

TRANSPORTATION

Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(c)

Transportation

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.

INTRODUCTION

Sawyer County’s primary transportation mode consists of local, federal, state and County roads provide residents and visitors the ability to traverse the countryside for employment, shopping or leisure. The land use pattern has in large part been driven by the development of roadways serving residential and commercial structures. While personal vehicles and commercial trucking are the prominent modes of travel, public transit is available in many areas and is gaining ridership. In addition, air, pedestrian, and bicycle are also important modes of travel.

EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK

The existing roadway network is represented in Map 2. The natural environment of forests, rivers and lakes characterizes the County and local roadway development pattern. A total of 1,485 miles of roads traverse the County landscape.

Roads within the County are classified by their functional use and by the amount of traffic they carry. **Table 3-1** indicates the functional classification of the overall County roadway network. Functional road classification (**Map 2**) for rural areas include principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors (major & minor) and local roads.

- 1) Principal arterials—Principal arterial roads provide connections between cities and regions. They move large volumes of traffic on reasonably direct routes. More often than not, private property access, parking and traffic signals are often limited to help

Table 3-1: Functional Road Classification		
Classification	Miles of Roadway	Percent of Total
Principal arterials	16.94	1.1%
Minor arterials	144.39	9.7%
Collectors (major/minor)	295.15	19.9%
Local Roads	1,029.13	69.3%
Total	1,485.61	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

facilitate smooth traffic flow through rural areas. STH 63 serves as the only Principal arterial in the County.

- 2) Minor arterials—In conjunction with the principal arterials, minor arterials serve cities, large communities and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements. STHs 27, 40, 48, 70 and 77 serve as Minor arterials.
- 3) Collectors (major and minor)—Collector roads generally provide major and/or minor connections within a community or neighborhood and link local roads to arterial roads. Parking and private property access is generally available on these roads. The CTH system and several local roads serve as collectors. Major collectors include CTHs A, B, D, E, F, G, N, K, W, portion of M south of W, S, CC, EE, GG, NN, and OO and Hospital Road, Airport Road, Cedar Avenue and Telemark Road. Minor collectors include CTHs C, H, T, BB, KK, and a portion of M between STH 70 and CTH W, Ranch Road, Sissabagama Road, Froemel Road, Round Lake School Road, Indian Trail Road, Penninsula Road, West Lane, Forest Road 206, Upper A Road, Nelson Lake Road, Nyman Avenue and County Hill Road.
- 4) Local Roads—Local and federal forest roads are all other roads that are not classified as arterials or collectors. Local roads handle the least amount of traffic volume, but provide direct access to private property. They are generally narrower than the other types of roads and generally allow parking.

The County Forestry Department maintains a list of forest roads within the Sawyer County Forest. These roads are not included in the total of the overall transportation network. Across the County Forest approximately 381 miles of Forest Roads are in place. Restrictions for the use of County Forest Roads are outlined within the Sawyer County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

TRAFFIC VOLUME

Annual average daily traffic (ADDT) counts for selected years and locations across the County are represented in **Table 3-2**. Overall, the transportation system is carrying more daily trips on the roadway network that has been in place for decades. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, ADDT figures are developed by multiplying raw hourly counts by seasonal, day-of-week and axle adjustment factors. The daily hourly values are then averaged by hour of the day and the sum of the 24 resultant hourly values is calculated. An example of ADDT counts from the 2007 Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume Data book is found in the back of this chapter for informational purposes.

The state highway system has the highest levels of traffic, in part due to the highways serving as a connection between cities and regions. Most County highways have average daily traffic below 1,000 vehicles per day. However, CTH B west of the City of Hayward has traffic volumes in excess of 5,000 vehicles per day. While commercial and entertainment developments has been built along CTH B over the past 20 years, the segment between the City of Hayward and CTH K continued to see sustained average daily traffic similar to counts along STH 63.

The large geographic area of Sawyer County places a reliance on the county highway system to provide intra-county connections to communities. Future financial constraints to the County Highway Department will result in deferred maintenance and rehabilitation of the nearly 230 miles of county trunk highway.

Table 3-2: Select Highway Traffic Count Data

Municipality	1988	1991	1995	1998	2001	2005	1950-2000 Number Change	1950-2000 Percent Change
STH 27 – south of Ojibwa	1,390	1,170	1,400	1,400	1,300	1,500	110	7.9%
STH 27 – north of CTH K	2,290	2,770	3,500	3,100	3,400	3,200	910	39.7%
STH 70 – west of Loretta	850	880	1,100	1,000	930	1,300	450	52.9%
STH 70 – east of unincorp Stone Lake	1,670	2,450	2,000	2,200	2,600	2,500	830	49.7%
STH 77 – east of Washburn Co. Line	750	850	1,100	1,100	1,600	1,800	1,050	140.0%
STH 77 – just east of CTH A	600	750	1,100	1,100	930	800	200	33.3%
STH 40 – south of Radisson	700	600	650	840	800	630	-70	-10.0%
STH 63 – east of Washburn Co. Line	3,380	3,940	5,000	5,400	5,500	5,000	1,620	47.9%
STH 63 – north of City of Hayward	NA	3,010	3,100	3,200	4,000	4,300	1,290	42.6%
STH 48 – west of CTH C	540	560	810	650	740	710	170	31.5%
CTH C – south of STH 70/27	170	330	340	400	420	300	130	76.5%
CTH G – west of CTH W	140	180	200	210	250	250	110	78.6%
CTH A – south of STH 77	310	640	350	450	610	320	10	3.2%
CTH B – west of CTH K	2,720	3,500	3,900	4,100	5,300	5,200	2,480	91.2%
CTH W – west of West Lane	NA	NA	NA	350	280	290	-60	-17.1%
CTH CC – south of CTH B	600	820	790	990	1,200	1,000	400	66.7%
CTH CC – south of intersec w/ CTH N	360	690	500	600	710	550	190	52.8%
CTH NN – south of CTH B	620	620	1,100	1,200	1,500	1,500	880	142.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

JOURNEY TO WORK

Commuting is the process of traveling between places whether by automobile, recreational vehicle and non-motorized means. **Table 3-3** illustrates commuting choices for residents who are employed and 16 years and older. In 2000 most commuting to work by Sawyer County residents was done alone while driving a car, truck or van (73.7 percent) followed by 12.1 percent who carpool. The remaining modes of

commuting to work included public transportation, walking, working at home or other means, totaling 14.2 percent.

According to the Department of Workforce Development, 246 more workers entered Sawyer County from the surrounding collar counties than leave to work outside of the County. Of the 936 workers who commuted to the County in 2000, the majority came from Washburn County, and the second largest amount came from Bayfield County (**Table 3-3**). The number of workers who commute within Sawyer County increased by 1684, or almost 40% in the 10 year span from 1990 to 2000.

Table 3-3: Sawyer County Commuting Patterns 1990 and 2000

	1990	1990		2000	2000	
	From Sawyer County to:	To Sawyer County from:	Difference:	From Sawyer County to:	To Sawyer County from:	Difference:
Ashland	30	13	-17	33	37	+4
Bayfield	120	106	-14	97	224	+127
Price	62	36	-26	33	25	-8
Rusk	114	44	-70	166	32	-134
Washburn	366	380	+14	361	618	+257
Totals	692	579	-113	690	936	+246
Sawyer	4,166			5,850		+1684

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

While the primary mode of transportation is the personal vehicle (car or truck) a number of other modes provide critical transportation services.

Air Transportation

No scheduled passenger flights are available from within Sawyer County. The nearest airports providing regular scheduled passenger flights to domestic and international destinations are the Duluth International Airport (96 miles), Eau Claire Regional Airport (110 miles) and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (148 miles). The Rice Lake Regional Airport-Carl's Field (51 miles), provides regional airport services including charter air services through Rice Lake Air Center. The charter service operates a King Air C-90 providing passenger service for up to 6 passengers.

The Sawyer County Airport, located in Hayward, is classified as a general aviation airport. It has an asphalt runway length of 5,003 feet by 100 feet and a runway capacity of 60,000 lbs. At present, there is one public and five private airport/airfields registered with the Bureau of Aeronautics within Sawyer County. The County location and present status of area airports is outlined in **Table 3-4**. A number of privately owned float planes use the many lakes to access cabins and personal property.

Airport/Airfield	Location	Status
Sawyer County Airport	T41N, R9W Section 24	Public
Rainbow Airport (Ojibwa)	T38N, R6W Section 3	Private
Lake Chippewa Field	T40 N, R6W Section 8	Private
Round Lake Seaplane Base	T41N, R7W Section 30	Private
Florida North Airport	T37N, R9W Section 29	Private
Kitty-Wompus Airport	T37N, R8W Section 12	Private
Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation		

Pedestrian Facilities

Designated pedestrian walkways are limited in rural area of Sawyer County. Most state and County roadways have minimal shoulder areas and speed limits greater than 45 miles per hour unless posted. These conditions hamper safe pedestrian travel opportunities. Moreover, given the low-density development pattern of rural Sawyer County, walking to places of work, shopping or entertainment is not realistic for most residents.

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 provides a statewide framework to increase walking as a mode of transportation 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. No specific recommendations within the policy plan relate directly to Sawyer County.

Throughout the County, pedestrians use the state, County and local roads to walk for exercise or to destinations such as shopping or visiting friends and neighbors. Many communities have had residents request wider shoulders for walking. In the future, as roadway improvements are made, it is strongly recommended County and state transportation officials meet with local officials to discuss the inclusion of pedestrian facilities along roads and highways.

The City of Hayward, Town of Hayward and Hayward Area School District have secured state funding to develop a Safe Routes to School Plan. This plan will assist the community in identifying routes for improved walking and bicycling to school and will include recommendations for future pedestrian paths. Other communities and school districts could also seek Safe Routes to School planning assistance and development.

Bicycling Facilities

Bicycling is limited to undesignated bicycle routes on the state, County, and town roads. The Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020, presents a blueprint for improving and expanding bicycle transportation routes in the state.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights bicycling conditions on select roadways in Wisconsin. A number of state and County trunk highways are identified as best or moderate conditions for bicycling. The Sawyer County Bicycle Condition Map and that of the other 71 counties in Wisconsin can be found at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/bike-foot/CountyMaps.htm>. A Sawyer County Area Bicycle Map was produced in 2009 and highlights 18 bicycle routes designed to direct cyclists to the best road bicycling Sawyer County has to offer. The map provides start and end points with on road directions and mileage.

Under the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Enhancement Program (2008), the Sawyer County Highway Department submitted an application for Bicycle and Pedestrian System development to construct a 4.8-mile bicycle and pedestrian path along CTH B from STH 27 to CTH K. The proposed project was awarded to Sawyer County in late 2008 with engineering scheduled to begin in late 2009 and trail construction during the summer of 2010.

Due in part from the development of the CTH B trail and a trail system in the City of Hayward, a proposal has been put forth to take a comprehensive vision and strategy for an integrated bicycle and pedestrian trail system throughout Sawyer County and the region.

Trucking and Water Transportation

County and State highways provide adequate trucking access for delivery of goods and products while the local roadway system enables commercial and forestry related products to be transported to local businesses. Continued maintenance of local, County and state roadways is critical to ensure safe and efficient travel. Deteriorated roadways can result in increased maintenance costs and the potential of discouraging businesses from locating throughout the County due to inadequate infrastructure. On many local and County highways, seasonal weight limits must be posted to prevent damage.

No commercial waterborne transportation occurs in the County. The nearest access to waterborne commerce is the Port of Duluth/Superior. Waterborne commerce was once a critical transportation mode used by Native American Indians and settlers for transporting logs harvested from forests of Sawyer and surrounding counties.

Transit

Private specialized transportation providers are available to persons with disability. Sawyer County and several specialized transportation providers met in 2008 to discuss strategies to provide continued and expanded specialized transportation and non-ambulatory services. A Locally Developed County Transportation Coordination Plan was developed that provides future strategies and actions to enhance existing and future mobility of area residents.

Namekagon Transit (formerly LCO/Sawyer County Transit) provides public transit services. It provides door-to-door pick-up and drop-off service to most residents through fixed routes and individual service. Doorstep services are available on a 24-hour advance call basis. Namekagon Transit also operates a commuter bus services for persons needing transportation to and from work. Namekagon Transit has expanded services to areas in Bayfield, Washburn and Rusk Counties. Future expansion of transit services will continue to be examined. Namekagon Transit operates 22 vehicles (November 2009) with one-way trips at a nominal charge.

The Senior Resource Center (SRC) provides transportation services to persons 55 years of age and older living in a 7-10 mile radius of the City of Hayward for shopping, medical appointments and other appointments. The SRC is a contract provider under LCO/Sawyer County Transit. The SRC also provides a volunteer driver program for persons who have no other means of travel. Non-handicapped accessible transit services include Cindy's Taxi Service located near the City of Hayward, Sawyer County Veteran's Service and Namekagon Transit.

NWT Express provides ground transportation between Hayward and Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport (MSP) and other prearranged destinations. MSP service operates seven days a week with scheduled stops at 12 different communities along the way to MSP.

Rail

During the late 1970s and 1980s a flurry of rail abandonments resulted in one main rail line traversing the County. Freight rail service is provided by Canadian National (CN) Railroad connecting to points into Canada, Chicago and beyond (Map 2). Limited manufacturing development presently utilizes the rail line except for manufacturers along the Hayward Subdivision line. Rail sidings for logging operations along the line have disappeared over the past several decades, with reports of future siding closures at either Stanberry or Stone Lake to occur in 2010.

The status of the Bayfield County rail abandonment from the City of Bayfield south towards St. Croix County may have future implications for recreational use by motorized and non-motorized uses.

Multi-use Recreational Trails

Throughout Sawyer County, there are several hundred miles of multi-use trails and a large number of forest roads. This network is used most intensely during the winter months for snowmobiling and in the summer months for ATV use. The network also provides an alternate means of commuting (other than vehicle travel) for some Sawyer County residents. This network includes:

- Over 600 miles of snowmobile trails
- 30.5 miles of ATV trails
- 200 miles of cross country ski trails
- 200 miles of bike trails
- Hiking trails
- Horseback trails

Most motorized trails include Class A groomed snowmobile-only trails, ATV-only routes and trails for both ATV and snowmobiles. Most of the trails are located along easements granted to local recreation associations or others by private landowners. Coordination between motorized recreation associations and land managers with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and the Sawyer County Forest has allowed for designated motorized snowmobile and ATV trail routes. Map 3 includes trail routes throughout the County. These trail routes continually change due to local conditions and easement changes. As a result, trail users should seek up-to-date maps from local clubs and organizations for accurate routes.

An important rule regarding motorized trails in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest was handed down on November 9, 2005 with an effective date of December 9, 2005. This rule, commonly referred to as the Travel Management Plan, revised regulations governing motor vehicle use on all National Forest System lands, including the use of off-highway vehicles. This final rule prohibited the use of motor vehicles off the designated network, as well as the use of motor vehicles on roads, trails, and in areas that are not consistent with the designations. The decision rendered in the Travel Management Plan encompasses the following changes:

- 559 miles of roads will be available to ATVs (roads that are available to ATVs only or to both highway-legal vehicles (HLV) and ATVs). 71 miles of these roads are located on the Nicolet side of the forest.
- 52 miles of roads for HLV and ATV use will be controlled seasonally in the fall (open from September 1 to December 31).
- 8 miles of roads for ATV use will be controlled seasonally in the fall (open from September 1 to December 31).

- 25 miles of road for HLV use will be controlled seasonally for sensitive species consideration, including 13 miles of roads for ATV use.
- 334 miles of trails will be designated to be available for public ATV use.

Accessible roads and trails are displayed on the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Map available on the National Forest Service website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/rec/tmr/index.html> and at each Forest Service office.

A number of non-motorized recreational activities exist on all public-owned properties. These properties allow for walking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and sightseeing. A number of designated non-motorized trail systems are located within the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Management Areas. The American Birkebeiner Ski Trail offers world-class cross-country skiing from Hayward to Cable. Portions of the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) trails are well mapped and marked for mountain biking and hiking (Map 3).

All National and County Forest lands are open to walking and other quiet-sport recreational activities. A number of “hunter walking trails” are located within the Chequamegon–NICOLET National Forest and can be found on the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forests web site. Several hunter-walking trails are located within Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource owned Wildlife Areas.

Rustic Roads

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Rustic Roads program in 1973 to help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads. Unique brown and yellow signs mark the routes of all officially-designated Rustic Roads. These routes provide bikers, hikers, and motorists an opportunity to leisurely travel through some of Wisconsin's scenic countryside.

Rustic Road 108 (R-108) is located within Sawyer County and travels along Northern Lights, Boedecker, Seely, and Janet Roads from State Highway 63 to County Highway OO in the Towns of Lenroot and Spider Lake. The route is 3.4 miles in length along a gravel roadway. R-108 meanders through the Sawyer County Forest and is bordered by many species of trees including maples, oaks, birch, red and white pine which are home to many birds and mammals. Originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a logging road in the 1930's, travelers will catch a glimpse of the old “Dynamite Shack” which stored the explosives used to construct the road through the hills. R-108 is crossed by the Birkebeiner cross country ski trail, and numerous ATV, mountain bike and snowmobile trails. This road offers all nature lovers a north woods experience.

Rustic Road 95 (R-95) is located within Bayfield and Sawyer Counties. The route begins at the intersection of STH 77 and Federal Forest Road (FFR) 203 in the Town of Spider Lake and continues on a six-mile loop off FFR 203 comprised of FFR 622 and Tews Road/FFR 206. The route continues into the Town of Namakagon on Lost Land Lake Road and terminates at County Highway M. The route is 16.4 miles in length on a gravel road. The Lost Land Lake Route (R-95) passes through the Chequamegon National Forest. Along with scenic forest views, visitors are apt to see a variety of wildlife including deer, bear and possibly even wolves and elk. There are numerous bicycle, ATV and snowmobile trails that cross the route, including the Lynch Creek Trail that leads to a wildlife-viewing platform.

Color Tours

Six Color Tour routes cross the majestic landscape of Sawyer County, highlighting the scenic vistas and views of the great outdoors. Color tour routes 1, 2 and 3 total 203 miles of roads are located in the

northern half of the County and color tour routes 4, 5 and 6 total 138 miles located in the southern half. Each route has written narrative detailing the area sights and events. Information on each of the color tour routes can be found at http://haywardlakes.com/color_tours.html.

STATE, REGIONAL AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION PLANS

State, regional and County agencies have developed guidance and improvement schedules for roadways or infrastructure under their responsibility. It is important that County and other agencies communicate on proposed implementation schedules and coordinate local and regional activities. State, regional and County plans applicable to this element have been reviewed and are generalized to reflect their overlapping jurisdictional control or recommendations. A regional transportation plan has not been developed.

Sawyer County Road Improvement Plan

The Sawyer County Highway Department annually develops a road construction schedule for County road improvements covering a seven-year period.

Connection 2030

The Long-Range Transportation plan for the state, Connections 2030 addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin. No conflicts with the comprehensive plan have been identified in association with this planning effort.

Corridors 2020

Corridors 2020 sets criteria for selected routes that go beyond traditional highway planning with the intent to enhance and improve all two- and four-lane highways connecting cities of 5,000 inhabitants or more. No conflicts with the comprehensive plan have been identified in association with Corridors 2020.

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 and Five-Year Airport Improvement Program

The *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020* assists in determining the number, location, and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state's aviation needs. The *Five-Year Airport Improvement Program* of the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics is published annually. The Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics works with local governments on planning for new and proposed upgrades to local airports. This document provides a snapshot of scheduled airport improvement projects for the next five years. As a result, no conflicts were identified in association with the two documents.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* presents a blueprint for improving and expanding bicycle transportation routes throughout the state. No identified bicycle route expansion or development is detailed in the plan. However, when town, County, and state transportation roadways are reconstructed, consideration of bicycle lanes should be discussed.

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. When town, County, and state transportation roadways are reconstructed, consideration of pedestrian access could be discussed.