

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 Stinnett 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 Stinnett.

3.2 SMART GROWTH REQUIREMENTS

This element includes a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs to guide the future development and maintenance of various modes of transportation in the Town of Stinnett. Given the town’s rural setting, the primary focus is on highways and local roads. The element also compares the town’s transportation policies and programs to other local, state, and regional transportation plans as required under SS66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

3.3 TRANSPORTATION VISION AND VALUES

Transportation Vision

The Town of Stinnett 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.

Transportation Value

The Town of Stinnett 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.

3.4 FACILITIES INVENTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

Functional Classification System

The Town of Stinnett’s roadway network is comprised of 37.79 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 Stinnett’s roadway network, while Map 3.1 visually depicts the functional classification in the Town of Stinnett.

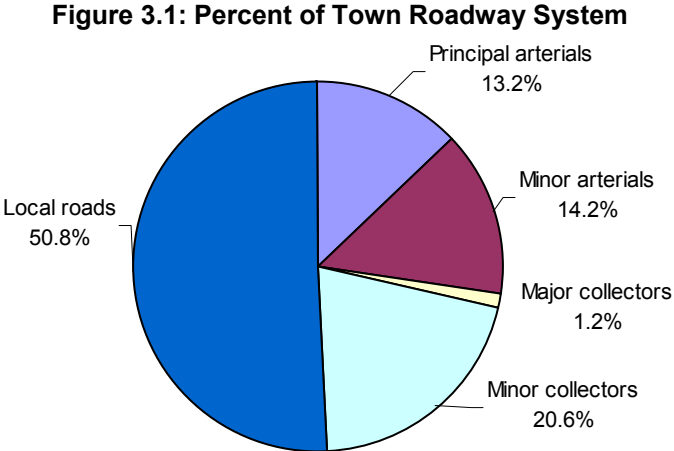


Table 3.1: Functional Classification of Roadways in the Town of Stinnett

| Classification | Miles of Roadway | Percent of Town Roadway System |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Principal arterials | 4.98 | 14.4% |
| Minor arterials | 5.36 | 15.5% |
| Major collectors | 0.47 | 1.4% |
| Minor collectors | 7.77 | 22.5% |
| Local Roads | 19.21 | 46.2% |
| Total | 37.79 | 100.0% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, District 8

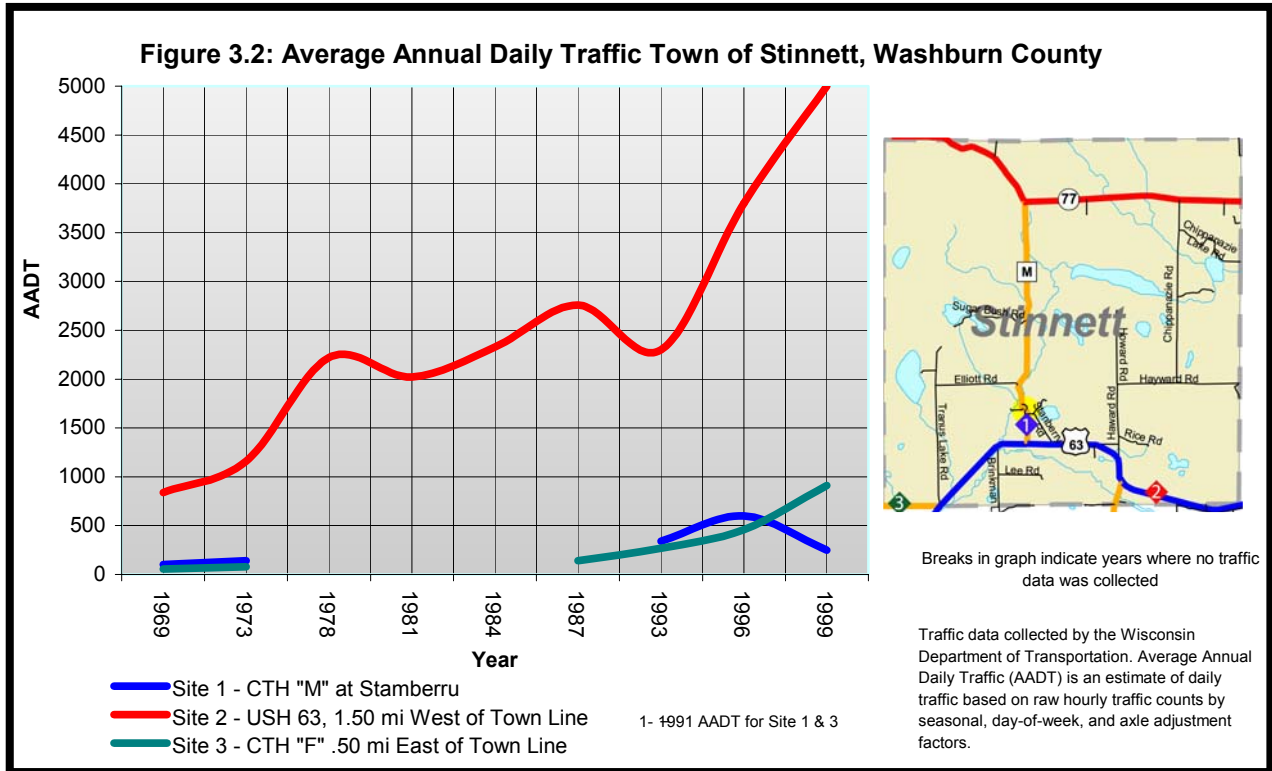
In the Town of Stinnett, US Highway 63 is classified as a principal arterial highway on a statewide level. This highway carries higher traffic volumes than any other roads and provides links to major activity centers. STH 77 is classified as a minor arterial and along with CTH’s “E” and “M” and other local roads provide routes to homes and recreational destinations both within and beyond the town.

Traffic Volume

Figure 3.2 depicts the change in traffic volume at recording sites on roads passing through the Town of Stinnett. As is indicated in the graph, site two along USH 63 has shown the highest amount of traffic increase of all roadways in the town measured since 1969.

The increase in traffic in and around the Town of Stinnett and throughout Washburn County can be attributed to two main factors. First, since 1969, residents of the town and surrounding towns are making more frequent vehicular trips for shopping, commuting to work, and to recreational sites. Secondly, many areas of Washburn County have seen a significant increase in population density and the development of second homes owned by seasonal residents of the town.

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



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 Stinnett, nine accidents were identified at four different intersections in the town. No fatalities resulted in any of these accidents. Accident locations can be found on Map 3.2. Plan committee discussion has also centered on the dangerous situation that the “S” curves on DTH M presents in the Stanberry area near the town hall. The town intends to work with the county to research the straightening of this section of road to eliminate possible future accidents. This is particularly the case with semi-trailer trucks, which have difficulty navigating the “S” curves without crossing into oncoming lanes of traffic.

PASER Roadway Evaluation

In summer 2001, the Town of Stinnett, with assistance from Northwest Regional Planning Commission, conducted 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 19 miles of roadways that the Town of Stinnett 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.

3.5 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 years to year or even day to day. The Town of Stinnett has developed a schedule of road improvements. There are currently five scheduled town roadway improvements in the next five years (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Selected Roadway Improvements, 2002-2006

| Year | Sponsor | Road/Street | Location | Mileage | Type of Improvement |
|------|----------|--------------|--|----------|--------------------------------|
| 2005 | Stinnett | Hayward Road | From the section completed above east to the junction with Chippanazie Road | .4 miles | Hot mix overlay Shouldering |
| 2006 | Stinnett | Hayward Road | From the junction of Chippanazie Road east on Hayward Road to Sawyer County line | 1 mile | Hot mix overlay Shouldering |

Source: Town of Stinnett

Washburn County Road Improvement Plan

The Washburn County Highway Department has a road construction schedule in place for scheduled county road improvements for the next seven years. There are no scheduled improvements slated for the Town of Stinnett.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan

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 Stinnett 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 Stinnett, as no corridor 2020 primary or secondary route passes through the town. No conflicts with the Town of Stinnett Comprehensive Plan exist.

3.6 AIRPORTS AND AVIATION

No scheduled passenger flights are available in the Town of Stinnett. 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 is two public and nine private airport/airfields within Washburn County. Their county location and present status is 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 | Warren Lewis | 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 |
| Springbrook Airport | Springbrook | Clifford Ingbretson | Private |
| Lakewood Lodge Airport | Birchwood | Robert Gillette | Private |
| Un-named | Birchwood | Wallace Fisk | Private |
| Warbirds North Airport | Trego | Arland Fox | Private |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics, 2001

Airport Improvements

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 by which it was 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 Stinnett, therefore, there are no scheduled improvements.

3.7 NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNS AND MOBILITY

Due to the Town of Stinnett 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.

3.8 OTHER TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS

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 route into the Town of Stinnett. The WisDOT, along with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin have compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights the most favorable bicycling conditions in northern Wisconsin. In the Town of Stinnett, part of STH 77 is categorized as moderate conditions for biking and part is categorized as undesirable conditions for biking, while all of STH 63 in Stinnett is categorized as moderate conditions for biking. CTH M is considered the best roadway for biking in the town.

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. 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. No specific recommendations to the Town of Stinnett exist.

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. Trail #39 is the only designated trail in the town, and it is exclusively used for snowmobiling. According to the Washburn County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 1996-2005, the present plan does not recognize a need for ATV funded trails or additional snowmobile trails on the forest. Stinnett's motorized and non-motorized trail systems is further described in the "Utilities and Community Facilities" element of the comprehensive plan.

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 disables 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 Stinnett relating to this program.

Public Transit

No bus service exists within the Town of Stinnett. The closest access to commercial bus transportation is available by greyhound bus lines in Duluth, MN; Ironwood, MI; or Eau Claire, WI. NWT Express, operating from the City of Hayward also provides ground passenger transportation. NWT Express provides transit service between Hayward and Minneapolis/St. Paul seven days a week with scheduled stops at several communities en route.

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 primarily utilized for recreational purposes.

Rail System

Wisconsin Central Limited operates a railway that bisects the Town of Stinnett from north to south. This railway runs from Superior to Manitowoc, and is used mostly for the shipment of freight. The Great Northern railroad owns a small portion of track in the far southern part of the town. This track operates a historic excursion and dinner train operating on approximately 20 miles of former Chicago & Northwestern track between the northern Wisconsin Towns of Spooner and Springbrook along the picturesque Namekagon River. This family oriented attraction combines historic railroad equipment with exciting special events to entertain and educate all age groups. No future expansion has been identified.

3.9 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STATEMENTS

Goal: To provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users.

Objective 1: Create and preserve existing motorized and non-motorized trails on county forestland keeping safety issues in mind and providing reasonable access and parking that will encourage public use.

- A. Work with local clubs and organizations interested in various modes of transportation (i.e. snowmobiles and ATVs).
- B. Work with the county to develop a plan to expand our county forest trails and usage in the township.

Objective 2: Consider the future needs of the transportation infrastructure to meet the safe needs of land use.

- A. Coordinate with other jurisdictions regarding safe transportation needs.
- B. Research expanded rail line usage

- Objective 3: Continue high quality maintenance of present and future town roadways.*
- A. Monitor and update the road capital improvement plan on a regular basis.
 - B. Coordinate with the county and identify problem areas along county highway M and town roads.
- Objective 4: Consider public transportation options.*
- A. Encourage public involvement on future needs of public transportation options.
 - B. Investigate possible transport programs for elderly and disabled.