

ELEMENT 3 - TRANSPORTATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The transportation network is the backbone upon which a community bases its economy, access to resources and connection to other communities forming a critical link to continued development and growth. Maintenance and repair, in addition to periodic additions and enhancements to this system, are essential for preserving connectivity for residents, visitors, and businesses. Keeping pace with changes in transportation trends and network use is also essential to anticipate needed improvements and potential additions to the transportation network.

Vehicular transportation is the predominant form of transportation for individual use in Springbrook 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 Springbrook.

3.2 TRANSPORTATION VISION AND VALUES

The Town of Springbrook 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 TRANSPORTATION INVENTORY, CHARACTERISTICS, AND PLANS

Functional Classification System

The Town of Springbrook’s transportation system consists of principal arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads. Certain areas of the town can also accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel. However, private vehicles are the primary means of transportation in, through, and around the town. The town’s roadway network is comprised of approximately 54 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 below indicates the functional use of the town’s roadway network, while Map 3.1 visually depicts the functional classification in the Town of Springbrook.

In the Town of Springbrook, 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. County Trunk Highway’s “E” and “M” and other local roads provide routes to homes and recreational destinations both within and beyond the town.

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

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

Classification	Miles of Roadway	Percent of Town Roadway System
Principal arterials	7.78	14.5%
Minor arterials	0.00	0.0%
Major collectors	3.64	6.8%
Minor collectors	8.70	16.2%
Local Roads	33.65	62.6%
Total	53.77	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, District 8

3.4 TRAFFIC VOLUME

Figure 3.1 depicts change in traffic volumes at recording sites on roads passing through the Town of Springbrook. 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. Additionally, traffic volume along site one on CTH M into and out of Springbrook has shown a modest increase over the 30-year period.

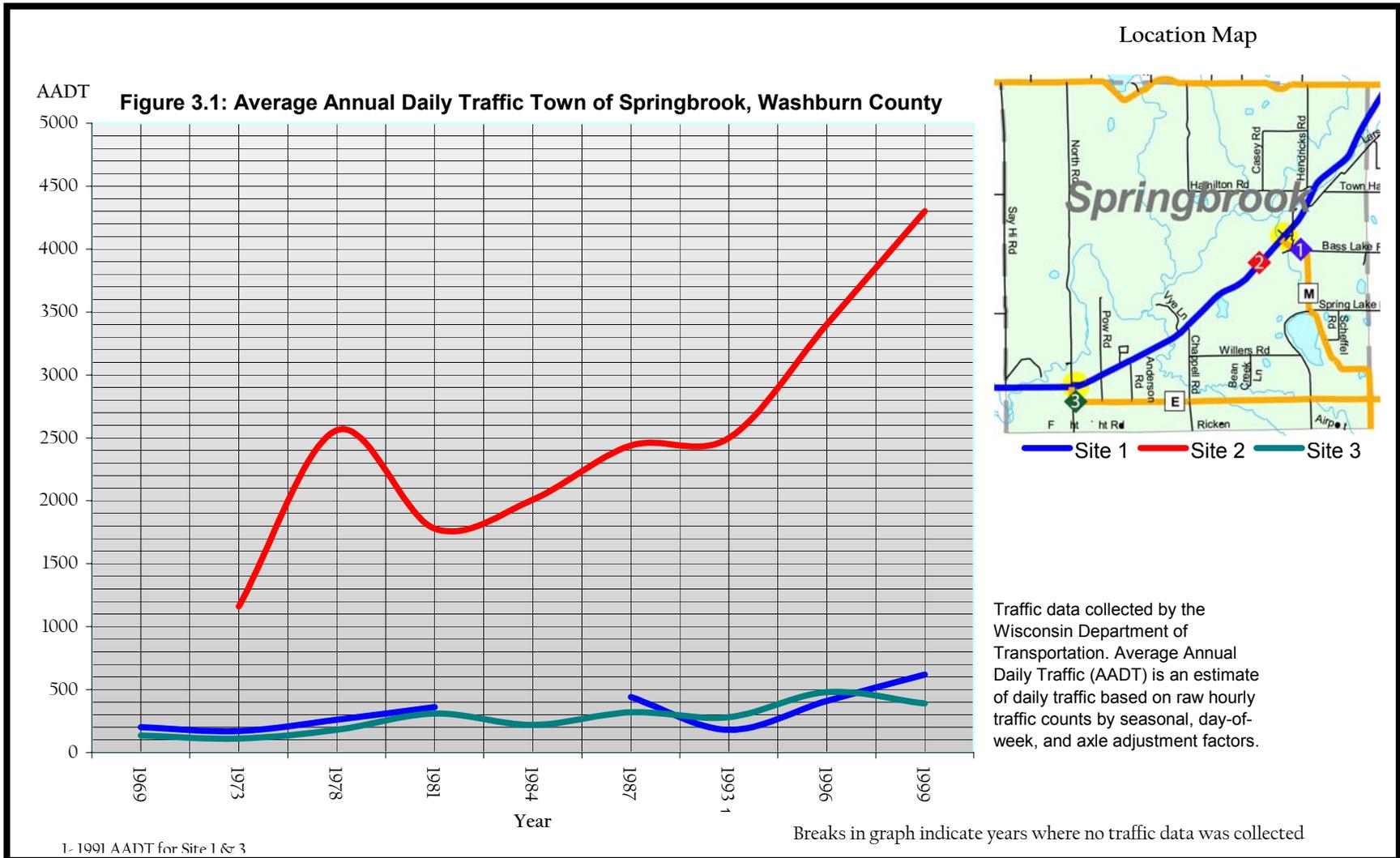
The increase in traffic in and around the Town of Springbrook and throughout Washburn County can be attributed to two main factors. First, since 1969, residents of the town and surrounding towns are making more frequent vehicular trips for shopping, commuting to work, and to recreational sites. Secondly, 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.

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 Springbrook, two accidents were identified at the intersection of USH 63 and CTH M. A map depicting multiple intersection accidents can be found in the transportation element of the *Washburn County Comprehensive Plan*.

PASER Roadway Evaluation

In summer 2001, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission conducted a state mandated roadway evaluation known as PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating) for the Town of Springbrook. 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 roadways that the Town of Springbrook 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, the town 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. Table 3.2 lists the Town of Springbrook’s scheduled road improvements.

Washburn County Road Improvement Plan

The Washburn County Highway Department has a tentative road construction schedule in place for scheduled county road improvements for 2005-2009. There are no scheduled county improvements in the Town of Springbrook.

State of Wisconsin Six Year Highway Improvement Program

There are no state highway projects slated in the Town of Springbrook through 2008.

Year	Sponsor	Road/Street	Type of Improvement
2005	Springbrook	Trepainia Road	Seal coat
2005	Springbrook	Lumbard Lane	Seal coat
2005	Springbrook	Willers Road	Seal coat
2005	Springbrook	Friday Street	Hot mix
2006	Springbrook	Airport Road	Seal coat
2006	Springbrook	Pine Road	Hot mix
2006	Springbrook	Legion Lane	Seal coat
2006	Springbrook	Hendrick Road	Hot mix
2006	Springbrook	Earl Street	Hot mix
2006	Springbrook	Chappell Road	Hot mix
2006	Springbrook	Edgerton Road	Hot mix
2007	Springbrook	Pow Road	Seal coat
2007	Springbrook	Anderson Road	Seal coat
2007	Springbrook	Larsen Road	Seal coat
2007	Springbrook	Andrews Road	Hot mix
2007	Springbrook	Geno Lane	Seal coat

Source: Town of Springbrook

3.6 AIRPORTS AND AVIATION

No scheduled passenger flights are available in the Town of Springbrook. 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. One private airfield, the Springbrook Airport, is in the Town of Springbrook and is registered with the DOT Bureau of Aeronautics. 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.

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
Sarona 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	City of Spooner	Spooner Hospital	Private
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, 2001

3.7 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. Springbrook’s motorized and non-motorized trail systems is further described in the “Utilities and Community Facilities” section of the Comprehensive Plan.

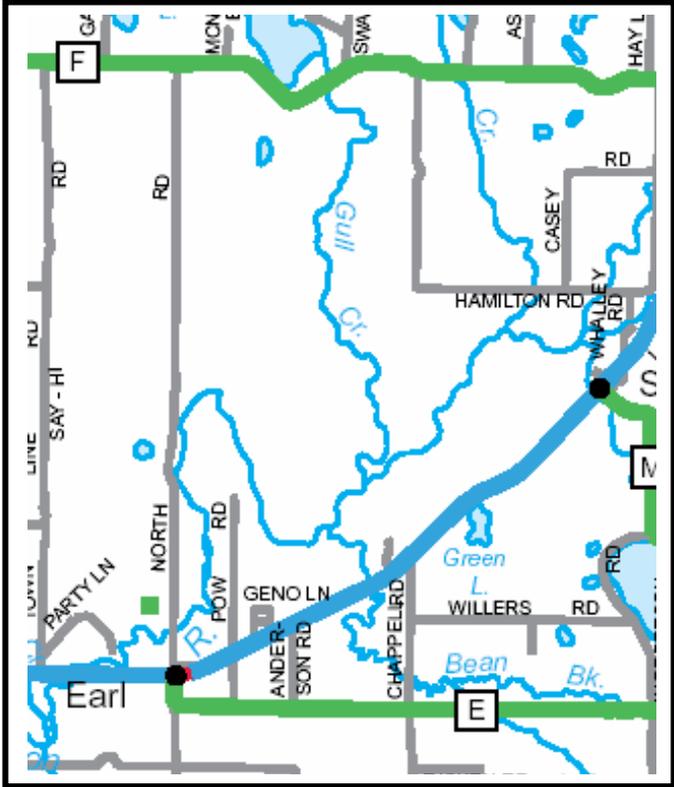
Pedestrian Facilities

Most local town roads in the Town of Springbrook have limited shoulder areas and the speed limits are usually more than 45 miles per hour unless posted otherwise. A motor vehicle creates a dust hazard for pedestrians on gravel roads. These conditions hamper safe pedestrian travel opportunities. Moreover, given the low-density development pattern of the town and the fact that nearly all goods and services are located several miles away in nearby cities, walking to places of work, shopping, or entertainment is not realistic for most residents. This situation is not anticipated to change over the 20-year planning period.

Bicycling Opportunties

The WisDOT, along with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, has compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights bicycling conditions on select roadways in northern Wisconsin. In the Town of Springbrook, STH 63 is rated as having moderate conditions for bicycling. County Highways E, F, and M are considered to have the best conditions for biking. Most of the rural State Trunk Highway system now has a three-foot or wider paved shoulder. While shoulders are generally paved for maintenance and safety purposes, they also provide suitable accommodations for bicycle travel. See Figure 3.2 for biking conditions in the Town of Springbrook.

Figure 3.2: Town of Springbrook Biking Conditions



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 Springbrook relating to this program.

Public Transit

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

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. The closest port available for the delivery or shipment of waterborne commerce is approximately an hour and a half north of the town at the Duluth/Superior Port.

Rail System

The Great Northern railroad owns and operates a track, which diagonals the town in a southwestern to northeastern fashion. This track runs 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 plans for future expansion have been identified.

3.8 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 routes into the Town of Springbrook.

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 Springbrook exist.

Washburn County Road Improvement Plan

The Washburn County Highway department has a road tentative construction schedule in place for scheduled county road improvements for the next seven years.

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 Springbrook in the next 20 years. STH 63 is classified as a state collector. There are 1,700 miles of sub-system collectors in the State of Wisconsin, which are used for short trips within an area and to access adjacent land.

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 Springbrook, as no corridor 2020 primary or secondary route passes through the town

Connections 2030

Connections 2030 is the second generation Statewide Transportation Plan after Translinks 21, and is now in progress. The planning process will update Wisconsin’s comprehensive, long-range multi-modal transportation plan. It will provide a broad planning framework for the next 25 years, guiding transportation policies, programs and investments through 2030.

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 was developed. This document provides a snapshot of the scheduled airport improvement projects to date for the next five years. There are no scheduled airport/airfield improvements in the Town of Springbrook.

2005 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The *2005 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.

3.9 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

A set of recommended transportation goals, objectives, and action steps has been developed to assist the Town of Springbrook. Implementation of the identified actions will allow the town to achieve the identified objectives and overall goal of a safe and efficient transportation system while preserving the aesthetic qualities of the town.

Transportation

Goal: A safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system, which accommodates the movement of people and goods.	
OBJECTIVES	Actions
1. Continue to maintain and upgrade town roadways.	Follow road upgrade and maintenance plans developed by the town board.
	Continue to monitor and update road improvement plan.
2. Control the expansion of ATV traffic.	Work with county and other pertinent enforcement agencies to control and regulate ATV traffic.

Goal: A safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system, which accommodates the movement of people and goods.	
OBJECTIVES	Actions
3. Enforce ATV regulations.	Investigate ordinances that might be of help in regulation of these vehicles.
4. Regulate jet ski and large boat traffic.	Research present regulations and enforcements for these recreational vehicles.
	Develop enforcement ordinances where necessary.
5. Research senior transportation needs.	Communicate with local/regional transportation agencies to determine future plans and improvements for senior transport needs.

Due to the town being rural in nature, the ability for the Town of Springbrook to 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 neighborhood designs. 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 like that of the Earl and Springbrook areas and subdivisions, designs targeted to better pedestrian movement may be adapted in the future.

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, where possible, developers consider a more compact design of building lots (residential, commercial, and industrial) to minimize the total mileage of road construction. The cost saving can be significant to the developer and, in turn, can reduce for the town the total mileage required to maintain when designated as a town road.