

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 Buena Vista. 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, as well as specific land uses.

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 Buena Vista, 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 (shown in 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" are roadways that primarily accommodate the movement of vehicles between destination points, while "local streets" primarily 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 Buena Vista consisted of a total of 114.07 miles of public roadway. County Roads (Cty Rds) BB, N, J and JJ account for 39.76 miles of the network (6.3 miles of County Road JJ from STH 54 to the Town of Lanark has been transferred to the Town in 2004. That stretch of road is now called Old Amish Rd.); Interstate 39 (4-lane roadway) is 3.00 miles; and State Highway 54 is 7.98 miles. Local Town roads account for the final 63.33 miles.

1. Principal Arterials (Rural Interstate)

Interstate 39/51 is the only principal arterial in Buena Vista. It is located in the western half of the Town and has a north-south orientation. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the average daily traffic volume (ADT) reported in 2002 for Interstate 39/51 was 8,400 south bound and 7,900 north bound vehicles per day.

2. Minor Arterials

State Highway 54 is the only road in the Town currently designated as a minor arterial. The ADT in 2002 for Highway 54 near Shady Dr. was 4,600 vehicles, while the count along Hwy 54 at Oak Dr. was 3,900 vehicles per day.

3. Major Collectors

County Road BB is the only road currently designates as a major collector. The ADT in 2002 was 1,100 vehicles per day near STH 54.

4. Minor Collectors

County Roads K and N are considered minor collectors. The ADT in 2002 for Cty Rd N, west of Cty Rd J, was 260 vehicles per day and Cty Rd K had a count of 110 vehicles per day north of STH 54.

5. Local Streets

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

B. Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

The Ice Age Trail is an all-season recreational trail running throughout the entire state of Wisconsin, made to accommodate hikers, cross-country skiers, backpackers and all other people who enjoy the outdoors. When completed, it will total approximately 1,000 miles in length. The trail, some of which passes through private lands, is for non-motorized traffic only.

The designated bike route of the Ice Age Trail that passes through Buena Vista is located along Cty Rd D, on the northern boundary of the Town; Cty Rd EE; and Cty Rd GG, on the southern boundary of the Town (Map 3.1).

Other roads within Buena Vista that accumulate bicycle traffic include: Wiczek and Shady Roads, and Oak Drive.

C. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

The Portage County Department on Aging provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Buena Vista 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 to the Lincoln Center or other locations on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 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.

D. Rail

There are no railroad lines present in the Town and as of the writing of this plan, no plans have been presented to expand rail service into Buena Vista during the 20 year planning horizon.

E. Air Transportation Facilities

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

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 20 miles north of Stevens Point in Mosinee, 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. These airlines offer overnight delivery and connections throughout the world.

Map 3.1: Transportation Networks and Functional Class

Map 3.2: PoCo Highway Department 2005 - 2009 Maintenance Plan

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located on the east side of the City on STH 66, Stevens Point and has two runways, one of which is 6,000 feet long. There are 37 private hangers at the airport. These accommodate corporate jets (i.e. Noel Group and Sentry Insurance) and private aircraft. No passenger or freight service is available. Jet fuel is available for private aircraft, but there are no repair services.

In addition to the above mentioned airports, other air operations in the Town of Plover (Taft Ave.) and Town of Pine Grove (Bancroft Intl Airport) provide crop dusting and spraying services for area agricultural producers. Although these facilities are not used for air transportation, they have the potential to generate a substantial amount of air traffic during the agricultural growing season.

F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on Interstate 39/51, STH 54 and normal delivery service for area businesses. 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. It is important to note that a significant amount of truck traffic on local roads is also generated from gravel operations in or near the Town. This equipment may also cause premature damage to road surfaces due to the extreme weight. These types of traffic are greatest from April to November.

There are no designated truck routes; however, the Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on most county roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil. County Road BB, though, is one of a limited number of roads that have been constructed to accommodate heavier truck traffic; therefore a weight limit is not posted on that portion of the Town's road network.

Section 3.3 Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

A. Short Term Highway Improvement Plans

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) produces a six-year Highway Improvement Program Plan that is updated every two years. According to the WisDOT Highway Improvement Program Plan produced for the period 2003-2008, there weren't any sections of road within Buena Vista identified for improvement.

The Portage County Highway Department also prepares short term Construction and Maintenance Plans for County Roads. These plans are updated on an annual basis, as compared to WisDOT's bi-annual revision. A number of County Roads within the Town have been identified for maintenance ranging from crack filling to reconstruction in the Highway Department's 2005-2009 Maintenance Plan (Map 3.2). The Town should continue to monitor both the State and County documents for the most up-to-date road maintenance proposals.

B. State Railroad Plans

The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020 (now incorporated into the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's *Connections 2030 Plan*) does not apply as Buena Vista has no rail facilities.

C. 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.

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 Related Programs

The Town of Buena Vista uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) road condition rating system to assess the physical condition of local roads. This program is administered by the Town Board and records are kept with the Town Clerk. The database of local road conditions was projected to be completed in 2004. Although the PASER rating system will continue to be used, the PASERware software is being phased out and replaced with the DOT's Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). This internet accessible software will allow local government units to manage local road data to improve decision-making, and to meet state statute requirements.

Section 3.5 Transportation Issues

The following transportation issues were identified during the planning process:

- Some roads within the Town experience a substantial amount of pedestrian traffic. To what extent should the Town accommodate or encourage non-motorized users?
- Some town roads are experiencing increased traffic due to development pressures. To what extent is there a need to revise or post speed limits on certain roads?
- Development of roads - paved vs. dirt: To what extent should the Town address expectations for better roads and faster service provision from people moving into a rural area?
- There are currently no Class B roads designated in the Town. To what extent should the Town pursue designating truck routes or constructing roads to accommodate heavy truck traffic?
- The functional class designation of County Rd J (north of Hwy 54) should be reviewed. Commissioners noted that increased traffic volume on this stretch of road should warrant a higher functional class designation. What can the Town do to ensure current and accurate functional class designations?

Section 3.6 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. Goals

1. Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
2. Encourage and accommodate non-motorized recreational transportation options.

B. Objectives

1. Encourage the utilization and maintenance of trails for ATV's and snowmobiles.
2. Investigate applying bonds to roads for projects such as logging, gravel pits, or residential development.

C. Policies

1. Work with existing clubs to provide information about access to trails for motorized and non-motorized traffic.
2. Encourage opening routes for ATV use if routes are not open for snowmobile use (December 1 through March 1).