

CHAPTER 6
Transportation

Introduction

A quality transportation system is essential to the development of the Village of Clear Lake. An excellent road network makes the Village a desirable place to live because it allows residents to have access to other communities, commodities, and job opportunities. High traffic areas, such as highways, provide good locations for industry and businesses. Trucking transportation can provide the movement of goods to and from the Village. Trail systems provide recreation opportunities for people throughout the area and add to the livability and attractiveness of the Village.

The Transportation Element will inventory and evaluate local modes of transportation and identify possibilities for future development and improvement.

Survey Results

The Community Survey included a question related to different modes of transportation. According to the responses, when asked what the Village should support, "sidewalks to key areas" was the highest selected answer.

Village should support...	Count	Percent
Bike lanes/paths	60	31.3%
Sidewalks to key areas	71	37.0%
Area car pool/"park and ride"	50	26.0%
Other (NARRATIVE)	11	5.7%
Total	192	100.0%

There were also a number of written responses to this question. The most common written response was to implement four-wheeler/ATV trails within the Village and permit residents to drive them in the Village.

Modes of Transportation

The movement of people and goods is accomplished through a variety of transportation modes. These modes include car, truck, rail, public transportation, ship, air, bicycle and pedestrian. For the most part, each mode fits a particular need. Automobiles function as the dominant mode for the movement of people. Trucking provides for the rapid movement of goods and products over the highway network. Air travel helps to move people and lightweight products quickly over long distances. The railroad functions primarily for the movement of bulk commodities over long distances while bicycle paths and sidewalks provide

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for the movement of people. The most dominant mode of transportation in the Village of Clear Lake (and nearly all communities) is the automobile and for that reason the majority of the Transportation Element will focus on local streets and highways.

Functional Road Classification and Jurisdiction

The road system is composed of four levels of government jurisdiction. These levels include the local road system, and county, state, and federal highways. Each roadway within the county can also be classified by function. The function that the road serves in relation to existing traffic patterns, the adjacent land use, land access needs, and the average daily traffic volumes determine its functional classification. There are both urban and rural classification systems, both of which are detailed below. The Village of Clear Lake falls in the Rural Functional Road Classification System.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation uses population figures, land uses, spacing between classified roads, and average daily traffic counts to determine the functional classification. Classifications are updated every 10 years after census information becomes available. The Village can request a review of their classifications but would be required to collect the data needed.

Functional Road Classification System (Rural <5000 Population)

Principal Arterials: Serve interstate and interregional trips. These routes generally serve all urban areas greater than 5,000 people. The rural principal arterials are further subdivided into:

- Interstate highways.
- Other principal arterials.

Minor Arterials: In conjunction with the principal arterials, they serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements.

Major Collectors: Provide service to moderate sized communities and other intra-area traffic generators, and link those generators to nearby larger population centers or higher function routes.

Minor Collectors: Collect traffic from local roads, and provide links to all remaining smaller communities, locally important traffic generators, and higher function roads. All developed areas should be within a reasonable distance of a collector road.

Local Roads: Provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.

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Map 6-1 shows the functional road classifications and jurisdiction of the Village and includes traffic counts for some of the roads. U.S. Highway 63 is classified as a Principal Arterial (other) and serves the West Central Wisconsin Area from Red Wing, Minnesota to Spooner, Wisconsin. County Trunk Highway A is classified as a Major Collector and County Trunk Highway JJ and 60th Street are classified as Minor Collectors. All other roads are considered Local Roads.

Traffic volume information is a useful tool in determining transportation needs of the future. The volumes can be used to measure and establish trends, justify expenditures, prioritize street and highway improvements, and measure present use and traffic flow relative to the capacity of the existing system. Of the roads that were used to count traffic volume, only U.S. Highway 63 had an increase in traffic volume between 1998 and 2006.

Commuter Patterns

An efficient road network is critical to the needs of area residents and economic growth. Table 6-1, reveals that in 2000, 409 workers (89%) in the Village of Clear Lake, 16 years of age and older, commute to work by car, truck or van. Of those workers, 364 (or 79%) drove alone while 45 carpooled. Almost 10% of residents walked to work or worked at home. Between 1990 and 2000 there was a significant drop in the number of residents that chose to car pool, walk, or take public transportation.

Table 6-1 - Commuting to Work 16 Years and Older

	1990	2000	Numerical Change	% Change
Total	411	458	47	11.4%
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	240	364	124	51.7%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	57	45	-12	-21.1%
Walked	68	30	-38	-55.9%
Public Transportation	31	3	-28	-90.3%
Worked at home	15	16	1	6.7%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Over 33% of working residents worked in the Village of Clear Lake while 67% worked in Polk County and approximately 12% of the workforce is employed outside of Wisconsin.

Table 6-2 - Place of Work 16 Years and Over

	2000	Percent
Living in a place:	458	100.0%
Worked in place of residence	152	33.2%
Worked outside place of residence	306	66.8%
Worked in county of residence	306	66.8%
Worked outside county of residence	98	21.4%
Worked outside state of residence	54	11.8%

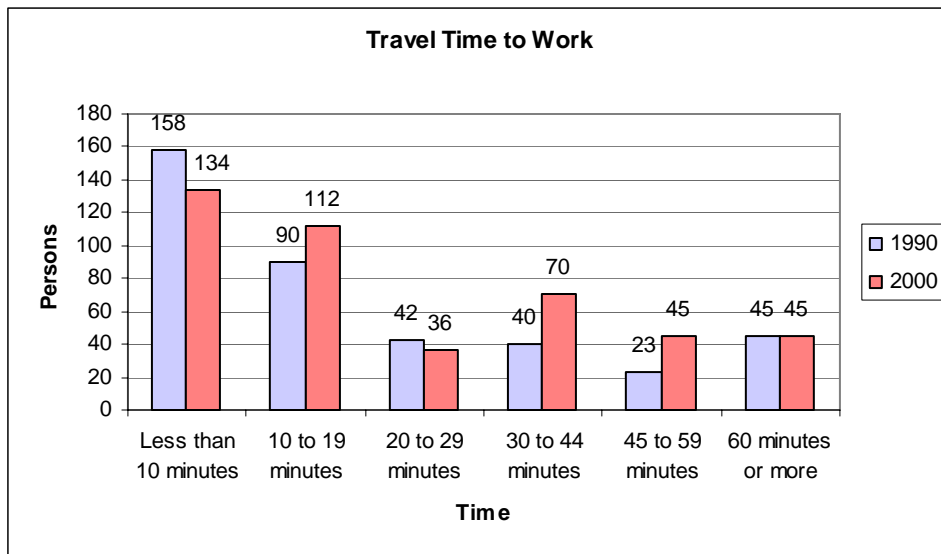
Source: 2000 U.S. Census

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At this time, there are no WDOT regulated van and carpool lots located in the Village of Clear Lake or in Polk County. The nearest carpool lot is only 8 miles away in St. Croix County at the corner of U.S. Highway 63 and State Highway 64. Also, residents use “unofficial” parking areas such as vacant gravel or asphalt parking lots for car pooling. The Village could benefit greatly from developing carpool lots in the future.

The number of residents traveling over 30 minutes to work has increased from 1990 to 2000 (Figure 6-1). The largest decrease happened in the group traveling less than 10 minutes. This indicates that more residents are traveling longer distances to their jobs.

Figure 6-1 – Travel Time to Work



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Air Transportation

The Village of Clear Lake is served by a number of airports, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Amery Municipal Airport, New Richmond Regional Airport, and Menomonie Municipal Airport.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, approximately 70 miles away, provides major commercial air service for Western Wisconsin and Village of Clear Lake residents. The airport consists of the Humphrey and Lindberg Terminals. This airport will continue to be the main provider of passenger and commercial service in the area.

The City of Amery has a publicly owned airport that has two runways. Each runway is 4,001' in length and 75' in width. The Amery Municipal Airport is located on the southern tip of the City of Amery approximately 5 miles from the Village.

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The New Richmond Regional Airport (NRRRA) is the only public use airport in St. Croix County and is approximately 20 miles from the Village of Clear Lake. The airport has two runways. Runway 14-32 is 5,507'x75' and is has an asphalt surface. Runway 4-22 is 2,110'x75' and has a turf surface. Over 180 aircraft are based in privately owned hangars. NRRRA is also home to ten aviation related businesses and several business aircraft. The airport contributes over nine million dollars per year to the New Richmond area economy. NRRRA will continue to provide private aircraft service for area residents.

The Menomonie's Municipal Airport has recently completed improvements to increase the accessibility to the City by air travel. The airport improvement project included the construction of a new primary east/west runway 5,040 feet in length by 75 feet in width. The project also included the upgrading of navigational aids with the installation of new medium intensity runway lights (MIRLS), runway end identifier lights (REILS), and a visual approach decent indicator (VADI/PAPI). The improvements enable the community to better accommodate business travel on corporate owned aircraft, as well as personal travel on privately owned aircraft. The Menomonie Municipal Airport is approximately 45 miles from the Village.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks provide a safe alternative route for people move throughout the community. They connect residential areas to traffic generators such as parks, schools, downtown, churches, and other community facilities. Currently, the Village of Clear Lake does have an extensive sidewalk system, but lacks connectivity with some of the recreational areas. Map 6-2 shows that most of the sidewalks are concentrated near the downtown area and extends to adjacent residential areas.

Trail Routes

The area surrounding the Village of Clear Lake has a number of ATV and snowmobile trails that are maintained by local area clubs. The Clear Lake - Clayton Trail is on an abandoned railroad bed on the western side of the Village and is used by ATV and snowmobile riders. According to the survey, many residents would like to see four-wheelers and ATV trails developed within the Village. Although the Village doesn't have ATV trails, it does have designated routes that the ATV riders can use to get through the Village and connect on to the Clear Lake – Clayton Trail. The route also permits golf carts.

Developing a trail system will take cooperation with surrounding municipalities and local groups to determine location and funding options. When considering trails, it is best to separate motorized and non-motorized trails for safety reasons.

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Transportation Facilities for the Disabled

The Polk County Aging Program provides transportation services for the elderly and handicapped in the Village of Clear Lake. Transportation services are run by volunteers who will take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, or for personal appointments. The services are available to Polk County senior citizens aged 55 and older.

Wheelchair bound senior citizens and handicapped residents of any age can contact Polk County Aging Programs to arrange lift-equipped transportation that is provided by Polk County Transportation for the Disabled & Elderly, Inc.

Trucking

Buhr Brother's Transport is a trucking service in the Village of Clear Lake. They provide transit services to companies throughout the nation as well as other companies in the industrial park.

Other Modes of Transportation

There are no rail (passenger or freight) or water transportation services in the Village of Clear Lake. It is unlikely that any of these services would be available over the next 10 to 20 years.

State and Regional Plans

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has several state and regional transportation plans that were reviewed to ensure consistency. The plans reviewed are:

- Connections 2030
- Polk River Crossing Project
- West Central Regional Freeway System
- Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report
- Midwest Regional Rail System
- Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020
- Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020
- Wisconsin Statewide Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020
- US 63/WIS 64 Environmental Assessment

US 63/WIS 64 Environmental Assessment

This environmental assessment covers the corridor of State Highway 64 between State Highway 65 in the City of New Richmond then 12.2 miles east to just past the intersection with County Highway "D" in the unincorporated hamlet of Forest.

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It also includes a 4-mile long section of U.S. Highway 63 from its intersection with State Highway 64 north to the Polk County line. Growth in St. Croix County, the anticipated St. Croix River Crossing project, and the increasing use of this highway for tourism are driving forces in this assessment. For the short-term, the Environmental Assessment recommends corridor preservation, intersection improvements, and the addition of passing lanes. Future improvements would be to expand State Highway 64 to a four-lane facility with at-grade, direct-access intersections. Then, farther into the future, the U.S. Highway 63 intersection would become grade-separated with no direct access to the west.

The results of this assessment will impact on the Village of Clear Lake. If U.S. Highway 63 becomes a four-lane highway, access and future commercial opportunities will be important to the future of the Village.

Future Considerations

There are a number of things to consider when planning future roads and improvements to the transportation network. When reviewing existing infrastructure and future site plans, the Village should ask the following questions:

- Are there existing dead ends and stub roads that proposed roads could be connected to?
- Is there a need for a “park and ride” facility?
- Can a proposed road increase/improve east-west, north-south corridors?
- Do proposed roads follow and preserve the natural features and topography of the land?
- Are there dangerous intersections that could be made safer?
- Are there existing regulations that cost/policy prohibitive for future road and trail network projects?

Future Improvements

As the Village grows, the transportation infrastructure will need to be upgraded and expanded. Below are descriptions of some of the possible future upgrade and expansion projects of the transportation system. Map 6-3 identifies the locations of those future corridors.

Intersections

Most automobile accidents occur at intersections. If there are visibility speed issues at an intersection, there may be higher accident rates at that location. Steps can be taken to reduce the factors contributing to some of the accidents. For example, two intersections that were considered dangerous and had a high rate of accidents are County Trunk Highway JJ and U.S. Highway 63, and County Trunk Highway F and U.S. Highway 63. Both areas were considered problem areas and had significant accident rates. A few years ago, the speed

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limit was reduced to 45 mph on U.S. Highway 63 just north of County Trunk Highway JJ to just south of South Avenue W. This has significantly reduced traffic accidents at those two intersections.

One intersection that is still considered hazardous is the intersection where Grimes Road meets 5th Street and 6th Avenue. The intersection circled on Map 6-3 should be considered for realignment if accidents continue to be a problem.

Roads

Future roads will depend greatly on future development. There are some current locations the Village has identified as possible road corridors in the future. These corridors are identified on Map 6-3. Primarily these future roads provide transportation to areas likely to be developed as well as provide connectivity to the existing road network.

Sidewalks and Trails

There are a couple of areas that the Village would like to connect to the existing sidewalk network. One is linking the downtown area to Clear Lake Park. This would provide a safe route for park users to visit the park without having to drive there. The other one is connecting the residential area south of downtown with the convenience store at the corner of U.S. Highway 63 and South Avenue W. This route would provide a safe route to walk to the convenience store as well as future development that is likely to take place in that area. These future sidewalk and trail routes are identified on Map 6-3.

Road Maintenance Planning

Road maintenance is vital to keeping the road system safe and functioning properly. Because of the local climate and recent oil prices, road maintenance is a significant cost of a municipality's budget. A sound transportation plan should be able to foresee and plan for upcoming expenses. The two primary ways of planning for future road projects are by using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and devising a long-range Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

PASER allows for better allocation of resources by identifying pavement conditions and those areas in need of repair and allows for long term planning. CIPs list, prioritize, and provide cost estimates for public infrastructure improvements over a five-year period.

Possible Funding Sources

Local multi-modal transportation projects can be funded through different sources. Some of the most common sources that are or could be used are:

- State Shared Revenue

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- Local General Funds
- Community Development Block Grants
- DNR Stewardship Grants
- Enhancement Grants
- Private Foundations
- Corporate Foundations
- Local Volunteer Groups
- Local Organizations (Boy/Girl Scouts)

Transportation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Create and maintain a safe pedestrian and bicycle network within the Village of Clear Lake.

Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for residents to move throughout the Village by means other than automobiles or trucks.
2. Encourage walking and biking as ways of experiencing one's neighborhood and community.
3. Reduce the use of fossil fuels.
4. Promote the health benefits of walking and biking.
5. Provide safe routes for people to enjoy the Village's parks.

Policies

1. Require a Bike/Pedestrian Plan in new subdivisions and redevelopment to concentrate on connectivity.
2. Visit and evaluate accident sites for signage and visibility.
3. Utilize signs and striping to ensure safe crosswalks for residents.
4. Coordinate with surrounding municipalities, including the Town of Clear Lake, Town of Black Brook, City of Amery, and Village of Clayton in developing a biking and walking trail network.
5. Evaluate street reconstruction projects to see if road widths can be narrowed creating more space between potential sidewalks and resident's homes.
6. Identify a safe pedestrian route/path from the downtown area to Clear Lake Park.

Goal 2: Support the development of public transportation in the area.

Objectives

1. Reduce vehicle traffic.
2. Provide safe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists.
3. Reduce the use of fossil fuels.
4. Provide transportation options for the elderly and disabled.

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Policies

1. Support local transportation options such as bus and carpooling.
2. Participate in local and regional transit planning with surrounding communities, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Polk County.
3. Identify, map, and preserve potential lands in the Village of Clear Lake that could be used for public transportation in the future.
4. Encourage the use of local groups, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, to help develop walking and bicycle trails.

Goal 3: Provide cost effective maintenance and safe transportation network.

Objectives

1. Reduce the tax burden of Village residents.
2. Maintain safe roads in and around the Village.

Policies

1. Research and apply for grants to offset the costs of sidewalks, trails, and road reconstructions.
2. Utilize the PASER pavement evaluation system to efficiently plan future infrastructure expenditures.
3. Use a Capital Improvements Plan to plan and budget for future road maintenance.
4. Communicate with the County to adequately maintain and repair as needed County Trunk Highways JJ, A, and F.

Goal 4: Promote a road system that provides connectivity where possible.

Objectives

1. Create transportation that promotes the smooth flow of traffic and preserves road corridors.

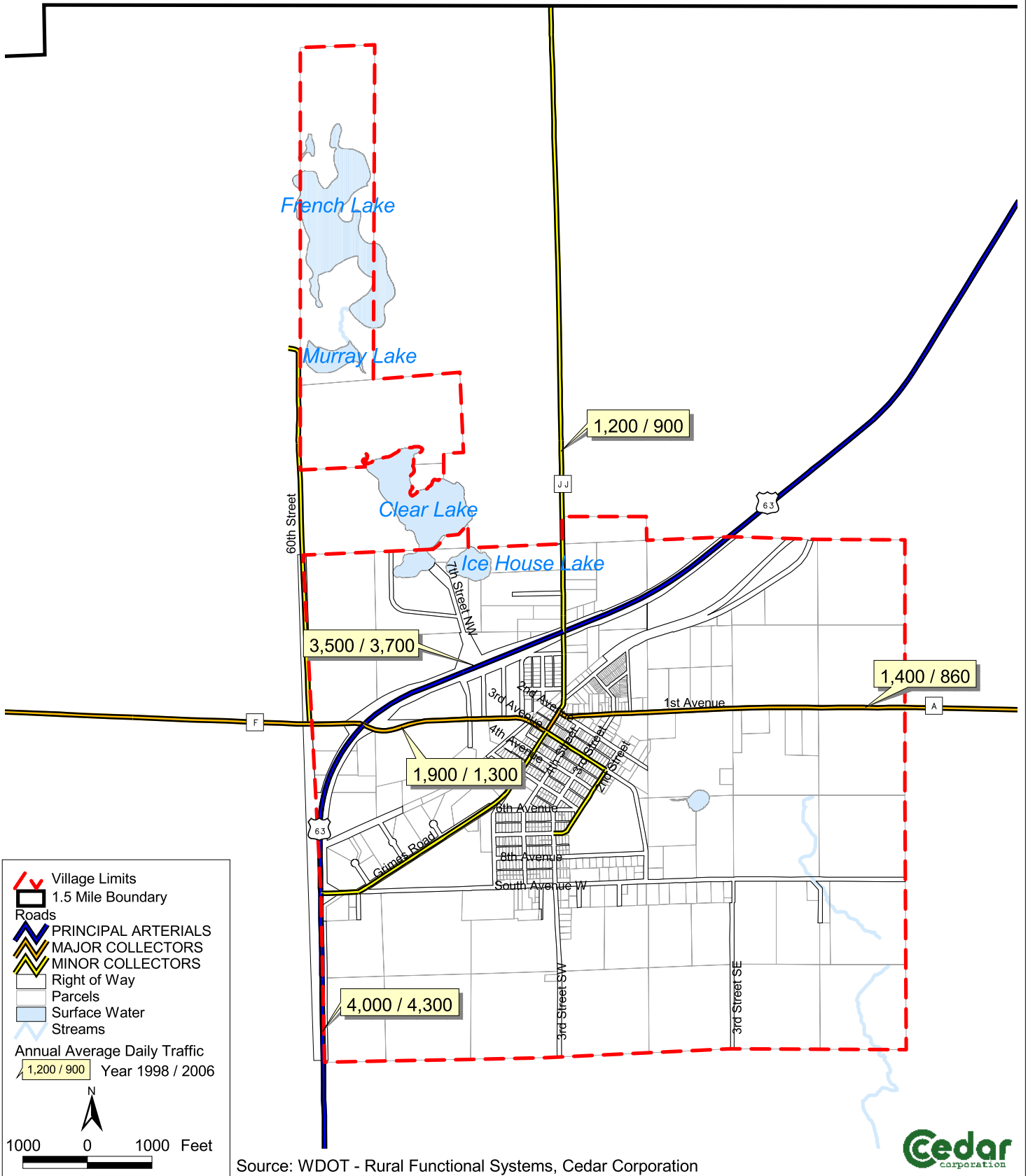
Policies

1. Review site plans to ensure future right-of-way space is preserved to extend roads to existing roads if possible in the future.
2. Provide multiple access points to subdivisions where possible.
3. Investigate the effects and opportunities of U.S. Highway 63 becoming a four-lane highway.

ROAD FUNCTION & JURISDICTION

Village of Clear Lake

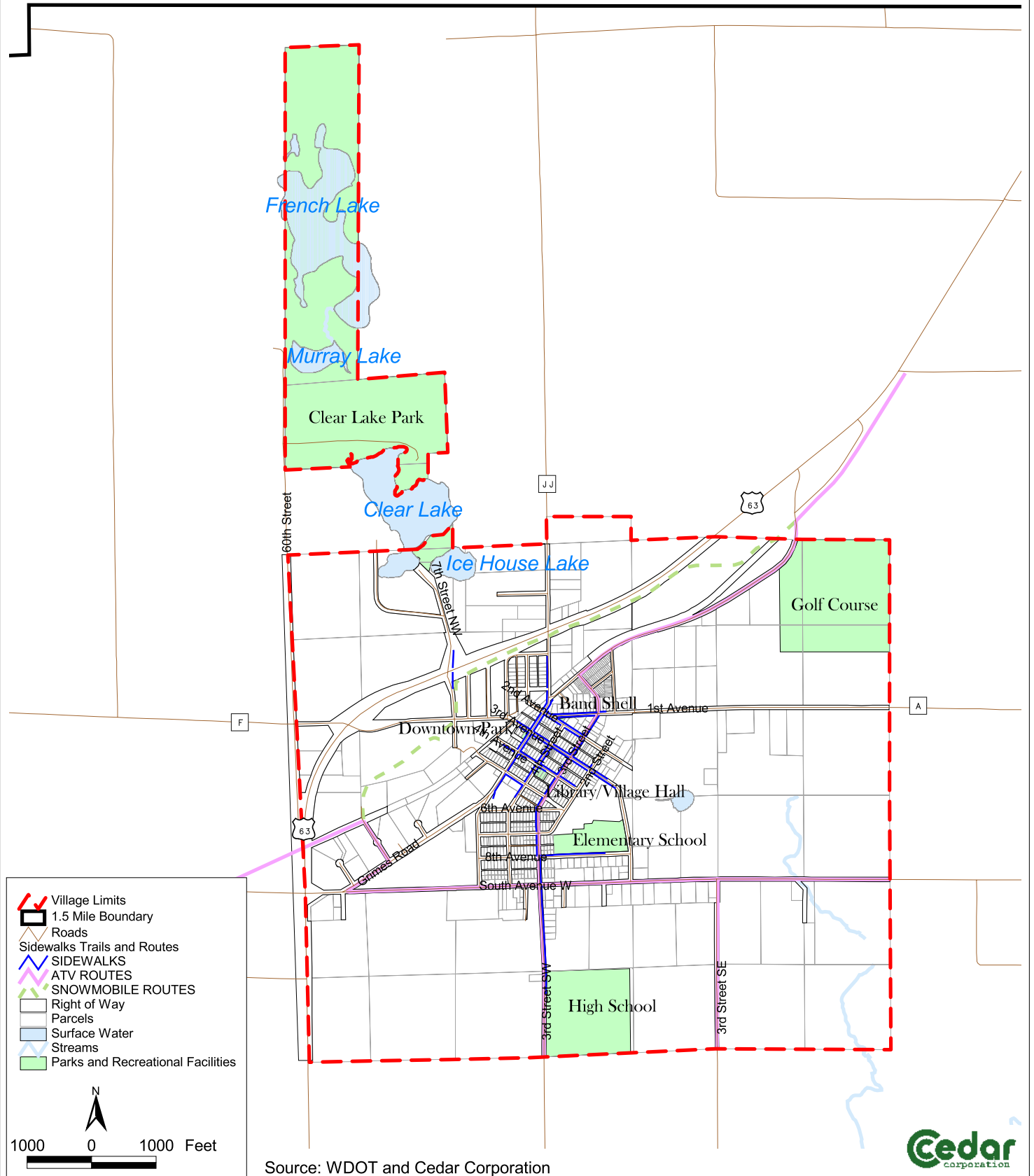
Map 6-1



SIDEWALK AND TRAIL SYSTEM

Village of Clear Lake

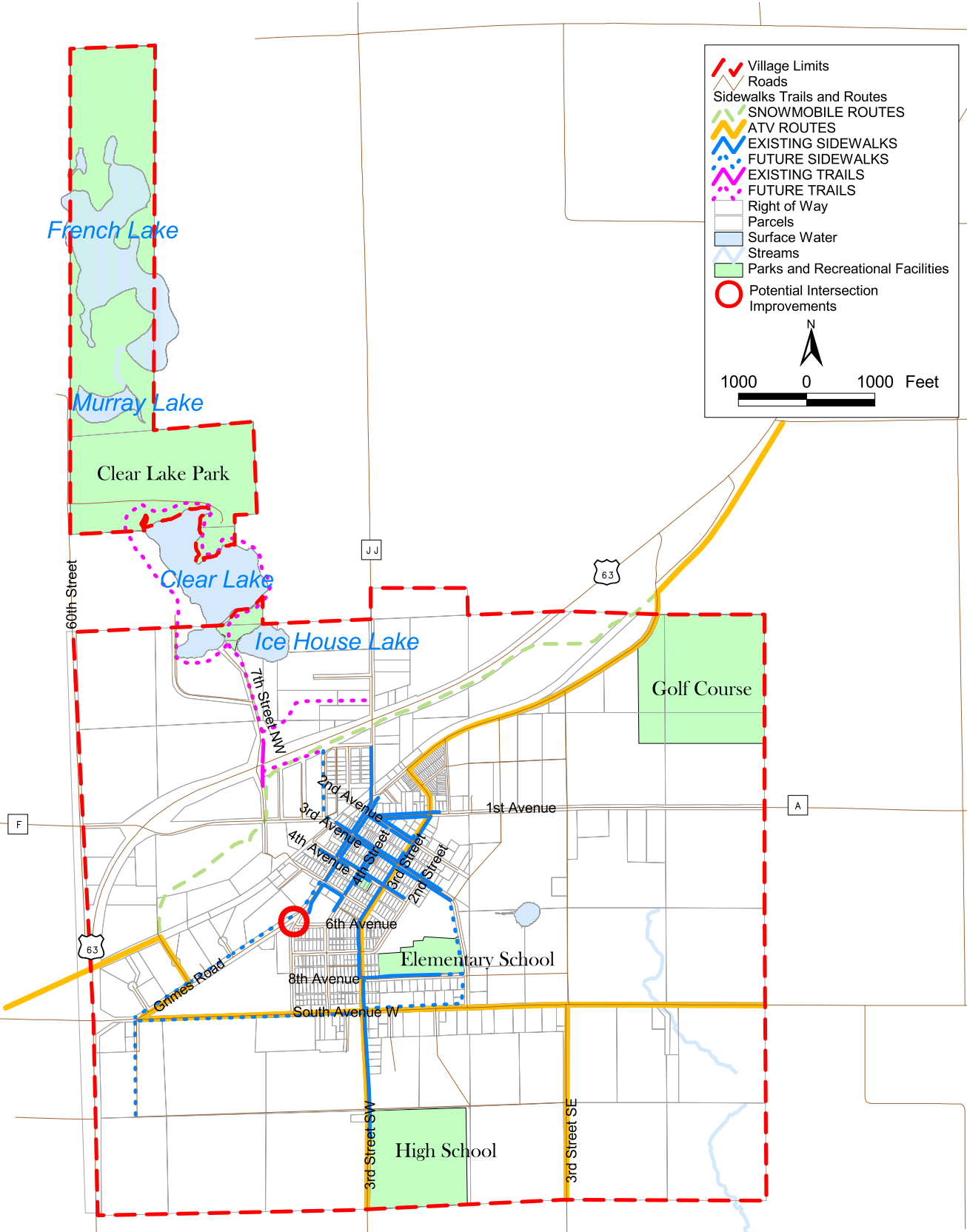
Map 6-2



FUTURE SIDEWALK AND TRAIL CORRIDORS

Village of Clear Lake

Map 6-3



Source: WDOT and Cedar Corporation

