

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 Pine Grove. 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 and 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 Pine Grove, 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 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 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 quickly between destination points, 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 road system within Pine Grove consists of a total of 84.74 miles of public roadway. Interstate Highway 39 accounts for 6.4 miles of 4-lane roadway; County Roads (Cty Rds) W, D and JJ account for 14.52 miles; 63.82 miles are local Town roads.

1. Rural Interstate

Four-lane Interstate Highway 39 passes through the center of the Town of Pine Grove on a north/south alignment. Along these 6.4 miles of interstate highway are two interchanges, one at Cty Rd D in the southern portion of the Town and the other at Cty Rd W near the settlement of Bancroft. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) indicated a 2002 traffic volume for I-39 in Pine Grove (between Cty Rd D and Cty Rd W) of 6,500 vehicles per day in the northbound lane and 7,500 vehicles per day in the southbound lane.

2. **Principal Arterials:** No principal arterial highways are located in Pine Grove.

3. **Minor Arterials:** No Minor arterial highways are located in Pine Grove.

4. **Major Collectors:** No major collector highways are located in Pine Grove.

5. Minor Collectors

County Roads D and W are considered minor collectors. ADT data available from 2002 for Cty Rd W indicates a volume of 1,600 vehicles per day west of I-39 and 1,700 vehicles per day east of I-39. For Cty Rd D, volume counts were 740 vehicles per day west of I-39 and 1,300 vehicles per day east of I-39.

6. Rural Local Roads

The remaining roadways are classified as rural local roads with a primary function of 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 rural portions of the County 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 in the Village of Amherst on specific days during the week. The closest bus pick-up point is located in the Village of Almond.

Volunteer drivers may also be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or 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

There are no designated bicycle/walking routes or trails within the Town of Pine Grove. Cty Rds W and D are popular bicycling routes 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 Pine Grove.

E. Air Transportation

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

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 35 miles north of Pine Grove in Mosinee, WI, is a full-service, all-weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Several airlines offer regular commuter and passenger service with connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service is also available, with overnight delivery and connections throughout the world.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport, located approximately 16 miles north of Pine Grove at the intersection of I-39 and STH 66 in Stevens Point, 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 at this time.

Another airport, the Bancroft International Airport, located in the northeast part of the Town, is actually a privately owned air field used primarily by aerial spray planes that serve the region's vegetable producers.

Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class

F. Trucking

Semi-trailer traffic in Pine Grove generally consists of through traffic on Interstate 39 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are no designated truck routes, however, 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 potato 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.

Gravel and fertilizer trucks traveling on County Road W also damages the road surfaces due to their extreme weight of over 14 tons.

Section 3.3 Inventory of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

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

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has not identified any road projects in Pine Grove as part of this transportation 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 Pine Grove due to a lack of rail facilities.

D. State, Regional and Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

1. 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 Related Programs

The Town of Pine Grove 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 3.5 Transportation Issues

The following transportation related issues were identified through the course of the planning process:

- How can road damage be minimized?
- How can road right-of-way be protected from development? People are building in the right-of-way.
- How can County Road maintenance and plowing be improved?
- How can the number of accidents on I-39 be reduced between County Roads D and W?
- How will transportation improvements such as sidewalk, curb-and-gutter, etc. be maintained?
- How can increased transit services for elderly be provided?
- To what extent will the Town work to ensure safe travel for bicyclists and pedestrians?
- Trucks: How can road damage from trucks be mitigated? Roads have to be constantly repaired.

Section 3.6 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1 - Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.

Objective 1 - A safe and convenient Town street system is planned for to avoid unnecessary Town costs and user inconvenience.

Policies:

1. Adhere to road related standards of the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.
2. New and existing roads are built or maintained to alleviate drainage problems.
3. Recommend that driveways and road access points are consistent with Portage County standards.
4. Continue upgrading of un-surfaced roads to hard surfaces, as indicated in the Town's Road Improvement Plan.
5. Consider designating truck routes through Town to minimize road damage.
6. Continue to bill agricultural and heavy equipment users for damage caused to Town roads.
7. Recommend that development does not occur in the road right-of-way.

Objective 2 - Existing and future public roads are constructed and maintained according to WisDOT design standards

Policy - The Town will only accept newly dedicated roads provided they meet state DOT design standards.

Goal 2 - Develop a viable public transportation network.

Objective 1 - Work with the County to provide transit service to the elderly and disabled in need of such services.

Policy - Inform Town residents of transportation options that are available to the elderly and disabled.

Goal 3 - Encourage and accommodate human-powered transportation options.

Objective 1 - Identify routes used by the public for bicycling/walking.

Policies:

1. Pursue the designation of County Road W as a bicycle route.
2. Develop bicycle/walking routes on Isherwood Road from Bancroft to the Vista Royale Campground.
3. Work with the Portage County Parks Department and other agencies to extend existing trails to the Town of Pine Grove.