

= M @-@ 51 ( Michigan highway ) =

M @-@ 51 is a north ? south state trunkline highway in the southwestern portion of the US state of Michigan . The southern terminus is at a connection with State Road 933 across the Michigan ? Indiana state line near South Bend , Indiana . From there the trunkline runs north through an interchange with US Highway 12 ( US 12 ) into Niles along a route that was once part of Business US 12 ( Bus . US 12 ) . North of Niles , the highway runs parallel to a river and a rail line through rural areas . The northern terminus is on Interstate 94 ( I @-@ 94 ) west of Paw Paw .

There were two other highways that bore the M @-@ 51 designation . The first connected Holland and Grand Rapids with the birth of the highway system in 1919 . After the creation of the United States Numbered Highway System in 1926 , the number was moved to a different highway in The Thumb area . That second highway was scaled back and later decommissioned in the 1960s . The current highway dates back to 1971 when the southern end of M @-@ 40 was rerouted , and the previous alignment was given the M @-@ 51 moniker . It was extended to the state line in 1998 to complete the current highway .

= = Route description = =

M @-@ 51 starts at the Indiana state line as a continuation of SR 933 into Michigan . The trunkline runs north through residential areas along 11th Street into Niles . On the south side of town , it meets US 12 at an interchange before continuing northward through commercial areas . Between the intersections with Maple and Main streets , M @-@ 51 splits into a one @-@ way pair of streets to follow 12th Street northbound and 11th Street southbound . Oak Street marks the western end of Bus . M @-@ 60 , and M @-@ 51 turns westward on Main Street into downtown Niles . At 5th Street , the highway turns north again to exit downtown . The highway crosses a rail line owned by Amtrak before curving northeasterly near the Plym Park Golf Course . M @-@ 51 angles parallel to the Dowagiac River and the Amtrak line as the highway crosses from Berrien County into Cass County . The landscape transitions to farmland along the river , and the highway turns to the east between Sumnerville and Pokagon .

Past Pokagon , M @-@ 51 turns back northeasterly toward Dowagiac . Once the highway reaches that city , it merges with M @-@ 62 . The two highways run concurrently eastward along Spruce , Main and Division streets through downtown . M @-@ 51 turns to the north along Front Street , separating from the concurrency and leaving downtown . North of town in rural Cass County , M @-@ 51 intersects M @-@ 152 near location where the highway crosses the Dowagiac River . North of that intersection , the trunkline crosses into Van Buren County and turns to the east again . M @-@ 51 passes south of Knickerbocker Lake before turn northeasterly parallel to the rail line along Delaware Street in Decatur. after which is heads due north to I @-@ 94 .

M @-@ 51 is maintained by MDOT like other state highways in Michigan . As a part of these maintenance responsibilities , the department tracks the volume of traffic that uses the roadways under its jurisdiction . These volumes are expressed using a metric called annual average daily traffic , which is a statistical calculation of the average daily number of vehicles on a segment of roadway . MDOT 's surveys in 2010 showed that the highest traffic levels along M @-@ 51 were the 20 @,@ 298 vehicles daily south of US 12 ; the lowest counts were the 2 @,@ 658 vehicles per day west of Decatur . M @-@ 51 between US 12 and the state line has been listed on the National Highway System , a network of roads important to the country 's economy , defense , and mobility .

= = History = =

= = = Previous designations = = =

When the state highway system was originally signed in 1919 , M @-@ 51 was initially designated from Holland to Grand Rapids . The highway ran from Zeeland along a route that used Byron Road

and 32nd Avenue to connect with Port Sheldon Street in Jenison before connecting with Chicago Drive . The highway 's course was simplified by 1924 to use Chicago Drive between Zeeland and Jenison . When the US Highway System debuted in 1926 , this original M @-@ 51 was renumbered as an extension of M @-@ 21 , and the M @-@ 51 number was reused for the original M @-@ 27 in The Thumb . The highway ran from Port Huron to M @-@ 83 ( now M @-@ 142 ) west of Harbor Beach . The designation of M @-@ 51 from Port Huron to M @-@ 46 was removed in late 1961 , and the remainder to M @-@ 142 was removed in 1965 .

= = = Current designation = = =

In 1971 , all of M @-@ 40 south of I @-@ 94 to Niles was reassigned the designation M @-@ 51 while M @-@ 40 was shifted to the east to take over the routing of the contemporary M @-@ 119 between Paw Paw and its intersection with US 12 in Porter Township near Mottville . The routing of M @-@ 51 was extended down to the state line in April 1998 when US 33 was decommissioned out of the state of Michigan ; the extension formed a concurrency with Business US 12 ( Bus . US 12 ) through Niles in the process . In early 2010 , the central section of Bus . US 12 was transferred to the City of Niles . In doing so , the Bus . US 12 designation was decommissioned in the city , removing that designation from the M @-@ 51 concurrency .

= = Major intersections = =