

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

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens of Carson. 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 the Town of Carson; 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 by the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation through mapping that is ultimately adopted by the Portage County Highway Committee. Criteria used in determining functional classification included traffic volumes (Average Daily Traffic volume), land use, population concentrations, and geographical limitations such as river crossings or restrictive topography.

As of January 1, 2013, there are 115.9 miles of roadway in the Town of Carson. The local road system consists of a total of a total of 61.4 miles of public roadway. United States Highway 10 accounted for 7.8 miles (Divided highway counted twice). State Highway 34 accounted for 6.3 miles. Of the remaining 101.8 miles, County Roads (County Roads) C, E, G, M, O, P, S and HH accounted for 40.4 miles, with local Town roads covering the final 61.4 miles.

1. Rural Principal Arterials

U.S. Highway 10 was rebuilt and opened to traffic in 2010 from the U.S. Interstate 39 east of the Wisconsin River, parallel to the northern Town boundary, to State Highway 34 in Junction City as a controlled access roadway. U.S. Highway 10 was opened to Marshfield Wisconsin from the State Highway 34 at Junction City in August of 2012. It is the main highway between the City of Stevens Point and the City of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

U.S. Highway 10, is aligned parallel to the northern Town boundary;. It enters the Town from the East from the Town of Dewey across the Wisconsin River and exits near the northwest corner at the Village of Milladore. There are no ADT's for U.S. Highway 10 at this time.

State Highway 34 running from Highway 10 on the north of the Town of Carson south toward Wisconsin Rapids in Wood County is currently designated as a Rural Principal arterial. The ADT count in 2012 for State Highway 34 south of U.S. Highway 10 was 2,500 vehicles.

2. Rural Minor Arterials

A section of road designated as State Highway 34 heading north from U.S. Highway 10 north Toward Marathon County is the only road currently designated as a rural minor arterial. The ADT count in 2002 for State Highway 34 south north of U.S. Highway 10 was 3,500 vehicles.

3. Rural Major Collectors

County Roads C, E, M, and P (east of County Road O) and County Roads P and G (west of County Road O), are designated as rural major collectors. These roads provide local access to facilities such as schools, parks and airports. ADT volumes have recently been recorded for some the County Roads (see Map 3.1). These ADT's were taken prior to the now opening of U.S. Highway 10 west of State Highway 34 toward Marshfield Wisconsin.

Map 3.1 Transportation Networks and Functional Class

4. Rural Minor Collectors

County Road S is the eastern most road running north and south and is also the border between Wood County and Portage County and is the sole minor collector within the Town. There are 550 ADT registered for this road just south of County Road P as P exits into Wood County.

5. Rural Local Roads

The remaining roadways are classified as local roads. Their primary function is land access.

B. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

The Portage County Department on Aging, Disability, and Resource Center provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Carson 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. Additional transit services are provided by the Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Stevens Point School District bus services for children.

Community Industries Corporation of Stevens Point employs handicapped individuals to perform various activities important to the local community. This organization does offer rides to work for its employees who have no other means of transportation.

C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

Pedestrian and bicycle linkages are an important part of the transportation network. Pedestrian use of roads in Carson is an important part of healthy living for many people as they use them for exercise and enjoyment of the natural environment, and of the Town. Bicycles are used for transportation, exercise, recreation, and commuting.

An attraction to cyclists directly north in the Town of Carson and Marathon County is The Mead Wildlife Area. It offers 70 miles of maintained hiking trails. In addition to these trails, a new two mile boardwalk hiking trail has been added that takes visitors through the three habitat types that are found in the Mead. This boardwalk is a wonderful opportunity for any visitor to get out and enjoy nature. The Mead also offers a 7 mile bicycle loop around Berkhahn Flowage. The bicycle trail is open from May 15 – September 1.

However, the roadways are available for biking and walking throughout the town. The County is currently in the process of creating a County wide bicycle-pedestrian plan. This process should help to identify which roads should receive focus as possible bicycle routes in the future. This will help the Town direct resources to bicycle-pedestrian facility upgrades when needed.

In June, 2009 the State of Wisconsin passed ACT 28 (State Statute 85.023) to provide assistance in the development of bicycle facilities. A second State Statute 75.02 (1), provides for the requirement to provide bicycle and pedestrian ways on certain types of Wisconsin roads “Except as provided in this chapter, the authority shall include bikeways and sidewalks in all new highway construction and reconstruction projects funded in whole or in part from state funds or federal funds

appropriated under s. 20.395 or 20.866, Stats.”. Only State Highway 34 currently meets the guidance provided for State Statute 85.023 in the Town of Carson.

D. Railroads

Two major rail lines are located in the Town of Carson. One line is oriented northeast to southwest and is aligned between State Highway 34 and County Road O. The other line has a northwest to southeast orientation and runs parallel to County Road P and County Road HH (Map 3.1). Approximately 25 to 30 trains in excess of 10,000 feet in length travel through the Town each day carrying materials such as: coal, potash, wood, and pulp products. The lines are owned by Canadian National Railroad.

The lengths of trains on these routes are to gradually increase. The new side track in Carson can accommodate trains as long as 10,500 feet long. Canadian National Railroad intends to have trains up to 3 miles in length (15,840 feet). This could significantly increase the wait times at rail intersections. It could also be a potential issue for emergency vehicles, especially if a vehicle should have to stop or reverse course while needing to reach a medical emergency or arrive at a hospital.

E. Air Transportation

The three main airports that serve the Town of Carson are: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport, and South Wood County Airport (Alexander Field).

The Central Wisconsin Airport is located approximately 20 miles northeast of the Town of Carson in Mosinee and is a full service, all weather regional airport offering around-the-clock service. This facility is owned and operated via joint agreements between Marathon and Portage Counties. Several 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 as well as passenger charters are also available.

This airport has two large concrete runways (complete with taxi ways) capable of handling most planes. Main runway is 7,648 feet long by 150 feet wide. Secondary runway is 6,501 feet long and 150 feet wide. There are 25 private/corporate aircraft based out of this facility, 2 of which are jet and 2 are multi-engine. There are a limited number of hangers present which are leased.

Beginning in the spring of 2011 CWA embarked on a 3 year \$25 million expansion project for terminal renovation and expansion aimed at increasing operational space, expanding the security check-point, relocating car rentals to their own facility and expanding current parking facilities. CWA was recently awarded a \$250,000 Small Community Air Service Development Program grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation that it will use to pursue new air service with a fourth carrier and improve and/or expand current air service with existing carriers. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 designates the Central Wisconsin Airport as an Air Carrier / Air Cargo Airfield. Additional services include flight training education, Airframe and engine maintenance, fuel service and several car rental companies.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located at the intersection of I-39 and State Highway 66 in Stevens Point and has two runways. The primary runway is 6,028 feet long and 120 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,642 feet long and 75 feet wide. There are 37 private hangers at the airport, fuel and repair services are available. No passenger service is available. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the airport as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

The airport is owned and operated by the City of Stevens Point. The airport averaged 101 aircraft operations per day in 2011. It is home to 42 home-based aircraft including four jets, 40

single-engine and one multi-engine propeller airplane. Travel Guard, Med Topics Unlimited, Sentry Insurance, Pegasus Aviation, Freight Runners, and the Rettler Corporation operate business aircraft from this location. Also, UPS operates daily flights providing essential cargo services to the local and regional community.

South Wood County Airport (Alexander Field), located on the south side of the City of Wisconsin Rapids, it is owned and operated by multiple south Wood County municipalities. Two asphalt runways are available which can accommodate many types of aircraft. The primary runway is 5,500 feet long by 100 feet wide, and the secondary one 3,640 feet long by 75 feet wide. A third turf-based runway exists for use by ultra lights. Hanger space is a combination of private and municipally owned involving 22 structures. It is home to 41 aircraft – 3 of which are multi-engine, and 8 are ultra lights. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the South Wood County Airport (Alexander Field) as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

There are no scheduled passenger or freight services although both can be contracted. Fuel services are available. Two corporate entities having 5 aircraft call Alexander Field home. Similar to the Stevens Point airport, the primary services provided by Alexander Field are for private and corporate aircraft.

F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on U.S. Highway 10, State Highway 34, and normal delivery services for area businesses. 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

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. The river, which bounds the Town of Carson on its eastern border, is used for recreational purposes.

The Town has two public boat launches that provide parking and access to the water through improved boat launches.

- The first is near the northeastern border of Carson under the U.S. Highway 10 Bridge on River Road in Carson and is a full service boat launch on the Wisconsin River.
- The second is the Bay shore Drive boat launch on County Road HH and is a full service boat launch on the Wisconsin River.
- There are 2 public primitive access points to the Wisconsin River in the Serafin Court subdivision between the two improved boat launches. These sites may have a small path to the waters edge in which to launch a small light water craft.

Section 3.3 Inventory of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

A. WisDOT Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2013-2017)

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation has no plans for major repairs or construction scheduled for Portage County at this time. This schedule includes existing or proposed highways, and existing or proposed bridges.

B. Portage County Highway Department Six-Year Improvement Plan (2013-2017)

2013 – The County Highway Department is slated to perform crack fill and chip seal maintenance on County Road C from the County Road O and C intersection east to into the Town of Linwood where County Road C intersects County Road HH.

2014 – The County Highway Department is not slated to perform road maintenance activities in the Town of Carson.

2015 – 2017, The County Highway Department is not slated to perform road maintenance activities in the town of Carson.

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 (Air Carrier/Air Cargo) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Transport/Corporate), and South Wood County Airport (Transport/Corporate airfield) are not projected to change through 2030.

D. Connections 2030- Wisconsin State Railroad Plans (SRP)

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has decided to include the State Rail Plan as a component of the State's Connections 2030 Plan, a long range, all-mode transportation plan. At this time, there is a draft Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 that has not been adopted by the State. At the time the Carson Comprehensive Plan was written, the state has only completed the Issues and Opportunities Report of the rail plan.

The primary issues in the report include four major areas: rail network issues, intercity passenger rail issues, safety issues, and legislative issues. Emerging issues identified in the report included commuter rail, locomotive horns at rail/road crossings, and proposals to reduce mercury emissions. Town officials should maintain awareness of the status of the Rail Plan as there is a rail corridor through the central portion of the Town.

E. State, Regional and Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2030

Overall plan goals are: to increase the level of bicycling in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycle and motor vehicles.

F. Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Portage County takes pride in being a great place to live, work, and play. Providing opportunities for citizens to integrate bicycling and walking into their everyday lives is essential to maintaining

the vibrancy of the community and enhancing quality of life. Better public health, increased economic activity, and cleaner air are a few of the benefits that can be realized by improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Whether for recreation or transportation, the demand for safe, comfortable, and convenient places to walk and bike is increasing. The Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian plan provides recommendations to improve conditions for bicycling and walking in Portage County and to coordinate efforts of the County, City of Stevens Point, and the numerous Villages and Towns. The official Plan is available at the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Office, located at 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, as well as the Department’s website.

While bike lanes may be warranted in Villages, town bicycle accommodations typically take the form of paved shoulders, shared roads, and shared-use paths. From a pedestrian perspective, providing sidewalks along rural roads in unincorporated areas is rarely cost-effective. In these areas, pedestrians will often use paved shoulders or shared-use paths. Below are definitions for more commonly utilized bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in towns.

- **Paved Shoulders**: Paved shoulders ranging in width from three feet to five feet, or wider, provide space for bicyclists on rural roads. The width of the paved shoulder should be based on traffic volumes, site lines, and anticipated bicycle use.
- **Bike Routes/Shared Roadways**: Lower volume roadways where potential motor vehicle conflicts are at a minimum, especially where motorists are passing in opposing directions with a bicyclist in the same section of the roadway. Generally, where motor vehicle counts are less than 750, conflicts are significantly reduced, although there are other factors that need to be considered.
- **Paths (or trails)**: Separated from streets and roads. They are often built in rural areas where railroads are abandoned or rail-banked, along rivers, in parks, and occasionally along roadways.

Figure 3.1 Recommended Bikeways in the Town of Carson

Street	Bike Facility	From	To	Miles
3rd Ave	Bike Route	County Road M	County Line Rd	1.01
County Road C	Paved Shoulder	County Road O	Elm Rd.	0.99
County Road E	Bike Route	U.S. Highway 10	County Road HH	1.35
County Road G	Bike Route	Robin Rd	County Road M	4.08
County Road HH W	Bike Route	Franks Ln	Town of Linwood	7.53
County Road M	Bike Route	County Road G	County Road O	2.01
County Road O	Bike Route	County Road M	County Line Rd	1.00
County Road P	Bike Route	Village of Junction City	County Road HH	1.64

Section 3.4 Transportation Related Programs

The Town of Carson 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

The following transportation issues were identified through the planning process:

- Rail
 - How can the Town accommodate another railroad crossing, between County Road O and County Road M to aid emergency services?
 - Deere Lane North has been redirected to allow for the Canadian National Railroad to create a side track that will allow a 10,500 foot long train to wait while other rail traffic travels northbound on the existing rails.
 - The moving of the Deere Lane crossing will open additional property to the possibility of development on two acre parcels.
- Highway
 - There is a need for longer turn lanes on County Road HH into subdivisions for safety issues.
 - How will the Town address the increased maintenance cost of local roads created through jurisdictional transfers?
- Bike
 - There may be a desire to extend the bike path to State Highway 34.
 - There may be the possibility for a path along the river.
 - How does the Town use future information from the current County Bike Pedestrian Plan to assist in increasing bike/pedestrian participation in the Town?
 - How does the Town identify significant roads to incorporate into the future transportation planning for bike/pedestrian use?
 - How does the Town incorporate bike/pedestrian plans for safety on the roads?
- How will the Town address major road damage occurring from flooding and major rain events?
- A possible safety issue exists from trucks transporting fuel from the refinery located at U.S. Highway 10 & Sate Highway 34.
- On which roads should the Town reduce the speed limit to enhance public safety? (currently unposted road speed limit is 55 mph)
- On which roads should the Town plan for wider shoulders to enhance public safety on its roads.

Section 3.6 Transportation Goals/Objectives/Policies

Goal A Strive to provide a safe transportation network.

Objective A.1 Protect public safety through the creation of longer turn lanes on State Highway 34, County Road HH and other County roads when roads are upgraded.

Objective A.2 Encourage development of a railroad overpass or underpass between County Road O & County Road M for increased public safety and eliminating lengthy wait times.

Objective A.3 Reduce the amount of time that railroad crossings are closed due to long trains.

Policy A.1 Encourage railroad users to comply with federal standards for stopping at crossings.

- Policy A.2 Continue communicating with State and County transportation officials to improve road infrastructure and safety concerns.
- Policy A.3 Review speed limits on Town roads.
- Goal B Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
 - Objective B.1 Encourage the development of maintenance and condition criteria for gravel roads.
 - Policy B.1 Continue to use PASER system to determine road condition.
- Goal C Encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation options.
 - Policy C.1 Examine the need for designation of bike routes as the Town's population increases.
- Goal D Public transportation options are available to the residents of Carson.
 - Policy D.1 Provide information to Town residents regarding transit options.