

can be detrimental if poorly designed and interfere with traffic on public roads.

County government and local communities must work together with private road developers to make sure the private roads do not duplicate existing or planned public roads, do not disrupt traffic flow on public roadways, and connect properly and safely with public roads.

From a monetary perspective, care should be taken to ensure that the private road developer will provide future road maintenance at a level that is fair and appropriate for those who live, work, and travel on the road – and at no expense to the local unit of government or its taxpayers.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming refers to a means of visually and physically causing drivers within a residential area to slow down and be more attentive. The term is defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) as “the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.” The intent of traffic calming is to reduce traffic congestion, accidents, air and noise pollution, and to generally improve the street environment.

Therefore, traffic calming devices have special application and purpose on some streets and require special regulatory consideration before being implemented.

TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES

- ☑ Speed bumps
- ☑ Speed tables
- ☑ Street narrowing medians
- ☑ Street closures
- ☑ Roundabouts or traffic circles
- ☑ Textured pavement surfaces
- ☑ Attractive landscaping features



Roundabouts keep traffic moving, decrease emissions, improve fuel economy, and increase safety by slowing traffic speeds and eliminating left turns across opposing traffic lanes. Photo courtesy of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Neighborhoods that employ traffic calming devices should also post signs at entrance points to notify drivers that calming measures and ordinances are in effect.

Planning for traffic calming devices prior to constructing a new neighborhood reduces future problems and unnecessary retrofitting costs.

Natural Beauty Roads

Natural Beauty Roads refers to roads that are specially designated through Michigan’s Natural Beauty Road Act and are, thus, maintained in an undisturbed condition in order to help reserve rural and community character. Natural Beauty Roads are those often associated with scenic views or canopies of tree branches creating a picturesque tunnel over the roadway.

In order for a road to be considered a Natural Beauty Road, at least 25 residents must initiate a petition asking that the road be so designated. Within six months, the road commission or a legislative body must hold a public hearing. Within 30 days after that, the road commission or legislative body must announce its decision.

Roads that receive Natural Beauty Road designation receive the same level of maintenance as they did prior to the designation, as long as the character of use does not change, resulting in a higher degree of maintenance.

St. Clair County does not have any roads officially designated as Natural Beauty Roads. However, several county roads do have appropriate native vegetation and other natural features that warrant consideration for this designation.

ROAD POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

In addition to the various specific policy and program issues already presented in this chapter, the federal government and the county government provide program guidelines.

Federal Government

The federal government has had several transportation funding programs in the past and also probably will in the future. The current program is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Signed into law by the President on August 10, 2005, SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation's history, with guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion.

SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today, such as:

- Improving safety
- Reducing traffic congestion
- Improving efficiency in freight movement
- Increasing intermodal connectivity, and
- Protecting the environment

SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities.

County Government

Through SCCOTS, the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission has participated in the development of a 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for St. Clair County and the other communities and agencies SCCOTS serves. These plans list projects and funding priorities based in part on:

- Analysis of current travel conditions, transportation facilities, and systems management
- Projection of economic, demographic, and land use activities and transportation demands
- Evaluation of short-term improvements and long-term, area-wide transportation alternatives

Through provisions of the Regional Transportation Plan and Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Metropolitan Planning Commission hopes to reduce congestion and improve safety factors, road surfaces, and overall highway and bridge standards throughout the county.

TRANSPORTATION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following is a comprehensive list of significant findings from the Transportation Technical Report:

County Travel Characteristics

- The transportation network is a critical element in making land accessible for development. While there are other factors that contribute to land use change, such as market demands and local zoning policies, changes to the transportation system can significantly impact land uses and property values.
- Transportation systems require land for right-of-way. With most expansions of a transportation system, or development for a new facility, there will be a need for right-of-way. The acquisition of right-of-way will have fiscal, land use and social implications such as the potential displacement of residents or businesses.
- Land uses, and the distribution of different land use types, generate traffic. Residential areas

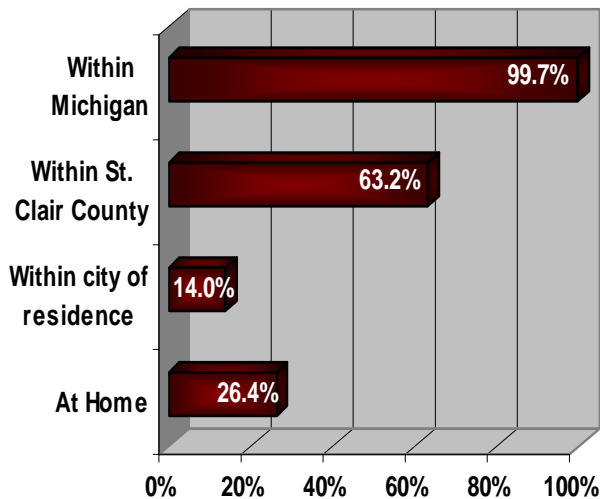
will generate trips which are attracted by places of employment, shopping, recreation, and proximity to other modes of transportation. Land use planning can be used to make the relationship of these land uses more effective from a transportation standpoint, such as with mixed-use development.

- ☑ Travel time to work is one important transportation factor. It is a key indicator of the relationship of land uses, principally the compactness of communities and the relationship between residences and places of work. Travel time to work tends to be somewhat less for most St. Clair County residents than the overall state average. This is partially due to the relative compactness of employment centers such as the Cities of Port Huron, St. Clair and Marysville.
- ☑ The time home/departure time to work in St. Clair County is more evenly distributed than the overall state average. Residents of St. Clair County tend to leave for work earlier in the morning than the overall state average.
- ☑ Transportation facilities need to be considered in relation to traffic volumes and roadway congestion, safety, non-motorized

transportation, land use relationship and intensities, impact to community character, environmental impacts, air quality, noise and fiscal constraints.

- ☑ Fewer St. Clair County residents work within their county of residence than the average for the state. In addition, fewer St. Clair County residents work within their city of residence than the overall average for the state. This is likely due to a significant portion of the county's population that is employed in the Detroit metropolitan area or Macomb County.
- ☑ While the overall percentage of commuters utilizing mass transit in Michigan is small, the percentage of St. Clair County residents utilizing available modes of public transportation is much less.
- ☑ Environmental conditions and impacts need to be considered when planning for transportation systems. Natural features such as topography and water features not only present constraints to new transportation facility development, but also pose major elements in defining the spatial context of the transportation network, land use, and community structure.

Where St. Clair County Workers Work, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Transportation Planning

- ☑ There are many organizations with transportation interests in the county, each with their own goals, constituency, and role in the transportation system.
- ☑ The St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS) has been established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SEMCOG to aid in the development of a coordinated transportation system for the county. SCCOTS is a State designated transportation study area within Southeast Michigan.
- ☑ SCCOTS maintains an Advisory Committee (SAC) that provides recommendations on all transportation related matters to the SCCOTS Policy Committee, which in this case happens to be the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). SCCOTS also

maintains a Technical Subcommittee (STS) which develops technical documents and plans, and recommends action to the SAC.

- ☑ In preparing the LRTP and TIP, factors such as anticipated population and economic growth rate, existing and anticipated transportation problems and system performance, consideration of environmental and energy concerns, available financial resources and prevailing political and public attitudes must be considered.

St. Clair County Roads

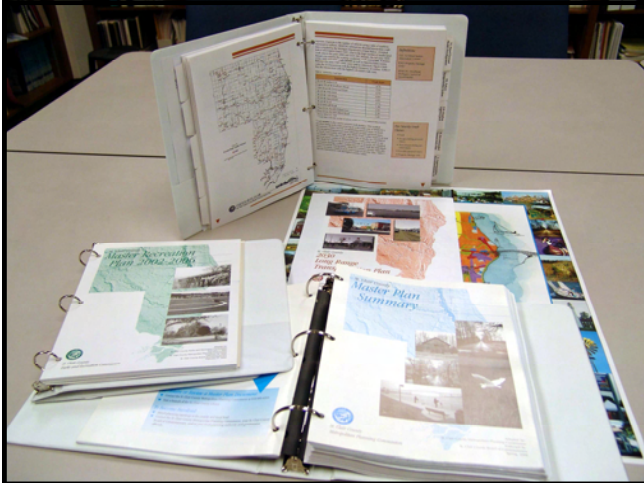
- ☑ The St. Clair County surface transportation (road) network is comprised of 472 miles of county primary roads, 1,044 miles of county local roads, 260 miles of city streets and over 180 miles of state trunkline.
- ☑ Function, efficiency and safe movement on St. Clair County roads can be improved through the planning, design, and establishment of a road system in which each element serves a specific purpose. Creating a functional road system, or hierarchy of roads, provides for movement of traffic as well as access to specific sites.
- ☑ The cost of improving roads is normally split between the County Road Commission and township, although the local share can come from sources other than the township. Local taxes must be generated to fund local road projects, while county taxes may have to be increased to fund primary road projects.
- ☑ The Level of Service (LOS) of a road may be influenced by a number of factors that will define individual roadway capacity, including: pavement condition and material; roadway width and number of lanes; and topography (terrain).
- ☑ The SEMCOG projected traffic volumes show some increase in traffic in and around the Port Huron area. Some roads in the southern and central areas of the county are also shown to increase volumes. This is likely due to the suburbanization of southern St. Clair



The M-25 corridor from Port Huron through Keewahdin Road in Fort Gratiot is an area that experiences more severe traffic congestion than other areas in the county.

County and northeastern Macomb County.

- ☑ Areas that are identified as having more severe projected congestion include a section of M-29 east of New Baltimore, Capac Road at the border with Macomb County, Lapeer Road from Allen Road to Abbottsford Road (including the intersection with Wadhams Road), and the M-25 corridor from Port Huron through Keewahdin Road. Marine City Highway and Fred Moore Highway will experience even more congestion as the southern portion of the county becomes more developed. This will be especially evident near the intersections with I-94 and Gratiot Avenue.
- ☑ Good access management, through control over the number and location of driveways, and efficient spacing of traffic signals or roundabouts, can increase capacity by up to 50 percent according to some studies. Though access management will help alleviate congestion, volumes of greater magnitude may still lead to significant congestion issues.
- ☑ There is a strong link between land uses and transportation in St. Clair County. The area's population growth has increased the demand for retail services and has been a catalyst for economic development. A significant portion of the county's commercial and industrial development has been in Port Huron, Fort Gratiot and Port Huron Townships.
- ☑ Because traffic patterns are largely dictated by



The Long-Range Transportation Plan integrates goals, objectives, and policies from other county plans such as this Master Plan, the Master Recreation Plan and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

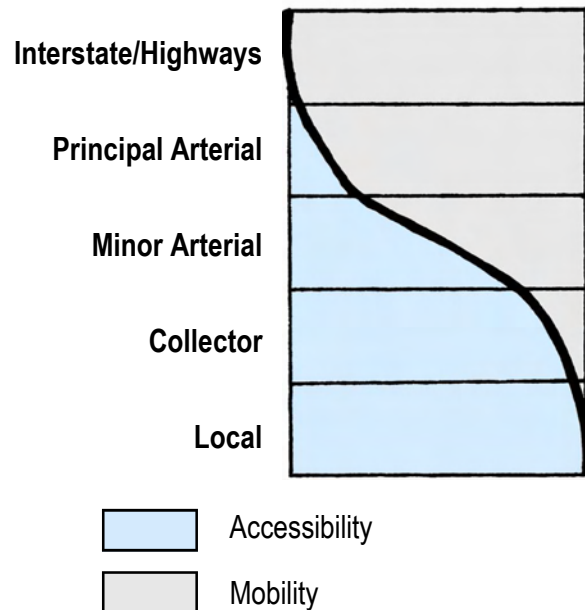
land use, it is vital that road development be coordinated closely with the overall land use plan for the County. By controlling the intensity of land use, the number of trips generated by the various districts of the community can also be managed. The best tool available for this purpose is an integrated land use/transportation planning process that measures every land use decision against the suitability of the transportation network.

- ☑ Much of the major roadway improvements proposed in the St. Clair County Long-Range Transportation Plan and the SEMCOG Regional Transportation Plan are concentrated around existing urban areas. This will help support the continued growth and redevelopment of these areas in their role as the industrial, commercial, residential and cultural centers of the county.
- ☑ Improvements to the St. Clair County transportation system should support local land use policies, while minimizing impacts to the natural and built environments. Population and housing trends depict a county that will require additional transportation services beyond improving its current infrastructure. Economic trends suggest the need to use alternative funding sources to meet the demands of St. Clair

County's existing and future transportation system.

- ☑ Auto crashes occur more frequently on the major roads and major road intersections of the County than on other class of roads.
- ☑ Intersection operation and design issues (sight distance limitations, too many driveways, etc.) are a major consideration in determining road safety conditions. Unobstructed sight distances should be provided on all approaches at each intersection.
- ☑ Within larger developments, particularly those that could potentially have roads serving as through connectors to arterials, there is a need to have a hierarchy of roads. Providing road connections between adjacent subdivisions allows for the movement between adjacent neighborhoods without the need to access major roads.
- ☑ Local communities need to adopt standards for private roads to ensure that they are properly designed and constructed. Poorly designed and located private roads without connections to adjacent developments will increase traffic on public roads and degrade the ability of the public road system to meet the needs of the

Roadway Classification Mobility vs. Accessibility



community.

- ☑ Many roadways in St. Clair County and throughout the state were originally designed for much lower traffic volumes than they are now expected to accommodate. Improvements to these roadways are often limited due to lack of right-of-way or development which lines the roadway. The lack of adequate right-of-way escalates costs and significantly delays improvement projects. One way to minimize these problems is through a cooperative effort to preserve right-of-way.
- ☑ The more people that commute by bus, vanpool, or train, the greater the number of people our congested corridors can carry during peak periods. Using strategies that increase the carrying capacity of the system – such as enabling greater use of high-occupancy vehicles, shifting trips out of rush hours, and eliminating the need for a trip altogether – helps us get the most out of our transportation investments.
- ☑ Traffic congestion results in a number of problems, including economic costs due to delayed travel times, air pollution, wasted fuel and accidents. As one roadway becomes congested, drivers may use others not necessarily intended for through traffic. One procedure to help ensure that traffic impacts are properly evaluated is to require a traffic impact study.
- ☑ Typically, the approach to addressing high traffic volume is to widen a road to three, four or five lanes. However, widening can disrupt the rural atmosphere of an area. Maintaining safety and smooth traffic flow can minimize the need to undertake costly, premature or even unnecessary widening. One technique to help preserve capacity and promote safety while delaying or avoiding the need for widening is access management.
- ☑ Attainment status for ozone, fine particulate matter (PM2.5), and carbon monoxide is designated for the entire SEMCOG region, not by county. The region is currently

designated nonattainment for the eight-hour ozone and PM2.5 standards, and maintenance for carbon monoxide. Future standards will be even more difficult to attain.

- ☑ As areas develop and traffic volumes increase, fast and efficient roadway design in neighborhoods contributes to problems related to cut-through traffic, especially when the adjacent arterial streets become congested and motorists begin seeking alternate routes. In order to alleviate these traffic problems, traffic calming measures can be employed, particularly in residential neighborhoods.
- ☑ Increasingly, St. Clair County will have to “do more with less” due to the lagging economic climate. This lack of funding is felt at the national level trickling down through states and directly impacting local units of government.
- ☑ The Port Huron urban area has the highest concentration of environmental justice populations (minority and low-income) within St. Clair County. The planned transportation improvements detailed in the St. Clair County Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) enhance travel options throughout the entire county including the urban area.

Transit Facilities

- ☑ By 2030, 42,000 St. Clair County residents are projected to be older than 65, more than double the amount in 2000. There will be a great need to find alternative transportation options for many residents over the age of 65. Therefore, transit services in St. Clair County will become increasingly important.
- ☑ Buses from the BWATC operate seven regularly scheduled bus routes in the City of Port Huron and Fort Gratiot Township. Currently, bus riders can catch a bus anywhere in the system every 40 minutes. All fixed route buses are lift-equipped for the mobility impaired.
- ☑ BWATC served 933,121 riders in 2006, an overall increase of 13.6% in ridership from 2003 (there was an increase of 6.8% increase



The new Blue Water Area Transit Bus Operations, Maintenance and Administrative Center opened in October 2006.

between 2001 and 2003). Between 2003 and 2006, the largest increase in ridership was in fixed-route service which increased by 14.1%. Between 2002 and 2003, the largest increase in ridership was in demand response services which increased by 23.7% in one year's time.

- ☑ Other than private boats and aircraft, the ferries to Russell and Harsens Islands provide the only means of access from the mainland.

Air, Rail, and Boat

- ☑ The top imports entering the U.S. in 2006 via pipeline in the Port Huron area include: petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals; and crude. The total value of these imports is approximately \$2.3 billion. Total imports in 2006 entering through Port Huron via pipeline totaled \$5.8 billion.
- ☑ Freight value through the CN (Port Huron) tunnel has increased significantly from \$4 billion in 1994; to nearly \$11.7 billion in 1996; to over \$26.2 billion in 2006. The significant increase is attributable largely to Canadian imports.
- ☑ United States-Canada export trade accounted for roughly \$6.2 billion in 2006 compared to Canada-United States import trade which amounted to just over \$20 billion for the same year.
- ☑ In 2006, 4,518 westbound trains entered the U.S. via the CN (Port Huron) railroad tunnel.
- ☑ The St. Clair County International Airport (SCCIA) primarily functions as a cargo airport

providing 24-hour customs/immigration services.

- ☑ Airport master plans provide a detailed level of airport planning and serve as the programming instrument for the development of future facilities on the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prescribes goals and objectives of an airport master plan.

Non-Motorized, Pedestrian and Greenways

- ☑ The vast majority of residents rely on the automobile to meet their transportation needs. Historically, most transportation planning efforts have focused on vehicular travel and much of the development in the county, outside of the older cities and villages, has been dominated by the automobile. Non-motorized transportation is another important factor that needs to be taken into consideration. As development occurs, options for non-motorized transportation should be provided for recreation, an alternative for commuting to work, transportation to school for children and access to shopping and civic destinations.
- ☑ Greenways are corridors or linkages that



The Wadhams to Avoca Trail utilizes more than 12 miles of a historic rail line formerly owned by the CSX Company. The trail offers a variety of opportunities for walkers, in-line skaters, bicyclists, and even horseback riders. The scenic beauty of the Wadhams to Avoca Trail also makes it great place to do some bird watching or see the fall colors.

provide high-quality residential environments and recreational amenities which have been shown to increase property values and tax revenues and are becoming more important in attracting and retaining productive, high skilled residents and business.

- ☑ Portions of some greenways could and do tie together the county's cultural landscape providing routes for transportation or movement between St. Clair County's residential population, and various recreational, civic, cultural and natural resources.
- ☑ The relationship between greenway projects, particularly to pathways and nearby private spaces, must be carefully considered. Views, residential privacy, and access from residential areas adjacent to greenways are important.
- ☑ Pathways and wildlife habitats potentially conflict because of the environmental impact of construction. In addition, some wildlife species are intolerant of the presence of pathway users. Where a high quality habitat is present, pathway links should be rerouted around the habitat. Subtle, attractive buffers should be integrated where necessary to provide privacy and wildlife.
- ☑ The county's greenway, pathway/trail and park resource component is comprised of a variety of land and water areas, all of which function as an integral system. Because the combined total system provides more value than the sum of its individual parts, decisions on individual locations should be based upon the vision of the whole.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

TRANSPORTATION

We are a mobile society. Most people enjoy the freedoms inherent with owning automobiles. Many of us, whether we can drive or not, also ride buses, trolleys, and taxicabs, at least occasionally. The goals and strategies in this chapter address roads first, but also include public transportation systems.

Responsibility for legislating and implementing these

goals and strategies lies primarily with government officials within the county, cities, and villages. However, citizens also have a significant impact on road development and placement.

For example, government officials note traffic volume and traffic patterns. They seek to rectify unsafe conditions and places of congestion and delay. Likewise, because people have a need to get to destinations like work, stores, and health care facilities, and a need to transport materials, many citizens express their opinions through public forums and individual phone calls. Government officials also listen to these opinions and comments.

The following pages present:

- ☑ Goals that St. Clair County citizens have identified as being important
- ☑ Background information that helps to place those goals into a context
- ☑ Strategies that, if implemented, can lead us to the desired goals

The transportation goals desired by St. Clair County residents are:

1. Continually evaluate and adjust road standards.
2. Revise thoroughfare plans to coincide with anticipated growth.
3. Implement traffic impact analysis ordinances.
4. Develop and implement access management standards.
5. Develop detailed small area plans for key roadways and growth corridors.
6. Reserve sufficient rights-of-way for future roads and related improvements.
7. Provide facilities for carpooling, Park & Ride, and other "transportation demand programs."
8. Limit private roads.
9. Expand existing public transportation systems to link residential areas with employment centers.
10. Establish a countywide multimodal transportation system.



Regional collaboration is key to transportation planning in St. Clair County. Participants in the planning process include the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Road Commission, Blue Water Area Transit, and planners and engineers from local units of government.

GOAL #1

Continually evaluate and adjust road standards

Road construction standards encompass many criteria, including road width, surface materials, signs, shoulder width, rights-of-way provisions, and others.

The responsibility for achieving this goal lies primarily with the Metropolitan Planning Commission, St. Clair County Transportation Study (SCCOTS), and the St. Clair County Road Commission, working in conjunction with local and state agencies.

In order to continually evaluate and adjust road standards, these county agencies must:

- Communicate and work together on both general plans and specific projects.
- Amend current road standards to achieve consistency with other transportation goals within the County Master Plan, to protect the public's roadway investments, and to safeguard people who use the roads.
- Remain responsive to the needs of local communities.
- Be knowledgeable about changing technologies and construction and maintenance techniques that may affect existing road standards.

GOAL #2

Revise thoroughfare plans to coincide with anticipated growth

Thoroughfares are major streets and highways that can take people entirely through a local community. Thoroughfares can either be designed to promote through traffic mobility, or they can be designed to provide access to businesses and attractions within the community. Thus, they can have significant impact on a community's natural features, character, and economy.

Most thoroughfare plans in St. Clair County deal only with the issue of sufficient right-of-way space. Yet, there are more issues, such as additional road width and bridges, that should be included in thoroughfare plans, especially in light of the potential population growth and development requirements facing the county.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and the St. Clair County Road Commission must take the lead role to revise current thoroughfare plans. Local communities also need to be proactively involved. Cooperation and communication are essential.

In order to revise thoroughfare plans to coincide with anticipated growth, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and St. Clair County Road Commission must:

- Work with local community officials to make sure that community transportation plans are consistent with both community master plans and the county's Master Plan.
- Ensure that plans are coordinated between all affected communities.
- Make sure that thoroughfares respect the character of communities through which they pass.
- Ensure that road improvements are included in all local master plans.
- Realize that alternatives to construction exist, for example better access management techniques.



Different land uses will create varying levels of trip generation and will affect traffic flow in different ways. Traffic impact analysis helps local communities determine the impacts of land use decisions and mitigate any anticipated problems.

GOAL #3

Implement traffic impact analysis ordinances

A traffic impact analysis is a tool used by road planners and highway engineers to evaluate the impact of additional traffic, as a result of new construction or development, on a certain intersection or road segments.

A traffic impact analysis looks at issues such as land space for access points (driveways), the possibility of sharing access points (shared access), or using service drives. The analysis considers options to mitigate traffic impacts or improve roadways.

The extent or detail of a traffic impact analysis is dependent upon the amount of traffic expected as a result of the driveway(s) to be constructed:

- ☑ A simpler traffic assessment should be required if a new driveway is expected to generate 50 to 99 one-way trips in a peak travel hour (approximately 1 to 1.5 per minute) or 500 trips in an average day.
- ☑ A more detailed traffic impact analysis should be required if a new driveway is expected to generate 100 or more peak hour one-way trips or 750 trips in an average day.

As with Goals 1 and 2, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and St. Clair County Road

Commission play lead roles. These agencies must:

- ☑ Develop a model traffic impact analysis ordinance.
- ☑ Adopt and implement the traffic impact ordinance at the county level.
- ☑ Encourage local units of government to adopt the traffic impact analysis ordinance at the local level.

Local units of government should amend their zoning ordinances to require traffic impact analysis prior to approving projects. All agencies or governments associated with transportation decisions should incorporate the findings of the traffic impact analysis into the design and construction of roads and access points.

GOAL #4

Develop and implement access management standards

The concept of access management is related to traffic impact analysis.

Access management standards are tools used to:

- ☑ Preserve road capacity, promote safety, and protect community character.
- ☑ Minimize congestion and the potential for accidents.
- ☑ Provide property owners with reasonable access.



Access management promotes safety, preserves road capacity, and reduces potential conflict points. Driveway spacing is one access management tool intended to minimize the potential for accidents. Photo source: Michigan Department of Transportation.

Like Goal 3, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and St. Clair County Road Commission must take a lead role in the development and implementation of access management standards.

These agencies must:

- Develop a model access management ordinance and adopt the access management standard at the county level.
- Encourage local units of government to adopt the model ordinance.
- Coordinate implementation of the access management standards with local units of government and the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- Work with property owners on alternative means of access, such as shared driveways, if their proposed driveway would conflict with the adopted standards.

Local units of government should amend their zoning ordinances to be consistent with the corridor authority or the county's access management standards.

GOAL #5

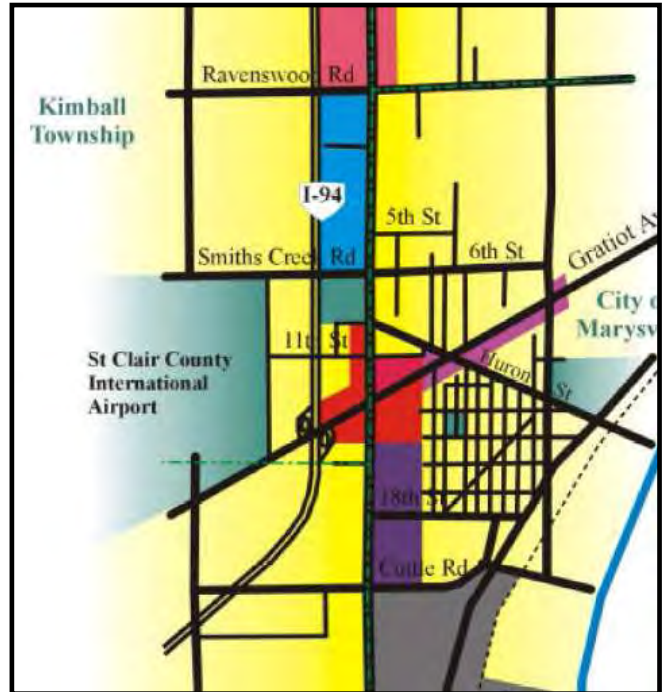
Develop detailed small area plans for key roadways and growth corridors

Local units of government are, of course, responsible for all of the land within their jurisdictional boundaries. To that end, they develop master plans and zoning ordinances.

Local units of government also develop plans for smaller areas within their boundaries. These plans are known as small area plans.

Small area plans are frequently written for areas associated with a roadway or thoroughfare that passes through the community, especially roadways along which growth is expected to occur. Small area plans can also be written for areas in need of redevelopment and investment.

Successful small area plans look into the future and provide direction to manage growth along the roadway.



This map is part of the Future Land Use Map contained in the Range Road Corridor Plan, which was developed in 2001. The Plan was prepared by the Range Road Advisory Committee, which is an inter-municipal committee made up of representatives from each community along the corridor.

Small area plans can be implemented during the construction phase of new growth corridors, or they can be retrofitted to existing roadways.

As with the other Goals, successful implementation of this Goal requires cooperation and coordination through many levels of government. The Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and St. Clair County Road Commission must:

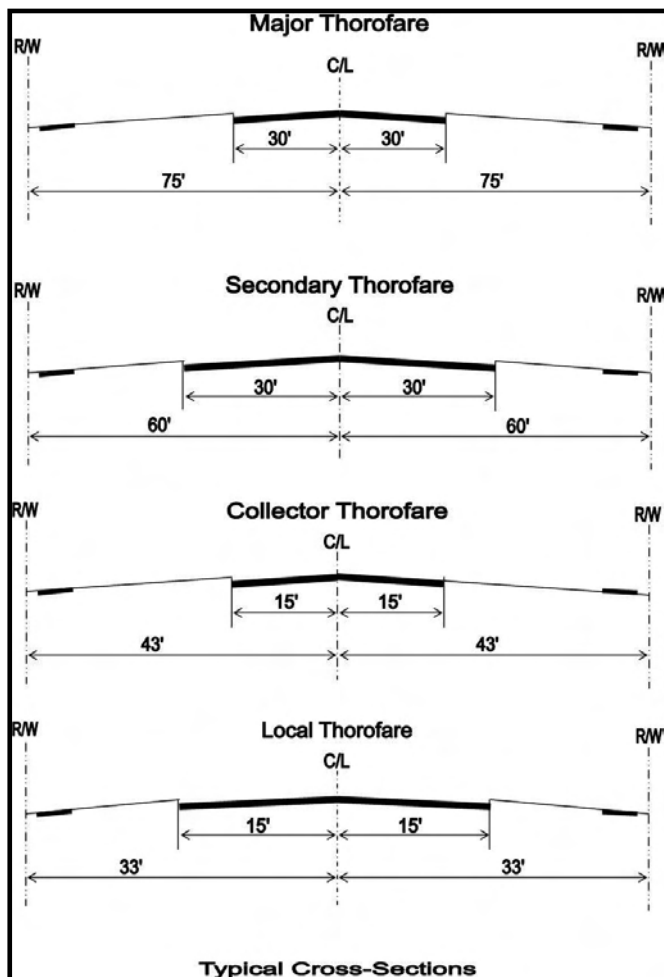
- Work with local communities to develop small area plans for key roadways that run through local jurisdictions.
- Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and other state agencies, if necessary.
- Ensure that corridor plans include recommendations for roadway improvements, multi-modal facilities, future land uses, access management standards, landscaping, street lighting, signage, architectural design, and innovative thought.

- ☑ Seek funding for plans and studies at the county level.
- ☑ Work with local communities to make sure that small area plans are implemented.

GOAL #6

Reserve sufficient rights-of-way for future roads and related improvements

Reserving sufficient rights-of-way for future roads and related road usages is a task that requires significant cooperation between county government, local governments, landowners, and developers. It is a task that can be applied to existing roads or roads planned for future construction.



Typical cross-sections for roads in St. Clair County. The diagrams also show the typical rights-of-way for various road classifications. Diagram courtesy of the St. Clair County Road Commission.

The thought process for successfully reserving rights-of-way also requires a certain amount of imagination.

Certainly, planners should look at existing traffic patterns to help determine future road requirements, including expansion of existing roads and construction of new roads and bridges. Planners should also project well into the future and ask, "Where else will we need roads and bridges?" Along with related questions for other public services, such as water and sewer lines, planners should also ask, "When do we want to build these roads and bridges?" The answers to these questions will help determine which St. Clair County land should be set aside for future construction, even if that construction is not expected for several years or decades.

Likewise, planners should look at road-related beautification and utilitarian projects that are currently occurring within rights-of-way spaces. These projects include pathways, trails, and possible public transit systems. With these in mind, planners and visionary thinkers should ask, "What else, besides traditional vehicular traffic, might we want to do with this space for the benefit of citizens and people using the roadways?"

To reserve sufficient rights-of-way, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and the St. Clair County Road Commission must:

- ☑ Work with local communities, landowners, and developers to promote the conceptual benefits associated with this goal to ensure sufficient rights-of-way for future improvements.
- ☑ Plan thoroughfares with sufficient rights-of-way.
- ☑ Develop incentives to gain private sector cooperation and dedication.

GOAL #7

Provide Park & Ride facilities for carpooling and other "transportation demand programs"

Park & Ride facilities are parking spaces that government can provide for people who want to meet at a public location and ride together to a common



destination, usually work. Such facilities exist within the county, but few people have used them in the past.

That pattern is changing, however. Spurred by either economic factors, such as the cost of gasoline, or environmental concerns, more people are using these facilities. Some companies, at least in other parts of the state, are also offering incentives to encourage employees to reduce or alter work-related driving.

To achieve this goal, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and the St. Clair County Road Commission must:

- Work with appropriate state and federal agencies to maintain existing Park & Ride facilities and to expand those facilities, as needed.
- Include space for Park & Ride facilities within rights-of-way plans.
- Encourage more businesses to promote carpooling and to develop transportation demand programs.

Local communities should also plan for Park & Ride facilities within their jurisdictional boundaries, especially at interstate ramps and along arterials.

GOAL #8

Limit private roads

Private roads can adequately serve small population

segments, such as within an apartment complex or condominium association.

However, private roads within subdivisions have, in the past, become unplanned public roads when private developers stop caring for the roads and, then, residents petition government for maintenance and repairs. For that reason, most St. Clair County residents prefer that construction of private roads be limited and allowed only if the road:

- Is built where connections to existing or future roads are not possible due to land situations, such as natural barriers
- Does not duplicate public roads
- Promotes beneficial land use patterns
- Contributes to orderly development and continued access to land
- Protects community character
- Minimizes environmental impacts
- Is appropriate for safe and efficient travel
- Remains passable in all weather conditions and is safely accessible by fire, police, and other public emergency vehicles
- Is constructed to, at least, minimum standards established by the St. Clair County Road Commission and local communities

In order to limit private roads, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and the St. Clair County Road Commission must:

- Develop policies that discourage private roads.
- Create a model ordinance that allows construction and use of private roads only under certain conditions.
- Ensure that private roads, if necessary, are built in accordance with the private road ordinance.

GOAL #9

Expand existing public transportation systems to link residential areas with employment centers

In the first half of the 1990s, there were five ways to get from Port Huron to Detroit: two railroad lines, an

interurban, by boat, and by car on Gratiot Avenue. All of these have been supplanted with I-94 on which thousands of cars, generally containing only one person per vehicle, travel daily.

Likewise, Port Huron used to have an electric trolley that ran through the heart of downtown. Neither the trolley, the rails, nor the electric trolley lines remain.

Public or mass transit today consists only of a few buses running on a few bus lines in Port Huron and Marysville. Yet, people say they would use transit systems more if such services were available, especially if they could ride buses that travel at appropriate times from residential neighborhoods to work locations.

To expand public transportation systems within St. Clair County, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, the St. Clair County Road Commission, and the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) must:

- ☑ Work with community leaders and employers to identify where expansion needs exist.
- ☑ Work with public transportation system officials to expand services to meet those needs where feasible.
- ☑ Include expansion of public transportation systems in development and funding plans.
- ☑ Ensure that public transit systems are flexible and responsive to the changing needs and demands of both employers and employees.
- ☑ Ensure that public transportation systems are linked to countywide multimodal transportation systems.

GOAL #10

Establish a countywide multimodal transportation system

A multimodal transportation system would allow a person to walk, ride a bike, or drive a car to a location near his or her home, then take a bus or other mass transportation vehicle to a desired location for business, work, or pleasure.

Multimodal transportation is a concept that was popular and thriving 60 to 100 years ago throughout the United States. It's a system that is both popular and economical in large U.S. cities and many locations throughout Europe and more developed countries within Asia. Many people think it's an idea and system worth resurrecting within more of the United States, including St. Clair County. In fact, the federal government requires that transportation plans include provisions for multimodal systems.

In order to establish a countywide multimodal transportation system, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, SCCOTS, and the St. Clair County Road Commission must:

- ☑ Work with local communities, state agencies, and other county agencies to establish opportunities for non-motorized access and links to existing transportation systems.
- ☑ Plan thoroughfares to include multimodal facilities.
- ☑ Ensure that multimodal transportation systems link residential areas with centers of employment, commerce, and recreation.
- ☑ Encourage other county government agencies and local units of government to include multimodal transportation systems in their land use and recreation plans.
- ☑ Ensure that multimodal transportation systems are sensitive to community character.



Multimodal transportation systems allow a person to bike to a location near his home, then take a bus to work or shop. Photo sources: St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission and Blue Water Area Transit (www.bwbus.com).

FUNDING

TRANSPORTATION

Funding for road improvements is available from federal, state, or local sources. This money is generally applied to new road development and improvements or maintenance of existing roads.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal transportation funding priorities change as transportation legislation is established and amended. The Federal Highway Trust Fund is the source of federal surface transportation funds. The fund contains two accounts: the highway account and the Mass Transit account.

Currently, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Signed into law by the President on August 10, 2005, SAFETEA-LU directs spending on improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment.

STATE FUNDING

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the overseeing state agency for road improvement projects and funding in Michigan. Many program priorities change annually and as they relate to federal program priorities. In St. Clair County the County Road Commission and SCCOTS develop and prioritize annual and long-range expenditure priorities.

LOCAL FUNDING

Local funds may come from general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, special assessments, or special millages. Funding from local sources can often be matched with monies available from federal and state agencies.

Some local governments are also asking private developers to pay for road installation or repair when the road serves a specific private use.

The St. Clair County Road Commission indicates that there is insufficient funding to perform necessary road repairs in the future. The same insufficient funding situation may be true for roads throughout Michigan.



Construction crews build a new stretch of the Wadhams to Avoca Trail.