

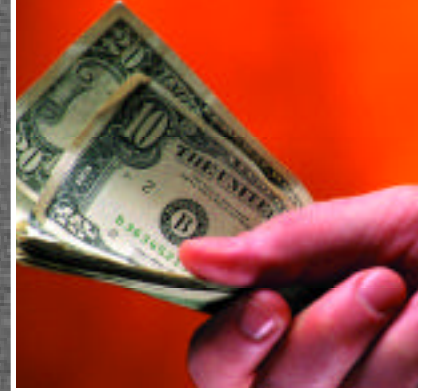
# Smart Roads: Grand Traverse Region

ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRAVERSE CITY BYPASS

Protecting the Environment



Saving Taxpayer Dollars



Improving Transportation



# Smart Roads: Better, Faster, Cheaper

Traffic congestion, sprawl, and disappearing green space are the problems. "Smart Roads" is the solution.

Smart Roads is an innovative citizen-led program to meet the Grand Traverse region's transportation needs now and in the 21st century. The Smart Roads approach remedies traffic problems by:

- Redesigning current roads.
- Improving mass transit.
- Promoting urban growth in already developed areas.

With Smart Roads, we can accomplish what a majority of residents and local officials in the Grand Traverse region want to do: preserve open space and prevent suburban sprawl from taking over farmland, forests, and recreational areas.

Why not make current roads work better, rather than shifting the problem once again into the countryside? Building more and wider roads through rural lands uses our tax dollars to subsidize sprawl. And it causes congestion as more cars come rushing to the latest development.

We can't build our way out of traffic congestion. The solution is to improve the roads we already have and make it convenient for people to get where they want to go without necessarily having to drive.

Smart Roads is a realistic alternative to the \$300 million proposal to construct a bypass south of Traverse City and build a new bridge through the Boardman River Valley. Smart Roads is less costly for taxpayers and less damaging to the community and the environment. It's a plan for cars *and* for people.

With Smart Roads thinking, we can:

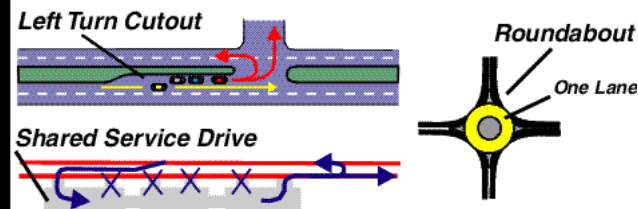
- Retool portions of Grand Traverse County's South Airport Road to handle more traffic more efficiently.
- Connect the Beitner-Keystone corridor to Hammond Road to serve east-west traffic flowing south of Traverse City.
- Renovate the existing Cass Road Bridge instead of building another bridge and new connecting roads in the Boardman River Valley, for a cost savings of \$13.9 million, or nearly 90 percent.
- End taxpayer subsidies for new roads and water lines that contribute to sprawling development.
- Expand the Bay Area Transportation Authority bus system to make it more comfortable and convenient for residents and tourists.
- Improve criteria for the siting of future roads to reflect citizen involvement and to support areas that already are developed.

The main reason the Grand Traverse region is among the fastest-growing areas of Michigan is that people are fed up with congested suburbs and are attracted to the natural splendor and strong sense of community that we enjoy. Let's prepare for continued success. Let's get smart with Smart Roads.

## REDESIGN SOUTH AIRPORT ROAD

South Airport Road can handle more traffic with less congestion. To increase traffic flow transportation officials should:

- Synchronize traffic signals to give green lights to motorists driving the speed limit.
- Install one-lane roundabouts at intersections so traffic can flow smoothly through them.
- Reduce entries and exits by creating service drives shared by several businesses.
- Allow left turns only to or from the new service drives.
- Reduce vehicle congestion by encouraging non-motorized traffic with sidewalks and pedestrian overpasses.



SMART ROADS IDENTIFIES THE BEST MIX OF SOLUTIONS—FROM FIXING POORLY DESIGNED OR DETERIORATING ROADS TO EXPANDING PUBLIC TRANSIT AND IMPROVING HOW LAND IS USED—TO MEET THE GRAND TRAVERSE REGION'S TRAFFIC CHALLENGES.

## EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

An improved, convenient bus system would decrease regional traffic and save commuters the cost of operating their own vehicles. Regional municipalities should:

- Expand Bay Area Transportation Authority bus routes and increase the number of stops to serve more students, senior citizens, non-car owners, city-center workers, and everyone seeking to leave their cars behind.
- Minimize waiting times and build all-weather passenger shelters at bus stops.
- Set up parking lots in outlying townships and counties where commuters can leave their cars and catch a bus to the Traverse City area.
- Shuttle visitors and shoppers between downtown Traverse City and the malls.

## ESTABLISH URBAN INVESTMENT DISTRICTS

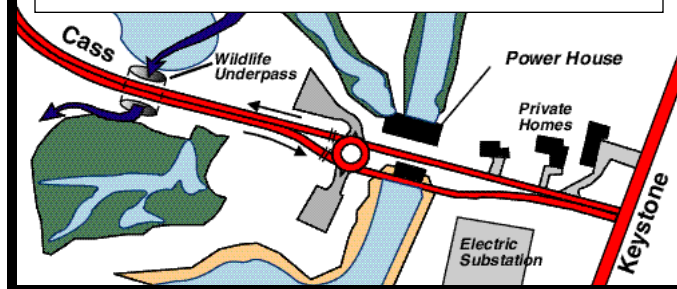
Why build a convenience store on the edge of a farm instead of in a neighborhood where people can easily walk to it? With Smart Roads planning, there are vibrant neighborhoods with schools, stores, restaurants, and entertainment all nearby.

To achieve this ideal mix of community and livability, Smart Roads recommends that the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners and its Road Commission use taxpayer dollars to finance projects only inside areas that already are developed and have the infrastructure for roads, water, and sewer. Such areas are known as Urban Investment Districts. Directing development to them saves taxpayer money and preserves forests, farmland, and recreational areas.

## RENOVATE THE CASS ROAD BRIDGE

This option avoids the costly and ecologically damaging proposal to build an entirely new bridge farther north.

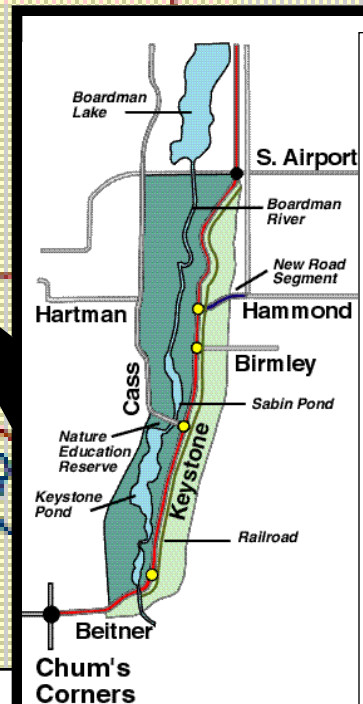
- Rebuild the bridge as two separate, one-lane segments designed for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Save nearly 90 percent over the cost of the proposed new bridge and connector roads.



## CREATE THE KEYSTONE-BEITNER PARKWAY

Improving the Keystone-Beitner corridor and linking it to an existing east-west road will reduce traffic on the already congested South Airport Road while minimizing new road construction. The Smart Roads plan seeks to:

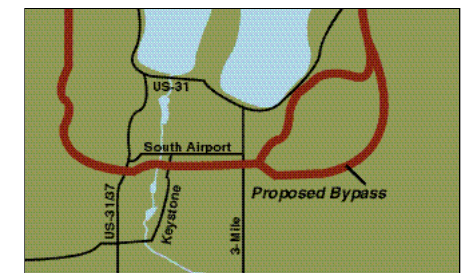
- Upgrade existing Keystone and Beitner roads into a divided boulevard with bicycle lanes and limited entries and exits.
- Connect Keystone and Hammond roads to route some east-west traffic around Traverse City with a new short segment of road.



## Smart Roads is a far better approach than the Traverse City bypass advocated by the Grand Traverse County Road Commission.

The \$300 million plan would intensify sprawl, waste money, undermine existing businesses and neighborhoods, and harm the environment. The bypass also would:

- Expand Hartman and Hammond roads to four lanes linked with new connector roads and a four-lane bridge across the Boardman River.
- Fill in about 10 acres of wetlands to build the bridge.
- Draw economic activity farther away from Traverse City.

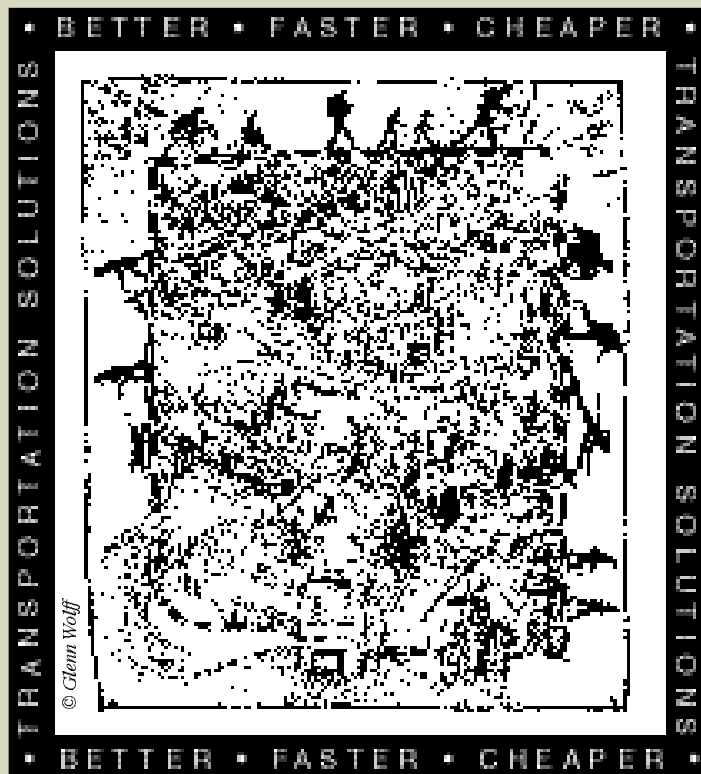


## SMART ROADS: GRAND TRAVERSE REGION

is part of the Transportation and Land Use Initiative sponsored by the Michigan Land Use Institute. The Initiative works in partnership with local groups like the Coalition for Sensible Growth to reform transportation by changing how people and policy makers think about the interrelationship between mobility and development.

The Initiative advocates for improving transportation and relieving congestion by stopping sprawl, upgrading roads, and giving people travel choices in addition to their cars. The means for this are better-designed roads, clean and convenient mass transit, safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, and strong neighborhoods and downtowns.

The Transportation and Land Use Initiative grew out of increasing public resistance to proposals statewide—in Grand Rapids, Cadillac, Traverse City, Petoskey and Alpena—for building new highways through rural lands. Such short-term solutions spend tax dollars to shift traffic problems to new areas and subsidize sprawling development. This has happened time and again in Michigan's metropolitan areas.



Relying exclusively on more roads means more time spent stalled in traffic, more pollution, more frayed nerves, and more isolation from each other. We can improve our standard of living by:

- Convincing the Michigan Department of Transportation to improve existing roads and to halt the wasteful construction of more than \$2 billion in proposed new highways through mostly rural lands.
- Working with local governments, citizens groups, and metropolitan planning organizations to build a statewide movement to support better-designed roads that handle more traffic with less congestion.

Increasing public participation in planning local and state transportation projects so that pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, and buses, and light rail in major cities, all are considered.

- Establishing alliances with neighborhood organizations in Detroit and other southern Michigan cities to reduce congestion and improve access to mass transit.
- Joining with local governments, public interest organizations, and business leaders to strengthen land use laws. We can stop sprawl and preserve Michigan's countryside by

**THE COALITION FOR SENSIBLE GROWTH** is a Traverse City-based grassroots organization working to build community support for future development that reduces energy demands, air and water pollution, and the encroachment of paved surfaces, and protects the unique natural features of the Grand Traverse region. The Coalition has taken the lead in developing alternatives to the proposed Traverse City bypass and a new four-lane bridge through the Boardman River Valley.

The Coalition's work is made possible through volunteer efforts and tax-deductible contributions. To get involved, make a donation, or to receive more information, contact:



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**THE MICHIGAN LAND USE INSTITUTE** is an independent, nonprofit research, educational, and service organization operating in the public interest. Our mission is to establish a fresh approach to economic development that strengthens communities, enhances opportunity, and protects the state's unmatched natural resources. The Institute's approach to land use policy reform is pro-business, pro-community, and pro-environment.

The Institute is a grassroots group funded by member contributions, grants, donations, and fees for services. For more information, or to join the Transportation and Land Use Initiative, contact:

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