

CHAPTER 3 Transportation Element

66.1001(2)(c) Wisconsin Statutes:

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

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

Functional classification is the process by which highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. Roads and highways in the Town's transportation network are officially classified under the rural functional classification system using the Functional Classification Criteria, last updated by the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in April 2013. The criterion used in determining rural functional classification includes population service, land use service, spacing, and average daily traffic (ADT). Routes are classified through mapping that is ultimately adopted by the Portage County Highway Committee.

As of 2017, the local road system consisted of a total of 70.84 miles of public roadway within the Town. State Highways (STH) total 5.50 miles; County Roads (Cty Rd) total 29.36 miles; and Town roads total 35.98 miles (WisDOT 2016).

WisDOT conducts traffic counts for some roadways within the Town. These counts, reported as the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), represent an estimate of the number of vehicles traveling along a given point on a highway on an average day in the year. The AADT is a short-term count (usually 48 hours) and is collected over a three year cycle. The most current AADT count data is from 2011 (Map 3.1).

1. Rural Principal Arterials

There are no roads classified as rural principal arterials within the Town of New Hope.

2. Rural Minor Arterials

There are no roads classified as rural minor arterials within the Town of New Hope.

3. Rural Major Collectors

Rural major collectors provide intra-area travel mobility and land access within localized areas. In the Town of New Hope, STH 161, Cty Rd A, and part of Cty Rd Z are designated as rural major collectors. In 2011, the AADT for STH 161 was 2,400 vehicles per day west of Cty Rd A and 1,800 vehicles per day to east of Cty Rd A. The AADT for Cty Rd A north of Cty Rd Z was 840 vehicles per day, while the count south of Grayson Rd was 1,100. The count for Cty Rd Z, west of Cty Rd A, was 300 vehicles per day.

4. Rural Minor Collectors

Rural minor collectors provide intra-area travel and mobility within a localized area but with more emphasis on land access. Rural minor collectors in the Town of New Hope include Cty Rd ZZ and part of Cty Rds Z, T, and MM. In 2011, Cty Rd ZZ, south of Grayson Road, had an AADT of 370 vehicles per day. Cty Rd Z, east of Cty Rd A, had a count of 220 vehicles per day and Cty Rd T, south of Trout Creek Road, had a count of 290 vehicles per day in the same year. There was no AADT record available for Cty Rd MM.

5. Rural Local Roads

The remaining roadways are classified as local roads. 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, and is open for hiking, backpacking and snowshoeing. Many segments of the trail also support cross-country skiing. The trail, some of which passes through private lands, is for non-motorized traffic only (Map 3.1). The Trail occasionally coincides with state bike trails – biking is allowed on these sections only. Horseback riding is not permitted. Motorized vehicles are not permitted (with the exception of just a few segments that share state multi-use trails). The entire trail, while not yet complete, is about 1,200 miles long. More than 600 miles are yellow-blazed Ice Age Trail segments, and more than 500 miles are unmarked connecting routes that link the blazed segments.

There are two different segments of the Ice Age Trail in the Town of New Hope; one for bicycles and one for hiking. The 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 Trail Alliance 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 the New Hope Pines State Natural Area and runs southeast to Cty Rd Z, between Sunset Lake Road and Cty Rd T. From there, the trail continues south across Krogwold Road, and then curves southeast between Severson Lake (aka Budsberg Lake per the Department of Natural Resources) and Skunk Lake. From there it meanders east, across Cty Rd T and Stoltenberg Road, into Waupaca County.

Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class

C. Transportation Services for Seniors and Adults with Disabilities

The Portage County Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) offers a variety of transportation services for seniors (aged 60+) and adults with disabilities. The ADRC Nutrition Program serves noon lunches Monday through Friday at the Lincoln Center in Stevens Point and Monday, Wednesday, Friday at the Jensen Center in Amherst. Bus rides are provided to these dining sites. Bus service is also available for daily activities or appointments at the Adult Day and Lincoln Centers, and for weekly grocery shopping. Rides may also be provided to medical appointments and essential personal business appointments via the Volunteer Driver Escort Program or taxi escort service. Persons requiring such services call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. While there is no set fee for bus and volunteer escort rides, passengers are asked to make a donation. There is a set fee for taxi rides. Currently, there are no agreements for any scheduled senior/disabled transit service from the Town of New Hope to the Stevens Point area.

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 (CWA) is located approximately 30 miles northwest of New Hope on STH 153 and I-39 in Mosinee. This facility is owned and operated via joint agreements between Marathon and Portage Counties. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 classifies CWA as a Commercial Service Airport, which by definition supports regularly scheduled year-round commercial airline service, and supports the full range of general aviation activity to domestic and international destinations. Three airlines (Delta, United, and American Airlines) offer regular daily commuter and passenger service to Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago, providing connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service is also available with overnight delivery.

CWA has two large concrete runways (complete with taxi ways) capable of handling most planes. The main runway is 7,648 feet long by 150 feet wide. The secondary runway is 6,501 feet long and 150 feet wide. In 2014, the airport averaged 42 aircraft operations per day and was home to 25 home-based aircraft including two jets, 19 single-engine and four multi-engine airplanes. There are a limited number of hangars present which are leased. CWA ranks fifth out of Wisconsin's eight Commercial Service airports for total number of enplanements (passenger boarding's). Data collected for 2014 revealed 125,395 passenger boarding's at CWA during the course of the year.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport (STE) is located approximately 10 miles west of New Hope, on STH 66 and I-39 in Stevens Point. The airport is owned and operated by the City of Stevens Point. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 classifies the airport as a Large General Aviation airfield, which supports all general aviation aircraft that include daily operations of all types of business jets. These airports generally serve as domestic transportation centers and may support international business activity. Although there is no passenger service available, the airport plays a critical role in fostering business growth and economic development in the region by providing facilities for agricultural spraying, emergency medical flights, law enforcement, and pilot training.

STE has two runways. The primary runway is 6,028 feet long and 120 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,635 feet long and 75 feet wide. In 2014, the airport averaged 53 aircraft operations per day and was home to 41 home-based aircraft including one jet, 36 single-engine airplanes, two multi-engine airplanes, and two ultralight aircraft.

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 to the road surface from use of the roads during the thawing of the 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.

In April 2014, several changes were made to Wisconsin law directing the way agricultural vehicles and equipment operate on State, County, and Town roads. These vehicles, otherwise known as Implements of Husbandry (IOH) and Agricultural Commercial Motor Vehicles (Ag CMV's), are allowed to operate at 15% more weight. Agricultural weight limits are 23,000 pounds per axle or 92,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, depending on the number of axles and axle spacing, and subject to seasonal or special postings. Category B IOH (tillage, planting, and cultivation equipment) may be given an axle weight exemption on Town roads. The Town is authorized to issue a no-fee permit to allow an operator to exceed the statutory limits.

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 Program (2017-2022)

The Highway Improvement Program covers the state highway system which is administered and maintained by WisDOT. There are no State or County roads identified in the Town for repair or maintenance as part of the WisDOT Highway Improvement Plan.

B. Portage County Highway Department Seven-Year Reconstruction, Reconditioning and Resurfacing Plan (2017-2023)

The following projects are tentatively proposed as part of the Portage County Highway Department's seven-year Capital Improvement and Maintenance Plan, but are subject to change depending on funding availability and other factors including weather and staffing:

- 2021 – Mill and resurface Cty Rd Z, west of Cty Rd A to Edgewood Rd in the Town of Sharon
- 2022 – Reconstruction of Cty Rd T from Cty Rd MM to Locust Rd in the Town of Alban

C. Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030

The plan determines the number, location and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state’s aviation needs through 2030. 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 (Commercial Service) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Large General Aviation) are not projected to change through 2030.

D. Wisconsin Rail Plan (SRP) 2030

The rail component of the state’s *Connections 2030 Plan*, a long range, multi-modal transportation 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

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. These goals are consistent with Town recommendations.

2. Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

In 2014, Portage County adopted the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Plan identifies bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations for the Towns, Villages, and City of Stevens Point. The intended result is a single, unified network of safe and useful bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serves the transportation and recreational needs of all County residents and visitors. While not required, the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations may be used to direct resources in planning for future bicycle and pedestrian projects within the Town of New Hope.

A series of rural area bikeways are identified and recommended for implementation within the Plan. A bikeway is any facility that is open for the use of bicyclists. In rural areas, this includes facilities in any of the outlying Villages as well as in unincorporated Towns. The rural area bikeway network is designed to connect the Villages, provide connections into and out of the urban area (including the City of Stevens Point, the Villages of Plover, Whiting, and Park Ridge, and portions of adjacent towns), connect to County Parks and other recreational areas, and provide connections into neighboring counties. Table 3.1 shows the bikeway recommendations for the Town of New Hope.

Table 3.1: Town of New Hope Recommended Bikeways

Street	Bike Facility	From	To	Miles
County Road A	Bike Route	County Road Z	Flume Rd	1.73
County Road MM	Bike Route	County Road T	County Road T	1.57
County Road T	Bike Route	Town of Amherst	County Road MM	2.5
County Road T	Bike Route	County Road MM	Town of Alban	4.1
County Road Z	Bike Route	Town of Sharon	County Road A	2.53
County Road ZZ	Bike Route	County Road Z	State Highway 161	4.56
Rolling Hills Rd	Bike Route	Five Corners Rd	State Highway 161	1.64
State Highway 161	Bike Route	Rolling Hills Rd	County Road ZZ	0.32
Trout Creek Rd	Bike Route	County Road T	Waupaca County	2.29

Source: Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Section 3.4 Transportation Related Programs

The Town of New Hope uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) pavement 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 Supervisor. The PASER system can help prioritize road maintenance, calculate project costs, evaluate consequences of alternative budgets and project selection strategies.

Every two years, the Town is required to submit pavement ratings to WisDOT that represent the physical condition of roadways under its jurisdiction. The information becomes part of a statewide local road information database called the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). In addition to pavement ratings, WISLR stores roadway data such as surface type, surface width, traffic lanes, functional classification, and more.

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 agricultural vehicles, or milk, gravel, and logging trucks?
- 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 and Policies

Goal 1: Provide a safe road network.

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

Policy 1.1.a: Communicate with the Portage County Sheriff's Office 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.

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

Objective 2.1: Continue to use PASER and WISLR to rate and manage 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, non-motorized transportation network where practicable.

Policy 3.1.a: Consider the recommendations in the 2014 Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan when making decisions about maintenance and improvements to Town roads.

Policy 3.1.b: Coordinate or partner when possible with Portage County and other agencies or organizations to improve bike and pedestrian facilities within the Town.

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.