

ELEMENT 3: TRANSPORTATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A multi-modal transportation system serving Washburn County has a significant influence on the growth and development of the county, as well as contributing to the quality of life of county residents. A review of the county’s multi-modal transportation system not only confirms these linkages, but also identifies the growth impacts on the transportation system and the improvements programmed in response to these impacts. An analysis of transportation system trends provides further insight into the future transportation needs of Washburn County.

Vehicular transportation is the predominant form of transportation individual use in Frog Creek due to the limited forms of transportation available. The only other form of transportation of note is that of the recreational type. The following section describes the existing conditions of transportation facilities in the Town of Frog Creek.

3.2 TRANSPORTATION VISION AND VALUES

The Town of Frog Creek envisions managing demand for local transit while providing an appropriate level of service to sustain community businesses; providing for efficient and effective delivery of commercial, public, and emergency services, and encouraging the use of multi-modal means of transportation. The town also values a safe, efficient multi-modal transportation network that is planned, well maintained, and which meets the current and future needs of residents, visitors, and community businesses.

3.3 FACILITIES INVENTORY, CHARACTERISTICS AND PLANS

The Town of Frog Creek’s roadway network is comprised of 46.84 miles of highways and town roads. Roads within the community are classified by their functional use¹ and by the amount of traffic they sustain. Table 3.1 indicates the functional use of Frog Creek’s roadway network, while Map 3.1 visually depicts the functional classification in the Town of Frog Creek.

Table 3.1: Frog Creek Functional Roadway Classification		
Classification	Miles of Roadway	Percent of Town Roadway System
Principal arterials	0.00	0.0%
Minor arterials	8.20	17.5%
Major collectors	4.33	9.2%
Minor collectors	0.00	0.0%
Local Roads	34.31	73.2%
Total	46.84	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, District 8

¹ Functional Classification System: Groups streets and highways into classes according to the character of service they provide.

In the Town of Frog Creek, State Trunk Highway (STH) 77 is classified as a minor arterial highway on a statewide level. This highway serves as the central road corridor providing residents and visitors access to the community, while CTH “G” and other local roads provide routes to homes and recreational destinations both within and beyond the town.

Traffic Volume

Traffic volume recordings were too few in the town over the last 30 years to provide any meaningful inference.

Intersection Accidents

An inventory of traffic accidents at intersections was completed on a countywide level using a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) database. The database was queried to retrieve multiple accidents at intersections in the county from January of 1995 through December of 2001. In the Town of Frog Creek, no multiple accidents occurred at any intersection in the seven-year period.

PASER Roadway Evaluation

On a biannual basis (most recent – 2005), the Town of Frog Creek conducts a state mandated roadway evaluation known as PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating). The rating system is intended to assist the town in planning for roadway improvements and to better allocate its financial resources for these improvements. Currently, there are approximately 34 miles of local roadways that the Town of Frog Creek is responsible for repairing and/or maintaining throughout the year. This mileage may fluctuate from year to year due to additions or subtractions of roadway miles to the overall town system. During the inventory, roadways in the town were evaluated and rated in terms of their surface condition, drainage, and road crown. Paved roads were rated from 1 to 10 (10 being the best), and gravel roads were rated from 1 to 5 (5 being the best). For information on how to rate local roads, you can reference one of six manuals produced by the Transportation Information Center. These include manuals on Concrete, Asphalt, Gravel, Unimproved, Sealcoated roads, and a Rural & Urban Drainage Manual.

Road Weight Restrictions & Limitations

In the spring the town board imposes weight restrictions (Frost Laws) to lower the allowable weight on most roads in recognition of the instability caused by winter frost activity. Some roads, however, have been designated as all-season roads, and are exempt from springtime weight restrictions.

3.4 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to local roads are critical for maintaining an adequate and safe roadway system. Future road improvements are generally based on current road conditions, with the intent to keep all roadways intact and useable on a daily basis. Future roadway improvements need to be flexible because of the possibility of unforeseen emergencies or disasters that may arise from year to year, or even day to day. The Town of Frog Creek has developed a schedule of road improvements. There are currently six scheduled town roadway improvements and one county road improvement in the next four years. (Table 3.2)

Table 3.2: Roadway Improvements, 2005-2009

Year	Sponsor	Road/Street	Location	Mileage	Type of Improvement
2005	Frog Creek	Salisbury Road	--	N/A	Reconstruct, gravel and brush
2005	Frog Creek	Salisbury Bridge	--	N/A	New Construction
2005	Frog Creek	Town	--	N/A	Brush gravel roads
2006	Frog Creek	Totagatic Trails	--	N/A	Grind and blacktop
2006	Frog Creek	Frog Creek Road	Intersection of Totagatic Trails	N/A	Replace culverts & repair blacktop
2006	Frog Creek	Town	All	N/A	Brush gravel roads
2009	County	CTH G	Frog Creek Rd to Douglas Co.	2.49 miles	NA

Source: Town of Frog Creek & Washburn County Highway Dept.

Funding for local roadway improvements is generally done through the town’s general fund by either local tax funds or state programs. One state program providing funds to the town is the General Transportation Aids (GTA) program. GTA helps defray a portion of the costs of construction, maintaining, and operating local town roads and bridges. Funding is based on several factors, including road mileage under its jurisdiction and the amount of its own resources it has spent on that mileage over the past six years. In 2005, the Town of Frog Creek will receive an estimated \$60,686.60 in GTA. The Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP) is another state program providing funds to units of government for improving seriously deteriorating town roads. TRIP will fund up to 50 percent of total eligible project costs, with the balance matched by the local unit of government. A TRIP-Discretionary (TRIP-D) program is also available for transportation improvement projects exceeding \$100,000.

3.5 AIR TRANSPORTATION

No scheduled passenger flights are available in the Town of Frog Creek. The nearest airports providing regular scheduled passenger flights to domestic and international destinations are located in Eau Claire WI, Duluth, Minnesota or Minneapolis-St. Paul. Charter air service is also available at the Rice Lake Air Center-Regional Airport. At present, there are two public and nine private airport/airfields within Washburn County. Their county location and present status are outlined in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Washburn County Airports/Airfields

Airport / Airfield	Location	Owner/Operator	Status
Will-B-Gon Airport	Birchwood	William Cyr	Private
Lilac Time Airport	Birchwood	Robert Gillette	Private
Ben Sutherland Airport	Minong	Byron Bright	Private
Four Seasons Airport	Sarona	William Plumeri	Private
Long Lake Seaplane Base	Sarona	Henry Didlier	Private
Shell Lake Municipal Airport	City of Shell Lake	City of Shell Lake	Public
Nest of Eagles Airport	Spooner	K. Johnson	Public
Spooner Hospital Heliport	Spooner	Spooner Hospital	Private

Table 3.3: Washburn County Airports/Airfields

Airport / Airfield	Location	Owner/Operator	Status
Springbrook Airport	Springbrook	Clifford Ingbretson	Private
Lakewood Lodge Airport	Stone Lake	Robert Gillette	Private
Warbirds North Airport	Trego	Arland Fox	Private

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics

3.6 MULTI-USE TRAILS

Throughout Washburn County, there are several hundred miles of multi-use trails. This network is used most intensely during the winter months for snowmobiling, and in the summer months for ATV use, which in addition to its recreational use, provides an alternate means of commuting (other than car travel) for some Washburn County residents. There is one designated snowmobile trail in the town; one part is called the Frog Creek Trail and the other is Trail #39-8. Also present is an ATV trail running east and west through the town. Frog Creek’s motorized and non-motorized trail systems are further described in the “Utilities and Community Facilities” section of this Comprehensive Plan.

3.7 ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION

Section 5310, Wisconsin State Statute-Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program provides for capital assistance to be used in serving the special transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities for whom public transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. The grants available through this program cover up to 80 percent of the cost of purchasing vehicles that will be used in specialized transportation service for elderly and/or disabled persons as well as for anyone for whom room is available in the vehicle. At present, there are no designated pick-up or drop-off sites located in the Town of Frog Creek relating to this program.

3.8 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Currently no bus service exists within the Town of Frog Creek. Closest access to commercial bus transportation is available by Greyhound Bus Lines in Duluth, MN or Ironwood, MI.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* (1998) presents a blueprint for improving and expanding bicycle transportation routes in the state. There are no plans to expand state bicycle routes into the Town of Frog Creek. WisDOT, along with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin has compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights the most favorable bicycling conditions in northern Wisconsin. In the Town of Frog Creek on STH 77, bicyclists are prohibited or not recommended. CTH G is considered to have the best conditions for biking in the town.

3.9 TRUCKING AND WATER TRANSPORTATION

Trucking through the town is accommodated through the highway network and typically is subject to road weight restrictions, and water transportation is solely utilized for recreational purposes.

3.10 RAIL SYSTEM

Canadian National operates a railway that bisects the northwest corner of the Town of Frog Creek. This railway runs from Superior to Manitowoc, and is used mostly for the shipment of freight. No waterborne commerce/routes are available in the town. The nearest access to waterborne commerce is the Port of Duluth/Superior.

3.11 NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNS AND MOBILITY

Due to the Town of Frog Creek being primarily rural in nature, the ability to functionally provide a full range of transportation choices to its residents has limitations. However, it is the desire of the town that when possible and financially feasible, alternative transportation modes be investigated and developed into new designs (subdivisions etc.). A number of the objectives and action statements made by the town support the overall development of a multi-modal transportation system. Due to the rural nature of the town, full implementation of a town-wide pedestrian/trail system may be difficult. However, in areas more densely populated, designs targeted to better pedestrian movement may be adapted.

Transportation costs to a developer in meeting the town requirements for minimum road standards can have an impact to total project development costs. It is recommended that developers consider a more compact cluster design of building lots (residential, commercial, and industrial), with green space to minimize the total mileage of road construction. The total cost savings can be significant to the developer and, in turn, can reduce for the town the total mileage required for maintenance when designated as a town road. In the future, as commercial development occurs, the placement of frontage roads with limited access to local, county, and state roadways will minimize traffic congestion and have the potential to increase safety.

3.12 SUMMARY OF EXISTING TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Washburn County Highway Department 5-Year Road Project Schedule.

The Washburn County Highway department has a preliminary road construction schedule in place for scheduled county road improvements for the next five years. One improvement in the Town of Frog Creek on CTH G is tentatively planned in 2009. See Table 3.2 for more information.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin. The plan does not identify any projects in the Town of Frog Creek in the next 20 years.

Corridors 2020

Corridors 2020 sets criteria for selected routes that go beyond traditional highway planning with the intent to enhance and improve all two-lane and four-lane highways connecting cities of 5,000 inhabitants or more. This does not pertain to the Town of Frog Creek, as no corridor 2020 primary or secondary route passes through the town.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* (1998) presents a blueprint for improving and expanding bicycle transportation routes in the state. There are no plans to expand state bicycle routes into the Town of Frog Creek at this time.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020

This plan provides a statewide framework to increase walking and to promote pedestrian safety. The plan establishes goals, objectives, and actions regarding the provision of pedestrian accommodations that could be implemented locally. The plan also serves to help communities identify actions they can take to establish pedestrian travel as a viable, convenient, and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2020

The Five-Year Airport Improvement Program, which is produced by WisDOT’s Bureau of Aeronautics, is published annually and includes an overview of the process through which it developed. This document provides a snapshot of the scheduled airport improvement projects to date for the next five years. There are no airports or airfields in the Town of Frog Creek.

2003 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The *2003 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) provides an analysis of local conditions, identifies problems, needs, and opportunities of the ten-county region, and defines the vision, goals, and objectives of the region. Within the document, specific transportation objectives and activities have been identified on a regional basis. Based on a review of the 2003 CEDS and that of the transportation goals and objectives of the Town of Frog Creek, the transportation goals and objectives are complementary and no conflicts exist.

3.13 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

A set of recommended transportation goals, objectives, and action steps has been developed to assist the Town of Frog Creek in achieving the identified objectives and overall goal.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STATEMENTS

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of our users.

1. Maintain and require an interconnected road network.
 - a. Maintain communications with county for continued improvements to county roads.
 - b. Monitor the conditions of logging roads used in the town, and suggest conversations that will result in the proper maintenance of these roads.
 - c. Continue PASER evaluations to determine need for improvements to town roads.
 - d. Research need for additional roads if development increases in the town.

2. Support trail development for other modes of traffic.
 - a. Work with county and other groups to foster cooperation regarding the development of new trails for identified and preferred modes of recreational traffic.
 - b. Research the need for ordinances to control the use of existing and new trails.
 - c. Investigate the need or demand for hiking and biking trails.

3. Encourage future growth options in other types of transportation.
 - a. Cooperate with surrounding jurisdictions on the development of new transportation options in the future, such as rail, bus, etc.
 - b. Research cooperative efforts to provide transport for the elderly and disabled.
 - c. Investigate the feasibility of constructing an airfield in the Town of Frog Creek.