

## **CHAPTER 3      Transportation Element**

### **Section 3.1      Introduction**

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town of Plover is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens. 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, and minimize conflicts between transportation modes 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 the Town, 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. The functional classification of roads shown on the map (Map 3.1) are based on Wisconsin DOT information, while the text below depicting functional classes is based on the County's system of classification.

As of 2002, the local road system for Plover consists of a total of 103.6 miles of public roadway: Interstate 39 accounts for 8.5 miles; State Highway (STH) 54 - 9.5 miles; County Roads (Cty Rds) F, U, and HH - 4.06 miles; Town roads comprise the remaining 81.5 miles.

#### **1.    Principal Arterials**

Interstate 39/51 is a four-lane highway that is aligned in a north-south direction along the eastern portion of the Town (Map 3.1). According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the *average daily traffic volume* (ADT) reported in 2002 for Highway 39 between Cty Rd HH and Cty Rd B was 23,600 vehicles. The ADT between Cty Rd B and STH 54 was 16,900 vehicles, which then declined to 16,300 vehicles south of STH 54.

State Highway 54 runs southwest from the western border of the Village of Plover into the Town of Grant. The 2002 ADT for STH 54 west of County Road F was 13,200 vehicles, while the count was 14,400 vehicles east of County Road F. Traffic mobility and servicing major economic centers are major functions of this class of roads.

#### **2.    Minor Arterials**

State Highway 54, east of USH 39/51, is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. The ADT in 2002 for this section of highway was 5,800 vehicles.

### 3. Major Collectors

County Roads F, U, and HH, are designated as major collectors in the Town of Plover. The ADT in 2002 for Cty Rd F was 1,300 vehicles. 2002 ADT counts were not taken for Cty Rds F and HH in the Town. 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

Coolidge Avenue is the only road designated as a minor collector in the Town. The 2002 ADT count was 700 vehicles per day.

5. Local Streets The remaining roads are classified as local streets. Their primary function is land access.

## B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The Green Circle Trail is a collection of 13 continuous segments that wind through forests, along river and lake shores and through other natural areas and parts of the Stevens Point urban area to make up a unique trail that is over 30 miles in length. The completion of this trail was made possible through a cooperative effort of private, public and business interests that include donated easements on 25 private parcels of land. The trail is for non-motorized traffic only, however, some sections of the bike route are included on existing roadways. The Green Circle Trail can be accessed from Hoover Avenue, one mile north of STH 54.

The Tomorrow River State Trail currently is a 14 mile trail developed along an abandoned railroad grade. It begins in the Village of Plover and extends east into Waupaca County. The trail is surfaced with crushed limestone, which is packed to a smooth surface. It is open to bicyclists, hikers, joggers, and horseback riders in the spring, summer, and fall and to snowmobilers, skiers, and dog sledders during the winter.

The horse trail is a separate 9 mile trail, alongside the limestone trail, from Plover to Amherst Junction. Horseback riders and bicyclists are required to have either a state or county trail pass in order to use the trail. Trail passes are available at self registration stations along the trail or at the Portage County Parks office in Stevens Point. Currently, access to the trail can be obtained on Kennedy Avenue, north of Cty Rd B in eastern Plover.

## 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 Plover area through a busing and volunteer escort service. Bus rides are provided to mealsites, grocery shopping, senior center services, essential personal business, and adult day care. 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

The Canadian National Railroad operates a rail line, approximately six miles in length, in the Town of Plover, running southwest along STH 54 into the Town of Grant (Map 3.1). Approximately 25 to 30 trains travel through the Town each day, crossing the following roads: Coolidge, Monroe, and Hayes Avenues, 100<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Streets, Cty Rd F, and STH 54. These crossings are currently equipped with crossing lights, crossing arms, or stop signs.

**Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class**

#### E. Air Transportation Facilities

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

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 25 miles north of Plover 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 on 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. 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 Interstate 39, and STH 54 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are no designated truck routes through Town, 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 uses, sand and gravel pits, and some logging operations. 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 also can cause damage to road surfaces due to the extreme weight.

#### G. Water Transportation

The Wisconsin River is not used as a mode of transportation, even though it can be navigated from the DuBay Dam in northern Portage County to the Clark Street bridge in Stevens Point, and from the spillway below Cty Rd HH to the dam in Wisconsin Rapids. The river, which bounds the Town of Plover on its northwestern border, is used for recreational purposes.

The Little Plover River (located in the northeastern portion of the Town), Love Creek in the western part of the Town, and the Buena Vista Creek in the southern portion of the Town, are also used for recreational purposes.

### **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 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. Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020

The final SRP 2020, which is currently pending, 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 include six major components: Intercity passenger rail, Freight rail, Highway-rail crossings, Funding, Economic benefits, Environmental evaluation.

Work to be done under the passenger rail component will be coordinated with the efforts of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, the 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 Plover 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**

- How will the Town address long-term maintenance of rural roads?
- How can development along roads be properly elevated to maintain proper drainage?
- Roads in agriculture area are not wide enough to equipment
- How does the Town allow for private ownership of roads?
- To what extent will the Town provide for bike and pedestrian traffic along local roads?
- Is a sign ordinance needed to address aesthetics along local roadways?
- People walk on roads (Forest Dr. Subdivision) where there is higher traffic. To what extent should standards be in place to address safety concerns in newly built subdivisions? Should subdivision ordinance include language that requires developers to provide places for bike and pedestrian users?

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

A. Goal: Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.

B. Objectives:

1. Encourage the development of bike and pedestrian paths.
2. Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing road infrastructure.
3. Brush and vegetation in road right of ways is properly maintained.

C. Policies:

1. All newly developed roads are properly elevated to maintain proper drainage.
2. Drainage ditches along roadways must be maintained to ensure proper stormwater flow.
3. Continue to use PASER (or WISLR) system to evaluate road conditions throughout the Town.
4. In order for vehicles whose weight loads exceed local road limits to use local roads, permission must first be granted by the Town Board.
5. Trees and brush are cleared three feet beyond the outside ditch lines to maintain public safety.
6. Recommend the designation of a frontage/backage road corridor along the north side of Hwy 54 West. Commercial development is recommended to take place along that corridor.
7. Promote industrial uses along the rail corridor on the south side of Hwy 54.west.
8. Promote the use of the Tomorrow River and Green Circle Trails.
9. Consider the creation of a Town Road Ordinance.