

3. Transportation

Overview

A well-designed and maintained transportation system provides efficient, reliable, and safe ways for residents to get to their businesses, places of work, homes and schools. A community's transportation system plays an important role in the facilitation of an area's land use, economy and all-around development. This chapter brings an inventory of the existing transportation amenities in Town of Atlanta, including a compilation of objectives, actions, goals, and programs to guide the future development and maintenance of the various transportation facilities in and around Town of Atlanta.

3.1 Modes of Transportation

Highways/Roads

The road system is the primary means of transportation of people and goods in and through the town, linking it to surrounding areas and communities.

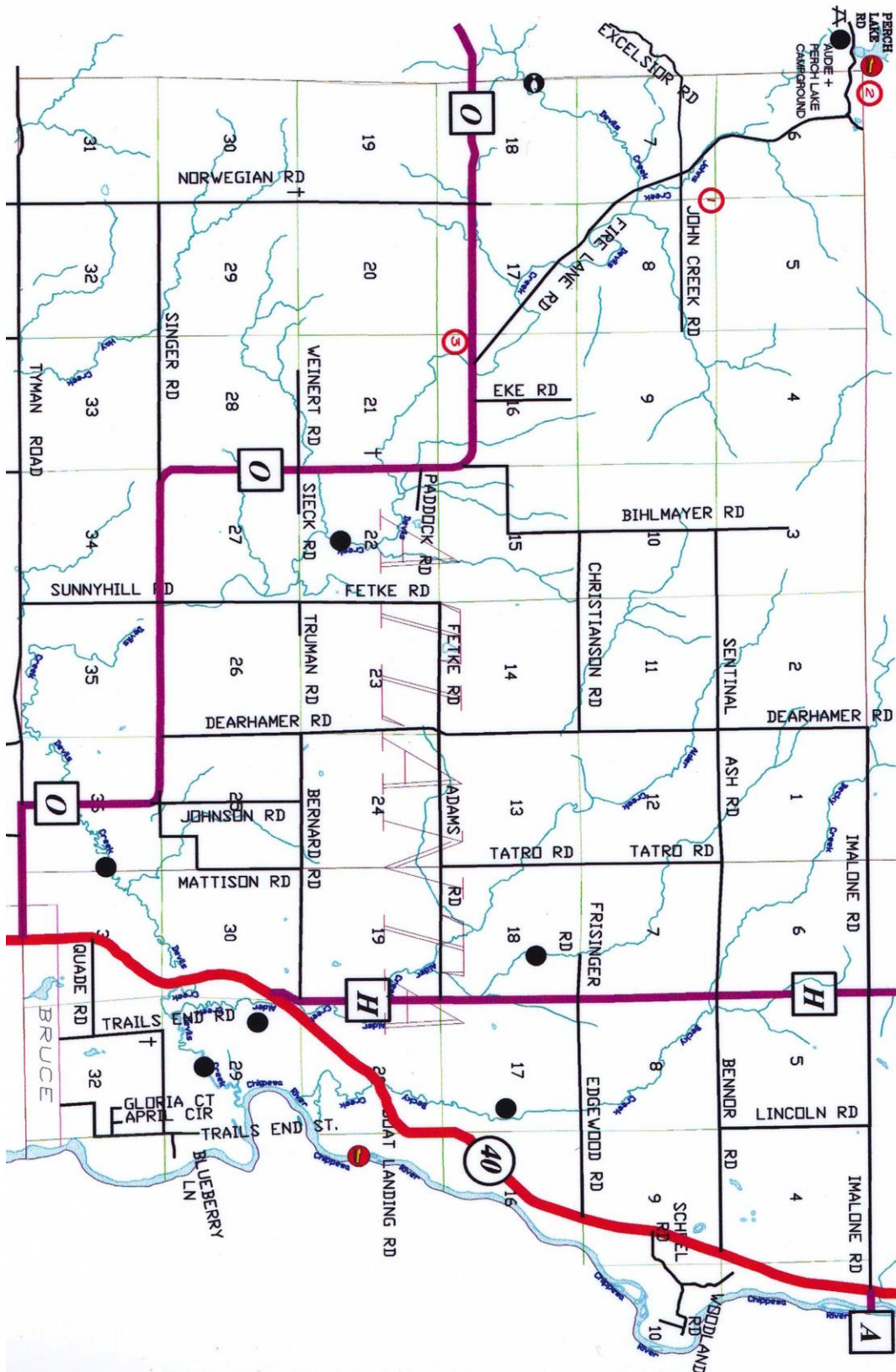
Highway 40 serves as the backbone in serving local transportation needs. The State of Wisconsin has jurisdiction over state highway 40 in the Town of Atlanta. Through a contractual agreement with the State of Wisconsin, the Rusk County Highway Department is responsible for maintenance of state highways and right-of-ways.

The major East-West highway is County O. The major North-South highway is County H. These highways play an important role in linking the area's agricultural resources to the county's retail and commercial nodes. Rusk County is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of Highways O and H.

Town roads are an important component of the transportation system and serve local development, farming, forestry, and recreation areas. Towns in Rusk County are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their individual town roads.

The Firelane road in the town of Atlanta has been designated part of Rustic Road 114.

Table 3.1 Map of Roads in the Town of Atlanta



** From the Rusk County Highway Department

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Trails

Trails in Town of Atlanta accommodate a variety of uses including, walking, biking, hiking, cycling, equestrian, snowmobiling, ATV, and cross-country skiing. These trails provide both recreational opportunities as well as an alternative mode of transportation for some people. Some major trails include: Blue Hills East & West side Trails and Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

Freight Transportation

Freight transportation is available through the county and state highway system and the local road network. In the spring, depending on weather conditions, the Rusk County Highway Department, Wisconsin Department of Transportation and town road officials impose weight restrictions on local roads due to the heaving volatility caused by frost.

Town of Atlanta posts town roads during spring break up.

Year Dec thru May	Frozen Road Start	Total Days of Frozen Roads	Road Bans Begin	Road Bans Off	Total Days of Road Bans
2021-2022	December 30	77	March 17	May 5	49
2020 - 2021	December 31	64	March 5	April 19	45
2019 - 2020	December 19	81	March 11	April 27	47
2018 - 2019	Decemberr 12	94	March 16	May 6	51
2017 - 2018	December 12	85	March 7	May 10	64

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) classifies roads as principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local roads. The classification system recognizes that roads perform specific functions and according to WisDOT serve two primary purposes: 1) to move vehicles (traffic mobility), and 2) to serve adjacent land (land access). Arterials accommodate the through-movement of vehicles, while collectors (major and minor) serve both local and through traffic by providing a connection between arterials and local roads. Local roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local functioning roads.

Minor Arterials

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Minor arterial roads connect to principal arterial roads. Like principal arterial roads, minor arterials carry large volumes of traffic to activity centers such as cities, but unlike principal arterials, allow more access to private property and residences. In Town of Atlanta, State Highway 40 is classified as a minor arterial.

Major Collectors

Major collectors provide service to moderate sized communities and link to larger population centers or higher functional routes. In Town of Atlanta, County Highway O is classified as a major collector.

Minor Collector

Minor collectors collect traffic from local roads and provide links to all remaining smaller communities. In Town of Atlanta, County Highway H and F are classified as minor collectors.

Local Roads

Local roads carry the least amount of traffic volume and provide access to adjacent land and residential developments. In Town of Atlanta, these roads provide for travel over relatively short distances and are mostly all town roads.

Table 3.2 List of Town of Atlanta roads, length, **paved status**

Road Name	Length (miles)	Paved
Total Miles	51.75	
Adams	1.98	No
Bennor	1.94	No
Bernard	2.01	No
Bilmayer	1.50	No
Blueberry Lane	0.18	No
Christianson	2.86	Yes
Dearhamer	5.08	Partial
Edgewood	1.64	No
Eke	0.71	No
Fetke	2.95	No
Fire Lane	3.59	No
Imalone	2.11	Yes
Johnson	1.13	Yes
Lincoln	1.08	No
Mattison	1.58	Yes
Norwegian	3.39	No

Paddock	0.32	No
Perch Lake	0.36	No
Quade	0.72	Yes
Quanstrom Drive	0.30	No
Sheel	0.65	No
Sentinal Ash	3.49	Partial
Sieck	0.33	No
Singer	2.04	Partial
Sunny Hill	1.01	Yes
Tatro	2.03	No
Trails End	2.76	Yes
Truman	0.25	No
Tyman	2.65	Yes
Weinert	0.74	No
Woodland	0.37	No

** From Town of Atlanta clerk

3.3 Traffic Volume

An analysis of past and present traffic volumes is beneficial in determining the traffic conditions in a community. Traffic volumes are usually presented as an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) and are calculated for a particular intersection or stretch of roadway. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, as part of its traffic count program, provides highway traffic volumes for selected roads on a rotating basis every three years. Traffic volumes were last published in 2021.

3.4 Means of Transportation & Commuting Patterns.

In Rusk County, the most common form of transportation is by individual vehicular trips. Of the 291 workers 16 years and older in 2012, the Census reports 67.4% drove alone, 11.3% carpooled, and 2.1% walked, and 18.2% worked at home.

3.5 Road Improvements

Rusk County Highway Department

The Rusk County Highway department is responsible for Highway's 40, O, and H in the town of Atlanta. They also contract with the town for assorted jobs as warranted.

Wisconsin Transportation Regions

Rusk County is one of twenty counties located within Wisconsin's Northwest Region, with the regional office located in Eau Claire. The Northwest Region annually prepares a six-year highway improvement program for road improvements including bridge rehabilitation, bridge replacement, pavement replacement, reconditioning, reconstruction, resurfacing and general roadway maintenance.

Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR)

The Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads is an Internet-accessible system that helps local governments manage local road data to improve decision-making, and to meet state statute requirements. The Town of Atlanta uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system for conducting annual reports on the condition of all county truck highways. Every odd numbered year, these pavement ratings must be submitted to WisDOT by mid-December. These ratings, used in conjunction with other factors, determine annual construction projects for the town. These other factors include (1) proximity of road projects to scheduled state or bridge projects, (2) availability of hot mix asphalt plants in the area, (3) cost effectiveness of resurfacing larger projects and (4) the possibility of alternate funding (STP, CHIP-D, PLH).

3.6 Programs & Implementation Tools

Funding and Technical Assistance Programs

The following section identifies the agencies as well as programs established and administered by those agencies to provide financial and technical support for the operation, maintenance and planning of the county's transportation system.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

General Transportation AID (GTA)

General Transportation Aids is the second largest program in WisDOT's budget and returns to local governments roughly 30% of all state-collected transportation revenues (fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees) – helping offset the cost of county and municipal road construction, maintenance, traffic and other transportation-related costs. County road improvements, construction, and maintenance are funded, in part, through the state's disbursement of general transportation aids. The state provides a payment to each county and municipality in the state that pays a portion of local governments' costs for such activities as road construction, snow removal, and grading. The statutory "rate per mile" for town, villages and cities was \$2,628.00 in 2020 and thereafter.

Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)

The Local Roads Improvement Program was established in 1991 to assist local units of government in improving seriously deteriorating county highways, town roads, and

municipal streets in cities and villages under the authority of the local unit of government. LRIP is a reimbursement program and pays up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, with the balance matched by the local unit of government. All LRIP projects are locally let and are reimbursed by WisDOT upon project completion.

Local Bridge Program

The Local Bridge Improvement Assistance program helps rehabilitate and replace, on a cost-share basis, the most seriously deficient existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway systems. Counties, cities, villages, and towns are eligible for rehabilitation funding on bridges with sufficiency ratings less than 80, and replacement funding on bridges with sufficiency ratings less than 50.

Flood Damage Aids

Flood Damage Aids assist local governments with improving or replacing roads and roadway structures that have sustained major damage from flooding. The program provides and helps defray costs of repairing major flood damage to any public highway street, alley or bridge not located on the State Trunk Highway System.

Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program

The Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program provides funds to local units of government for the installation of traffic signing and roadway marking enhancements, with the goal of improving visibility to assist elderly drivers and pedestrians. All Wisconsin counties, cities, villages, and towns are eligible to be project sponsors. The program can pay up to 75% of total eligible project costs, with the local government contributing matching funds equal to at least 25% of the total eligible costs to the limit of the award.

3.7 Summary – Goals & Objectives

When coordination of local land use planning and provision of transportation facilities is accomplished, money and time can be saved over the short and long term. Each transportation decision impacts economic development, community development, land use, and the natural and built environment. Although transportation decisions can directly influence Town of Atlanta's growth, it is more beneficial to the Town's future that it be used as a tool to accommodate planned growth. Lands in the Town of Atlanta will be used more efficiently when land is developed in proximity to other development and to transportation facilities.

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Goal:

Strive for a safe, maintained, and adequate transportation system that supports a variety of users that supports and grows the economy of the county.

Objectives:

1. Support the maintenance and improvement of existing transportation assets.
2. Promote a variety of transportation methods.
3. Encourage the development and growth of State and County transportation corridors in the town.

Actions:

- A. Identify State and Federal funds to develop, maintain, and/or expand various transportation systems
- B. Develop a maintenance and reinvestment plan for transportation assets.
- C. Monitor the population's transportation needs.
- D. Communicate with the appropriate State and Regional entities to ensure that the Town of Atlanta's transportation system is coordinated with surrounding transportation systems.