

TRANSPORTATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Transportation is necessary for the effective movement of people and goods within and outside an area. It plays a vital role in the facilitation of an area’s economy, land use, and development. This element of the Town of Wascott’s Comprehensive Plan presents an inventory of the existing transportation facilities and discusses future transportation needs and concerns expressed through the goals, objectives, and actions. Included in this section are descriptions of the various elements of the road system, airports, railroads, public transit, pedestrian and bicycling opportunities, and other transportation plans and programs.

3.2 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Town of Wascott’s roadway network is comprised of approximately 232 miles of highways and town roads (Table 3.1). Roads within the town are classified according to their primary function and by the amount of traffic they sustain. In the Town of Wascott, State Trunk Highway 53 is the only principal arterial and serves as the primary corridor providing residents and visitors access to and through the town. Segments of County Highways G, T, and Y are considered major collectors while South Mail Road is the only road classified as a minor collector. Local roads provide routes to homes and recreational destinations both within and beyond the town. All roads described in this section are illustrated on Map 3.1, Town of Wascott Functional Classification.

Functional road classifications for rural areas include principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, minor collectors, and local roads.

- **Principal arterials-** Serve interstate and inter-regional trips. These roads generally serve urban areas greater than 5,000 in population.
- **Minor arterials-** Serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-regional traffic movements.
- **Major collectors-** Provide service to moderate sized communities and links traffic to nearby larger population centers.
- **Minor collectors-** Collect traffic from local roads and links them to all remaining smaller communities. All developed areas should be within a reasonable distance of collector roads.
- **Local roads-** Provide access for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are classified as local roads.

Table 3.1: Functional Classification	
Classification	Miles
Principle arterials	5.37
Minor arterials	0.00
Major collectors	25.44
Minor collectors	6.04
Local roads	194.58
Total	231.43

Source: WisDOT, District 8

3.3 TRAFFIC VOLUME AND TRENDS

Table 3.2 depicts change in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) at recording sites on roads passing through the Town of Wascott from 1981 to 2002. As is indicated in Table 3.2, Site 2 along STH 53 has shown the highest amount of traffic increase of all roadways recorded since 1981.

The increase in traffic in and around the Town of Wascott and throughout Douglas County can be attributed to several factors. These factors include residents and visitors of the town and surrounding area making more vehicular trips associated with shopping, commuting to work, and leisure; an increases in population density along portions of some roadways; and the continued development of second homes owned by seasonal residents.

	1981	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	Percent Change 1981-2002
Site 1	370	340	330	290	340	330	420	540	45.9%
Site 2	2600	3000	3770	3170	4000	5400	5700	6200	138.5%
Site 3	510	430	450	400	530	790	-	570	11.7%

Source: Wisconsin Highway Traffic, Department of Transportation District 8

- Site 1: CTH Y, two miles west of USH 53
- Site 2: USH 53, ½ mile north of northern town line
- Site 3: CTH T, half mile west of USH 53
- : No Data for this year

3.4 HIGHWAY ACCESS CONTROL AND BILLBOARDS

Management of highway access via right-of-way provides the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Douglas County Highway Department with the ability to establish design requirements, by development activity, for the construction and spacing between driveways based on traffic volumes along area highways. This process seeks to provide safety measures to the traveling public. Landowners or developers wishing to place a driveway accessing local highways must coordinate with the respective highway department.

The Town of Wascott also has a driveway ordinance that stipulates standards for driveways that will provide for better and safer provisions for adequate access from private development to a public right-of-way and to provide for safe and orderly delivery of emergency services. Applicants for a driveway off a town road must contact the town clerk.

Billboards or signs along highways can provide a convenience to the motoring public regarding upcoming commercial opportunities. However, the development of billboards can also negatively impact an area’s rural character. The placement of billboards along state and county highways is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Douglas County respectively. Both agencies have regulations and application processes that must be followed prior to approval and construction of billboards.

3.5 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) has been developed to assist the town in implementing a strategy for making necessary roadway improvements. To assist in developing proposed road improvement projects, the town has implemented a roadway surface rating system for local road conditions. This rating system is useful in comparing the overall system and must be completed and submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by December of every odd calendar year. Utilizing the roadway rating data and changes to the road conditions due to natural disasters, such as flooding, the town should continually review the roadway capital improvement program to determine existing needs as identified in Table 3.3.

Year	Road/Street	Location	Mileage	Type of Improvement	Est. Cost
2005	Peterson Road	Entire Length	.93 miles	Resurface	N/A
2005	Crooked Lake Road	Old dump to Kreeel Rd	.50 miles	Resurface	N/A
2005	E. Sauntry Road	Entire Length	.64 miles	Resurface	N/A
2005	Spider Lake Road	Entire Length	1.23 miles	Gravel	N/A
2005	E. Mail Road	McCumber Rd to Johnson Rd	3.04 miles	Sealcoat	N/A
2005	S. Flowage Road	Entire Wascott portion	.98 miles	Sealcoat	N/A
*2005	CTH T @ Minong Flowage	Kennedy Rd to South Lighthouse Rd	.70 miles	Reconstruct	N/A
2006-07	Red Lake Road	Railroad tracks to east	2.7 miles	Resurface	N/A
2006-07	Burns Road	Entire Wascott portion	1.79 miles	Resurface	N/A
2006-07	Spider Lake Road	--	1.23 miles	Resurface	N/A
2006-07	Balcik Road	--	1.75 miles	Resurface	N/A
2006-07	Snake Lake Road	Crooked Lake Rd to bridge	.75 miles	Gravel	N/A
2006-07	Blackburn Road	Red Lake Rd to CTH G	1.26 miles	Gravel	N/A

Source: Town of Wascott and *Douglas County Highway Department
 Note: Depending on paving costs, the Town of Wascott may not be able to complete all planned work in a given year. In that case, any road not completed will move to the top of the list of planned work for the following year.

Within the town, the Douglas County Highway Department is responsible for several miles of county trunk highway. This highway system is an important link to the overall transportation network. However, the overall condition of county trunk highways in the Town of Wascott is very poor. The Town of Wascott recommends the county highway department and county board consider increasing the overall county highway budget specifically for highway improvements in an effort to increase the amount of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation completed a major upgrade of STH 53 during the 1990’s by converting the highway from a rural two-lane roadway to a four-lane divided expressway. As a result of the highway upgrade, it is not expected any major state highway improvements will be completed in the town.

3.6 MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Air

There are no airports/airfields located in the Town of Wascott. A total of six airports/airfields are located in Douglas County (Table 3.4) with no scheduled passenger flights available at these locations. The nearest major airport providing regular scheduled passenger flights to domestic and international destinations are in Duluth, MN, and Eau Claire, WI.

Table 3.4: Douglas County Airports/Airfields

Airport	Location	Owner/Operator	Status
Carlson's Airport	Superior	Earl Carlson	Private
Cedar Island Airport	Brule	Cedar Island Conservancy	Private
Elm Field	Parkland	Roger Elm	Private
Minnesuing Field	Lake Nebagamon	North American Fin. Corp.	Private
Richard I. Bong Airport	City of Superior	City of Superior	Public
Solon Springs Municipal Airport	Solon Springs	Town/Village Solon Springs	Public

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics, 2004

Three helicopter landing locations are located within the town. Located at the town hall, fire hall, and Wascott Ball Park the landing locations primarily provide service to emergency medical helicopters.



Pedestrian

Most local roads in the town have limited shoulder areas along roads that accommodate vehicular travel at speeds averaging 50 miles per hour. These conditions hamper safe pedestrian travel. Moreover, given the low-density development pattern and the fact that many goods and services are located several miles away in nearby cities and villages, 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.

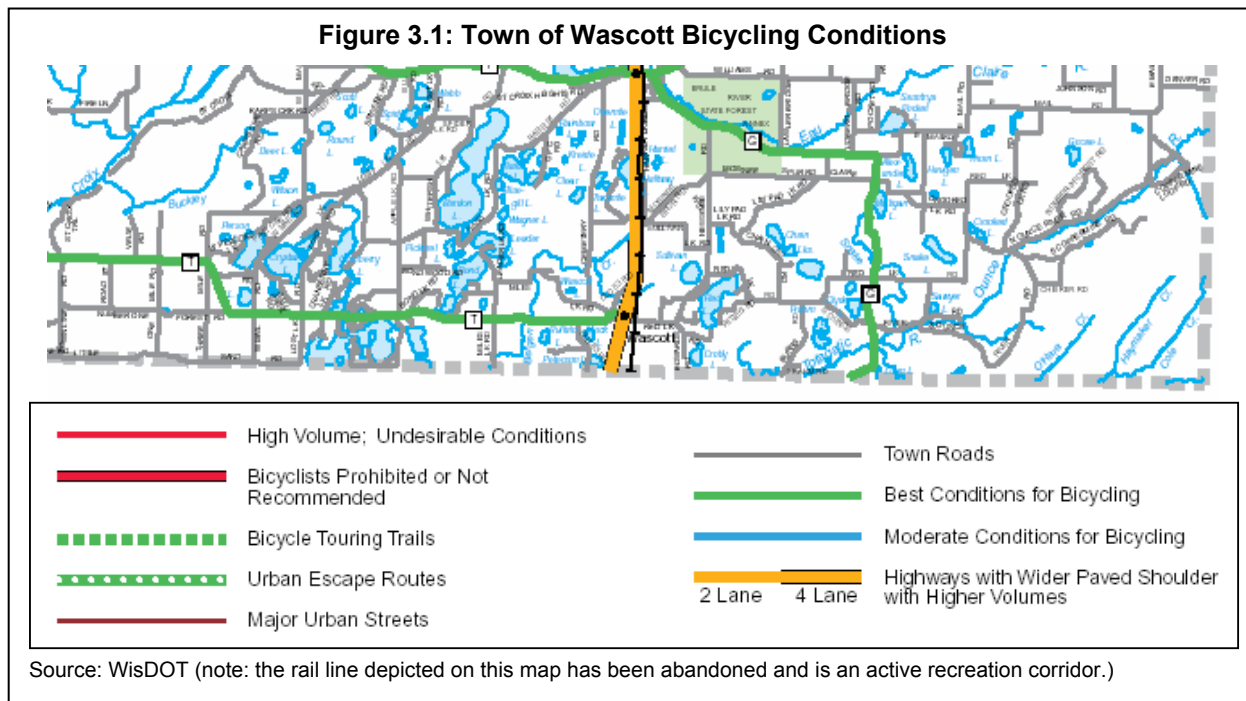
The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 provides a statewide framework to increase walking and to promote pedestrian safety. The plan establishes goals, objectives, and actions regarding the provision of pedestrian accommodations that could be implemented locally. The plan also serves to help communities identify actions they can take to establish pedestrian travel as a viable, convenient, and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. No specific recommendations to the Town of Wascott exist in the state plan.

Although not specifically designated as a pedestrian facility, the Wild Rivers Trail is a year-round multiple use facility for both motorized and non-motorized use. Pedestrian use of the facility is allowed. The Wascott Ball Park also has a non-motorized pedestrian walking trail.

Bicycling

Bicycling is limited to undesignated bicycle routes on state, county, and town roads. The *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020*, presents a blueprint for improving and expanding bicycle transportation routes in the state. There are no plans to expand state bicycle routes into or through the Town of Wascott.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights bicycling conditions on select roadways in Wisconsin. Figure 3.1 shows bicycling conditions as designated by WisDOT in the Town of Wascott. In the Town of Wascott, best conditions for biking are designated as being on portions of County Highway's G, T, and Y.



Railroad and Water Transportation

One railroad line extends through the middle portion of the Town of Wascott (T. 43N – R. 11W) in a north/south direction. Canadian National has operated this route since its purchase of Wisconsin Central Railroad in 2001. This rail corridor is the shortest route between Duluth/Superior and Chicago and has approximately 20 train trips per day traveling along the line. In the future, it is anticipated an increase in train trips will occur as the rail line now connects to Winnipeg, Canada and Chicago.

In the past, additional rail lines had criss-crossed the town. One line that connected Superior to the north and Spooner to the south was abandoned in the early 1990's. This segment currently is "rail-banked" and is used as a recreational corridor (Wild Rivers Trail) and is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and management by the Douglas County Forestry



Department. If in the future additional demand for rail lines is warranted, a railroad company could convert the rail-banked land back into a functioning rail line.

No waterborne commerce/routes are available in the town. The nearest access to waterborne commerce is the Port of Duluth/Superior. Use of all existing waterways is for recreational purposes.

Transit

Public transit services are not available in the Town of Wascott given its low density of development. The density of development in the town cannot provide ridership necessary to support a bus route. The closest access to commercial bus transportation is available by Greyhound Bus Lines in Duluth, MN, or Eau Claire, WI. No plans exist to establish service in the next 20 years.

Elderly and disabled residents are served by the Aging Resource Center of Douglas County and by a mutual agreement with the Washburn County Aging Unit. Instead of town residents always traveling to Superior, a van may take them to the Minong Senior Center in Washburn County. One van from the Aging Resource Center of Douglas County is stationed in Solon Springs. Town of Wascott residents use the Solon Springs van to access the meal site in Solon Springs and medical appointments, shopping, and grocery purchases in Gordon, Hayward, Spooner, and Superior. Volunteers drive the van, and Douglas County human services supplements are accepted or a minimal charge is collected for the transportation provided. The Aging Resource Center of Douglas County also coordinates various escorts providing elderly and disabled transportation. Northern Access from New Richmond, WI, is the specialized medical vehicle provider that Douglas County contracts with to provide medical assistance trips countywide.

Due to the town's geographic size and dispersed population, the ability to support a full range of public transit services is difficult. Whenever possible, existing providers of transit/transportation services should coordinate schedules and vehicles to provide a greater impact to the residents of the town.

Trucking

The local road network and its connection to the county and state highway system provide truck access to local businesses and residential dwellings. In the spring, the Town of Wascott and Douglas County imposes weight restrictions on local roads to lower the allowable weight due to the instability caused by frost and to prevent road damage.

Pipelines

A major pipeline transporting liquid petroleum crosses the town from north to south. Owned by Enbridge Pipelines (Lakehead) LLC., the pipeline delivers crude oil and natural gas to refinery centers throughout the Midwest. Overall, the pipeline is underground and consists of 12-48 inch diameter pipes. An upgrade of the system was implemented in early 2000.

Trails

Throughout the county, there are several hundred miles of recreational trails. Douglas County Forestry Department oversees the development and maintenance of approximately 300 miles of snowmobile and seasonal ATV trails, 17 miles of cross-country ski trails, and numerous nature-hiking trails. Over the years, several abandoned railroad corridors have been converted to multi-use recreational trails. Four of these trail networks have already been completed,



connecting with many trail corridors from other counties and adjoining states. Trails in the Town of Wascott are further described in the Utilities and Community Facilities element of the comprehensive plan.

3.7 OTHER TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Several state and regional organizations develop plans and programs for the management and systematic update of transportation facilities that may include the Town of Wascott. Based on a review of these plans and programs, no land use conflicts or policy differences were identified. A listing of these plans and programs is provided below.

Rustic Roads Program

The Rustic Roads program in Wisconsin was created by the 1973 State Legislature in an effort to help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads for the leisurely enjoyment of bikers, hikers, and motorists. An officially designated Rustic Road shall continue to be under local control. The county, city, village or town shall have the same authority over the Rustic Road as it possesses over other highways under its jurisdiction.

A Rustic Road is eligible for state aids just as any other public highway. To qualify for the Rustic Road program, a road:

- Should have outstanding natural features along its borders such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, native wildlife, or include open areas with agricultural vistas that singly or in combination uniquely set this road apart from other roads.
- Should be a lightly traveled local access road, one which serves the adjacent property owners and those wishing to travel by auto, bicycle, or hiking for purposes of recreational enjoyment of its rustic features.
- Should be one not scheduled nor anticipated for major improvements that would change its rustic characteristics.
- Should have, preferably, a minimum length of two miles and, where feasible, should provide a completed closure or loop or connect to major highways at both ends of the route.

A Rustic Road may be dirt, gravel, or paved road and may be one-way or two-way. It may also have bicycle or hiking paths adjacent to or incorporated in the roadway area. Law has established the maximum speed limit on a Rustic Road at 45 mph. The local governing authority may establish a speed limit as low as 25 mph.

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 Wascott. The WisDOT, along with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, has compiled a Wisconsin State Bike Map that highlights the most favorable bicycling conditions in northern Wisconsin.

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.

Wisconsin State Highway Plan

The *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020* focuses on the 11,800 miles of State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin. The plan identifies no traffic congestion in the next 20 years on highways within the Town of Wascott.

Corridors 2020

Corridors 2020 plan 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.

2003 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The *2003 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.

3.8 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

To assist the town in meeting its overall goal of developing and maintaining a safe, efficient transportation system while preserving the aesthetic qualities of the Town of Wascott, a set of recommended objectives and actions has been developed. Implementing the identified actions will allow the town to achieve the identified objectives and its overall goal.

Due to the rural character of the community and its low-density development pattern, the ability of persons to travel by foot, bicycle, or other mode of transportation, other than by automobile, is very limited. The result of this creates difficulties in implementing significant design standards

for low-density developments. However, in development proposals where higher-density developments are proposed, a compact roadway network will assist in reducing road development costs and in turn costs related to maintenance and future reconstruction.

Goal: Develop and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system, while preserving the aesthetic qualities of the Town of Wascott.

- Objective:** Strive to improve and maintain existing roads within the town.
- A. Continue to rate local roads to plan for future road improvements.
 - B. Consider “Rustic Road” designation on selected roads.
 - C. Encourage the town to continue to obtain special funding grants available for road improvements.
- Objective:** Address the interests and concerns involving recreational traffic.
- A. Review existing recreational traffic systems.
 - B. Work with local organizations to recommend changes to existing systems to include all modes of transportation.
 - C. Provide accurate information to organizations which produce maps of trails and regulations.
 - D. Encourage the improvements to trail systems.
 - E. Investigate funding for establishing biking and walking trails.
- Objective:** Require private developers and individuals to develop roads to town and state standards.
- A. Develop ordinances outlining road construction requirements.
 - B. Develop guidelines for ceding private roads to the town.
 - C. Encourage development where roads already exist.
- Objective:** Explore the creation of a transit system.
- A. Identify needs for transit services.
 - B. Meet with adjoining towns and counties to develop a plan.
 - C. Investigate available funding and grants.
 - D. Make recommendations for development.
- Objective:** Improve and maintain emergency services.
- A. Communicate with local services and air emergency services.
 - B. Establish standards and needs.
 - C. Investigate available funding and grants.
 - D. Make recommendations to the town.
- Objective:** Evaluate future airport needs.
- A. Meet with airport commission annually.