

CHAPTER 6

Transportation

Introduction

Having access to a quality transportation system is essential to residents in the City of Cornell. An excellent road network makes a City a desirable place to live because it allows residents to enjoy small town living yet have access to a wide variety of job opportunities in other communities. Manufacturing is an important industry in the City and there is a need for a good transportation system to support the shipment of manufactured goods to and from the area.

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

Survey Results

Below are the results from the Community Survey:

The City of Cornell should support...	
	Count
Bike lanes/paths	63
Sidewalks to key areas	58
Area car pool/"park and ride"	30
Foot paths	36
ATV Routes	39
Snowmobile Routs	40
None	15
Total	281

The top two responses to the survey question asking what the residents would support regarding alternative transportation system was bike lanes/paths (63) and sidewalks to key areas (58).

SWOT Exercise Results

Strengths

- Proximity to highways
- Good trail network
- Size of community
- Proximity to large communities for jobs
- Access to airports
- Aesthetics of area

- Roads well maintained
- Variety of transportation modes
- Scenic highways nearby
- State park – trails
- Nearby access to rail
- Active government for transportation
- Lack of traffic congestion
- Local airport

Weaknesses

- People not wanting to change
- Too far from interstate
- Lack of land for industries
- No busses or taxis/public transportation
- No rail spur
- Tight turn onto Highway 64 from Highway 27 for trucking
- No signage for overnight truck parking
- No official park and ride
- Signage for businesses/downtown
- Cost of fuel

Opportunities

- Outdoor recreation opportunities
- Continue to develop sidewalks/trails
- Tourism and other recreational opportunities
- Maintain existing
- Promote existing facilities/amenities
- ATV and snowmobile routes
- Attract bus stop
- Taxi/shuttle service

Threats

- Fuel costs
- Loss of funding/grants
- Potential bypass
- Natural disasters – flooding/tornado
- Major road construction on nearby highways coming to Cornell
- Closing the airport
- Terrorist attack

Functional Road Classification and Jurisdiction

Roads and highways provide different levels of service. Highways provide for the movement of through traffic while streets provide access to property. Most public

roads in Wisconsin are classified according to their function and jurisdiction. A functional classification system groups roads and highways according to the character of service that they provide (Map 6-1). It also helps determine eligibility for federal aid. Classifications are divided into urban and rural categories, based on population. The City of Cornell falls under the urban functional 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 City 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.

Within the City of Cornell, State Highway 178, 64 and 27 are the principal arterials (state jurisdiction); County Trunk CC is a major collector (Chippewa County). The remaining roads are local roads, primarily maintained by the City and County.

Commuter Patterns

The road network in and surrounding the City of Cornell is a major factor in the City’s commuting habits. State Highway 178 starts/stop at the City of Cornell; additionally the City is bisected by ST.H. 64 and ST.H. 27, all act as principal arterials for the City.

Driving is the most common mode of transportation for residents who commute to work. Table 6-1 shows that 75% of residents drive alone while only 10 % of carpool. Thirteen percent of residents walk or work at home which could indicate residents engaged in farming or home based businesses.

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

	2000	%
Total	637	100.0%
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	481	75.5%
Car, truck, or van – carpooled	65	10.2%
Walked/Worked at Home/Other Means	88	13.8%
Public Transportation	3	0.5%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

There are no Department of Transportation regulated van and carpool lots in Chippewa County, yet in 2000 about 10% of residents carpooled to work.

In general, in 2000 the number of residents traveling 30 minutes or more had increased significantly, while the number of residents traveling 29 minutes or less decreased significantly. Many residents are likely commuting to jobs in Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census nearly 40 percent of working residents that work outside their homes, commute over 30 minutes to work.

Table 6-2 - Travel Time to Work Workers Who did not Work at Home

Travel Time	1990	Percent	2000	Percent	Numerical Change	% Change
Total	564	100.0%	619	100.0%	55	9.8%
Less than 10 minutes	293	52.0%	263	42.5%	-30	-10.2%
10 to 19 minutes	98	17.4%	72	11.6%	-26	-26.5%
20 to 29 minutes	52	9.2%	46	7.4%	-6	-11.5%
30 to 44 minutes	68	12.1%	125	20.2%	57	83.8%
45 to 59 minutes	31	5.5%	58	9.4%	27	87.1%
60 minutes or more	22	3.9%	55	8.9%	33	150.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Air Transportation

The City of Cornell is served by a number of airports including Cornell's Municipal Airport, Eau Claire's Chippewa Valley Airport, and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

The Cornell Airport is privately owned, but the City of Cornell owns most of the land within the City Limits to the north. The airport, located east of the downtown at 28250 State Highway 64 in the City of Cornell, has a paved runway of 2,420 feet.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in Eau Claire is approximately 24 miles away. Its main connection is to the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Northwest AirlinK Airlines, through Mesaba Airlines, provides eight round trip flights per weekday with connecting service to over 220 domestic and international destinations. Mesaba provides both scheduled passenger and air cargo/package express service from this airport.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, approximately 120 miles away, provides major commercial air service for Western Wisconsin and City of Cornell 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.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails

Today, more people are interested in physical fitness than ever before. Besides basic transportation, biking and walking are increasingly popular ways to exercise regardless of age. Besides health benefits, sidewalks provide a safe way for pedestrians to move throughout the City while bike trails can offer an aesthetic and relaxing way to enjoy Cornell while bringing in financial benefits to local businesses as well. The City of Cornell has an extensive sidewalk and trail system throughout the City (See Map 6-2). The City maintains a map showing the years and locations of sidewalk upgrades since 2000 (Map 6-3).

One of the primary uses for sidewalks is for the safe transportation of students to and from school. In 2008, the City developed and adopted a Safe Routes to School Plan where the Safe Routes Task Force inventoried existing City sidewalks and trails and identify needs for improvements while exploring ways to improve and finance them. The Plan addresses topics such as existing safe routes efforts, sidewalk and trail design standards, traffic calming techniques, signage, funding opportunities and recommendations.

There are some areas of the City that remain without sidewalks but for the most part, the sidewalk network has connectivity and the sidewalks are in good condition overall. Map 6-4 identifies the areas of the City that at this time are

missing sidewalks, but have been identified as possible future locations for sidewalks and paths.

Cornell is also a trail head for the Old Abe State Trail that is a paved 19.5 mile trail that connects Lake Wissota State Park in Chippewa Falls and Brunet Island State Park in Cornell. The other major trail that extends to the Cornell area is the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Both of these trails provide recreational opportunities for the area residents and visitors. It is important to maintain access to these trails and connectivity with the existing sidewalk and trail network within Cornell.

Local and regional hiking/biking trails provide connectivity and access to the recreational trails in the Brunet Island State Park. There are many trails throughout the park for hiking and biking.

The City also provides marked routes for snowmobilers and trails for cross-country skiers coming from the surrounding area to go through the City.

The future sidewalk/bike trail plan will take these factors into consideration:

- Providing safe passage to generators of traffic including parks, schools, public buildings, restaurants, and retail stores.
- Locate sidewalks along roads with heavy traffic such as arterials and collectors.
- Build sidewalks that provide connectivity to other sidewalks.
- Provide adequate road width and shoulder space for safe sharing of road space with bicycles and vehicles.
- Establish trails that link park and conservancy areas and provide parking for non-resident use.

Transportation Facilities for the Elderly and Disabled

The Chippewa County Department of Department of Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides transportation services for the elderly and handicapped throughout Chippewa County and the City of Cornell. Transportation services are run by volunteers who will take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, or for personal appointments. The services are available to Chippewa County senior citizens aged 55 and older. Below is a list of groups available in Chippewa County for elderly transportation services:

- Department of Aging Volunteer Drivers
- Triniteam Caregivers Volunteers Drivers
- Volunteer Caregiver Program
- Veterans Service – Veterans Van
- Faith in Action

Chippewa County Department of Aging also provides contact information for services that can be contacted by wheelchair bound senior citizens and handicapped residents to arrange lift-equipped transportation. Below is a list of groups available in Chippewa County for disabled transportation services:

- Chippewa Co. Transit
- Abbey Van
- Comfort Carriers Medford
- Patients' Express – Non-Emergency
- Tender Care Transport

Truck Transportation

There are a number trucking companies in and around the City – Dave Hakes (hauls logs), Bohaty Trucking (hauls trusses and logs), S & S Trucking at the airport, and Burlingham Trucking in the Town of Estella that provide transportation of goods for the City and throughout the Country.

The City does not allow overnight or day parking on the streets. Current places to park overnight are the City Shop, across from the Visitor's Center, and as a last resort at Mule Hide on Bridge Street.

Other Modes of Transportation

There are no rail (passenger or freight) or water transportation services in the City of Cornell. It is unlikely that any of these services would be available over the next 10 to 20 years. However, there is rail service in nearby communities. Bloomer, Ladysmith, Cadott, and Chippewa Falls all have rail service and are all within 20 miles of Cornell.

The City recently passed an ordinance allowing Neighborhood Electric Vehicles. This action allows local residents and visitors to Brunet Island to get around the City with electric vehicles. The vehicles must meet certain criteria established in the ordinance.

The City has also established ATV routes through the City connecting to existing ATV routes adjacent to the City.

State, Regional, and Local 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
- 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

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 City 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 City 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 6-4 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. There are a number of intersections that are considered dangerous and some have had a high rate of accidents. Dangerous intersections include: Third Street and Main Street; Third Street and Bridge Street (State Highway 64); 6th Street and Bridge Street; 8th Street and Bridge Street; and, the Fox Road alley that comes out at Bridge Street. In 2008, the City developed a Safe Routes to School Plan which identified many of these intersections as needing additional safety improvements.

Roads

Future roads will depend greatly on future development. There are some current locations the City has identified as possible road corridors in the future. 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 City would like to connect to the existing sidewalk network (Map 6-4). Developing sidewalks at these areas would provide connectivity and safe pedestrian routes for residents.

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.

Potential Funding Sources and Organizations

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

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Create and maintain a safe pedestrian and bicycle network within the City of Cornell.

Objectives

1. Investigate opportunities for residents to move throughout the City by multimodal forms of transportation.

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 City's parks.

Policies

1. Encourage Bike/Pedestrian Plans in new subdivisions and redevelopment to concentrate on connectivity.
2. Consider visiting and evaluating accident sites for signage and visibility.
3. Utilize signs and striping to ensure safe crosswalks for residents.
4. Consider working with surrounding municipalities, including the Town of Estella and Town of Cleveland in developing a biking, ATV, and walking trail network.

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

Objectives

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

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 Chippewa County.
3. Identify, map, and preserve potential lands in the City of Cornell 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 a safe transportation network.

Objectives

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

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.

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.

Goal 5: Provide a multi modal system of transportation throughout the City.

Objectives

1. Maintain existing sidewalk and trail system.
2. Support safe alternative methods of transportation.

Policies

1. Review site plans to ensure sidewalk and trail connectivity.
2. Maintain existing Neighborhood Elective Vehicle Ordinance.
3. Support future ordinances that encourage safe and fuel efficient alternative forms of transportation.