

**TRANSPORTATION PLAN ELEMENT
OF THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

VOLUME II

(Companion document to VOLUME I of the Winnebago County Comprehensive
Plan)

**Adopted by Winnebago County Board of Supervisors:
March 21, 2006**

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Wayne R. Volkman
Curt H. Solberg
Mary Jo Pankratz
Brigit Duley

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INTRODUCTION

The Transportation element of Winnebago County's Comprehensive Plan has been developed to consider, on a countywide basis, all types of transportation-related planning. The Plan is designed to fulfill a number of functions:

- 1) To guide public expenditures for transportation improvements for all modes of transportation, not just roadways and transit.
- 2) To advise local communities on the larger transportation framework for the county as a whole.
- 3) To serve as a guide for the Winnebago County Planning Committee in their understanding of the various modes of transportation and to assist the Committee in making land use recommendations that relate to the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Winnebago County roadway network is being impacted by several factors, those being:

- 1) The County is at the axis of a State Highway System heavily used by tourists, hunters, and those that own a second home in Wisconsin's northwoods. This type of through traffic contributes towards the need for adequate road capacity, especially during the weekends.
- 2) The growth of the urban centers in the "Fox Cities" and Oshkosh area creates the need for east-west highway corridors for those who live in the rural section of the western half of the County, but work, shop or recreate in the eastern urban area of the County.
- 3) Due to regional traffic capacity needs, major roadways in the County (U.S. Highway 41, U.S. Highway 10, State Highway 21, U.S. Highway 45) have seen major reconstruction projects over the next 10 years. Because of the increased carrying capacity of these highways, the efficiency and shortened time of travel throughout the County may increase the interest of homeowners to live in rural areas of the County.

If greater than ever interest in rural housing development occurs due to improved access, the rural landscape of the County will begin to disappear and the demand for increased services upon rural Towns, the County, and local School Districts (busing issues) will undoubtedly occur.

All political entities in the County will need to agree on effective land use regulations that would avoid the urbanization of the County's rural areas, if in fact the County wants to preserve its rural character. This issue will need to be addressed in other elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

1) TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

In 1991, Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Passage of ISTEA in 1991 required all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to update and adopt long-range transportation plans that conformed to ISTEA's metropolitan planning requirements. ISTEA's requirements emphasized multimodal transportation, a strong transportation/land use interrelationship and an expanded public involvement process.

In response to this legislation, East Central Regional Plan Commission held a series of public meetings to obtain public input that would meet ISTEA's requirements for long-range transportation and land use planning. An extensive issues-identification process involving representatives of governmental agencies, area officials, environmental groups, developers, business groups, civic organizations, minority advocates, and interested citizens, took place late in 1993.

The following goals, objectives, and policies were the consensus of the meetings that were sponsored by East Central Regional Plan Commission' staff. This effort included all of Winnebago County, and the incorporation of these goals, objectives, and policies into this Comprehensive Plan is a logical extension of the previous efforts made by many of the residents and businessman that participated in the formation of these goals and objectives. In addition, the town/city/county comprehensive planning group revised some of the policies to better reflect the desires of communities in Winnebago County.

Transportation Goals and Objectives

OVERALL GOAL. The County transportation program is to achieve a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation system that provides personal mobility for all segments of the population and supports the economy of the County.

To attain this goal, the following objectives have been defined:

1. • **Integrated planning.** To integrate the transportation program with other functional elements of comprehensive planning in recognition of the fact that the primary objective of a transportation system is to connect or relate activity locations.
2. • **Maximum system effectiveness for all residents.** To plan for the travel needs of the region's population through consideration of the capabilities and preferences of all population subgroups and in so doing determine the relative effectiveness of various system alternatives.

3. • **An efficient street and highway system.** To provide a street and highway system which, together with other transportation facilities, will meet short and long-range needs, interests, and objectives of the County's citizens in a cost-effective manner.
4. • **Safety.** To reduce the potential for traffic accidents and provide for safe transportation throughout the County.
5. • **Minimum environmental disruption.** To encourage development of a transportation system that minimizes environmental disruption and strives to maintain a quality environment.
6. • **Compatibility with land use patterns.** To develop a transportation system compatible with existing and future land use patterns.
7. • **Conservation of energy.** To provide a transportation system that recognizes energy supply uncertainties and promotes the conservation of energy resources.
8. • **Multimodal interaction.** To provide an integrated transportation system that enables best use of the capabilities of individual modes and modal combinations, including rail and trucking facilities, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian travel and air transportation.

OBJECTIVE #1: Integrated Planning. To integrate the transportation program with other functional elements of comprehensive planning in recognition of the fact that the primary objective of a transportation system is to connect or relate land use or activity locations.

Policies

- Local units of government in the county should adopt Citizen Participation Plans as part of their Comprehensive Planning/Transportation Planning process.
- The Winnebago County transportation system should be continually evaluated, deficiencies identified and solutions proposed in support of current land use, desired patterns of future development and adopted local comprehensive plans.
- The County and local units of government should continue to be proactive in promoting compatibility among local, regional, and state transportation policies by incorporating adopted urban and regional transportation plans and by attending State and local transportation meetings.
- The County's Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Coordination Committee should continue to promote compatibility between public and private transportation services.

OBJECTIVE#2: Maximum System Effectiveness for all Residents. To plan for the travel needs of the County's population through consideration of the capabilities and preferences of all population subgroups and in so doing, determine the relative effectiveness of various system alternatives.

Policies

- The transportation needs of all citizens should be considered. Funding for transportation policies and programs should be provided by local units of government as determined by local needs and priorities.

OBJECTIVE #3: An efficient street and highway system. To provide a street and highway system which, together with other transportation facilities, will meet the short and long-range needs, interests and objectives of the County's citizens in a cost-effective manner.

Policies

- Local units of government in the County should adopt regulations concerning the use of highways, including those which prevent the deterioration of structures and the highway surface.
- Development of new or expanded highway corridors should only be considered after a determination that alternative transportation modes cannot address the need to:
 - a. Alleviate significant safety hazards.
 - b. Relieve communities of heavy through traffic burdens.
 - c. Alleviate traffic congestion.
 - d. Conserve energy in highway use.
 - e. Stimulate economic development.
 - f. Provide a framework for future planned land use.
- Through local comprehensive plans the highway system in the County should be designed to adequately accommodate projected future highway travel growth and the potential modal choices necessary for the efficient movement of goods and people.
- Where private streets are allowed regulations allowing private streets must require right-of-way and design standards consistent with WisDOT's *Design Manual* for local streets.

- When proposing future Principal and Minor Arterial streets within their existing and “extraterritorial powers” jurisdictions should coordinate the planning and adjacent municipalities.
- To ensure compatibility County and municipality street and highway design standards should be based on functional class criteria set forth in WisDOT’s *Design Manual*.
- Adequate financial resources for upkeep and renewal of existing highways to prevent accelerated deterioration should be an annual and long-range consideration in the budgetary process.

OBJECTIVE #4: Safety. To reduce the potential for traffic accidents and provide for safe transportation throughout the County.

Policies

- Access control ordinances should be adopted by County and Town governments to provide the level of access control appropriate to the function of the highway.
- Annually, local units of governments should review accident-producing facility deficiencies and assign priorities for correction.
- Educational programs should be expanded to include pedestrian, motorcycle and bicycle safety and the safe use of public transportation.
- To ensure safe movement of hazardous material through our communities, transportation improvements should conform to guidelines set by local emergency services and state and federal regulations.
- Safe speed limits and laws dealing with drunk driving should be strictly enforced.
- County, City and town street design standards should be adequate for the legal speeds, sizes, and weights of vehicles.
- Design speed and accident exposure rate standards should be used by local units of governments to mark and sign roads where appropriate.
- The County should continue to mark and light harbors and other navigable waters where appropriate.
- Future infrastructure improvements by local units of governments should reduce vehicle conflicts through roadway and intersection designs appropriate for the desired level of service.
- Where practical railway and highway grade crossings should be eliminated in low traffic areas and separated in high traffic areas and properly signalized in other areas.

OBJECTIVE #5: Minimum Environmental Disruption. To encourage development of a transportation system that minimizes environmental disruption and strives to maintain a quality environment.

Policies

- Local Comprehensive Plans/Transportation Plans should prevent the location of roadways through environmentally sensitive areas.
- Local transportation planning should protect historic or visually pleasing buildings and scenic, historic, scientific, and cultural sites when constructing new or improving existing transportation facilities.
- Local units of government through adopted ordinances should design transportation facilities to be aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to the natural landscape, incorporating such amenities as boulevards, berms and attractive landscaping on major arterials in urban areas and minimizing unsightly views such as junkyards, billboards, and strip commercial development in more rural areas.
- Local Transportation Plans should minimize air pollution through efficient traffic control measures and encourage transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.
- The County and municipalities should consider adopting noise set back ordinances or use Federal and State noise standards when approving subdivisions to ensure that residential areas, schools, or other places with high concentrations of people are not exposed to harmful levels of noise from transportation facilities.
- Natural water depths should be used to the maximum extent possible to avoid unnecessary dredging. Where dredging is necessary, disposal sites should be planned and located consistent with state solid waste disposal regulations and/or disposed of in a nuisance-free and aesthetic manner.
- All transport related sewerage and other facilities should be constructed and maintained so that their contribution to water pollution will be minimized and will meet appropriate State and local water quality standards.
- Transportation planning by local units of government should include using native vegetation along roadsides in areas of the County where it is appropriate to protect wildlife, reduce the use of herbicides, and cut maintenance costs.

OBJECTIVE #6: Compatibility with Land Use Patterns. To develop a transportation system compatible with existing and future land use patterns.

Policies

- The proper use of land for and adjacent to highways should be maximized by coordinating street and highway planning with local comprehensive plans.
- Penetration of neighborhood units by arterial streets and highways should be avoided except where it can be demonstrated by local Comprehensive/Transportation Plans that the proposed location and design will improve the ability of the area to function effectively.
- The County and municipalities should coordinate their transportation planning to minimize the amount of land used for right-of-ways and consider multiple use of right-of-ways.
- When constructing or improving roadways, prime farmland and farmable units should be preserved wherever possible.
- The County and municipalities should jointly map future right-of-ways to minimize disruption of future development.
- The accessibility by highway systems to serve areas where development is encouraged should follow locally adopted comprehensive plans.
- Transportation facilities should be designed to serve developing areas and promote compact development. New transportation facilities should not be extended to areas that are not considered development areas in the municipalities' comprehensive plan.

OBJECTIVE #7: Conservation of energy. To provide a transportation system that recognizes energy supply uncertainties and promotes the conservation of energy resources.

Policies

- Local governments should develop transportation policies to conserve transportation energy and meet contingency situations in case of fuel shortfalls.
- Development patterns that reduce the need for motorized travel should be promoted.
- Interruptions in traffic flow should be minimized.

- Highway facilities should be routed to provide the shortest travel paths for the greatest number of trips.
- Bypasses of urban areas should be constructed where serious traffic congestion can be alleviated.
- Highway facilities should be designed and maintained to conserve energy. This includes providing smooth pavements and the elimination of steep grades and sharp curves.
- The use of ride sharing and mass transportation should be encouraged.
- The most energy efficient methods of construction and maintenance should be identified and applied.

OBJECTIVE #8: Multimodal Interaction. To provide an integrated transportation system that makes best use of the capabilities of individual modes and modal combinations, including rail and trucking facilities, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian travel and air transportation.

Freight Transportation: To ensure that appropriate types and levels of freight transportation service are provided to the entire region.

Policies

- Rail service should be maintained according to standards set forth in the Wisconsin Rail Plan.
- Common-carrier truck service should be provided to areas of the region which show a need for such service.
- The location of truck and rail terminals should be determined cooperatively by public and private interests so that local community concerns are addressed and market demand is met.
- Efficient truck routing should be oriented to the freeway, expressway and high-level arterial network to facilitate truck traffic and to reduce conflicts with autos, pedestrians and bicyclists as well as to minimize deterioration of local roadways.
- Joint terminals and common pick-up and delivery services should be encouraged where efficient and practical for the transport companies concerned.
- Airfreight service should be provided at metropolitan and regional centers, where market demand is sufficient to support it.

Public Transportation: To develop public transportation into a viable alternative mode of transportation.

Policies

- During the planning process local governments should recommend the type of land use patterns and site design standards that can be efficiently served by public transportation.
- Public transportation should provide a level of service that is safe, convenient, comfortable, and affordable.
- Transportation services should be coordinated to increase efficiency and avoid overlap and duplication of service. Coordination should encompass public and private transportation services and include such travel demand management programs as ride-sharing, employee van pools, subsidized transit passes, park and ride lots, etc.
- Public transportation should be related to travel patterns within an urban area.
- Local municipalities should have the option to provide public transportation in urban areas using delivery systems appropriate to the density of development. Delivery systems include both fixed-route and demand-responsive services employing various sized buses, vans, and taxis.
- Funding and organizational mechanisms for public transportation should reflect the interconnectivity of jurisdictions within and between urban areas.
- Inter-city public transportation is a cooperative effort between municipalities and should serve populous areas of the region.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: To create a physical and cultural environment which encourages travel by foot or bicycle by making these modes of transportation safe, convenient, and attractive alternatives to motorized travel through the provision of adequate accommodations, education and enforcement, and more compact land use patterns.

Policies

- Future land use plans should plan for bicycle and pedestrian-related activities.
- Each development must consider the integration of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation and policies and ordinances should be adopted to require this as needed.

- Conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians should be minimized as much as practical.
- Pedestrian friendly street design and construction should be encouraged to increase walking and bicycling for transportation purposes.
- Provide uniform signing and marking of all bikeways and walkways throughout the Fox Cities region.
- Facilities and amenities that make bicycling and walking should be encouraged at destinations.
- A network of suitable on- and off-road routes should be encouraged, which provide linkage between important origins and destinations and interconnect with other modes of transportation.
- When practical natural and man-made corridors should be utilized for bicycle/pedestrian trails.
- County and municipalities should have maintenance practices to preserve bikeways and walkways in a smooth, clean and safe condition.
- Compact and mixed land use should be encouraged to increase opportunities for bicycling and walking.

Goal of County Trails Plan

The following goals for a County Trails Plan are as follows:

- Clarify the County's intent to encourage and establish a countywide network of trails
- Identify specific routes that the County, other governmental entities, and private property owners should aim to dedicate, acquire or donate for benefit of its constituents
- Identify rail corridors in which the County may have an interest, if and when abandonment is considered.
- Shorten the land acquisition approval process for new trails.
- Encourage inter-agency planning between the County, Towns, Villages, Cities, DOT, and other County Road departments for potential trail corridor links on public roadways.
- Encourage local governments to work together toward a common goal and encourage partnerships between local governments and the County

- Consider ways of having County trails become part of a regional trail system that connects with the statewide network.

Air Transportation: To provide and maintain a safe air transportation system to serve County development patterns and to meet travel and freight service demands of the County.

Policies

- Noise exposure forecast criteria should be considered when developing areas surrounding airports.
- Local units of governments should adopt zoning ordinances for every airport in the County to ensure compatible uses adjacent to each airport.
- Priority should be given to maintaining existing airport facilities in a safe condition before constructing new facilities.
- Master plans should be prepared for all airports in the region included in the Wisconsin Airport System plan.
- An airport system should be maintained to provide an adequate level of service to existing and anticipated patterns of development, especially areas of population concentration and activities which generate significant travel demands throughout the region.
- Airports should cause minimal disruption of the environment and natural resource base.
- Local comprehensive plans should reflect land proposed for new airports or expansion of existing airports.
- Each airport in the County should be designed to conform to standards and provide the type of service approved by Federal and State Agencies.
- The regional airport system should be integrated with other major transportation modes.
- Adequate parking areas should be maintained at all regional airports in the region.
- Air transportation facilities and services should be coordinated between county and regional facilities.

2) COMPARISON OF LOCAL OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, GOALS AND PROGRAMS TO STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS

General Comparison

In a forthcoming section of the Transportation Plan, the County's access control ordinance is explained. The County established an access control ordinance to protect the health, welfare and well being of its residents and visitors.

In the same way, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation operates from a set of policies and goals, much like Winnebago County, to manage the access to roadways. More specifically, based on state policies and goals to control access to State Roads, the following steps are taken to review, control, and grant access to State Roads:

- Purchasing access rights along with right-of-way needed for roadway projects
- Designating "controlled access roadways" on which access is frozen
- Constructing relocated roadways to which no rights of access exist
- Working cooperatively with local units of government to review development plans, establish local land use/access management plans for State Road corridors, and creating alternative access to State Roads via the local road network
- Reviewing subdivision plats for lands abutting State Roads, developing access covenants to limit the number of accesses to a property, and issuing permits for new driveways onto State Roads.

Differences in Ordinances

The State of Wisconsin has recently instituted a rule that is more restrictive than what the County has instituted for County Roads. This new rule is known as Trans. 233, and affects all subdividing of land that abuts state numbered roadways.

In essence, Trans. 233 contains the following provisions:

- Direct access to a roadway is generally not permitted, and developers will be required to look for alternative options.
- Wis. DOT will more closely evaluate drainage from developments into road right-of-way.
- Setbacks along State Road frontage may become more restrictive, with a "no building" setback required for any type of project. Frontage setback is now 110 feet from the centerline or 50 feet from the right-of-way line, whichever is greater. The greater setback enables the State to improve facilities in the current roadway corridor without having to relocate the roadway or disrupt businesses and residences.