

CHAPTER 3 Transportation Element

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Statutes

Section 3.1 Introduction

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town of Sharon is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens. Decisions made regarding transportation can have a direct impact on the community's growth and quality of life. These decisions should be made to include choices that will most efficiently serve the community as a whole, maximize investment in transportation infrastructure, as well as minimize conflicts between modes of transportation as well as jurisdictions.

This chapter will: assess the current inventory of transportation options; list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Sharon; and, compare local transportation goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

Section 3.2 Transportation Facility Inventory

A. Roads & Highways

Current road classifications for the County transportation networks are officially designated in the document entitled "The Functional Classification of Highways, Roads, and Streets in Portage County, Wisconsin"; adopted in 1989. The existing functional class system (**Map #010**) categorizes streets and highways according to their two primary purposes: 1) to move vehicles (traffic mobility), and 2) to serve adjacent land (land access). "Arterials" accommodate the movement of vehicles, while "local streets" provide a land access function (neighborhood streets that lead to homes, etc.). Collectors serve both local and through traffic by providing a connection between arterials and local roads.

As of 2002, the local road system for Sharon consists of a total of 101.68 miles of public roadway within the Town: County Trunk Highways (CTH) CC, I, J, K, Y, and Z equal 33.78 miles; and Town roads comprise the remaining 67.9 miles. In addition, State Highway (STH) 66 adds 9.3 miles to the Town's road system.

Principal Arterials

There are no principle arterials located in the Town of Sharon.

Minor Arterials

State Highway 66, is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count in 2002 for STH 66 west of CTH K was 4,200 vehicles while the count was 2,900 vehicles east of CTH K in Polonia. Traffic mobility and servicing principle arterials is the main function of this road.

Major Collectors

County Trunk Highways J, Z, and Y are designated as major collectors in the Town of Sharon. The ADT in 2002 for Highway J, north of STH 66 was 890 vehicles, the ADT for CTH Z in Polonia was 1,400 vehicles, and CTH Y had an ADT count of 620 vehicles just east of Bentley Pond. Providing access to attractions such as schools, parks and airports is one set of criteria used in assigning major and minor collectors.

Minor Collectors

County Highways I and K are designated as minor collectors in the Town. The 2002 ADT count for CTH I, just south of STH 66 is 210 and the ADT count for CTH K, south of STH 66 is 320.

Local Streets

The remaining roadways are classified as local streets. Their primary function is land access.

B. Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

There are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the Town.

C. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

The Portage County Department on Aging provides transportation services for elderly residents in the Town of Sharon. Volunteer drivers may be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or those otherwise not able to use the busing service. Persons requiring such services must call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. In addition to these needs, Portage County Department on Aging will also arrange volunteer driver rides to a meal site in Rosholt. There is no set fee for these services, however, passengers are asked to make a donation. As another option, a privately-owned business called Courtesy Carriers provides transportation within the County as well.

D. Rail

There are no rail lines running through the Town of Sharon.

E. Air Transportation Facilities

The two main airports that serve the Town of Sharon are the Central Wisconsin Airport and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 15 miles north of Sharon in Mosinee, is a full service, all weather airport offering around-the-clock service. There are various airlines that offer regular commuter and passenger service with connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service is also available. These airlines offer overnight delivery and connections throughout the world.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located on STH 66 in Stevens Point and has two runways, one of which is 6,000 feet long. There are 37 private hangers at the airport. No passenger or freight service is available. Jet fuel and repair services are available for private aircraft.

F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on STH 66 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are no designated truck routes, however, the Town of Sharon and the Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on town and county roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil.

The majority of truck traffic in rural Portage County (County Highways and local roads) comes from agricultural use, non-metallic mining, and some logging operations.

G. Water Transportation

The Plover and Tomorrow Rivers are used as modes of non-motorized recreational transportation in the Town of Sharon. The Plover River bounds the Town of Sharon on its southwestern border, while the Tomorrow River is located on the eastern side of the town.

Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

A. Highway improvement plans

1. Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2002-2008)

State Hwy 66 was rebuilt in 2007 from Hwy J North on the west end and to the township line on the east end. The rebuild allows for better line-of-sight vision and turn-off lanes at the heavier traveled intersections. A rebuild of the corner at Rustic Drive, approximately one and one-half miles east of Polonia, was also included in this project.

2. U.S. Hwy 10 Improvement Plan

Another major highway improvement plan will be occurring on U.S. Hwy 10. Although U.S. Hwy 10 is not located within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon, the planned improvements for this highway will have a great impact for the Town of Sharon residents. The plan calls for the re-routing of U.S. Hwy 10 around Stevens Point in order to create a high speed corridor between Marshfield and Appleton. The section of highway between Stevens Point and Marshfield is currently under construction, with completion scheduled for 2012. The route for the eastern by-pass of Stevens Point has not yet been selected, and funding for this portion of the project is not yet in place.

B. State airport plans

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020

The plan determines the number, location and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state's aviation needs through 2020. The plan also forecasts the level of public investment required to: upgrade substandard features such as widening of existing runways, replace existing systems to meet federal and state standards, and enhance the airport system through runway extension and new construction. The classifications for Central Wisconsin Airport (Air Carrier/Air Cargo) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Transport/Corporate) are not projected to change through 2020.

C. State railroad plans

Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020

The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020 does not apply in the Town of Sharon due to a lack of rail facilities.

D. State, regional and local bicycle and trail plans

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

Overall plan goals are to increase the level of bicycling in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycle and motor vehicles.

Section 3.4 Transportation Issues

Highways and Roads

- How can the Town keep roads in good condition?
- Development of new roads.
- How can businesses with heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) be sited so they minimize damage to Town roads?

Transportation options for the elderly and disabled

- How can transportation services for the elderly be provided throughout the Town?
- Community Industries of Stevens Point offers a pickup service for employees needing to get to work.

Bicycles and walking trails/routes

- How will the town address safety concerns from increased bicycle traffic in the summer?
- To what extent should organized walking/biking trails be encouraged in the town?

Trucking

- Seasonal truck traffic for the vegetable harvest is moderate from mid-June to November.

Section 3.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Support and maintain a safe and efficient road system.

Objective 1: Upgrade roads on a priority basis.

Policies:

- Systematically prioritize road improvement needs; implement as funding is available.
- Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
- Whenever siting businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) evaluate and make part of the discussion making process current road capacity, cost for upgrading and cost long term maintenance of the roads.

Objective 2: Plan for new or upgraded road corridors. (**See Map #010**)

Policies:

- As development takes place, the developer is responsible for the cost of the new roads and/or necessary improvements.
- The Town will not accept new roads unless they meet road specifications as stated in the Town Road Ordinance or Subdivision Ordinance. (These Ordinances can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall.)
- Design new roads to have a separate entrance and exit and they must meet Town, County, and State requirements. Cul de sacs should not be allowed and only be considered as a temporary solution when it will eventually be eliminated and the road meets up with a new road.
- Consider an impact fee to deal with long term cost of new roads.

Objective 3: Plan siting of businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) in areas where Town roads can handle weight and traffic volume (see also Chapter 2 Housing sec 2.3 & 2.4, Chapter 5 Natural Resources, Sec 5.5 G and Chapter 8 Land Use Sec 8.3).

Policy: Whenever siting businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) evaluate and make part of the decision making process current road capacity, cost of upgrading and cost of long term maintenance of the roads.

Goal 2: Allow for human-powered transportation options. Bicycle and walking trails.

Objective: Maintain good visibility along town roads so as to make all town roads safer for pedestrians and bikes.

Policies:

- Make sure brush and trees do not obstruct driver's line of sight.
- Support the county's efforts if they choose to build bike and pedestrian lanes on shoulders of county roads

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