

## **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 Grant. 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 inventory current transportation options; list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Grant; 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. The majority of 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. One segment of roadway is classified under the urban functional classification. The criterion used in determining rural and urban 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.

Access to State Trunk Highways (STH 54, STH 73) is controlled by WisDOT, and requires an "access permit" for each new access point. Similar permits, issued by Portage County, are required for new access along County Roads (U, F, W, D, FF, WW).

As of 2016, the local road system in the Town of Grant consisted of a total of 152.07 miles of public roadway. State Highway (STH) 54 accounts for approximately one mile of four-lane roadway, County roads (Cty Rds) account for 34.9 miles, with the final 116.17 miles being Town roads. WisDOT conducts Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts, which 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 and 2014, although 2014 data is only available for select locations. See Map 3.1 for details of all traffic count data.

#### 1. Rural Principal Arterials

Rural principal arterials provide interstate and inter-regional travel. Traffic mobility and servicing major economic centers are major functions of these roads. STH 54, located in the far northwest corner of the Town, is the only rural principal arterial in the Town of Grant. In 2014, the AADT count for this portion of STH 54 was 11,500 vehicles per day. WisDOT regulates public and private road and driveway access onto this facility.

#### 2. Rural Minor Arterials

Rural minor arterials provide for intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements. STH 73, located along the south border of the Town, is the only road currently designated as rural minor arterial in the Town. In 2014, the AADT count along STH 73 was 1,600 vehicle trips per day. WisDOT regulates public and private road and driveway access onto this facility.

#### 3. Urban Minor Arterials

This road classification serves important economic activity centers and intercommunity trips. In conjunction with principle arterials, urban minor arterials provide an urban extension of the rural collector system and connect the rural routes to the central business district of an urban area in the most direct manner. A portion of Cty Rd U, from Cty Rd FF to Griffith Avenue, is the only road currently designated as an urban minor arterial. The AADT in 2011 for this section of Cty Rd U was 4,200 vehicles per day between Cty Rds FF and WW, and 4,000 vehicles between Cty Rd WW and Griffith Avenue). New road and driveway access is regulated by Portage County, with a minimum separation requirement of 600 feet between access points, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.

#### 4. Rural Major Collectors

Rural major collectors provide for intra-area traffic movements. Roadways classified as rural major collectors in the Town of Grant include Cty Rds U, F, W and D. No 2014 AADT count data was available for these roadways. In 2011, Cty Rd U had the highest AADT, with 2,500 vehicles per day on the north (south of STH 54). Traffic counts for Cty Rd U also totaled 1,100 vehicles near the intersection with Cty Rd W, and 610 vehicles on the south (north of STH 73). The count for Cty Rd F was 920 on the north and 350 on the south. There were 1,200 vehicle trips per day along Cty Rd W. No AADT count data was available for Cty Rd D. The location and separation of access points along these highways is regulated by Portage County through access permits. The required minimum separation between access points is 300 feet, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance.

#### 5. Rural Minor Collectors

These roadways link the rural, less densely populated areas (i.e. local roads) with higher order roads/highways. Rural minor collectors in the Town of Grant include Cty Rds FF and WW. Portage County regulates the location and separation of new access points along these roadways (through access permits) and requires a minimum separation of 300 feet between access points, as specified in the Portage County Subdivision Ordinance. The 2011 ADT count for Cty Rd FF between Cty Rd U and 90<sup>th</sup> Street was 170 vehicles per day, while the count for Cty Rd WW was 1,200.

**Map 3.1      Transportation Network**

**Map 3.2 Road Surfaces**

**Map 3.3 Road Weight Restrictions**

**Map 3.4      Implements of Husbandry**

## 6. Rural Local Roads

These roadways primarily stress land access and provide inter-township and intra-township traffic movements over short distances. All roads not designated as arterials or collectors are considered local roads. Portage County does not regulate the separation of access points on local roads, except to require that driveways be located a minimum of 50 feet from a road intersection. A driveway permit is required by the Town whenever a proposed driveway will physically meet or intersect with any town road. Please see Map 3.2 for details on road surfaces (paved/unpaved) throughout the Town.

In the summer of 2004, traffic counts were conducted on local roads within the Town of Grant (Table 3.1). The counts were conducted by placing a traffic count tube across the full width of the roadway for a period of seven days and then averaged to compute Average Annual Daily Traffic.

**Table 3.1: Average Daily Traffic Volumes on Local Roads, 2004**

Roadway	Location	Average Daily Traffic
Lake Road	East of CTH U	610 vehicles per day
Lake Road	West of CTH F	165 vehicles per day
90 <sup>th</sup> Street	North of CTH WW	200 vehicles per day <sup>(1)</sup>
90 <sup>th</sup> Street	South of CTH W	163 vehicles per day
100 <sup>th</sup> Street	South of CTH W	56 vehicles per day
Mill Avenue	East of CTH U	191 vehicles per day
Evergreen Avenue	East of CTH U	195 vehicles per day
Tower Road	East of CTH U	141 vehicles per day

Source: Town of Grant

(1) Traffic is 1.5 to 2.0 times this amount on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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

The Portage County Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) offers a variety of transportation services for seniors and adults with disabilities. Buses provide rides to the Nutrition Program dining sites, the Adult Day Center and Lincoln Center, and for grocery shopping throughout the County. Rides can also be set up via taxi, bus or volunteer driver escort for medical appointments and essential personal business. Persons requiring such services must 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 elderly/disabled transit service from Wisconsin Rapids to the Kellner area.

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) provides free transportation to VA hospitals and clinics for injured and ill veterans.

### C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

There are no designated bicycling or walking routes within the Town of Grant. An existing bicycle/walking route is present around Lake Wazeecha in adjacent Wood County and provides direct access to Wisconsin Rapids. The Town of Grant has invested in a four-foot paved shoulder along Lake Road between Cty Rd U and 85<sup>th</sup> Street that connects to the Lake Wazeecha trail system. Any future routes developed or identified near the Kellner area would be enhanced by providing a connection to this existing trail system.

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. Town officials should be aware of the recommendations within the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, as they may be used to direct the Town's resources in planning for future bicycle and pedestrian projects within the Town.

#### D. Railroads

Canadian National railway owns a single track rail on the south side of Highway 54. There are two at-grade crossings of this rail line within Grant. The crossing at County Road U has warning lights, but no gates. The crossing at 90<sup>th</sup> Street has a stop sign, but no lights or gates.

The Town has expressed an interest in developing commercial/industrial properties along this stretch of rail line for businesses that require rail access.

#### E. Air Transportation

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

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is located approximately 30 miles north of Grant 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 propeller airplanes. There are a limited number of hangers present which are leased. CWA ranks fifth out of Wisconsin's eight Commercial Service airports for total number of enplanements (passenger boardings). Data collected for 2014 revealed 125,395 passenger boardings at CWA during the course of the year.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport (STE) is located at the intersection of I-39 and STH 66 in Stevens Point. The airport is owned and operated by the City of Stevens Point. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified 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.

Alexander Field - South Wood County Airport (ISW) is located in the City of Wisconsin Rapids. The airport is owned and operated by the Town of Grand Rapids, Village of Port Edwards, City of Nekoosa, and City of Wisconsin Rapids. As with the Stevens Point airport, there is no passenger service available and the primary services provided are for private aircraft. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the airport as a Medium General Aviation airfield, which supports most single and multi-engine general aviation aircraft, including those aircraft commonly used by businesses. These airports support regional and in-state air transportation needs.

ISW has two runways. The main runway is 5,500 feet long by 100 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,640 feet long by 50 feet wide. In 2014, the airport averaged 25 aircraft operations per day and was home to 59 home-based aircraft including 47 single-engine airplanes, four multi-engine airplanes, and eight ultralight aircraft.

#### F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on STH 54, STH 73, and Cty Rd F, and normal delivery services for area businesses. 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 Town of Grant has special weight restrictions for local roads, which are not limited to the spring season. See Map 3.3 for details on Town road weight restrictions. (Please note: Road weight restrictions are subject to periodic changes.)

Agricultural traffic, specifically during harvest and planting seasons, is especially heavy within the Town. The equipment used in the vegetable production industry is very large and presents unique hazards on roadways when present. In many cases, traffic must use the shoulder of the road to get around field equipment that is using the roadway. This equipment is, in some cases, damaging to road surfaces due to the extreme weight.

In April 2014, several changes were made to Wisconsin law directing the way agricultural vehicles and equipment operate on State, County, and Town roads. The most significant change was a 15% increase in the weight limits for these vehicles, otherwise known as Implements of Husbandry (IOH) and Agricultural Commercial Motor Vehicles (Ag CMV's). The new law also allowed Town officials to participate in a no-fee permitting process, and to adopt an ordinance regarding the maximum length and weight limits for IOH and Ag CMV's operating upon Town roads. The Town chose to designate specific roads for overweight and overlength IOH or Ag CMV travel. IOH and Ag CMV operators must also follow special weight restrictions that are imposed upon Town roads. See Map 3.4 for IOH designated roads. (Please note: Designated roadways are subject to periodic changes.)

### **Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs**

#### A. Six-Year Highway Improvement Program 2016-2021

The Highway Improvement Program covers the state highway system which is administered and maintained by WisDOT. During their 2016-2021 plan cycle, WisDOT identified a reconstruction project at the STH 54 and Cty Rd U intersection between Wisconsin Rapids and Plover. The purpose of this project is to improve the safety of the intersection by reducing crashes and crash

severity. Several alternatives were evaluated. The Town voiced a preference for the option that would expand the median storage space by reconstructing the westbound lanes of STH 54 and moving them to the north. However, it was determined that reconstruction of the intersection into a J-turn would be the preferred alternative. Construction is scheduled for summer and fall 2016.

B. Portage County Highway Department Five-Year Improvement Plan 2016-2020

These projects are tentatively proposed as part of the County Highway Department's 5-year Capital Improvement and Maintenance Plan, but are subject to change depending on funding availability and other factors including weather and staffing:

2016 - Mill and resurface Cty Rd F from STH 54 to Cty Rd W.

No further maintenance of County roads within the Town is planned for 2017 - 2020.

C. Town of Grant Two-Year Road Improvement Plan

The Town of Grant maintains a Road Improvement Plan, which targets Town roads for construction improvements and identifies roads for routine maintenance. The Plan is updated annually.

D. 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), Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Large General Aviation) and Alexander Field - South Wood County Airport (Medium General Aviation) are not projected to change through 2030.

E. Wisconsin State Rail Plan (SRP) 2030

WisDOT has included the State Rail Plan as a component of the State's Connections 2030 Plan, a long range, multi-modal transportation plan. Adopted by the State on March 19, 2014, the Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 is the statewide long-range rail transportation plan. The Plan focuses on the role of freight rail, intercity passenger and commuter rail in the States multi-modal transportation network, and identifies priorities and strategies that will serve as a basis for Wisconsin rail investments over the next 20 years. Town officials should remain aware of this Plan, as there is a rail corridor that parallels STH 54 within the Town.

F. 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.

2. Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

County and community leaders have come to recognize that bicycle and pedestrian travel are viable forms of transportation and recreation in Portage County. They understand there are important benefits to be had when bicyclists and pedestrians can travel safely and

conveniently within and between communities such as an increased quality of life and wellness, increased economic activity, enhanced access to employment, etc.

The Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted on April 22, 2014, represents the first coordinated attempt to identify the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, and integrate them into a County-wide transportation network. The Plan provides recommendations for improving bicycling and walking conditions in Portage County, and for coordinating efforts between the County, City of Stevens Point, and the numerous Villages and Towns.

For additional information, including bicycle facility recommendations within the Town of Grant, please refer to the Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The official Plan is available at the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Office, located at 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, and is also available on the Department's website.

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

The Town of Grant 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.

The Town also has access to the WisDOT's Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), a comprehensive electronic database containing road-related data, forms, maps, reports, instructions and statute descriptions.

### **Section 3.5 Transportation Issues**

- The Town is behind in maintenance and upgrade of its 116 mile road network with a limited budget of \$250,000/year.
- How can the Town increase the availability of funds for road maintenance or improvements?
- Rural agriculture roads need to be maintained at a level adequate for truck and tractor passage.
- The functional class system needs to further divide the local roads by use.
- How can the Town increase or improve intergovernmental coordination of road maintenance?
- The development of a road master plan that includes maintenance schedules would be very useful.

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

#### **A. Goals:**

1. Develop and maintain a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of Town residents.

#### **B. Objectives:**

1. Coordinate with the State, County and adjoining County and Town governments on all matters concerning transportation facilities and programs.

2. Work with WisDOT to construct a diamond interchange at Cty Rd U and STH 54 as a long term solution.
3. Give priority to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
4. Develop a road master plan to ensure existing and future public roads are to be built and maintained according to adequate design standards so as to avoid unnecessary Town costs and user inconvenience.
5. Investigate the possibility of rail service to potential users of the existing railroad line through the Town.
6. The Town seeks sufficient funds for annual maintenance and improvement on existing Town roads.
7. Support the development of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations where bicycle/pedestrian and vehicle traffic warrant.
8. Consult with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department on the review of street proposals in planned subdivisions or lot splits.
9. Correct drainage and subsurface problems interfering with road conditions.
10. Ensure transportation options are available for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

C. Policies:

1. Work with the proper agencies to clear up clogged streams and ditches where overflows are disrupting road conditions and grades.
2. Pursue the installation of safety measures for the 90<sup>th</sup> Street and Cty Rd U Canadian National railroad crossings.
3. Work with Canadian National officials to assure adequate maintenance of rail properties and crossings and the development of rail access near Highway 54.
4. Regularly update and utilize the “PASER” and “WISLR” road surface management programs.
5. Work with Portage and Wood Counties to provide transit service to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and others in need.
6. Town roads used primarily for agricultural and conservation land access should to be maintained at a level acceptable for truck and tractor passage.
7. Review new developments to ensure appropriate road connectivity to the existing road network.
8. Explore options for funding of road maintenance.
9. Update Subdivision, Driveway, and Road Construction Ordinances to reflect changes in road construction technology.
10. Encourage Portage County to upgrade County Roads “W” and “F” and “U” north of Kellner to all weather roads (no weight limit).

11. Continue to improve and upgrade unsurfaced roads to surfaced roads where appropriate and feasible.
12. Remove poor subgrade soils and replace with suitable base or geogrid and other current technology.