

## **CHAPTER 3      Transportation Element**

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Stat.:

**Transportation element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

### **Section 3.1      Introduction**

Amherst's transportation network is a vital element of community development. Efficient economic growth depends on a transportation system capable of moving people, goods and services to, from and within the Village. Different types and intensities of development impose varied demands on streets and highways. Conversely, new transportation facilities significantly affect the development potential of adjacent land. The coordination of land use and transportation improvements can result in a more pleasant community functioning with greater efficiency, at less expense.

Current transportation issues center around the reconstruction of USH 10 from two lanes to a four-lane divided highway and its relocation west of the Village of Amherst (Map 3.1). Jurisdictional transfers and other changes resulting from the relocation of USH 10 are detailed in section 3.3.

### **Section 3.2      Transportation Facility Inventory**

As of 2004, street, highway and railroad rights-of-way occupy 131 acres or nearly 16% of the Village's total land area.

#### **A.      Streets and Highways**

Amherst's street and highway system is designed and maintained so that each facility performs a function relative to the overall transportation network. 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.

##### **1.      Principal Arterials**

The only principal arterial in the Village of Amherst is USH 10, which crosses the southern tip of the Village. This particular section of USH 10 was constructed in 2004,

and there is currently no traffic data for this facility. The former route of USH 10 (now County Road KK) was itself built as a bypass in 1968 to replace the segment that passed through the Village on Main Street. Travel mobility was the major function of this road. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the average daily traffic volume (ADT) in 2002 on USH 10 was 8,800 vehicles just south of Cty Rd B and 9,400 vehicles just south of Main Street.

## 2. Major Collectors

Amherst's major collectors currently include Cty Rd B (Wilson and Mill Streets) and Cty Rd A (Main and Pond Streets). These two roadways are excellent examples of the compromise function of collectors. Both move traffic through the Village and provide direct access to a variety of land uses. (See jurisdictional transfer information below.)

The ADT in 2002 on Cty Rd B was 3,000 vehicles west of Main Street, 2,800 vehicles east of Main Street and 1,300 vehicles east of High Street. The ADT on Cty Rd A in 2002 was 1,800 vehicles south on Main Street and 600 vehicles north on Pond Street.

Additional concerns associated with the Villages major collectors have been identified:

- The narrow passageways under the railroad overpasses on Wilson and Main Streets constitute a potential hazard to traffic. It is unlikely that these underpass openings will be enlarged unless there is a significant increase in traffic on Cty Rd's A and B. If these structures would need to be replaced or modified, larger openings would be provided.
- The driving surface on Cty Rd B, in the area of the railroad overpass, has been in poor condition in the past. This section of road has been repaired and will be updated prior to its transfer as a County Road to the Village of Amherst.

## 3. Minor Collectors

The only minor collector in the Village is located on Main Street, between Wilson and School Streets. This segment serves businesses located in the northern part of the central business district (CBD), as well as the Tomorrow River School District facilities, Lettie Jensen Library, and Jensen Community Center. A greater emphasis is placed on land access than on traffic mobility; this is the primary reason why it has been designated as a minor collector. The ADT on this section of Main Street was 1,100 vehicles in 2002.

## 4. Local Streets

The remaining streets in Amherst provide access to individual residences and are classified as local streets.

There is a need to provide access to the northeast and northwest quadrants of the Village for future growth. The present street layout of the Oakview Meadow Subdivision is designed to accommodate future residential growth in the northeast quadrant of the Village. Future roadways in this area may also connect with Cty Rd B. Access to the northwest quadrant of the Village will most likely come from Cty Rd KK, as Depot Street is considered inadequate to serve the entire quadrant. Access from Cty Rd KK to this area of the Village will require cooperation with the Town of Amherst.

Map 3.1 – Functional Classification For Amherst Streets

## B. Rail Transportation

Rail freight service is provided to Amherst by the Canadian National Rail Line. Rail transportation has the potential to provide a major service to local business and industry; however, it also causes noise, safety hazards and blighted neighborhood conditions. The railroad is elevated through most of Amherst, creating a barrier to movement within the Village. Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets are the only Village streets that pass under the railroad grade. The railroad bridges are showing signs of age. The overpass on Cty Rd A (Main Street) has an arched opening, which is approximately 14 feet in height at its center. Most semi-trailers can clear this overpass, although care must be taken to drive through the center of the opening. The overpass on Cty Rd B (Wilson Street) is approximately 10.5 feet in height and is too small for semi-trailer traffic. The vertical facing on the bridges is deteriorating, which can result in pieces of concrete falling onto the roadway and creating a safety hazard. The overpass on Main Street was recently refurbished to correct this problem, leaving Wilson and Lincoln Streets' overpasses to be refurbished. If the three railroad overpasses ever require major reconstruction, the openings should be enlarged to mitigate safety and traffic volume concerns.

The railroad spur that ran from Wilson Street to Pond Street is no longer in service and the tracks have been removed. The Village owns much of the old rail right-of-way. The part of the spur that extends from Wilson to Main Street should be retained for storm water management. A walkway is planned for the portion from Main Street to Pond Street.

Rail currently services two businesses in Amherst, the Tomorrow Valley Cooperative and Blenker Companies. However, there is potential within the Village to further develop rail related business in the Business Park. This would be contingent upon other necessary public improvements such as the extension of streets, sewer and water. The new Cty Rd A and B will be bridged over the tracks in the southeast portion of the Village further facilitating access to the industrial park.

## C. Air Transportation Facilities

The three main airports that serve the Village are: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Waupaca Municipal Airport, and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport, which is located 32 miles northwest of Amherst on I-39 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 Waupaca Municipal Airport is located 13 miles east of Amherst on USH 10 and has two runways. The airport is open to the public, however, there is no passenger service available.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located 14 miles west of Amherst on State Highway 66 and I-39, and has two runways, one of which is 6,000 feet long. There are 37 private hangers at the airport. No passenger service is available. Jet fuel and repair services are available for private aircraft.

## D. Bridges

There are two bridges located in the Village of Amherst. Both bridges are currently located on County Roads and are maintained by Portage County; however, as a result of jurisdictional transfers, discussed in section 3.3 below, the Village will become responsible for any future

maintenance. The bridges are currently inspected every other year by County Highway Department.

The Mill Street bridge is a 46.3 foot, spandrel arch bridge constructed in 1907. The most recent inspection report (October of 2002) reveals that no structural repairs have been made since this bridge was built. The bridge is in fair condition. The sufficiency rating for the bridge is 59.8, which is scaled out of 100. If the sufficiency rating drops below 50 then the bridge is eligible for federal funding which will pay up to 80% of the replacement cost. Replacement is expected in the next 10 years.

The Washington Street bridge is a 33.9 foot, girder deck bridge constructed in 1938. According to the 2002 inspection report, spot painting was done on the bearings to alleviate rust problems. The sufficiency rating for the bridge is 84.1 out of 100. The bridge is in fair to good condition. Replacement is not expected over the next 20-year planning period.

#### E. Parking

There are a number of parking facilities available in the Central Business District (CBD). The Village provides for horse parking needs in an area located across from the Village Hall, behind the Village garage. There is also a vehicle parking area adjacent to Nelson Park, behind the Village Hall, which is hard surfaced and frequently used. In addition, hard surface parking is available to downtown shoppers in the Peace Lutheran Church lot. This parking facility was constructed through mutual cooperation of the Village Board and Peace Lutheran Church. The International Bank maintains a hard surface parking facility on Wilson Street, as does the Jungers Holly Funeral Home, located on Main Street, adjacent to Nelson Park. The Village of Amherst will ensure adequate availability of parking through review of proposed development projects.

#### F. Sidewalks

The Village has a limited sidewalk system (Map 3.2). Much of the sidewalk that exists serves the Tomorrow River School facilities, Lettie Jensen Library and CBD. As population and traffic volumes increase, the lack of sidewalks could create safety hazards to local pedestrians. The Village should consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance which will encourage the development of sidewalks in desired locations rather than on all new streets. This could be accomplished through the use of a sidewalk assessment which would go into a general fund for sidewalk development. The Village utilizes a 5-year sidewalk development plan in which the following new sidewalk construction projects are laid out:

- East side of Main Street across the dam to Pond Street, and from Mill St. to McKinley St.
- North side of McKinley St.
- West side of McKinley Ct.
- South side of Washington from Main St. to Dicallen St.
- North side of Wake Island Dr.
- East side of Christy St.

Additionally, sidewalks may be constructed on the following roadways:

- Dicallen St.
- Edge Rd. along with the improvements to new Cty Rd A and B

When curbs or sidewalks within five feet of a legal crosswalk are installed or repaired, handicap ramps should be provided as called for by Wisconsin State Statutes (ss. 66.0909).

Map - 3.2 Sidewalks and Trails

## G. Trails

The Tomorrow River State Trail runs approximately a half mile to the north of the Village of Amherst along an abandoned railroad grade (Map 3.2). It currently extends for 14 miles starting in the Village of Plover and ending at the Waupaca County community of Scandinavia. There is a small break in the trail in Amherst Junction, as it stops at County Road Q and starts again at the eastern boundary of Amherst Junction. Future plans call for a bridge across Cty Rd KK to allow for an uninterrupted trail. The trail is surfaced with crushed limestone and is open to bicyclists, hikers and joggers during the summer. A separate 9-mile horse trail is located alongside the limestone trail from the Village of Plover to the Village of Amherst Junction. Parking and access to the trail is available at Cate Park approximately a half mile north of the Village of Amherst. Paved shoulder has been installed along Pond Street, from Mill Street north to the Cate Park trail head, to provide safer pedestrian and bike access to the Tomorrow River State Trail.

The Ice Age Bicycle Trail runs north and south along the glaciated areas of eastern Portage County for a total of 48 miles. The trail was designed specifically for bicyclists as it runs along portions of major roadways. The Trail is currently routed through the Village of Amherst because the crossing of Cty Rd KK is considered relatively safe at Packer Avenue. However, future plans call for an overpass of Cty Rd KK for the Tomorrow River Trail. It is possible that the Ice Age Bicycle route will then be altered to follow the Tomorrow River Trail north of Amherst, thereby bypassing the Village.

## H. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Village generally consists of through traffic on USH 10 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There is a large trucking firm located west of the Village on Cty Rd B in the Town of Amherst. Truck traffic patterns are naturally constrained by the railroad bridges on Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets. Semi traffic patterns should be monitored and evaluated as the new USH 10 and County Road re-alignment is completed. Designated truck routes may become necessary if semi traffic through the Village becomes a problem.

## I. Transit

The Portage County Department on Aging provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities in the Village of Amherst 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 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Volunteer drivers may also be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or are 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.

## **Section 3.3 Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans**

### A. Highway 10 Relocation

With the reconstruction of USH 10 to a 4-lane divided highway and its subsequent relocation (Map 3.1), numerous jurisdictional transfers will occur, resulting in changes to the functional classification of certain segments and traffic flow through the Village of Amherst.

The new USH 10, which opened in the fall of 2004, is located almost entirely outside of the Village of Amherst. There is an interchange at Cty Rd B west of the Village, where the on/off ramp will provide access to the 4-lane highway for the Villages of Amherst and Amherst

Junction. Cty Rd B will be rerouted around the Village of Amherst along the new USH 10 alignment to another new interchange at Cty Rd A, where a new County Road will be constructed northeast towards Edge Road. The existing Cty Rd A will be cul-de-saced on the north side of the new interchange and will be rerouted along with Cty Rd B towards Edge Road, and then along Cty Rd T towards Highway 161. New USH 10 realigns with the existing US Highway 10 just east of County Road A.

Numerous jurisdictional transfers will directly affect the Village of Amherst. The former US Highway 10 from Lake Drive south to Cty Rd A has been transferred from the State to Portage County and renamed Cty Rd KK. Inside the Village limits: Cty Rd B (Wilson and Mill Streets), Cty Rd A (Main and Pond Streets) and Cty Rd V (Washington Street) will be transferred from the County to the Village of Amherst. Outside the Village limits: Cty Rd A from Highway 161 south to the Village of Amherst boundary line, and Cty Rd B from the new USH 10 interchange east to the Village of Amherst boundary line will be transferred from the County to the Town of Amherst. The functional classification for these segments will most likely be downgraded from their current classifications. Traffic counts will have to be done once the realignment project is complete to determine the new functional classifications.

#### B. Future Road Improvements

As a result of the new USH 10 alignment and subsequent jurisdictional transfers the following road improvements are planned:

- Cty Rd B and A will be relocated to a newly constructed roadway starting at the Cty Rd A interchange and head northeast through the Village to Edge Road. The new Cty Rd A and B will be the through road where it intersects Mill Street.
- The curve of the new Cty Rd A and B located at the northeastern Village limits will be altered to provide improved traffic mobility.
- Lorry Street will run parallel to and on the north side of existing USH 10 from the new Cty Rd A and B to Buchholz Road.
- Infrastructure within the Business Park

#### C. Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

Current plans exist for a bridge across Cty Rd KK to allow for the unencumbered continuation of the Tomorrow River State Trail.

#### D. 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.

#### E. 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.

## F. State Railroad Plans

The final State Railroad Plan (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 contain 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, 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 is scheduled for completion in 2005 (Wisconsin DOT).

### **Section 3.4 Transportation Conclusions**

- A. Rail traffic will continue to increase in speed and volume. Efforts are needed to improve viaduct appearances, railway safety, and emergency response capabilities.

### **Section 3.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies**

A transportation network capable of moving people and goods to, from and within the Village of Amherst is an essential element in the community development process. Such a network consists of highway and non-highway modes of transportation.

The upgrade of USH 10 to a four-lane facility and its relocation will directly affect the future growth of Amherst. USH 10 is a major east/west highway, connecting the Fox Valley and Oshkosh areas to the Stevens Point urban area and Interstate Highway 39. Much of the economic growth that has taken place in the Amherst area can be attributed to the Village's location along USH 10. The potential for additional economic growth exists in the Amherst area and that potential is only enhanced by the upgrading of USH 10.

The existence of a railroad that bisects the Village presents additional economic development opportunities for Amherst. The railroad is elevated through a majority of the Village, with only three streets (Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets) passing under the railroad grade. Problems such as noise and safety, however, will continually need to be addressed.

A. Goal

1. To provide a transportation system capable of delivering goods and services to and from the community while providing for efficient movement of traffic.

B. Objectives

1. Provide a transportation system that allows for safe and efficient movement of motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the Village of Amherst.
2. Provide and maintain adequate and convenient public parking facilities.
3. Work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department to minimize negative effects while maximizing benefits of an upgraded, four-lane USH 10.
4. Ensure that all transportation improvements are designed to minimize costs to residents.
5. Develop an area-wide transportation planning approach.
6. Utilize and update existing transportation related plans including the sidewalk plan.
7. Encourage and accommodate human-powered transportation options.
8. Decisions regarding transportation should be consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

C. Policies

1. In anticipation of future development, street facilities needed to handle projected traffic should be identified on the official street map of the Village of Amherst.
2. Maintain and promote effective regulations that ensure future development, including facilities for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic.
3. Bicycle routes should be developed along collector and local streets for those wishing to use bicycles as a mode of transportation.
4. Incorporate the use of sidewalks in strategic locations to maximize pedestrian connectivity in the Village.
5. Encourage patronage of Village businesses by those using the Tomorrow River State Trail.
6. Transportation options are provided for transit dependent persons through the Portage County Department on Aging.
7. Work with appropriate corporations and state and local agencies to create community response and evacuation plans in the event of a railroad or highway disaster.
8. Work with appropriate corporations and state and local agencies to improve the appearance of the railroad viaducts within the Village of Amherst.