

3 TRANSPORTATION

3.1 Transportation Chapter Purpose and Contents

This element includes a brief summary of existing transportation conditions followed by a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations to guide the future development of various modes of transportation and facilities development throughout Waushara County.

This element includes policies that local governmental units should explore to promote the development of transportation facilities and programs that enhance mobility for all income levels, age groups, and persons with special needs.

Recommendations contained within this element were determined through the public participation process and review of the following documents and plans:

- *STH 21 Corridor Study Map (July 2001)*
- *WisDOT Connections 2030 Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan (Draft November 2008)*
- *Coordinated Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Plan (2006/2008)*
- *WisDOT 2008-2013 Six-Year Highway Improvement Program (March 2008)*

3.2 Summary of Existing Transportation Conditions

Waushara County's roadway network is comprised of local roads and highways. Interstate 39, found in the western part of Waushara County, provides north-south vehicular movement through the center of the state, while STH 21, another popular transportation corridor traverses east-west through the county, providing access from Oshkosh to I-39, I-90/I-94 and the western part of the state. Although private vehicles are the primary mode of transportation in Waushara County, there are several biking and pedestrian opportunities available to the residents and visitors.

The following section identifies key transportation conditions throughout Waushara County. A complete listing of transportation information, including references to regional and state plans, can be located in the *Waushara County Comprehensive Plan Volume Two: Existing Conditions Report*.

Streets and Highways

- The entire transportation network in Waushara County contains 1,331 miles of local roads, county highways, interstate and state highways. County highways comprise about one quarter (25.1%) of this network.
- There are two principal arterials in Waushara County. I-39, rural interstate, provides north-south linkage between the south central part of the state, Madison and Beloit, and the north central part of the state, Wausau and northern Wisconsin. STH 21, rural principal arterial – other, provides for east-west movement between Oshkosh and I-39, I-90/I-94 and the western side of the state.
- There are three minor arterials within Waushara County: STH 73, STH 49 and STH 22.
- Most of the county highways within Waushara County are classified as either major or minor collectors.
- Roughly half (51.7% or 172.21 miles) of the county roads are in excellent to very good condition and require little maintenance.

Other Transportation Modes

- WisDOT lists two roads in Waushara County in the Rustic Roads program: Rustic Road 48 (26th Road in the Town of Saxeville) and Rustic Road 102 (7th Ave. and Cumberland Dr. in the Town of Richford).

- There are several designated truck routes within Waushara County: I-39, STH 21, STH 73, STH 22, STH 49 and STH 152.
- There are two major freight corridors passing through Waushara County. The Cranberry Country Corridor (STH 21) and the Wisconsin River Corridor (I-39/US 51).
- Rail service to Waushara County was discontinued several decades ago.
- There are no commercial ports in Waushara County. Several municipalities and Waushara County operate recreational boat facilities throughout the county.
- Waushara County has established an interconnected system of bicycle routes throughout the county. Routes are delineated in the “Waushara County Bike Routes” guide developed by the Waushara County Parks Department.
- There are four airports convenient to area residents that provide scheduled commercial air service. These include: Central Wisconsin Regional Airport in Mosinee, Outagamie County Regional Airport in Appleton, Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, and Austin Straubel Airport in Green Bay.
- Two Basic Utility airport facilities are located in Waushara County: the Wautoma Municipal Airport and the Wild Rose Idlewild Airport.
- There is no scheduled bus service within the county; however, there are specialized public transportation services available through the Waushara County Aging & Disability Resource Center.

Current and Future Transportation Projects:

County Highways

- CTH E Pine River Bridge Rehabilitation Design & Construction (2009 – 2012)
- CTH XX Fox River Bridge Rehabilitation Design (2009 – 2012)

State Highways¹

- STH 21 roadway maintenance in C. Wautoma along Cambridge Street (2010-2013)
- STH 49 replace bridge to current standards between Aurora and Waupaca (2010-2013)
- STH 49 mill and overlay 10 miles of existing driving lanes and pave the shoulders between Poy Sippi and Fremont (2010-2013)
- STH 73 roadway maintenance on 7 miles of roadway between Princeton and Wautoma (2010-2013)
- STH 73 mill and overlay 14.5 miles of roadway between Wautoma and Plainfield (2010-2013)

3.3 Transportation Issues and Opportunities Identified Through the Planning Process

A number of issues were identified through the public participation process that are subjective in nature. These include perceptions about current transportation facilities or the ability of current transportation networks to adequately meet the needs of residents. These opinions are not easily quantified, but are necessary for determining strategies for improvement or rehabilitation of transportation resources within Waushara County. A consolidated list of challenges identified during this process is described below.

Bicycling

Waushara County has established a system of bicycle routes throughout the County. The routes use a combination of county highways and local roads. The routes exist as loops that emanate and terminate at population centers. These routes, which are mapped but not signed, would be enhanced through

¹ WISDOT 2008-2013 Six-Year Highway Improvement Program

better interconnectivity and directional signage. On-street routes can be limiting to bicyclists of varying abilities so a series of off-road accommodations that link to a variety of key destinations may augment the entire system and enhance mobility for all users. Off-road facilities also allow for various types of exercise and recreation activities and may increase the comfort level of individuals who wish to bicycle to key destinations.

Road Maintenance

Some representatives in unincorporated areas talked about the difficulty to maintain the quality of town roads due to the lack of adequate funding. Providing services can place a large burden on communities with small budgets and limited taxing authority. Forecasting a road budget has also been difficult in some communities.

Private Roads

In some areas of the county, the development of private roads is common. Unfortunately, the design of these private facilities does not always conform to expectations. Some of the roads make it difficult for emergency and maintenance vehicles to operate, and many towns have policies against plowing private roads which can lead to complaints. There are also some instances of private roads being abandoned or given to the local traffic authority, but these facilities can be denied public ownership due to a variety of reasons including maintenance concerns.

State Highways

State and interstate highways provide important connections to area communities, businesses, and resources. For this reason, they can be a boon to local economic development efforts. At the same time, some state highways are also designated truck routes, and bring higher volumes of traffic traveling at high rates of speed. Access to a state or interstate highway is limited in order to increase the safety for vehicles operating on these facilities. How communities control access and land use along and near highways can have a large impact on the entire community and there are differences of opinion on how lands adjacent to highways should be managed.

Heavy Vehicle Traffic

Designated truck routes in Waushara County are located along the state highway system. Specifically, delineated truck routes are on state highways 21, 73, 22, 49, 152, and I-39. The county highway system is a vital resource for intercommunity travel, and it gets utilized by heavy vehicles on occasion. The increase of truck traffic on some local roads has caused some local concern due to additional noise, traffic volume, and wear and tear on these vital roads. Safety concerns have also arisen.

Regional Transportation Plans

State highway planning, performed by WisDOT, may occur for STH 21 in the 2014-2019 period. This corridor planning would include the entire segment of STH 21 through Waushara County. Proposed improvements along STH 21 include construction of passing lanes near Redgranite/Lohrville and Wautoma, and bicycle and pedestrian connections near these same municipalities. Because changes in any one section can have an impact on the entire corridor, Waushara County needs to keep vigilant of proposed improvements or access restrictions that may alter the character of the region.

3.4 Transportation Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

The following section identifies goals, objectives, and recommendations concerning transportation facilities and programs in Waushara County. The goals and objectives identify what should be accomplished, whereas the recommendations focus on identifying the action necessary to achieve the goals and objectives. In many cases, existing goals, priorities, or actions cited in state or regional plans have been included to enhance mobility options for a range of transportation users.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations listed are grouped by transportation mode to enable decision-makers to locate specific directives more easily.

Goal 3.1 – Airports: Continue or increase services and infrastructure projects to support growth in the air industry.

Objectives

- a. Support realistic plans for economic development in air services.
- b. Address potential land use conflicts as they arise.

Recommendations

- 3.1.1 Support cooperation and intergovernmental coordination between governments and the airport board to minimize the severity of noise disturbance and other nuisances.
- 3.1.2 Support continued use of airport zoning tools (height restrictions, etc) to enable airport expansions if the market dictates.
- 3.1.3 Ensure the Wautoma Municipal Airport continues to serve the general aviation needs of the community for the foreseeable future, and support realistic plans for regional service.

Goal 3.2 – State Highways: Balance preservation of rural lands and maintenance of existing infrastructure to ensure user efficiency and mobility throughout Waushara County.

Objectives

- a. Improve traffic movements along designated corridors.
- b. Preserve rural viewsheds along state highways that identify and separate entries to urbanized communities and the rural countryside.
- c. Preserve local access to the state highway system.

Recommendations

- 3.2.1 Support the recommendations of the State's Access Management Plan.
- 3.2.2 Promote cooperative planning processes with WisDOT to ensure that needs and concerns of local communities are addressed.
- 3.2.3 Identify and map rural viewshed corridors for protection and ensure that highway development does not fragment or destroy valuable agricultural or natural landscapes.
- 3.2.4 Work with state officials to ensure that local access from local roadways, or county highways, to state highways is maintained to the greatest extent practicable.
- 3.2.5 Ensure that the negative effects of sprawl development on the countywide transportation system are minimized by encouraging new development to locate where adequate services and facilities exist.
- 3.2.6 Encourage intergovernmental cooperation to ensure that the regional transportation network links economic centers and efficiently moves people and freight throughout the region.

Goal 3.3 – Public Transportation: Increase regional coordination for public transportation to enhance mobility for all elderly and special needs populations.

Objectives

- a. Address the service needs and gaps outlined in the 2008 Waushara County Specialized Transportation Coordination Action Plan.
- b. Provide resources to interested persons about how they can access or support public transportation services.
- c. Increase the capacity of services to meet actual demand.

Recommendations

- 3.3.1 Provide support for the development of partnerships with private agencies/businesses to expand marketing efforts for volunteer programs and program awareness.
- 3.3.2 Support efforts to obtain additional funding including public/private partnerships to address the lack of weekend and evening or holiday service for public transportation.
- 3.3.3 Continue to provide support through the Waushara County Aging & Disability Resource Center for public transportation service coordination. Replicate successes, like transportation services for medical appointments, which are highly utilized.
- 3.3.4 Identify funding opportunities to support the development of public transportation for social and employment trips. Consider applying for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and 5311 federal grants to enable programming.
- 3.3.5 Coordinate with health care agencies for public transportation services when patients are released. This may include identifying a pool of drivers, through the volunteer driver program, to provide transportation services at irregular hours.
- 3.3.6 WisDOT is recommending a park and ride lot near the STH 21 and STH 49 intersection in the long-term period (2020-2030) within Connections 2030. Plan for additional lots at major intersections including STH 73/STH 21 and I-39/STH 21 or I-39/STH 73.
- 3.3.7 Work with local school districts and other bus providers to identify opportunities for utilizing buses that could be used for paratransit or work-related trips when they are not needed for school transportation.
- 3.3.8 Support continued shared-ride taxi services, such as those in Berlin, to increase local transportation options.
- 3.3.9 Support statewide efforts to establish intercity bus services between Madison and Wausau. This would include developing a stop at the intersection of I-39 and STH 21 to provide expanded transportation services to Waushara County community members.

Goal 3.4 – County and Local Roads: Support the development of an integrated transportation system that is safe, economical, and convenient.

Objectives

- a. Encourage joint construction and maintenance agreements between traffic authorities.
- b. Promote joint planning efforts especially between adjacent communities.

- c. Accommodate vehicles of all types, including bicycles and horse-drawn carriages, whenever practicable.

Recommendations

- 3.4.1 Encourage municipalities to draft a formal agreement for shared road construction and maintenance activities. This agreement should be clear and subject to negotiation on a yearly basis and made available to interested parties.
- 3.4.2 Collaborate on transportation system improvements lead by WisDOT. Facilitate discussions between local-level and state-level entities to address transportation needs and issues.
- 3.4.3 Support the maintenance of the countywide bike route network. Consider an expansion of facilities based on user needs. This may include delineating bike routes that can be used for transportation as well as recreation functions.
- 3.4.4 Support the development of adequate shoulders to facilitate travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, and carriage drivers where appropriate.
- 3.4.5 Continue to review the highways under the county’s jurisdiction based on safety, level of service, and pavement condition criteria on an annual basis. Maintain consistent monitoring and recoding of the county highway system to identify, reduce, and minimize deficiencies within the system.
- 3.4.6 Road development and new driveway accesses on active agricultural land should be limited to the fullest extent possible. When new roads are required, minimize the use of dead end roads and cul-de-sacs whenever possible. New driveways shall continue to be regulated to ensure sufficient emergency vehicle access and to maintain safe driveway spacing standards.
- 3.4.7 Maintain and continue the balance between transportation and the environment through efficient and consistent transportation and land use planning.
- 3.4.8 Encourage towns to discourage development that is only served by private roads and encourage any new and existing private roads be built and maintained to local standards. Consider encouraging local fire districts to mail property owners a notice if their driveway or private road will prevent access to emergency vehicles.
- 3.4.9 Encourage all levels of government to utilize a formal capital improvements program (CIP) to establish appropriate funding levels. The plan should forecast capital improvements over a 3-5 year period. Annual updates of the CIP are recommended to better assess any necessary changes to the program.

Goal 3.5 – Bicycles and Pedestrians: Support continued efforts to enhance accommodations, linkages, and accessibility within the transportation network for non-motorized transportation.

Objectives

- a. Provide local routes in the Waushara County Bike Routes guide that are safe, convenient, and well-connected throughout the County.
- b. Ensure that alternative modes of transportation to the automobile exist and mobility options are efficient.

Recommendations

- 3.5.1 Support WisDOT's plans to provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along STH 21.
- 3.5.2 Provide safe and adequate bicycle facilities for transportation and recreational bicycling trips. Consider developing a countywide committee to address bicycle facilities and to plan for education and advocacy activities.
- 3.5.3 Update and enhance wayfinding resources, such as the Waushara County Bike Routes guide, to promote local bicycling. Consider installing unique countywide signage to identify routes to system users.
- 3.5.4 Explore revision of county zoning regulations to require accommodation of bicycles, such as bicycle parking requirements, for non-residential uses.
- 3.5.5 Promote exploration of funding sources to develop off-street paths that connect people to places of employment and recreation. Sources include Stewardship funds through the Department of Natural Resources, or Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funds through WisDOT.
- 3.5.6 Encourage enforcement of crosswalk and bicycling regulations countywide to create realistic expectations among all roadway users that automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists will behave in a predictable manner to increase the safety of the transportation network for all users.
- 3.5.7 Encourage the provision of bicycle or pedestrian facilities within new subdivisions to allow for non-motorized circulation and inter- as well as intra-neighborhood access and promote installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities when existing roadways are reconstructed.