

CHAPTER 3 Transportation Element

Section 3.1 Introduction

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens of Almond. 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 Almond; and, compare local transportation goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

Section 3.2 Transportation Facility Inventory

A. Roads and Highways

Current road classifications for the County transportation network is 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 3.1) 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 within Town of Almond consists of a total of 82.38 miles of public roadway. County Roads (Cty Rd) A, BB, EE, J and W account for 32.50 miles, with the remaining 49.88 miles being local Town roads. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the average daily traffic volume (ADT) reported in 2002 for Cty Rd A was 270 vehicles; Cty Rd BB from Church Road to Akron Avenue was 2270 vehicles; Cty Rd J from Cty Rd A to Akron Avenue was 1290 vehicles. There was no count for Cty Rd W. See Map 3.1 for other ADT information

1. Rural Interstate

There are no rural interstate highways located in the Town of Almond.

2. Principal Arterials

None of the roads with the Town are designated as principal arterials.

3. Minor Arterials

None of the roads with the Town are designated as minor arterials.

4. Major Collectors

County Rds A, BB, D, and W are classified as major collectors for their entire length within the Town. County J from the Village of Almond to the intersection with County W is also a major collector. These roadways total 25.14 miles.

5. Minor Collectors

County GG along the northern border of the Town is a minor collector highway. This road segment is approximately two (2) miles long and provides a link between other major collector highways in the region.

6. Rural Local Roads

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

B. Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled and Elderly

The Portage County Department on Aging provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Almond area through a busing and volunteer escort service. Bus rides are provided to meal sites, grocery shopping, senior center services, essential personal business, and adult day care. Buses will bring residents into Stevens Point or to the Jensen Center on specific days during the week. Volunteer drivers may also 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. There is no set fee for this service, however, passengers are asked to make a donation.

C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

A portion of the Ice Age Bicycle Route is located along the northern boundary of the Town on County Road GG (Map 3.1). In addition to this designated route, many roads are used by cyclists during the warmer months of the year. One such course, which includes County Roads W, J and D, is a popular bicycling route for individuals and groups on organized cross-country rides. Every effort should be made to designate this roadway as a bicycle route and provide appropriate route and warning signage.

D. Railroads

There is no rail service within the Town of Almond.

E. Air Transportation

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

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 35 miles north of Almond on I-39 in Mosinee, WI, is a full service, all weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Four airlines 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.

Map 3.1 Transportation Network

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located at the intersection of I-39 and 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 is available for private aircraft (100 octane low-lead), but there are no repair services.

F. Trucking

There are no designated truck routes within the Town; however, all of Cty Rd BB and Cty Rd D, from Interstate 39 to the Village of Almond, are open all year to truck traffic. These roads are listed by the Portage County Highway Department as, County Roads not posted. The Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on county roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil.

Agricultural traffic, specifically during harvest and planting seasons, is especially heavy within the Town. The equipment used in the vegetable industry is very large and presents unique hazards on roadways when present. In many cases, traffic must use the shoulder of the road to get around field equipment that is using the roadway. This equipment is also damaging to road surfaces due to the extreme weight.

Section 3.3 Inventory of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

A. Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2003-2008)

There is no state or county roads identified in the Town for repair or maintenance as part of the WisDOT Highway Improvement Plan.

B. 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

The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020 does not apply in Almond 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.

E. PASER Program

The Town of Almond uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) road condition rating system to assess the physical condition of local roads. The PASER software can help prioritize road maintenance, calculate project costs, evaluate consequences of alternative budgets and project selection strategies.

Section 3.4 Transportation Issues

A. Highways

- How can the Town keep roads in good condition?
- How can the Town work with the County to provide rumble strips at the intersection of County Roads D and BB?
- Town residents think that County Road EE should be upgraded to a collector. People use this as the main route to go to Amherst, Waupaca, and the Fox Valley area. Traffic counts should not be taken during fall harvest when farm trucks can skew the data.

B. 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 pick-up service for employees needed to get to work, otherwise, no disabled transportation services are available in the community.

C. Bicycles and walking trails/routes

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

D. Trucking

- Seasonal truck traffic for the vegetable harvest is very heavy from mid-June to November.
- How will the Town address safety and road maintenance concerns due to the presence of heavy trucks and agricultural equipment throughout the Town?

Section 3.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

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

Objective 1.1: Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.

Policies:

1.1 (a). The Town will consider paving of road segments based on necessity.

1.1 (b). Avoid locating land uses that generate heavy traffic on roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such uses.

Objective 1.2: Update local transportation plans.

Policies:

1.2 (a). Consider future road locations, extensions, or connections when reviewing local development plans.

1.2 (b). New roads must have a separate entrance and exit, and meet state and County requirements.

1.2 (c). The Town will not accept new roads unless they meet road specifications as stated in the Town's Road Ordinance or Land Division Ordinance.

Objective 1.3: Work with the County to provide transit service to the elderly and others in need of such services.

Policy 1.3 (a): Support the continuation of the Portage County Department on Aging transportation program.

Objective 1.4: Coordinate with other governmental units on matters concerning transportation.

Goal 2: Allow for human powered transportation options.

Objective 2.1: Identify routes used by the public for bicycling/walking.