

## **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 Grant. 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 inventory current transportation options; list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Grant; 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 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, 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. Access to State Trunk highways (STH 54, STH 73) is controlled by Wisconsin Department of Transportation WisDOT, which requires an "access permit" for each new access point. Similar permits, issued by Portage County, are required for new access point along County Roads (U, F, W, D, FF, WW).

As of 2004, the local road system in the Town of Grant consisted of a total of 150.82 miles of public roadway. State Highway 54 accounts for approximately one mile of 4-lane roadway, County Roads (Cty Rds) account for 34.9 miles, with the final 114.92 miles being Town roads. WisDOT conducts Average Daily Traffic Volume (ADT) counts every three years on varying sections of roads throughout the county. The 2002 ADT count data available for STH 54 in the Town of Grant indicates that 5,900 vehicles traveled eastbound on the roadway from Portage/Wood County line, while 7,300 vehicles travel westbound to the Portage/Wood County line. The count for Cty Rd U was 560 on the south, 4,800 in the Kellner area and 2,400 on the north. The count for Cty Rd F was 510 on the south and 1,300 on the north. Other counts were as follows: Cty Rd FF – 1,100; Cty Rd WW – 1,500 and Cty Rd W – 1,300. No 2002 ADT count data was available for Cty Rd D. The township also placed counters in 2004 on various Town roads. See Map 3.1 for details of all traffic count data.

#### **1.    Rural Interstate**

No rural interstate highways are located in Grant.

#### **2.    Principal Arterials**

Traffic mobility and servicing major economic centers are major functions of roads classified as arterials, and are representative of interstate or intrastate travel. STH 54, located in the far

northwest corner of the Town, is the only principal arterial in the Town of Grant. The WisDOT regulates public and private road and driveway access onto this facility.

### 3. Minor Arterials

These roadways provide for intraregional and inter-area traffic movements. STH 73, located along the south border of the Town, is the only minor arterial in the Town. New road and driveway access onto these highways is regulated by the WisDOT and Portage County, with the County requiring an access permit with a minimum separation of 600 feet between access points, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.

### 4. Major Collectors

These roadways provide for inter-area traffic movements. Major collectors in the Town of Grant include Cty Rds U, F, W and D. The location and separation of access points along these highways is regulated by Portage County through access permits. The required minimum separation between access points is 300 feet, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.

### 5. Minor Collectors

These roadways link the rural, less densely populated areas (i.e. local roads) with higher order roads/highways. Minor collectors in the Town of Grant include Cty Rds FF and WW. Portage County regulates the location and separation of new access points along these roadways (through access permits) and requires a minimum separation of 300 feet between access points, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance. The DOT's 2002 ADT count for Cty Rd FF is 1,100 vehicles, while the count for Cty Rd WW is 500 vehicles.

### 6. Rural Local Roads

These roadways primarily stress land access and provide inter-ownership and intra-ownership traffic movements over short distances. All roads not designated as arterials or collectors are considered local roads. Portage County does not regulate the separation of access points on local roads, except to require that driveways be located a minimum of 50 feet from a road intersection. There are some ADT counts available for local roads. Please see Map 3.2 for details on road surfaces (paved/unpaved) throughout the Town.

## 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 Grant area through a volunteer escort 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. Currently, there are no agreements for any scheduled elderly/disabled transit service from Wisconsin Rapids to the Kellner area.

## C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

There are no designated bicycling or walking routes within the Town of Grant. An existing bicycle/walking route is present around Lake Wazeecha in adjacent Wood County and provides direct access to Wisconsin Rapids. Any routes developed or identified near the Kellner area would be enhanced by providing a connection to this existing trail system.

**Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class**

**Map 3.2 Road Surfaces**

#### D. Railroads

Canadian National railway owns a single track rail on the south side of Highway 54. There are two at-grade crossings of this rail line within Grant. The crossing at County Road U has warning lights, but no gates. The crossing at 90<sup>th</sup> Street has a stop sign, but no lights or gates.

The Town has expressed an interest in developing commercial/industrial properties along this stretch of rail line for businesses that require rail access.

#### E. Air Transportation

The three main airports that serve the Town of Grant are: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport and Wisconsin Rapids Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 30 miles north of Grant in Mosinee, WI, is a full service, all weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Four airlines offer regular commuter and passenger service, including jet 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 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 and repair services are available for private aircraft.

The Wisconsin Rapids Municipal Airport is located in the city of Wisconsin Rapids and includes two runways, multiple hangers and contract passenger and freight services. As with the Stevens Point airport, the primary services provided are for private aircraft.

#### F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on STH 54 and STH 73, 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. The Town of Grant has similar regulations for weight posting for local roads, which are not limited to the spring season.

Agricultural traffic, specifically during harvest and planting seasons, is especially heavy within the Town. The equipment used in the vegetable production 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, in some cases, damaging to road surfaces due to the extreme weight.

### **Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs**

#### **A. Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan**

There are no State or County roads identified in the Town for major improvements as part of the 2003-2008 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. Wisconsin State Rail Plan (SRP) 2020**

The final SRP 2020 will be used to communicate the condition of Wisconsin's rail system, the rationale for proposing certain improvements, and the financial needs and system-wide implications of proposed funding levels.

The State Rail Plan will comprise six major components:

1. Intercity passenger rail
2. Freight rail
3. Highway-rail crossings
4. Funding
5. Economic benefits
6. Environmental evaluation

Work to be done under the passenger rail component will be coordinated with the efforts of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, Wisconsin-Minnesota High Speed Rail Corridor Study, and the Milwaukee-Madison Corridor Study. In addition, the findings of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Passenger Rail Service will be incorporated in the State Rail Plan.

The freight rail component of the plan will have a policy focus, reflecting the recognition that the majority of Wisconsin's railroad system is owned and maintained by the private sector. The highway-rail crossing element will refine and/or build upon the statewide assessment of highway-rail crossing needs initially developed by the State Highway Plan. The State Rail Plan will become the rail component of the State's Connections 2030 Plan. (Wisconsin DOT)

#### **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 Grant 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.

The Town also has access to the WisDOT's Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), a comprehensive electronic database containing road-related data, forms, maps, reports, instructions and statute descriptions.

### **Section 3.5 Transportation Issues**

- The Town is way behind in maintenance and upgrade of road network. \$200,000/year budget doesn't go very far.
- How can the Town increase the availability of funds for road maintenance or improvements?
- Rural agriculture roads need to be maintained at a level adequate for truck and tractor passage.
- The functional class system needs to further divide the local roads by use.
- How can the Town increase or improve intergovernmental coordination of road maintenance?
- The development of a road master plan that includes maintenance schedules would be very useful.

### **Section 3.6 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### A. Goals:

1. Develop and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of Town residents.

#### B. Objectives:

1. Coordinate with the State, County and adjoining County and Town governments on all matters concerning transportation facilities and programs.
2. Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
3. Develop a road master plan to ensure existing and future public roads are to be built and maintained according to adequate design standards so as to avoid unnecessary Town costs and user inconvenience.
4. Investigate the possibility of rail service to potential users of the existing railroad line through the Town.
5. The Town needs sufficient funds for annual maintenance and improvement on existing Town roads.
6. Support the development of bicycle lanes on county trunk highways where bicycle and vehicle traffic warrant.
7. Explore the need to further divide the local road system into additional categories.

8. Consult with the Portage County Planning Department on the review of street proposals in planned subdivisions or lot splits.
9. Correct drainage problems interfering with road conditions.
10. Transportation options are available for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

C. Policies:

1. Work with the proper authorities on cleaning up clogged streams and ditches where overflows are disrupting road conditions and road grades.
2. The Town should pursue the installation of safety measures for the 90<sup>th</sup> Street Canadian National railroad crossing.
3. Work with Canadian National officials to assure adequate maintenance of rail properties and crossing and the development of rail access near Highway 54.
4. Regularly update and utilize the “PASER.” road surface management program.
5. Work with Portage and Wood Counties to provide transit service to the elderly and others in need of such services.
6. Town roads used primarily for agricultural and conservation land access should to be maintained at a level acceptable for truck and tractor passage.
7. Determine the feasibility of closing certain roads to winter traffic.
8. Review new developments to ensure appropriate road connectivity to the existing road network.
9. Explore options for funding of road maintenance.
10. The Town of Grant road ordinance is kept current to reflect changes in road construction technology.
11. Encourage Portage County to upgrade County Roads “W” and “F” and “U” north of Kellner to all weather roads (no weight limit).
12. Continued improvement and upgrading of un-surfaced roads to surfaced roads where appropriate and feasible.