

City of

Wisconsin Dells



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Intent

Intent:

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, 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

Introduction:

Although the nine required Comprehensive Plan Elements are all very much inter-related, understanding the link between transportation and land use is critical to the development of policies and strategies of an effective Comprehensive Plan. Land use decisions inevitably influence transportation needs, and transportation systems clearly influence future land use patterns. This relationship is particularly evident in the development patterns of the last several decades - with the shift in the majority of our nation's population and new business growth from urban to suburban areas being both *fueled by* the construction of new highways and arterial streets, and *fueling* the construction of more highways, increased capacity, and alternative transportation systems to meet increased demands. The goals, objectives and policies that come out of the Transportation Element should focus on transportation alternatives that will most efficiently serve existing and planned land uses and community needs and desires.

When making land use decisions, the City should determine how existing and proposed land uses impact transportation and whether or not it is feasible to address those impacts. For example, the siting of a convention or cultural resource center or major commercial recreation facility will affect traffic levels, particularly on streets providing access to the site. This may result in needed modifications to existing transportation infrastructure to accommodate more traffic, or may require increased funding to maintain an existing facility to its desired standard. An evaluation of the cost of such improvements versus the benefits of the proposed land use is an important consideration. Likewise, City decisions regarding the extension of an arterial street, the establishment of a transit or shuttle system, or the construction of a pedestrian/bicycle trail will have an impact on the demand and desirability of land located along these transportation routes or at transit stops. A community can influence growth patterns in a desirable way by guiding infrastructure to areas most suitable for new development. It is clear that the decisions the City makes about land use and transportation directly impact one another. Understanding the existing transportation system, identifying needed improvements, and coordinating additions to the system with planned future land use patterns and overall Plan goals and objectives will help to ensure that the City's future transportation needs are met.

This Plan Element will provide an inventory of the City's existing transportation system, including not only roadways but also rail, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, air and water systems and associated inter-modal connections. (For instance, are there transportation options for a visitor arriving at Wisconsin Dells via Amtrak to reach their final destination? In the case of a day visitor, do sidewalks or trails exist to connect or transport the visitor to area attractions?). From this inventory and direction from the community regarding specific transportation needs and desires, specific policy recommendations will be developed to help guide City decision making over the next 20 years and beyond, including proactive measures that the City should take to implement specific objectives of the Plan, as well as policy guidelines to consult when responding to development applications and making decisions regarding the extension of infrastructure to promote or serve new development.

“This Plan Element will provide an inventory of the City's existing transportation system”

Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Existing Conditions:

Although the City of Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton together have a combined population of 4,400, the area's transportation system must be able to accommodate populations of over 50,000 during the peak tourist season, which generally runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

This can be difficult given the serious limitations that exist with regard to topography and natural features. Only one bridge spans the Wisconsin River, connecting the older portion of the City and its downtown retail area with Lake Delton and the more recently developed tourist attractions on the west side of the River. As a result, the bridge carries about 30,000 vehicles per day, plus all bicycle and pedestrian traffic traveling between the two areas. The lack of both a transit/shuttle system and an effective pedestrian/bicycle network, combined with the recent development of tourist facilities over a geographically large area, forces most trips between destinations in the City to occur by car. There are many challenges to overcome in planning for an effective transportation system in the Wisconsin Dells area for the future.

“The area’s transportation system must be able to accommodate peak populations”

Gateways

The City of Wisconsin Dells, like most cities across Wisconsin, has established key entryway points or gateways into the community. These gateways mark the entry point to cities typically by the placement of city logo signage in highly visible locations. While the City of Wisconsin Dells has yet to undertake the placement of signage at these locations, it can be noted that several of them exist at key interchanges. These interchange locations include the I90/94 & STH 13 interchange on the City's west side and the STH 13/16 & STH 23 interchange on the City's east side.

Roadways

Although all components of the transportation system need to be evaluated, by far the most critical is the City's roadway system. The growth of the tourism industry in recent decades has been in the form of large amusement parks and combined accommodations/amusement facilities, generally built upon large parcels of land with their own parking facilities. Similar to many commercial areas developed over the last half of the 20th century, these sites were designed to accommodate guests arriving and leaving by automobile, with little regard for other modes of transportation. The resulting traffic congestion and conflicts at peak times are less than desirable, as evident by the light-hearted comments of many participants in the stakeholder interview process about their desires for a “stealth” bridge – a second bridge that would allow local residents easier access throughout the area while remaining unknown to the tourist crowd. As the tourism industry in the area continues to grow, local officials will be faced with a need to expand the capacity of its roadway system and/or develop alternatives to the automobile for meeting local transportation needs. The community's approach to dealing with this issue will shape the goals and policies that ultimately get incorporated into this Element and the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Existing Traffic Volumes

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) studies and reports average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts for several roadways within the City. Traffic volumes reported by WisDot in 2001 for the year 2000 are illustrated on the AADT map. As expected, the heaviest volumes are present in and around the City's River District and along the Wisconsin Dells Parkway, which leads to major tourist destinations along the strip in Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton. A comparison of traffic volumes in these areas with volumes recorded at major entryways into the community reveal, not surprisingly, that a big portion of the traffic recorded along these corridors is the result of people moving between destinations within the City and between the City and Lake Delton.

Projected Traffic Volumes

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) studies and reports projected AADT traffic counts for major intersection and roadway reaches throughout the City. The following table illustrates the projections available within the City of Wisconsin Dells in five-year increments out to the year 2023.

SITE	2000 AADT Count	2003 AADT Projection	2008 AADT Projection	2013 AADT Projection	2018 AADT Projection	2023 AADT Projection
STH 13 Ramp from I90/94	690	730	780	830	890	940
STH 13 Btwn CTH H & I90/94	9,500	9,770	10,660	11,520	12,350	13,150
STH 13 Btwn USH 12/STH 16 & CTH H	18,670	20,550	22,430	24,160	25,770	27,290
USH 12/STH 23 South of Wis Dells	24,450	26,310	27,400	28,420	29,370	30,260
USH 12-STH 16 Btwn Broadway & Pioneer	4,070	4,130	4,230	4,330	4,440	4,540
STH 13-23 Btwn USH 12-STH 13 & Stand Rock	32,680	34,150	36,600	39,050	41,500	43,950
STH 13-16-23 W of Finnegan	31,650	33,180	35,060	36,760	38,320	39,750
STH 13-16-23 Broadway Btwn Superior & Oak	21,960	22,950	24,600	26,240	27,890	29,540
STH 13-16-23 Broadway Btwn Oak & Elm	21,800	22,780	24,420	26,050	27,690	29,320
STH 13 Broadway Btwn Race St & STH 16	14,400	14,610	15,420	16,150	16,820	17,440
STH 13 North of STH 16	4,720	6,000	6,490	6,960	7,410	7,850
STH 23 Broadway East of STH 16 & STH 13	7,640	7,040	7,640	8,210	8,760	9,300
STH 23 NE of Broadway	4,820	5,310	5,820	6,300	6,770	7,220

Existing Conditions

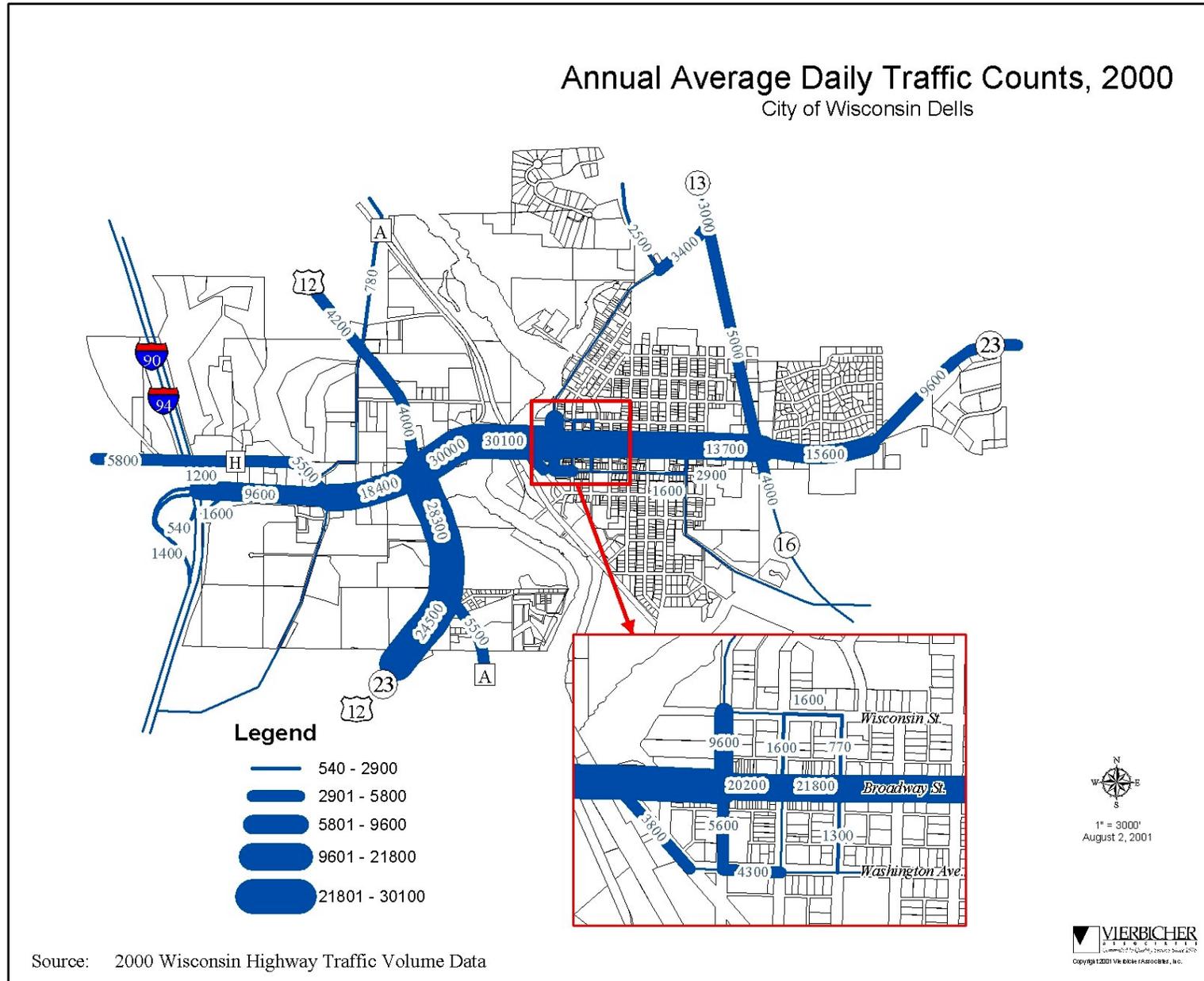
City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Street Classifications

Streets are generally classified by function into one of three groups: arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets. Classifications are based upon traffic volumes and the location and purpose of streets within the transportation system. WisDOT has established street classifications for roadways in counties and communities throughout the state, including Wisconsin Dells (See Roadway Classification Map). These include mainly highways and through streets, but also collector streets that are intended to carry traffic to the arterial street system within the community. The classification system developed by WisDOT is based on a statewide perspective. From that perspective, the interstate system and other primary highways are classified as principal arterials, with other state and federal highways falling in the minor arterial category, county highways generally classified as major collectors, and other city streets considered either minor collectors or local streets.

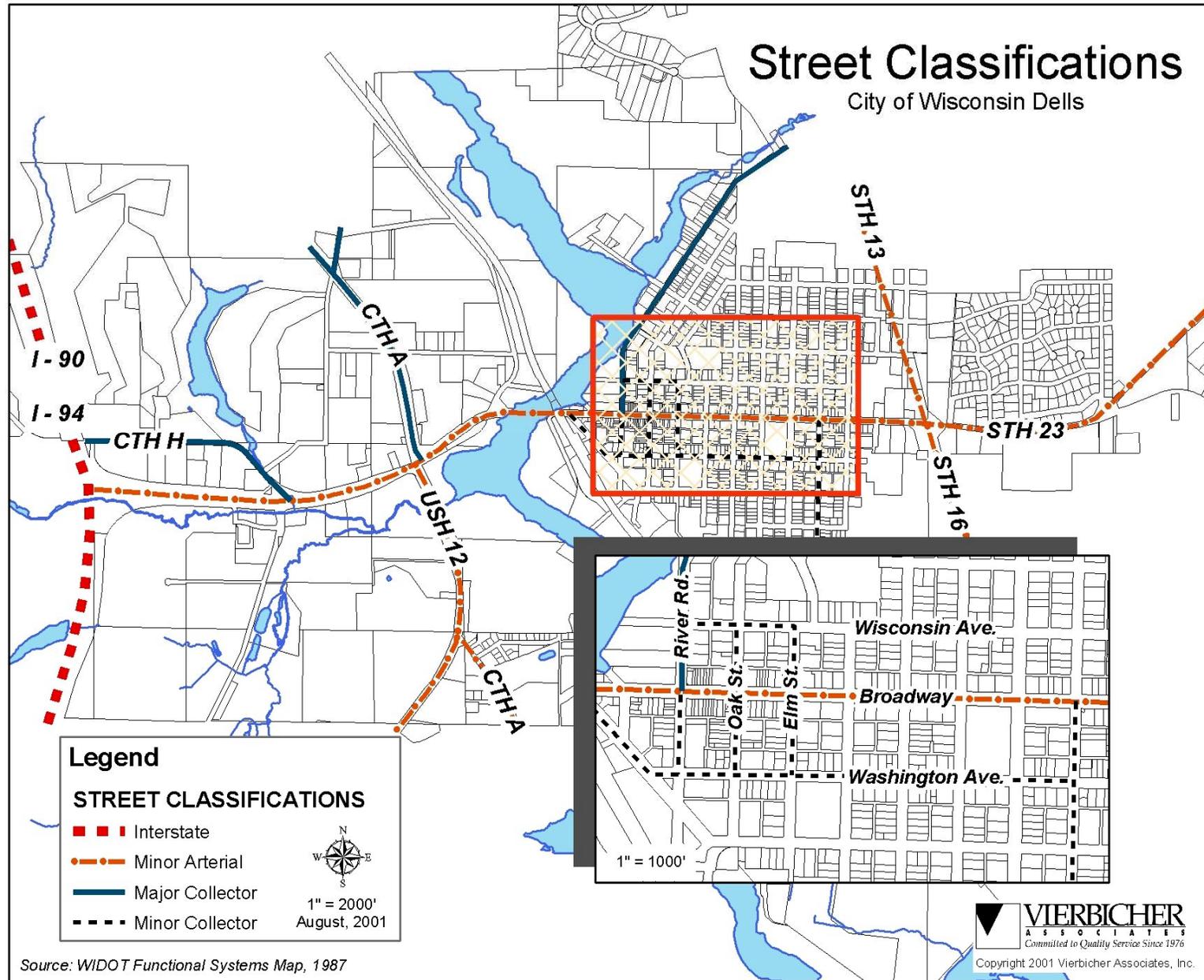
Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



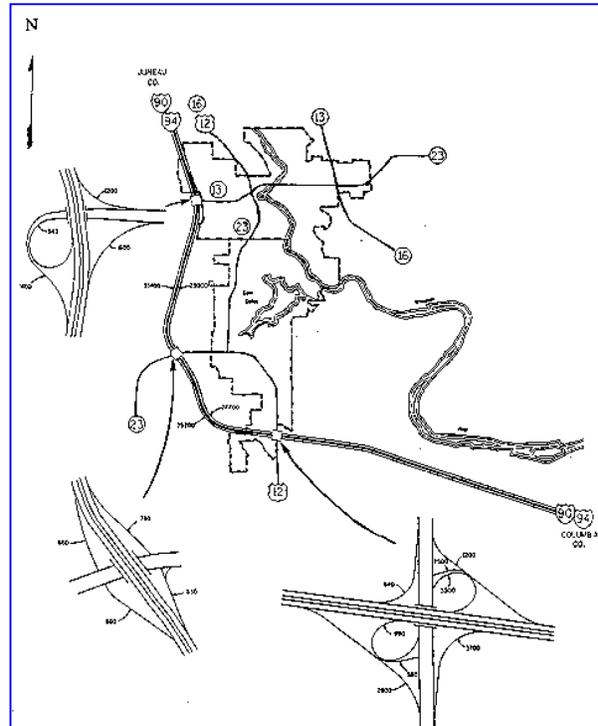
Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

While Broadway and Wisconsin Dells Parkway are major components of the City's street system, they fall into the minor arterial category within the State's system. Because local land use and development regulations often impose different standards on properties located along different class streets, it is important that a local perspective be taken when developing a street classification system as part of a local comprehensive planning effort.

Interstate 90/94

Wisconsin Dells benefits from its location adjacent to Interstate 90/94, which provides easy access from the large population centers of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, as well as other smaller municipalities throughout the Midwest. Although a small percentage of tourists visiting the area arrive by passenger rail and air, the vast majority of visitors arrive by car, and most of them travel to the Dells area along some portion of I-90/94. According to 2000 Wisconsin Highway Traffic Volume Data reported by the WisDOT, I-90/94 carries over 35,000 vehicles per day to the south of the Dells area, 44,000 to 50,000 vehicles per day adjacent to Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton, and over 32,000 vehicles per day to the north of the area.



A total of four interchanges are provided along I-90/94 for the Wisconsin Dells/Lake Delton area. Interchanges at STH 12 and STH 23 are located at the south end of the City of Lake Delton, and lead to the southern end of "The Strip" – a 1.5 -mile long portion of STHs 12/23 leading through Lake Delton and up to STH 13 in Wisconsin Dells. This route is lined with tourist recreation facilities, hotels and resorts, retail shops, and restaurants. An interchange at STH 13 provides direct access to the City of Wisconsin Dells, while a fourth interchange to the north at STHs 12/16 provides a secondary, but lesser utilized access to the City.

State and Federal Highways:

In addition to I-90/94, the Dells area is served by U.S. Highway 12, and STHs 13, 16 and 23. In addition to providing access to the City, these routes generally serve as arterial street corridors within the City.

US 12 provides access from Baraboo, Sauk City, and the west side of Madison from the south, and parallels I-90/94 to the northwest of the City.

STH 13 begins in the Dells and heads north along the Wisconsin River to Wisconsin Rapids, and then continues north to Lake Superior at Ashland.

Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

STH 16 provides an additional access from the Portage area to the southeast. The highway spans the state, traveling from the Milwaukee area west to La Crosse, but much of its route parallels I-90/94 and therefore carries less tourist traffic to the area.

STH 23 provides access from Reedsburg and areas in southwest Wisconsin, and connects to other highways to the east that serve northeastern Wisconsin, including Green Bay and the Fox Valley area.

Local Streets

To the east of the Wisconsin River, the local street system consists of predominantly the regular grid street pattern developed in the City over its first 100 years. Such a pattern provides for good connections to local destinations for motorists, bicycles and pedestrians. Traffic is fairly evenly distributed on local streets in such a system that no one street bears the burden of providing access to the arterial street system for the neighborhood. With the exception of Broadway and major entrances into the City's east side, traffic volumes are not exceptionally high on any local streets.

To the west of the Wisconsin River, the street pattern is much less interconnected and integrated. Due to topography and large-lot tourist recreation facilities, there are fewer streets and thus fewer options for motorists to choose from. This, combined with the high-traffic generation uses located here, results in a greater burden on each individual street and more traffic at each intersection.

Rail

Amtrak provides passenger rail service to the City, with a regular stop at a depot located adjacent to the River District. There were 11,216 boardings and alightings from the Wisconsin Dells Depot for the period April 2000 to March 2001.¹ This likely includes a combination of tourists visiting the area and area residents or business representatives traveling to and from other destinations. When compared to the estimated 2.4 million visitors to the area annually, this may not seem like a significant number of travelers.



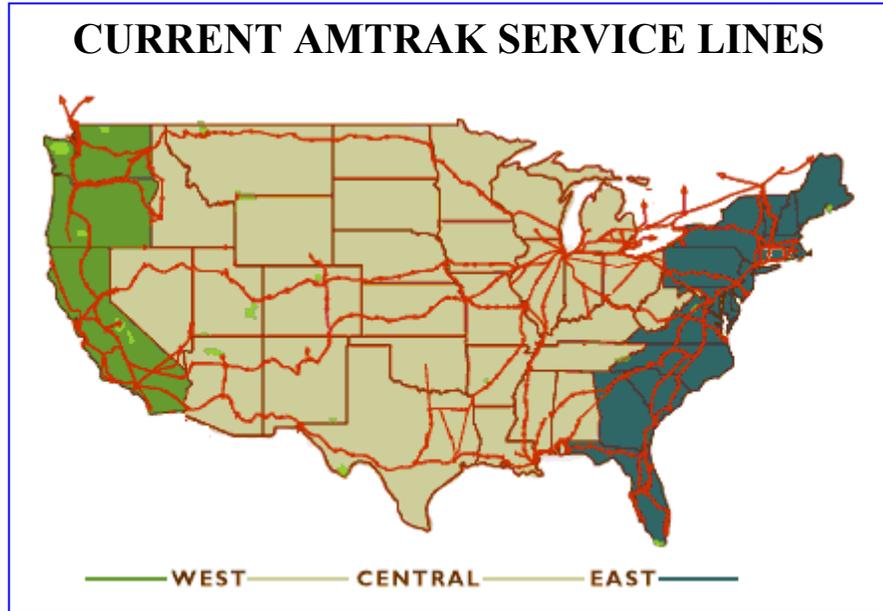
However, it does represent an average of 30 trips per day, which is likely higher in the summer tourism season. Currently, the City maintains and operates the depot. In the past, there was a Chicago to Wisconsin Dells route, which brought tourists up to enjoy the City. This route has been cancelled, but the City may want to work with the Department of Tourism to explore the possibility of restoring this route. Amtrak utilizes the Canadian Pacific Rail System (the former Soo line) through Wisconsin Dells. While this rail line serves as a means for public transportation, it also doubles as a freight rail system. Because the frequency of dual use on the system, questions have begun to arise about the noise

¹ Amtrak Corporate Communications, Washington, DC, 202/906-3000.

Existing Conditions

generated and the safety of the bridge structure that passes over Broadway. On the south side of Broadway, the rail corridor through the City is located along the east side of the Wisconsin River. There is only one at-grade crossing within the City limits – at Bowman Road as it heads south toward the City’s wastewater treatment plant. The rail corridor

crosses the Wisconsin River via a bridge near the STH 13/16/23 bridge, and then parallels the River on its west side until it leaves the City limits, with no at-grade crossings in this area. With the exception of the narrow opening under the viaduct at Broadway, the rail line has little impact on the City’s street system.



The U.S. Congress is currently considering the High Speed Rail Investment Act (HSRIA), an initiative that would expand high speed rail services throughout the country and fund the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI). As part of the Midwest Rail Initiative, plans are being prepared for the improvement of existing rail lines to provide high-speed passenger service between Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul and to points beyond. Regional bus service is intended to bring travelers to the rail stations along the route. Full implementation of this plan will certainly benefit all of Wisconsin, even those areas not situated near a rail station. Wisconsin Dells is located on the proposed high-speed rail line. Since 1996, WisDOT has been working with eight other states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio) and Amtrak to investigate and develop a high-speed Midwest Regional Rail System. The proposed 3,000-mile system would be hubbed in Chicago and offer timesavings of 20-30% over existing passenger rail service. It would also offer additional routes and increased service frequency.

Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

June 27, 2001 Press Release

More than 120 members of the House of Representatives today co-sponsored and introduced the High Speed Rail Investment Act (HSRIA) in response to growing state and local demand for increased investments in passenger rail to help ease the nation's transportation gridlock. High speed rail will provide an alternative to congested airports and highways, create jobs and economic opportunities, and respond to the demand from 38 states, dozens of local governments, civic organizations and businesses for increased investment in high-speed passenger rail. The bill would authorize bond financing of up to \$12 billion over 10 years, with the proceeds going to upgrade existing rails, build new high-speed lines, purchase high-speed trains, and eliminate or improve grade crossings. States would be required to match 20 percent of project costs in order to obtain funding in their regions. States now must provide financing on a 50-50 basis or in some cases are forced to pick up the entire cost because of the absence of federal funding. The state matching funds would be placed in a privately managed escrow account to guarantee repayment of the bond principal. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the cost of the \$12 billion bond program to be \$4.3 billion over ten years.

Existing Conditions

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Translink 21, a study created by WisDOT, found that passenger rail could be, and should be, an important component of Wisconsin's transportation system. Translink 21 is a broad umbrella plan with a unified vision and set of goals from which individual modal plans for highways, airports, railroads, bikeways, pedestrian and transit are being shaped.

Proposed Midwest Regional Rail Service Area



Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Pedestrian / Bicycle Facilities

Other than sidewalks located along City streets, there are few off-road pedestrian or bicycle facilities within the City. Although WisDOT reported no vehicle/bicycle or vehicle/pedestrian accidents between 1998 and 2000, these conflicts have been identified as an increasing concern that the City wishes to address in the near future. The consensus is that bicycle traffic is increasing, particularly bikes use by seasonal workers on their way to and from work. In addition to safety concerns for the cyclists, many residents believe that bike use is beginning to impede the flow of vehicle traffic.

Potential for conflict during the peak tourism season is high at and near the bridge crossing the Wisconsin River, where only one sidewalk is provided on the north side of the bridge. Bicycles are forced to either travel out in the street along with car traffic or use the sidewalk and compete with pedestrians. Although the travel deck of the bridge appears to be wide enough to accommodate bicycles as well as two lanes of traffic, there is no identified bike lane along the street. Traffic volumes on and near the bridge are higher than any other point in the Dells area street system which, combined with the pedestrian/bike limitations, makes for a precarious situation at times. The Plan Commission has expressed an interest in developing an additional pedestrian/bicycle facility across the River.

“Potential for conflict during the peak tourism season is high...”

On the east side of the Wisconsin River, the grid street pattern of the older part of the City provides an alternative for bicyclists for dealing with the heavier automobile and pedestrian traffic on Broadway. Parallel streets, one block on either side of Broadway, provide good access throughout this portion of the City for bicyclists. Designation of these streets as bike routes would help to identify these streets as alternatives to Broadway.

To the west of the Wisconsin River these alternatives do not exist for bicyclists. The street system in this area does not consist of a regular grid pattern, but rather includes much larger blocks, fewer streets, and more oddly configured parcels. Currently, alternatives for bicyclists in this area include sidewalks, where provided, and the street. Due to the size of the parcels and presence of deeper setbacks in some areas, opportunities may exist in this portion of the City for the establishment of off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities, either along streets or by easement through mid-blocks. Topography will limit these routes to some extent, but as a means of reducing traffic volumes and addressing parking shortages at certain times of the year, this might be worth exploring. The possibility of coordinating efforts with Lake Delton to provide a good off-street network to major destinations such as amusement parks, hotels/resorts, the downtown, and employee housing areas should be studied.

Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Recent streetscape improvements in the downtown area have improved the environment for pedestrians, which should improve further as new trees and landscaping mature. Pedestrian friendly features such as bump-outs at some intersections, benches, decorative paving and crosswalks, and landscaping were added in a major renovation that was completed in 2001. For people driving to the downtown area to shop, the new streetscape should provide for a more pleasant experience. However, those choosing to walk to or from destinations on the west side of the River face a less inviting pedestrian environment at the present time.

Snowmobile Trails

Wisconsin snowmobilers are proud of the statewide trail system that ranks among the best in the nation. This trail system would not be possible without the generosity of the thousands of landowners around the state as 70% of all trails are on private land. Trails are established through annual agreements and/or easements granted by these private property owners to the various snowmobile clubs and county alliances throughout the state.

Snowmobile club members work closely with landowners in the placement of the trails. They also assist by performing pre-season preparation, brushing, grading, signing the trails, trail grooming, safety inspections of the trails and fund raising to support the trail projects. This cooperation results in the promotion of safe, responsible snowmobiling that benefits everyone. There are a number of snowmobile clubs in the area including the Dells County Snowmobile Club, the Sauk County Snowmobile Association, and the Reedsburg and Baraboo clubs. Under Wisconsin State law, Sections 350.19 and 895.52, landowners are not liable for injury on their property when they have granted permission for snowmobiling.

Registration fees and the gas tax on 50 gallons per registered snowmobile help fund nearly 16,000 miles of snowmobile trails. Specifically, registration fees fund a combination of trail aids, law enforcement, safety education, registration systems and administration. Gas tax revenues are dedicated solely to the trails program.

The City is situated along some of Wisconsin's most scenic trails, with miles of county and state trails running along STH 23 and club trails running to the northwest. Both the state, county, and club trails connect to a much larger system, which make for a large snowmobile transit system.

Snowmobile Trails in the Area

Snowmobiling and associated trail systems are an important asset to the community. Specifically, they assist in expanding the range of recreational opportunities in the City. They also serve as a winter time attraction, assisting the area to promote its image as a year-round tourism destination.



Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Water Transportation

“According to Native American legend it was a great serpent, wriggling down from the north and his home near the Big Lake, that formed the bed of the Wisconsin River. Crawling over the forests and the fields, his huge body wore an immense groove in the land and the water rushed in behind him. When he came to the sandstone ridge where the Dells begins he thrust his great head into a crevice between the rocks and pushed them aside to form a narrow, winding passage. At his approach, lesser serpents fled forming the canyons, which lead off from the main channel. It was these timid, lesser serpents that formed Coldwater Canyon and Witches' Gulch, so the legend goes.”



“In the early days when lumbering was the state's leading industry, the river at the Dells played a leading role in the drama of rafting. Down most of its length, the Wisconsin is a placid, tranquil river but at the Narrows of the Dells, where it is confined within high rocky banks and only fifty feet wide, it can become a wild and unpredictable terror to all who try to traverse it.”

“Before white settlers arrived in Wisconsin much of the state was forested. White pine was the first timber considered for commercial logging because it would float down the rivers when freshly cut. The first recorded logging on the Wisconsin River was by soldiers led by Lt. Jefferson Davis, later president of the Confederacy, in 1828 for the building of Fort Winnebago near Portage.”



Most water transportation in the Dells area is tourism related. Boat tours of the scenic Dells area are a popular attraction in the summer months. So are rides on the world famous Wisconsin Duck boats. The City provides a public boat landing and related parking at the end of Indiana Avenue. There is also a City-operated marina/boat slip area located in Crandall Bay.

Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Transit / Shuttle Services

Mass transit is an issue with which many communities struggle. Citizens, planners, and decision-makers argue for public investment in transit to help reduce congestion. They argue that better transit can reduce congestion by attracting some drivers off busy roadways and onto transit.

The key point for implementing mass transit and other non-automobile modes is to decrease the gap that most drivers perceive between its cost (out-of-pocket, time, service) compared to the cost of driving. The figure below provides an overview of these costs.

Factors That Affect the Amount of Travel and Modal Choice			
	Automobile	Transit	Cycling & Walking
Out-of-Pocket Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel and Maintenance Parking Fees Roadway Tolls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit Fare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance
Time Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driving Parking Search Walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking Waiting Riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riding Walking
Service Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effort Safety Comfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effort Safety Comfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effort Safety Comfort

Source: *The Transportation and Land Use Connection, APA, PAS*

One way to decrease this gap is to implement a system that is reliable, fast, and convenient.

The City of Wisconsin Dells does not currently have a local transit system. In its 1962 Master Plan, the City proposed improvements to the municipal parking lot south of La Crosse Street and Minnesota Avenue with the intention of also operating a shuttle type bus from the parking lot to Broadway. The City also thought of partnering with tourist attraction entrepreneurs to extend the bus routes from the parking lot to other areas within the City and west of the River. The thought was that this would assist in the solution of two problems, reducing the number of vehicles circling in the area and permit the location of larger parking lots in less built-up areas and on less expensive land.

Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Today, development of a local transit system would provide a needed service for visitors, seasonal workers and local citizens, but there are serious questions about costs and economic viability of such a service. Various attempts have been made by private entities to establish such a system on a fee basis, with advertising on the shuttles helping to cover costs of operation. However, long-term success of such operations has proven to be difficult. Today, the City continues to support and advocate the need for private ventures seeking to serve local transit system needs.

According to the Wisconsin Dells' Visitor and Convention Bureau, about 17% of all lodging facilities in the Wisconsin Dells/Lake Delton area currently offer pick-up services from the Amtrak station, airport, or bus stop. There is also a car rental service available.

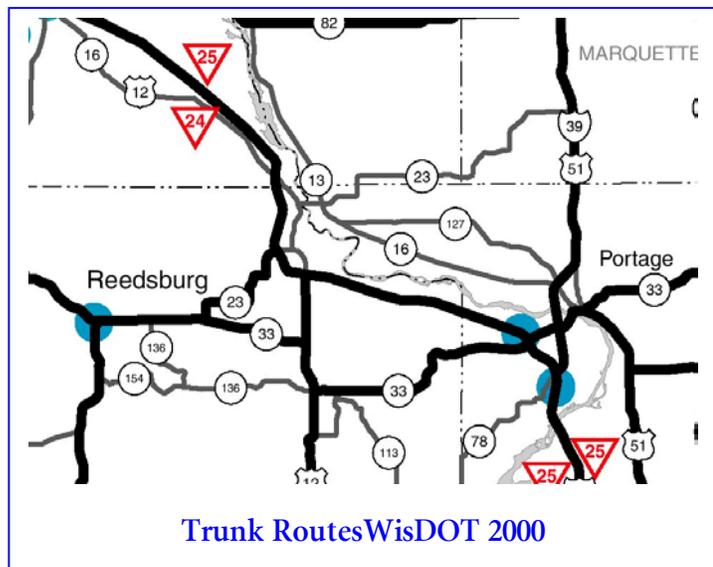
Taxi Service

A private company, Sureway Taxi Service, currently provides taxi service in Wisconsin Dells. The City has, however, expressed interest in establishing a more extensive system – possibly utilizing state grant money to get a program established and help it operate. Information on this program is provided under the *Funding Assistance Opportunities* section of this Plan Element.

Air Transportation

The Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport is located approximately 7 miles southwest of Wisconsin Dells in Sauk County, and is jointly owned and operated by the Cities of Baraboo, Wisconsin Dells, Village of Lake Delton, the Town of Delton, and Sauk County. While construction and upgrades of the airport were primarily funded by the federal Airport Improvement Program, operation of the facility is funded locally. Airport revenues are expected to cover about 38% of operating costs, and the balance is shared by the above municipalities. Sauk County

contributes \$5,000 annually to cover the cost of operating the airport. Based on 2000 budget figures, the City of Baraboo contributes 55% (year 2000 budget estimated at \$30,272) of the local subsidy, Wisconsin Dells 26% (\$14,310), Lake Delton 13% (\$7,155) and the Town of Delton 6% (\$3,303). The Plan Commission has expressed an interest in renegotiating this agreement when the opportunity arises to more evenly distribute costs between Wisconsin Dells, Lake Delton, and the Town of Delton.



Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

According to information supplied by the airport, as many as 300 aircraft can land and take off on a busy day, and over 600 cargo flights occur each year. It is one of seven airports in the state to provide daily cargo flights. An airport survey indicates that 64% of trips to and from the airport were tourism related, with 21% business related. About 32% of visitors by air visited the Wisconsin Dells/Lake Delton area, with 47% visiting Baraboo/West Baraboo and 22% visiting other areas.

Trucking

The City of Wisconsin Dells is located just east of Interstate 90/94, which is an officially designated truck route and makes for prime semi transports. Northwest of the City there are two state rest areas that can hold up to 25 trucks at one time. Trucks can access the City by way of several state truck highways. Going southbound, trucks can use STH 13, which turns into STH 16 to enter and depart from the City. STH 16, 23, and 127, and USH 12 are also viable access routes for trucks.

Bus Transportation

Greyhound stops at the Citgo station at 611 Frontage Road. Greyhound bus takes an average of 17 cars per day off the road, and achieves 162 passenger miles per gallon of fuel. Information regarding passenger trips to and from Wisconsin Dells is not available, but attendants at the local stop report that the bus stops five times per day, with anywhere from 2 to 10 passengers disembarking at any one stop.

Paratransit

Specialized transportation services such as paratransit, are designed to serve the needs of those whose transportation needs are not met by traditional services. According to WisDOT, many Wisconsin counties do not yet have large paratransit programs in place. Columbia County, which serves the City of Wisconsin Dells, has been working on expanding its services. At present, Columbia County offers transport several times a day, taking people to needed medical appointments. The County relies heavily on volunteer drivers, which makes it very difficult to provide consistent and reliable service. The cost associated with service is approximately \$25 for those who do not receive medical assistance through the County. The County van is not wheelchair accessible, which means that those unable to walk must seek services from private companies. Currently, Midstate Medical Express and Ramonds Medical Services are two private paratransit services providing service to residents of Wisconsin Dells.

Sauk County has a paratransit program that is more advanced than that of Columbia County. Wheelchair accessible transportation is offered to residents living in their own homes who are 60 or older and to disabled individuals who are aged 18 and older.

Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Parking

Parking is a simple means of reducing traffic congestion. For example, free employer-provided parking not only generates single occupied vehicles, but is also unfair to non-auto commuters who receive no corresponding benefits.

Currently, the City of Wisconsin Dells has nine municipal parking lots. All of the lots create revenue for the City with the exception of the lot adjacent to City Hall and the lot associated with the boat ramp on Indiana Avenue. In addition to supporting businesses in the River District, the parking stalls generate revenue for the City. The City also has on-street meter parking within the Business District. Parking within the City is governed by the Parking Board. Municipal patrol officers strictly enforce parking around the River District.

The City has indicated that there is a need for more parking to support businesses and activities in the River District. If the City is successful in encouraging additional development and redevelopment in the District, this need will likely increase. There are several options available to address this issue, and each strategy, or a combination of strategies, may be appropriate for meeting short and long term goals. These strategies include:

“The City has indicated that there is a need for more parking to support business and activities”

- Securing additional land located adjacent to the business district on which to locate additional surface parking. This will help address needs over the short term, but continuation of this policy over the long term as the downtown grows and attracts more visitors could have negative impacts on the pedestrian oriented environment that exists downtown and on adjacent neighborhoods as more land is cleared and paved for surface parking.
- Utilizing existing land more efficiently through the construction of multi-level parking structure(s) on existing parcels utilized for parking. Due to the limited size of several of the existing parking lots, this may also require the purchase of additional land. It is unlikely that this will be a viable option, at least in the short term, due to the cost of such facilities and the limited availability of land in the vicinity of downtown.
- Initiating measures aimed at encouraging visitors to frequent the downtown via other modes of transportation, limiting the need for additional surface parking without limiting the downtown customer base. This might involve the development of a transit or shuttle system to move people between the downtown and hotels and other destinations and/or the development of a convenient off-road pedestrian and bicycle network that provides safe routes to and from the downtown. Investigating and initiating such measures would also have a positive impact on traffic volumes and congestion on Broadway.

Transportation Modes

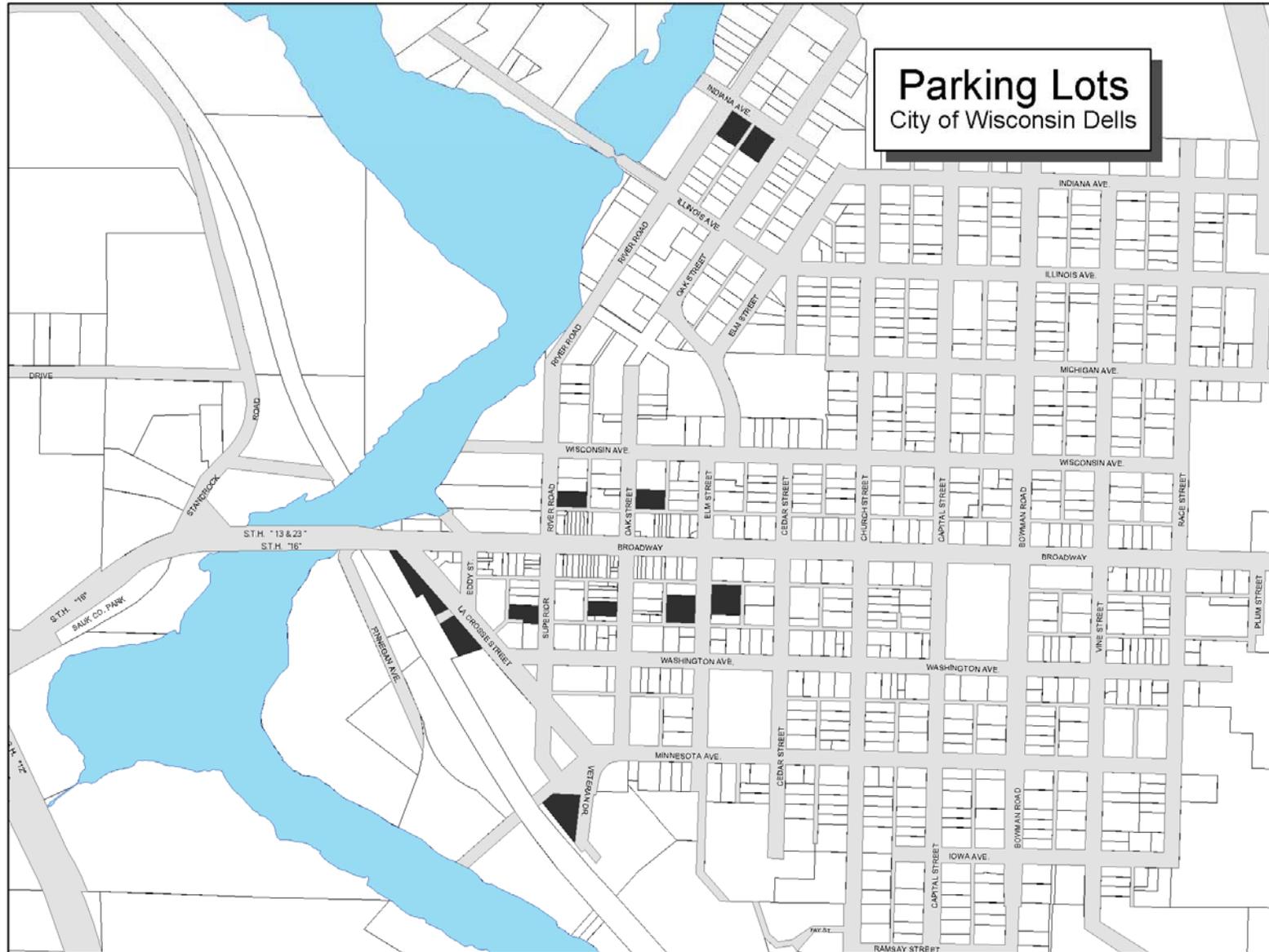
City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Accident Data

The Accident/Incidents Map illustrates accident frequency at or near intersections within the City. This data was compiled by WisDOT based upon reported accidents. As expected, the highest number of accidents has occurred along those streets with the highest traffic volumes, although relatively few have occurred within the downtown along Broadway or other areas east of the Wisconsin River. Most have occurred in the more auto-oriented areas to the west of the River, even though concerns about traffic congestion seem to be focused on areas east of the River. The character of the environment in the River District makes drivers more cautious and slows traffic speeds, resulting in a safer environment.

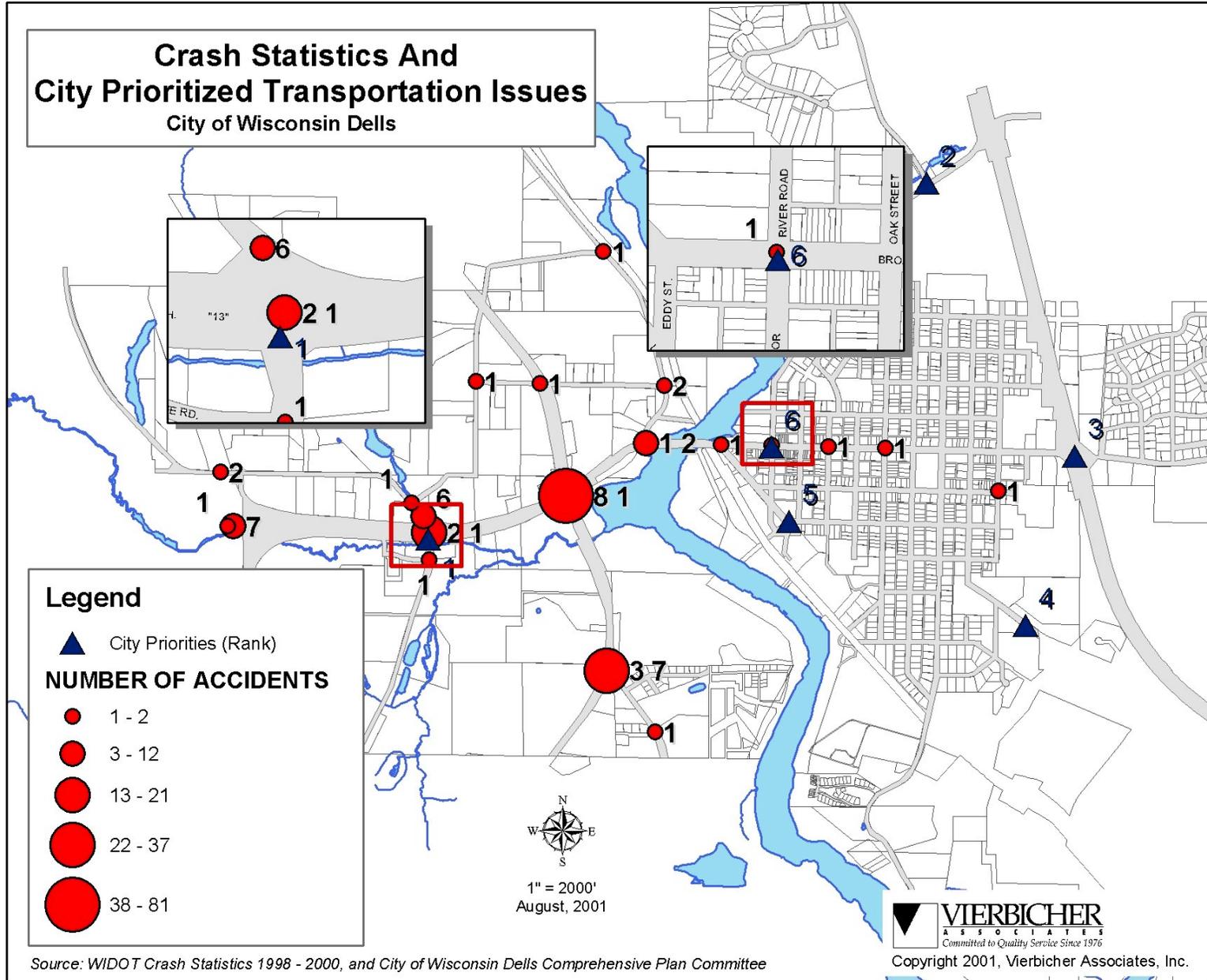
Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Transportation Modes

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Community Input On Transportation Issues

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Community Input on Transportation Issues

The following input was received from the stakeholder interview process regarding traffic and transportation issues (excerpts from the Stakeholder Interview Report prepared by RealWorld Research):

General

Many people mentioned that traffic concerns would need to be addressed. A number of people felt that a second bridge would be inevitable. Several people mentioned the creation of some form of public transportation, especially aimed at tourists, such as trolleys or monorails. Several people also suggested the development of bike paths, specifically for the safety of foreign student who frequently bike, but also as a potential draw for tourists. Our favorite suggestion, though, was for a “stealth bridge” that would only be known to locals.

“Many people mentioned that traffic concerns would need to be addressed.”

Excited About

- Street Maintenance
- Financed the two new lanes on the bridge
- Widening of Broadway is great
- Paved his street finally
- City is doing a lot with streets
- Making extra lanes across bridge/relieves traffic and freshens the look of the approach
- Pedestrian crossing on Broadway
- Stoplight on Vine
- Crossing from Showboat on Broadway – crosswalk stop sign
- Eddy St. changes are good – more like this could be done

Concerned About

- No more stop signs/traffic lights
- Traffic – delivery problems from Dells Lumber and have to cross the bridge – need another River crossing somewhere
- Traffic – especially the bridge
- Infrastructure – primarily transportation
- The number of parking meters – people are concerned about time running out so they don't stay downtown

Community Input On Transportation Issues

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Hopes

- Traffic situation needs to be addressed – 2nd bridge
- Bike trails
- Public transportation – a key element to develop. Service to the entire area. Monorail or something separated from the street system. Has to be good to get people to use it.
- Foreign students – often bicycle – need to address safety issue – possibly bike paths for workers, but also for tourists.
- Better traffic management overhead by-passes, separate pedestrian ways.
- The stealth bridge for locals
- Fix the alleys
- Road improvement – get rid of potholes
- A parking meter pass for locals
- Public transportation for visitors - like San Antonio trolley – something other than taxis. Maybe funded by the government if private funding fails.
- It would be nice to have a second bridge
- How to deal with cars - Parking ramps
- Trolley or something for transportation, especially of seniors
- 4 way stop sign at Vine and Iowa streets – problem for kids crossing to school
- Traffic problems – add a turning lane to ease congestion on Dells/Delton road
- A downtown bypass would be a dumb idea.
- Focus on improving the streets
- Traffic needs to be addressed – think about one-way streets, move non-downtown traffic around the downtown, going up Vine St. bottleneck will only get worse



Current Transportation Issues / Concerns

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Current Transportation Issues/Concerns

The City Plan Commission has identified several concerns while discussing transportation issues, and has ranked them as follows:

1. Traffic back-ups on westbound Broadway
2. Need for local control of traffic light synchronization
3. Lack of a reliable taxi service
4. Need for bike/pedestrian routes
5. Condition of railroad bridge
6. Proliferation of non-emergency transports
7. Promotion of an alternative entranceway (Hwy 16)

In addition, a number of problem intersections have been identified and ranked. These locations are listed below, and also illustrated on the Accident/Incidents Map along with accident statistics to provide a comparison between perceived and actual safety concerns:

1. Trout Road/Hwy 13
2. River Road/Waubek
3. Hwy 23/Hwy 16
4. Vine/Spring Hill School entrance
5. Minnesota/La Crosse/Veteran
6. River Road/Hwy 13

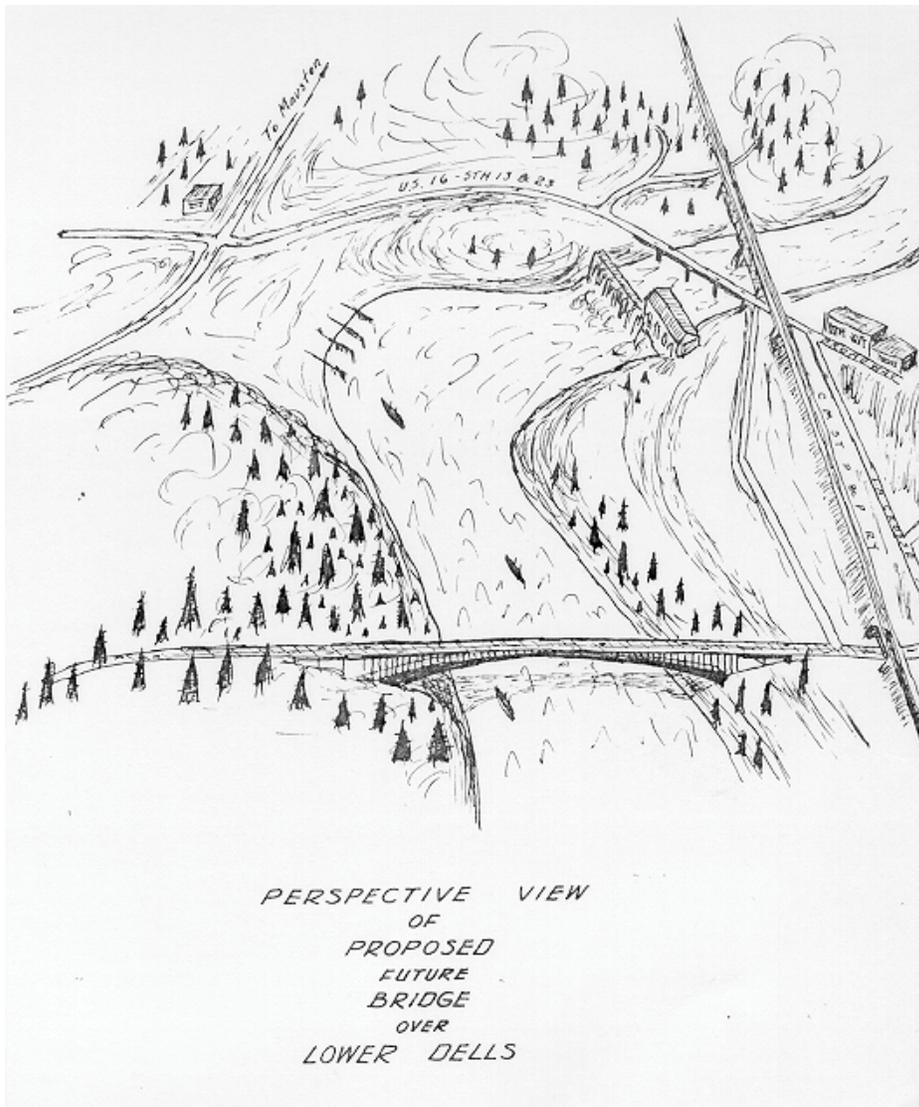


1962 Master Plan

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

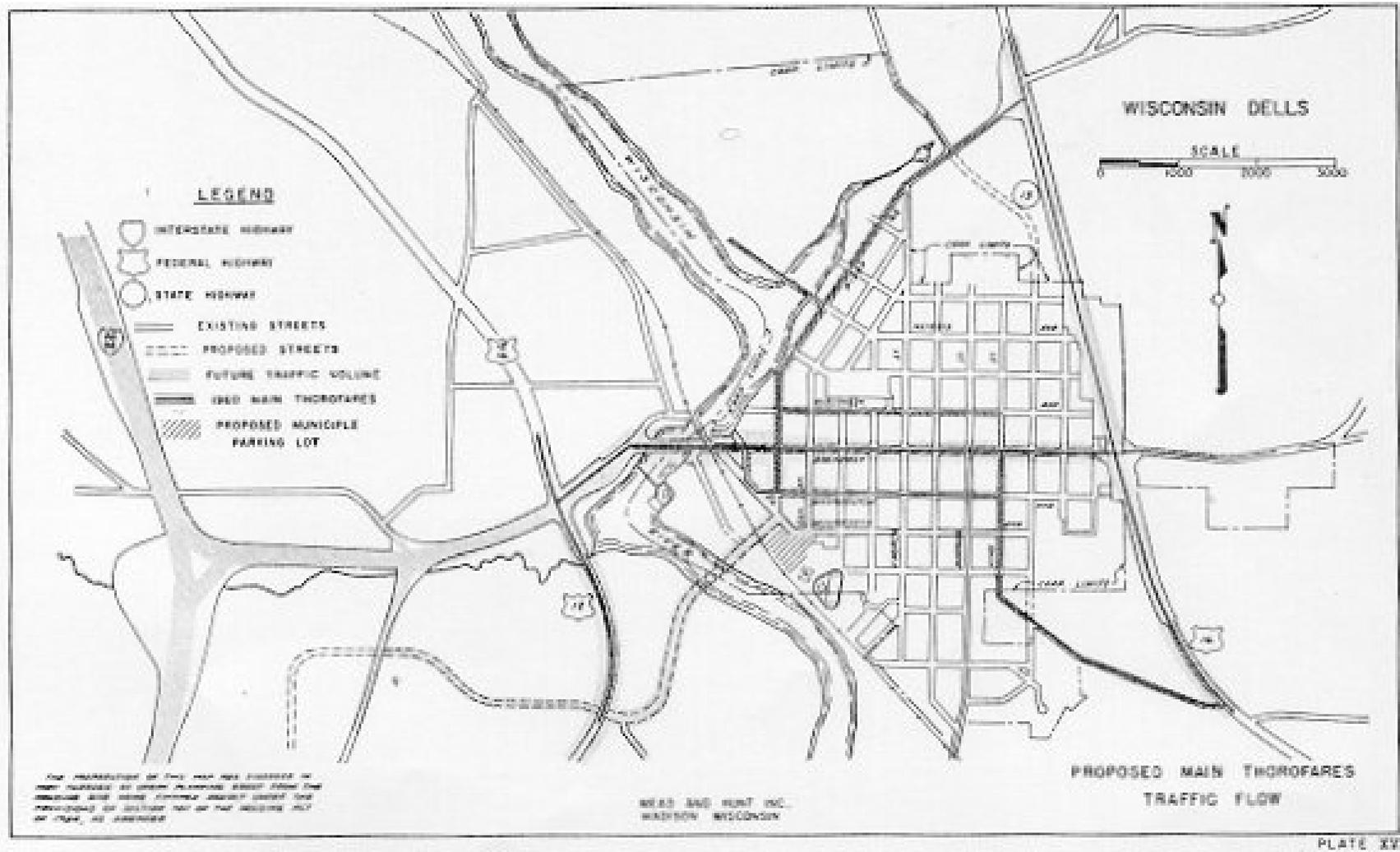
1962 Master Plan

In its 1962 Master Plan, the City of Wisconsin Dells identified several areas of congestion within the City. The areas included the bridge across the Wisconsin River at the west end of Broadway, the area at and adjacent to the railroad underpass on Broadway, and the intersection of Broadway and River Road/Superior Street. Even though improvements have been made to address these areas, many of these concerns still exist. Interestingly, recommendations that were made as part of the 1962 Plan included the development of a transit/shuttle system as a means of alleviating traffic congestion, and the construction of an additional bridge over the Wisconsin River, extending southwest off of La Crosse Street, as seen in 1962 sketch and map below.



1962 Master Plan

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



State Transportation Plans / Programs

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

State Transportation Plans / Programs

Funding Assistance Opportunities

The WisDOT administers a number of programs to defray the cost of enhancements to local transportation systems. Due to the proximity to and tourist travel between the Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton, the City is encouraged to consider coordinating its transportation efforts with the Village of Lake Delton. Eligibility options may increase through coordination due to population thresholds associated with some programs. In addition, cost savings and a more seamless transportation network between and around the two communities may be realized as a result of joint efforts.

“The WisDOT administers a number of programs to defray the cost of enhancements...”

Local Transportation Enhancements Program

The City’s Business Improvement District (BID) Committee is currently exploring submittal of an application to this program to continue its downtown beautification efforts. The initial set of improvements including decorative streetlights, benches, waste receptacles and banners have brought a heightened sense of pride to the community as a whole and strengthened the viability of the businesses located within the City’s River District. This type of activity has the potential to spur further redevelopment throughout the City. This program requires a local match of 20 percent and allows for bicycle and pedestrian facility system enhancements such as the development of a bicycle commuting route, landscaping and other scenic beautification. The most common projects include providing bicycle and/or pedestrian paths and constructing bicycle lanes, restoration of rail depots and landscaping near transportation facilities.

Elderly and Disabled Transportation Capital Assistance Program

This annual grant program provides capital funding for specialized transit vehicles used to serve the elderly and persons with disabilities. The program covers 80 percent of the total cost of equipment. Eligible applicants include private, not-for-profit organizations, local public bodies that do not have a private, non-profit organization readily available to provide a transportation service, and local public bodies such as Commissions on Aging approved as the coordinator of elderly and disabled transportation services in their service delivery area.

State Urban/Rural/Small Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance Program

This program provides funds for eligible project costs to public bus and shared-ride taxi programs. Eligible public transportation services include transport by bus, shared-ride taxicab, rail or other conveyance, either publicly or privately-owned, that provides general or special service on a regular and continuing basis. Eligible applicants are local public bodies (e.g., counties, municipalities, towns or transit or transportation commissions or authorities). Federal funding covers 50% of the operating deficit. The state supplements the federal funds and attempts to cover approximately 70% of the total project cost. However, state funds require a population of 2,500. Therefore, if the City wants to seek



State Transportation Plans / Programs

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

state funds, in addition to federal, it may be necessary to submit a joint application with another community. The City's current population is 2,418. Applications are due in October of each year.

Existing State Transportation Plans

Wisconsin has 110,594 miles of public roads, from interstate freeways to city and village streets. This highway improvement program covers only the 11,794-mile state highway system, which is administered and maintained by WisDOT. The other 99,160 miles are improved and maintained by the cities, towns, counties and villages in which they are located.

The state highway system consists of 744 miles of interstate freeways and 11,147 miles of state and U.S.-marked highways. While the 11,794 miles of state highways represent only 11% of all public road mileage in Wisconsin, they carry over 29 billion vehicle miles of travel a year, or about 58% of the total annual statewide travel.

To ensure the system's vitality and viability, WisDOT currently invests over \$750 million each year, resulting in over 800 miles of roads improved and rehabilitated annually.

Each wisely invested dollar returns benefits in terms of time savings, fewer accidents and decreased vehicle operating costs. Poor roads mean more accidents and deaths, higher insurance costs, more wear and tear on vehicles, more time on the road and less efficient and competitive commerce.

State Highway Subprograms

Wisconsin's transportation budget is divided into two subprograms for implementing improvements to state highway facilities:

1. Major Highway Development
2. State Highway Rehabilitation (which has three parts)
 - Existing highways
 - State bridges
 - Backbone rehabilitation

Source: WisDOT website



Major Highway Development Subprogram

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Major Highway Development Subprogram

Major highway development projects are generally the most complex, costly and potentially controversial projects initiated by WisDOT. They are long-term solutions to the most serious deficiencies on highly traveled segments of the highway system. Beginning in 1981, the Legislature renewed a transportation bonding program to provide continuity of funding for this subprogram. In 1983 the Legislature created the Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) to evaluate the merits of candidate major projects and to recommend projects to the Governor and Legislature for statutory enumeration (i.e. authorization for construction).

By statute, a "major highway project" denotes a project, which has a total cost of more than \$5,000,000 and which involves any of the following:

- Constructing a new highway 2.5 miles or more in length
- Reconstructing or reconditioning an existing highway by any of the following:
 1. Relocating 2.5 miles or more of the existing highway
 2. Adding one or more lanes five miles or more in length to the existing highway
 3. Improving to freeway standards 10 miles or more of existing divided highway

2000-2005 Major Projects Program

The 1989-91 Biennial Budget broadened the focus of the Major Highway Program by also enumerating three entire highway corridors. The enumeration of entire highway corridors is part of the Corridors 2020 strategy to position Wisconsin to effectively compete in the national and world markets as well as provide Wisconsin highway users needed mobility into the 21st century.

This program is based on legislatively authorized funding levels and current programming priorities. The program of major projects listed here is based on an annual level of \$195.4 million (in 2000 dollars) approved by the Legislature in the 1997-99 state budget.



State Highway Rehabilitation Subprogram

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

State Highway Rehabilitation (SHR) Subprogram

Existing Highways

The Existing Highways component of the SHR subprogram deals with improvements to the non-Corridors 2020 Backbone portion of the state highway system. It funds "3R" improvements—resurfacing, reconditioning and reconstructing existing roadways—and the minor addition of lanes, traffic and safety improvements, and minor realignments of roadway.

To establish bicycling as a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. –

Vision Statement of the Bicycle Transportation Plan - 2020

State Bridges

The State Bridges component of the SHR subprogram deals with improvements to bridges on the non-Interstate portion of the state highway system, including bridge replacements and major bridge repair. Bridge rehabilitation generally increases load-carrying capacity and widens deck roadways.

The program does not include bridges that can be effectively treated through routine repair, which is funded in the maintenance program.

The types of improvement are categorized as:

- **Replacement:** Constructing a new bridge to replace an existing deteriorated one.
- **Rehabilitation:** Restoring the structural integrity of an existing bridge by using less extreme measures than replacement—usually deck replacement or overlay.

Backbone Rehabilitation

The Corridors 2020 Backbone System consists of 1,550 miles of freeways and expressways connecting major economic areas of the state. This includes Wisconsin's 744 miles of Interstate highways. While original Interstate construction is complete in Wisconsin, lanes and interchanges may still be added when warranted by traffic conditions.

By 2020, all 1,550 miles of the Corridors 2020 Backbone System are intended to be multi-lane. Today, 1,270 miles, or 82%, are multi-lane.

Bicycle Transportation Planning

WisDOT encourages planning for bicyclists at the local level, and is responsible for developing long-range, statewide bicycle plans. Guidelines for accommodating travel by bicycles when roadways are reconstructed, or new roads are built, are available and their use is encouraged. WisDOT devotes two staff positions to bicycle and pedestrian planning and safety. Many publications are available on safety, education and enforcement.



State Highway Rehabilitation Subprogram

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

WisDOT recently adopted *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan – 2020* which provides a framework for accommodating and encouraging bicycling as a viable transportation option. Specific strategies are included for the urban area (including suburban and smaller communities) and the rural areas of the state. The Plan addresses three different levels of roadway ownership or partnership: state-owned, state-supported, and state-interest².

The Plan is intended to:

- Increase levels of bicycling throughout Wisconsin, doubling the number of trips by 2010
- Reduce crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles by at least 10% by 2010

To attain these goals, 5 objectives were adopted and are as follows:

- Plan and design new and improved transportation facilities to accommodate bicyclists and encourage their use.
- Expand and improve a statewide network of safe and convenient routes for bicycle transportation and touring, including safe and convenient access to and through the state's urban areas.
- Provide consistent safety messages and training to all roadway users by expanding the range of education activities through driver licensing and training, bicycle safety education, increasing understanding of traffic laws, and provision of public service information.
- Improve the enforcement of laws to prevent dangerous and illegal behavior by motorists and bicyclists.
- Encourage more trips by bicycles by promoting the acceptance and usefulness of this transportation mode.

Statewide Airport Planning

The *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020* provides for a framework for the preservation and enhancement of the state's public-use airports³. The Plan identifies the current and future role of each public-use airport in the system. The state's airport system consists of 100 public-use airports. Of this total, 95 are publicly owned and 5 are in private ownership. In addition, there are 45 public-use airports throughout the state that are not part of the statewide airport system. The Plan does not call for an expansion or contraction in the number of airports in the statewide system.

WisDOT's Bureau of Aeronautics uses this Plan to pre-qualify airport improvement projects submitted by airport sponsors for funding. If an airport sponsor proposes a project that is not included in the Plan, the sponsor must demonstrate the need for the project and the Plan will be amended. Based on the identified improvements, a total of \$1.1 billion (in 1999 dollars) is needed over the 21-year planning period. This translates into an annualized need of \$51.5 million.

² WisDOT has oversight responsibilities for state-owned and state-supported highways, but makes recommendations to local units of government on state-interest roadways.

³ A public-use airport is an airport that may be publicly owned and operated or one that is in private ownership and control.



State Highway Rehabilitation Subprogram

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

State Recreational Trails Network Plan

The Wisconsin State Trails Network Plan provides a long-term, big-picture vision for establishing a comprehensive trail network in the state. It identifies the Department of Natural Resources role and mission of providing all types of trails, and strategies for implementing its mission. The Plan identifies potential trail corridors that link existing trails, public lands, natural features, and communities. As an amendment to the *Wisconsin State Trail Strategic Plan*, it authorizes the DNR to purchase identified corridors.

A series of maps graphically depict the location of existing and potential trail corridors.



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Conclusions

The Wisconsin Dells Plan Commission undertook an intensive planning process to review the existing conditions, inventory, public comments and existing plans and policies with respect to the city's transportation system. From this effort several specific items have risen to the forefront based on the discussions undertaken during the planning program. These "action" based items call out specific transportation related efforts desired to be undertaken in the short term in order to ensure long term success. By combining these items with the policies, goals and objectives that follow, the City of Wisconsin Dells will continue to meet its transportation needs long into the future.

Action Items

1. **Proposed Gateway Intersections** – The City of Wisconsin Dells continues to grow and build upon its unique standing and opportunities. Within this planned process the City recognizes that it must extend its transit accessibility to the larger roadway system and in so doing seize upon the opportunity to promote its location and reputation. In addition to delineating the City of Wisconsin Dells from other area locations, these gateway interchanges also offer the opportunity to route visitors and general traffic via alternative roadways into and throughout the City easing the burden placed on arterials. Specifically the City would like to sight the following new gateway locations:

- I 90/94 & STH 12/16 interchange.
- STH 13 & River Road intersection.
- STH 16, CTH WD & STH 127 intersection.
- STH 23 & CTH O intersection.

In order to maximize the potential use and impact of these Gateway locations, additional study with respect to design and visual aids should be undertaken. Once constructed, these areas will enhance the City's "name brand" recognition, further delineating itself as a destination location.

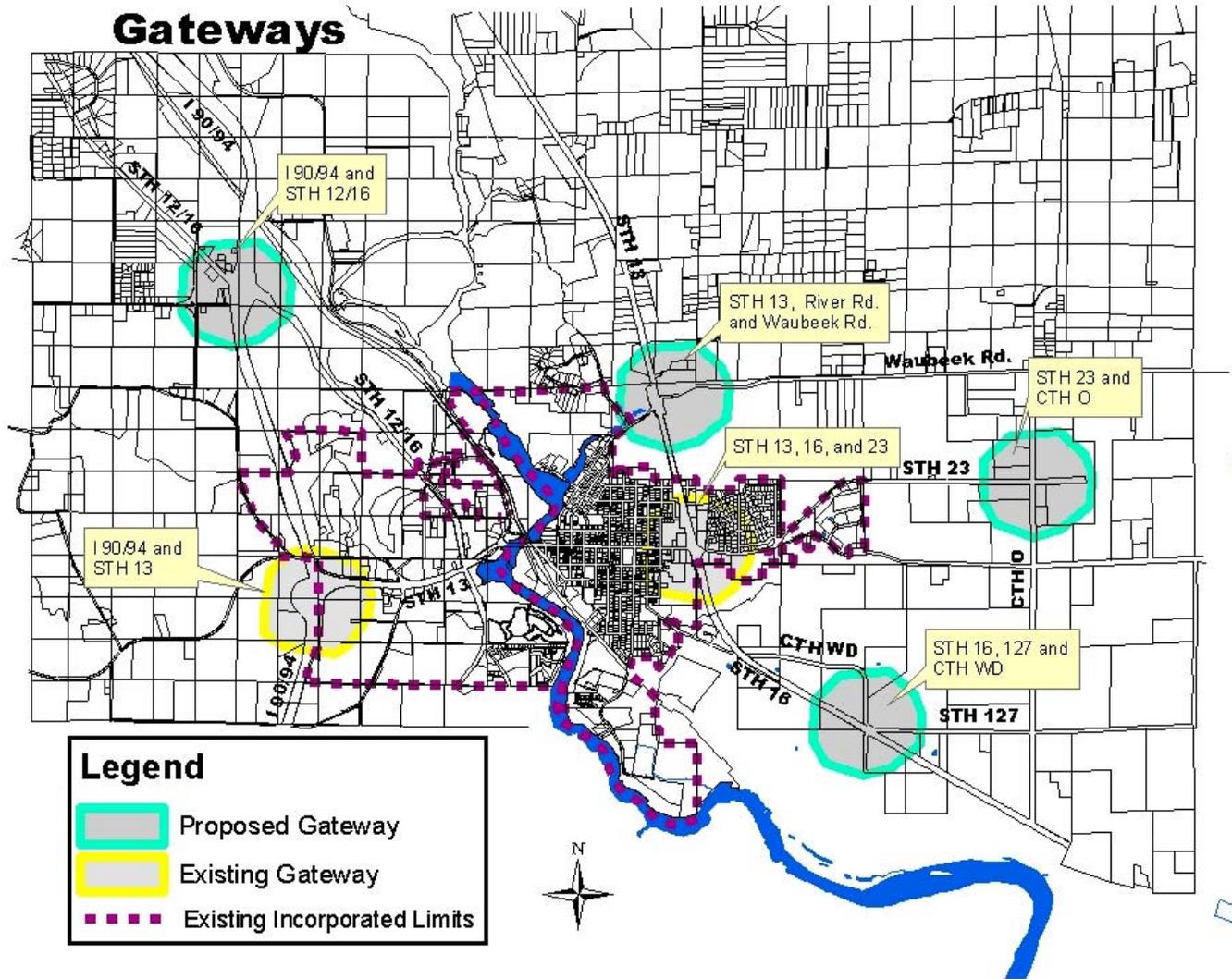


Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

City of Wisconsin Dells

Gateways



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

2. **Mid West Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI)** – While discussion and planning are currently underway exploring the feasibility of the establishment of this system, it is in the City’s best interests to advocate that the system be established with a planned stop at the City of Wisconsin Dells terminal. High-speed rail access from Chicago, Madison and the Twin Cities into the City of Wisconsin Dells offers the potential of attracting additional visitors to the City while decreasing the burden to the local roadway system. This prospect offers a “win-win” opportunity that should be pursued in an advocate fashion.

3. **Bicycle & Pedestrian facilities** – The City of Wisconsin Dells, perhaps more than any other city in the state, recognizes the need to establish and maintain a broad range of transportation choices and facilities. This understanding comes from the need to balance vehicular movement with pedestrian movement while intermixing non-motorized movement choices. These needs also recognize that local residents, seasonal residents and visitors all have unique movement needs which need to be accommodated. Understanding these issues the following actions are being recommended:
 - Prepare and submit an application to the WDOT Surface Transportation Program – Discretionary (STP-D) Transportation Enhancements (TE) program and its subset program, the WDOT Local Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, for the purpose of funding a planning study to create a regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.
 - Establish a bike route way finding signage system throughout the City. Design and color scheme should be uniform and distinct for easy recognition by users.
 - Continue to actively pursue WDNR stewardship grant funds for the purpose of offsetting the costs to design and construct the proposed riverwalk pathway system.
 - Contact and work with WDNR staff to negotiate the possible designation of reaches of the City’s trail and Riverwalk system as part of the State Ice Age Trail System.
 - Pursue the possibility of establishing a pedestrian use only bridge to ensure public safety and limit vehicular conflict. This type of bridge would serve as an integral connection between state natural resource amenities and city commercial amenities. Two possible locations exist for consideration of such a bridge crossing.
 - The first potential site would be at the location advocated in the City’s 1962 Master Plan. This could be accomplished by constructing a trail that would extend along the easement from the intersections of Minnesota Ave., La Crosse St. and Veterans Dr. to the west/southwest. The trail could then cross the lower dells via a pedestrian bridge connecting city conservancy lands with WDNR conservancy lands. A pedestrian bridge at this location would achieve several major benefits. This site offers the possibility of connecting a City conservancy and park lands with WDNR conservancy lands on the west side of the lower dells. This connection would serve as a major asset and conduit to the formation of a regional trail system network linking not only city attractions but also state lands and trail systems in order to provide alternative transportation choices protecting safety and welfare. Last this site could also serve as a closing loop around the lower dells to the City’s Riverwalk system.



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

- The second potential site for a pedestrian use only bridge would be adjacent to the existing Killbourn bridge. A slightly offset or sublevel pedestrian only bridge crossing at this location would also greatly assist in limiting vehicular conflicts and protecting safety and welfare.



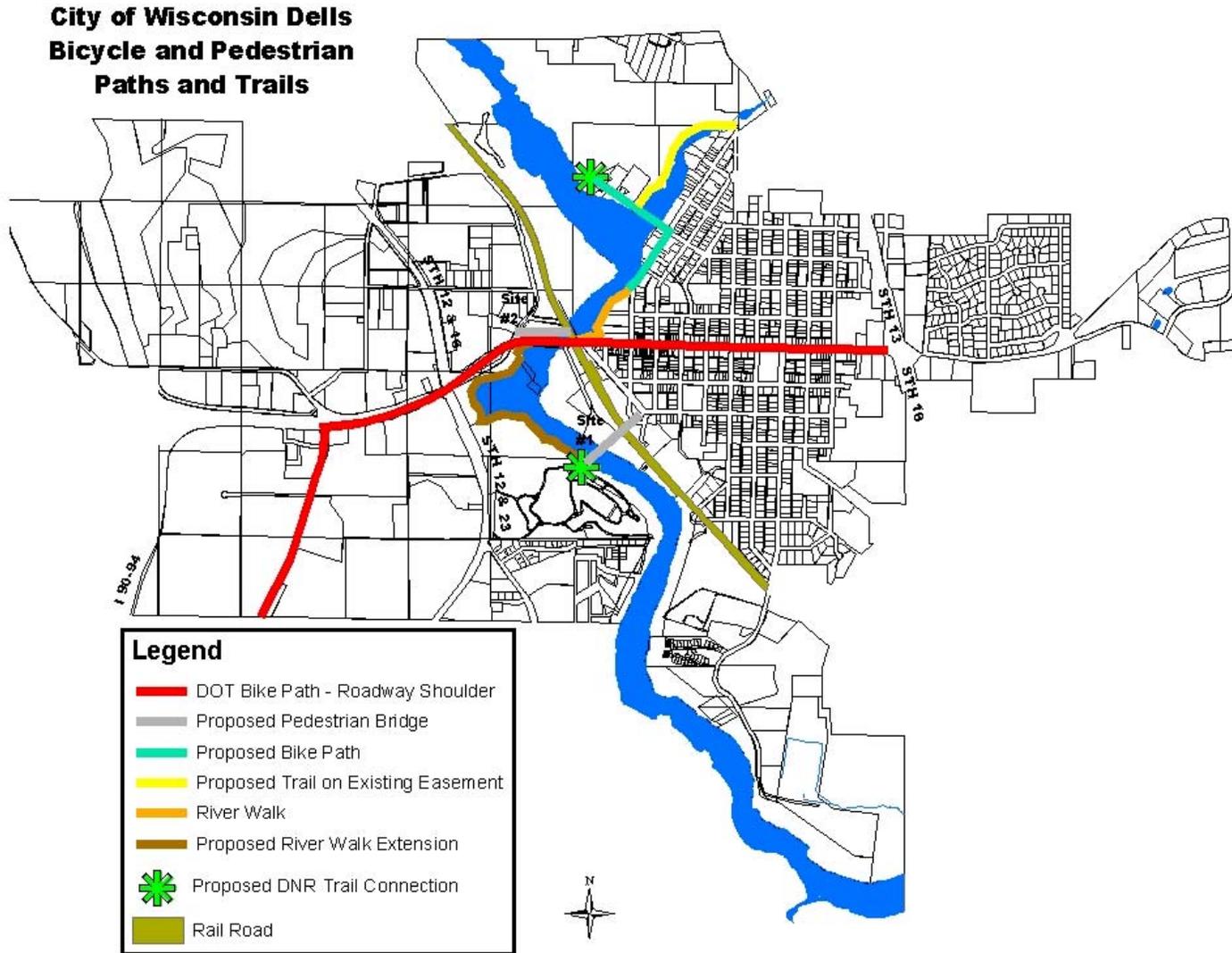
Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



Conclusion & Action Items

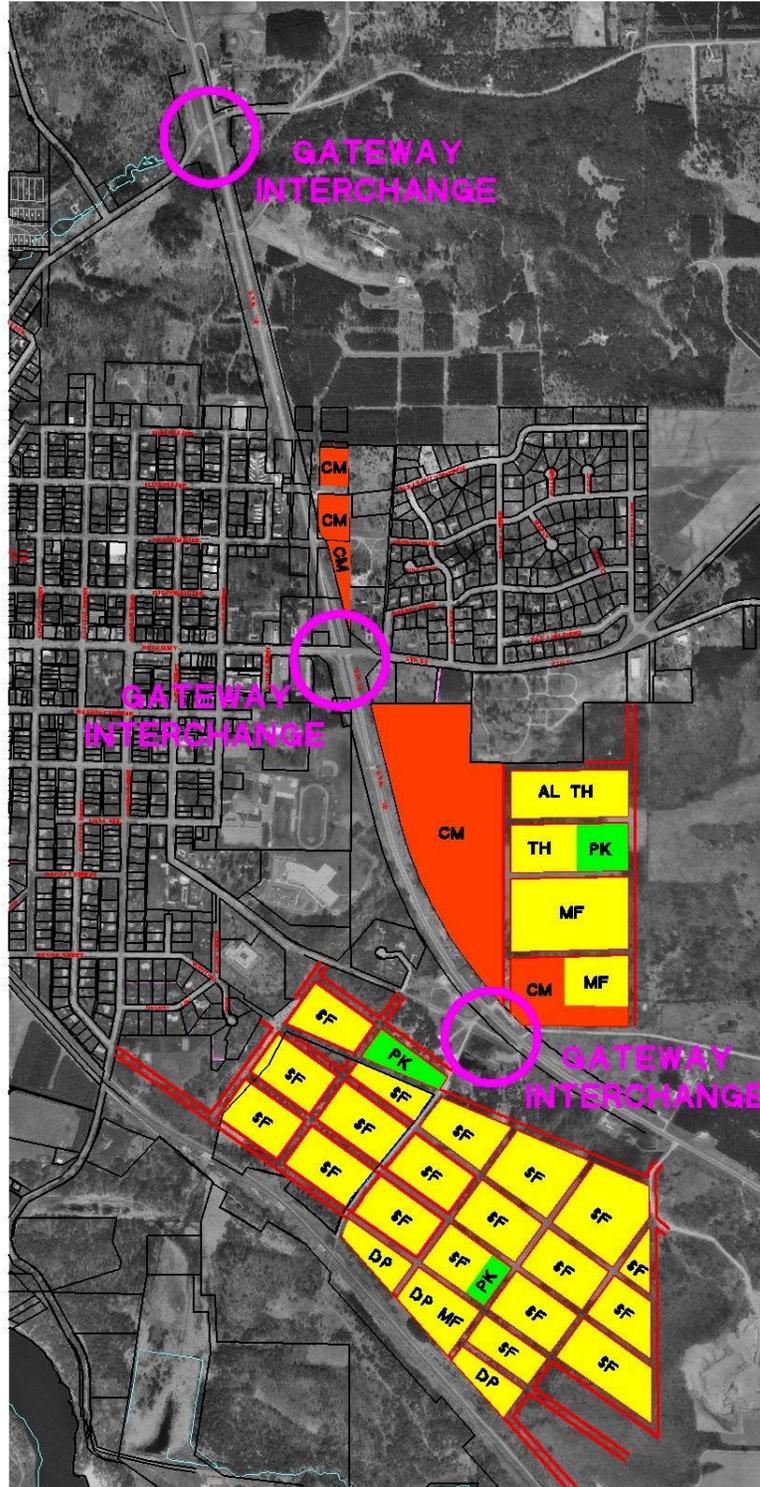
City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

4. Pursue planning activities that will result in trail systems that link City attractions and destinations with State resources and trail systems. Recreational opportunities and assets in the City of Wisconsin Dells extend beyond resorts and commercial attractions. In fact the cornerstone of the Wisconsin Dells area is its natural resources. The history of the City's evolution is testimony to this fact. Understanding this the City will pursue planning activities and projects that link these environmental assets with its built environment assets fostering opportunities for year round multi-experience, passive and active based recreation.
5. **Parking** – A major land use and transportation challenge in the City of Wisconsin Dells is the provision of adequate parking in customer friendly and accessible locations. As commercial attractions continue to grow in number immediate customer access has proven to be a major challenge. Additional, because of land use patterns and associated market values key properties hold locating additional parking facilities has also proven to be a major challenge. Understanding these issues the City is proposing to undertake a three level approach towards resolution of the issues.
 - Developing alternative transportation systems. The City is undertaking this effort by assisting private transit carrier companies when possible, planning for and creating a bicycle and pedestrian network, including the Riverwalk, and establishing user friendly roadways through their design, signage, crosswalks and signals. Continued vigilance of these efforts across the board can ease the number of users requiring on street and immediate proximity parking areas.
 - The City is already in possession of numerous parking facilities. While these facilities are currently maximized in terms of their existing surface potential, study should be undertaken to explore the feasibility of converting them to multilevel design and use.
 - Long term funding programs for additional land acquisitions and facilities construction need to be established and maintained.
6. **Road Extensions** – The hart of the City of Wisconsin Dells is laid out in a traditional “grid” system roadway pattern. It is in the City's best interests to continue the use of this layout system until an opportunity to transition layouts presents itself by the grid interconnecting with a primary arterial. One such area, where continuation of the grid design is most desirable, is located in the Southeast corner of the City. To ensure that City and general public interests are served, the City will advocate a policy that development in the area will be done under a grid pattern of design only. One possible scenario for the build out of the area using the grid system is provided on the next page for reference only.



Conclusion & Action Items

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element



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Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

The overall goal for the City's 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 region.

To attain this goal, the following guidance goals have been defined:

- **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.
- **Maximum System Effectiveness for all Residents** – To plan for the travel needs of the City'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.
- **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 City's citizens in a cost-effective manner.
- **Safety** – To reduce the potential for traffic accidents and provide for safe transportation throughout the city.
- **Minimum Environmental Disruption** – To encourage development of a transportation system that minimizes environmental disruption and strives to maintain a quality environment.
- **Compatibility with land use patterns** – To develop a transportation system compatible with existing and future land use patterns.
- **Conservation of energy** – To provide a transportation system that recognizes energy supply uncertainties and promotes the conservation of energy resources.
- **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.

Goal

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.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

POLICIES

- The existing transportation system should be continually evaluated, deficiencies identified and solutions proposed in keeping with comprehensive planning goals and objectives.
- The transportation system should be planned in support of current land use and desired patterns of future development.
- All proposals and changes considered in the comprehensive planning program should be constructively reviewed in terms of their impact on the transportation system.
- Local citizens should be formally involved in the transportation planning process.
- Compatibility should be promoted among local, regional and state transportation policies and plans.
- Compatibility should be promoted between public and private transportation services.

Goal

Maximum System Effectiveness for all Residents; To plan for the travel needs of the City'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

- At least a minimum level of transportation should be provided to all residents residing in the City of Wisconsin Dells.
- Methodologies should be employed capable of comparing the effectiveness of investments in alternative networks and modes within the City of Wisconsin Dells.
- Subsidy programs should be considered to meet the needs of the economically disadvantaged.

Goal

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 City's citizens in a cost-effective manner.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

POLICIES

- The roadway system 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.
- Development of new or expanded roadway corridors should only be considered after a determination that alternative transportation modes cannot address the need to:
 1. Alleviate significant safety hazards
 2. Relieve neighborhoods with heavy through traffic burdens
 3. Alleviate areas with traffic congestion
 4. Conserve energy in roadway use
 5. Stimulate economic development
 6. Provide a framework for future planned land use.
- Street and roadway design standards in the City of Wisconsin Dells are based on functional classification criteria set forth in WisDOT's Design Manual.
- Development regulations allowing private streets should be amended to require right-of-way and design standards consistent with WisDOT's Design Manual for local streets.
- Adequate financial resources for upkeep and renewal of existing roadways to prevent accelerated deterioration is a high priority in the City of Wisconsin Dells's budgetary process.
- Low-cost improvements such as channelization, signalization, removal of parking, etc. should be the first measure considered to maintain an adequate level of service on roadway facilities.
- Regulations concerning the use of roadways should be strictly enforced, including those, which prevent the deterioration of structures and the roadway surface.
- Appropriate access control measures should be established for existing and future routes functionally classified or proposed as principal or minor arterials and collectors.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Objectives

- Create a citywide system of parkway streets: Highly landscaped streets with decorative lighting and retrofitted older streets (e.g., Broadway).
- Create neighborhood streets that provide for all modes of transportation, enhance livability, and neighborhood quality.
- Prepare a downtown parking management plan.
- Provide for the accommodation of parking that is an efficient and cost-effective, which focuses on customer and visitor convenience, yet contributes to creating, a pleasant, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment, and an economically vital and socially vibrant community.

Goal:

Safety; To reduce the potential for traffic accidents and provide for safe transportation throughout the city.

POLICIES

- The level of access control should be appropriate to the function of the roadway.
- Vehicle conflicts should be reduced through roadway and intersection design appropriate for the desired level of service.
- Accident-producing facility deficiencies should be accorded a high priority for correction.
- Design standards should be adequate for the legal speeds, sizes, and weights of vehicles.
- Appropriate marking, signing, and protection devices should be installed where justified, under a “warrant” study, by the design speed and accident exposure rate.
- Safe speed limits and laws dealing with drunk driving should be strictly enforced and new strategies for dealing with these problems should be explored.
- The strictest possible safety regulations should be employed within and around transportation related construction sites.
- To ensure safe movement of hazardous materials, infrastructure improvements should conform to the guidelines set by local emergency services and state and federal regulations.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Objectives

- Follow access management guidelines -- driveway and intersection spacing
- Complete minor intersection and similar improvements to reduce congestion and improve safety.
- Make more use of transportation system management by installing advanced signal systems, computers and information technology devices
- Apply traffic calming measures on some neighborhood streets

Goal

Minimum environmental disruption; To encourage development of a transportation system that minimizes environmental disruption and strives to maintain a quality environment.

POLICIES

- Care should be taken to protect historic or visually pleasing buildings and scenic, historic, scientific and cultural sites when constructing new or improving existing transportation facilities.
- The location of roadways through environmentally sensitive areas should be minimized.
- Transportation facilities should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to the natural landscape, incorporating such amenities as boulevards, berms and attractive landscaping on major arterials in the city and minimizing unsightly views such as junkyards.
- Air pollution should be minimized through efficient traffic control measures and through the encouragement of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.
- All transport related sewerage, runoff and other facilities should be constructed and maintained so that their contribution to water pollution will be minimized and will meet appropriate water quality and runoff standards.
- National noise standards should be used 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.

Goal

Compatibility with land use patterns; To develop a transportation system compatible with existing and future land use patterns.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

POLICIES

- The proper use of land for and adjacent to highways should be maximized by coordinating street and highway planning with land development.
- The relative accessibility provided by the roadway system should be adapted to the comprehensive plan by providing a higher level of accessibility to areas where development is to be encouraged.
- The total amount of land used for roadways should be minimized and multiple use of right-of-ways should be encouraged.
- The disruption or dislocation of neighborhoods, households, businesses, industries and public and institutional buildings by construction of new or reconstruction of existing transportation facilities should be minimized.
- Penetration of neighborhood units by arterial streets and highways should be avoided except where it can be demonstrated that the proposed location and design will improve the ability of the area to function effectively.
- Location of new or relocation of existing transportation facilities in or through recreational facilities and historic, scenic, or cultural sites should be avoided wherever possible.
- When constructing or improving roadways, prime farmland should be preserved wherever possible.
- Right-of-ways for proposed transportation facilities should be reserved to minimize disruption of future development.

Goal

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.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

Freight Transportation

To ensure that appropriate types and levels of freight transportation service are provided to the City of Wisconsin Dells and its region

POLICIES

- Common-carrier truck service should be provided to all areas of the city.
- Efficient truck routing should be oriented to the freeway and high-level arterial network to facilitate truck traffic and to reduce conflicts with autos.
- Joint terminals and common pick-up and delivery services should be encouraged where efficient and practical for the transport companies concerned.
- The location of truck and rail terminals should be determined cooperatively by public and private interests.
- Existing rail service should be maintained according to standards set forth in the Wisconsin Rail Plan.
- Airfreight service, passenger service and private pilot use should continue to be provided at the Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport.

Objectives

- Maintain a viable railroad industry while minimizing negative impacts.
- Ensure safe and efficient truck access through the city and to major truck destinations.

Public Transportation

To develop public transportation into a viable alternative mode of transportation.

Policies

- The City of Wisconsin Dells recognizes that public transportation is a basic public service.
- Public transportation should be provided using private delivery systems appropriate to the level of the city's development and density. Delivery systems to be considered include both fixed-route and demand responsive services employing various sized buses, vans, and taxis.
- The City of Wisconsin Dells promotes land use patterns and site design standards that can be efficiently served by public transportation.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

- Public transportation systems in the City of Wisconsin Dells will be related in design to travel patterns within the city.
- Transportation service will be coordinated to increase efficiency and avoid overlap and duplication of service. Coordination will encompass public and private transportation services and include such travel demand.

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

- A network of suitable on – and off – road routes will be developed which provide linkage between important origins and destinations and interconnect with other modes of transportation.
- Bicycle and pedestrian related improvements will be integrated into the planning, budgeting, design and construction of all appropriate highway and street improvement projects.
- Facilities and amenities which compliment and make bicycling and walking more attractive alternatives to motor vehicle travel should be provided at destination locations.
- Actions, activities, and incentives which encourage increased walking and bicycling for transportation purposes should be promoted.
- Efforts to increase community awareness of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, accommodations, use and safety will be undertaken.
- Enforcement of “rules of the road” which pertain to safe bicycling and walking should be increased.
- Efforts and signage to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians on designate routes should be undertaken.
- Compact land use, especially in areas with high-density residential development and mixed uses, should be encouraged to increase opportunities for bicycling and walking.
- New development will be encouraged to integrate the bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation.



Transportation Policies, Goals & Objectives

City of Wisconsin Dells - Transportation Element

- The City of Wisconsin Dells will adopt maintenance practices to preserve bikeways and trails in a smooth, clean and safe condition.
- The City of Wisconsin Dells will establish uniform signage and marking of all bicycling and walkways throughout the city.

Objectives

- Connect sidewalks and improve pedestrian connections to create a continuous and seamless pedestrian system, and enhance the pedestrian environment to create a more walkable community.

Air Transportation

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

POLICIES

- The Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells airport system will 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 greater Wisconsin Dells area.
- The Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport shall be maintained in conformity to the standards set forth in the Wisconsin Airport System Plan and shall provide the type of service indicated within its classification.
- A Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport Master Plan shall be prepared adopted and kept up to date to ensure continued compatible uses with adjoining and adjacent property.
- Land proposed for consideration for an airport expansion of any kind should be reserved as soon as possible.
- Adequate parking area will be maintained at the Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport.
- The Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells area Airport will be integrated in its planning and operation with all other transportation modes.

Objectives

- Coordinate with the Baraboo/Wisconsin Dells Airport and its commission to aid in providing the community with economically viable air transportation.

