

# CHAPTER TWO

**Regional Overview**

## THE MACC REGION

Based on the 2020 United States Census, 127,925 people live within the 212 square-mile MACC planning area. This represents a population increase of 7.5% since 2010 and an increase of 50.3% since 1990. Settled by Dutch immigrants in the 1840s, the area today is home to people of many ethnic backgrounds, with 28.8% of area residents identified as minorities.

The economic base is also diverse with automotive, office furniture, food processing, warehousing, pharmaceuticals, car battery manufacturing, and agricultural sectors having a significant presence. Its location adjacent to 18.3 miles of Lake Michigan frontage and access to many area parks makes it a popular summer tourist destination which adds greatly to the local economy.

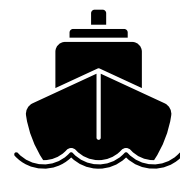
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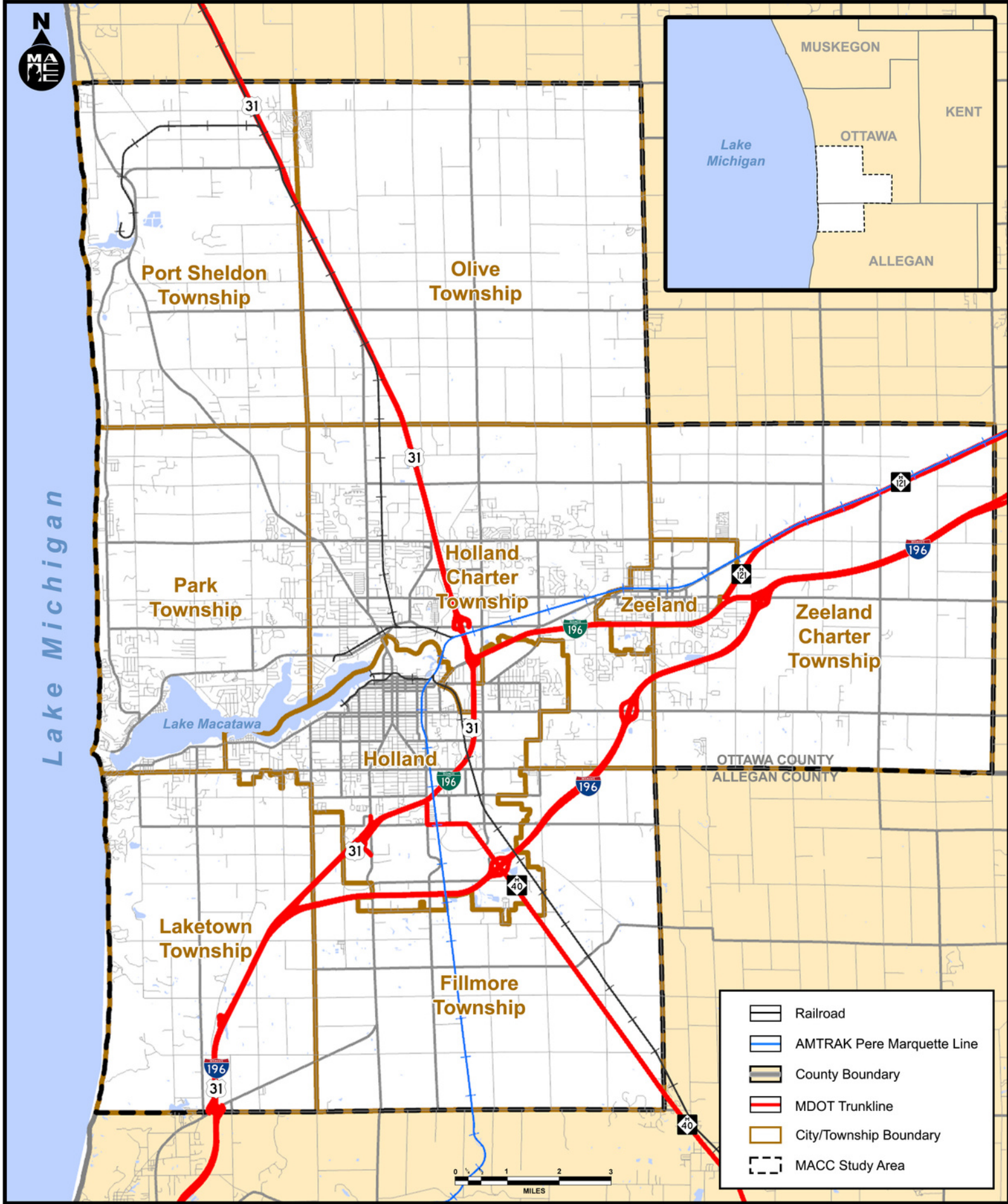
## TRANSPORTATION HISTORY

The early settlers dug a channel suitable for commercial purposes from the Holland Harbor to Lake Michigan that allowed for the transport of timber and other materials to the Chicago area. By 1871, two railroad companies had extended lines to Holland that greatly expanded intra- and interstate travel. US-31 would later serve that purpose as automobile travel became more popular. The completion of Interstate 196 in the 1970s connected the MACC area to the national roadway network. Passenger rail service, provided by Amtrak's Pere Marquette, was initiated in 1984 and a publicly-owned general aviation airport was established by the City of Holland in 1996. An extensive non-motorized network, beyond traditional city sidewalks, began in the late 1970s which has helped the region become more multimodal along with the establishment of the Macatawa Area Express transit system in 2000.

## CURRENT TRANSPORTATION IN THE REGION

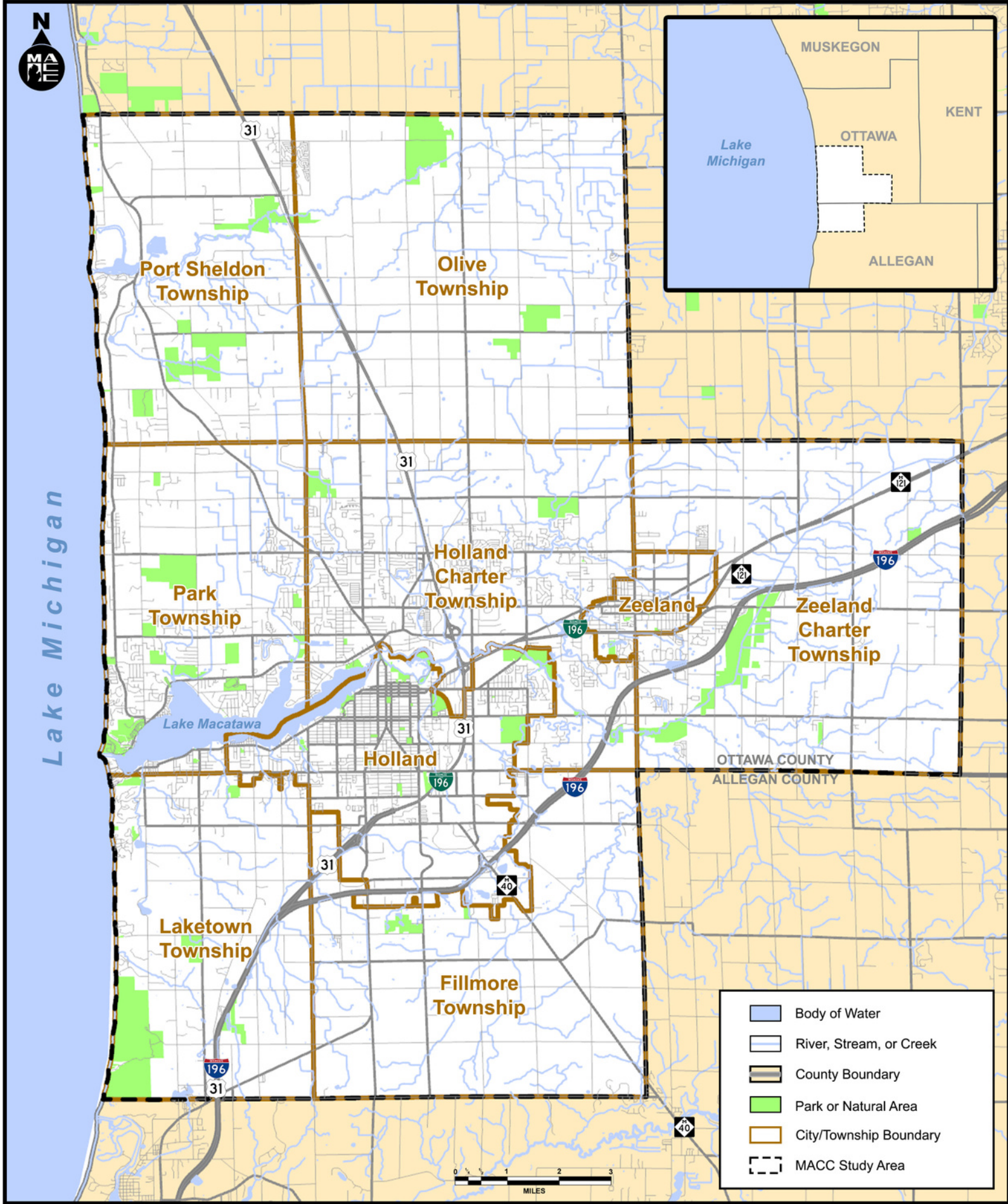
The MACC area transportation system encompasses all modes of transportation with a general aviation airport, two Class A rail lines, a public transit system (11 fixed routes and demand response service), an extensive non-motorized pathway network and a commercial harbor serving business and recreational users. Figure 2.1 illustrates the roadway network in the MACC, which includes segments of an interstate (I-196), a US route (US-31), and numerous state trunklines (M-121, M-40, and BL-196). The Pere Marquette passenger rail line, as well as freight railroad lines, are also shown.





# MACC Road and Rail Network

Figure 2.1



**MACC Parks/Natural Areas and Water Features**  
*Figure 2.2*