# **CHAPTER 3** Transportation Element

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Stat.:

**Transportation element**. 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.

### **Section 3.1** Introduction

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens of Amherst. Decisions made regarding transportation can have a direct impact on the community's growth and quality of life. These decisions should be made to include choices that will most effectively serve the community as a whole, maximize investment in transportation infrastructure, as well as minimize conflicts between modes of transportation as well as jurisdictions.

This Chapter will assess the current inventory of transportation options, list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Amherst, and compare local goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

### **Section 3.2** Transportation Facility Inventory

### A. Roads and Highways

Classifying and protecting roads according to their function is a primary element of transportation planning. The term "functional classification" is used to refer to the process by which highways are grouped into classes, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. The level of service a roadway provides can range from a high degree of traffic mobility to a more basic land access function, or a combination of both (Map 3.1). All roads and highways have been classified by periodic updates from the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation and adopted by the County Highway Committee. Criteria used in determining functional classification included traffic volumes (Average Daily Traffic volume or ADT), land use, population concentrations, and geographical limitations such as river crossings or restrictive topography.

As of January 1, 2013, the municipal road system within the Town of Amherst consisted of a total of 104.8 miles of roadway. Municipal roadway accounts for 58.2 miles. County Roads (County Roads) A, B, SS, K, and Q totaled 27.7 miles. State Highways comprised 5.4 miles. Federal Highways accounted for 13.7 miles of the network (divided highway counted twice). See Map 3.1 below for the Average Daily Traffic volume (ADT) information for individual roadways.

1. <u>Rural Principal Arterials</u> - These roads primarily stress traffic mobility/movement and are representative of interstate or intrastate travel. U.S. Highway 10 is the only principal arterial in the Town of Amherst. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation

(WisDOT) regulates public and private road and driveway access onto this facility. The ADT count for U.S. Highway 10 west of the Village of Amherst Junction was 10,700. The 2011 ADT count for U.S. Highway 10, east of the Village of Amherst was 12,500 vehicles. The ADT count for U.S. Highway 10 west of the Village of Amherst was 12,500.

- 2. <u>Rural Minor Arterials</u> These roads provide for intraregional and inter-area traffic movements. There are no Rural Minor arterials in the Town of Amherst.
- 3. <u>Rural Major Collectors</u> These roads provide for inter-area traffic movements. Major collectors in the Town of Amherst include County Road's A, B, Q, and KK (From the Village of Amherst to Nelsonville). The location and separation of access points along these highways is regulated by Portage County. The required minimum separation between access points is 300 feet.

The 2011 ADT count for County Road A south of U.S. Highway 10 was 1,200 vehicles. The 2011 ADT count for County Road A North of U.S. Highway 10 was 720 vehicles.

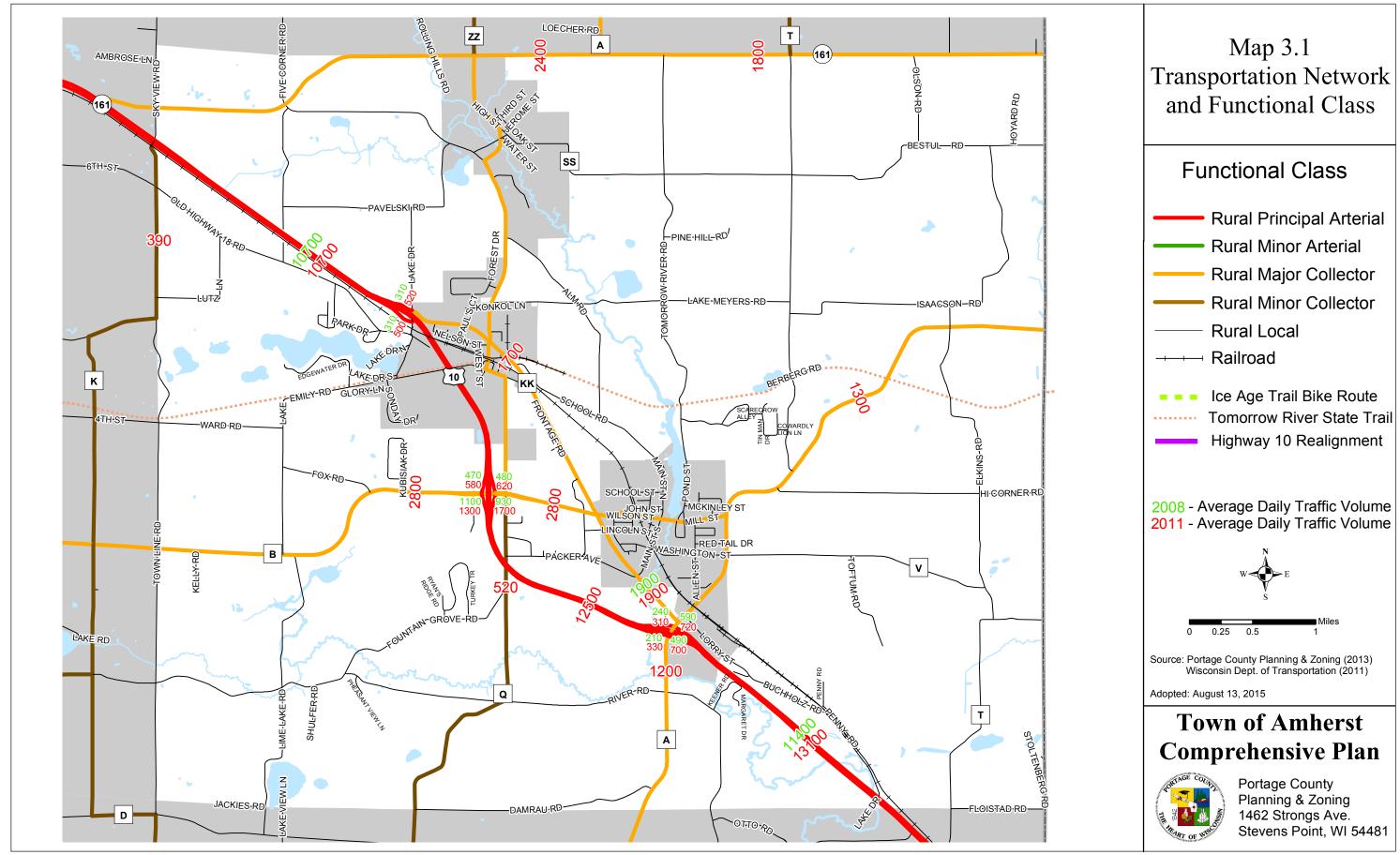
County Road B had a 2011 ADT count of 2,800 vehicles west of U.S. Highway 10, and 1,300 east of the Village of Amherst.

County Road Q had a 2011 ADT count of 520 vehicles south of U.S. Highway 10. The ingress and egress ramps of U.S. Highway 10 note a 2011 ADT of 2,300 vehicles closest to the intersection of County Road B and County Road Q. There is no recent ADT given for County Road Q north of this intersection.

County Road KK has a 2011 ADT of 1,900 vehicles entering the Village of Amherst north of the intersection of County Road A and County Road KK. County Road KK has a 2011 ADT of 1,700 ADT vehicles as it reacheds the intersection of County Road KK and County Road Q.

State Highway 161 has a 2011 ADT count for 2 sections of its length: 2,400 vehicles east of the County Road Q and State Highway 161 intersection, 1,800 vehicles west of the County Road T and State Highway 161 intersection.

- 4. <u>Rural Minor Collectors</u> These roads link the rural areas, i.e. local roads, with higher order roads/highways. Portage County regulates the location and separation of new access points along these roadways and requires a minimum separation of 300 feet between access points. There is only one minor collector in the Town of Amherst, Town Line Road. This section of County Road is on the borderline of the Town of Stockton and the Town of Amherst. This section of road between Lutz Lane and U.S. Highway 10 has a 2011 ADT of 390 vehicles.
- 5. <u>Rural Local Roads</u> These roads primarily stress land access and provide inter-ownership and intra-ownership traffic movements over short distances. All roads not designated as arterials or collectors are considered local roads. The Town regulates the location of new access points on local roads and Portage County requires that access points be located a minimum of 50 feet from a County Road intersection.



### B. Transit and Transportation Facilities for the Disabled and Elderly

The Portage County Aging, Disability, and Resource Center provides transportation services for transit-dependent adults and people with disabilities to the Amherst area through a busing and volunteer escort service. Bus rides are provided to meal sites, grocery shopping, senior center services, essential personal business, and adult day care. Buses will bring residents into Stevens Point or to the Jensen Center on specific days during the week. Volunteer drivers may also be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or those otherwise not able to use the busing service. Persons requiring such services must call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. There is no set fee for this service; however, passengers are asked to make a donation. Additional transit services are provided by the Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Stevens Point School District bus services for children.

Community Industries Corporation of Stevens Point employs handicapped individuals to perform various activities important to the local community. This organization does offer rides to work for its employees who have no other means of transportation.

# C. Bicycle/Walking Routes and Trails

Pedestrian and Bike linkages are commonplace and an important part of the transportation network. Pedestrian use of roads in Amherst is an important part of healthy living for many people as they use them for exercise and enjoyment of the natural environment of the Town. Bikes are used for both exercise, recreation and commuting.

In June, 2009 the State of Wisconsin passed ACT 28 (State Statute 85.023) to provide assistance in the development of bicycle facilities. It dictates that going forward, bike-pedestrian facilities will be required or will be established on all new highway construction and reconstruction funded in whole or in part from State or Federal funding. Rules intending to clarify issues in the State statute were reaffirmed in March, 2011.

Only State Highway 161 currently meets the guidance provided for State Statute 85.023 in the Town of Amherst. This statute describes what a bike and pedestrian way is and how they should be planned for as well as what exceptions exist. A simplified explanation of the Statute can be found by doing an internet search for "Wisconsin Complete Streets Presentation".

The League of American Bicyclists recently rated Wisconsin as the 8<sup>th</sup> friendliest state for biking in the United States. A Wisconsin Department of Transportation workshop in 2010 indicates that the total contribution of bicycles to the state is \$556 million dollars a year and includes 3,418 jobs.

Making roads bicycle-pedestrian friendly provides many benefits to motorists, public safety, and non-motorists alike. Below are examples of how providing bicycle-pedestrian facilities provides public benefits to all (Workshop Presentation for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Law - Fall, 2010 - WisDOT).

- Makes room for vehicles to perform evasive maneuvers
- Added width allows for accommodation of driver error
- Adds a recovery area to regain control of vehicle
- Makes space for disabled vehicles, mail vehicles, and bus stops
- Increases the sight distance for through vehicles
- Creates clearance for poles, guard rails, signs, and other roadside obstacles
- Reduces passing conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycle-pedestrians
- Increases visibility of pedestrians trying to cross the road

- Storm water removal from the road is facilitated and reduces hydroplaning
- Provides more intersection and safe stopping distances
- Allows for easier exiting from travel lanes and to side streets and roads
- Provides additional space for maintenance operations and snow storage

The Town of Amherst has one major bicycle/walking trails running through it. The Tomorrow River State Trail follows an abandoned rail line from the Village of Plover in Portage County to the Village of Scandinavia in Waupaca County. The trail is open to bicyclists, joggers, and hikers in the spring, summer, and fall, and to skiers, snowmobilers, and dog sledders in the winter. A separate trail for horseback riders is located adjacent to the limestone bike path from the Village of Plover to the Village of Amherst Junction. Parking and access to the trail is available in the Village of Amherst Junction and at Cate Park, approximately one half mile north of the Village of Amherst. A paved shoulder has been installed along Pond Street, from Mill Street north to the Cate Park trail head, to provide safer pedestrian and bike access to the Tomorrow River State Trail.

#### D. Railroads

Eight miles of mainline track lay across the Town of Amherst. There are three (3) public atgrade crossings and three bridges/trestles. WisDOT did close the at-grade crossing located at Five Corners as part of the ramp construction at Lake Road.

Canadian National Railroad runs approximately 22-24 trains per day through the Town of Amherst. There is an expected 10-15% increase over the next 10 years, including a 60 mph corridor and possible increases in track sidings.

The lengths of trains on these routes are to gradually increase. Canadian National Railroad intends to have trains up to 3 miles in length (15,840 feet). This could significantly increase the wait times at rail intersections. It could also be a potential issue for emergency vehicles, especially if a that vehicle should have to stop or reverse course while needing to reach a medical emergency or arrive at a hospital.

### E. Air Transportation

A number of airports serve the Town of Amherst: the Central Wisconsin Airport, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport, and the Waupaca Municipal Airport. Two private airstrips are also located within the Town of Amherst.

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA), located approximately 35 miles north of Amherst along Interstate Highway 39 in Mosinee, is a full service, all-weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Several airlines offer regular commuter and passenger service and air cargo service is also available with overnight delivery.

This facility is owned and operated via joint agreements between Marathon and Portage Counties. Several airlines (Delta, United, and American Airlines) offer regular daily commuter and passenger service to Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago providing connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service as well as passenger charters are also available.

This airport has two large concrete runways (complete with taxi ways) capable of handling most planes. Main runway is 7,648 feet long by 150 feet wide. Secondary runway is 6,501 feet long and 150 feet wide. There are 25 private/corporate aircraft based out of this facility, 2 of which are jet and 2 are multi-engine. There are a limited number of hangers present which are leased. Additional services include flight training education, Airframe and engine maintenance, fuel service and several car rental companies.

Beginning in the spring of 2011 CWA embarked on a 3 year \$25 million expansion project for terminal renovation and expansion aimed at increasing operational space, expanding the security check-point, relocating car rentals to their own facility and expanding current parking facilities. CWA was recently awarded a \$250,000 Small Community Air Service Development Program grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation that it will use to pursue new air service with a fourth carrier and improve and/or expand current air service with existing carriers. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 designates the Central Wisconsin Airport as an Air Carrier / Air Cargo Airfield.

Additional services include flight training education, Airframe and engine maintenance, fuel service and several car rental companies.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located at the intersection of I-39 and State Highway 66 in Stevens Point (15 miles east of the Town) and has two runways. The primary runway is 6,028 feet long and 120 feet wide. The secondary runway is 3,642 feet long and 75 feet wide. There are 37 private hangers at the airport, fuel and repair services are available. No passenger service is available. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the airport as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

The airport is owned and operated by the City of Stevens Point and averaged 101 aircraft operations per day in 2011. It is home to 42 home-based aircraft including four jets, 40 single-engine and one multi-engine propeller airplane. Travel Guard, Med Topics Unlimited, Sentry Insurance, Pegasus Aviation, Freight Runners, and the Rettler Corporation operate business aircraft from this location. Also, UPS operates daily flights providing essential cargo services to the local and regional community.

The Waupaca Municipal Airport, otherwise known as Brunner Field is located 13 miles east of Amherst adjacent to U.S. Highway 10. It has two asphalt paved runways. The longest is 5,200 feet long by 100 feet wide. The second is 3,899 feet long and 75 feet wide. The airport is operated by Plane Guys Aviation LLC. The airport is open to the public; however, there is no passenger service available. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 has classified the Waupaca Municipal Airfield (Brunner Field) is as a Transport/Corporate airfield.

# F. Trucking

There are no designated truck routes within Town of Amherst. Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on U.S. Highway 10 and County Rd. B; local traffic on County Road KK and AB; and normal delivery services for area businesses. The Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on County Roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil. However, County Road B from the Village of Plover to the Village of Amherst is one route that is not posted in spring.

Several trucking firms providing local, regional, and national service are based in the Town and are located primarily along major collector roads.

### G. Water Transportation

Although the Tomorrow River runs through the Town, its primary use is recreation and is not considered a transportation corridor.

The Town of Amherst has 3 improved boat launches that can be used by recreational boaters to access Lake Emily, Lime Lake, and Lake Meyers. Residents also are likely to use the access in the Village of Amherst to access the Amherst Mill Pond. These sites include accommodation for parking.

The Town has at least 11 public access sites that have primitive boat launch facilities. A primitive boat launch is a wide spot on the shoreline on public land used to launch a canoe or kayak. The access may be no more than a worn walking path. Parking may not be available or available on Town or County Roads.

### Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs

### A. WisDOT Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2013-2017)

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation has no plans for major repairs or construction scheduled for Portage County at this time. This schedule includes existing or proposed highways, and existing or proposed bridges.

### B. Portage County Highway Department Six-Year Improvement Plan (2013-2017)

In 2013, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Highway B west of the Village of Amherst Junction.

Crack fill and chip sealing of County Road A from the Town line north to County Road KK. County Road KK will have crack fill and chip sealing from County Road A to northwest into the Village of Amherst Junction. A section of County Road T that head north from County Road V to where County Road T turns due west toward the Village of Amherst.

County Road B from U.S. Highway 10 through the Village of Amherst and into the Town on the northwest side will also receive crack filling in 2013.

County Road T between County Road V and County Road T will get a crack fill and chip sealing.

The Town is not scheduled to have any State or County road maintenance in 2014.

In 2015, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Road SS from the Village of Nelsonville west to State Highway 161.

In 2016, the Portage County Highway Department will mill and resurface parts of County Road T east of the Village of Amherst from County Road B west to where County Road T turns south.

The Town is not scheduled to have any State or County road maintenance in 2017.

### 1. Jurisdictional Transfers

With the reconstruction of USH 10 around the Village of Amherst to a 4-lane divided highway and its subsequent relocation (Map 3.1), numerous jurisdictional transfers occurred, resulting in changes to the functional classification of certain segments and traffic flow through the Town of Amherst.

A majority of the USH 10 Amherst by-pass, which opened in the fall of 2004, is located almost entirely in the Town of Amherst. There is an interchange at County Road B west of the Village of Amherst that will provide access to the 4-lane highway for area residents. County Road B will be rerouted around the Village of Amherst along the new USH 10 alignment to another new interchange at County Road A, where a new County Road will be constructed northeast towards Edge Road. The existing County Road A route was terminated in a cul-de-sac on the north side of the new interchange, and will be rerouted along with County Road B towards Edge Road, and then along County Road T towards Highway 161. New USH 10 realigns with the existing USH 10 just east of County Road A.

A number of jurisdictional transfers will directly affect the Town of Amherst. The former US Highway 10 from Lake Drive south to County Road A has been transferred from the State to Portage County and renamed County Road KK. County Road A from Highway 161 south to the Village of Amherst boundary line, and County Road B from the new USH 10 interchange east to the Village of Amherst boundary line will be transferred from the County to Town of Amherst.

State Highway 161 from County Road KK (formerly USH 10) to the Village of Nelsonville's northern limits will be transferred from the State to the County and will be renamed County Road Q.

State Highway 161 now follows the northern Village border along Loberg Road and County Road SS eventually intersecting with the new USH 10.

A new intersection has been constructed at the junction of County Road ZZ, Highway 161, and the new County Road Q to allow for a safer crossing of the new State Highway 161. Traffic counts will have to be done once the realignment project is complete to determine the new functional classifications.

### C. Wisconsin State Airport System 2030

The State Airport Plan determines the number, location and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state's aviation needs through 2030. The plan also forecasts the level of public investment required to: upgrade substandard features such as widening of existing runways, replace existing systems to meet Federal and State standards, and enhance the airport system through runway extension and new construction. The classifications for Central Wisconsin Airport (Air Carrier/Air Cargo) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Transport/Corporate) are not projected to change through 2030.

# D. Connections 2030 - Wisconsin State Railroad Plans (SRP)

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has decided to include the State Rail Plan as a component of the State's Connections 2030 Plan, a long range, all-mode transportation plan. At this time, there is a draft Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 that has not been adopted by the State. At the time the Amherst Comprehensive Plan was written, the state had only completed the Issues and Opportunities Report of the rail plan.

The primary issues in the report were broken into four major areas: rail network issues, intercity passenger rail issues, safety issues, and legislative issues. Emerging issues identified in the report included commuter rail, locomotive horns at rail/road crossings, and proposals to reduce mercury emissions. However, Town officials should maintain awareness of the status of that Plan as there is a rail corridor that parallels U.S. Highway 10 through most of the Town.

### E. State, Regional and Local Bicycle and Trail Plans

### 1. Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Portage County takes pride in being a great place to live, work, and play. Providing opportunities for citizens to integrate bicycling and walking into their everyday lives is essential to maintaining the vibrancy of the community and enhancing quality of life. Better public health, increased economic activity, and cleaner air are a few of the benefits that can be realized by improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Whether for recreation or transportation, the demand for safe, comfortable, and convenient places to walk and bike is increasing. The Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian plan provides recommendations to

improve conditions for bicycling and walking in Portage County and to coordinate efforts of the County, City of Stevens Point, and the numerous Villages and Towns.

While bike lanes may be warranted in villages, town bicycle accommodations typically take the form of paved shoulders, shared roads, and shared-use paths. From a pedestrian perspective, providing sidewalks along rural roads in unincorporated areas is rarely cost-effective. In these areas, pedestrians will often use paved shoulders or shared-use paths. Below are definitions for more commonly utilized bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in towns.

- **Paved Shoulders**: Paved shoulders ranging in width from three feet to five feet, or wider, provide space for bicyclists on rural roads. The width of the paved shoulder should be based on traffic volumes, site lines, and anticipated bicycle use.
- **Bike Routes/Shared Roadways:** Lower volume roadways where potential motor vehicle conflicts are at a minimum, especially where motorists are passing in opposing directions with a bicyclist in the same section of the roadway. Generally, where motor vehicle counts are less than 750, conflicts are significantly reduced, although there are other factors that need to be considered.
- Paths (or trails): Separated from streets and roads. They are often built in rural areas where railroads are abandoned or rail-banked, along rivers, in parks, and occasionally along roadways.

For additional information including recommended bikeways within the Town of Amherst please refer to the Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The official Plan is available at the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Office, located at 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, as well as the Department's website.

### 2. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2030

Overall plan goals are: to increase the level of bicycling in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycle and motor vehicles.

### 3. <u>Local Bicycle and Trail Plans</u>

Current plans exist for a bridge across County Road KK to allow for the unencumbered continuation of the Tomorrow River State Trail.

### **Section 3.4** Transportation Related Programs

The Town of Amherst uses the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) road condition rating system to assess the physical condition of local roads. The PASER software can help prioritize road maintenance, calculate project costs, evaluate consequences of alternative budgets and project selection strategies.

The Town tries to make effective use of the State's Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP), a reimbursement program that pays up to 50% of eligible costs for upgrading seriously deteriorating town roads.

### **Section 3.5** Transportation Issues

The following transportation issues were identified during this planning process:

• The proposed U.S. Highway 10 relocation will:

- o Adversely impact agricultural areas of the Town.
- o Increase pressure to develop land for commercial and residential uses in the Town near the villages. This growth pressure must be managed carefully.
- The proposed U.S. Highway 10 relocation <u>may</u>:
  - o Require additional setbacks from the new right-of-way to ensure there is room for additional lanes in the future if needed.
  - o Change local road traffic patterns, thus requiring upgrades to roads that were not previously planned for upgrade.
  - o Change the demographics of the area.
  - o Create parcels of unpredictable nature that may require special exceptions or variances to utilize to good effect.
- How will re-assigning of road systems impact traffic patterns?
- How can communities band together to secure highway funds for specific projects?
- How will the Town create a safe environment for different modes of transportation?
- How can the Town address potential safety issues arising from railroad spills or derailments?
- How will road infrastructure be addressed due to increased growth?
- How will the Town address the increased use of compression brakes by trucks?
- How will the Town address the potential impacts from hazardous material spills along rail and road corridors?
- How can surface waters and Lake Emily be protected from transportation projects?

### Section 3.6 Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies

**Goal 1:** Maintain a safe and efficient transportation network throughout the Town.

Objective 1.1: Identify potential growth areas that may generate need for road construction or improvements.

#### Policies:

- 1. Recommend that future road right-of-way in new developments be identified on final plats.
- 2. Update the Town of Amherst road ordinance.
- 3. Work with local organizations to minimize conflicts and enhance safety along snowmobile, biking, and pedestrian trails.
- 4. Where necessary, request the County to post weight limits on County roads.
- 5. Identify roads where speed limits should be decreased and create ordinances to set and enforce limits.

- 6. Consider road impact fees for new developments for needed upgrading of roads adjacent to those developments.
- 7. Consider developing an official road map.
- 8. Consider the creation of an 'engine braking' ordinance.
- 9. Roads must be designed to accommodate school bus and snow removal equipment.
- 10. Work with County Emergency Management Department to develop a plan for dealing with hazardous materials spills.

Objective 1.2: Monitor changing traffic patterns due to jurisdictional road transfers.

### Policies:

- 1. Work with County Highway Department and DOT to identify safety concerns, weight limits and road usage on re-assigned roads.
- 2. Work with the Sheriff's Department to identify dangerous sections of road for automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic through crash information in the Town of Amherst.

Objective 1.3: Materials, road construction practices, and road runoff should have a minimal impact on the environment.

<u>Policy</u>: Contact the DOT and/or County Highway Department to ensure that road construction materials are environmentally safe and proper stormwater management provisions are adhered to.

<u>Objective 1.4</u>: Identify potential railroad problem areas.

<u>Policy</u>: Work with railroad commission to enhance railroad safety in the Town.

**Goal 2**: Enhance the aesthetic development of the road right of ways.

Objective 2.1: Encourage local organizations to support highway beautification efforts.

<u>Policy</u>: Work with the County and other municipalities to apply for highway enhancement funds.

Objective 2.2: Limit off premise signage along major transportation corridors. (i.e. USH 10, STH 161, County Roads A, B, D, T, Q, K, KK)

**Goal 3**: Minimize the negative impacts of the Highway 10 re-alignment project.

<u>Objective 3.1</u>: The rerouting of U.S Highway 10 east of Amherst Junction will present unforeseen consequences. The Town will strive for flexibility in administration of land use objectives and policies when addressing issues directly affected by the expressway rerouting.

<u>Goal 4</u>: Take part in the County Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan and develop guidelines for addressing bicycle-pedestrian routes within the Town.

Objective: Identify important routes to designate for future bicycle-pedestrian upgrades.

<u>Policy</u>: Future bicycle-pedestrian upgrades will be mapped and plans will begin for their inclusion into the Town budgetary process.