

# Transportation

## A. Introduction

Transportation networks are the basis upon which a community builds its foundation for the economy and gains access to resources and connections to other communities, thereby forming a critical link to continued development and growth. Maintenance and repair, along with periodic additions and enhancements, are essential for preserving its usefulness to residents, visitors and businesses. This element will profile the existing transportation system within and around the Village of Poplar.

## B. Transportation Profile (Inventory & Analysis)

### 1. Roadways

#### Functional Classification

Streets within the village are classified by their functional use and by the amount of traffic they sustain. The Village of Poplar’s roadway system is comprised of 27.45 municipal (village) miles or local streets and 7.61 miles of County and State Highways. State Highway 2, considered the main ingress/egress route through the community, links Poplar to the Cities of Ashland to the east and the metropolitan area of Duluth-Superior to the west. Map 3.1 displays the functional classification in the Village of Poplar.

#### Pavement Analysis

The village utilizes the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) Internet-accessible system that helps local governments manage local road data to improve decision-making, and to meet state statute requirements.

#### Traffic Volumes

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation records Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts (AADT) over a 3-year cycle. Six sites have been identified within the village limits from 1990 to 2005 in Table X. Traffic counts have fluctuated in for the 15-year period. USH 2 west of CTH P (Site 4) increased the most. Traffic increases in and through the Village of Poplar over the years can be contributed to one main factor. Residents and visitors are making more vehicular trips for shopping, commuting to work, and for recreation purposes.

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	Change
Site 1	650	440	480	410	350	350	-300
Site 2	860	820	820	700	780	780	-80
Site 3	--	--	6700	6400	6500	--	-200
Site 4	5390	6600	5400	7700	7500	7100	+1710
Site 5	1450	1700	1800	1500	1700	1700	+250
Site 6	4340	5100	5800	7000	6400	5900	+1560

Source: WisDOT Highway Traffic Volume Data 1990-2005

Site 1: CTH D north of USH 2  
 Site 2: CTH D south of USH 2  
 Site 3: USH 2 east of CTH P

Site 4: USH 2 west of CTH P  
 Site 5: CTH P south of USH 2  
 Site 6: USH 2 east of Wiehe Rd

Commuting

Commuting is the process of traveling between a place of residence and a place of work. Most residents (75.2%) drove alone in a car, truck, or van. Table 3-X illustrates commuting choices for Village of Poplar employed workers 16 years and over. Travel time to work ranged from less than 5 minutes to 90 or more minutes. The average travel time to work was 25.4 minutes.

	Number
Workers 16 years and over	290
Car, truck, or van—drove alone	218
Car, truck, or van—carpooled	39
Public Transportation (including taxi cab)	1
Walked	8
Other means	2
Worked at home	22
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	25.4

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Traffic Safety

The village has a variety of reduced speed areas within its corporate limits to maintain consistent traffic speeds and insure safety for pedestrians and other roadway traffic. Despite all the precautions and safety measures, accidents are an unavoidable part of any community in which automobile use is the primary means of transportation. Table 3-1 details traffic accident information in the Village of Poplar for the 5-year period from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2007. In this time period, 34 accidents were reported.

Location	Date	Accident Type	Road Condition	Weather Condition	Accident Severity	Fatalities	Injuries
USH 2	11/2/2004	Deer	DRY	--	PD	0	0
USH 2	5/10/2005	Unknown	WET	Cloudy	INJ	0	1
USH 2	12/29/2006	Traffic Sign	SNOW	Cloudy	INJ	0	1
USH 2	4/26/2006	Unknown	DRY	Clear	PD	0	0
USH 2	3/26/2004	Unknown	DRY	Cloudy	PD	0	0
USH 2	9/18/2003	Unknown	WET	Rain	PD	0	0
USH 2	9/16/2004	Unknown	DRY	Cloudy	PD	0	0
USH 2	10/16/2004	Other Animal	DRY	Cloudy	PD	0	0
USH 2	3/1/2005	Unknown	ICE	Clear	PD	0	0
USH 2	7/18/2003	Unknown	DRY	Cloudy	FAT	1	1
USH 2	5/24/2005	Unknown	DRY	Clear	PD	0	0
USH 2	9/10/2003	Guardrail	DRY	Clear	PD	0	0
USH 2	3/11/2004	Unknown	SNOW	Cloudy	PD	0	0
USH 2	7/2/2003	Unknown	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	1
USH 2	10/4/2003	Unknown	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	1
USH 2	9/22/2006	Unknown	WET	Rain	PD	0	0
USH 2	1/16/2004	Unknown	DRY	Clear	PD	0	0
USH 2	7/4/2004	Ditch	DRY	Cloudy	PD	0	0
USH 2	6/29/2004	Unknown	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	2
USH 2	12/2/2004	Unknown	SNOW	Snow	PD	0	0
USH 2	5/15/2006	Ditch	WET	Fog	PD	0	0
Bayfield Rd	8/17/2003	Unknown	BLNK	--	INJ	0	1
CTH D	4/22/2003	Culvert	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	1
CTH D	9/14/2003	Ditch	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	1
CTH P	12/3/2004	Ditch	ICE	Snow	INJ	0	2

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CTH P	12/22/2006	Ditch	ICE	Sleet	INJ	0	1
CTH P	11/3/2006	Tree	DRY	Cloudy	INJ	0	1
E Holmstead Rd	11/28/2004	Unknown	ICE	Clear	PD	0	0
Memorial Dr	3/10/2005	Unknown	BLNK	Snow	PD	0	0
Middle River Rd	12/30/2006	Ditch	SNOW	Cloudy	PD	0	0
Middle River Rd	12/20/2003	Ditch	SNOW	Clear	INJ	0	1
Middle River Rd	1/11/2006	Overturn	ICE	--	PD	0	0
N Poplar Dr	9/15/2006	Object not fixed	DRY	Clear	INJ	0	1
W Holmstead Rd	9/27/2003	Ditch	DRY	Clear	PD	0	0

Source: [Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory](#).

FAT-Fatal Accident, INJ-Injury Occurred, PD-Property Damage

2. Air Travel

There are no airports in the Village of Poplar. The nearest airports providing scheduled passenger flights to domestic and international flights are located in Duluth, MN at the Duluth International Airport (23 miles) or Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (174 miles).

3. Commercial Trucking

Commercial trucking in and through the Village of Poplar is served by U.S. Highway 2, which runs east-west through the village. This highway supports the majority of the commercial trucking traffic within the village. County highways D and P also support truck traffic in the village.

4. Rail Transport

There are no rail lines in the Village of Poplar and none are planning in the future. The closest passenger rail services are available in Minneapolis-St. Paul through Amtrak.

5. Ports/Harbors

There are no ports or harbors located in the Village of Poplar. The combined Port of Duluth-Superior is one of the largest ports on the Great Lakes in total cargo volume, shipping primarily coal, ore, grain and other materials.

6. Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation

There is no formal sidewalk policy for pedestrians in the Village of Poplar. Sidewalks in the village are located on a few blocks of XX and randomly on other streets in the village. Biking and pedestrian travel in the village are supported by local streets.

7. Trails

The Tri-County Corridor runs through the Village of Poplar. This is a multi-use trail that stretches roughly 63 miles from Ashland to Superior across the three counties of Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas. Communities along the trail include Ashland, Brule, Ino, Iron River, Moquah, Superior

and Wentworth. It is a former railroad line, converted to a lime surfaced trail that has gradual gradients and is very peaceful and scenic.

#### 8. Other Transportation Services

Public transportation services in the Village of Poplar are limited. The Aging Resource Center for Douglas County offers transportation to those aged 60 and older. Transportation services are provided by two programs –

**Specialized Van Transportation** - The Specialized Van Transportation Program provides curb to curb transportation services for people who are age 60 and over, or people with a medical disability (vans are handicapped accessible). Specialized Van Transportation provides rides to medical appointments, personal appointments, banking or shopping, visit family and friends, or to run errands in town. Participants who need assistance are required to have another person escort them to their appointment, and that person may ride free of charge.

**Volunteer Driver Escort Program** - This program utilizes volunteers who use their own vehicles to provide transportation throughout Douglas County. This program also provides transportation to Duluth, Minnesota (for medical purposes only). The program is designed for those individuals who need minimal assistance, are ambulatory, and are at least 60 years of age. If under the age of 60 years old, and disabled, with no other means of transportation, they also try to accommodate, depending on the situation and availability of volunteer drivers. Volunteer Drivers do not stay with participants at their destinations. It is a door to door service.

Possible future transportation services may include bus service provided by the Isle Vista Casino on the Red Cliff Indian Reservation in Bayfield County. This service would shuttle persons back and forth from the casino to Duluth making multiple stops in between.

#### C. **Existing County, State, Regional Transportation Plans**

There are a number of state, regional and county agencies that have developed and adopted various transportation plans or programs for roadways and infrastructure under their responsibility. In an effort to be consistent and cooperative with other overlapping jurisdictions, the following state, regional, and county plans and/or planning organizations applicable to this element for the Village of Poplar are listed and summarized.

- **TRANSLINKS 21**  
A comprehensive 25 year intermodal vision and plan for 21st century transportation in Wisconsin.
- **Connections 2030**  
A long-range transportation plan for the state that will address all forms of transportation over a 25-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

- **Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report**  
The report summarizes critical rail transportation issues, suggests opportunities for public sector involvement, and points out areas where additional research is needed.
- **Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020**  
A 21-year strategic plan which considers the highway system's current condition, analyzes future uses, assesses financial constraints and outlines strategies to address Wisconsin's preservation, traffic movement, and safety needs.
- **Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020**  
This planning document is intended to help both communities and individuals in developing bicycle-friendly facilities throughout Wisconsin.
- **Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020**  
The Pedestrian Plan provides a basic description of existing and emerging pedestrian needs over the next 20 years, with a set of recommendations to meet those needs. WisDOT's efforts ensure that this plan complements both existing and future long-range transportation plans.
- **Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020**  
Airports, aviation and aviation-related industries play a significant role in the economic success of Wisconsin communities. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020 provides a framework for the preservation and enhancement of a system of public-use airports adequate to meet current and future aviation needs of the State of Wisconsin.

**D. Public Input**

Transportation Issues & Opportunities Raised During Planning Process

1. Village roads are in need of repair
2. Funding for road maintenance is getting harder and harder to obtain
3. Not able to pave more than 1/3 mile each year and roads are two feet narrower
4. Road names (directional confusion)

**E. Transportation Goals, Objectives, Actions, Policies & Programs**