

## **PRELIMINARY DRAFT**

### **SEWRPC Planning Report No. 15 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) A Jurisdictional Highway System Plan for Walworth County**

## **Chapter VI**

# **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report presents an update to the Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan that was originally adopted by the Walworth County Board of Supervisors on April 19, 1973, and later amended on four other occasions. The updated jurisdictional highway system plan is for the design year 2035. This jurisdictional highway system plan provides a review and reevaluation, and recommendations as to which level and agency of government should have jurisdictional responsibilities for each segment of arterial street and highway in Walworth County. This review was required in order to address changing traffic demands and patterns, to adjust the jurisdictional systems to changes in land use development patterns, and to assure the maintenance of an integrated network of state and county trunk highways as urban development continues within the county. The recommended jurisdictional highway system plan constitutes a refinement and amendment of the functional improvements recommended in the year 2035 regional transportation plan, adopted by the Commission on June 21, 2006, in Walworth County, and is intended to be a functional, as well as jurisdictional, arterial street and highway system plan for Walworth County to the design year 2035.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Because any realignment in the jurisdictional highway systems would affect the federal, state, and local units of government concerned in many ways, it was essential to actively involve these units of government in the jurisdictional highway planning process. Such participation was obtained through the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee. That Committee had representation from each of the cities, villages, and towns in the County, the County itself, as well as from the federal and state levels. The Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee provided guidance and assistance to the staff during the course of this study. Specifically, this Committee assisted and advised the study staff on technical methods, procedures, and interpretations; assisted in the assembly and

evaluation of planning and engineering data; assisted in the establishment, definition, and review of criteria; appraised alternative plans; and resolved any conflicts which arose in plan preparations and selection. The Committee was a working committee that actively involved the federal, state, and local officials in the planning process.

## **STUDY PURPOSE AND PLAN OBJECTIVES**

The primary purpose of jurisdictional highway system planning was to group into classes arterial streets and highways that serve similar functions and which, accordingly, should have similar design standards and levels of service. Once this classification process was completed, it was possible to assign jurisdictional responsibility logically for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of each of the groups to the state, county, and local levels of government. Thus, this county jurisdictional highway system plan indicates which highway facilities should be the primary responsibility of state government, county government, and local government—city, village, or town.

The Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan is intended to help Walworth County:

- Cope with the growing traffic demands within the County;
- Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway systems to changes in land use development along their alignment;
- Maintain an integrated county trunk highway system within the County;
- Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway system to better serve the major changes in traffic patterns taking place within the County; and
- Achieve an equitable distribution of arterial street and highway development and maintenance costs and revenues among the various levels and agencies of government concerned.

The county jurisdictional highway system plan also provides a review, as was requested by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee and Walworth County local governments, of the functional highway improvements—arterials to be widened with additional lanes and new arterials—recommended in the regional transportation plan within Walworth County.

## **ARTERIAL STREET AND HIGHWAY SYSTEM IN WALWORTH COUNTY**

Streets and highways may be functionally classified into three categories—arterial streets, land access streets, and collector streets—based upon the manner in which they function. Arterial streets are defined as streets and highways which are principally intended to provide a high degree of travel mobility, serving the through movement of traffic and providing transportation service between major subareas of an urban area or through the area. Together, the arterial streets should form an integrated, areawide system. Access to abutting property may be a secondary function of some types of arterial streets and highways, but it should always be subordinate to the primary function of traffic movement.

Together with local governments and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Commission has defined the arterial street and highway system of Walworth County and all of Southeastern Wisconsin over the past 40 years. Over the past 30 years, the mileage of the arterial street and highway system in Walworth County increased from 427 miles in 1973, the year the original Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan was adopted, to 459 miles in 2005, an increase of 32 miles, or about 7 percent.

## **ARTERIAL STREET AND HIGHWAY SYSTEM JURISDICTION**

The jurisdictional classification of the arterial street and highway system identifies the level of government—State, county, or local—having responsibility for the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of each segment of the arterial street and highway system. The existing jurisdictional highway classification is the result of a long evolutionary process influenced by many complex political, administrative, financial, and engineering considerations and constraints. The Commission has attempted over the past 35 years to work cooperatively with local, State, and Federal governments to recommend changes in the jurisdictional classification of the arterial street and highway system so that the arterial street system of the Region may over time be grouped into more logical subsystems of jurisdictional responsibility with the appropriate streets and highways under the jurisdiction of each level of government—State, county, and local. In 2005, the State trunk highway system consists of 213 route-miles, the County trunk highway system consists of 173 route-miles, and the local arterial street system consists of 72 route-miles.

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND WALWORTH COUNTY JURISDICTIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN**

The design year 2035 regional transportation plan presents a comprehensive, multi-modal, balanced, and integrated transportation plan which addresses the long range transportation needs and challenges that face the Region. The regional transportation plan contains five plan elements— public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transportation systems management, travel demand management, and arterial streets and highways. The plan considers the forecast growth of the Region to the year 2035 in terms of jobs, population, and households. The plan also considers trends in travel, transportation system use, and transportation system development. Quantitative forecasts of the growth in regional travel and traffic to the year 2035 were prepared, and potential alternative transportation plans were quantitatively tested to evaluate and compare their ability to accommodate the forecast future travel and traffic. The year 2035 regional transportation plan explicitly considered the potential of more efficient land use and expanded public transit, systems management, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and demand management to first alleviate traffic congestion. Highway improvements were only then considered to address any residual traffic congestion. Thus, the regional transportation plan contains an up-to-date functional arterial street and highway system plan for the Region and Walworth County.

The Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan serves as a further refinement of the Walworth County arterial street and highway element of the regional transportation plan. Once a functional plan consisting of recommendations concerning the general location, type, capacity, and service levels of arterial streets and highways has been identified, a jurisdictional highway system plan, as the first step toward plan implementation, specifies the governmental level and unit which should have responsibility for acquiring, constructing, maintaining, and operating each of the existing and proposed facilities which compromise the total physical system. The review and update of the Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan allows for amendment of the regional transportation plan to address changing traffic demands and patterns in Walworth County, to adjust the recommended jurisdictional system to changes in land use and development patterns, and to assure the maintenance of an integrated network of state and county trunk highways as urban development continues within Walworth County.

## **Functional Improvements Completed in Walworth County Since Adoption of the First Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan in 1973**

The functional improvements recommended for the Walworth County arterial street and highway system can be divided into three categories: system preservation, system improvement, and system expansion. System preservation refers to those facilities which are recommended to be resurfaced and reconstructed to their same traffic carrying capacity. System improvement refers to those facilities which are recommended to be widened with additional traffic lanes to provide additional traffic carrying capacity, or other improvement which significantly expands capacity. System expansion refers to those facilities which are recommended as new arterial facilities. Those system improvement and expansion functional highway projects undertaken in Walworth County since the adoption of the original jurisdictional highway system plan in 1973 total about 45.1 miles.

## **Functional Improvements Addressed During the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan Review and Update**

The design year 2035 regional transportation plan was considered and approved by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee as part of the preparation of the year 2035 regional transportation plans. The Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee and Walworth County local governments requested specific functional improvement issues to be further considered, during the current Walworth County jurisdictional highway system planning effort. A summary of the analyses performed for each of the specific functional improvement issues requested for further consideration are provided in Chapter II. The year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan includes changes discussed and agreed upon by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee to the functional improvements recommended in the regional transportation plan within Walworth County.

## **Jurisdictional Highway Transfers Completed in Walworth County Since Adoption of the First Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan in 1973**

Since 1973, approximately 54.8 miles of highway have been added to the state trunk highway system, including both new facilities and the transfer of county or local facilities. During the same time period, about 37.2 miles of state trunk highway were transferred to the County or local units of government.

Thus, the state trunk highway experienced a net increase of about 17.6 miles. During the same time period, about 28.0 miles of facilities were added to the county trunk highway system through the transfer of State or local facilities, including both new facilities and the transfer of State or local facilities. During the same time period, about 31.9 miles of county trunk highways were transferred to the State or local units of government. Thus, the county trunk highway system experienced a net decrease of about 3.9 miles. Finally, about 21.6 miles of facilities were added to the local arterial system through the construction of new facilities or transfer of State or county facilities. During the same time period, about 3.2 miles of local arterials were transferred to the county or the State. Thus, the local arterial system experienced a net increase of about 18.4 miles.

## **JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

For planning purposes, street and highway systems are divided into functional subsystems according to the primary type of service individual facilities provide. Such a classification is essential to sound transportation planning because it identifies the primary function which a particular facility should serve, as well as providing a means for defining travel routes for movement through the total system. Jurisdictional classification criteria are intended to provide an objective and rational basis for the assignment of jurisdictional responsibility for various segments of the existing and proposed arterial street and highway system to the various government levels concerned. The state, county, and local levels of government have direct jurisdictional responsibility for the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of street and highway facilities in Walworth County.

All segments of the total (existing and proposed) arterial street and highway system in Walworth County are proposed to be classified into one of three categories: state trunk; county trunk; and local trunk. The criteria to guide this classification include the trips served, land uses served, and the operational characteristics of the facilities themselves. Trip length ranges which should be served by each facility type were delineated under the trip service criteria. Land use activities to be connected and served by the various arterial subclassifications were recommended under the land use service criteria including, transportation centers, outdoor recreation centers, economic activity centers, and governmental and institutional centers. Criteria relating to operational characteristics were recommended to include consideration of system continuity, facility spacing, traffic volume, traffic mobility, and land access.

In general, state trunk arterials should serve routes of statewide and regionwide importance within the urban or rural areas of the county. These state trunk arterials are intended to connect land uses of

statewide and regionwide significance and provide the highest level of traffic mobility, that is, the highest speeds and lowest degree of land access service. These state trunk arterials should have regional or interregional system continuity. These state trunk arterials should serve the longest trips made in Walworth County, particularly trips through Walworth County and between Walworth County and other counties.

County trunk arterials should include all those routes which are intended to serve land uses of countywide importance and provide an intermediate level of traffic mobility, an intermediate level of land access service, and intercommunity system continuity. These county trunk arterials should in particular serve travel between the communities of Walworth County.

Local trunk arterials should include all those routes within the county which are intended to provide the lowest level of arterial traffic mobility, the highest degree of arterial land access service, and intracommunity system continuity. These local trunk arterials are intended to serve predominately travel within the communities of Walworth County.

## **APPLICATION OF JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

The application of criteria for the jurisdictional classification required analysis of trip lengths to be served by each segment of the total arterial street and highway system, an inventory of existing and proposed land uses to be served by each segment of the arterial street and highway system, and the analysis of the operational characteristics, including traffic volume, of the arterial facilities. This procedure involved four major steps: classification of each arterial facility in terms of trip service criteria, classification of each arterial facility in terms of the land use criteria, classification of each arterial facility in terms of traffic volume (one of the operational characteristics), and the combining and refinement of these two sets of jurisdictional subsystems through the application of the remaining operation characteristics criteria, including system continuity and facility spacing.

By comparing trip service, land use service, and operational characteristics, it was concluded that most of the arterial facilities logically should be classified into one of three jurisdictional categories: state trunk, county trunk, or local trunk. Some judgment was exercised in the case of facilities which did not clearly fall into one category or another.

A preliminary recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan was presented to and approved by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee for public review and comment. Public comment was solicited on the preliminary recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan during a formal public comment period of March 18, 2010, through April 17, 2010. In addition, a public informational meeting/hearing was held on March 25, 2010, to provide information on and solicit public comment for the preliminary recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan. A summary of the public comments received on the preliminary recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan is documented in Chapter IV of this report. Following review and consideration of the public comments received, the Committee approved a final recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan.

## **RECOMMENDED YEAR 2035 WALWORTH COUNTY JURISDICTIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN**

The recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan was approved by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee. The recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan would include approximately 485 miles, or about 32 percent of the expected 1,532-mile year 2035 total street and highway system in Walworth County. The State arterial element of the recommended jurisdictional plan would include 211 miles of arterial facilities, or about 44 percent of the 485 mile planned arterial system. This represents a reduction of 2 miles in the existing state trunk highway system in Walworth County. The county arterial element of the recommended jurisdictional plan would include 190 miles of arterial facilities, or about 39 percent of the 485 mile planned arterial system. This represents a decrease of three miles in the existing county trunk highway system in Walworth County. The local arterial element of the recommended jurisdictional plan would include 84 miles of arterial facilities, or about 17 percent of the 485 mile planned arterial system. This represents an increase of 6 miles in the existing local trunk arterial system in Walworth County.

Of the total 485 miles of planned arterial system in Walworth County, at total of 450 miles would require only preservation, or resurfacing and reconstruction; 8 miles would require improvement, or widening to provide additional traffic lanes; and 27 miles consist of new facilities.

The report identifies the actions required to implement the recommended year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan. The recommended plan actions are listed in the following paragraphs by level of government concerned.

### **Local Level**

#### ***Walworth County Board of Supervisors***

It is recommended that the Walworth County Board, upon recommendation of the Public Works Committee of the Walworth County Board of Supervisors, do the following:

1. Adopt the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan as a guide to future highway facility development within the County.
2. Seek, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and local units of government, the implementation of the jurisdictional transfers with respect to the state trunk, county trunk, and local trunk systems, as recommended in the jurisdictional highway system plan.
3. Proceed with right-of-way acquisition and facility construction as necessary to implement functional improvements recommended under the jurisdictional highway system plan.
4. Establish, with the approval of the municipalities as they are affected, a modified “official” map, pursuant to Section 80.64 of the Wisconsin Statutes, identifying the location and necessary right-of-way of all planned state and county trunk highways.

#### ***City Common Councils, Village Boards, and Town Boards***

It is recommended that the city common councils, village boards, and town boards in Walworth County, upon recommendations, as appropriate, of their plan commissions and boards of public works, do the following:

1. Endorse the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan as a guide to highway system development within their area of jurisdiction. It is further suggested that the respective local plan commissions endorse and integrate the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan into the local comprehensive plans and recommend plan adoption to their local governing body.

2. Act to approve a county official map prepared in conformance with the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan, and establish local official maps including the state, county, and local trunk highway facilities.
3. Proceed with right-of-way acquisition and facility construction to implement the functional improvements recommended under the jurisdictional highway system plan.
4. Seek, in cooperation with the Walworth County Board of Supervisors and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the implementation of the jurisdictional transfers with respect to the state, county, and local trunk systems as recommended in the jurisdictional highway system plan.

### **Regional Level**

#### ***Regional Planning Commission***

It is recommended that the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission act to formally adopt the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan as an integral part of the master plan for the Region, constituting an amendment to the regional transportation plan.

### **State Level**

#### ***Wisconsin Department of Transportation***

It is recommended that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation do the following:

1. Endorse and integrate the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan into the state long-range highway system plan.
2. Seek, in cooperation with the Walworth County Board of Supervisors and appropriate local officials, the implementation of the jurisdictional transfers with respect to the state trunk, county trunk, and local trunk systems, as recommended in the jurisdictional highway system plan.
3. Proceed with right-of-way acquisition and facility construction to implement the functional improvements recommended under the jurisdictional highway system plan.

**Federal Level**

***U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration***

It is recommended that the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration acknowledge the recommended jurisdictional highway system plan for Walworth County.

**CONCLUSION**

Adoption and implementation of the year 2035 Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan recommended in this report would provide the County with an integrated highway transportation system which will effectively serve the existing, and promote a desirable future, land use pattern; meet the anticipated future travel demand at an adequate level of service; abate traffic congestion; reduce travel time and costs between component parts of the County and the Region; and reduce accident exposure. It would serve to concentrate appropriate resources and capabilities on corresponding areas of need, assuring a more effective use of the total public resources in the provision of highway transportation, and provide a sound basis for the establishment of long-range fiscal policies and for the systematic programming of arterial street and highway improvements within Walworth County. It would also provide a basis for the more efficient planning and design of the total arterial street and highway system, for the efficient multi-jurisdictional management of that system, and for the attainment of intergovernmental coordination necessary to the cooperative development of the system. Finally, it should provide a more equitable distribution of highway improvement, maintenance, and operation costs among the various levels and agencies of government concerned.

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