

## Transportation Network

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Muskegon County and northern Ottawa County. As the designated MPO, operating under the name of the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan), the Regional Commission undertakes a comprehensive transportation planning program to maintain the eligibility of local governments in the area to receive federal and state transportation funds for street and road improvements, as well as subsidies for mass transit.

The County is well served by a series of freeways, state highways, major roads and local roads. The County's primary link to other metropolitan areas in southern Michigan is by Interstate 96 which terminates as it enters the City of Norton Shores. Access to downtown Muskegon from I-96 is provided by Seaway Drive (Business 31). I-96 empties onto Seaway, which provides the most direct route to the downtown center of Muskegon. Other regional access routes are provided by U.S. 31, which is the primary north-south road for communities along the coast of Lake Michigan and by Apple Avenue (M-46), a state highway providing access to townships and communities to the east, and M-120 which begins in the City of North Muskegon and terminates in Hesperia on the Oceana and Newaygo county line at M-20.

A total of 693 miles of roads are maintained by the Muskegon County Road Commission, 374 miles of which are primary roads.

There are 513 miles of local roads within the jurisdictions of the cities and villages of Muskegon County. See Figure 3.37 for the major road network.

The Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) was originally formed in 1969 as the Muskegon County Metropolitan Transportation System (MCMTS). In 1972, MCMTS absorbed the operation of another public transit organization, the Muskegon Area Transit Authority (MTA), and became the Muskegon Area Transit System. MATS is a Department within Muskegon County Government and is authorized to provide public mass transportation services within the County. MATS currently operates service on seven fixed-routes with a 100 percent handicap accessible fleet utilizing 10 buses during maximum peak service and serving the urbanized areas of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Roosevelt Park and Norton Shores and Muskegon Township. Muskegon Trolley is operational from Memorial Day to Labor Day, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday to Sunday. MATS also provides paratransit services to meet the public demand.

MATS has a total of 20 vehicles and employs 29 people. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, for the fiscal year of 2002, MATS traveled approximately 622,000 miles, served approximately 402,400 passengers and had over 41,000 vehicle hours. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturdays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Greyhound operates out of a terminal on Morris Avenue in Muskegon. The terminal is open Monday through Saturday, but closed Sundays and holidays. Service is available to a variety of cities. Muskegon is part of the Greyhound Great Lakes region.

Pioneer Resources is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of services to people with disabilities in order to increase their independence and community participation. One of their

services is transportation for people with mobility impairments, developmental disorders, special education students, and senior citizens. Their fleet includes lift equipped transit buses, school buses, suburbans and vans. They also provide MedTrans service, a non-emergency service to transport disabled individuals to medical appointments and clinics.

In terms of rail, Muskegon County is served by CSX Transportation and the Michigan Shoreline Railroad, which is a CSX partner. There are freight services available from Muskegon and Muskegon Heights.

The commercial port on Lake Michigan for Muskegon County and the surrounding area is the Port of Muskegon. Access to the lake is also provided at eight marinas in the county.



Lake Express, a high speed ferry service across Lake Michigan, began service in June 2004 linking the cities of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Muskegon, Michigan. The Lake Express Terminal is located at the Great Lakes Marina, 1920 Lakeshore Drive, with easy connections to Interstates 96 and 31 and Interstate 131 via Rt. 46. These major highway connections link Muskegon to Grand Rapids, Holland, Detroit, Mackinac Island and the entire Western Michigan shoreline. The high speed Lake Michigan crossing will take just two and one-half hours, saving passengers a lengthy

drive through heavily congested Chicago. Lake Express is a modern, efficient, and proven transportation solution alleviating traffic hassles, while saving valuable time. Lake Express is capable of holding 46 cars for each passage across the lake. It also provides passengers with the option to travel without their vehicle. Lake Express will have a full-service car rental facility at both terminals to handle daily or weekly transportation needs. Ground transportation is available from the terminal.

Muskegon County Airport, located in Norton Shores, with an annual 92,826 passengers, is a modern, all weather facility, serving the air transportation needs of the West Michigan shoreline. The airport encompasses 1,000 acres within the City of Norton Shores and has a total employment of 165. Commercial airline service is one of the airport's major activities. Muskegon County Airport has the regional services of three major carriers, Northwest, Midwest Express and United Airlines.

In addition to commercial airline activity, Muskegon County Airport has significant general aviation activity. Many prominent businesses base their aircraft in Muskegon. The airport is also visited on a daily basis by corporate and private aircraft, with an average of one hundred fifty daily aircraft takeoffs and landings.



During the summer the airport is host to one of West Michigan's most popular summer activities, the Muskegon Air Fair.

Muskegon County also has non-motorized transportation options. The Hart-Montague Trail is a 22 mile trail that is part of the state park system, and is accessible from Montague. The Musketawa Trail is also state owned property and is a 26 mile corridor from Marne to Muskegon. Within the City of Muskegon the Lakeshore Trail has approximately 10 miles completed in four segments. Routes that are on or along the street will connect the existing trail sections to a new section of the trail scheduled to be completed in 2005. The City of Whitehall has a 2.2 mile trail called the White Lake Pathway.

#### **Air Quality – Non Attainment Area**

A designation is the term the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses to describe the air quality in a given area for any six common pollutants known as criteria pollutants. These pollutants include ground-level ozone which is unhealthy to breathe.

EPA designates an area as non-attainment if it has violated or has contributed to violations of the national 8-hour ozone standard over a three-year period. EPA also may designate an area as attainment/unclassifiable if it has: 1) monitored air quality data showing that area has not violated the ozone standard over a three year period; or if 2) there is not enough information to determine the air quality in the area.

The designations process plays an important role in letting the public know whether air quality in a given area is healthy. Once designations take effect, they also become an important component of state, tribal and local governments' efforts to control ground-level ozone.

Many areas have been categorized as basic non-attainment areas. They will have to comply with the more general non-attainment requirements of the Clean Air Act. EPA classifies ozone non-attainment areas based on the severity of their ozone problem. Classified areas fall into six categories: basic, marginal, moderate, serious, severe or extreme.

In April 2004, several counties in West Michigan were classified as non-attainment for ozone by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Kent, Allegan, Ottawa and Madison counties were classified as basic while Muskegon County was classified in the higher moderate category. Later, Muskegon County was "bumped down" to the lesser category of marginal. This was announced in September 2004 during a visit to Muskegon County by the EPA Director Michael Leavitt.

Muskegon has until 2007 to meet the new standards. It is important to note that West Michigan has an extreme ground-level ozone transport issue as much of the polluted air monitored in West Michigan is blown across Lake Michigan from areas like Chicago, Milwaukee and Gary, Indiana.

The Clean Air Act of 1970 (CAA) and its Amendments require that the federal government review all transportation plans to assure air quality conformity. These conformity requirements, first introduced in the 1977 CAA Amendments, prohibited federal approvals of actions that did not concur with state government's State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality improvements. These requirements were further expanded in the 1990 Amendments, which require transportation plans to conform to the SIP's expressed purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and

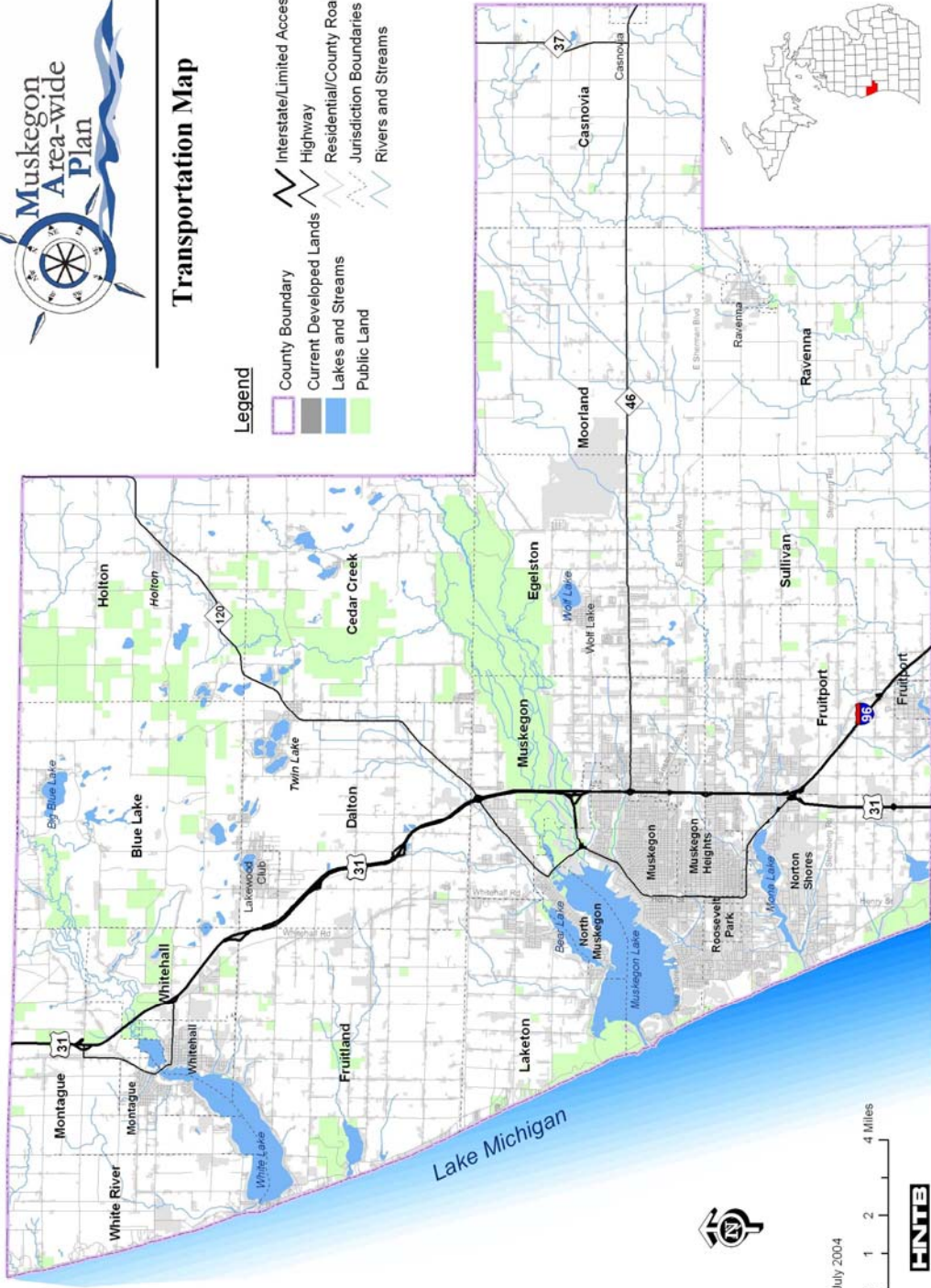
achieving expeditious attainment of such standards (WMSRDC, 2001).

The Muskegon area and the State of Michigan are operating under the State Implementation Plan adopted for 2002-2004. This plan identifies how air quality will be protected and improved in the State. The processes for reviewing and approving long range plans and projects are outlined in the SIP and will be followed in the development of transportation plans statewide. One of the most successful efforts for improving air quality in the Muskegon area is the ongoing “Ozone Action! Program”. The program has promoted voluntary ozone reduction strategies on targeted days since 1995 (WMSRDC, 2001).



### Transportation Map

- Legend**
- County Boundary
  - Current Developed Lands
  - Lakes and Streams
  - Public Land
  - Interstate/Limited Access Highway
  - Residential/County Road
  - Jurisdiction Boundaries
  - Rivers and Streams



July 2004  
0 1 2 4 Miles

