five Practical Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, were carried forward from the DEIS for further analysis in this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The alternatives carried forward (as discussed below) were selected based on their ability to best address the reasons for improving the corridor when compared with other potential alternatives. Alternatives A, F-1/F-3, R, and F/J-1 each included a new crossing of the Grand River and/or a replacement of the existing bascule bridge. MDOT also evaluated a new option presented by the Coalition for Sensible Transportation Solutions (CSTS) after publication of the DEIS.

These alternatives were further refined to minimize impacts and address public and agency concerns. Public, local government and regulatory agency concerns were identified and considered in the evaluation process. Traffic impacts, congestion relief, and access improvements to existing US-31 and within the overall FEIS study area were evaluated for existing and future (2030) conditions. Social and environmental factors were assessed, as well as future land use impacts. Project costs were also considered. The corridor study area in this FEIS includes western Ottawa County, and is the primary area of impact from the Practical Alternatives. In addition, the future year projections were extended to 2030 to cover a 20-year timeline for the FEIS.

Brief descriptions of the Practical Alternatives and the CSTS option are included below, and a Practical Alternative map in Figure 3.2-1 of the FEIS. The proposed route for the CSTS option can be found in the FEIS in Figure 5.4-1.

- **No-Action Alternative - Rehabilitating Existing US-31:** The No-Action Alternative did not reduce traffic congestion and delay, improve safety, or increase access. Therefore, it did not meet the purpose and need of the project. The No-Action Alternative would maintain US-31 in its present location without additional lanes. No new ROW, access changes, or crossing of the Grand River would be included with the No-Action Alternative. The existing bascule bridge between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg would be in its current location with the same number of lanes. This alternative was used as the basis of comparison with the other Practical Alternatives.
- **Alternative A - Freeway on Existing US-31:** This alternative included the construction of a limited-access four-lane freeway on existing US-31 from I-196 in the City of Holland to M-104 in Ottawa County, including a replacement of the existing bascule bridge between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg. The freeway included the ability to add an additional lane when warranted by traffic volumes and funding. The interchanges were designed to minimize ROW acquisition and reduce impacts. The estimated cost of Alternative A is approximately \$1.5 billion in 2004 dollars.

- **Alternative F-1/F-3 - New Alignment Freeway:** This alternative included the construction of a new limited-access four-lane freeway from I-196 in the City of Holland, on the existing US-31 alignment, to M-104 at I-96 in Ottawa County on a new alignment, beginning south of M-45. Boulevard improvements in the City of Grand Haven were also included, as well as replacement of the existing bascule bridge in Grand Haven. The estimated cost of Alternative F-1/F-3 was approximately \$1.4 billion in 2004 dollars.
- **Alternative R - Upgrading 120th Avenue to a State Highway:** This alternative included improvements on US-31 in the City of Holland, Holland Township, and the City of Grand Haven (Allegan and Ottawa Counties) and an upgraded roadway on 120th Avenue from I-196BL to I-96. The jurisdiction of 120th Avenue would be transferred from Ottawa County Road Commission (OCRC) to MDOT. The estimated cost of Alternative R was approximately \$750 million in 2004 dollars.
- **Alternative F/J-1:** Alternative F/J-1 included the construction of a six-lane boulevard on portions of existing US-31, a limited-access freeway connection from I-196 east of the City of Zeeland and from existing US-31 north of Holland to I-96 in Crockery Township, the removal and replacement of the existing bascule bridge between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg, and M-104 improvements. The estimated cost of Alternative F/J-1 was approximately \$1.3 billion in 2004 dollars. Specific improvements included in this alternative were:

New Alignment Freeway

- A new freeway beginning at I-196 east of Zeeland, extending northwesterly to 120th Avenue and New Holland Street, and paralleling 120th Avenue on the west, then northerly to I-96 in Crockery Township.
- A new freeway connection from US-31 to the new freeway just north of New Holland Street.
- M-104 reconstructed as a four-lane boulevard/five-lane roadway between 130th Avenue and I-96 in Crockery Township.

US-31 Six-Lane Boulevard

- A controlled access six-lane boulevard on US-31 through the City of Holland and Holland Township (32nd Street to Port Sheldon).
- A free access six-lane boulevard on US-31 through Grand Haven Township and the City of Grand Haven (Comstock Street to the Grand River).
- Reconstruction of the bascule bridge on US-31 between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg.

Alternative F/J-1 was selected and presented by MDOT initially as the proposed Preferred Alternative in 2000 based on its ability to address current and future traffic demand on US-31, as well as providing regional access improvements within the

corridor study area with an additional crossing of the Grand River and consistent with the project's purpose and need.

Although originally selected as the Preferred Alternative, Alternative F/J-1 was eliminated from further consideration due to the following reasons:

- Traffic flow and safety issues north of the Holland urbanized area and south of M-45 are less significant.
 - Traffic projections south of M-45, and north of and east of the Holland urbanized area can be accommodated by the existing US-31 and local system roads through 2030.
 - Significant environmental and social impacts south of M-45 as compared to limited anticipated benefits from major improvements at this time.
 - High costs could not be supported by the projected revenues statewide and in the affected MPO areas.
- **Coalition for Sensible Transportation Solutions (CSTS) Option:** The CSTS Option included a freeway bypass of the Holland-Zeeland area, a freeway on existing US-31 between Holland Township and the City of Grand Haven, a freeway bypass of the City of Grand Haven, a local 104th Avenue crossing of the Grand River and a new interchange at I-96 and Sternberg Road.

3.5 Preferred Alternative Modification

Alternative F/J-1 emerged initially as the alternative that best met the project's Purpose and Need in 1999/2000. Alternative F/J-1 included a new off alignment freeway between I-96 and I-196, and existing route improvements in Holland and Grand Haven. From 2002 to 2003, additional modifications and analysis of the five Practical Alternatives were made at the request of the resource agencies, to reduce impacts address other concerns. MDOT began to evaluate conceptual practical alternatives from the DEIS that would address the critical traffic and access issues, reduce impacts identified by resource agencies, as well as address statewide financial issues. As development of the FEIS continued, it became clear that funding would not be available to construct the entire F/J-1 Alternative at a cost of approximately \$1.3 billion. In 2004, MDOT began considering a scaled down project due to statewide financial issues. In 2005, local and state, needs and priorities were identified, in order to develop a consensus on a modified Preferred Alternative. In 2006, the modified Preferred Alternative (F-1a) was formally presented to the public at a public information meeting in November, 2006. From 2006 to 2010 the FEIS was finalized and completed based on Alternative F-1a.

Therefore the Preferred Alternative (F-1a) a presented in the FEIS, substantially meets the project Purpose and Need, and addresses local interests, by relieving congestion on existing US-31 and providing another crossing of the Grand Rivers in Ottawa County.

The Project will be designed so as not to preclude future expansion to a four-lane divided facility between M-45 and I-96, or non-motorized facility accommodation when warranted. Additional lanes on M-231 will likely be needed in the future, based on the projected traffic levels, following

the 20 year planning time-frame covered in the FEIS. The ROW preserved will be adequate to accommodate the additional lanes needed for a future four-lane divided facility, to address future traffic growth.

Subsequently, MDOT developed Alternative F-1a in cooperation with local officials in the corridor study area; it includes critical segments of F/J-1. Alternative F-1a, which became the Preferred Alternative for the FEIS, addresses local and state priority needs in the corridor study area with significantly less social and environmental impacts, and within the revenues projected to be available for the project. F-1a is described in more detail in Section 2 of this ROD.

3.6 Selected Alternative

There was no Preferred Alternative identified in the DEIS. A Preferred Alternative (F-1a) was presented in the FEIS. As indicated in more detail in Section 2 of this ROD, it includes a new two-lane roadway, with a new Grand River crossing, located generally along the previously identified F/J-1 alignment between M-45 (Lake Michigan Drive) and the I-96/M-104/112 Avenue interchange area; additional lanes on M-104 in the vicinity of the new M-104/M-231 junction; a new I-96/M-231 interchange will be constructed; and new ramps will be added to the existing I-96/112th Avenue interchange. Alternative F-1a also includes improvements to priority congested segments of existing US-31 in Grand Haven from south of the Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street, and in Holland from Lakewood Boulevard north to the Quincy Street

The segments of Alternative F/J-1, south of M-45, were not included with this Selected Alternative, F-1a, because traffic issues and needs were determined to be less significant. The social, environmental and economic impacts were also not offset by the anticipated benefits derived over the EIS planning horizon. In addition, replacement of the existing bascule bridge in Grand Haven is beyond the timeframe covered in this FEIS, based on its condition, and therefore, it is not included in the Selected Alternative.

3.6.1 Rationale for Selection

The Selected Alternative, F-1a, best satisfies the Purpose and Need for this project while minimizing impacts and providing financially feasible improvements. This conclusion was reached after additional coordination with MPO's, local agencies, resource agencies, other local stakeholders, and the public. Alternative F-1a addresses the project Purpose and Need as follows:

- Improves the movement of people and goods by reducing vehicular delay and congestion along key segments of US-31 in Grand Haven and the Holland area.
- Increases transportation system capacity, addresses regional growth and enhances Grand River crossing efficiency by providing a new river crossing (M-231) approximately mid-way between the two existing crossings of the Grand River in the corridor study area.

- The new M-231 Grand River Bridge and existing US-31 improvements will enhance safety, emergency service access, incident management and traffic flow in the corridor study area.
- Provides north/south route continuity and connectivity in the Ottawa County by creating a new state highway segment (M-231) and linking three existing state highways (M-45, M-104 and I-96), as well as county primary roads (Lincoln Street and 120th Avenue).
- Minimizes impacts compared to other Practical Alternatives evaluated in this FEIS.

The Selected Alternative effectively addresses the current traffic-related issues and future traffic demand by improving existing US-31 in the most congested areas and providing an alternate route with a new Grand River crossing to increase regional access. The new M-231 route will create a logical trunkline segment with independent utility. Potential indirect and cumulative impacts from urban sprawl pressures are minimized by limiting direct access to the new M-231 route.

- **Reduce Traffic Congestion and Delay:** Capacity improvements consisting of adding lanes and improving intersections will enhance traffic flow along US-31 within the Holland and Grand Haven urbanized areas. These improvements will increase capacity, reduce delay and improve intersection operations. The new alignment with the new Grand River crossing will provide an alternate through route for regional access and help further reduce traffic congestion and delay in the Grand Haven area. Traffic is also diverted from the Ottawa County Road Commission 68th Avenue two-lane river crossing on the east end of the corridor study area.
- **Improve Safety:** The capacity improvements on existing US-31 will reduce traffic congestion and delay and will also reduce the potential for crashes on existing US-31. The new M-231 alignment will be limited access (allows no access for vehicles or adjacent land use, between intersections), which has a reduced crash rate as compared with free access (provides access for vehicles at intersections, and adjacent land use access).
- **Increase Access:** The new alignment includes an additional crossing of the Grand River, a new I-96/M-231 interchange and improvements at the existing I-96/112th Avenue Interchange. This relieves travel demand on the existing US-31 crossing in Grand Haven, provides improved access to the growing area east of existing US-31 in the corridor study area, and provides a critical link for emergency services between Robinson Township and Crockery Township and the region.
- **Future Demand:** This new route will not preclude additional lanes on the Selected Alternative M-231 alignment north of M-45, when warranted by land use and traffic growth in the corridor study area. Additional improvements beyond this Selected Alternative will require future NEPA environmental documentation and alternative evaluation, based on statewide financial considerations, state trunkline needs, and local priorities.

4.0 FINAL SECTION 4(f)

FHWA finds, in accordance with 23 CFR 774 that the Selected Alternative would not impact Section 4(f) resources.

5.0 MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

All practicable measures to minimize environmental harm have been incorporated into the decision. Major regulatory requirements applicable to this project include the following:

- Consultation regarding threatened and endangered species under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act
- Certification of conformity under the Clean Air Act
- Compliance with Environmental Justice Guidelines and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in identifying impacts to minority and low income population groups in the Study Area
- Permitting activities

Actions committed to or taken to comply with these requirements are summarized below. The Project Mitigation Summary “Green Sheet”, which identifies proposed mitigation, is included as **Appendix B** of this ROD. Measures to minimize harm are outlined below.

5.1 Farmland

The Selected Alternative will directly affect less than 1% of the total farmland in Ottawa County and will not have a substantial regional impact on farmland, farm employment or farm production. The Selected Alternative will require six displacements of farmland operation, eight parcel splits, and impact a total of 115.8 acres of active farmland. MDOT will purchase property in accordance with FHWA regulations. Federal Prime and Unique Farmland will be acquired in accordance with FHWA regulations of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (Part 361) and the Ottawa County Farmland Preservation Program, if applicable.

5.2 Section 7 (Endangered Species Act)

The Selected Alternative will not affect any threatened or endangered species nor any species of special concern. This determination is based on literature reviews, information from the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, field investigations, and was confirmed by the DNRE.

According to correspondence with the DNRE and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the following species are known to occur near the Selected Alternative: Pitcher’s thistle, Indiana bat a state and federally endangered species, American ginseng a state threatened species, Great Lakes marsh, a high quality natural area, bald eagle, although recently delisted, is still federally protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. During the field survey, no state or federally threatened or endangered species were observed within the project area. Consequently, it is unlikely any threatened or endangered species would be impacted by the Selected Alternative. Letters were sent to both the DNRE and USFWS describing the findings of the habitat and species assessment and indicating that the project would have no effect on listed species. The DNRE responded on January 15, 2008 and agreed with the findings that the project should have no direct impacts on known special natural features.

5.3 Wetlands

The Selected Alternative will affect 10 wetland complexes with approximately 3.1 acres of wetland take. The wetland types include palustrine forested, palustrine scrub-shrub and palustrine emergent. Wetland mitigation will be done either on-site and/or off site at the Rogers Property and will involve the creation of approximately 4.7 acres to meet the mitigation requirement. The Rogers Property is described in the Public Interest Finding Statement, which can be found in Appendix G of the FEIS.

5.4 Air Quality Conformity (Clean Air Act)

The project is consistent with MDOT's Long Range Plan (MI Transportation Plan) and is listed on MDOT's 2010-2014 Five Year Transportation Program. It is also in the Holland and Muskegon adopted Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP's). The project design/engineering and ROW phases are in the Holland and Muskegon MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP's) as noted in the FEIS, Section 3.4.2. The Transportation conformity analysis required for this project includes two parts: a Regional Conformity finding, and a micro scale or "hot-spot" analysis. The LRTPs for Holland and Muskegon which include the selected alternative were found to be in conformance with the state implementation plan for Ozone on June 27, 1007 and August 9, 2007 respectively. A carbon monoxide (CO) microscale Hot-Spot analysis was completed. The results indicated that CO air quality standards will not be violated. Ottawa County is in attainment for PM 2.5 and PM 10, and therefore no hot spot analysis for particulate matter was required. Based on the air quality analyses completed for the proposed improvements, this project will not contribute to any violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

No adverse impacts to air quality are expected during construction due to careful procedures, legal requirements and the relatively short-term duration of construction activities.

5.5 Environmental Justice and Title VI (Civil Rights Act)

The analysis has determined that there are no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minorities and/or low-income populations by the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative will affect Environmental Justice populations in a similar manner to the general population. The FEIS complied with the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, *Environmental Justice guidelines* and *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, and did not exclude participation or deny benefits of any program or activity while conducting the study.

To ensure compliance with Environmental Justice guidelines and *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* and related statutes, an intensive community involvement effort was employed as part of the environmental justice analysis and cumulative impact analysis.

5.6 Permitting

Environmental permits will be obtained by MDOT in accordance with their Program/Project Management System. Environmental permits required for this project include:

- Permits under Michigan Public Act 451 required from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE):
 - Part 31 (Water Quality and Floodplains)
 - Part 301 (Inland Lakes and Streams)
 - Part 303 (Wetland Protection)
- MDOT must obtain a permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the discharge of fill or construction activities and for the placement of structures, fill material, and dredging in navigable waters of the United States.
- Permitting under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which is administered by the DNRE, is also required.
- A Section 9 permit concerning navigation requirements is required from the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Any additional required local permits will be obtained. The specific permits required will be determined during the design phase.

6.0 MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

NEPA legislation and implementation regulations require implementation and monitoring of mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts associated with a planned action. Per 23 CFR 771.109, "it shall be the responsibility of the applicant (MDOT), in cooperation with the Administration (FHWA) to implement those mitigation measures stated as commitments in the environmental documents prepared pursuant to this regulation." (For additional statutory guidance see: 42 USC 4371 et seq., Presidential Order 11514, 23 CFR 771.109(6), 40 CFR 1505.2(c) and 1505.3).

6.1 Environmental Commitments Defined

Environmental commitments are composed of both environmental mitigation and community enhancements (see Project Mitigation Summary Green Sheet in **Appendix B** of this ROD). Monitoring of the environmental commitments within this project will be accomplished in part by MDOT tracking environmental commitments with regular reporting to FHWA and the public as the project progresses.

- Project Mitigation includes measures required by law to address any damage to the social and natural environments caused by the project. Mitigation measures include avoidance, replacement, restoration, compensation or other means.
- Community enhancements are activities above and beyond what is required by law, and developed in cooperation with the local community.

6.2 Enforcement of Environmental Commitments

MDOT will track and enforce implementation of the environmental commitments listed on the Green Sheet. The Project Mitigation Summary Green Sheet included in **Appendix B** of this ROD details the US-31 Improvement Study Project mitigation and enhancement commitments.

- MDOT's Project Planning Division will coordinate with MDOT's Lansing and Region Design and Construction staff to review the mitigation and enhancement commitments included in the FEIS and the ROD.
- MDOT's project manager for the US-31 Improvement Study will be responsible for incorporating mitigation commitments listed in the FEIS and this ROD into the project design plans and proposal.
- MDOT Lansing and Grand Region staff will assist the project manager in completing and coordinating the various mitigation activities, such as property contamination surveys.
- MDOT staff will also coordinate maintenance of traffic, construction staging, with other federal, state, and local agencies on items such as local road improvements.
- The MDOT project manager for the construction phase will be responsible for making sure the contractor completes the mitigation shown on the design plans and project proposal.

6.3 Environmental Commitment Progress Reporting

Good environmental stewardship and trust among the agencies and public can occur if MDOT assures, demonstrates, and communicates project environmental commitment implementation. The progress or status of the environmental mitigation and enhancement commitments made during the environmental clearance process and included in this ROD will be reported:

- Annually to FHWA in the US-31 Financial Plan.
- Annually to the Federal and State Resource Agencies during the fall MDOT/FHWA update meetings held to discuss existing and upcoming major projects.
- Quarterly on the US-31 Improvement Study website which will remain active throughout the project construction phase.
- Periodic reporting as requested to local governments (e.g. Ottawa County quarterly administration meeting).

7.0 COMMENTS ON THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The FEIS was signed by FHWA on February 5, 2010; copies were distributed and a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on February 19, 2010. The waiting period was 30 days and all comments were received by March 26, 2010.

The substantive comments and responses are below. The comments are organized by commenter. All comments received have been responded to and can be obtained through: the MDOT Office by calling (616-451-3091) and referencing the project name, or the project website at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9621_11058---,00.html

FHWA has reviewed all comments received and found that the proposed project was examined and potential impacts were identified and addressed.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Comment: The LWMD has no objections to the selection of the preferred alternative as described in the FEIS

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

Comment: The FEIS indicates that the new M-231 will be a new two-lane route but additional right-of way will be acquired to protect the corridor from development and not to exclude expansion to a four-lane boulevard or a non-motorized facility. The FEIS does not indicate what the potential resource impacts would be if that expansion occurred.

Response: Identification of impacts with regards to future expansion are not required to be studied in the FEIS because the need for the additional improvements is not warranted. Any future expansion within the additional Right of Way is not likely to occur until after the 20 year design horizon, based on traffic projections and funding availability. If and when expansion is warranted due to traffic congestion or other triggers, MDOT will initiate the necessary NEPA documentation to identify environmental resources, the extent of potential impacts and mitigation requirements. MDOT will also initiate early coordination with all relevant resource agencies.

Comment: We recommend the proposed culvert at the Beeline Drain crossing be replaced with a bridge. Proposed crossings should also be evaluated for potential wildlife usage along the stream corridor.

Response: MDOT will conduct a hydraulic analysis for Beeline Drain during the design process to determine structure type and size.

MDOT will conduct a wildlife surveys at the crossing locations prior to design to determine wildlife usage. If wildlife crossings needs are evident, MDOT will

coordinate with DNRE to evaluate the structure type during design to address wildlife passage concerns.

Comment: The following Grand River tributaries are currently classed as Type 1 Designated Trout Streams which include Beeline Drain, Stearns Creek and Little Robinson Creek. Restricted work dates are October 1 through April 30. The following tributaries are warm water streams which include Unnamed drain (Cypress Street), Black Creek tributary (M-104 west of 120th Ave), Black Creek tributary (New alignment at I-96 Interchange) and Unnamed drain (I-96/112th Interchange). Restricted work dates May 1-June 30

The lower portion of the Grand River is used in the spring by a variety of migrating fish species including lake sturgeon (State-threatened) northern pike, muskellunge, and several species of suckers including the river redhorse (State-threatened). In addition, several species of resident fish spawn in the lower Grand River and bayous. To protect these species, restricted work dates are March 1 – June 30.

Because the Grand River mainstream and connected bayous are utilized in the fall and early winter as foraging areas by juvenile lake sturgeon, additional work restrictions are recommended. To protect this species during this period, restricted work dates are October 1 – December 30.

Response: All attempts will be made to work within these restriction dates. However, due to construction constraints such weather and high water, it may be necessary to request “revisions” from DNRE, Fisheries Division, to work outside these dates.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Comment: We agree that the preferred alternative (F-1a) substantially meets the project’s Purpose and Need while minimizing impacts. We understand that this alternative has support from affected local government agencies and its costs could be funded within projected revenues. For these reasons, we concur with the preferred alternative for this project (Concurrence Point # 3).

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

Comment: From the FEIS, it is clear that additional capacity on M-231 is anticipated, but it isn’t clear when that might be needed or what traffic volumes or congestion levels would be thresholds useful for considering this decision.

Response: Triggers for future M-231 improvements not part of the Selected Alternative will be a function of multiple factors including the roadway’s Level of Service, operational status, traffic volumes, funding and statewide/regional priorities. As stated in the FEIS, any future capacity improvements will need to follow a future NEPA process. The locations of any future projects will be determined following

observation and analysis of how the Selected Alternative and adjacent roadways are functioning vs what was modeled with the FEIS.

Comment: The FEIS and the ROD should provide more information about how the highways adjacent to M-231 will function and when changes in capacity may be needed.

Response: These issues were taken into consideration and used in the analysis. The information and changes were updated in the Errata, along with figures added in the Appendix A of this ROD to show the summary of information. As per the traffic study, it is anticipated that the adjacent MDOT trunklines, M-45, I-96 and M-104, will show an increase in traffic as a result of the Selected Alternative. Most local roadways should see either no change or a decrease in traffic volumes, with the exception of Lincoln Street (which is the only local road access point to M-231), and on 120th Avenue south of M-45.

Comment: Specifically, we believe a discussion of how M-45 will function when M-231 is constructed is important to include in the evaluation and ROD. LOS information would be useful.

Response: Impacts to M-45 have been analyzed with the traffic study, included with this project. Per the traffic study, M-45 has the capacity to accommodate the projected traffic generated by the Selected Alternative. In addition, right and left turn lanes, along with additional ROW, are proposed on M-45 at M-231, to address some of the needs for the future, as shown on Fig A-6 in Appendix A of the FEIS.

Comment: The FEIS states that the project may influence the location of future cumulative impacts (i.e., land use changes, etc.) and concentrated areas of impact may occur along the proposed M-231 intersection locations. Going one step further to discuss what environmental resources are at M-231 intersection locations would be helpful.

Response: The proposed M-231 will have three at-grade intersections along the 7 miles on the new roadway including M-45, Lincoln Street and M-104. There are no wetlands, historic, or archeological resources, and Threatened and Endangered species at these intersections. Along M-45 east and west of the proposed M-231 intersection there is mostly privately owned plant nursery related land uses. Land use adjacent to Lincoln Street is agricultural in three quadrants and forested and residential in the fourth quadrant. At M-104 intersection with M-231, most of the adjacent land is developed into commercial land uses. Potential indirect and cumulative impacts are more likely to occur along Lincoln Street which may affect agricultural land uses.

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers (March 22, 2010)

Comment: Since the Corps has not received a permit application for this project, we have not yet begun our public interest review or solicited comments under our public notice procedures. Thus, we feel we cannot give formal concurrence with the Selected Alternative given in the FEIS at this time.

Response: Subsequent to the receipt of their March 22, 2010 letter, the Corps in a telephone conversation on April 2, 2010, agreed to concur with the Selected Alternative and send an additional letter for documentation. That letter was received April 7, 2010 (see comment below). All of their other concerns remain applicable and are discussed below.

Comment: The Corps requests that first priority be given to expanding Wetland C by both removing fill from former [Grand River] riverside residences along Limberlost Lane and expanding the existing wetland mitigation site at the former Jack's Fish Farm site near the proposed Grand River crossing. We strongly recommend "on-site" restoration of wetlands complexes affected by the river hydrology to mitigate unavoidable impacts in Wetlands C and D.

Response: As stated in the FEIS, MDOT's first preference is on-site mitigation at the locations you reference. Also stated in the FEIS, MDOT will be able to create a minimum of 1.59 acres at these locations to mitigate for the 1.96 acres of wetland impacted by the Grand River bridge crossing. During the design phase of the project, MDOT will make all attempts to reduce impacts to all affected wetlands and maximize on site mitigation. Additional wetland mitigation will be provided at the Rogers Property.

Comment: The FEIS states the Rogers site will not be directly connected to the Grand River, and may not be within the floodplain of the Grand River. It appears to the Corps that the Rogers site is not the preferred site for mitigating impacts at the Grand River crossing site.

Response: MDOT's first preference is on-site mitigation. However, the Rogers site will be needed to mitigate for the remaining acres of impact. The Rogers site was visited by USACE and DNRE (formerly MDEQ) on November 13, 2007 along with 3 other potential wetland sites (including the Bolthouse Property mentioned in the FEIS). During the review, USACE staff indicated that they preferred the location of the Rogers and Bolthouse properties due to their proximity to the Grand River. The entire Rogers property, with the exception of the upland forested area to the north, is within the 100YR floodplain of the Grand River. Based on the field review and acceptance of the site, a Public Interest Finding statement was prepared by MDOT and approved by FHWA in July 2009 (see FEIS Appendix G, page G-4). Following approval of the Public Interest Finding Statement, MDOT has acquired the property.

Although MDOT initially intended on connecting the Rogers site to the Grand River, an investigation of the surrounding area found a large monoculture of

Phalaris arundinacea (reed canary grass) to the west of the site. Since MDOT is required to control invasive species in wetland mitigation sites, a direct connection to an existing monoculture of invasive species was not practical. The buffer of trees between the existing wetland to the west of the Rogers parcel and the existing wetland on Rogers appear to be an effective barrier in prevention of invasive species. In the future, the site may be opened up to the Grand River if DNRE (the property owner of the existing wetland) implements invasive species control on the monoculture and effectively controls the species at a reasonable level. Regardless, the Rogers wetland is designed to outlet to the existing wetland and will provide several of the functions of the impacted wetlands such as wildlife habitat, vegetation diversity and improved downstream water quality.

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers (April 7, 2010)

Comment: In summary, we concur with the third concurrence point, the Selected Alternative, as described in the February 5, 2010 Final Environmental Impact Statement. Should new information arise in the future, we may reconsider our position. Our comments on navigation, wetlands, and wetland mitigation found in our March 22, 2010 letter remain unchanged.

Response: Comment acknowledged. MDOT will coordinate with your agency if any compelling new information arises or there is substantial change in the project. Responses to your other listed concerns are discussed above.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Comment: Although we maintain some concerns, as outlined in our letter of January 15, 2010, about potential effects to migratory birds, we agree that the preferred alternative has substantially reduced and minimized impacts to the natural resources.

Response: In your letter dated January 15, 2010, you stated “Because the new alternative F1-a would require construction of a new roadway and a new crossing of the Grand River, we continue to have concerns about impacts to the habitat value of the wetlands and potential adverse impacts to migratory birds from habitat fragmentation and highway noise. The FEIS contains predicted noise levels from the new M-231 alignment, and we recommend you consider mitigation for the indirect effects of these noise levels as you develop a more detailed mitigation plan. Biologists from this office are available to assist addressing the effects to habitat value and migratory birds.”

During the Grand River structure design phase, MDOT will coordinate with your agency to evaluate measures and address habitat value and noise effects on migratory birds to the extent practicable.

Comment: Pursuant to March 1994 FHWA NEPA/404 merging process, we agree with the third decision point and concur with the Preferred Alternative.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi

Comment: According to our enrollment records we have 177 NHBP members in Ottawa County, many of which own fee properties. Other Tribes may also have members residing in Ottawa County. With this information, what is meant by "There are no Native American settlements within the study area" on p 4-32.

Response: The statement in question is part of a longer sentence on page 4-32 that states "According to the Economic Development offices in Ottawa County, there are no Native American settlements within the study area." The meaning of the word "settlements" used by the Economic Development offices in Ottawa County with respect to residence and property ownership is ambiguous and the reader should refer to Table 4.4-1 for accurate census data. The 2000 census data presented in Table 4.4-1 clearly indicate the specific percentages of American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Hispanic populations living in the Townships within the Selected Alternative Study Area. Further, while there are individual properties in Ottawa County that are owned by members of these populations, the United States Census does not disclose the location of their residences, due to confidentiality requirements; hence, this information cannot be provided.

County of Ottawa Administrator's Office

Comment: On behalf of the Ottawa County, I would like to express strong support for Preferred Alternative F-1a as proposed in the US-31 Holland to Grand Haven FEIS, which includes improvements to US-31 and proposed new route, commonly known as the M-231 bypass. Many residents, local agencies, and County Road Commission are also supporting these efforts.

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

City of Grand Haven

Comment: The City of Grand Haven does not automatically agree with any changes made hereafter and would like to review and comment on any such modifications to the plans for the project from this point forward.

Response: As per MDOT's processes and Context Sensitive Design principals, the City will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the MDOT design projects within their jurisdiction.

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Comment: This letter is to document that the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Muskegon/Northern Ottawa areas, supports the Michigan Department of Transportation's US-31/M-231 Holland to Grand Haven project, as well as the Final Environmental Impact Statement document that was prepared for this project.

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

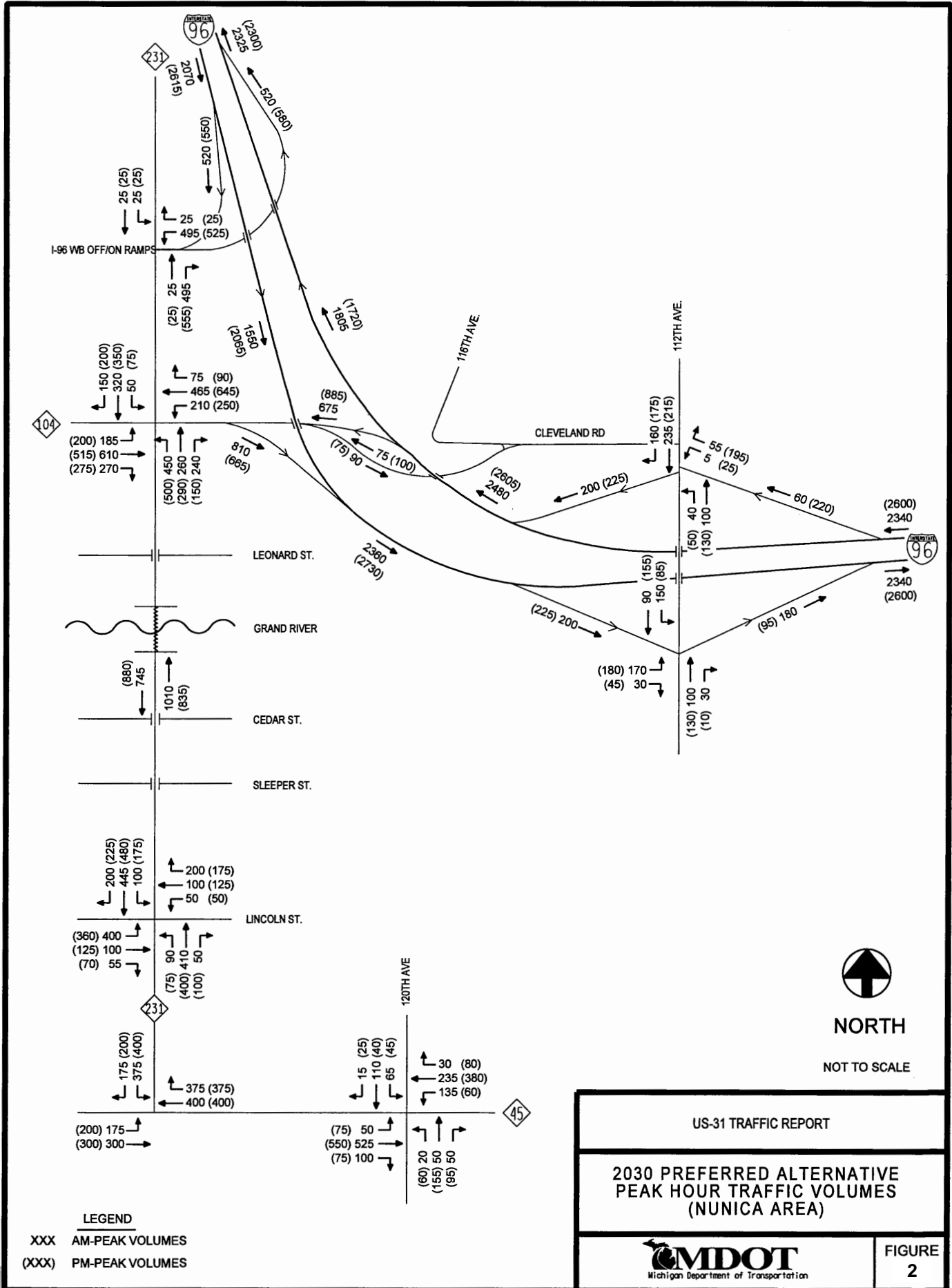
Comment: At its meeting on February 22, 2010, the Policy Committee reviewed the findings and improvements contained in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for US-31 Holland-Grand Haven, Ottawa County. At the conclusion of the review a motion was made and passed unanimously, authorizing staff to submit this letter in support of the improvements contained in this document.

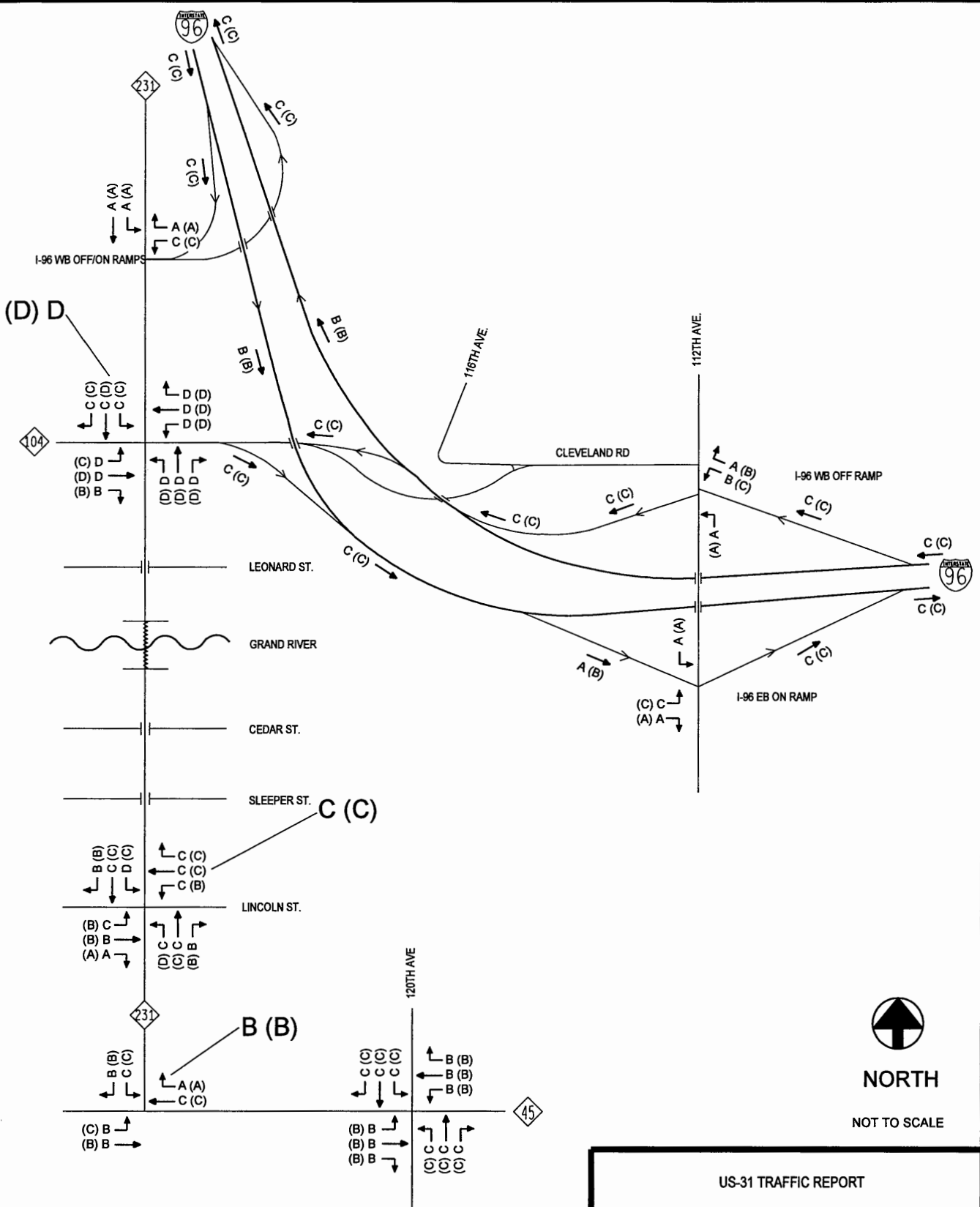
Response: Comment Acknowledged.

8.0 CORRECTIONS TO THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (ERRATA)

Page #	Correction
1-4	Ferris Street on Figure 2 should be change to Lincoln Street . This correction includes several other figures/map throughout the FEIS document.
1-12	Paragraph 2 - \$170 million (2014 dollars) should be changed to \$1.3 billion (2004 dollars) for alternative F/J-1.
2-4	Figure 2.1-2, M-21 should be M-121 and I-196 BR should be I-196 BL . This correction includes several other figures/map throughout the FEIS document.
3-16	Third paragraph in the New Grand River Bridge and Other Structures sub-section, the length of the Little Robinson Creek bridge should be 503 feet , not 575 feet as noted.
3-7	Alternative R cost should be in 2004 dollars , not 2007.
3-8	Alternative F/J-1 cost should be in 2004 dollars , not 2007.
4-22	First paragraph, form AD-1006 is also noted as form NRCS-CPA-106 in Appendix B.
4-32	First paragraph - The statement " <i>According to the Economic Development offices in Ottawa County, there are no Native American settlements within the study area.</i> " The meaning of the word " <i>settlements</i> " used by the Economic Development offices in Ottawa County with respect to residence and property ownership is ambiguous and the reader should refer to Table 4.4-1 for accurate census data. There are individual properties in Ottawa County that are owned by members of these minority populations; however, the United States Census does not disclose the location of their residences, due to confidentiality requirements; hence, property ownership information cannot be provided.
4-125	Section 9 federal permit is through the USACE , not USCG as noted.
D-2/3	Replace and update Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan with 2009 version (Appendix C).
3-18	<p>Add paragraphs – The Preferred Alternative in the draft Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for US-31, Holland to Grand Haven, includes a 6-mile segment from M-45 north to I-96. A capacity analysis was performed on the Preferred Alternative design, including M-231, the proposed new intersections and for the M-104/I-96 interchange, using traffic projections for 2030 contained in the draft FEIS, which includes the geometric changes from the existing operation, as shown in the following figures. The results showed the new M-231 route will operate at acceptable Levels of Service (LOS), generally above LOS D for the operations analyzed.</p> <p>Based on this information, it is recommended that the Preferred Alternative proceed as planned in the FEIS, with purchase of Right of Way for future expansion between M-45 and M-104 and a standard diamond interchange design at I-96/112th Avenue. Based on the ramp LOS indicated in this analysis, the proposed design for each of the interchanges (I-96/112th Avenue and I-96/M-231) can accommodate traffic growth beyond what is projected</p>

	<p>over the FEIS planning horizon of 2030. It does not appear to be necessary to upgrade the freeway interchange designs to free flow operations for the current design horizon. Traffic beyond 2030, at the anticipated growth rate, could cause the need for additional lanes on M-231, which is beyond the scope of the FEIS. Additional traffic analysis will be completed with the Interstate Access Justification Report, which will be completed after this ROD (Figure 2 and Figure 3 of this ROD).</p>
4-110	<p>Replace term “temporary impacts, such as access limitations or restrictions” in Section 4.19.2 with “temporary modified access”.</p>





NORTH

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

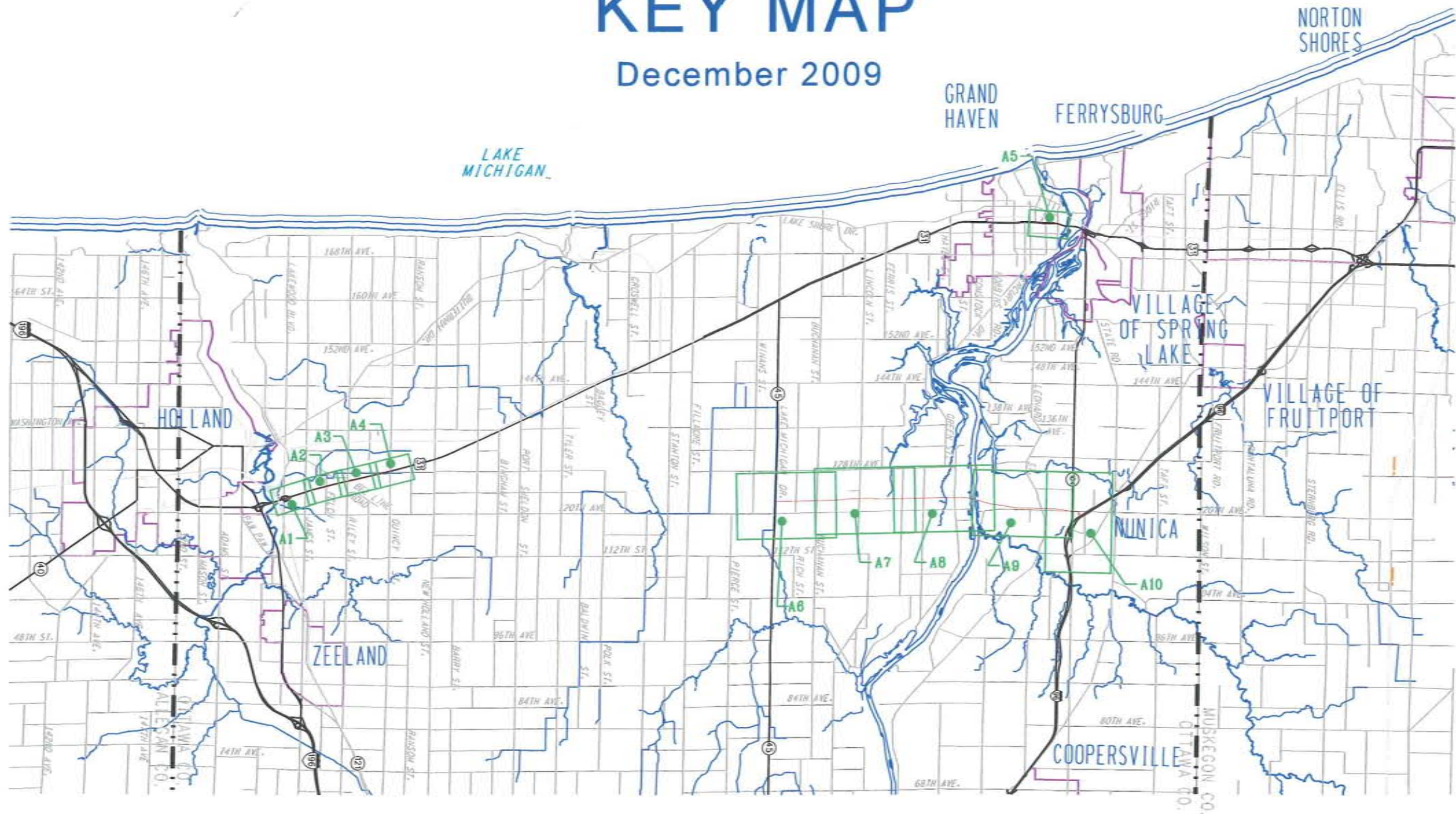
- X AM-LEVEL OF SERVICE
- (X) PM-LEVEL OF SERVICE
- A (A) AM (PM) OVERALL SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE

US-31 TRAFFIC REPORT	
2030 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE PEAK HOUR LEVEL OF SERVICE (NUNICA AREA)	
 Michigan Department of Transportation	FIGURE 3

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE KEY MAP

December 2009



LEGEND



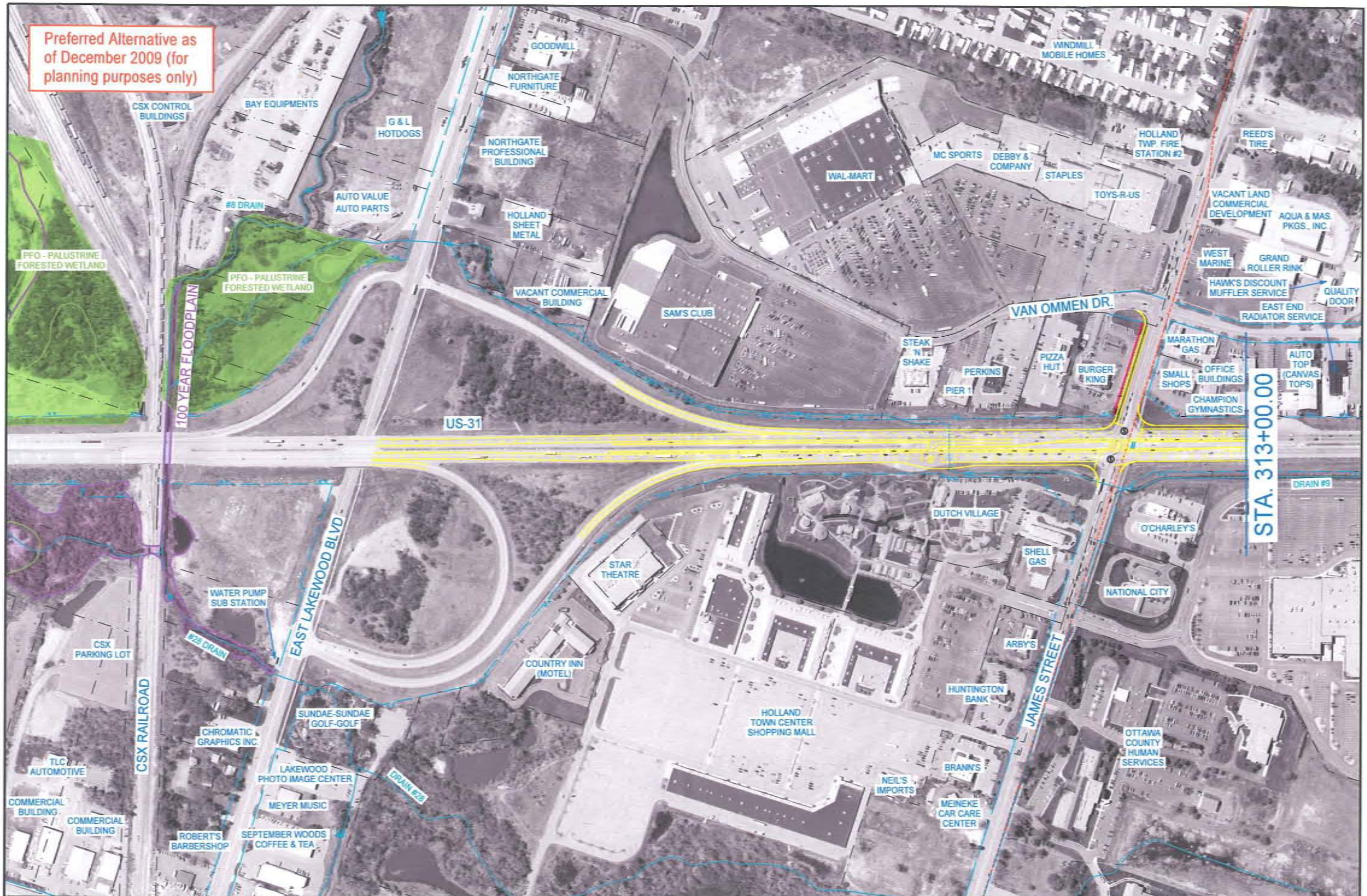
STATE PROJ. NO.
33955

FEDERAL NO.
FH0536

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

KEY MAP

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



	<p>LEGEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW 	<p>DELIMITED WETLANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED BRIDGE 		<p>STATE PROJ. NO. 33955</p> <p>FEDERAL NO. FH0536</p>	<p>MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT</p> <p>FIGURE A1 EAST LAKEWOOD BLVD. TO JAMES STREET</p>
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Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)

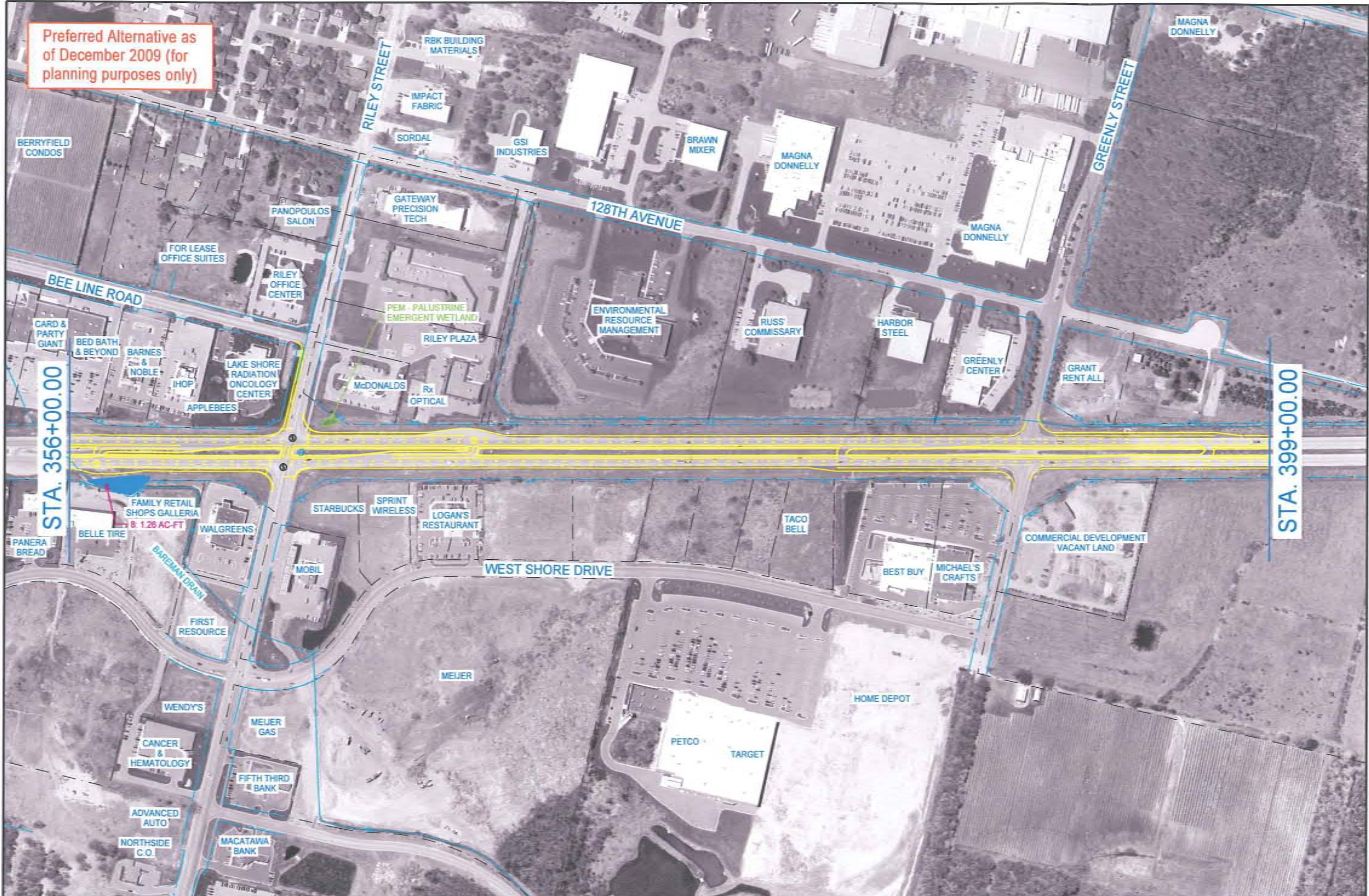


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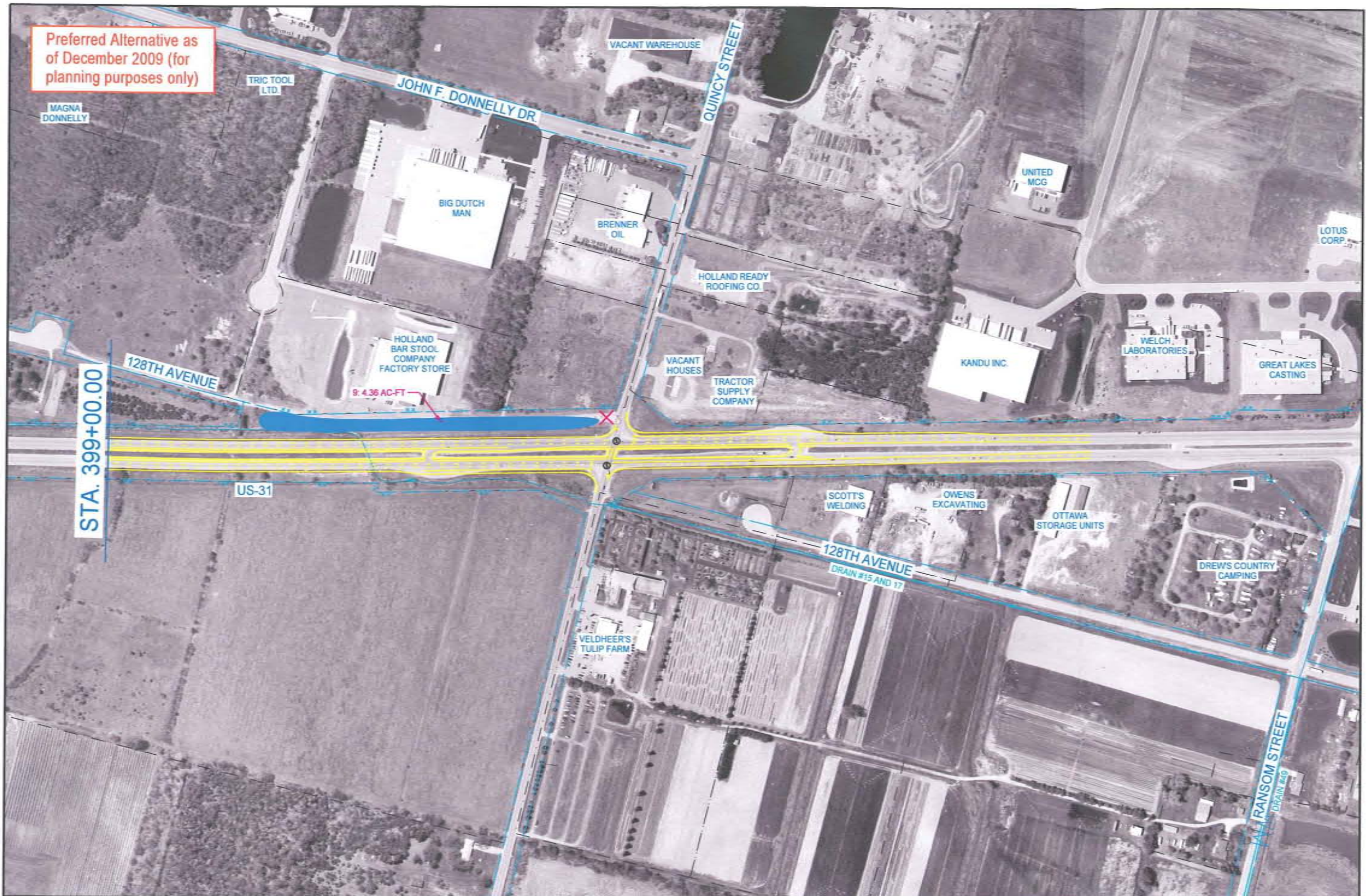
	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-Q-W EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-Q-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-Q-W LIMITED ACCESS R-Q-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE	 Michigan Department of Transportation	STATE PROJ. NO. 33955	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A2 JAMES STREET TO RILEY STREET
			FEDERAL PROJ. NO. FH0536	

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



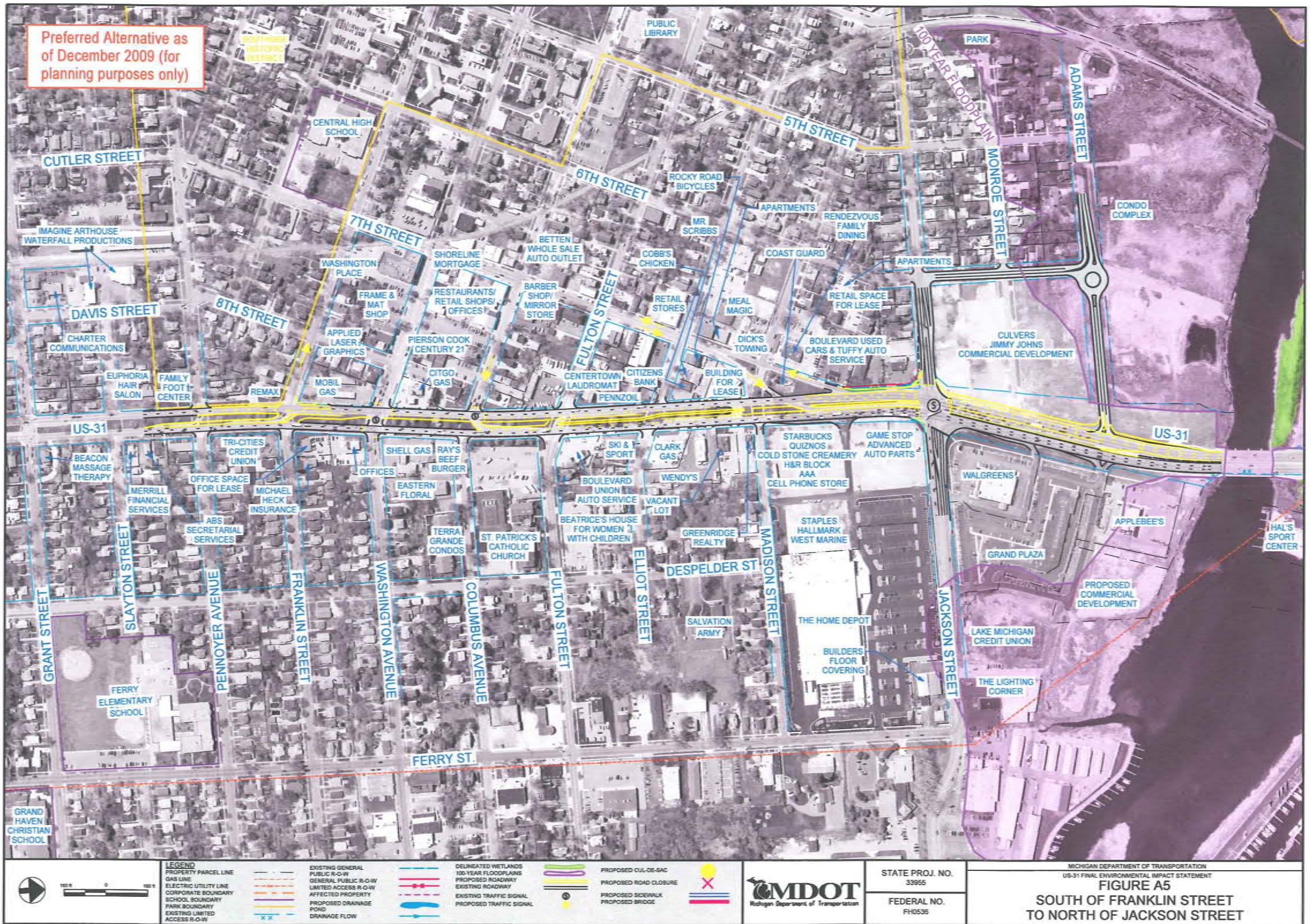
	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W	EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW	DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL	EXISTING PUBLIC R-O-W PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE		STATE PROJ. NO. 33955 FEDERAL NO. FH0536	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A3 RILEY STREET TO GREENLY STREET

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W		EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW		DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL		PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE			STATE PROJ. NO. 33955	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A4 GREENLY STREET TO NORTH OF QUINCY STREET
	FEDERAL NO. FH0536										

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



LEGEND
 PROPERTY PARCEL LINE
 GAS LINE
 ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE
 CORPORATE BOUNDARY
 SCHOOL BOUNDARY
 PARK BOUNDARY
 EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W

EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W
 GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W
 LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W
 AFFECTED PROPERTY
 PROPOSED DRAINAGE
 DRAINAGE FLOW

DELIMITED WETLANDS
 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS
 PROPOSED ROADWAY
 EXISTING ROADWAY
 EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL
 PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL

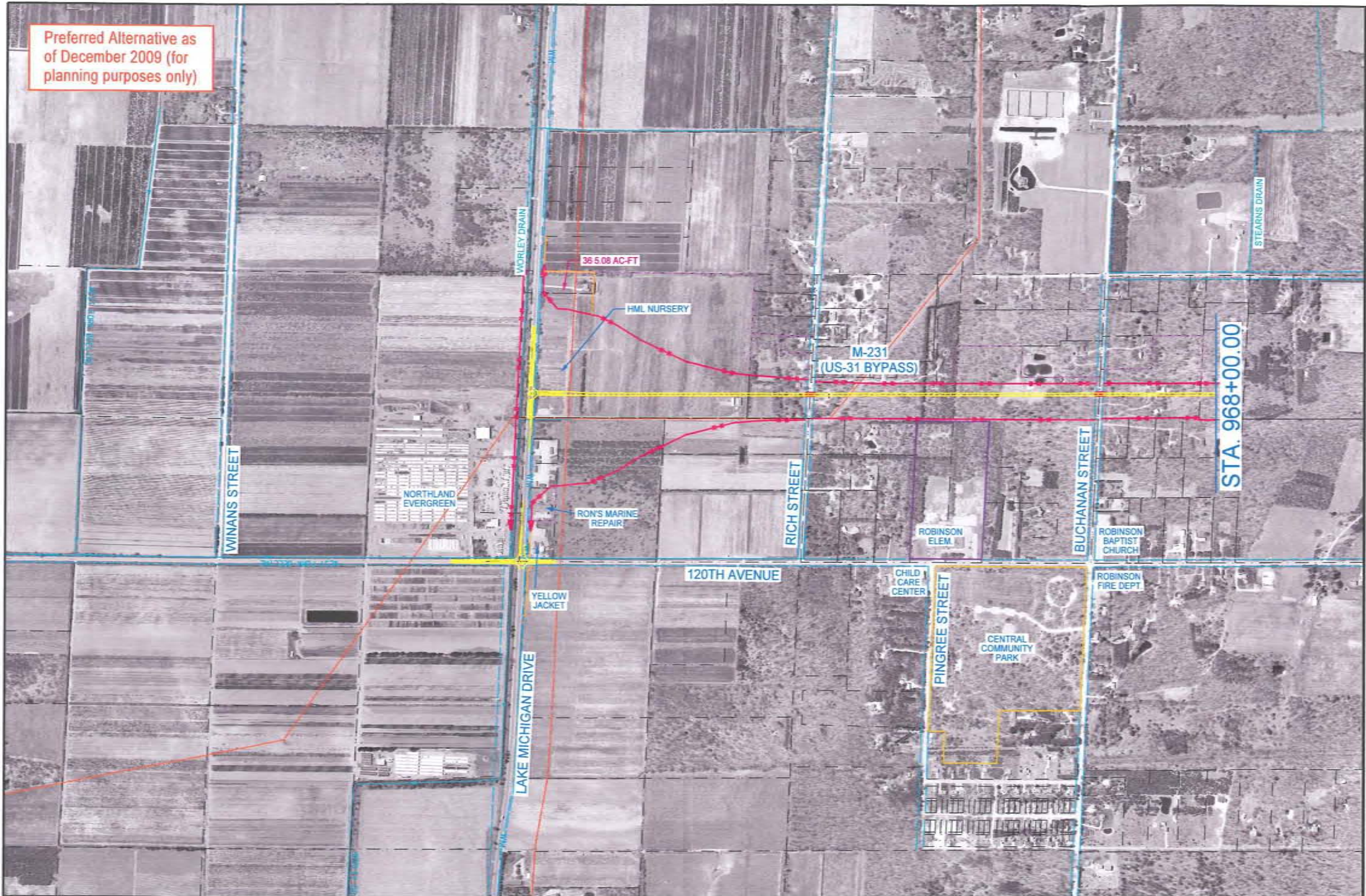
PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC
 PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE
 PROPOSED SIDEWALK
 PROPOSED BRIDGE

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE PROJ. NO. 33955
 FEDERAL NO. FH0536

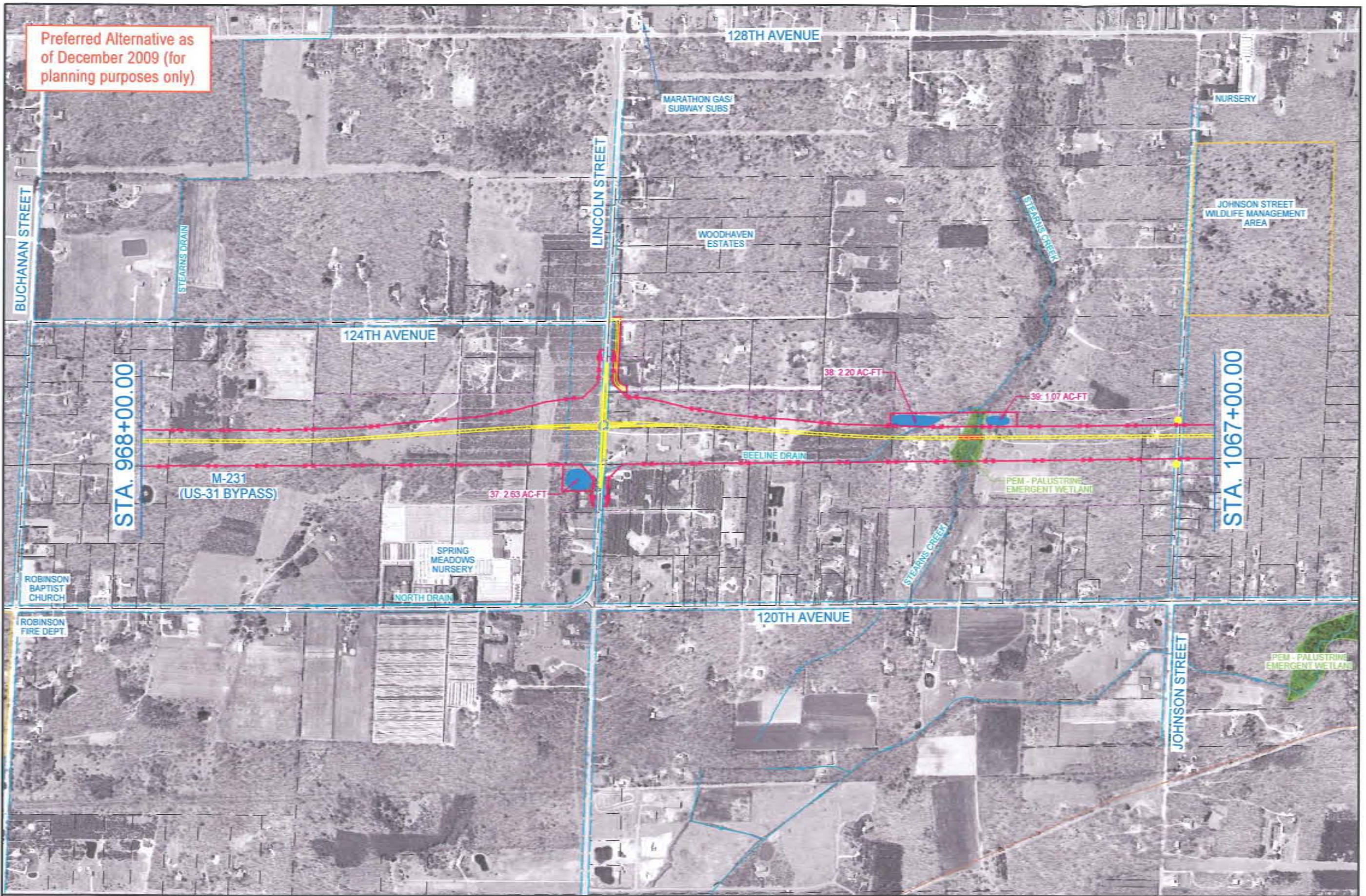
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FIGURE A5
SOUTH OF FRANKLIN STREET TO NORTH OF JACKSON STREET

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W		EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW		DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL		PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE			STATE PROJ. NO. 33955	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A6 LAKE MICHIGAN DRIVE TO BUCHANAN STREET
	FEDERAL NO. FH0536										

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



LEGEND

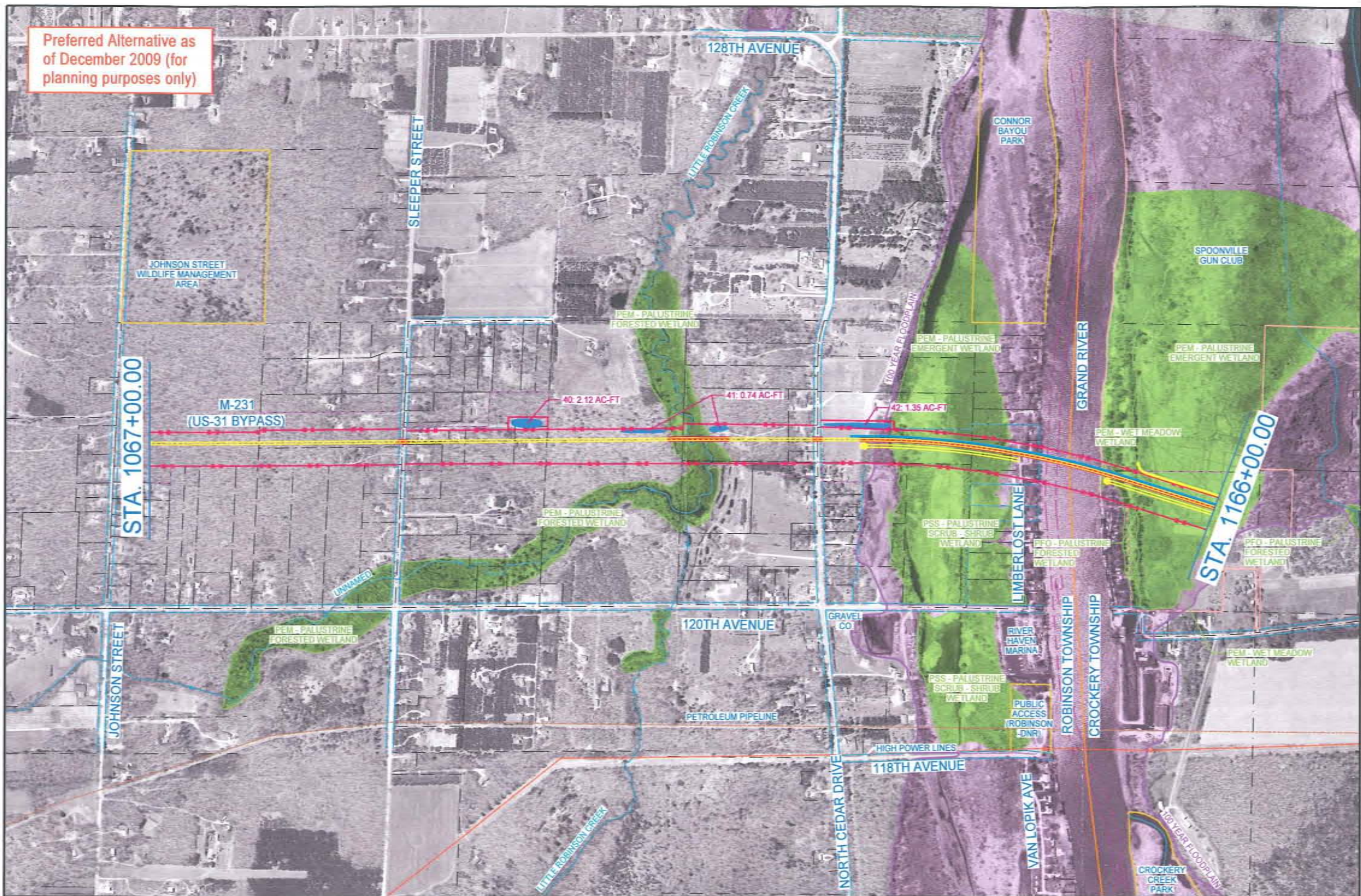
- | | | | |
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|--|---|---|--|



STATE PROJ. NO. 33955
FEDERAL NO. FH0536

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FIGURE A7
BUCHANAN STREET TO JOHNSON STREET

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



STA. 1067+00.00

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LEGEND
 PROPERTY PARCEL LINE
 GAS LINE
 ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE
 CORPORATE BOUNDARY
 SCHOOL BOUNDARY
 PARK BOUNDARY
 EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W

EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W
 GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W
 LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W
 AFFECTED PROPERTY
 PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND
 DRAINAGE FLOW

DELINEATED WETLANDS
 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS
 PROPOSED ROADWAY
 EXISTING ROADWAY
 EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL
 PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL

EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W
 PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC
 PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE
 PROPOSED SIDEWALK
 PROPOSED BRIDGE
 VACANT, PARTIAL TAKES
 FULL DISPLACEMENT TAKES

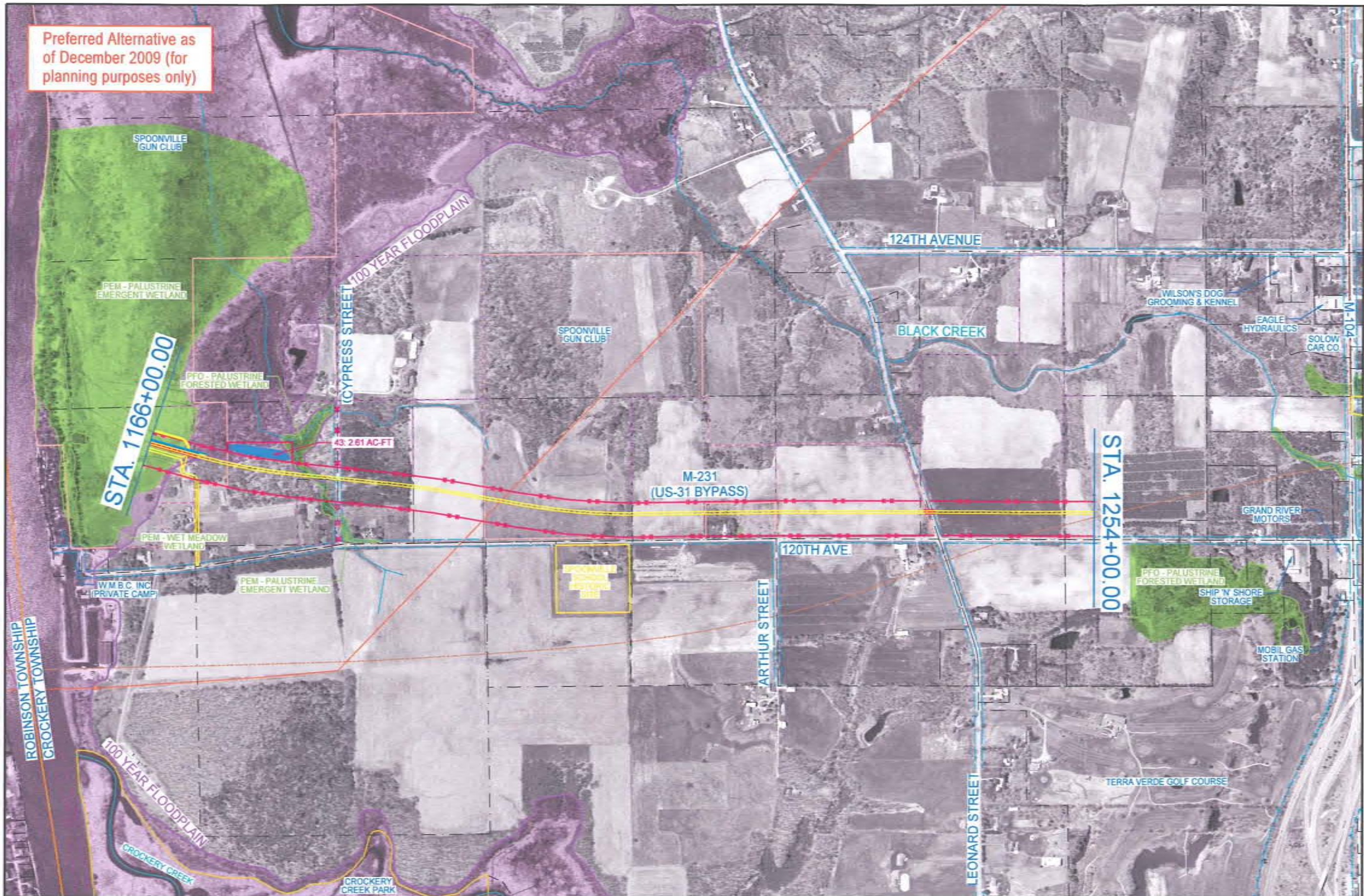


STATE PROJ. NO. 33955
 FEDERAL NO. FH0536

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

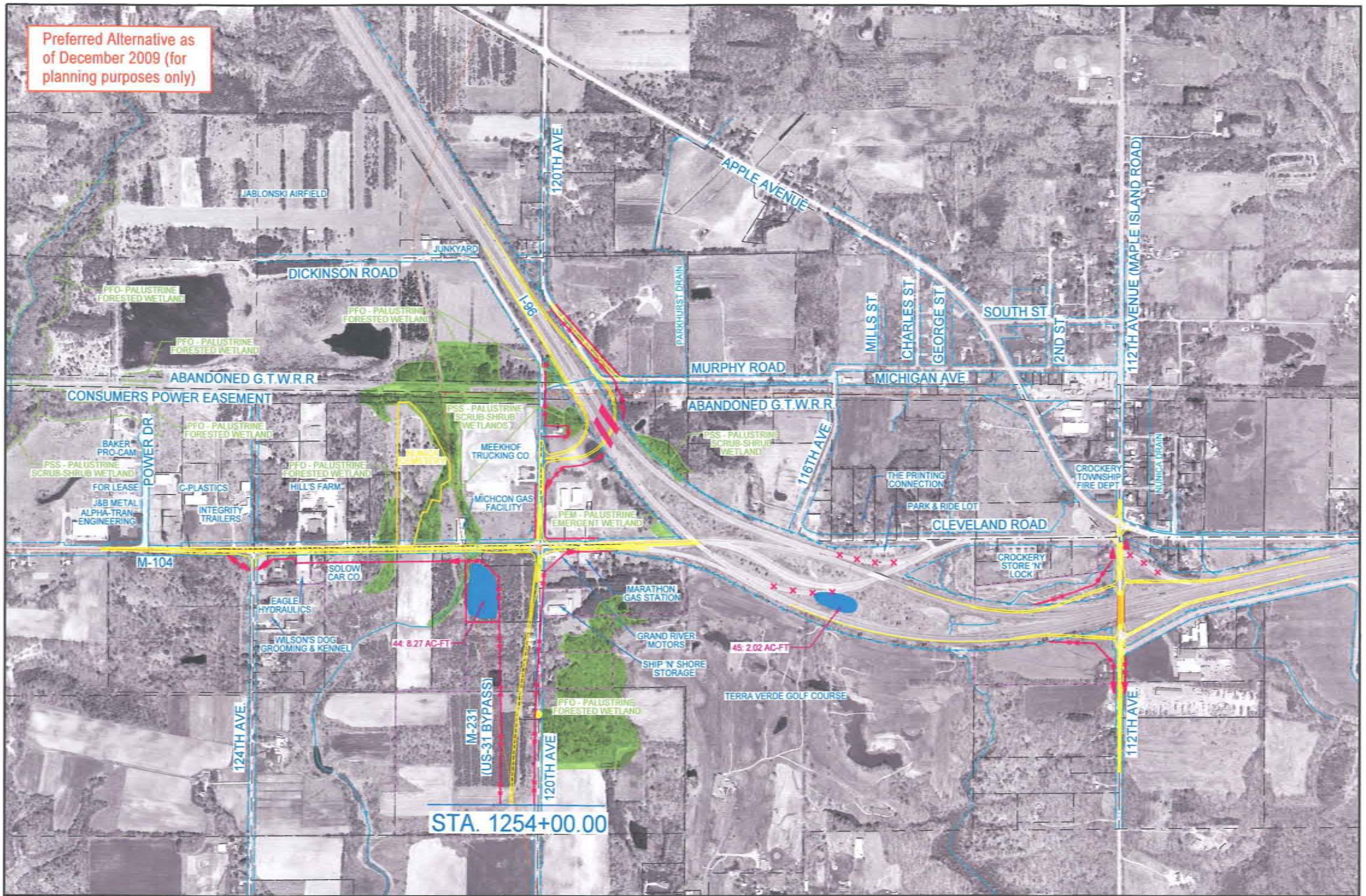
FIGURE A8
JOHNSON STREET TO GRAND RIVER

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W		EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW		DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL		PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE			STATE PROJ. NO. 33955	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A9 GRAND RIVER TO LEONARD STREET
	FEDERAL PROJ. NO. FH0536										

Preferred Alternative as of December 2009 (for planning purposes only)



	LEGEND PROPERTY PARCEL LINE GAS LINE ELECTRIC UTILITY LINE CORPORATE BOUNDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY PARK BOUNDARY EXISTING LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W	EXISTING GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W GENERAL PUBLIC R-O-W LIMITED ACCESS R-O-W AFFECTED PROPERTY PROPOSED DRAINAGE POND DRAINAGE FLOW	DELINEATED WETLANDS 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS PROPOSED ROADWAY EXISTING ROADWAY EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNAL	EXISTING CUL-DE-SAC PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PROPOSED SIDEWALK PROPOSED BRIDGE VACANT, PARTIAL TAKES FULL DISPLACEMENT TAKES		STATE PROJ. NO. 33955	MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION US-31 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FIGURE A10 LEONARD STREET TO 112TH STREET
						FEDERAL NO. FH0536	

Appendix B

Project Mitigation Summary “Green Sheet”

US-31 Holland to Grand Haven Ottawa County

Record of Decision

Project Mitigation Summary “Green Sheet” for the Selected Alternative

This Project Mitigation Summary Green Sheet contains the final project specific mitigation measures being considered at this time. These mitigation items may be modified during the final design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction phases of the project.

Social and Economic Environment

- a. *Maintaining Traffic* – No two consecutive freeway interchanges, M-231 road crossings or intersections along US-31 will be closed during construction in Ottawa County to maintain local road continuity.
- b. *Road Relocations* - Access will be maintained to 120th Avenue north of M-104 to Jablonski Landing Field (general aviation airport)
- c. *Carpool Lots* - Review existing carpool lots for possible expansion or relocation during the design phase.
- d. *Acquisitions and Relocations* - MDOT and the local real estate offices will coordinate to find suitable housing for residents and commercial property for businesses displaced by the Preferred Alternative. A total of sixty-six property relocations will be required. The sixty-six relocations consist of six farmland relocations, nine business relocations, and fifty-one residential relocations.
- e. *Noise* - Although there are residences that will receive noise impacts at or above the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria levels, noise walls are not recommended for this project because they did not meet the reasonableness criteria of MDOT’s Noise Policy. Where noise walls are still desired, the municipality may consider providing funds to cover the costs above MDOT’s reasonableness criteria.
- f. *Pedestrians/Bicyclists* - Ottawa County non-motorized trail plans are still conceptual at this point, beyond the Grand River crossing. Generally, non-motorized facilities are not permitted within limited-access ROW, if reasonable options are available outside the highway ROW. The new M-231 bridge will be designed so as not to preclude non-motorized trail options where feasible, consistent with local and county trail plans, as well as MDOT engineering policies and guidelines. Specific non-motorized facility options (such as providing a wider substructure and extra beams) will be considered during the subsequent bridge design phase.

Natural Environment

- a. *Wells* - Properly abandon, and if needed, replace nine known water wells including potential conduits, sewer lines and drains that will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative.
- b. *Detention Basins* - Maintain detention basin (first flush) discharges to pre-construction flow rates.
- c. *Parks* - Coordinate with the Ottawa County Park Department's Grand River Greenway project and local watershed groups.
- d. *County Drains* - Coordinate with Holland Township, the City of Grand Haven, and Ottawa County Drain Commission when County Drains are involved, to determine whether closed, open, or a combination of the two drainage facilities should be used and to provide acceptable system detention.
- e. *Storm Water* - Collect stormwater on the new M-231 bridge over the Grand River and route it to detention/settling basins on either side of the river before discharging it to the river. Direct release of storm water from the structure to the river will be avoided. MDOT will coordinate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE), Fisheries Division for locations of detention basins adjacent to water courses to reduce impacts to fisheries resources.
- f. *Floodplain* - Span the Grand River and its 100-year floodplain with a bridge. Approach embankment fill will not be used within the 100-year floodplain. This span will also minimize impacts to wetlands and tree removals. A maximum of two piers will be placed within the Grand River. Once the design is initiated and complete, MDOT will submit an application for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicating that an increase in the backwater of the Grand River is proposed for the project. FEMA anticipates that the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) will be completed in 2011, at which time MDOT anticipates that a design level hydraulic analysis accurately showing the backwater increase caused by the project will be available, and FEMA will issue the CLOMR. Once the new river crossing is complete MDOT will request a LOMR, then FEMA will issue the LOMR and revise the FIRM.
- g. *Wetlands* - The Preferred Alternative will impact 3.04 acres of wetland. Based on MDEQ wetland mitigation ratios, 4.70 acres of wetland will be created on-site or at the Rogers mitigation sites. MDOT will prepare and submit a comprehensive mitigation and monitoring plan to the MDNRE (formerly MDEQ) during the permit process.
- h. *Threatened and Endangered Species* - If Eastern box turtles are encountered during construction, special care will be taken to remove them from the construction zone. At the preconstruction meeting, construction crews will be required to undergo Eastern box turtle identification and removal procedures with qualified MDOT personnel prior to the start of work. The time restrictions (March 1 through June 30) for working in the Grand River to protect lake sturgeon (State-threatened), river redhorse (State-threatened), or recently discovered listed fresh water mussels will be followed.
- i. *Migratory Birds* - MDOT will coordinate with the MDNRE and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the design phase to address any impacts to migratory birds from construction of the new structure crossing the Grand River.
- j. *Fisheries and Wildlife* - MDOT will coordinate with the MDNRE and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the design phase to review watercourse structure type and size required to pass the 100 year flood event and to address fisheries and wildlife concerns.

Cultural Environment

- a. *Historic Review* - Due to denial of access, the archaeological survey of several properties was not able to be completed. SHPO concurred that once MDOT purchased the properties, the surveys would be completed and any eligible sites located would be mitigated through data recovery. If eligible sites are discovered, MDOT shall consult with SHPO and the Office of State Archaeologist to develop an acceptable data recovery mitigation plan.

Hazardous/Contaminated Materials

- a. *Project Contamination* - Perform a Project Area Contamination Survey (PACS) for each of the sixteen (16) known and/or potentially contaminated sites or hazardous waste generators directly impacted by the Selected Alternative. A Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be conducted if the PACS results or the final design permitting of the facility require it.
- b. *River Sediment Contamination* - Include soil erosion and sedimentation control measures for all construction activities in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Design

- a. Coordination with local agencies will occur during the design process consistent with MDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions and Public Involvement guidance.

Construction

- a. *Construction Access Pads or Work Areas* - The contractor shall not park any vehicles or store any materials on public recreational property. Access to all adjacent property shall be maintained at all times during construction. Consider alternate construction methods (top down, incremental launching, etc.) for the Grand River structures during the design phase. Bituminous and Portland cement concrete plants and crushers shall meet the requirements of Michigan Air Pollution Control Commission. Follow MDOT's Stormwater Management Plan and use stormwater Best Management Practice's (BMP's) during construction.
- b. *Maintaining Navigation* - Water navigation will be maintained on the Grand River at the new M-231 crossing site. Maintaining a navigable channel may include the placement of signs both upstream and downstream to indicate the navigable channel location. The lighting of barges and other areas may also be required. Temporary short term disruptions in boating traffic may occur at the new Grand River crossing during some construction operations such as placing bridge beams.
- c. *Maintenance of Traffic* - MDOT will maintain public awareness throughout the project by providing general information, addressing public concerns, and providing specific information such as location and duration of detours, lane closures, alternate routes, upcoming activities, and anticipated construction deadlines. This will be done through a Motorist Information Plan which may include a project website, a project hotline, or portable message signs.
- d. *Time Restrictions* –
 - The following Grand River tributaries are currently classed as Type 1 Designated Trout Streams which include Beeline Drain, Stearns Creek and Little Robinson Creek and restricted work dates are October 1 through April 30.
 - The following tributaries are warm water streams which include Unnamed drain (Cypress Street), Black Creek tributary (M-104 west of 120th Ave), Black Creek tributary (New alignment at I-96 Interchange) and Unnamed drain (I-96/112th Interchange) and restricted work dates are May 1 through June 30.

- The lower portion of the Grand River is used in the spring by a variety of migrating fish species including lake sturgeon (State-threatened), northern pike, muskellunge, and several species of suckers including the river redhorse (State-threatened). In addition, several species of resident fish spawn in the lower Grand River and bayous. To protect these species, restricted work dates are March 1 through June 30.
- Because the Grand River mainstream and connected bayous are utilized in the fall and early winter as foraging areas by juvenile lake sturgeon, additional work restrictions are recommended. To protect this species during this period, restricted work dates are October 1 through December 30.
- The tree cutting restriction dates for the Indiana bat are April 1 through October 1.

e. *Construction Permits –*

State of Michigan (MDNRE):

Act 451 Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, as amended

Part 31, Water Resource Protection, requires a permit to place fill materials in an identified floodplain.

Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, requires a permit for activities below the ordinary high-water mark of any stream, river, pond, or lake and for temporary crossings of rivers and streams.

Part 303, Wetlands Protection, requires a permit to fill, dredge or remove sediment from; construct, operate or maintain use in; or drain surface water from a wetland.

Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, specifies that sedimentation caused by highway construction will be controlled before it leaves the highway ROW or enters the waters of the State. As an Authorized Public Agency under Part 91, MDOT is not required to obtain a permit, but is instead required to implement soil erosion and sedimentation measures in accordance with its approved Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Manual.

MDOT maintains a statewide NPDES permit from the MDNRE (issued under the authority of the U.S. EPA) to discharge stormwater into the surface waters of the State.

Federal Permits (USACE):

Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972, requires a permit for the discharge of fill or construction activities in navigable waters of the United States, such as the Grand River.

Section 10 of the Federal Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the placement of structures, fill material, and dredging in navigable waters.

Federal Permit (USCG):

Section 9 of the Federal Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, requires a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard for new structures constructed across navigable rivers.

Coordination with the above-mentioned cooperating and coordinating agencies is on going, and applications for these permits will be submitted during the design phase of the project. FEMA has indicated that the anticipated backwater elevation increase would not be problematic. Based on the available information for the project, MDNRE (formally MDEQ) has indicated that they agree, and that the permit process for construction activities under Act 451 Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, as amended, will proceed independently from FEMA's mapping activities.

Appendix C

Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan

Michigan Department of Transportation
Real Estate Division
Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan
US-31 from Holland to Grand Haven
Including the new M-231 from
M-45 to the I-96/M-104/112th Avenue Interchange Area
Control Section 70013, JN 339550

July 1, 2009

GENERAL AREA and PROJECT INFORMATION

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is proposing a trunkline project in Ottawa County which runs from M-45 in Allendale, Michigan to M-104 in Grand Haven, Michigan. MDOT previously selected an alternative that included a new off-alignment freeway between I-96 and I-196, and existing route improvements in Holland and Grand Haven. Based on the current economic climate in Michigan, it became clear completion of the entire project was not economically feasible. In 2005, MDOT held a series of meetings with local agencies located in the corridor influence area, as well as the Holland and Muskegon Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The meetings were held to review local and state priorities and needs in the corridor. As a result of the meetings, a modified preferred alternative was selected, which includes constructing a new route between M-45 and I-96/M-104 just west of 120th Avenue, including a new river crossing and improvements to the I-96/M-104/112th Avenue interchange area.

The new route will initially be constructed as a 2-lane highway with property acquired as limited access right-of-way for future expansion to a 4-lane freeway. The project also includes improving strategic segments of US-31 in Grand Haven from south of the Franklin Street intersection, north to the Jackson Street intersection vicinity; and from Lakewood Boulevard north to the Quincy Street vicinity in the Holland area. Improvements include adding through lanes and intersection modification, primarily within the existing right-of-way.

DISPLACEMENTS

Residential:	51
Business:	9
Farm:	6
Non-Profit:	0

DISPLACEMENT EFFECTS AND ANALYSIS

Acquisition of property for this project will allow for an orderly and timely relocation of all eligible displaced residents, businesses, farms and non-profit organizations

(community facilities). The acquiring agency will ensure the availability of a sufficient number of replacement properties in the local area for all eligible displacees.

Residential: The project may cause the displacement of approximately 51 residential units. A study of the housing market in the project area indicates a sufficient number of replacement homes and rentals will be available throughout the relocation process. It is anticipated that the local residential real estate market will have the capacity to absorb the residential displacements impacted by this project.

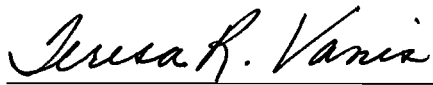
Business: The project may cause the displacement of approximately 9 businesses. A review of the local commercial real estate market indicates there are a sufficient number of replacement sites available to relocate eligible displaced businesses. Displacement of these businesses is not expected to have a major economic or otherwise generally disruptive effect on the community impacted by this project.

Farms: The project may cause the displacement of approximately 6 farms. A review of the market for available agricultural properties indicates a sufficient supply of farm properties to which eligible owners may be relocated.

ASSURANCES

The acquiring agency will offer assistance to all eligible residents, businesses, farms and non-profit organizations impacted by the project, including persons requiring special services and assistance. The agency's relocation program will provide such services in accordance with Act 31, Michigan P.A. 1970; Act 227, Michigan P.A. 1972; Act 149, Michigan P.A. 1911, as amended; Act 87, Michigan P.A. 1980, as amended, and the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended. The acquiring agency's relocation program is realistic and will provide for the orderly, timely and efficient relocation of all eligible displaced persons in compliance with state and federal guidelines.

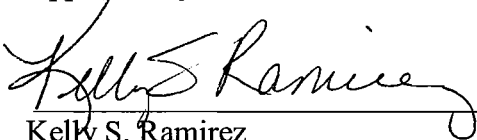
Prepared by:



Teresa R. Vanis
Local Agency Coordinator

Date: 7/1/09

Approved by:



Kelly S. Ramirez
Project Delivery Specialist

Date: 7/1/09

Appendix D
Wetland Finding

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
E.O. 11990 – WETLAND FINDING
FHWA-MI-EIS-98-01-F**

This statement sets forth the basis for a finding that there is no practical alternative to construction in wetlands for the proposed improvements to approximately 7 miles of US-31 Bypass from M-45 (Lake Michigan Drive), north to the I-96/M-104 interchange in Ottawa County, Michigan. All practical measures to minimize harm to the wetlands have been taken. This finding is prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11990 (23 CFR 771.125(a)(1)), on the Protection of Wetlands, dated May 24, 1977.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Preferred Alternative consists of a two lane bypass (M-231) constructed near 120th Avenue from M-45 north to the I-96/M-104 interchange; including a new river crossing, improvements to M-104 near I-96, new ramps at the I-96 and M-231 interchange, and improvements to the I-196/112th Avenue interchange. Improvements will be made to segments of the existing US-31 in Grand Haven, from south of Franklin Street to north of Jackson Street and from Lakewood Boulevard north to Quincy Street in the Holland area (See Figure 1 of this ROD). A detailed description of the proposed action can be found in Section 2.0, "Alternatives Considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)".

DESCRIPTION OF WETLANDS AFFECTED

The Preferred Alternative alignment avoids and minimizes impacts to wetland areas to the greatest degree possible, particularly high-value wetlands that may harbor threatened or endangered species. Ten wetland areas will be affected by the project, as was described in greater detail in the FEIS. The Preferred Alternative will impact approximately 3.04 acres of wetland, as was described in greater detail in the FEIS, Section 4.10 Wetlands.

Wetland A is a palustrine scrub/shrub wetland associated with Stearns Creek. Wetland A's functions and values rated high in vegetative diversity and integrity, hydrology-characteristic, water quality-downstream, water quality-wetland and characteristic wildlife habitat structure. In addition, the wetland was rated as exceptional in maintenance of characteristic fish habitat. Of the 1.69 acres of Wetland A delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.25 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland A continues to the east and west outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland B is a palustrine emergent/scrub/shrub wetland complex associated with Little Robinson Creek. Wetland B's functions and values scored high in the categories of hydrology-characteristic, water quality- downstream, water quality-wetland, and maintenance of characteristic fish habitat. Of the 3.24 acres of Wetland B delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.41 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland B continues to the east and west outside the proposed ROW.

Wetland C is a palustrine emergent wetland with some scrub/shrub habitat associated with the Grand River. Wetland C's functions and values scored high in the categories of hydrology-characteristic, flood attenuation, water quality- downstream, water quality- wetland, characteristic wildlife habitat structure, and maintenance of characteristic fish habitat. Of the 7.77 acres of Wetland C delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.84 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland C continues to the east and west outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland D is a palustrine emergent/scrub/shrub wetland complex associated with the Grand River. Several wetland types are associated within this wetland. This entire wetland complex is hydrologically connected to Bruce's Bayou. Wetland D's functions and values scored high in the

categories of vegetative diversity/integrity, flood attenuation, water quality-downstream, water quality-wetland, and characteristic wildlife habitat structure. Of the 9.53 acres of Wetland D delineated within the proposed ROW, 1.12 acres of palustrine emergent/shrub/scrub wetland will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland D continues to the east and west outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland E is a palustrine forested wetland complex associated with an intermittent stream, an unnamed tributary to Bruce's Bayou, just south of Cyprus Street. The wetland continues via a culvert under Cyprus Street to an area of palustrine emergent wetland. This wetland is also hydrologically connected to Bruce's Bayou. Wetland E's functions and values scored high in the categories of vegetative diversity/integrity, hydrology characteristic, water quality-downstream, water quality-wetland, characteristic wildlife habitat structure, and maintenance of characteristic amphibian habitat. Of the 0.60 acre of Wetland E delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.12 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland E continues to the east and west outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland F is a palustrine forested wetland just west of the Nunica Cemetery. Wetland F's functions and values scored medium in all applicable categories. Of the 0.36 acre of Wetland F delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.15 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland F continues to the north and south outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland G is a palustrine emergent wetland associated with the Black Creek. Wetland G's functions and values scored medium and low in all applicable categories. Of the 0.26 acre of Wetland G delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.08 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland G continues to the north and south outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland H is a palustrine emergent/scrub/shrub wetland. Wetland H's functions and values scored medium and low in all applicable categories. Of the 0.86 acre of Wetland H delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.01 acre will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Wetland H continues outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland I is a palustrine scrub/shrub wetland. Wetland I's functions and values scored medium in all applicable categories. Of the 0.56 acre of Wetland I delineated within the proposed ROW, 0.06 acre will be impacted by the preferred alternative. Wetland I extends outside of the proposed ROW.

Wetland J is a palustrine emergent wetland. It is located at the corner of US-31 and Riley Street in Holland. This is the only wetland that will be impacted within the Macatawa River Watershed. Wetland J's functions and values scored medium in flood attenuation, water quality downstream, and aesthetics/recreation/education/culture. 0.002 acre of Wetland J may be impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Measures will be taken to avoid impacts to this wetland, but if impacts do occur, mitigation will take place at MDOT's Macatawa wetland bank site.

PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

Twenty-nine Illustrative Alternatives were considered throughout the development of the DEIS. After analysis and comparison to the project's purpose and need, eighteen were eliminated. Eleven Practical Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, were presented at the DEIS Public Hearing in 1998. Following the Public Hearing, and after additional evaluation based on comments from the DEIS process, six of the Practical Alternatives (2005 Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, 2020 TSM Alternative, Alternative F, Alternative J1, Alternative P, and Alternative P1) were eliminated from further consideration due to their inability to address the project's purpose and need.

After eliminating the six alternatives described above, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) began evaluating the remaining alternatives against the project's purpose and need.

Five Practical Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, were carried forward from the DEIS for further analysis. Alternatives A, F-1/F-3, R, and F/J-1 each included a new crossing of the Grand River and/or a replacement of the existing bascule bridge. MDOT also evaluated a new option presented by the Coalition for Sensible Transportation Solutions (CSTS) after publication of the DEIS. Detailed descriptions of the Practical Alternatives and the CSTS option are included below. Section 3.0, "Alternatives Considered" in the FEIS provides an in-depth analysis of each alternative and a history of the alternatives development process.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

Wetland mitigation for unavoidable impacts can be required through Part 303 (Wetlands Protection) of Act 451, NREPA, as amended and Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act. In Michigan, federal wetland regulatory authority has been delegated to the State, and the extent to which wetland mitigation is required for a project is dictated through the wetland permit process administered by the MDEQ. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) retains authority over navigable rivers, including the Great Lakes and adjacent wetlands. A permit will be required jointly by the USACE and MDEQ for the impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States in order to construct the Preferred Alternative.

The maximum required acreage of wetland mitigation was calculated for each watershed using MDEQ regulatory replacement ratios. The wetland mitigation ratios required by MDEQ are 2:1 (mitigation-to-impact) for forested wetlands and 1.5:1 for scrub/shrub and emergent wetlands. Ratios for areas of exceptionally high quality or low quality may be adjusted on an individual basis upon review by the resource agencies during permitting. Based on the mitigation to impact ratios, 0.12 acre of emergent, 3.57 acres of emergent/scrub/shrub, 0.47 acre of scrub/shrub and 0.54 acre of forested mitigation will be required by the MDEQ for a total of 4.70 acres of mitigation.

The following sites have been identified for wetland mitigation. These sites provide the maximum amount that will be required within the watershed. The owners of these potential mitigation sites have expressed an interest in selling the portion of their properties desired by MDOT for mitigation.

On Site Mitigation

The first option for wetland mitigation is on-site wetland mitigation. This is generally the best place to successfully build wetlands that will replace the functions and values of the impacted wetlands. There are two potential on-site locations that are being considered. The first is on parcels owned by MDOT along the Grand River. The second possible on-site mitigation area is on a site called Jack's Fish Farm owned by MDOT just south of the Grand River. There is potential to create approximately 1.59 acres of additional wetland at this location. Mitigation at this site would be highly beneficial to the watershed given its proximity to the Grand River. The expected functions and values at this mitigation site are flood attenuation, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Off Site Mitigation

If on-site mitigation is not an option, there are two potential off-site mitigation locations.

Rogers Property

The first off-site location is the Roger's property, an approximate 75-acre parcel located on the west side of 144th Avenue where it intersects with Garfield Road in Spring Lake Township, Ottawa County, Michigan (T8N, R16W, Section 36). The site consists of well drained Chelsea complex (CIB) soils, poorly drained Glendora Sandy Loam (Gl) soils and somewhat poorly drained Shoals loam (Sh). The site is located adjacent to the Grand River floodplain and is surrounded by Dermo Bayou to the north and Indian Channel to the west, which are both connecting tributaries to the Grand River. The property consists of a sandy, upland woods dominated by mixed oak (*Quercus sp.*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), cherry (*Prunus sp.*),

and maple (*Acer sp.*), as well as fallow farm fields. The expected functions and values at the Roger's property mitigation site are flood attenuation, wildlife habitat and recreational uses. This property also provides an opportunity for MDOT to create additional wetland mitigation for future project impacts.

This location is currently the preferred wetland mitigation site for the project, based on the information available at this time. MDOT is therefore pursuing the early acquisition of the property for this purpose. The Rogers site was one of three sites field reviewed by MDEQ and USACE. Prior to selection, MDOT staff installed groundwater monitoring wells and conducted soil borings to determine groundwater levels. It was determined that the groundwater level was sufficient to support the necessary wetland mitigation. As a result, the wetland mitigation on this site will be groundwater fed. The site was preferred by the USACE because it is located in the lower Grand River area and it is within (or is adjacent to) the floodplain of the Grand River. Additional USACE comments are addressed in the FEIS. Other factors used for selection of this site include its location within the project study area, the availability of the property, and the capacity to accommodate mitigation for future projects.

Bolthouse Property

The second off-site location is the Bolthouse property, which is an approximately 100-acre parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection of M- 45 (Lake Michigan Drive) and Linden Drive in Tallmadge Township, Ottawa County, Michigan (T7N, R13W, Section 19). The site consists of existing forested and scrub/shrub wetlands and farmland. Soils on the site are hydric, poorly drained Sloan loam. The entire site is within the floodplain of the Grand River that runs adjacent to the west. Other streams and water bodies nearby include Ottawa Creek, a perennial stream to the northwest and man-made lakes formed from gravel pits to the east. The site contains a floodplain forest dominated by silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), box elder (*Acer negundo*) and American elm (*Ulmus americana*); and farm fields that are currently planted with corn. Approximately 20-acres of wetland would be created at this site and the remaining acreage would be enhanced and preserved. The expected functions and values at the Bolthouse property mitigation site are water quality, wildlife habitat, and flood attenuation.

COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project has been coordinated with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and other agencies as listed in Section 5 of the FEIS. Evidence of this coordination is contained in Appendix C of the FEIS along with Section 5 of the FEIS. The concerns raised by these agencies and the public in general have been adequately considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to avoid and minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.