

Chapter 3: Transportation

Introduction

Dane County provides many different transportation resources including planning, designing, and maintaining the 543-mile county trunk highway system, as well as providing and maintaining bike paths, hiking and skiing trails. Through the county's Department of Human Services, the county also provides funding for and administers specialized transportation services.

The transportation network facilitates the flow of goods and people throughout the region, and both responds to, and influences land use growth patterns. The intersections of Dane County's highways, urban streets, farm roads, railways, airport runways and bicycle paths symbolize the pervasive nature of transportation issues, intersecting with the economy, environment, land use, housing, and agriculture.

Purpose

This chapter identifies goals, objectives, policies and programs to guide the future development of Dane County's various modes of transportation, including::

- Highways
- Transit
- Transportation facilities for the disabled
- Bicycles
- Walking
- Railroads
- Air transportation
- Trucking
- Water transportation

Stakeholders

The Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities workgroup (TUCF) generated all the recommendations in this chapter, based on a consensus decision-making model. Contributors to Chapter 3 included: town officials, county government officials, transportation planners, environmental groups, regional planning advocates, members of the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission, advocates for transportation for people with disabilities, and advocates for various modes including bicycle, pedestrian and air travel.

Key Issues

How can Dane County best promote safe and efficient mobility for its residents and visitors when:

- 30,000 work trips a day originate from outside of Dane County?
- The number of cars per household continues to increase?
- Greater proportions of commuters drive alone to work?
- Portions of the Dane County transportation network are beginning to experience significant congestion and traffic delays?
- The number of transit passengers has increased steadily since 1998?
- Commuting by bicycle has increased significantly?
- Estimated daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) continues to increase?
- Flights to and from the Dane County Regional Airport continue to expand and increase?
- Rail freight, bicycles, passenger rail, commuter rail and transit jointly use the same existing rights-of-way?
- Transportation contributes approximately 1/3 of all greenhouse gases statewide?

Survey Results

The *Dane County Comprehensive Plan Survey* not only asked respondents to provide feedback on overall transportation goals for the county, but also asked them specific questions about how they get to work, how often they use transit services and what role Dane County should take in improving transportation. When asked to identify which transportation goals needed “more,” or “considerably more” county attention, 72% of respondents identified “providing public transportation between housing, shopping and work,” and “ensuring all forms of transportation are safe and efficient.” Sixty-one percent of respondents thought the county should pay more or considerably more attention to “providing safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian travel.” The survey reveals different transportation preferences between urban and rural residents. For example, urban residents tended to emphasize public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian transportation more than rural residents. A consistent majority (58%) of both urban and rural respondents thought the county should pay more or considerably more attention to “providing effective transportation to persons with disabilities.”

The survey also included questions about county resource allocation for transportation. When asked how Dane County government should use its resources to promote safe and efficient transportation “into and out of” Dane County, 47% of respondents selected “highways” as their top priority, 21% selected “passenger rail in the future,” and another 21% selected “mass transit.” The survey included a similar question regarding transportation “within Dane County.” Fifty percent of respondents chose “local roads” as their top priority for county resource allocation, 22% chose “bus service,” and 13% chose “bike paths and trails.”

When asked what the most important role Dane County government should play in addressing transportation issues, respondents ranked “help build cooperative relationships between transportation and government” (34%), “invest public money in more transportation options” (24%), and “educate the public on transportation issues” (18%) as the most important. Only 1% of respondents selected “maintain roads better” as their top priority.

Background/Orientation

The recommendations in this chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* incorporate and complement a variety of county, state and regional transportation planning documents. A complete list of ongoing transportation planning projects is included in Volume II. Some of the more significant county or regional transportation plans include:

- the *Regional Transportation Plan 2030*.
- *Transport 2020* (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, currently in development)
- *State Highway Plan* (Wisconsin Department of Transportation)
- *State Rail Plan* (Wisconsin Department of Transportation)
- *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- *Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan*, Dane County Land and Water Resources Department. This includes planning and acquisition priorities for the county’s regional bicycle, pedestrian and water trail systems.

Dane County plays the most direct role in the County Trunk Highway System, the Dane County Regional Airport, county bike facilities, and in specialized transportation services provided by the Department of Human Services. These efforts are coordinated with regional and other local transportation planning efforts.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

Overall Transportation

Goals

1. *Provide an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.*
2. *Provide an accessible, integrated and well-maintained multi-modal transportation network that provides for the movement of people and goods in a safe and efficient manner.*
3. *Coordinate land use and transportation plans and decisions to ensure that transportation facilities are compatible with planned development.*
4. *Ensure that future transportation planning examines the full range of costs associated with infrastructure improvements and programs, including indirect, external, and opportunity costs.*
5. *Reduce transportation's contribution of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.*

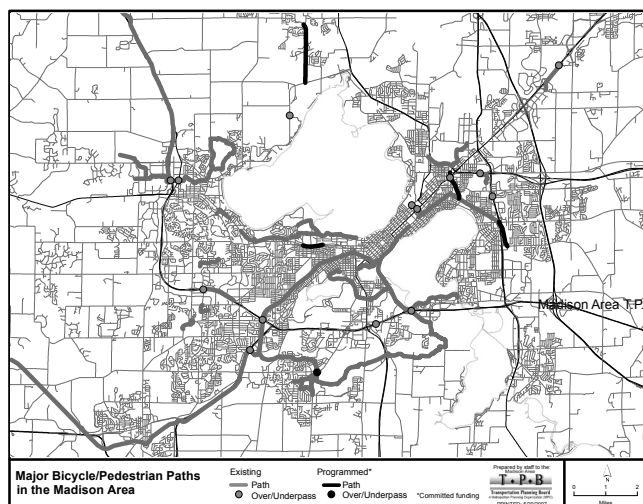
Supporting Objectives

- A. Increase mode choices while enhancing and preserving the character and livability of neighborhoods where transportation facilities are located.
- B. Decisions regarding transportation should be consistent with other elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*.
- C. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), other agencies and developers to ensure that transportation improvements are consistent with the goals and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*.
- D. Utilize and update existing transportation related plans (State Rail, State Highways, Bicycle, TIP, etc.).

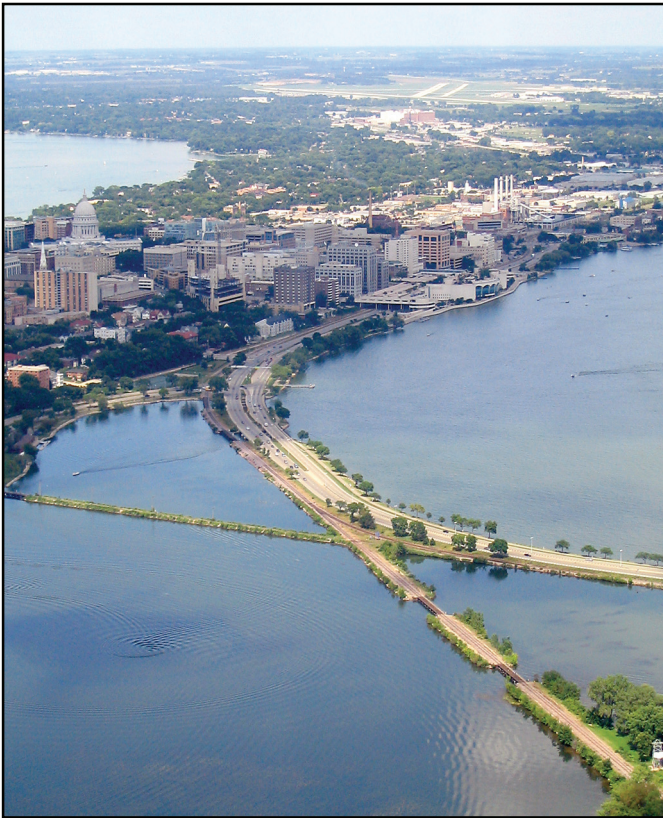
- E. Develop and implement programs, working with towns, cities and villages, as necessary, to ensure that developers consistently share responsibility for the transportation infrastructure costs of new development.

Policies and Programs

1. Promote a coordinated planning approach to address the interrelated nature of transportation issues and ensure an integrated and well maintained multimodal transportation network, by pursuing the following key concepts:
 - A. **Growth Area and Activity Center Linkage:** Seek to maintain mobility and accessibility options throughout the region by continuing the interconnection of major activity centers within the Madison area and between Dane County's growth centers with a system of arterial and collector roadways, while providing for the connection of these same centers with express bus service and possible future rail service.
 - B. **Balanced Transportation:** Strive to increase travel reliance on transit, carpooling and other travel options such as bicycling and walking, and trip reduction. This reduces the demand on the roadway network and provides mobility choices for those who wish to use other modes of travel rather than an automobile or who do not have access to an automobile.



- C. ***Traffic Accommodation:*** Continue to accept somewhat higher traffic congestion levels, particularly during the peak hours. This is intended as a means of encouraging travel during off-peak periods, greater use of transit and carpooling, and lessening the need for expanding streets and roadways. Techniques of traffic engineering and safety improvements make existing streets and roadways more efficient in moving traffic. Higher mobility levels are also maintained on some key circumferential routes (the Beltline and Interstate) to ensure efficient movement of people and goods through the region.



2. Promote multi-modal uses along transportation and utility corridors and new transportation options.
 - A. Make sure county-funded highway and other transportation improvements and plans take into account the needs of farmers, bicyclists, and other uses.



Air Transportation

Goals

1. *Support operations of airports located in Dane County through the promotion of compatible land uses to protect their function as a vital component of the region's transportation system.*
2. *Improve multi-modal access, including public transit services, to the Dane County Regional Airport*

Policies and Programs

1. Continue implementation and updates of the Dane County *Regional Airport Master Plan*. Support the Dane County *Regional Airport Master Plan's* promotion of compatible land uses.
2. Master planning and promotion of compatible land uses should be applied to all municipal airports in Dane County
3. Plan for municipal airports and rural airfields, as well as that for the regional airport. Examples of uses of smaller airports include air ambulance service, personal business use and insect and seeding spraying.
4. Include transportation of agricultural goods to market in all long-term planning related to air-freight transport.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Goals

1. *Provide for safe, convenient and efficient bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the county, including on-street and off-street facilities.*
2. *Promote the development of safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to schools and other community facilities.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Incorporate bikeway, pedestrian, and other facilities as a part of all major roadway improvement projects and new developments.
- B. Develop interconnected bikeway and pedestrian systems as a part of transportation planning and improvement efforts undertaken by all units of government in Dane County.
- C. Promote biking as an alternative through bike lanes and a countywide bike system.

Policies and Programs

1. Continue to program and build major bikeway facilities within urban service areas countywide.
2. Continue Dane County's efforts to link bike trails as outlined in the *Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan*.
3. Encourage all villages, cities and towns in the county to develop bikeway systems, routes and facility plans as part of transportation planning efforts they may undertake.

4. Continue to provide public information via the Internet, brochures, special events, and other means to notify the public of where and when bikeway routes and facilities are available.
5. Encourage the inclusion of bikeway and pedestrian improvements in all development proposals.
6. Adopt countywide signage for bike facilities.
7. Review and enhance the Dane County bike plan, as appropriate.
8. Encourage municipalities to adopt ordinances that require the installation of sidewalks in all urban and suburban subdivision developments.
9. Encourage municipalities to adopt design guidelines and other standards to encourage more pedestrian trips, especially to governmental facilities such as parks, schools and libraries.
10. Provide for pedestrian connections to park and ride lots, bus transfer points, and other intermodal transfer facilities.
11. Encourage municipalities to adopt design guidelines that encourage commercial buildings and community facilities to be built up to the sidewalk and locate parking lots to the back and side.
12. Encourage countywide countdown pedestrian crossing signals, where appropriate.
13. Maintain or add bike trails along rail corridors.





Rail Transportation

Goals

1. *Preserve rail corridors to serve current and planned freight and passenger service.*
2. *Seek opportunities to assist and expand, in a cost-effective manner, the range of passenger and freight rail service options in Dane County.*

Policies and Programs

1. Continue to consider initiatives to bring enhanced passenger rail options to the Dane County area, including:
 - A. enhanced intercity and interstate rail service, such as the Midwest High-Speed Rail Initiative;
 - B. regional commuter rail initiatives, such as the *Transport 2020* plan, and;
 - C. local, intra-city rail transit alternatives such as streetcars or special-event rail service.
2. Maintain or add bike trails along rail corridors.
3. Provide public transit at intercity rail stations in the county.
4. Preserve rail corridors for high-speed rail service as defined in Midwest Regional Rail System.
5. Improve rail-crossing safety particularly along high-volume rail lines, e.g., add gates and signals.
6. Include transportation of agricultural goods to market in all long-term planning related to rail freight.

7. Work with private rail operators to encourage and establish freight rail infrastructure, such as load-out sites and freight car staging areas, in closer proximity to current and prospective industrial customers to improve efficiencies and avoid conflicts with residential neighborhoods.

Streets and Roadways

Goal

1. *Correct auto, bicycle, and pedestrian safety problems and provide for street and roadway continuity.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Give priority to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new facilities or capacity.
- B. Address insufficient capacity using a variety of strategies, including Transportation Demand Management and System Management techniques.
- C. Provide for necessary roadway capacity expansion when Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management strategies have been exhausted, consistent with the compact urban development, modal choice, resource protection and other goals and objectives of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*.

Policies and Programs

1. Participate in, and implement recommendations of the *Regional Transportation Plan 2020*.
2. Start detailed planning and construction of street and roadway projects as defined in the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*.
3. Incorporate bikeway, transit and other facilities as a part of major street and roadway improvement projects.
4. Highway shoulders and crossings should be designed to accommodate farm equipment, bicycles and other uses and minimize safety conflicts with automobile traffic.
5. Include transportation of agricultural goods to market in all long-term planning related to truck freight transport.
6. Continue official mapping and other programs to preserve corridors for possible future travel uses.
7. Use street and roadway access control measures as a means of preserving travel capacity on existing streets and roadways, and of seeking safe and appropriate driveway access points.
8. Continue transportation system measures (TSM), to make the most efficient use of the existing transportation system.
9. Invite neighboring counties to participate in a south central transportation plan.



Transit and Public Transportation

Goals

1. *Expand transit services in a manner to achieve an increasing proportion of total trips by transit.*
2. *Ensure that Dane County has a well functioning paratransit service for people with disabilities and make all transit services as accessible as reasonably possible.*
3. *Develop a regional transit authority.*
4. *Recognize and promote the economic benefit of transit-oriented development.*

Supporting Objectives

- A. Explore potential to expand commuter bus/van services to serve more Dane County communities.
- B. Develop express commuter transit and vanpool services to and from the central Madison area and other major activity centers from outlying villages and cities, including park and ride lots along major travel corridors, and at transit system transfer points.
- C. Identify and maintain existing easements for rail/transit corridors; and obtain easements for future rail/transit corridors.

Policies and Programs

1. Support and maintain the current transit system while moving toward an expanded and more comprehensive transit system.

- A. Continue efforts to improve transit service to all shopping and commercial areas.
 - B. Expand commuter transit and/or vanpool and carpool services from outlying villages and cities.
 - C. Expand, enhance and promote alternative transportation options such as the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's regional carpool, or community-owned car options, so that residents have better access to jobs.
 - D. Encourage the use of incentives to increase individual transit usage.
 - E. Provide county incentives to foster community participation in a regional bus system.
 - F. Conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine the most appropriate model for some sort of regional transit and/or transportation organization (i.e. transit authority).
 - G. Encourage progressive addition of regional and express service to the existing Madison Metro bus system.
 - H. Support intercity transit services, (bus and rail), and co-location of intercity, local transit multi-modal terminals in central Madison. Make sure all terminals have convenient connections to urban transit services and taxis, and improve access to major intermodal facilities such as Dane County Regional Airport.
 - I. Support improved transit and specialized transportation systems outside the Madison Metro service area.
 - (1) Encourage the creation of more shared-ride taxi systems for local transit service.
 - (2) Improve specialized transportation services, especially for persons with disabilities
2. Encourage land use and location of development to support and serve increased transit use.
 3. Improve coordination of service among the various providers of specialized transportation service and information.
 4. Inventory transit stops for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and coordinate with municipal street departments in scheduling improvements to bring them into compliance with ADA.
 5. Implement seamless transfers between transit modes (for example one fare/pass)