

## **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 Eau Pleine. 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 minimizes 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 Eau Pleine; 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 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 106 miles of roadway in the Town of Eau Pleine. The local road system consists of a total of 88.1 miles of public roadway within the Town (excluding Federal and State roadways). County Roads (Cty Rds), E, G, H, N, O, and P equal 30.5 miles; and Town roads equal 57.5 miles. Federal and State highways have a total of 12 miles. U.S. Highway 10 makes up 11.8 miles (divided highway counted twice); State Highway 34 makes up 6.1 miles. See Map 3.1 below for the Average Daily Traffic volume (ADT) information for individual roadways.

##### **1.    Rural Principal Arterials**

The only principal arterial in the Town is U.S. Highway 10, which enters the Town from the East from the Town of Dewey across the Wisconsin River and exits in the southwest corner at the Village of Milladore. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Average Daily Traffic volume (ADT) has not been reported.

U.S. Highway 10 was recently located and upgraded to a controlled access highway meant to be a Rural Principal arterial and opened for use in August of 2012. It is the main highway between the City of Stevens Point and the City of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

State Highway 34 from U.S. Highway 10 south from the west of the Village of Junction City is also a Rural Principal arterial. This road is not in the Town of Eau Pleine, however, it moves traffic south to the City of Wisconsin Rapids.

## 2. Rural Minor Arterials

State Highway 34 is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. This road starts at the exit east of the Village of Junction City and moves north to the Portage County line with Marathon County. The ADT in 2011 for the route north of Highway 10 was 3,500 vehicles.

Map 3.1 shows a drop of 3,600 vehicle trips per day over the Little Eau Pleine River from 2008 to 2011. There was no traffic count in this location in the 2002 ADT information. Town Officials have no explanation as to why traffic volumes would have dropped as State Highway 34 is used as an alternative route to access Interstate 39 in Marathon County.

## 3. Rural Major Collectors

County Roads E, G, N, O, and P are designated as rural major collectors. ADT volumes have recently been recorded for these County Roads (see Map 3.1). These roads provide local access to facilities such as schools, parks and airports.

Eau Pleine has a mutual aid agreement with the Village of Milladore. Eau Pleine pays the Village its share of road maintenance for the upkeep of County Road N.

## 4. Rural Minor Collectors

The County Roads below have been designated as rural minor collectors.

- County Road E from State Highway 34 east to Bridge Road had 100 trips per day in 2011.
- County Road H from County Road O to County Road N had 380 trips per day in 2011.
- County Road N from U.S. Highway 10 south had 680 trips per day in 2011.

## 5. Rural Local Roads

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

**Map 3.1      Transportation Networks and Functional Class**

## B. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

The Portage County Aging, Disability, and Resource Center provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Eau Pleine area 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. 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 Eau Pleine 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.

There are no designated pedestrian or bicycle routes and paths in the Town of Eau Pleine. However, the roadways are available for biking and walking throughout the town. Town Official is participating in the bicycle-pedestrian planning process with the County. 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.

The Mead Wildlife Area 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 here on the Mead. This boardwalk is a wonderful opportunity for any visitor to get out and enjoy nature. The Mead also offers a seven mile bicycle loop around Berkahn Flowage. The bicycle trail is open from May 15 – September 1.

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 Eau Pleine.

## D. Railroads

Two major rail lines are located in the Town of Eau Pleine. One line is oriented north to south and divides the Town in half. 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 track facilities are currently owned by Canadian National Railway.

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 Eau Pleine are the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport, and South Wood County Airport (Alexander Field).

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 10 miles northeast of the Town of Eau Pleine in Mosinee is the closest facility to the Town. This 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, two of which are jet and two are multi-engine. There are a limited number of hangers present which are leased.

Beginning in the spring of 2011 CWA embarked on a three-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 STH 66 in Stevens Point (15 miles east of the Town) 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, and 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, 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 – three of which are multi-engine, and eight 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 five 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, County Road H 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 Town intends to post the local roads with Class B weight limit signs at about the same time and duration of the County weight limits on County Roads. The Town also posts weight limits of 7½ tons on blacktopped Town roads.

Mark's Transport is the only major trucking firm in the Town, located near the State Highway 34 and County Road E intersection. Truck traffic, other than the through traffic on U.S. Highway 10, in rural Portage County (County Highways and local roads) comes from agricultural, non-metallic mining, and some logging operations.

State Highway 34 through the Town is having a high number of semi-truck vehicle trips. The fuel tank farm generates trips through Eau Pleine. Other commercial vehicles and trucks generate trips through Eau Pleine through using State Highway 34 to access Interstate 39 north of Town in Wood County.

#### 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 Wisconsin River and Lake DuBay, which bound the Town of Eau Pleine on its eastern border, are used for recreational purposes only.

There are four boat launches in the Town of Eau Pleine.

- Large improved parking lot and boat launch at DuBay Park providing access to Lake DuBay.
- Gravel parking lot and boat launch at the Lake DuBay Dam providing access to the Wisconsin River below the dam.
- Boat launch with a dirt road access in the Marietta subdivision on Marietta Lane.
- Primitive access canoe launch where State Highway 34 crosses the Little Eau Pleine River.

There are two boat launches that serve Eau Pleine that are not in the Town but are near the edge of Town and provide launch services to Town residents. The first is 200 feet north of the Town of Eau Pleine on the Little Eau Pleine River and is a full access boat launch. The second is near the southeastern border of Eau Pleine under the U.S. Highway 10 bridge on River Road in Carson and is a full service boat launch on the Wisconsin River.

### **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 is slated to perform crackfill and chipseal maintenance on County Road O and G from the border of Portage County and Marathon County line south the Village of Junction City.

2014 – 2017: There are no major County Highway maintenance operations slated to be performed on roads in the Town in this four year period.

#### **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 Eau Pleine 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 Bike/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

**Map 3: Bicycling Suitability Map (PoCo Bike and Ped Plan**

**Map 13: Countywide Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities (PoCo Bike and Ped Plan)**

for safe, comfortable, and convenient places to walk and bike is increasing. The 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 rural area of Portage County has never had a formal bicycle or pedestrian plan, although pedestrian planning has occurred at a small scale in some of the Villages, and municipalities typically identified existing trails, etc. when completing their Comprehensive Plans. Bicycle and pedestrian planning in rural areas has several unique aspects. Although most town roads, and some County roads, carry very little motor vehicle traffic, the traffic that is present often travels at a high speed. While bike lanes may be warranted in Villages, rural 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. Map 3 from the County’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan displays Countywide bicycle suitability information.

- **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 details recommended bikeways for the Town of Eau Pleine as found within the County’s Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

Figure 3.1: Town of Eau Pleine Bikeways

Street	Bike Facility	From	To	Miles
County Road E	Bike Route	State Highway 34	U.S. Highway 10	7.77
County Road G	Bike Route	County Road H	Village of Junction City	1.99
County Road O	Bike Route	Marathon County	County Road H	3.73

Rural bike routes can either be ‘Signed’ or ‘Mapped’ depending on community preference. A signed bike route provides distance and directional information as a wayfinding aid for bicyclists. Signed routes provide cyclists greater confidence when exploring new routes or in unfamiliar territory. Mapped bike routes are only designated as such on maps; no actual signage is placed along the route. Mapped routes are only recommended for areas in which placing signs would be cost prohibitive. Mapped routes should be supplemented with signed bike routes or other bicycle facilities guiding users to popular destinations. Countywide existing and proposed bicycle facilities can be found on Map 13 of the County’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

### **Section 3.4 Transportation Related Programs**

The Town of Eau Pleine 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. As of this writing, the Town still has yet to receive an updated version of the State DOT PASER program (software).

### **Section 3.5 Transportation Issues**

#### 1. Highways

- Driveway control is needed for safety considerations on roadways. How will the Town address the need to improve safety regarding driveway placement and construction?
- How can the Town work with the County Highway Department to better maintain County Roads and manage jurisdictional transfers?
- How can road safety be improved in the Town of Eau Pleine?

#### 2. To what extent should the Town provide bicycle and/or pedestrian paths and trails?

#### 3. How can the Town work with the railroad to decrease the likelihood of fire along the rail corridors?

#### 4. How can the Town address damage to local roads from substandard entrance and exit points to agricultural fields?

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

Goal 1: Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing roads before adding new roads.

Policy: Blacktopping of Town roads will be considered when the cost of maintaining unpaved roads becomes prohibitive.

Goal 2: Maintain transportation related plans for roadway development and maintenance.

#### Objectives:

1. Update roadway management plan for development and maintenance of Eau Pleine's Town roads.
2. Maintain the program for upkeep and replacement of road maintenance equipment.
3. Work with elected County officials to improve distribution of Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP) funds.

#### Policies:

1. Leave options open for land development along U.S. Highway 10.
2. Continue using PASER program for evaluating road quality.
3. The Town roadway management plan should include a budget to take advantage of the maximum amount of transportation aids.
4. Budget moneys every year for a road equipment fund.
5. Review the need for public transportation when it becomes available.

6. Work with the Sheriff's Office to identify dangerous sections of road for automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic through crash information in the Town of Eau Pleine.

Goal 3: Support the County Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan and develop guidelines for addressing bicycle-pedestrian routes within the Town.

Objective: Implement recommendations of the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as they become feasible.

Policy: Future bicycle-pedestrian upgrades will be mapped and plans will begin for their inclusion into the Town budgetary process

Goal 4: Transportation options are available for persons with disabilities.

Objective: Encourage the County to maintain or enhance transportation options for the elderly and those with disabilities.

Policy: Provide information regarding transportation options for persons with disabilities.