

Chapter 8: Transportation

Introduction:

As recognized in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, adequate transportation systems in the City are critical to the vitality and growth of the City. Isanti has two major road corridors that go through it, US Highway 65, which bisects the City with a north/south four lane corridor that provides access to the metropolitan area, and County Highway 5 / Heritage Boulevard, which provides an east/west connection through Isanti County. Isanti County Highway 5, through connecting inter-county roads, has access to US Interstate 35 to the east and US Highway 169 to the west. How City and County arterial road systems interrelate to the major roads will promote or hinder commercial, industrial and residential development and growth. Listed below are key transportation goals that are incorporated into this update.

Transportation Goals and Strategies

- Provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation system that services and balances both access and mobility needs.
- Create and provide excellent north-south and east-west connections and movements throughout Isanti.
- Maintain a transportation system that is coordinated and cost effective.
- Coordinate transportation with land use planning and environmental protection.
- Establish a strong multi-modal transportation plan to meet the community's current and future needs.

Transportation Elements:

Transportation elements are placed in categories, each of which is an important part of the transportation system. These categories are expanded on as follows.

Roadway Jurisdiction

Transportation right-of-ways and their roadways, non-motorized and pedestrian facilities have different governing jurisdictions, ranging from the State Department of Transportation, Isanti County, Townships and the City. The City has both a municipal road system and a municipal state aid road system. With state aid system routes, the City receives both money for improvement and on-going maintenance. As the City's

population increases, the City will be able to designate more road miles to the state aid system. Figure 8-1 shows the State Aid Routes and Jurisdiction of County and State road systems at the time of this update.

Roadway Classification

Roadways are classified based on access, capacity and function. Local road classifications range from a Major Arterial (US Highway 65) to minor collector roads (South Passage SE). The higher the classification, the greater the vehicle capacity of the road. Access points are more limited and road speeds are higher. Classifications can change over time due to increased usage of the roads, changes in road design and access. MSA routes in the City are primarily minor collector routes. At this time the following local roads are classified as follows:

<u>Road</u>	<u>Classification</u>
• US Highway 65	Major Arterial
• Heritage Boulevard/CSAH 5	Major Collector
• CSAH 23/Whiskey Road SW	Minor Collector
• CSAH 55	Minor Collector

Local MSA Routes

- South Passage SE/SW
- 6th Avenue SW
- Railroad Avenue SE
- Palomino Road SE (Railroad Avenue SE to US Highway 65)
- Towns Edge Rd SE (Railroad Avenue SE to US Highway 65)
- S. Brookview Lane SW (CSAH 23 to 5th Avenue SW)
- Fifth Avenue SW (S. Brookview Lane SW to N. Brookview Lane SW)
- N. Brookview Lane SW (5th Avenue SW to 2nd Avenue SW)
- 4th Avenue SW/NW (N. Brookview Lane SW to Heritage Boulevard NW)
- 2nd Avenue SW (N. Brookview Lane SW to Main Street W)
- Main Street W/E (4th Avenue SW to US Highway 65)
- Credit Union Drive NE (Main Street E to Heritage Boulevard NE)
- 3rd Avenue NW (Heritage Boulevard NE to Isanti Parkway NW)
- Isanti Parkway NE (3rd Avenue NW to East Dual Boulevard NE)
- East Dual Boulevard
- Cajima Street NE (East Dual Boulevard to US Highway 65)

Local Road Systems

Beyond the original townsite plan, with its surveyed grid iron blocks with street and alley systems, development of streets has taken place as part of the planning and subdivision process, with many of the roads part of developer installed public improvements in a specific subdivision. The City has worked diligently to maintain all local roads in its jurisdiction, including drainage and hard surfacing to improve existing neighborhoods as needed. The City implemented a long range plan to address current and future improvements and maintenance. The City will need to monitor legislative changes that may either enhance or limit the ability of the City to finance these programs.

Road Use and Access

The City, in conjunction with Isanti County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, periodically monitors vehicle traffic usage of collector, arterial and local streets. This is reflected in the mapping of Average Daily Trips (ADTs). This is reflected in Figure 8-2, Current Traffic Volumes. This data is collected over time and is used in planning improvements in road systems. As an example, certain traffic thresholds may cause implementation of traffic signals or re-configuration of traffic lanes to flow more volume in a specific right of way. Access to those roads also becomes part of the equation, as more access points on a specific road may lower speeds and the ability of the roadway to carry increasing traffic loads. With both collector and arterial road systems, direct access from an adjacent property is discouraged or limited, with local roads taking on the function of gathering destination specific traffic and bringing that traffic to specific intersections, some of which may be signalized. This concept works in residential and commercial areas as well. Often frontage or backage roads are constructed in general commercial areas to serve this purpose. Roadway design for both current and future traffic use, is important as transportation systems evolve over time. As a matter of policy for future road systems, the City may want to consider development of a Roadway Design and Access Policy.

Functional Transportation Plan:

The City has developed a long range functional transportation plan for vehicular traffic that has been reviewed as a part of this comprehensive plan update. This is reflected in Figure 8-3 Multi-Modal & Transportation Corridor Enhancements (placed at end of this Chapter). These improvements include roadways and collectors that may be developed beyond the scope of this planning effort (post 2030). The Plan incorporates the following elements:

- Realignment of CR 45 - straightening of segments to create a smoother corridor. North-south route between 277th Avenue NE and CSAH 5 – this corridor would extend north to an east-west route and ultimately connect with the extension of 8th Avenue NE.

- E Dual Boulevard Extension – this corridor would connect to the railroad crossing at 299th Avenue NE.
- East-west connection between north-south corridor, east of golf course and extending to CR 45.
- East-west connection between CR 23 and Polk Street.
- 6th Avenue NE & Wendover NE Extensions – East Commercial corridor connection.
- West Frontage Road Improvements – From Heritage Boulevard north to Golden Way and Enterprise Avenue NE.
- Intersection Improvements at: Heritage Boulevard NE and East Dual Boulevard NE, Cajima Street NE and US Highway 65, Eighth Avenue NE and Heritage Boulevard NE, and Palomino Rd SE and US Highway 65

Multi Modal Transportation Systems:

Local Sidewalk and Trail Systems

The Parks, Open Space, Trails and Natural Areas Plan contains the location of existing trails and sidewalks in the City. The City has had sidewalks and trail extensions installed as commercial and residential development occurred in the City. The City has also had some sidewalk systems installed as MSA, local and neighborhood roads have been reconstructed. Typically, sidewalks in the City are on the north and west sides of roadways. As we move to the future, the City should have sidewalk or trail systems installed along all MSA, current and future roads that will be classified as minor collectors. In cases where sufficient right of way does not exist for a separated trail, shoulder trails, possibly separated by curbing or part of a “complete street” concept could be implemented. Access improvements across major roadways should also be considered in the future.

The major goal is to have a contiguous system of sidewalks and trails that connect commercial and residential areas, educational facilities and parks/natural areas. Off road trails could be used to connect natural areas (river, brooks, wetland/woods) and passive parks. In some cases these will be unpaved trails with seasonal access and use.

Regional Trail Systems

Connections should also be made and enhanced to County, regional and state trail systems. This includes future extension of the Cambridge Isanti Bike/Walk Trail north to Braham. The City also has access to the state Sunrise Trail in the City of North Branch, using CSAH 5. This access needs some improvements that hopefully will be made in the future. An alternate trailway along CSAH 9 could also provide access to the Sunrise Trail. The County has completed a future trail plan with connections in and through Isanti. It is recommended that the City coordinate its trail efforts with the County and surrounding communities.

Highway 65 Crossing

State Highway 65 bisects the City, creating limited crossing opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists. A signalized controlled access is available at the Heritage Avenue intersection. That was constructed to provide a safe route across this roadway. Additionally, bicycle access improvements across the Cajima Street intersection with Highway 65 are incorporated in a current intersection improvement project. In the past the City had pursued a separated walkway over the highway near the Main Street access, but funding constraints and cost of construction for connecting trails on the east side of the highway ended consideration of that project. It is not anticipated that a separated crossing is in the timeframe of this comprehensive plan update. However, it should be noted that the need for such a crossing will increase with future residential development on the east side of the City.

Other Multi-Modal Systems

The City has a local bus company, Heartland Express, that provides destination specific bus transportation for local residents. At the writing of this update, metro bus transportation is provided up to the City of Blaine, with a park and ride location. At this time, there is not a designation public park and ride lot in Isanti for those desiring to share rides to metro destinations. It has been discussed that such a lot could be developed in downtown Isanti. Placement of such a lot could coincide with future planning for a commuter rail stop in the City. Planning for the commuter rail in the timeframe of this comprehensive plan update has the rail stop in the City of Cambridge.

Cross Jurisdictional Transportation Planning:

The 2008 City Comprehensive Plan took into account transportation plans prepared by the Isanti County Highway Department, as well as consultation with MnDOT. The City was actively involved in County planning efforts, as well as other multi-modal planning transportation efforts. It is recommended that those collaborative efforts be continued. It is recommended that the City consider membership in the Highway 65 Corridor Coalition. This group advocates for highway improvements from Anoka to Kanabec County.