

## Chapter 3

# EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FACILITIES

The transportation system in Kalamazoo County is an integrated multi-modal system. On or adjacent to the road network, passenger vehicles, public transportation, freight haulers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, move and interact. Other modes of transportation, including intercity buses, trucks, freight and passenger rail, and the airport, connect Kalamazoo County to the rest of the regional and worldwide transportation system.

### EXISTING MAJOR ROADWAYS

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study's primary study focus is the network of roads that are on the National Functional Classification (NFC) system and are classified as following:

- Rural and Urban Interstate Highways;
- Rural and Urban Other Freeways;
- Rural and Urban Other Principal Arterials;
- Rural and Urban Minor Arterials;
- Urban Collectors;
- Rural Major Collectors; and
- Rural Minor Collectors.

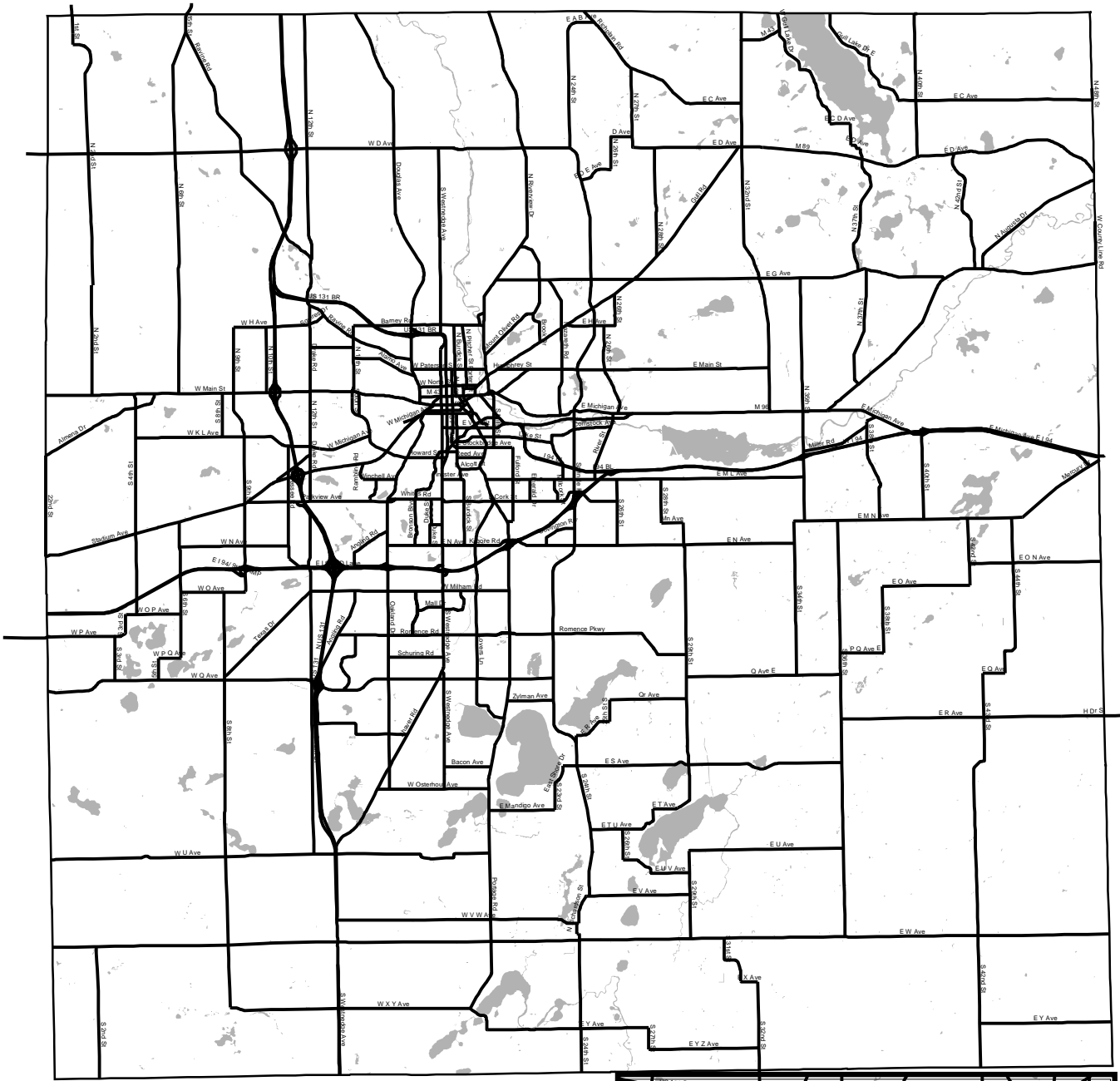
Roads classified as local or private/non-classified roads are not typically studied.

The current Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study road network is shown on the following map. These roads have from two to seven lanes of traffic and many have adjacent bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The major road system carries private passenger and public transportation vehicles, intercity buses, bicyclists, pedestrians and freight vehicles, connecting the region to local properties and businesses.

### EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT



The Kalamazoo area is served by the City of Kalamazoo Department of Transportation Metro Transit with fixed route and associated Americans with Disability Act (ADA) demand response services. In 2006, the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) was formed to transition the City of Kalamazoo Metro Transit public transit services with the existing countywide demand response service, forming one independent agency to oversee the operation of public transportation services throughout the county. The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority have not completed this transition to date (2011). They have formed joint operating agreements allowing the City of Kalamazoo to operate all public transit services in Kalamazoo County. The two demand response services have been combined into one service called Metro County Connect. Work continues towards establishing one public transit service provider for the entirety of the county.

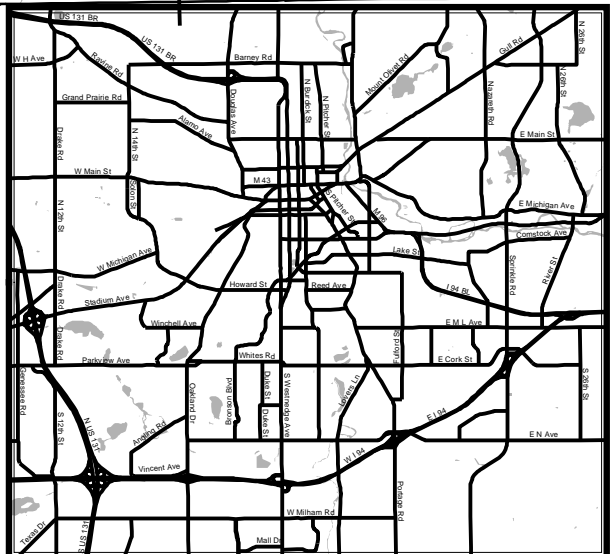
Maintenance and accessibility of the bus stops are important factors in the use of the public transportation system.



# Federal Aid Road Network

## Legend

-  Federal Aid Roads
-  Lakes, Rivers & Streams



KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
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Kalamazoo Metro Transit is operated by the City of Kalamazoo and maintains fixed route public transit service primarily in the urban area. Fixed route line haul service is provided to the cities of Kalamazoo, Portage, and Parchment and the townships of Comstock, Cooper, Oshtemo, Texas, and Kalamazoo operating Monday through Saturday. Scheduled bus headways are 30 to 60 minutes.

Bus service is also provided on the campus of Western Michigan University from August to May by the university. Students, faculty and staff currently are able to ride the bus for free anywhere within the fixed bus route system using their University identification.

Transit operations have historically been funded by passenger fares, federal and state grants, a City of Kalamazoo millage, and service contracts with local jurisdictions in the service area. Special rates are available to senior and disabled riders. Beginning in January 2007, the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority Board used a countywide transit millage to subsidize the fixed route service provided by Metro Transit to the municipalities outside of the City of Kalamazoo, excluding the university campus routes. This has allowed the elimination of service contracts with the cities of Parchment and Portage and the townships of Comstock, Cooper, Oshtemo, and Kalamazoo, thus freeing general fund resources for other local priorities for these jurisdictions. The current countywide millage helps pay for all demand response service including Americans with Disability Act (ADA) service in the county and fixed route service outside of the City of Kalamazoo. A Kalamazoo city millage helps pay for fixed route service inside the City of Kalamazoo.

Public transit administrative offices and fixed route bus maintenance and storage are located in the public transportation administrative and maintenance facility located on Rose Street just north of the central business district of the City of Kalamazoo. Fixed routes operate from the Kalamazoo Transportation Center, located Kalamazoo Avenue between Rose Street and North Burdick Street, south of the adjacent administrative offices. Demand response services and vehicle maintenance are contracted to a private company.

Further details on Metro Transit operations may be found in the publication, *“An Overview of the Kalamazoo Metro Transit System,”* available at the Metro Transit office.

A list of public transportation’s 25-year capital improvements and operational funding projects is included in the Financial Plan and the 2035 Transportation Plan Projects chapters. The following map shows the current Metro Transit fixed routes.

Demand response paratransit service required under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and countywide demand response service is provided in Kalamazoo County. This service is funded by federal, state, farebox, and county millage sources. A private contractor provides the service using publically owned vehicles. Kalamazoo County has worked with its partners and private service providers to develop a Public Transit Human Services Coordinated Plan that guides improvements to the service. This plan is available from the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA). Copies of the annually revised Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Plan Update are available from Kalamazoo Metro Transit.



## **EXISTING BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

The urban core of Kalamazoo County has extensive pedestrian facilities in the form of sidewalks, marked pedestrian road crossings, and pedestrian traffic signals. The City of Kalamazoo has instituted a new standard for its pedestrian traffic signals, including the installation of audible pedestrian signals with count down timers for the flashing “Don’t Walk” pedestrian clearance intervals. The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study has inventoried existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities adjacent to streets on the KATS network. This inventory is not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of pedestrian facilities on all streets. Existing sidewalk facilities that are on non-federal aid eligible roads are not included in the inventory. A map showing the pedestrian facilities on the federal aid system is available in the Non-Motorized Review chapter.

## **AIRPORT**

### **Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport**

Located on Portage Road, south of I-94 in the east central urban area, the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport provides both commercial (3 airlines) and general aviation services to the metropolitan and southwestern Michigan areas. This airport primarily provides passenger services. The W.K. Kellogg Regional Airport in Battle Creek, Michigan, handles much of the air freight into and out of this region. The Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport is one of 14 air carrier airports in Michigan and is classified by the Federal Aviation Administration as a Class 1 airport.<sup>5</sup> The airport facilities are owned and operated by Kalamazoo County. In addition to scheduled commercial passenger services, the airport facilities support a broad range of aviation activities, including instructional flight schools, corporate aircraft facilities, flying clubs, military operations, charter services, air freight, and air ambulance. A new terminal is under construction at the airport.

Land use surrounding the airport facility is primarily dedicated to commercial/retail and industrial purposes. A mobile home park is located adjacent to the northeastern edge of the airfield. The industrial and commercial areas serve as a buffer between airfield activities and larger residential areas located north of I-94, west of Portage Road, and east of South Sprinkle Road.

Portage Road is the main link that connects the airport to the rest of the surface transportation system. The airport is accessible by major transportation corridors linking to Portage Road from I-94, Kilgore Road, East Milham Avenue, and East Centre Avenue. The airport has reconfigured its long and short term parking areas and its access/egress road to improve connections to the major street network. A new terminal building is under construction which, when complete, will improve airport customer service and airport operations. Intermodal services linking to the facility include several taxi companies, limousine services, a variety of specialized transportation providers and the public transportation providers with Metro County Connect and the Metro Transit services. Metro Transit maintains a fixed route bus stop at the airport, providing interconnected bus service from all routes within their service area during normal operating hours. There are five rental car companies and one limousine service operating out of the airport.

In 1991, Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport completed a Noise Compatibility Study, which directed air traffic over the industrial area east of the Milwood neighborhood. The Airport Master Plan and the Federal Aviation Report, Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study, were jointly financed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation. The approved 1999 Airport Master Plan, which incorporated capital improvement

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<sup>5</sup> MI Transportation Plan, June 2007.

recommendations from the Noise Compatibility Study, provides short and long term project recommendations to meet projected aviation demands. Further information regarding this study can be obtained from the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. The airport is currently in the process of updating their Master Plan.

### **Current Operations and Aviation Forecast**

The Kalamazoo Battle Creek International Airport does provide transportation services across the board from training to commercial passenger service to air freight operations. The commercial passenger service is the largest part of the airport's operations.

The number of passenger emplanements has been decreasing in recent years but this trend is appearing to be bottoming out and growth is expected. Continued access to the surface transportation system using Portage Road is important. The airport does and will continue to serve as an intermodal hub connecting automobile, bus, and truck users to the airport.

## **RAIL**

### **Rail Freight**

Rail freight service to the Kalamazoo area is provided by three rail carriers. Norfolk Southern, operating on both north-south and east-west rail lines through the mid-section of the urban area, provides freight movements between Detroit and northern Indiana (and points beyond). Norfolk Southern also maintains a switching yard near the east side of the City of Kalamazoo's central business district. Grand Trunk/CN North America operates freight movement from two rail lines which serve Kalamazoo from the southwest, with continued service through Battle Creek and onto Detroit and Canada. A main line connects at the southern urban area which runs to Battle Creek. Grand Trunk maintains a switching yard near South Sprinkle Road. Grand Elk Railroad leases north/south track rights from Norfolk Southern Railroad and provides freight service along this corridor between Elkhart, Indiana and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Small spur lines serve major industrial locations near the Pfizer facilities east of Portage Road and along the Fulford Street industrial area.

Rail carries 18% of the freight tonnage and 14% of the freight value in Michigan according to the Michigan Department of Transportation State Long Range Plan.<sup>6</sup>

### **Rail Passenger Service**

Rail passenger service is provided by Amtrak using the east-west Amtrak/Norfolk Southern corridor between Detroit and Kalamazoo. The Amtrak station is housed in the Kalamazoo Transportation Center located on the north side of the City of Kalamazoo's central business district. Passengers can reach numerous national destinations using the following routes that pass through Kalamazoo:

- Chicago: four times a day, Monday through Sunday
- Detroit: three times a day, Monday through Sunday
- Port Huron: one departure once a day, Monday through Sunday

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<sup>6</sup> MI Transportation Plan, June 2007.

High speed passenger rail service is being advanced for the Detroit - Chicago corridor. The Michigan Department of Transportation has aggressively promoted the development of this corridor and has completed work towards high speed train service including in-cab signaling and improved road crossings between Kalamazoo and the state line west of Kalamazoo. The State of Michigan is an active partner with other midwest states and is a member of the Midwest Region Rail System in developing and improving the provision of a high speed rail system in the midwest. The Midwest Rail System Plan calls for corridor improvements to eliminate choke points and improve operations between Chicago and Detroit passing through Kalamazoo.

Details of passenger and freight rail planning activities are included in MDOT's MI Transportation Plan which is available from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

### **INTERCITY AND CHARTER BUS SERVICES**

Two intercity bus companies operate regularly scheduled passenger services in and out of the metropolitan area. Greyhound Bus Lines and Indian Trails Motorcoach are both stationed at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

Charter bus service is provided by approximately seven local companies.

### **TAXICAB/LIMOUSINE SERVICES**

The Kalamazoo area is served by several locally based, independently owned taxi companies and one limousine service. Rides are available on an on-call basis, seven days a week, 24 hours a day for most taxi services.

### **RIDESHARING**

Kalamazoo Metro Transit serves as the community ridesharing office for Kalamazoo, Barry, Branch, Calhoun, and St. Joseph counties. The office coordinates and provides updated names and address information for people requesting ridesharing information to locations within and out of the county area.

Other activities of the community ridesharing program include contacts with local employers to set up carpool/vanpool programs within their companies and surveys and interviews with users of the carpool lots in the Kalamazoo area. MDOT maintains four carpool lots in the metropolitan area. They are located at the MDOT Southwest Region office on Kilgore Road; Centre Avenue at US-131; Oakland Drive at I-94; and D Avenue at US-131. An additional lot has been recently built outside the Village of Augusta along M-96. Rideshare lot capacity expansion shows the increase use of carpooling and vanpooling of rides in the Kalamazoo area. Additional lots are being evaluated including one near US-131 and Stadium Drive.

### **OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

Several organizations, including church groups, senior care centers, and special interest providers maintain small scale transportation services for their members or clients.

## **KALAMAZOO TRANSPORTATION CENTER**

The Kalamazoo Transportation Center is located on Kalamazoo Avenue between North Burdick Street and Rose Street and houses Kalamazoo Metro Transit bus service, Amtrak, and intercity bus passenger services. The facility is the downtown transfer center for Metro Transit's fixed route bus system and has a space for food and convenience purchases. Dedicated taxicab pick-up spaces are provided near the building. Sidewalk connections provide pedestrian access. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway will have a non-motorized segment that connects to the transportation center. The Kalamazoo Transportation Center is owned and operated by the City of Kalamazoo.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS**

The existing transportation system in Kalamazoo County has numerous existing intermodal connections that facilitate the movement of people and goods between modes of transportation. These connections include:

- Sidewalks connecting pedestrians to:
  - cars parked in off and on street parking facilities;
  - public transportation service;
  - rail and intercity passenger service at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center; and
  - bicycle facilities.
- Bicycle facilities connect to:
  - pedestrian facilities;
  - public transportation through bicycle racks on the fixed route buses; and
  - to intercity bus and rail passenger service at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center (future direct trail).
- Road system that connects people and freight using passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles to:
  - residences, recreation, education, employment, and other sites;
  - the airport; and
  - intercity and passenger rail services at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.
- Public transportation service connecting to:
  - the airport;
  - intercity bus and passenger rail service at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center;
  - bicycle users; and
  - pedestrians.

## **EXISTING MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

The transportation system in Kalamazoo County is clearly a multi-modal system consisting of air, rail, freight, pedestrian, bicycle, and passenger vehicle transportation modes. All are connected to provide transportation to move people and goods and are included in the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study's continuing transportation planning process. Based on the available data and amount of transportation levels provided, the amount of emphasis spent on these modes may vary in the transportation plan, but all are important aspects of the total transportation system and will be considered in the planning process.