

CHAPTER 3 Transportation Element

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Statutes

Section 3.1 Introduction

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town of Sharon is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens. 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 Sharon; and, compare local transportation goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

Section 3.2 Transportation Facility Inventory

A. Roads & 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 County transportation networks 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.

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 #010** for traffic count details according to the existing functional class system.

As of 2016, the local road system for Sharon consists of a total of 101.68 miles of public roadway within the Town: County Trunk Highways (CTH) CC, I, J, K, Y, and Z equal 33.78 miles; and Town roads comprise the remaining 67.9 miles. In addition, State Highway (STH) 66 adds 9.3 miles to the Town's road system.

Rural Principal Arterials

There are no principle arterials located in the Town of Sharon.

Rural Minor Arterials

State Highway 66, is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. The AADT count in 2014 for STH 66 west of CTH K was 3,400 vehicles while the count was 4,100 vehicles east of CTH K in Polonia. Traffic mobility and servicing moderate to large-sized places (cities, villages, towns, and clusters of communities) is the main function of this road.

Rural Major Collectors

County Trunk Highways J, Z, and Y are designated as major collectors in the Town of Sharon. The AADT in 2011 for Highway J, north of STH 66 was 1,000 vehicles, the AADT for CTH Z

in Polonia was 770 vehicles, and CTH Y had an AADT count of 1,500 vehicles just east of Bentley Pond. Major collectors provide service to smaller-to-moderate sized places and provide links to nearby larger population centers (cities, villages, and towns) or higher function routes.

Rural Minor Collectors

These roadways link the rural, less densely populated areas (i.e. local roads) with higher order roads/highways. County Highways I and K are designated as minor collectors in the Town. The 2011 AADT count for CTH I, just south of STH 66 is 140 and the AADT count for CTH K, south of STH 66 is 550.

Rural Local Roads

The remaining roadways are classified as local streets. Their primary function is land access and travel over relatively short distances.

B. Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

There are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the Town. However, the Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted in 2014, identifies bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations for the Town of Sharon, plus all other Towns, Villages, and the 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.

C. Transit and Transportation Options for the Elderly and Disabled

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. 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. As another option, a privately-owned business called Courtesy Carriers provides transportation within the County as well.

D. Rail

There are no rail lines running through the Town of Sharon.

E. Air Transportation Facilities

The two main airports that serve the Town of Sharon are the Central Wisconsin Airport and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is located approximately 15 miles north of Sharon 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 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 on 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.

F. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on STH 66 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are no designated truck routes, however, the Town of Sharon and the Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on town and 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 Highways and local roads) comes from agricultural use, non-metallic mining, and some logging operations.

G. Water Transportation

The Plover and Tomorrow Rivers are used as modes of non-motorized recreational transportation in the Town of Sharon. The Plover River bounds the Town of Sharon on its southwestern border, while the Tomorrow River is located on the eastern side of the town.

Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

A. Highway improvement plans

1. Six-Year Highway Improvement Program (2016-2021)

State Hwy 66 was rebuilt in 2007 from Hwy J North on the west end and to the township line on the east end. The rebuild allows for better line-of-sight vision and turn-off lanes at the heavier traveled intersections. A rebuild of the corner at Rustic Drive, approximately one and one-half miles east of Polonia, was also included in this project. The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has no plans for major highway development or rehabilitation of existing highways or bridges scheduled for the Town of Sharon during their 2016-2021 plan cycle.

2. U.S. Hwy 10 Improvement Plan

Another major highway improvement plan will be occurring on U.S. Hwy 10. Although U.S. Hwy 10 is not located within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon, the planned improvements for this highway will have a great impact for the Town of Sharon residents. The plan calls for the re-routing of U.S. Hwy 10 around Stevens Point in order to create a high speed corridor between Marshfield and Appleton. The section of highway between Stevens Point and Marshfield is complete. The route for the eastern by-pass of Stevens Point has not yet been selected, and funding for this portion of the project is not yet in place.

B. State airport plans

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.

C. State railroad plans

Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020

The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020 does not apply in the Town of Sharon due to a lack of rail facilities.

D. 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- 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-side 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 Sharon, 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.

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

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

2016

- Reconstruction of Cty Rd J from STH 66 to the south into the Town of Stockton

2017

- Reconstruction of a portion of Cty Rd I
- Mill and resurface a portion of Cty Rd I

No further maintenance of County roads within the Town is planned for 2018 - 2020.

Section 3.4 Transportation Issues

Highways and Roads

- How can the Town keep roads in good condition?
- Development of new roads.
- How can businesses with heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) be sited so they minimize damage to Town roads?

Transportation options for the elderly and disabled

- How can transportation services for the elderly be provided throughout the Town?
- Community Industries of Stevens Point offers a pickup service for employees needing to get to work.

Bicycles and walking trails/routes

- How will the town address safety concerns from increased bicycle traffic in the summer?
- To what extent should organized walking/biking trails be encouraged in the town?

Trucking

- Seasonal truck traffic for the vegetable harvest is moderate from mid-June to November.

Section 3.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Support and maintain a safe and efficient road system.

Objective 1: Upgrade roads on a priority basis.

Policies:

- Systematically prioritize road improvement needs; implement as funding is available.
- Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.
- Whenever siting businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) evaluate and make part of the discussion making process current road capacity, cost for upgrading and cost long term maintenance of the roads.

Objective 2: Plan for new or upgraded road corridors. (See Map #010)

Policies:

- As development takes place, the developer is responsible for the cost of the new roads and/or necessary improvements.
- The Town will not accept new roads unless they meet road specifications as stated in the Town Road Ordinance or Subdivision Ordinance. (These Ordinances can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall.)
- Design new roads to have a separate entrance and exit and they must meet Town, County, and State requirements. Cul de sacs should not be allowed and only be considered as a temporary solution when it will eventually be eliminated and the road meets up with a new road.
- Consider an impact fee to deal with long term cost of new roads.

Objective 3: Plan siting of businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) in areas where Town roads can handle weight and traffic volume (see also Chapter 2 Housing sec 2.3 & 2.4, Chapter 5 Natural Resources, Sec 5.5 G and Chapter 8 Land Use Sec 8.3).

Policy: Whenever siting businesses that utilize heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) evaluate and make part of the decision making process current road capacity, cost of upgrading and cost of long term maintenance of the roads.

Goal 2: Allow for human-powered transportation options. Bicycle and walking trails.

Objective: Maintain good visibility along town roads so as to make all town roads safer for pedestrians and bikes.

Policies:

- Make sure brush and trees do not obstruct driver's line of sight.
- Support the county's efforts if they choose to build bike and pedestrian lanes on shoulders of county roads.