

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 New Hope. 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 New Hope, 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, 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 consisted of a total of 67.48 miles of public roadway within the Town. State Highways total 1.39 miles; County Roads (Cty Rd) total 31.17 miles; and Town roads total 34.92 miles (WisDOT 2002).

1. Principal Arterials: There are no roads classified as principal arterials within the Town of New Hope.

2. Minor Arterials

State Highway 161, located along the southern border of the Town, is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. The maximum Average Daily Traffic volume (ADT) in 2002 for this section of Highway was 3,400 vehicles.

3. Major Collectors

County Road A and part of County Road Z are designated as major collectors. The ADT in 2002 for Cty Rd A north of Cty Rd Z was 3,160 vehicles per day, while the 2002 count south of Grayson Rd was 1,200. The 2002 count for Cty Rd Z, west of Cty Rd A, was 500 vehicles per day. Providing access to attractions such as schools, parks and airports is one set of criteria used in assigning major and minor collectors.

4. Minor Collectors

County Road OO and part of Cty Rds Z and ZZ are considered minor collectors. There is no ADT record for Cty Rd OO. Cty Rd Z, east of Cty Rd A, had a count of 320 vehicles per day in 2002 and Cty Rd ZZ had a count of 300 vehicles per day in the same year.

5. Local Streets

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

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 (Map 3.1).

There are two different segments of the Ice Age Trail in the Town of New Hope; one for bicycles and one for hiking. This bicycle route runs north to south through the Town, following Sunset Lake Road from the north, through Sunset Park, and then continuing south along Cty Rd T. The Portage County Chapter of the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation has also designated a number of routes within the County.

The portion of the Ice Age Hiking Trail that runs through the Town of New Hope is one of two completed segments in Portage County (the other being in the Towns of Lanark and Belmont). It starts at Cty Rd Z, between Sunset Lake Road and Cty Rd T, runs south across Krogwold Road, and then curves southeast between Severson and Skunk Lakes. From there it meanders east, across Cty Rd T and Stoltenberg Road, into Waupaca County.

C. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

There currently are no transit services for the elderly and disabled in the Town of New Hope. A future goal for the Town is to work with the County to provide this service.

D. Rail

There are no railroads running through the Town of New Hope.

E. Air Transportation Facilities

The two main airports that New Hope has access to are: the Central Wisconsin Airport, and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 30 miles northwest of New Hope 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.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located approximately 10 miles west of New Hope, on STH 66 in Stevens Point, and has two runways, one of which is 6,000 feet long. There are 37 private hangars at the airport. No passenger or freight service is available. Jet fuel and repair services are available for private aircraft.

Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class

F. Trucking

Most of the large truck traffic in the Town generally consists of logging, milk, and gravel trucks. 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 majority of truck traffic in rural Portage County (County Roads and local roads) comes from agricultural, non-metallic mining, and some logging operations.

G. Water Transportation

Navigable waterways in the Town of New Hope include the Tomorrow River, located in the southwestern portion of New Hope; Poncho Creek, located in the western part of the Town and flows into the Tomorrow River; and the Flume Creek, located in the northern part of the Town. These waterways are used for recreational purposes.

Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

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

There are no State or County roads identified in the Town for repair or maintenance as part of the WisDOT Highway Improvement Plan.

B. Jurisdictional Transfers

With the reconstruction of USH 10 to a 4-lane divided highway and its subsequent relocation, numerous jurisdictional transfers will occur in the area resulting in changes to the functional classification of certain segments and traffic flow through the southern portion of the Town. State Highway 161 from existing USH 10 to the northern Village of Nelsonville limits will be transferred from the State to the County and will be renamed Cty Rd Q. State Highway 161 will be rerouted along the northern Village border on Loberg Road and Cty Rd SS, eventually intersecting with the new USH 10. A new intersection will be constructed at the junction of Cty Rd ZZ, Highway 161, and the new Cty Rd Q to allow for a safer crossing of the new State Highway 161. Cty Rd Q northwest of the Village of Nelsonville, which runs through the Towns of New Hope and Stockton, will be transferred from Portage County to the individual Towns. The current Cty Rd A in the Town of Amherst, east of Nelsonville, will also be transferred from a County road to a Town road and will be rerouted east to existing Cty Rd T. The functional classification for many of these segments will most likely be altered from their current classifications. Traffic counts will have to be done once the realignment projects are complete to determine the new functional classification for these roadways.

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 Railroad Plans (SRP)

The rail component of the state's *Connections 2030 Plan* does not apply to New Hope due to a lack of rail facilities within the Town.

E. 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. These goals are consistent with Town recommendations.

Section 3.4 Transportation Related Programs

The Town of New Hope uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) road condition rating system to assess the physical condition of local roads. The Town began using this system in the fall of 2002, and it is being administered by the Town of New Hope Road Supervisor. A database of local road conditions was projected to be completed in 2003. 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 issues relating to transportation were raised through the planning process:

- Will existing road infrastructure be able to handle future milk, gravel, and logging trucks? (More truck traffic on ZZ)
- Traffic at Sunset Lake gets backed up during certain times of the year due to people parking in the road right of way. How can through traffic at Sunset Lake be better accommodated given the limited parking at the beach?
- How can the Town accommodate increased bike and pedestrian (with strollers) traffic?
- People want to drive fast to get to destinations. What can the Town do to ensure public safety through better enforcement of speed limits?
- How can the Town work with residents to address proper brush clearing along local roads to ensure public safety?

Section 3.6 Transportation Goals/Objectives/Policies

Goal 1: Provide a safe road network.

Objective 1.1: Work closely with County Sheriff's Dept. to achieve better enforcement of speed limits.

Policy 1.1.a: Communicate with the Portage County Sheriff's Department on a regular basis regarding road safety issues.

Objective 1.2: Brush is cleared in the road right of way to ensure public safety.

Policy 1.2.a: Brush maintenance along Town roads shall be consistent with the Town Roadside Vegetation Policy (Appendix G)

Goal 2: Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.

Objective 2.1: Continue to use the PASER or other transportation software systems to monitor and maintain roads.

Policy 2.1.a: Prioritize road maintenance projects in local road plan.

Policy 2.1.b: Proposals for new roads are reviewed by the Town Plan Commission

Policy 2.1.c: Consider creating a Town road ordinance.

Goal 3: Encourage public safety with regard to non-motorized transportation.

Objective 3.1: Provide a safe, human-powered transportation network where practicable.

Policy 3.1.a: Identify corridors that are heavily traveled by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Policy 3.1.b: Encourage the Portage County Highway Department to widen shoulders along designated bike and pedestrian corridors.

Goal 4: Transportation options are available for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Objective 4.1: Utilize County agencies to provide transportation services to elderly and disabled persons.