

PLEASE NOTE

In an effort to gather additional comments and suggestions during the 2040 Long Range Transportation Planning process the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission is making the working draft sections of the plan available to the public.

Additional data collection and analysis is still being conducted and this information will be included in the next draft which is to be released mid April 2013.

Questions or comments can be directed to:

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NATS MPO

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NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Increased interest and attention has been building over the years on the incorporation of bicycling and walking into the transportation network. This section will focus on the non-motorized network that includes:

- Sidewalks-where information is available
- 4 foot paved shoulders
- 5 foot bicycle lanes
- Trails

I. FEDERAL EFFORTS

US Department of Transportation (US DOT)

“The DOT encourages States, local governments, and other government agencies, to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as an indication of their commitment to accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians as an integral element of the transportation system. Transportation agencies and local communities should go beyond minimum design standards and requirements to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks. Such actions should include:

- Considering walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes.
- Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children.
- Going beyond minimum design standards.
- Integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges.
- Collecting data on walking and biking trips.
- Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time.
- Removing snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths.
- Improving non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects.

“Increased commitment to and investment in bicycle facilities and walking networks can help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities. Walking and bicycling provide low-cost mobility options that place fewer demands on local roads and highways.”

Ray LaHood, US Secretary of Transportation

US DOT recognizes that safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities may look different depending on the context — appropriate facilities in a rural community may be different from a dense, urban area. However, regardless of regional, climate, and population density differences, it is important that pedestrian and bicycle facilities be integrated into transportation systems. While DOT leads the effort to provide safe and convenient accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, success will ultimately depend on transportation agencies across the country embracing and implementing this policy.” (Source: **Ray LaHood, United States Secretary of Transportation** http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/overview/policy_accom.cfm).

II. STATEWIDE EFFORTS

MICHIGAN

- Michigan Transportation Law—"Michigan's state transportation law requires that a minimum of one percent of state transportation funds be spent for non-motorized transportation. Section 10k of Public Act 51 of 1951, as amended, allows for non-motorized plans, services, and improvements to a road, street, or highway, which facilitates non-motorized transportation by the widening of lanes, striping to designate bike lanes, or any other appropriate measure considered a qualified non-motorized facility for the purpose of this section. State law allows bicyclists to ride on all public roads except where restricted or on limited access highways. Therefore, bicyclists are found in travel lanes on streets, roads shoulders, bike lanes, and shared use paths across the state". *Source Michigan Department of Transportation State Long-Range Transportation Plan 2005-2030 Non-Motorized Technical Report, 2007.*
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)—"The Michigan Department of Transportation is demonstrating its commitment to an integrated system through the inclusion of non-motorized projects in MDOT's standard operating procedures. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Integrated Call for Projects (CFP) encourages project managers to integrate non-motorized solutions with roadwork when appropriate". In addition, the CFP emphasizes context sensitive solutions that support the state's Complete Streets Policy discussed below. *Sources: Michigan Department of Transportation State Long-Range Transportation Plan 2005-2030 Non-Motorized Technical Report, 2007; Michigan Department of Transportation 2018 Integrated Call for Projects, 2012.*
- Michigan Trails at the Crossroads: A Vision for Connecting Michigan, 2007. This document was produced by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Transportation. This document seeks to foster a connected shared use path system in Michigan by building new facilities and upgrading existing facilities throughout the state. The document also promotes the creation of an interconnected statewide system of shared use paths called "Discover Michigan Trails." This system would connect natural, tourist, and urban destinations. Modeled after the Michigan Trailways Act, a designation of the initial set of shared use paths would be established and then an appointed Council of diverse interests would be charged to create a strategy and action plan to achieve the vision for the "Discover Michigan Trails" network, including developing guiding principles for public trail investments and a dedicated funding source for multi-use shared use paths. In accordance with this document and other initiatives, in 2012, Governor Snyder laid out his vision for a continuous 924-mile trail stretching from Detroit, to the border with Wisconsin in the UP, across the heart of the state. The trail would be accessible to hikers, bicyclists, and snowmobilers.
- Michigan Complete Streets Legislation: August 2010



Complete Streets legislation signed on Aug. 1, 2010 gives new project planning and coordination responsibilities to city, county and state transportation agencies across Michigan. The legislation defines Complete Streets as "roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all

legal users...whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot or bicycle." The law further requires Complete Streets policies be sensitive to the local context, and consider the functional class, cost, and mobility needs of all legal users. Michigan leads the nation in the number of communities that have enacted Complete Streets policies. The State Transportation Commission officially adopted a Complete Streets policy on July 26, 2012, as required by PA 134 and PA 135 of 2010. The primary purpose of the new laws is to encourage development of Complete Streets as appropriate to the context and cost of a project. The focus on streets that serve all legal users is intended to increase transportation accessibility for all modes and all users without significantly impacting traffic movements. MDOT created a Complete Streets internal team to help implement the policy and work through the department's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. MDOT also participates in the statewide Michigan Complete Streets Advisory Council. This activity complements the goals of the MITP.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_NewPolicyIntegrationWhitePaperFinal_397570_7.pdf

INDIANA

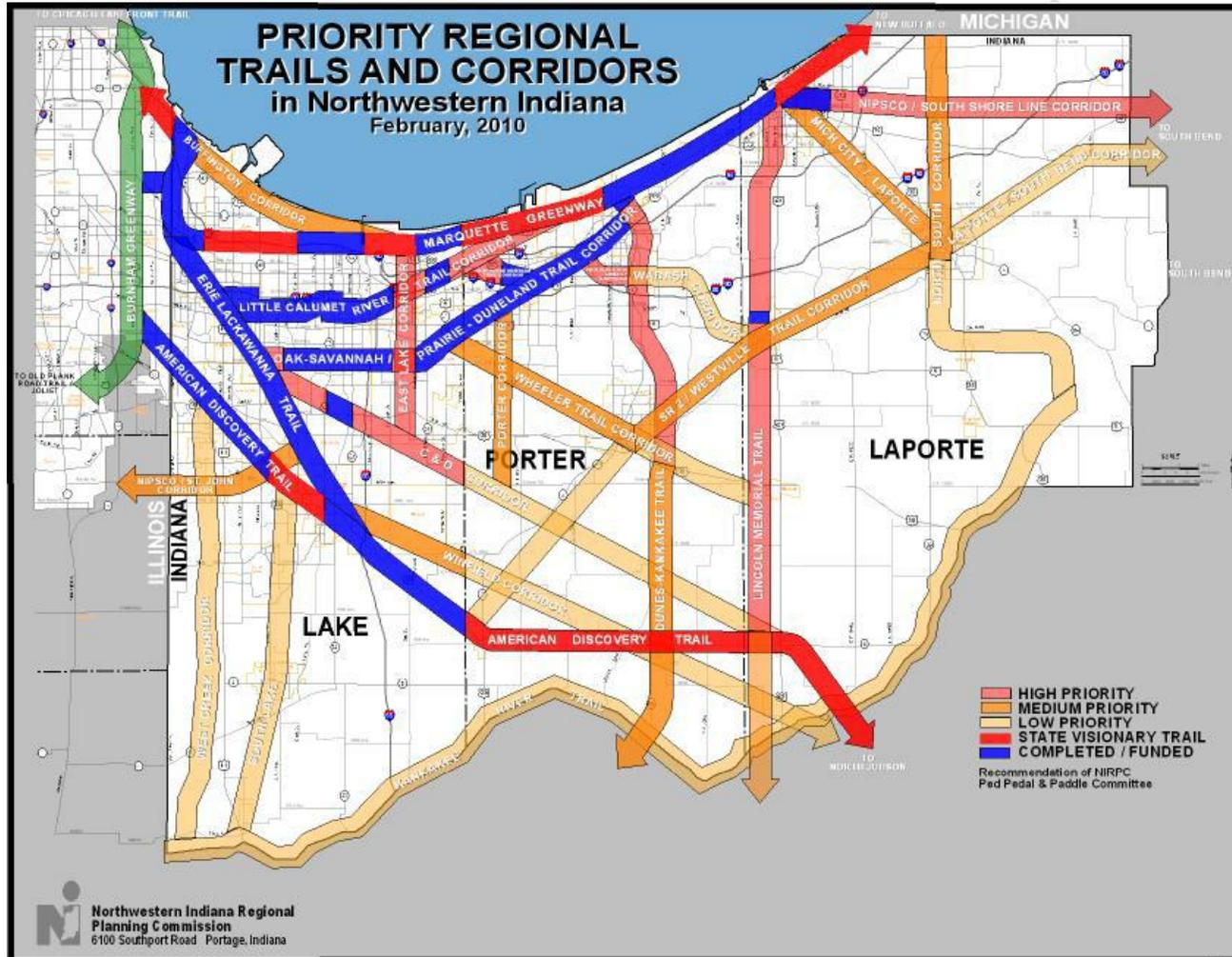
Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)

NIRPC shares a border with Berrien County. NIRPC is a regional council of local governments serving the citizens of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties in northwest Indiana, the TwinCATS planning region abuts to the NIRPC planning area and serves as a prominent non-motorized connector to other systems.

- Marquette Greenway – 37 miles:

This corridor combines the former Grand Calumet River/Marquette Trail, Calumet Trail, and Singing Sands Corridors. The corridor extends from the Illinois state line to the Michigan state line. A section of trail is in place around Wolf Lake and Lake George in Hammond. Two miles of the old Indiana Harbor Belt Railway have been converted to a crushed limestone trail in the Miller section of Gary. The former Calumet Trail Corridor is a crushed limestone path from Mineral Springs Road to the Porter/LaPorte County Line and is completely owned by NIPSCO. Finally, the former Singing Sands Corridor contains a segment in Michigan City's Washington Park. A preliminary conversation was held between SWMPC, the Friends of Harbor Country Trails, NIRPC, and the City of New Buffalo in 2012 to discuss short- and long-term potential to extend the Marquette Greenway across the Michigan state line, with a terminus in the New Buffalo area. If an extension does occur, it would possibly allow for connections between the Marquette Greenway and existing trails in Southwest Michigan.

Map South NIRPC Non-Motorized Priority Corridors



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III. REGIONAL EFFORTS

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In 2011, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission completed a 9 county non-motorized transportation plan on behalf of the Michigan Department of Transportation, which covered the 9 counties in the MDOT Southwest Region (Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren counties). The plan was intended to guide MDOT's investment in non-motorized facilities in the southwest region for five years.

The plan provided a region-wide vision for a connected system of off-road shared use paths and on-road facilities

(paved shoulders/bike lanes); encouraged dialogue and more coordinated planning among state, county, and local entities; and enhanced partnerships and increased communication among state, county, and local agencies regarding the implementation and operation (construction, maintenance, marketing, etc.) of non-motorized facilities.

This plan highlights the major gaps in southwest Michigan to achieving a connected region-wide system. With extensive public participation, desired and planned non-motorized facilities were solicited and mapped. Regional priority corridors were identified along with local priority routes for each of the counties. There are five north-south and four west-east priority regional corridors and many of the local/county priority routes correspond to the regional corridors. The regional corridors and local priority routes will help guide the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) investment in the region's non-motorized transportation system. The plan and maps can be viewed at http://www.swmpc.org/smart_plan.asp.



Mud Lake Bog is owned and operated by Buchanan Township.

IV. BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Non-motorized transportation has become increasingly important because many people understand the numerous benefits that these facilities bring to a community. The benefits are very diverse and include advantages in economic, social, environmental, health, and overall quality of life.

The economic vitality of a community can be greatly affected by an environment that is supportive of non-motorized travel. Non-motorized facilities such as shared use paths provide a means of interacting with nature, neighbors, and businesses within a community. Many studies have shown the economic benefits of shared use paths to local businesses. In Michigan studies show that out of town shared use path users spend anywhere



from \$949 to \$1,269 on lodging, restaurant, groceries, gas, and equipment per trip. Further, shared use paths can positively impact property values. For example, realtors indicated that homes along the Paint Creek Trail in Michigan were selling for about 10% more than comparable homes not located along the path.

Health and Quality of Life Benefits of
Non-Motorized Facilities

- Reduces air pollution
- Encourages physical fitness
- Helps prevent obesity related chronic diseases
- Creates safer neighborhoods
- Provides safe alternative transportation options
- Helps connect people, neighborhoods and communities with each other and the outdoors

Non-motorized facilities provide an alternative form of transportation to the automobile. This can help reduce the amount of congestion on our roadways and reduces the amount of air pollution from vehicles. Poor air quality can contribute to respiratory problems and overall health issues in the population. Non-motorized facilities can also provide transportation options for the elderly, mobility challenged and those who cannot afford or chose not

to have an automobile. Non-motorized transportation options can also help people connect to public transit options such as train and bus stops.

Further, a connected non-motorized network will offer numerous health and safety benefits for the residents of southwest Michigan. As the obesity epidemic is quickly becoming one of the largest health problems facing Americans today, these facilities can provide a place for community members to easily and inexpensively engage in physical activity. Non-motorized facilities can also provide a safer route for students to walk or bike to school.

Despite the known benefits to non-motorized transportation, the general public does not choose non-motorized transportation very frequently outside of recreational uses. According to the American Community Survey the primary means of transportation to work in Michigan and the study area continues to be those driving alone. The table below shows that driving alone to work is a slightly more dominant commute mode in Southwest Michigan than in the state as a whole.

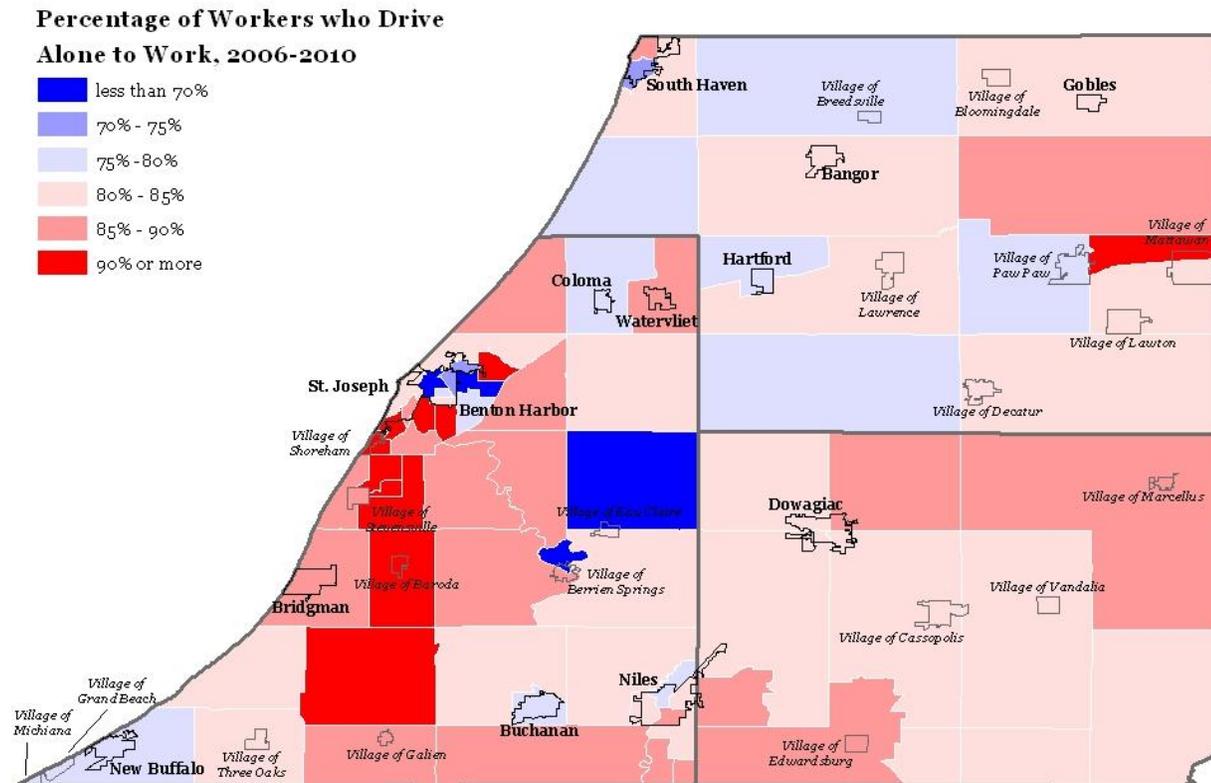
Table _____ :

	Michigan	Berrien County	Cass County
Total Number of Workers (Age 16 and older)	4,225,557	68,875	22,914
Drove alone	82%	84%	85%
Carpooled (2-3 person)	9%	8%	9%
Public Transportation	1%	.004	.002
Walked	2%	.026	.014
Bike	.004	.003	.000
Taxi, Motorcycle, and Other means	.007	.007	.005

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey Federal Information Processing Standards Codes (FIPS): 26027, 26, 26021

Still, the dominance of driving alone is not uniform throughout the study area. The map below shows that certain areas of Southwest Michigan contain higher concentrations of residents who tend to use a mode other than the personal automobile for their daily commute.

Map _____ Percentage of Workers who Drive Alone to Work



Commuting patterns alone do not fully explain the need for transportation alternatives to the personal automobile. Changes in demographics and market demand also contribute to a desire for infrastructure that supports a variety of forms of transportation.

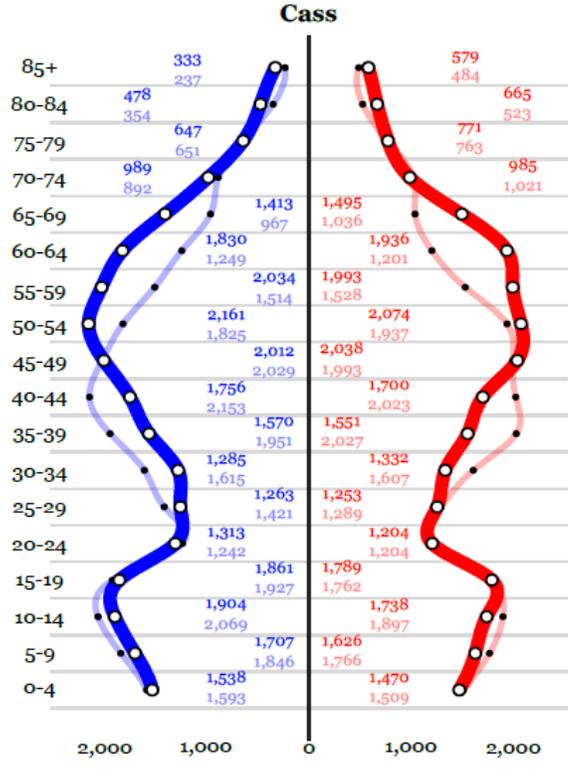
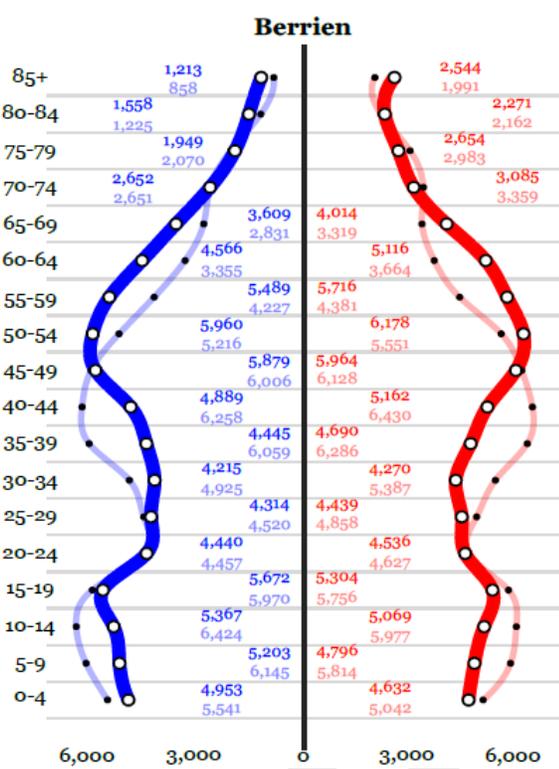
VII. CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

ELDERLY AND DISABLED POPULATIONS

The Figure ____ and Figure ____ show changes in the population’s age composition between 2000 and 2010 for

Figure ____ Berrien County Age of Population

Figure ____ Cass County Age of Population



males and females in Berrien and Cass County. The graphics show a clear increase in the population aged 50-74 between 2000 and 2010, and a clear decrease in the population aged 25-44 over that time. The trends suggest that while Southwest Michigan has a large number of people of working age, the population of the state and the study area will continue to age. As more people are unwilling or unable to drive alone, that they will rely less on single occupancy vehicles as their primary means of travel. As an MPO, NATS needs to ensure that the transportation system is complete to provide all people the opportunity to travel by modes other than automobile. A particular challenge in this region is that the population is continuing generally to disperse from incorporated cities and villages into townships. In many cases, this shift in population increases the distance that residents have to travel to access vital resources such as food, healthcare, and employment. For senior citizens

and persons with disabilities who are unable or uncomfortable with driving on their own, these distances can become prohibitive where alternatives do not exist. **INSERT DATA KEY FROM EXTRACT)**

YOUTH

A shortage of alternative facilities to the automobile creates challenges for more than just the elderly and disabled. One interesting change that has become more apparent is that many younger people now desire living in communities where they do not have to own an automobile, or do not need to travel by car to meet their daily needs. These young people might wish to live in an area with good public transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect them with employment and cultural attractions.

The ability for Southwest Michigan to once again attract working age people to the region may hinge not just on availability of jobs, but on provision of these amenities. Certain nationwide findings support the provision of these amenities to retain and attract young workers:

- **Driving Restrictions**-Recent restrictions on driving -- later ages for licenses, limits on how many people can be in the car, restrictions on cell phone use and this has resulted in the share of 14 to 34-year-olds without a driver's license increased by 5 percentage points, rising from 21 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2010, according to the Federal Highway Administration.
- **Multi-Modal Youth**-Young people are also making more use of transit, bikes, and foot power to get around. In 2009, 16 to 34-year-olds took 24 percent more bike trips than they took in 2001. They walked to their destinations 16 percent more often, while their passenger miles on transit jumped by 40 percent. But money doesn't explain everything. Sixteen to 34-year-olds in households with incomes of more than \$70,000 per year are increasingly choosing not to drive as well, according to the report. They have increased their use of public transit by 100%, biking by 122%, and walking by 37%.
- **Walkable Communities**-A separate 2011 Urban Land Institute survey found that nearly two-thirds of 18 to 32-year-olds polled preferred to live in walkable communities. The re-urbanization of America is giving more people access to public transportation. The advent of Zipcar and other car-on-demand businesses is eliminating the need to own and insure an expensive vehicle that often isn't driven much.

A survey by the National Association of Realtors conducted in March 2011 revealed that 62 percent of people ages 18-29 said they would prefer to live in a communities with a mix of single family homes, condos and apartments, nearby retail shops, restaurants, cafes and bars, as well as workplaces, libraries, and schools served by public transportation.

Source:

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/04/why-young-americans-are-driving-so-much-less-their-parents/1712/>

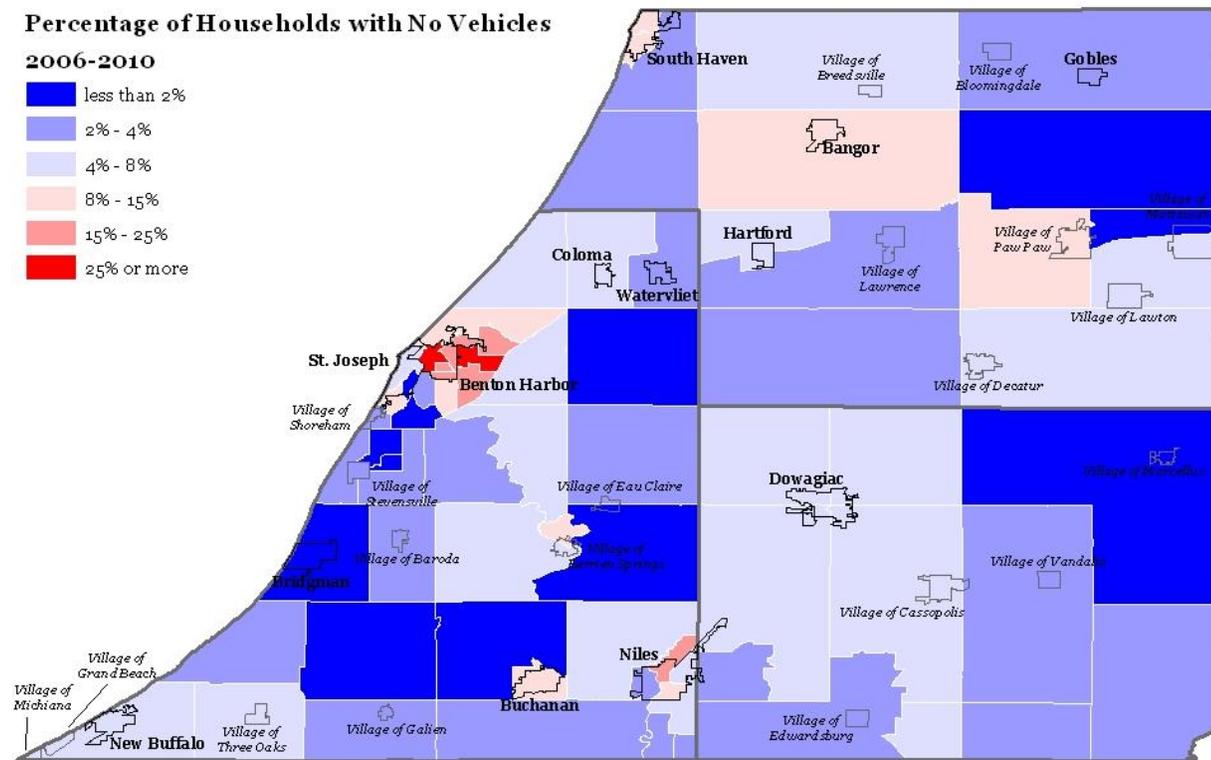
LOW INCOME POPULATIONS

Another demographic group may require, and indeed, want personal automobiles to navigate their daily needs, but may be unable to afford the cost of owning a car, which continues to rise. The total average cost of owning and operating a car is approximately \$8,700 per year, and this figure assumes that gasoline prices remain under \$4.00 per gallon.

A lack of a car may particularly impact these populations because entry-level employment centers in the region tend to be located close to high-speed, high-traffic roadways, including M-139 and areas near I-94 exits 29 and 23. The provision of sidewalks is intermittent and may be absent in many situations. Some of the jobs in these areas may also demand that employees reach and depart work during the evening hours, when transit is unavailable, and when walking and bicycling in the traffic lanes themselves may be even more unsafe than during daylight hours.

Aging and disability, a desire for less automobile-oriented living, and insufficient incomes all lead to a need to consider alternative modes to the automobile. The map below shows the percentage of zero-car households in each Census Tract of the Southwest Michigan region. While the small urban centers appear to have generally higher percentages of zero-car households than more rural areas, this might not always be the case as the population continues to age. One of the stated goals of this plan is to improve the accessibility that these households have to critical services, employment and cultural attractions, regardless of the circumstances that lead to them not owning or operating a vehicle.

Map Percentage of Household with No Vehicles



<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/08/why-are-young-people-ditching-cars-for-smartphones/260801/>

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/04/why-young-americans-are-driving-so-much-less-their-parents/1712/>

VIII. KEY ISSUES

- An aging, dispersing population that may not be able to use or rely on personal automobiles to connect them with distant services in the future.
- Intermittent and incomplete sidewalks and bicycle lanes throughout the region, with much of the needed infrastructure being away from employment centers.

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