I-75 CORRIDOR STUDY: ST. IGNACE to SAULT STE. MARIE

“GATEWAY TO THE UPPER PENINSULA”

Prepared For:
The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Communities located along the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie

With the Assistance of:
The I-75 Corridor Committee and the Eastern U.P. Regional Planning and Development Commission

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I-75 Corridor Study
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Identification and Overview of the Corridor

The EUP Regional Planning & Development Commission, together with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is conducting a Corridor Study of Interstate 75 (I-75) from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie. This is a key transportation corridor within the State of Michigan, which is currently faced with several important issues. The Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission has been contracted by the MDOT to perform this study and analysis of the I-75 corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie. A key component of this study is public involvement, the objective of having public involvement is to ensure that the public involvement/information and consensus building program includes the voices of the impacted customers of MDOT: the public, private and business community. The public participation process will ensure all local and regional concerns are documented and addressed in this study.

The fifties were a decade of transportation improvements that continued to focus on safety and mobility. The focus on mobility resulted in the opening of an engineering wonder, the Mackinac Bridge. The nation's first five-lane highway was constructed that allowed free movement of traffic on four lanes and reduced the occurrences of rear-end collisions by establishing center left-turn lanes. The opening of the longest suspension bridge ever built, the Mackinac Bridge, dubbed "The Mighty Mac," linked the state's two peninsulas and today carries nearly five million motorists per year. In addition, Michigan was well on its way to building its share of the nation's interstate freeway system.\(^\text{1}\)

Mackinac Bridge

The Mackinac Bridge is the lone connection from the Upper Peninsula to the Lower Peninsula. In addition, it is a major tourist attraction across the county. Currently, the Mackinac Bridge is the third longest suspension bridge in the world, and the longest in the western hemisphere. The total length of the Mackinac Bridge is 26,372 feet. The length of the suspension bridge (including anchorages) is 8,614 feet. The length from cable bent pier to cable bent pier is 7,400 feet. The length of the main span is 3,800 feet. The roadway width is 54 feet and the height of the roadway at mid-span is approximately 200 feet above water level. All suspension bridges are designed to accommodate wind, change in temperature and weight. It is possible that the deck at center span could move as much as 35 feet (east or west) due to high winds. This would only happen under severe wind conditions. The deck would not swing or "sway" but rather move slowly in one direction based on the force and direction of the wind. After the wind subsides, the weight of the vehicles crossing would slowly move it back into center position. The steel superstructure will support one ton per lineal foot per roadway (northbound or southbound). In 2001, over 5 million vehicles crossed the Mackinac Bridge—4.6 million passenger vehicles.

Figure 1-1: Blueprint of the Mackinac Bridge. (Source: Library of Congress, 1999)
International Bridge

The International Bridge at Sault Ste. Marie is the only automobile crossing in Canada, between Ontario and Michigan within a 600-mile distance. The Bridge connects the twin Sault’s (Canada and US). Today, the communities served by the bridge boast populations of 16,000 for Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and 80,000 for Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario is the largest international trade crossing in Northwestern Ontario. In 1996 almost $1.7 billion in Canadian exports were shipped through the crossing to the U.S., over one-third by rail. Ontario accounted for the largest share of Canadian exports—$1.3 billion or 78 percent—while Quebec shipped the remainder. Primary destinations for these goods were Wisconsin and Michigan, where each imported at least one-quarter of the total. Minnesota followed with nine percent. The rest of the states imported less than $100 million each.

Since the Soo crossing is near the Trans-Canada Highway, it is a convenient route for goods going by truck from Northeastern and Eastern Ontario, as well as Northern Quebec and the Montreal area, to the Upper Great Lakes states. The International Bridge plays a vital role in the well being of both Soo communities. It serves as an essential transportation link to the steel, paper and forest industries, to tourism-reliant business, and to the general public for work, recreation and shopping purposes. In 2001, 2.49 million vehicles—2.35 million of passenger vehicles—crossed the bridge.

![Figure 1-2: International Bridge, Sault Ste. Marie, MI. (Source: Adrian Stroupe, MDOT)](http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/historic/100yrs/)

Purpose and Benefits of the Corridor Plan

Some of the key community issues that the I-75 Corridor Committee addressed: aesthetics, access ramps, maintenance issues, traffic issues, informational signage, safety issues, and rest areas. This document proposes a strategy for the operation, preservation and enhancement of transportation facilities within the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie.

The I-75 Corridor that runs from Sault Ste. Marie, south to Saint Ignace, is a vital Interstate roadway within the Upper Peninsula, in addition, it serves as the primary North-South arterial in the region, and is the only State/Federal roadway that connects directly to the Lower Peninsula. This corridor is not only used for movement of goods and services, but tourists and general travel. Interstate 75 was constructed during the mid 1960’s. The north and southbound lanes north of the Mackinac Bridge were constructed between 1962 and 1964.
Development of the I-75 Corridor Study is the first step in the Corridor Planning process for the St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie transportation corridor. The purpose of this document is to provide objectives for the operation, preservation, and improvement of transportation facilities within the Corridor. This document describes the role the corridor plays within the region, identifies significant issues, and helps to distinguish this corridor from others within the State of Michigan.

History of Road Improvements in Corridor

Since its construction north in the 1960’s, the roadway has seen relatively few improvements, most consisting of landscape enhancements within the right-of-way, shoulder resurfacing, concrete joint repairs, rest area upgrades and some bridge replacements. Some of which include: crack and chip sealing, landscape improvements, and one bridge reconstruction (completed in 1998) near the Charlotte River. Arterial and other access roadways have seen surface improvements, infrastructure enhancements and roadside improvements during this same time period. However, the condition surface is currently very poor and in severe disrepair in many areas throughout the corridor. Survey respondents identified this as being a vitally important issue by an overwhelming 80%. (Surveys conducted in March 2001 and July 2001)

Corridor Planning Process

The corridor planning process covers issues throughout the 56-mile corridor, and recognizes that different segments of the I-75 Corridor require different levels of study to develop a corridor-wide long-range plan. Thus, the study will be generated in three specific phases:

- Analysis of existing and future conditions and identification of significant corridor-wide issues and objectives to address those issues in a Corridor Strategy;
- Identification of any outstanding environmental, land use or other issues throughout the Corridor.
- Identification of future needs and problems within the I-75 Corridor.
CHAPTER 2: Goals and Objectives of Plan

MDOT conducts corridor studies to determine capacity deficiencies on existing trunk lines. These studies develop potential alternatives and coordinate capacity improvements with pavement and structure rehabilitation (pg 2, MDOT Five Year Plan, Strategies Section). Based on the findings and conclusions of the strategy development process, the overall strategy for the Interstate 75 Corridor is to maintain the condition and increase the functionality of existing transportation facilities.

Objectives to fulfill this strategy have been identified and listed below under the most appropriate transportation performance measures and impacts. MDOT is dedicated to improving the condition of the road surface, throughout the entire Corridor. EUP Regional Planning conducted two surveys, one in the spring of 2001 and another in the summer of 2001. As a result of these surveys, we have developed the goals and objectives, and a list of priority issues throughout the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie.

I-75 Corridor Goals and Objectives:

Goal: Provide adequate road transportation for freight and passengers in the region as essential to economic development and well being of residents and tourists.

Objective: Promote the continued improvement and maintenance of Interstate 75 from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie.

Objective: Promote aesthetic improvements and interchange beautification, which will provide for a more appealing view for travelers both entering and exiting the Corridor.

Objective: Increased measures to ensure that safety is promoted throughout the corridor, particularly with regard to deer/animal crossing the roadway and general roadway maintenance during the winter months (right-of-way fence, windbreaks, snow removal/salting/sanding, closure procedures).

Objective: Promote transportation developments in the region as they relate to tourism and economic development.

Objective: Continue to support and enhance public transportation within the Corridor.

Objective: Promote non-motorized facilities throughout the corridor, which provide safe crossing at points intersecting Interstate 75. Including bicycle lanes or adequate shoulder width, as appropriate, in all Interstate 75 preservation and enhancement projects. Such as the recently completed snowmobile/multi-use tunnel in Sault Sainte Marie and the proposed multi-use bridge in Mackinac County.

Objective: Promote improvements to arterial roads that access Interstate 75.

Objective: In cooperation with local governments, inventory scenic resources and encourage land use controls to protect the corridor viewshed.
Goal: Address access issues within the Corridor, at M-48, a priority access point within the Corridor. Providing residents and businesses of the Pickford area with direct access to Interstate 75.

Objective: Promote all measures that will continue the effort to construct access ramps at M-48 in the Pickford area. This access point is a top priority within the I-75 Corridor. Some measures might include: increased contact with State and Federal Representatives, community input sessions and continued efforts with the Michigan Department of Transportation, to put this much needed access ramp in place.

Goal: Provide for adequate Interstate Highway access at 6 Mile Road Mile Road. Providing residents and businesses of the region with direct access to Interstate 75.

Objective: Support and promote measures, which will lead to the construction of an access point at the I-75/Six Mile Road intersection.

Goal: Continue to promote and enhance efforts related to the pickup and timely removal of road kill from the Interstate shoulders and right-of-way areas.

Objective: Pursue resolutions to the continuing problem with timely removal of road kill from the highway shoulders and right of way areas. This presents an ugly view for motorists entering and exiting the corridor and represents a problem for wildlife which feed upon these carcasses, and in many cases are struck in the process, particularly with regard to the bald eagle population. Not only an unappealing view problem, but also a public health concern as well. One possible solution would be the construction of additional right-of-way fencing.

Goal: Improved signage and consistent standards for signing and billboard construction.

Objective: Form a Corridor Committee, consisting of members from every community which bounds Interstate 75 from Saint Ignace to Sault Sainte Marie, which will develop more stringent billboard ordinances and a possible zoning ordinance overlay for the I-75 Corridor to eliminate the construction of any new billboards.

Objective: Promote and enhance communication between State and Local agencies with regard to the construction of billboards and the cutting of trees and destruction of other plantings within the right-of-way to enhance the view of billboards.

Objective: Support changes to Act 106 which would give communities more authority to regulate billboards along state highways.

Objective: Encourage the improvement and/or construction of adequate lighting at ALL interchanges at Interstate 75 throughout the corridor, to improve safety for corridor motorists.

Objective: Promote and enhance improvements to existing signage at several interchanges within the Corridor, where signage is either absent, inadequate or needs to be relocated.
CHAPTER 3: Study Area Profile

Development Trends

As seen in Figure III-1 below, the corridor’s population continues to grow at a steady rate, when compared to the overall growth of the State of Michigan during the past Census. Communities along the corridor continue to see growth, not only in their population, but also modest gains in their local economies, with the Cities of St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie being the anchors. Other communities within the corridor, such as Kinross Charter Township, Soo Township and Moran Township, have all displayed significant increases within the past 10 years, in terms of commercial development and civilian labor force increases. Throughout the corridor, growing economies, establishment of commercial and industrial developments has been a slow process, starting with the closure of the Kincheloe Air Force Base, in Kinross Charter Township in the late 70’s, and early 80’s, many efforts were made to revitalize the area, and to date, there are several industries located on the Township on the former base, including several State Correctional Facilities, which provide for a large number of jobs within the region, the Township is also the home of the Corridor’s largest commercial airport (Chippewa County International Airport). Soo and Moran Township have both benefited from the larger cities that they border (Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace), and most of the commercial development in these areas can be directly attributed to these larger markets.

Economic and Demographic Profiles

Figure III-1, below displays the populations of the Townships and Cities within the I-75 Corridor from the 1970 Census, up until the 2000 Census. On the whole, areas in within the Corridor have shown population increases around nine percent (9.4%) since 1970 and 30% since 1980, when the population within the region decreased due to Military base closures. As the population growth continues to shift to the outlying areas in the corridor, it is suspected that these areas will see an increase in motor vehicle traffic and a need for access to and from Interstate 75 and other throughways in the region. Soo Township and Moran Township continue to show the highest increases in population during the period, at 20% or higher, while Kinross Township shows the most fluctuations in population, due primarily to the closure of the Kincheloe Air Base in the 1970’s. However, it is important to note that population increases by percentage can be deceptive; areas such as Kinross show sizeable increases in their population due to the influx of those persons within group quarters.

Figure 3-1: Population within the Corridor 1970—2000

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<tr>
<td>Brevort Twp.</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Sault Ste. Marie</td>
<td>15,136</td>
<td>14,448</td>
<td>14,689</td>
<td>14,324</td>
<td>-5.3%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of St. Ignace</td>
<td>2,892</td>
<td>2,632</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>-7.4%</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>4.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dafter Twp.</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>25.75%</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinross Twp.</td>
<td>6,763</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>6,566</td>
<td>8,140</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>330.5%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquette Twp.</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>42.95%</td>
<td>19.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moran Twp.</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>31.23%</td>
<td>27.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickford Twp.</td>
<td>1,198</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>1,359</td>
<td>1,584</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>25.32%</td>
<td>16.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudyard Twp.</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.37%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soo Twp.</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>2,179</td>
<td>2,157</td>
<td>2,652</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>21.71%</td>
<td>22.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Ignace Twp.</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>45.04%</td>
<td>9.87%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32,256</td>
<td>27,152</td>
<td>32,566</td>
<td>35,409</td>
<td>9.77%</td>
<td>30.41%</td>
<td>8.73%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001
Another key factor in the demographics of the area is the amount of season tourism that occurs. This region relies heavily upon tourism as a major economic and workforce contributor. Overall within the corridor there are 1,588 housing units categorized as seasonal or recreational housing units, which translates into roughly 3,749 additional persons, who reside in the region during the tourism season, an increase of nearly 11% in the total population of the corridor. This does not include the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit our area each year during the tourist season and to attend festivals and other events in the region. The maps on pages 8 and 9 display the population of the Eastern U.P. by township and the density of the population by Census Block Group (as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census).

**Figure 3-4: Labor Force 1970—2000**

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<tr>
<td>DAFTER TWP.</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KINROSS TWP.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>1175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARQUETTE TWP.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORAN TWP.</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICKFORD TWP.</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUDYARD TWP.</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE</td>
<td>5925</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>6275</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>7400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY OF SAINT IGNACE</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT IGNACE TWP.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOO TWP.</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1075</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORRIDOR TOT</td>
<td>10550</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12575</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>14500</td>
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LF=labor force, UNEM=unemployment rate

Source: MDCD/ESA/OLMI, Labor Market Analysis Section, 2000


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<tr>
<td>CHIPEWA</td>
<td>32,412</td>
<td>29,029</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>34,604</td>
<td>36,900</td>
<td>38,543</td>
<td>41,900</td>
<td>44,600</td>
<td>47,700</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKINAC</td>
<td>9,660</td>
<td>10,178</td>
<td>10,300</td>
<td>10,674</td>
<td>11,493</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>13,800</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN U.P.</td>
<td>44,042</td>
<td>41,187</td>
<td>42,285</td>
<td>47,268</td>
<td>49,795</td>
<td>52,486</td>
<td>55,805</td>
<td>59,310</td>
<td>63,515</td>
<td>68,320</td>
<td>115.7%</td>
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I-75 Corridor Study 8
Key findings and conclusions during strategy development include:

- Capacity of the Highway should be sufficient for the next 20 years, according to the projected growth of the population within the I-75 Corridor.
- Freeway access needs to be expanded to include M-48 in Pickford and Six Mile Road in Dafter, which would enhance traffic flow, safety, improve business potential and greatly enhance travel time and conditions for residents of these areas.
- Freight, timber, agriculture and tourism generate a traffic mix that is rarely in conflict as a result of speed differentials, due primarily to the availability of sufficient lanes, and familiarity with the corridor.
- MDOT should consider investments in highway safety; specifically issues including inadequate roadway/overpass shoulder widths, driving hazards (i.e.; icing, road-kill areas, pavement conditions, pedestrian crossings).
- Lack of rest areas on Southbound I-75 between Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace.
- Bicycle / Non-motorized facilities within the corridor are inadequate.
- Environmental and aesthetic aspects (i.e.; interchange beautification, general maintenance, billboards, tree plantings for windbreaks.)
- Continue to promote, maintain and enhance air travel facilities in the corridor.
- Connections between modes of travel are minimal and could be improved. Non-motorized travel takes an excessive amount of time (bicycle pedestrian traffic from East and West sides of I-75).
- Overall pavement conditions need to be improved over time, in order for this corridor to reflect positively on the communities it serves.
- Scenic views should be preserved, by regulating new commercial, industrial and residential development proposed to be located too close to the highway, thus negatively impacting the viewshed.
- Promote and enhance the timely removal of road kill from the roadside and right-of-way areas.
- Maintenance of arterial roads should be promoted and enhanced to provide for the transportation of the disadvantaged.

These findings and conclusions are the basis for the Objectives for the I-75 Corridor contained in this Strategy document.

Roadway Description (by segment) and functional classification of the main and intersecting roads within the corridor

Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace are the two major cities that form the Northern and Southern anchors of the I-75 Corridor, there are many smaller communities between these two cities, and in general, the entire geographic area is a destination of thousands of tourists each summer, as well as an increasing number of snowmobile enthusiasts in the winter season. Because of the number of stakeholders involved within the Corridor, it is important that there is participation from each impacted community, in order to address all of the individual issues and concerns that each community is faced with. There are several different types of geography throughout the corridor, from the uncovered rock faces in St. Ignace, to the dense pines in northern Mackinac County, the flat lands of Rudyard and the higher elevations in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Eastern UP Transit Authority (EUPTA) and the Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency Transportation service, run daily bus routes throughout the Corridor, with stops in Kinross, and various other locations. Greyhound bus service, run locally by Indian Trails provides North-South service daily to locations south of Sault Ste. Marie, anywhere in the continental United States.

Interstate 75 (I-75) is the primary transportation facility in the corridor, serving automobile, truck, and public transportation modes. This corridor begins at the Mackinac Bridge Toll Plaza, in Mackinac County and ends at the International Bridge Toll Plaza in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.
Environmental features and conditions

International Bridge to M-28:

Traveling southbound, from Easterday Avenue (Exit 394), a more urban viewshed exists, on the southwest side is the Sault Ste. Marie Industrial park, and located on the eastern side of the road is the I-500 Snowmobile Track, about a half mile to the south of this facility is the proposed Ashmun Creek natural area. Continuing southbound, approximately a half-mile of the reserve the view consists primarily of heavy commercial activity to the east and forested lands to the west, as well as quickly changing terrain elevations. Passing beneath Three-Mile Road (Exit 392) two large gravel pits bound the highway, one on the southwest side of the road and one on the southeast. Continuing on southbound, the view is marked by sprawling farmlands, on both sides of the highway, which make up a relatively flat and long view of distant forested lands and spotty stands of treed areas. The median is open, providing a clear view to oncoming traffic in the northbound lanes. As motorists approach M-28 the terrain remains relatively flat, with some areas especially low and susceptible to flooding.

M-28 to County Line:

South of the M-28 exit, we find the terrain continues to remain flat and consists of several areas of farmland. Some hilly terrain and elevations are found near mile marker 384, and trees begin to dominate the views on both sides of the road, consisting mostly of pine, a mix of scattered birch and hardwoods within. Also very widely scattered and inconsistent residential areas are located within this viewshed. The roadway begins to jog west as it heads toward the Kinross/Kincheloe area, which is marked by several wetland areas on both sides of the road. Pine trees dominate the landscape throughout this segment. Elevations remain fairly consistent, with no considerable hills. Now the roadway begins to head straight to the south, this is an area identified as the “Rudyard Flats,” which is marked predominantly by farmlands and very flat lands. Neither side of the highway has any structured plantings that would resemble a windbreak in this vicinity, which is the cause for many safety concerns during the winter months, when snow frequently blows over the road and creates hazardous driving conditions.

Chippewa County Line to Mackinac Bridge:

Entering into Mackinac County, the terrain is marked by dense populations of pine trees, and the median begins to widen, and features a forested area, completely separating the northbound and southbound lanes of the highway. Well buffered from the elements, this area comes in stark contrast the portion of the roadway we just exited. As the road curves to the west and begins to head due south again, we begin to find larger hills and changes in the terrain become more frequent. Exposed rock and other geology can be seen frequently throughout this segment of the corridor, even more so as we approach the City of St. Ignace. At some points the viewshed extends as far as a mile on either side of the highway. As we descend into St. Ignace and approach the Mackinac Bridge, the views are breathtaking, Chain Lake bounds the west side of the highway, the ferry lines and Mackinac Island can be seen to the east.
Scenic Resources

**Signs**
Signage throughout the corridor is inconsistent. Some interchanges are adequately signed, while others are in need of serious upgrades/enhancements. In addition, many billboards are placed at too frequent of intervals, making for a cluttered viewshed. MDOT has recently completed a sign inventory, this will allow for the necessary improvements to take place. This Corridor of I-75 should be monitored and existing ordinances enforced where needed. Interchanges where serious conflicts are present should be addressed as priorities by MDOT.

Photo 4-1: Northbound I-75 entrance ramp at M-80, Kinross.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC

Photo 4-2: Trees cut near Rudyard to enhance the view of billboards.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
M-28 Access Ramps

The lack of signage at the Northbound I-75 access ramp on M-28 creates a serious traffic safety hazard. The access point on the southbound side of the road is a typical cloverleaf style access, however, many semis utilize this access point on the north side of M-28 primarily due to its ease of navigation, particularly during inclement weather conditions. The access point on the south side of the M-28 is clearly signed; this issue becomes even more critical during the nighttime and early morning hours, as there is no lighting at this access ramp. MDOT has stated that this access is for westbound traffic only, the recommendation of this study would be to then extend some type of curbing to discourage or eliminate motorists heading eastbound from using this as a left hand turn-on access.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC

Photo 4-3: M-28 Signage. I-75 Northbound access, north side of M-28 (above), the picture below shows a semi utilizing this access.
Photo 4-4: M-28 Entrance Ramp Signage

Motorists frequently utilize this unsigned Northbound I-75 entrance ramp.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
**3-Mile Exit Northbound**

This exit forks at the bottom as you intersect 3 Mile Road, if you are proceeding westbound, you are instructed to stop, however, if you are heading east/southeast, the ramp curves and you continue onto the Business Spur. Two problems can be identified immediately, 1) the stop sign is sometimes misinterpreted by those heading east/southeast, and they stop, this causes a point of conflict for persons driving behind them, that know they are not supposed to stop. 2) The curve is too sharp, and when vehicles traveling off the interstate, where the speed limit is 70, find it difficult to adequately slow down to negotiate the curve. Some re-design should be considered for the bottom of this exit, such as extending the median curbing farther to the south.

**Photos by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC**

**Photo 4-5(above):** Curbing should be extended, an overhead blinking traffic signal installed to calm traffic flow and eliminate confusion.

**Photos 4-6:** The picture on top shows the stop signs placed at the bottom of the exit ramp, while the picture below shows the inadequate throat length of the ramp as it enters the business spur. Traffic is constantly conflicting with motorists traveling the I-75 business spur.
Six-Mile Road Access

Six-Mile Road is located three miles south of the current Three Mile Road exit (MM 392); this road carries large volumes of traffic eastbound and westbound (Brimley/Bay Mills), from the intersection of I-75 and Six Mile. There are two casino’s located in the Brimley area, as well as, Brimley State Park and the Bay Mills Indian Community, which employs over 800 people. Further to the west, where Six Mile (Lakeshore Drive) turns into the Curley Lewis Highway, there are several major tourist attractions, including: Point Iroquois Lighthouse, Monocle Lake Campground, the Tahquamenon Falls State Park, Whitefish Point, the Shipwreck Museum and the Paradise area.

**Figure 5-2:** Six Mile Road Access (Topo Map)

**Source:** DeLorme 3-D Topoquads

**Photo 4-7:** Six Mile Road/I-75 Intersection (South)

**Source:** Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Other Aesthetic Concerns
Unsightly structures, billboard issues, right-of-way maintenance concerns, tree planting, entry-exit ramp landscaping and general beautification concerns were all identified through the survey, public input process. Picture 4-6 below displays a serious billboard concern within the corridor, where trees within the right-of-way have been trimmed in such a manner that they are no longer effective as windbreaks during the winter months, which prevents snow from blowing across the Interstate. The picture on the right shows the demolition of an unsightly structure at the Easterday Avenue exit from I-75 in Sault Ste. Marie.

Photo 4-7: (L) Billboard Issues
Photo 4-9: (R) Unsightly structure removal
Traffic and Safety Analysis (by transportation mode)

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mesaba Aviation, a division of Northwest Airlines, provides daily commercial air passenger service in the corridor at Chippewa County International Airport, a new terminal is currently under construction, providing for a 20,000 sq. foot, state of the art facility. General aviation service is provided at Sanderson Field in Sault Ste. Marie, Chippewa County International Airport in Kinross, Mackinac County Airport in St. Ignace and the Albert J. Lindberg, located in Hessel, Michigan. General information and characteristics of the airports within the Corridor can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIRPORT NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>RUNWAY</th>
<th>SURFACE</th>
<th>AIRCRAFT BASED ON FIELD</th>
<th>SINGLE ENGINE AIRPLANES</th>
<th>MULTI ENGINE AIRPLANES</th>
<th>AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHIPPEWA COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</td>
<td>Kinross, MI</td>
<td>5000 x 75 ft.</td>
<td>Asphalt/Grooved (9/27), Concrete/Grooved (16/34)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>average 97/day, 52% commercial, 27% local general aviation 19% transient general aviation 2% air taxi &lt;1% military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAULT STE. MARIE MUNICIPAL/SANDERSON FIELD</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie, MI</td>
<td>5235 x 100 ft.</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>average 122/week 60% transient general aviation, 40% local general aviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACKINAC COUNTY AIRPORT</td>
<td>St. Ignace, MI</td>
<td>3800 x 75 ft.</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>average 57/day 78% air taxi, 11% transient general aviation, 11% local general aviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERT J. LINDBERG AIRPORT</td>
<td>Hessel, MI</td>
<td>3700 x 60 ft.</td>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>average 27/week 60% transient general aviation, 40% local general aviation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning, Travel Demand and Intermodal Services Section.
Figure IV-1 identifies the road classifications within the I-75 Corridor, all but three of the roads listed in this chart have direct access to Interstate-75 (Six Mile Road, M-129, H-63). M-48 has access to the interstate via the M-48 Business Spur, but not at the actual intersection of M-48 and I-75, while M-129 does not intersect I-75 at all within the corridor, however, H-63 does intersect the interstate, once in Chippewa County (near 12 Mile) and once in Mackinac County. Average Daily Traffic was derived from the “MDOT 2000 Annual Average 24-Hour Traffic Volumes” map. All roads outside City boundaries are maintained by County Road Commissions from Chippewa and Mackinac County.

**Figure 4-1: Road Classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROADWAY</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>AVG DAILY TRAFFIC</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashmun Street</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>32,800</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easterday Avenue</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mile Road</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage Avenue</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75 Business Spur</td>
<td>State Trunk Line - BR</td>
<td>15,400</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-129</td>
<td>State Trunk Line</td>
<td>19,900</td>
<td>Chippewa County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-28</td>
<td>State Trunk Line</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>Chippewa, Luce County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-63 (Mackinac Trail)</td>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Chippewa, Mackinac County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaines Highway</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Kinross (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-80 (Tone Road)</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>Kinross (CHIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-48</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>5,230</td>
<td>Rudyard, Pickford (CHIP, MACK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-134</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>Cedarville (CHIP, MACK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-123</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>Moran, Trout Lake (CHIP, MACK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75 Business Spur</td>
<td>State Trunk Line - BR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>St. Ignace (MACK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage Avenue</td>
<td>Arterial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>St. Ignace (MACK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-2</td>
<td>US Trunk Line</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>Brevort, Engadine, Manistique (MACK, LUCE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Michigan Department of Transportation (2001).*
COMMERCIAL PORTS:

The Great Lakes serve as the nation’s fourth seacoast by transporting vital commodities to and from the nation’s heartland. Total annual commerce on the Great Lakes in 1998 was 101,306,079 million tons, with roughly 49.8 million tons passing through the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Most of Michigan’s waterborne commerce consists of bulk cargoes, such as; stone, sand, iron ore and coal, which accounted for 89 percent of the 101 million tons of total traffic in 1998, while cement, petroleum and chemicals totaled approximately 8 percent. Over 75 percent of the iron ore produced in the U.S. transits through these locks. Large vessels, which must use the Poe Lock (one of four locks at the facility), account for over 70 percent of the total U.S. cargo capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Commodities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Dolomite (Cedarville)</td>
<td>4,095,000</td>
<td>Dolomite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Drummond (Drummond Island)</td>
<td>1,582,000</td>
<td>Dolomite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie</td>
<td>76,000</td>
<td>Stone, Coal, Ore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ferries serving Drummond, Neebish and Sugar Islands are supported by state funds through the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority. The combined ridership on the three ferries has increased nearly 80 percent since 1983.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Passengers Carried</th>
<th>% Diff.*</th>
<th>Vehicles Carried</th>
<th>% Diff.*</th>
<th>Number of Crossings</th>
<th>% Diff.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>448,883</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>199,370</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>52,409</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>463,917</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>208,469</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>53,659</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>470,336</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>218,306</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>54,589</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>476,936</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>225,123</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>54,608</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>509,083</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>246,996</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>56,431</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>520,701</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>269,238</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>59,108</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>535,260</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>286,195</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>58,793</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>570,728</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>312,973</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>60,869</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>576,907</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>306,868</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>60,647</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>607,487</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>337,086</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>61,907</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>664,230</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>383,924</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>64,957</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>684,348</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>401,414</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>66,458</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>719,188</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>433,275</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>68,089</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>722,804</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>437,697</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>62,369</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>627,418</td>
<td>-13.2%</td>
<td>387,133</td>
<td>-11.6%</td>
<td>54,530</td>
<td>-12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>763,634</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>475,569</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>66,255</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>807,604</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>498,820</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>65,644</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*difference from previous year

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

The Canadian National Railway, formerly Wisconsin Central operates railroad services in this region, interconnecting with the Canadian Pacific and Algoma Central, the East-West mainline provides freight rail services to areas to West (Vancouver) and to the South (Atlanta).

**Significant dates in the corridor’s rail history include:**

- The International Bridge, between the Twin Saults completed in December of 1887, the Canadian Pacific and the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic is completed, at this time the Canadian Pacific completed a line from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie to make connection with the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie & Atlantic Line.

Wisconsin Central, Ltd., began operations October 11, 1987 over 2,015 route miles of track acquired principally from the Soo Line Railroad Company (now Canadian Pacific Railway). On September 7, 2001 the U.S. Surface Transportation Board announced approval of Canadian National Railway Company’s acquisition of Wisconsin Central Transportation Corporation. Wisconsin Central System received the highest overall score for customer satisfaction among North American Railroads according to survey results published in the August 2001 issue of LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT & DISTRIBUTION REPORT magazine. This is WC’s 13th consecutive award—a record unmatched by any other railroad and very few motor carriers. *(Write Track, Sept. 2001, No. 70)*

**Figure 4-7: Top Commodities: Rail Tonnage Originated within State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>% of State Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metallic Ores</td>
<td>8,867,394</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equipment</td>
<td>6,757,236</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and Scrap</td>
<td>2,307,654</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Metal Products</td>
<td>2,298,078</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>2,243,993</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>7,619,717</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4-8: Top Commodities: Rail Tonnage Terminated within State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>% of State Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>19,971,350</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metallic Ores</td>
<td>9,049,404</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>3,324,924</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Metal Products</td>
<td>2,899,588</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td>2,125,033</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>10,741,720</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Association of American Railroads, as reported by MDOT, Bureau of Transportation Planning, Travel Demand and Intermodal Services Section, Intermodal Services Unit*
I-75 Corridor Study

3-D Topography from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie

US-2 Exit 344

Portage Avenue Exit 345

M-123 Exit 352

Castle Rock Area Exit 348

M-134 Exit 359

Proposed M-48 Access Point

M-48 Exit 373

M-80 Exit 378
Gaines Highway Exit 379

M-28 Exit 386

Proposed 6 Mile Road Access

3 Mile Road Exit 392

Easterday Avenue Exit 394

Source: DeLorme TopoQuads, 1999.
Physical Constraints

Scheduled Transportation improvements

The following projects have been committed by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in their Five-Year Plan from 2002—2007, on I-75 and arterial roads connecting to the Interstate, within the I-75 Corridor:

Figure 4-9: MDOT Projects 2001 – 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M-48</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>Mackinac Trail to M-129</td>
<td>$2,375,000</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>3 Mile Road to IBA</td>
<td>$6,000,000</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Wide-</td>
<td>Traffic Signal Replacement</td>
<td>Portage Ave. to 3 Mile Road</td>
<td>$312,000</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSM</td>
<td>W/Ranger Rd. E 1.09 Mile</td>
<td>Wildwood Rd. to Brevort Lk. Rd.</td>
<td>$2,085,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>M28 to 3 Mile Road</td>
<td>$2,271,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>M80 to M28</td>
<td>$2,933,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Culvert Replacement</td>
<td>Hoban Creek</td>
<td>$657,800</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>N of NB Portage to M-123</td>
<td>$5,933,000</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>Chippewa Co. Line to M-80</td>
<td>$4,596,000</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>Hiawatha Trail to Worth Road</td>
<td>$1,037,000</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Culvert Replacement</td>
<td>Chippewa Co. Line to IBA</td>
<td>$2,200,000</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>M134 - South 3.75 Miles</td>
<td>$4,880,000</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-123</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>Luce/Chippewa Co. Line Westerly</td>
<td>$3,599,100</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Reconstruct</td>
<td>US-2 to Portage Rd. NB</td>
<td>$3,500,000</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Reconstruct</td>
<td>US-2 to Portage Rd. SB</td>
<td>$3,500,000</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-28</td>
<td>Crush and Shape</td>
<td>Mackinac Trail to M-129</td>
<td>$725,000</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-129</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>Mack/Chip Co. Line to M-48</td>
<td>$1,037,000</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-129</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>M-48 to M-80</td>
<td>$1,937,000</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-123</td>
<td>Resurfacing</td>
<td>M-28 to 1/2 mile N. of Tahq. River</td>
<td>$1,037,000</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-75</td>
<td>Bit. Reconstruct</td>
<td>M-28 to 3 Mile Rd. SB</td>
<td>$7,000,000</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation (2001).

Italicized: No projects have been committed beyond 2007. (MDOT)
**Photo 4-10:** Traffic Signal replacement work on Ashmun Street in Sault Ste. Marie

**Photo 4-11:** Southbound I-75 reconstruction project, Summer 2002.
Photo 4-12: Southbound I-75 at the Easterday Ave. Exit, reconstruction, Summer 2002

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
CHAPTER 5: Corridor Issues and Concerns

The issues listed below were identified through and elaborate set of surveys performed throughout the Corridor Plan area.

M-48 Access Ramp Construction

When Interstate 75 was constructed in the Upper Peninsula, provisions were made to construct an entry/exit ramp at the intersection of M-48 for future use. This access would primarily service Pickford and Rudyard areas. The residents of this area have long contended that an access point at this intersection would help to spur the local economies in both areas, which is currently served with very limited access. In order to access I-75 from Pickford on M-48, motorists must travel approximately six (6) miles north, in order to go southbound on I-75. The other two main north-south arterial roads, M-129 and Mackinac Trail, are located to the east and west of I-75 respectively. Please view map (V-1) below for a more detailed description of the area.

Figure 5-1: M-48 Access Point at I-75

This access point was overwhelmingly identified on surveys within the region, and the residents of this area are very passionate about their efforts to obtain an access ramp at the M-48, Interstate 75 intersections, which they have been pursuing this issue for many, many years now. The current access point location makes no sense for those traveling southbound, as they have to travel miles out of the way to even access the interstate.
**Photo 5-1:** Proposed M-48 Access Point at I-75 (southbound)

**Photo 5-2:** I-75 near M-48 in Rudyard.
Easterday Avenue overpass

Easterday Avenue is a major carrier of both motorized and non-motorized traffic in the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The Easterday Ave. overpass is located less than one-mile from the campus of Lake Superior State University. This overpass is not wide enough to accommodate pedestrian or non-motorized traffic safely. This particular overpass was identified through our survey process as a priority issue. MDOT should consider adding to the width of the overpass to accommodate non-motorized traffic, through whatever means necessary, to improve the safety and welfare of individuals using this overpass. Traffic signals have also been identified through the survey process as being a necessary control at this overpass, during times of peak traffic volume, motorists exiting the freeway back up down the ramp, and this would improve safety and traffic flow in this area.

Photo 5-7: Easterday Ave. Overpass (Sault Ste. Marie)

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Three-Mile Road overpass

Much like the Easterday Avenue overpass, the Three-Mile Road overpass is also too narrow to accommodate non-motorized traffic, and although it carries less foot/cycle traffic, it represents a dangerous crossing for anyone who attempts to use it, with a City maintained multi-use bicycle path located just to the east, it does carry some bicycle traffic, snowmobilers heavily use this overpass as a portal to City limits in the winter months. MDOT should consider whatever alternatives are available in order to maximize safety with regard to pedestrian traffic at this overpass.

Photo 5-8: Three Mile Road overpass at I-75

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Rudyard Area Windbreaks

Due in large part to the inclement winter weather in the region, there are several areas throughout the Corridor where more windbreaks are desperately needed. These locations, well known by area residents, were identified on the surveys circulated throughout the area. The Rudyard area is a landscape of densely populated farms, these flat areas with no trees in sight provide a perfect spawning area for blowing and drifting snow, aside from the dangerous road conditions that blowing snow create, the danger multiplies infinitely for those traveling I-75 during inclement weather conditions. Visibilities are severely reduced when blowing snow encounters the roadway. Road Commissions in the area are aware of these areas but there is little that can be done to keep these locations clear of snow, as the blowing and drifting snow makes their efforts futile.

**Photo 5-4:** Rudyard Flats (Chippewa County)

**Photo 5-5:** Rudyard Flats

Photos by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Other locations

Unsightly structures, some of which would include dilapidated billboard structures, and old barns, found intermittently throughout the corridor. Examples of unsightly structures would include abandoned barns, warehouses, etc. Elimination of these structures would enhance the views from the interstate and provide a more appealing view throughout the corridor. Local zoning ordinances should be reviewed for statutes pertaining to unsightly structures and efforts should be made to enforce these ordinances.

Photo 5-6: Former Port O’Call Gas Station (Easterday/I-75)

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Mackinac Trail – I-75 Screening Issues

Just to the north of Exit #348, on northbound I-75, outside of St. Ignace, Mackinac trail runs along the side of interstate 75, and traffic traveling southbound on Mackinac Trail, in particular, at night or in adverse weather conditions, gives drivers on northbound I-75 the impression that there is oncoming traffic approaching. This is very problematic at night and in adverse weather conditions, when site lines are limited (i.e., heavy snow, rain). There are currently a row of smaller cedar type shrubs in place, however, in order to correct this problem, MDOT needs to consider planting some taller cedars or pine-type trees, to better screen this area of I-75 from Mackinac Trail. A depiction of this can been seen in Figures I-3 and I-4 below. In addition, you can see from the 3-D view of this map how the conflicting traffic flows provide for a dangerous situation in times of adverse weather.

Figure 5-3: This 2-D view of the area shows the two roadways as they approach one another.
Source: DeLorme 3-D Topoquads
Photo 5-9: Mackinac Trail/I-75 conflict point

Figure 5-4: The 3-D view of the same map, the highlighted area is that of concern.

Source: DeLorme 3-D Topoquads
Case Study regarding billboards within the I-75 Corridor

Billboards within the corridor have become a very critical topic for the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie within the last several years dating back to 1989, when trees within the right-of-way were trimmed illegally, resulting in legal action and fines against the billboard company that performed the cutting. Once again, tree ‘trimming’ has raised the ire of local and regional billboard opponents, as well as, the concerns of motorists traveling within the Corridor. Currently the roadside is marked by a wide variety of billboards. Future billboard construction of this type would only serve to further clutter the viewshed. Because of the I-75 Corridor Study, this region supports the creation of a Corridor Committee with representation from all communities that border the Corridor. A primary goal of this Committee would be to create and implement an overlay-zoning district to regulate billboards, in order to enhance and protect the corridor’s character.

The liability issue raised as a result of these actions is also cause for concern of local communities within the Corridor, the trees that were trimmed within this section of the Corridor to enhance the view of the existing billboards were planted for a specific reason; to serve as a windbreak to eliminate snow blowing across the Interstate. Without these trees and other plantings in place this stretch of road needs to be monitored by the local road commissions and MDOT in cooperation with the Michigan State Police, in order to measure the number of accidents that occur during inclement weather as compared to previous years, when the plantings were in place.

A more detailed case study will need to be conducted and State and U.S. Representatives will be included in these discussions, to set the framework for better communication between agency departments in Lansing and local communities. It is the Corridor Study Committee’s opinion, that the tree-trimming incident within this Corridor could have been avoided had the Lansing agency contacted the local community about the trees planted in this segment of the Interstate. In this case, the billboard company applied for a permit to trim the trees along the Interstate, as they were encroaching upon the view of their billboards. In order to obtain a permit to lawfully cut the trees in this stretch of Interstate, this company applied for the permit in question through MDOT in Lansing, rather than submit the necessary paperwork through the local MDOT TSC office, located in Newberry. By effectively not cooperating with the regional TSC, the Lansing MDOT office could not have known, off hand, the specific reason for the trees being planted within the right-of-way throughout this segment of the Interstate, for all intensive purposes, these trees could have been brush growing up from years of non-maintenance.

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation policy on the protection of trees and shrubs, “MDOT typically only grants permits to trim or reduce vegetation in the highway right of way to improve the visibility of a sign if that vegetation has grown up after the sign has been in place. The reduction or removal of vegetation to improve the visibility of a proposed or new sign will not be allowed.” However, some consideration needs to be given to trees that are planted and maintained as effective windbreaks, to alleviate snow from blowing across the Interstate, and are currently serving their purpose in that regard. By allowing the trees to be planted for this purpose, AFTER a billboard is already in place, does not seem like a solid investment on MDOT’s behalf, if in the long run, the billboard companies are permitted to trim them, to a height of 3 ½ feet, rendering them completely useless as an effective wind-break.

Billboards will always be a part of the landscape and view-shed of the I-75 Corridor, it is the intent of this committee that the billboards currently in place and any proposed new or additional billboard structures be subject to a very stringent permit process and are continually maintained, and those falling into disrepair or found to be nonconforming with the zoning overlay ordinance are demolished or removed with in a timely fashion.
Photo 5-13: Trees that were cut to improve the view of these billboards (near mile marker 375).

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC

Photo 5-14: A close up picture of the trees cut near mile marker 375.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Photo 5-15: Another view of the trees cut within the interstate right-of-way.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC

Photo 5-16: Billboard located at M-28/I-75 is encroaching upon the right of way.

Photo by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC
Car-Wildlife Accidents

Through the surveys completed by area residents and corridor travelers, the incidence of car-wildlife accidents was identified as being a critical concern. In an effort to quantify the rate of these occurrences, information was obtained from the Michigan State Highway Office of Safety Planning and MDOT. Utilizing this data, we were able to formulate results that helped to identify the number and rate of car-wildlife crash occurrences within the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie.

The crash report chart indicates, in number, the amount of car-wildlife crash incidents for the areas listed below, these are the segments used by the MDOT and the Michigan Department of the State Police in performing their data analysis. This information was derived from the crash data reports compiled by the Michigan Highway Safety Planning Department:

- St. Ignace to the County Line (approx. Mm #368)
- Co. Line to International Bridge Plaza (368-386)

There were a total of 918 car-animal crashes in this corridor from 1993—Jan. 2000. By analyzing the data, it conclusively states that:

- 53% of the crashes occurred during “clear” weather conditions.
- 68% occurred when the pavement was “dry.”
- Crashes were evenly distributed amongst seasons (Spring 25%, Summer 23%, Fall 25%, Winter 26%)
- 60% of crashes occurred at night (5 PM or later)

In order to comparatively analyze these results, we obtained identical crash data for the corridor of I-75 from Gaylord to the southern end of the Mackinac Bridge. Within the Gaylord corridor, a total of 593 car-wildlife crashes occurred during the same time period, however, the only striking difference between the two corridors, was the season of the crash occurrences, the majority of the crashes in the Gaylord region occurred during the Summer and Fall months. Based on the data provided, we can conclusively state that car-wildlife crashes occur roughly 54% more often within the I-75 corridor in the Eastern Upper Peninsula, than in the I-75 Corridor in Northern Lower Michigan.

The results of this analysis support the results of the public opinion surveys, which concluded that car-wildlife crashes are a problem within the I-75 Corridor from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie. In cooperation with local officials, assist in identifying and developing strategies where warranted to provide proper signage and necessary mitigation measures at high-accident locations such as wildlife crossings and areas of high pedestrian activity.

Road Kill Removal

Timely removal of road kill from the roadway and right of way areas continues to be a serious problem within the I-75 Corridor. Agreements or contracts between MDOT and local road commissions should be strengthened or promoted further, in order to effectively remove dead animals from the roadside. This problem creates an unsightly view and can represent serious health concerns. In the past, the removal of road kill has rotated annually between the road commissions, health departments and the State Department of Natural Resources, this has been a very informal agreement and the guidelines for the timely removal of road kill is not widely known. A more formal agreement and a set of guidelines should be developed to help to alleviate this problem.

Lighting Issues

Nearly all of the interchanges within the Corridor have little or no lighting, as evidenced by the pictures below, this becomes a safety hazard for motorists traveling the Corridor in the evening and during inclement weather situations. Most exit/entrance ramps are so poorly lighted that the motorists exiting or entering the interstate cannot tell which ramp to take until they are practically on the access ramp itself. The construction and maintenance of some standard lighting fixtures should be considered throughout the Corridor. At the present time, only the Easterday Avenue and U.S. 2 interchanges are lighted. It is the recommendation of this Study that MDOT address this safety issue with the I-75 Corridor and install adequate lighting at the interchanges located within the I-75 Corridor.
Screening Issues / Right-of-Way Fencing

Aside from the screening issues found in the Rudyard area, other areas exist where plantings would effectively screen the view of undesirable activities that bound the Interstate. One spot, in particular, exists on both sides of I-75 south of the 3 Mile Road exit (392) in Sault Ste. Marie and Soo Township, two sand pits currently occupy land at these locations, there is a significant break in the current tree plantings that allows an unobstructed view of these unsightly locations. In addition, one location adjacent to I-75 in Mackinac County, north of St. Ignace, involves a junkyard located on a bluff that is an eyesore from the Interstate. MDOT should consider plantings that would effectively eliminate this break in the current screening to soften the visual impacts of the development within this stretch of the Interstate or negotiate with property owners in order to better screen locations where undesirable views exist.

In addition, MDOT should promote the maintenance, repair and construction of the right-of-way fencing, where necessary throughout the Corridor. This fencing would serve a vital purpose in alleviating car-wildlife crashes, trespassing, and would promote the general safety and welfare of motorists traveling the Corridor.

Flooding issues, north of Exit 386 (M-28)

Approximately 0.5 to 0.75 miles north of Exit 386 (M-28 exit), there are a series of undulations in the roadway, that during adverse weather conditions, such as, heavy rain, cause water to puddle/pond in the low spots, many people have commented on the hydroplaning effect that this has on vehicles traveling through this area during times of heavy rains, and or melting snows. Even though reconstruction has taken place this fall (2002), the undulations are even more frequent and remain unfixed.

Snowmobile Bridge near M-134 in Mackinac County

A 1,000-foot bridge that will carry snowmobilers and non-motorized traffic has been proposed at a site just north of M-134 in Mackinac County. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will provide the funding for the bridge, while the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will review/approve the permit for construction of the bridge, and the Straits Area and Les Cheneaux Snowmobile Clubs will operate and maintain the bridge, and finally the United States Forest Service will be in charge of construction and trail head relocation efforts, related to the construction of the bridge.

Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2003 on this bridge facility, provided environmental and funding issues are resolved, the project, which involves the relocation of the Red Creek Snowmobile Trail, north 1.2 miles to the site of the proposed bridge over I-75 on the west side of Mackinac Trail for 1.6 miles in the power line right-of-way. Additionally, the construction of parking lots for bikers and snowmobilers, will provide for easy and safe access to the trails. A 200-foot by 200-foot parking area on M-134 will give snowmobile’s access to North Service Road. A 60-foot by 40-foot parking area on North Service Road, approximately 1.2 miles north of M-134 near the east end of the trail bridge over I-75, is reserved for bicyclists.

Maintenance Issues

Maintenance issues were identified in both public opinion surveys. Issues related to maintenance concerns: grass mowing, dead animal removal, garbage, unsightly structures, rest areas, interchange beautification (which will be addressed later). Currently mowing only takes places twice, weather and conditions permitting, during the summer/spring season. Particularly as fall approaches, these tall grasses only add to the danger of deer crossing the roadway and causing serious accidents vehicles. Grass should be mowed and maintained in a more frequent fashion. Currently MDOT performs two cuts per year on all right of way and median grasses, it is the recommendation of this committee that grass mowing be performed one additional time as necessary. (See page 5-15). The placement of gate-type facilities at access ramps is recommended to allow law enforcement and maintenance personnel to adequately clear the Interstate and restrict traffic from entering the highway during adverse weather events, accidents or hazardous material situations that would require limited or restricted access to the Interstate.
Photos by: Jeff Hagan, EUPRPDC

**Photo 5-10:** Near mile marker 378 (Kinross), shows the mowing performed in the fall of 2002.

**Photo 5-11(l), Photo 5-12(r):** The picture on the right shows the mowing performed near mile marker 384, while the picture on the left shows the lack of mowing near the M-134 exit on Northbound I-75. Clear sight lines within the right-of-way make a significant difference in a motorists’ ability to identify wildlife that might cross the road.

### Snowmobile Crossing—Sault Ste. Marie

Interstate 75 creates a large physical border between the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the outlying areas. During the winter months, snowmobiling has become a major tourist attraction in the Eastern U.P. area, snowmobilers need an entry portal to the City from the rest of the EUP trail system, the Three Mile Road overpass most recently served as this entry, as well as a drainage culvert underneath I-75, although snowmobilers have been known to cross on I-75 directly, and proceed into the City. All of these situations present a very dangerous situation for anyone traveling I-75 and snowmobile riders themselves. The Three-Mile overpass is not wide enough to accommodate even bicycle traffic safely over I-75, let alone a snowmobile; however, riders most frequently utilize it as an entry point to the City trail system. The City secured the necessary funding and constructed a tunnel beneath I-75 that will serve to connect the east and west trail heads and provide for a safe crossing into and out of City limits, tunnel construction has been completed, and the City is now waiting for the connections to the trail heads to be completed. Below are photographs of the tunnel structure, which is made of solid concrete slabs, which were lowered in to place during the reconstruction of the roadway above.
Picture 5-17: East end of the snowmobile tunnel at Sault Ste. Marie

Photo 5-18: Close up view of the snowmobile tunnel.
CHAPTER 6: Action Plan

The chapter presents the recommendations and improvement strategies for the future of the I-75 corridor, based on the goals and objectives in Chapter 2. These recommendations were developed from the public opinion surveys and suggestions of the members of the I-75 Corridor Committee, and were reviewed by general consensus. This plan is intended to cover a twenty-year period, therefore many of the recommendations and improvement strategies are intended to reach well beyond current physical, political and financial constraints.

Access Issues
Recommendation 1: Construction of an access ramp at M-48 in Pickford. This access ramp would improve traffic flow in the Pickford/Rudyard area, allow for emergency services personnel to respond to emergencies in a more timely fashion, and allow school bussing systems to operate more efficiently and effectively and enhance economic development opportunities within this entire region.

Recommendation 2: Widening of Three Mile Road and Easterday Avenue overpasses.

Recommendation 3: Construction of Northbound exit ramp at Portage Avenue in St. Ignace.

Recommendation 4: Continued maintenance and enhancement of existing interchanges, some of which would include: landscaping improvements, improved signage, lighting and other aesthetic enhancements.

Recommendation 5: MDOT should address widening both the Three Mile Road and Easterday Avenue overpasses to improve the safety of non-motorized uses, both play are vital role in accommodating bicyclists and pedestrian traffic within the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

Proposed Road Improvements
Recommendation 1: Overall improvement of the Pavement Condition.

Recommendation 2: Identification of Right-of-Way areas that can be used for multi-modal transportation (bicycling, pedestrians, etc.).

Recommendation 3: Establishment of outdoor lighting standards and general improvements, especially near to more populated areas, such as St. Ignace, Kinross and Sault Ste. Marie, within the corridor. Improved lighting will enhance safety and eliminate severe glare problems in many areas. These locations include: Three Mile Road (SSM), M-80 (Kinross).

Recommendation 4: Identify and preserve necessary ROW and buffer space adjacent to the ROW for landscape and screening, particularly in areas where new development has or is likely to occur in the future. Case in point being the sand pits located south of 3 Mile Road in Sault Ste. Marie.

Aesthetic Issues
Recommendation 1: For aesthetic purposes, preserve open and agricultural land where possible within the Corridor.

Recommendation 2: Develop more consistent and stringent limits for off-premises signage and billboards, especially targeting those that are dilapidated and unsightly.

Recommendation 3: Discourage the construction of billboards within the Corridor.

Recommendation 4: Promote the institution of a forestry management program within the ROW that will allow for improvements of the timber stands.

Recommendation 5: Coordinate local natural resource preservation efforts, including water quality efforts.

Recommendation 6: Support the implementation of more TOD signs, as an alternative to billboards, which will serve to inform motorists of the location of critical services at interchanges within the Corridor.

Maintenance Issues
Recommendation 1: Continue to address the problems regarding snow removal from the roadway within the Corridor and identify long-term solutions.
Recommendation 2: Promote the construction and maintenance of lighting fixtures at Portage Avenue, M-134, M-48, M-80, Gaines Highway, and Three Mile Road, which currently have no lighting, or at the least VERY inadequate lighting. This would tremendously enhance safety for travelers of the corridor.

Recommendation 3: Continue to promote the program of tree plantings in snowdrift problem areas, particularly the “Rudyard Flats” area, and pursue more funding for this purpose.

Recommendation 4: Additional right-of-way fencing to improve visibility and safety.

Recommendation 5: Construction of gate type facilities that would provide for restricted access to the Interstate during severe weather conditions, hazardous materials incidents and other types of incidents that warrant closure of certain stretches of the Interstate.

Recommendation 6: Removal or enhanced screening of unsightly structures/uses that are located adjacent to the I-75 viewshed.

Recommendation 7: Tree plantings throughout the right-of-way North of Exit 352 in Mackinac County, where approaching Southbound traffic on Mackinac Trail, during night time hours and other times of limited visibility creates a serious safety concern.

Recommendation 8: Improve or enhance efforts to remove road kill from the roadway and adjacent right-of-way in a more timely fashion.

Billboards Zoning Overlay and Committee Formulation
Recommendation 1: Establish Intergovernmental coordination to ensure that there is continuity between jurisdictions, and that all issues are addressed comprehensively.

Recommendation 2: Informing community governmental units about their ability to guide development in a fashion that is consistent with the communities’ values, primarily through local zoning ordinances.

Recommendation 3: Support changes to Act 106, which will allow counties the authority to regulate billboards along State Highways.

Recommendation 4: Creation of an Overlay Billboard Ordinance to monitor and regulate the construction and maintenance of billboards within the Corridor.

Recommendation 5: Planning & Zoning workshops for local communities that are focused on scenic enhancement.

Recommendation 6: Develop and pass a Temporary Moratorium on all new billboards.

Multi-Jurisdictional Involvement
Recommendation 1: Improved communication between community planning departments, and communities in general with MDOT’s TSC’s and the Superior Region office to ensure coordination between local plans and MDOT corridor plans and projects.

Recommendation 2: Begin to promote ways in which adjoining jurisdictions can establish a system of coordinating land use decisions, such as creating a regional clearinghouse that a community could send their updated Master Plan to, and that entity would then send it to all adjoining communities, to gather input and information.

Recommendation 3: Creation of an I-75 Corridor Committee to monitor and enforce the zoning overlay district, as well as other issues identified as a result of this Study.
APPENDIX A: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

**Strengths:**
- Exceptional views of natural features such as forests, fields and water resources
- Diversity of forest and wildlife species throughout the corridor
- Relatively low density volumes of traffic on I-75, compared to freeways located downstate
- Communities along I-75 get extensive public exposure throughout the year.
  - Development has occurred sparsely throughout the corridor and local communities have the ability to guide future development through planning and zoning efforts.

**Opportunities:**
- Construction of access ramps in Rudyard at M-48 and at Six Mile Road, present opportunities to improve the flow of traffic, present a more convenient travel situation for resident and help to spawn economic development throughout the region.
- More windbreaks would enhance safety, especially throughout the winter months, when travel is already hazardous due to snowy conditions, and is further threatened by blowing snow across the highway.
- Promotion of a higher quality of maintenance throughout the ROW within the Corridor.
- Implementation of an overlay-zoning ordinance to ban any future or additional billboards within the Corridor.

**Weaknesses:**
- Limited funding available for road surface improvements (although they are scheduled for this Corridor).
- Ordinances are inconsistent from different communities within the Corridor.
- Industrial and commercial development close to the freeway can negatively impact views from the highway.
- Blight created by billboards.
- Unnecessary cutting of trees within the right-of-way in order to improve view of signage/billboards.
- Lack of enforcement of existing zoning ordinances within the Corridor.
- Absence of lighting at interchanges within the corridor.
- Lack of adequate access to the Interstate (M-48 and Six Mile).
- Lack of rest areas on the southbound portion of I-75 from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie.
APPENDIX B: MODEL ZONING ORDINANCE

Model Billboard Ordinances

The regulation of billboards is intended to enhance and protect community character and image by minimizing visual blight and pollution, and to minimize traffic safety hazards due to diversion of the driver’s attention and blockage of sight distances. Billboard regulations address the location, size and related characteristics of such signs.

Section 1 Title

This ordinance shall be known and be cited as the Billboard Ordinance of The I-75 Corridor Communities.

Section 2 Intent

The sign standards contained in this ordinance are declared necessary to protect the general health, peace, safety and welfare of the citizens of The I-75 Corridor Communities and are based on the following objectives:

- To avoid excessive property and use signing in order to give each use optimum visibility to passer-by traffic and if possible, to prevent one sign from blocking the view of another sign, 1,000-ft. spacing required.
- To place signs in such a way that scenic views are respected and visual obstructions to the natural landscape are minimized.
- To protect the character of the I-75 Corridor Communities.
- To remove all billboards within the Corridor which are found to be not in compliance with the Zoning Overlay district’s regulations.
- To protect the environmental resources found around and near the existing billboards.

Section 3 Definitions

BILLBOARD—An outdoor sign advertising services or products, activities, persons, or events which are not made, produced, assembled, stored, distributed, leased, sold, or conducted upon the premises upon which the billboard is located. Billboards may also be referred to as off-premise signs.

SIGN—means any outdoor sign, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing, whether placed individually or on a T-type, V-type, back to back or double-faced display, designed, intended or used to advertise or inform. (P.A. 106 of 1972, 252.301, Section 2 (h)

Section 4 Billboard Regulations

Billboards may be established in the Commercial and Industrial (Note: could be limited to just commercial or industrial) zoning district classification(s) provided that they meet the following conditions:

1. Note more than three (3) billboards may be located per linear mile of street or highway regardless of the fact that such billboards may be located on different sides of the subject street or highway. The linear mile measurement shall not be limited to the boundaries of I-
75 Corridor Communities where the particular street or highway extends beyond such boundaries. Double faced billboard structures (i.e., structures having back-to-back billboard faces) and V-type billboard structures having only one face visible to traffic proceeding from any given direction on a street or highway shall be considered as one billboard. Additionally, billboard structures having tandem billboard faces (i.e., two parallel billboard faces facing the same direction and side-by-side to one another) shall be considered as one billboard. Otherwise, billboard structures having more than one billboard face shall be considered as two billboards and shall be prohibited in accordance with the minimum spacing requirement set forth in subsection below.

2. No billboard shall be located within one thousand (1,000) feet of another billboard abutting either side of the same street or highway.

3. No billboard shall be located within two hundred (200) feet of a residential zone and/or existing residence. If the billboard is illuminated, this required distance shall instead be three hundred (300) feet.

4. No billboard shall be located closer than seventy-five (75) feet from a property line or public right-of-way. No billboard shall be located within ten (10) feet from any interior boundary lines of the premises on which the billboard is located. (A community could also limit it to the setback of a principal structure in the zoning district.)

5. The surface display area of any side of a billboard may not exceed fifty-six (56) sq. feet (Coordinate standards with abutting communities).

6. The height of a billboard shall not exceed thirty (30) feet above the elevation of the centerline of the abutting roadway.

7. No billboard shall be on top of, cantilevered or otherwise suspended above the roof of any building.

8. A billboard may be illuminated, provided such illumination is concentrated on the surface of the sign and is so located as to avoid glare or reflection onto any portion of an adjacent street or highway, the path of on-coming vehicles, or any adjacent premises. In no event shall any billboard have flashing or intermittent lights, nor shall the lights be permitted to rotate or oscillate. Lighting fixtures used to illuminate an outdoor advertising sign shall be mounted on the top of the sign structure. Bottom-mounted outdoor advertising sign lighting shall not be used. All lighting fixtures or lamps rate at a total or MORE than 1800 foot candles (fc), and all flood or spot lamps rated at a total of MORE than 900 fc, shall not emit any direct light above a horizontal plane through the lowest direct-light-emitting part of the fixtures or lamps. Any lighting fixtures or lamps rated at a total of MORE than 900 fc, shall be mounted at a height equal to or less than the value 3+ (D/3), where D is the distance in feet to the nearest property boundary. The maximum height of the fixtures or lamps may not exceed 25 feet. Billboards shall not be illuminated between the hours of 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM local time.

9. A billboard must be constructed in such a fashion that it will withstand all wind and vibration forces, which can normally be expected to occur in the vicinity. A billboard must be maintained so as to assure proper alignment of structure, continued structural soundness, and continues readability of message.

10. A billboard established within a business, commercial, or industrial area, as defined in the Highway Advertising Act of 1972 (1972 PA 106, as amended) bordering interstate highways, freeways or primary highways as defined in said Act shall in addition to complying with the above condition, also comply with all applicable provisions of said Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder, as such may from time to time be amended.

11. No person, firm or corporation shall erect a billboard within I-75 Corridor Communities without first obtaining a permit from the Zoning Administrator, which permit shall be granted upon a showing of compliance with the provisions of this ordinance and payment of a fee.
Permits shall be issued for a period of one year, but shall be renewable annually upon inspection of the billboard by the Zoning Administrator confirming continued compliance with this ordinance and payment of the billboard permit fee. The amount of the billboard permit fee required hereunder shall be established by resolution of the I-75 Corridor Communities and shall bear a reasonable relationship to the cost and expense of administering this permit requirement. The I-75 Corridor Communities shall further have the right to amend the aforementioned resolution from time to time within the foregoing limits of reasonableness. (Note: A community adopting this provision should be prepared to demonstrate that the amount of its billboard permit fee is reasonably related to the actual costs incurred by the community in administering the permit requirement.)
I. TEMPORARY MORATORIUM

Enacting a temporary moratorium on the issuance of billboard permits is the first step that a local government should take when it starts to consider strengthening its billboard law. This is an important first step because billboard operators have a well-known habit of flooding a permitting agency with applications as soon as they hear that tougher laws are on the way.

In the Fort Collins, CO, ordinance below, the “whereas” clauses suggest that billboards “may” endanger public safety and cause visual clutter. The ordinance calls for the city to maintain the status quo regarding billboards pending further investigation. The ordinance then enacts a 180-day moratorium on new billboard construction.

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS, CO IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN OFF-PREMISE SIGNS.

WHEREAS, the Council has determined that signs and billboards located on premises to which they do not specifically relate (off-premise signs) may endanger the public safety by distracting the attention of derivers from the roadway necessary for the maintenance of traffic safety and may otherwise endanger public health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Council has further determined that such off-premise signs might also result in harm to the welfare of the City of creating visible clutter and blight and by promoting a negative aesthetic impact in the City and:

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Fort Collins has determined that it is in the best interest of the City, in the protection of the public health, safety and welfare, that the regulation and prohibition of off-premise signs should be analyzed by the staff, the regulated community and the citizens of the City for the purpose of determining the best possible approach for such regulation under the Constitution of the United States and the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, in order to preserve the status quo pending further investigation of the possible regulation of off-premise signs, the Council has determined that a moratorium should be imposed upon the issuance of permits for the construction of new off-premise signs, with certain exceptions.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS as follows:

Section 1. That there be and hereby is imposed for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days from the effective date of this ordinance a moratorium upon the issuance of permits for the erection or construction of any sign or billboard which is used or intended for use to advertise, identify or direct or attract the attention of the public to a business, institution, product, organization, event or location offered or existing elsewhere than upon the same lot, tract or parcel of land where such sign or billboard is displayed, except such signs or billboards which carry only ideological or political messages.

Section 2. That, during said one hundred eighty (180) day period, the City staff shall work with the regulated sign industry and the citizens of the City to develop and present to the City Council a proposed ordinance regulating such off-premise signs, which proposed ordinance shall be presented to the City Council in sufficient time that said ordinance, if adopted, may take effect prior to the expiration of said one hundred eighty (180) day period.

Section 3. That all permits for off-premise signs issued by the city before the effective date of this ordinance shall be valid for a period of thirty (30) days from the effective date of this ordinance and the sign which is the subject of said permit must be erected by the end of said thirty-day period or not at all. Said permits may be extended by the city for one additional thirty-day period upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of diligence toward completion of the sign and the existence of circumstances beyond the control of the permittee causing the delay.