

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

Amherst's transportation network is a vital element of community development. Efficient economic growth depends on a transportation system capable of moving people, goods and services to, from and within the Village. Different types and intensities of development impose varied demands on streets and highways. Conversely, new transportation facilities significantly affect the development potential of adjacent land. The coordination of land use and transportation improvements can result in a more pleasant community functioning with greater efficiency, at less expense.

Section 3.2 Transportation Facility Inventory

As of 2016, street, highway and railroad rights-of-way occupy 133 acres or nearly 16% of the Village's total land area. There is a total of 11.2 miles of road network and 1.6 miles of railroad track within the Village boundary.

A. Streets and Highways

Amherst's street and highway system is designed and maintained so that each facility performs a function relative to the overall transportation network. Current road classifications for the County transportation network are officially designated in the document entitled "Functional Classification Criteria", last updated by the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in April 2013. Amherst's streets and highways are classified into the following functional types according to the rural functional classification system: Rural Principal Arterials, Rural Major Collectors, and Rural Local Roads. 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 3.1 for traffic count details according to their existing functional classification.

1. Rural Principal Arterials

The only principal arterial in the Village of Amherst is approximately .25 miles of USH 10, which crosses the southern tip of the Village. This particular section of USH 10 was constructed in 2004 to replace the former route of USH 10 (now County Road KK). Interstate and interregional traffic mobility is the major function of this road. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the AADT in 2014 for the USH 10 and CTH A interchange area was 370 vehicles (ramp from CTH A to USH 10 Westbound), 350 vehicles (ramp from USH 10 Eastbound to CTH A), 840 vehicles (ramp from USH 10 Westbound to CTH A), and 720 vehicles (ramp from CTH A to USH 10 Eastbound).

2. Rural Major Collectors

Amherst's major collectors currently include Wilson and Mill Streets and Cty Rds A/B and KK. These roadways, totaling 2.75 miles, are excellent examples of the compromise function of collectors. Both move traffic through the Village and provide direct access to a variety of land uses.

In 2011, the AADT was 3,200 vehicles on Wilson Street west of Main Street, and 1,100 vehicles on Mill Street west of Division Street. The AADT on Cty Rd A/B was 1,200 vehicles south of USH 10 and CTH A interchange. Along Cty Rd KK there were 1,900 vehicles south of Main Street, and 4,000 vehicles at the intersection with Lincoln Street.

An additional concern associated with the Villages major collectors has to do with the narrow passageways under the railroad overpasses on Wilson and Main Streets, which constitute a potential hazard to traffic. If these structures would need to be replaced or modified, larger openings would be provided.

3. Rural Local Roads

The remaining streets in Amherst (approximately 8.2 miles) provide access to individual residences and are classified as local roads.

There is a need to provide access to the northeast and northwest quadrants of the Village for future growth. The present street layout of the Oakview Meadow Subdivision is designed to accommodate future residential growth in the northeast quadrant of the Village. Future roadways in this area may also connect with Cty Rd A/B. Access to the northwest quadrant of the Village will most likely come from Cty Rd KK, as Depot Street is considered inadequate to serve the entire quadrant. Access from Cty Rd KK to this area of the Village will require cooperation with the Town of Amherst.

Map 3.1 – Functional Classification For Amherst Streets

B. Rail Transportation

Rail freight service is provided to Amherst by the Canadian National Rail Line. Rail transportation has the potential to provide a major service to local business and industry; however, it also causes noise, safety hazards and blighted neighborhood conditions. The railroad is elevated through most of Amherst, creating a barrier to movement within the Village. Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets pass under the railroad grade in the central portion of the Village, while Cty Rd A/B is bridged over the tracks in the southeast. The overpass on Main Street has an arched opening, which is approximately 14 feet in height at its center. Most semi-trailers can clear this overpass, although care must be taken to drive through the center of the opening. The overpass on Wilson Street is approximately 10.5 feet in height and is too small for semi-trailer traffic. The vertical facing on the bridges is deteriorating, which can result in pieces of concrete falling onto the roadway and creating a safety hazard. If the three railroad overpasses ever require major reconstruction, the openings should be enlarged to mitigate safety and traffic volume concerns.

The railroad spur that ran from Wilson Street to Pond Street is no longer in service and the tracks have been removed. The Village owns much of the old rail right-of-way. The part of the spur that extends from Wilson to Main Street should be retained for storm water management.

Rail currently services two businesses in Amherst, the CHS Larsen Cooperative and Blenker Companies. However, there is potential within the Village to further develop rail related business in the Business Park. This would be contingent upon other necessary public improvements such as the extension of streets, sewer and water. Cty Rd A and B is bridged over the tracks in the southeast portion of the Village further facilitating access to the industrial park.

C. Air Transportation Facilities

The three main airports that serve the Village are: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Waupaca Municipal Airport, and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is located 32 miles northwest of Amherst on 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 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 Waupaca Municipal Airport (PCZ) is located 13 miles east of Amherst on USH 10. The airport is owned and operated by the City of Waupaca. 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. Although there is no passenger service available, the airport provides facilities for flight training, aircraft repair, and a 24 hour self-serve fuel farm.

PCZ has two runways. The main runway is 5,200 feet long by 100 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,899 feet long and 75 feet wide. In 2013, the airport averaged 55 aircraft operations per day and was home to 40 home-based aircraft including, three jets, 29 single-engine planes, two multi-engine planes, two helicopters, and four ultralight aircraft.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport (STE) is located 14 miles west of Amherst on State Highway 66 and I-39. 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.

D. Bridges

There are two bridges located in the Village of Amherst. Both bridges are maintained by the Village. The bridges are currently inspected every other year by the Portage County Highway Department.

The Mill Street bridge was rebuilt in 2012 after the original bridge, which was constructed in 1907, had to be removed due to deterioration. The new bridge was a coordinated effort between federal and County funding.

The Washington Street bridge is a 33.9 foot, girder deck bridge constructed in 1938. The bridge is in fair to good condition. Replacement is not expected over the next 20-year planning period.

E. Parking

There are a number of parking facilities available in the Central Business District (CBD). The Village provides for horse parking needs in an area located across from Well #1, behind the Village garage. Hard surfaced, vehicle parking is available at the Village Hall and adjacent to the Village garages. There is also a vehicle parking area adjacent to Nelson Park, behind Well #1, which is hard surfaced and frequently used. In addition, hard surface parking is available to downtown shoppers in the Peace Lutheran Church lot. This parking facility was constructed through mutual cooperation of the Village Board and Peace Lutheran Church. The International Bank maintains a hard surface parking facility on Wilson Street, as does the Jungers Holly Funeral Home, located on Main Street, adjacent to Nelson Park. The Village of Amherst will ensure adequate availability of parking through review of proposed development projects.

F. Sidewalks

The Village has a limited sidewalk system (Map 3.2). Much of the sidewalk that exists serves the Tomorrow River School facilities, Lettie Jensen Library and CBD. As population and traffic volumes increase, the lack of sidewalks could create safety hazards to local pedestrians. The Village should consider modifications to the subdivision ordinance which will encourage the development of sidewalks in desired locations rather than on all new streets. This could be accomplished through the use of a sidewalk assessment which would go into a general fund for sidewalk development. The Village should also consider creating a sidewalk maintenance and development list in which new sidewalk construction and redevelopment projects are laid out and prioritized.

When curbs or sidewalks within five feet of a legal crosswalk are installed or repaired, handicap ramps should be provided as called for by Wisconsin State Statutes (ss. 66.0909).

The 2014 Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan provides recommendations to support pedestrian travel within the Village and to increase safety and improve access. One of the recommendations of the Plan is to incorporate sidewalks into upcoming street projects where sidewalks are not currently located along major streets (collectors) within the Village. The Plan also establishes general sidewalk location criteria as provided in Table 3.1 below. All new streets within the Village are recommended to have sidewalks as supported by the sidewalk location criteria. It is further recommended within the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that the Village updates its Subdivision Ordinance to include the requirement of sidewalks when new streets are constructed.

Table 3.1: WisDOT Guidelines for Sidewalk Placement

Land-Use / Dwelling Unit / Functional Classification	New Urban & Suburban Streets	Existing Urban & Suburban Streets
Commercial & Industrial (All Streets)	Both Sides	Both sides. Every effort should be made to add sidewalks where they do not exist and to complete missing links
Residential (Arterials)	Both Sides	Both Sides
Residential (Collectors)	Both Sides	Multifamily: Both sides Single family: Prefer both sides, require at least one side
Residential (Local Road) More than 4 units/acre	Both sides	Prefer both sides; Require at least one side
Residential (Local Road) 1 – 4 units/acre	Prefer both sides; At least one side required	One side preferred, at least 4 feet
Residential (Local Road) Fewer than 1 unit/acre	One side preferred; Shoulder on both sides	At least 4 feet shoulder on both sides required

Source: Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Another component of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan looks at the condition of biking and walking facilities near the Tomorrow River School for implementing a Safe Routes to School Program. Approximately 10% of the Village’s local streets have sidewalks. There are two main streets important for bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Village: Main and Wilson Streets. Both of these streets have sidewalks on at least one side through most of the Village. The streets that lack sidewalks are relatively short neighborhood streets.

Wilson Street was recently reconstructed to the west of Main Street. Appropriate width and markings were provided that provide paved shoulders which are useful for bicyclists. The reconstruction project also included a walkway across the Amherst Mill Pond impoundment

creating a useful and attractive way for students from the east side of the Village to connect on an angle to Main Street, the library and the school grounds. School Street was also reconstructed, and provides a sidewalk on the north side of the road (the south side previously had sidewalks). The streets that lack sidewalks are relatively short neighborhood streets.

Overall, there are a few missing sidewalks segments that, if added, will maximize the usefulness of the existing sidewalk network. Specific infrastructure recommendations identified for the Safe Routes to School component of the Plan include extending the sidewalk along the north side of the school parking lot and north to the Jensen Center, and adding a sidewalk on the east side of Main Street when the street is next reconstructed. Other recommendations for providing safe routes to the school include developing a Walking School Bus program, or group walks to school, as well as developing additional encouragement programs to get students excited about walking or biking to school.

G. Trails

The Tomorrow River State Trail runs approximately a half mile to the north of the Village of Amherst along an abandoned railroad grade (Map 3.2). It currently extends for 29 miles starting in the Village of Plover and ending just outside the Village of Manawa in Waupaca County. There is a small break in the trail in Amherst Junction, as it stops at County Road Q and starts again at the eastern boundary of Amherst Junction. Future plans call for a bridge across Cty Rd KK to allow for an uninterrupted trail. The trail is surfaced with crushed limestone and is open to bicyclists, hikers and joggers during the summer. A separate 14-mile horse trail is located alongside the limestone trail from the Village of Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County line. Parking and access to the trail is available at Cate Park approximately a half mile north of the Village of Amherst. Paved shoulder has been installed along Pond Street, from Mill Street north to the Cate Park trail head, to provide safer pedestrian and bike access to the Tomorrow River State Trail.

The Ice Age Bicycle Trail runs north and south along the glaciated areas of eastern Portage County for a total of 48 miles. The trail was designed specifically for bicyclists as it runs along portions of major roadways.

Map - 3.2 Sidewalks and Trails

H. Trucking

Semi traffic in the Village generally consists of through traffic on USH 10 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are several trucking firms located adjacent to the Village in the Town of Amherst. Truck traffic patterns are naturally constrained by the railroad bridges on Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets. Designated truck routes may become necessary if semi traffic through the Village becomes a problem.

I. Transit

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 meal sites, for daily activities or appointments at the Adult Day Center and Lincoln Center, and for weekly grocery shopping trips. 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 transportation services must call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. There is no set fee for bus and volunteer escort rides, however passengers are asked to make a donation. There is a set fee for taxi rides.

Section 3.3 Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans

A. Future Street Improvements

The Village of Amherst keeps a Street Improvements list, which identifies Village streets in need of replacement, improvement, and routine maintenance such as patching and seal coating. The list is updated by Village staff every two years.

B. WisDOT Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan 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 reconditioning project with median treatments for the segment of USH 10 between Stevens Point and Waupaca. The purpose of this project is to address five lane segment and concrete joint repairs.

In January 2016, WisDOT launched the US 10 Corridor Preservation Study for the section of US 10 that stretches from Lake Drive near Amherst to the WIS 96/110 interchange near Fremont. This study will provide for future freeway conversion through official mapping. Currently this section is classified as an expressway, providing access to and from the highway through interchanges, local roads, and private driveways. As US 10 is converted to a freeway, all at-grade, stop controlled intersections would need to be replaced by well-spaced interchanges, grade separations (overpasses and underpasses), cul-de-sacs, and alternate connections that safely balance the access needs of the adjacent areas with the safety of the highway. At the time of this update to the Comprehensive Plan, WisDOT is developing alternatives for corridor preservation. Completion of the official map process is scheduled for Spring 2022.

The Village of Amherst has concerns over the future of Buchholz Rd as a result of the conversion to a freeway. Currently, Buchholz Rd intersects the north side of USH 10 approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the Village. The Village would like this access to be maintained, as it provides an additional route into the community.

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

According to the County Highway Department's 5-year Capital Improvement Plan, replacement of the bridge over the Tomorrow River in the southern half of the Village, on Cty Rd A, is tentatively scheduled for 2018. The project is subject to change depending on funding availability and other factors including weather and staffing.

D. Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

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 Village of Amherst.

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.

The network in the rural area is primarily comprised of the following facility types:

- **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, sight 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.

Table 3.2: Village of Amherst Recommended Bikeways

Street	Bike Facility	From	To	Miles
County Road B	Paved Shoulder	County Road KK	Mill St	0.99
Main St	Bike Route	County Road KK	Mill St	0.49
Main St	Shared Lane Marking	Village Border	Wilson St	0.52
Mill St	Shared Lane Marking	South St	County Road B	0.39
Mill St	Bike Lane	Main St	South St	0.12
Packer Ave	Bike Route	Town of Amherst	County Road KK	0.31
Wilson St	Bike Lane	County Road KK	Main St	0.52

Source: Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Table 3.2 shows the bikeway recommendations for the Village of Amherst. For additional information, including all bicycle and pedestrian facility recommendations within the Village, please refer to the Portage County Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Plan is available at the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Office, located at 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, and on the Department's website.

E. 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.

F. 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 Waupaca Municipal Airport (Medium General Aviation) are not projected to change through 2030.

G. Wisconsin State Railroad Plan 2030

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. The Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 was adopted by the State on March 19, 2014.

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. Village officials should maintain awareness of that Plan as there is a rail corridor that parallels USH 10 within the Village.

Section 3.4 Transportation Conclusions

- A. With the reconstruction of USH 10 and its subsequent relocation, numerous jurisdictional transfers have occurred, resulting in changes to the functional classification of certain roadways and traffic flow through the Village of Amherst.
- B. Rail traffic will continue to increase in speed and volume. Efforts are needed to improve viaduct appearances, railway safety, and emergency response capabilities.
- C. Bicycle and pedestrian use will continue to increase. Efforts should be made to maintain and improve upon existing bike/ped routes within the Village and to tie into a Countywide network as opportunities become available.

Section 3.5 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

A transportation network capable of moving people and goods to, from and within the Village of Amherst is an essential element in the community development process. Such a network consists of highway and non-highway modes of transportation.

The Village's proximity to USH 10 will directly affect the future growth of Amherst. USH 10 is a major east/west highway, connecting the Fox Valley and Oshkosh areas to the Stevens Point urban area and Interstate Highway 39. Much of the economic growth that has taken place in the Amherst area can be attributed to the Village's location along USH 10. The potential for additional economic growth exists in the Amherst area.

The existence of a railroad that bisects the Village presents additional economic development opportunities for Amherst. The railroad is elevated through a majority of the Village, with only three streets (Wilson, Lincoln and Main Streets) passing under the railroad grade. Problems such as noise and safety, however, will continually need to be addressed.

A. Goal

1. To provide a transportation system capable of delivering goods and services to and from the community while providing for efficient movement of traffic.

B. Objectives

1. Provide a transportation system that allows for safe and efficient movement of motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the Village of Amherst.
2. Provide and maintain adequate and convenient public parking facilities.
3. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department to minimize negative effects while maximizing benefits of an upgraded, four-lane USH 10.
4. Ensure that all transportation improvements are designed to minimize costs to residents.
5. Develop an area-wide transportation planning approach.
6. Utilize the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in the development and implementation of transportation related plans.
7. Encourage and accommodate non-motorized transportation options.
8. Decisions regarding transportation should be consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

C. Policies

1. In anticipation of future development, street facilities needed to handle projected traffic should be identified on the official street map of the Village of Amherst.
2. Maintain and promote effective regulations that ensure future development, including facilities for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic.
3. Bicycle routes should be developed along collector and local streets for those wishing to use bicycles as a mode of transportation.
4. Incorporate the use of sidewalks in strategic locations to maximize pedestrian connectivity in the Village.
5. Encourage patronage of Village businesses by those using the Tomorrow River State Trail and Tomorrow River corridor.

6. Transportation options are provided for transit dependent persons through the Portage County Aging & Disability Resource Center.
7. Work with appropriate corporations and state and local agencies to create community response and evacuation plans in the event of a railroad or highway disaster.
8. Work with appropriate corporations and state and local agencies to improve the appearance of the railroad viaducts within the Village of Amherst.