

# **Pure Michigan Byway Project**

The Michigan Department of Transportation says,

“Pure Michigan Byways offer a rich taste of all the grandeur and diversity the Great Lakes State has to offer. Outstanding natural beauty and many sites of historical, scenic, recreational and cultural significance have earned Michigan its place at the top of the list of travel destinations.”

MDOT will provide a guide that... “highlights scenic, natural, historical, cultural and archaeological attractions along the route. “

They further explain the process for gaining such a designation:

## **Apply for a Michigan Byway Designation**

1. Verify the route is on a state trunkline (I, M or U.S. route).
2. Be prepared to show evidence of support from local units of government along the proposed byway.
3. Prepare the pre-application form listing at least one or more of the following intrinsic qualities of the route: scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural.

MDOT will make an initial review of the proposed route's eligibility. If the route has potential, the sponsor will submit a full application form and be instructed to proceed with the process. The application will be evaluated and, if the road meets criteria, it will become a Pure Michigan Byway.

The result of such a designation would be additional tourism and possible grants/funding for sites along the route.

The collaboration of groups in our community are looking at putting forth M-54/Dixie Highway (Vienna Township, possibly stretching from Flint to Saginaw).

## M-54/DIXIE HIGHWAY PROPOSAL:

Seeking designation of M-54 AND Dixie Highway as a Pure Michigan Byway based on Historical, Cultural and Recreational Designations.

### HISTORICAL QUALIFICATIONS:

- Part of the Native American: Mackinac Trail (stretched from Toledo to the Straits—MSU Publication)
- Native American footpath
- Part of the Saginaw Trail (Detroit to Saginaw—Thumbwind.com)
- Stagecoach Highway
- Part of the Genesee Flint Plank Road (stretched from Flint to Saginaw-- section was discovered in Saginaw in 2010 and now in the Castle Museum in Saginaw) This predated the automobile
- Pine Run was site of Hotels along the Stage Coach route
- Dixie Highway was a United States Auto Trail planned in 1914 to connect Miami, Florida, with the Midwest and ultimately Canada. (Constructed from 1915 to 1929)
- Part of original state trunkline signed in 1919 (M-10)
- Was designated as part of the US Highway 10 (US 10) in 1920's.
- Segment through Flint was redesignated a business route in the 1940 that became Business M-54 (as well as in 1962)
- A Large part was named: Dort Highway (1926) in honor of Josiah Dallas Dor (Flint Carriage & Automobile Pioneer)
- Was given the M-54 Designation in 1962
- Business Loop was decommissioned in 1974
- Pine Run Church of Christ building was along the route and still stands (and in use: Oldest Church building in Genesee County).
- Clio Train Depot/Historical Museum is located less than 2 miles off of M-54 (on M-57)
- Bridgeport Historical Society (Collection of buildings in Bridgeport—possible inclusion)
- Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad (Just short distance from M-54 in Mt. Morris—possible inclusion)
- Others?

### CULTURAL QUALIFICATIONS:

- Clio Center for the Arts (less than 3 miles from M-54 on M-57)

- Clio Amphitheatre (about 1 mile west of M-54 on M-57)
- Clio Cast and Crew (about ½ mile west of M-54 on M-57)
- Numerous Restaurants (less than 3 miles from M-54 on M-57)

#### RECREATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

- Auto City Speedway
- Pine Hill Playscapes
- Clio Youth Sports Complex
- Skateland (Mt. Morris)
- Golf Course (Birch Run)
- Others

We will research and seek to expand these qualifications and possibly reach out to neighboring communities.

#### GROUPS SUPPORTING THE RESEARCH OF THE PROPOSAL:

- Pine Run Church of Christ
- Vienna Township
- Vienna Township BDA
- Clio Area Chamber of Commerce
- Other (more than 20 City, Township, County, Historical groups along with Chambers of Commerce have been contacted and looking into supporting this project.

We will look to reach out and include other groups and possibly communities.

#### PROPOSED TIMELINE:

This is where I'm thinking we head:

#### PURE MICHIGAN BYWAY:

Travelled on 2 "Pure Michigan Byways" latter part of July. They have blue "Pure Michigan" signage along with Informational/directional/distance signs highlighting nearby attractions. Some of these attractions are 5+ miles off of the "byway".

Suggest:

- \* focusing solely on: M-54 from Flint to Saginaw
- \* Including sites on M-57 (as within the 5 mile distance) like: Bike Trail, Amphitheatre, Cast & Crew, Historical Society, Parks, Restaurants, etc.
- \* Encouraging our involved groups (Twp, BDA, Historical, Chamber, Churches, etc) to reach out to others of "their kind" from Flint to Saginaw to ask to join us
- \* Ask all participating parties to help us build our "attractions (Arts, Recreational,,Historical, restaurants) listings
- \* Have involved groups bring it up in meetings so minutes of discussion can be included with proposal
- \* Contact "attractions" to help support with letter of interest
- \* Set target date in mid-September to have
  - all groups contacted/on board,
  - proposed list of attractions
  - historical report assembled
  - letters of interest from all participating groups and attractions
- \* Send assembled package out to involved groups for review
- \* Attempt to send request ot MDOT by October 1
- \*\* Dates may change due to public meetings by groups for discussion.

UPDATES 8/4/2023

Have reached out to:

**GENESEE COUNTY**

City of Flint  
 Genesee Historical Society  
 Flint Chamber of Commerce  
 Genesee Co. Board of Commissioners  
 Explore Flint & Genesee  
 City of Mt. Morris  
 Mt. Morris Township

**SAGINAW COUNTY:**

Saginaw Co. Board of Commissioners  
 Saginaw Co. Chamber of Commerce  
 Bridgeport Charter Twp..  
 Birch Run Township  
 Saginaw City Hall  
 Birch Run/Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce  
 Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce  
 Saginaw Co. Historical Society  
 Bridgeport Historical Society

Let me know what you think.