OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA
of a meeting of the County Board, Committee, Agency, Corporation, or Sub-Unit thereof,

COUNTY OF MARATHON
WAUSAU, WI 54403

# MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

Date & Time of Meeting: **Tuesday, November 10th, 2026, at 2:00pm**

Meeting Location: **Wisconsin Room, 1000 Lake View Drive, Wausau, WI 54403**

**Planning Commission Members:** Duane Gau – Chair, Allen Opall (Designee, Gaylene Rhoden – Vice Chair), Dan Helgeson, Judith Hase, Steve Hagman, Doug Diny, Tim Buttke, Matt Lee Baer, David Phelps, Mark Maloney, Dan Joling, Kregg Hoehn, Tom Helbach, Matthew Bronson

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. Instead of in person attendance, Metropolitan Planning Commission and the public may attend this meeting by telephone and video conference. **Persons wishing to attend the meeting virtually may call into the telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

**PHONE NUMBER:** 1-408-418-9388

**ACCESS CODE:** 2488 427 8963

**Please Note:** If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number" press the **#** symbol. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference.

When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Approval of Minutes: October 20th, 2026, MPO Planning Commission Meeting**
4. **Policy Issues, Discussion, and Possible Commission Action**
5. **Educational Presentations and Commission Discussion**
   A. SS4A Update
   B. LRTP
      a. Traffic Model Chapter
      b. Recommendations Chapter
      c. Draft Review & Comment Period
      d. Meeting Date for Adoption (Thursday, January 7th or Monday, January 11th, 2027)
6. **Next Meeting Date & Time, Announcements, and Future Agenda Items**
   A. Next Meeting Date and Time – Tuesday, December 8th, 2026, at 2:00 PM.
   B. Future Agenda Items –LRTP, Public Participation Plan Update
7. **Adjournment**

*Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or email countyclerk@marathoncounty.gov one business day before the meeting.*

**EMAILED TO:** Courthouse, WDH, City Pages, and other Media Groups
**EMAILED BY:** MG
**DATE:** 11/03/2026
**EMAIL TIME:** 4:30pm

**SIGNED:** Jamie Miskimins
**PRESIDING OFFICER OR DESIGNEE**

**NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:**
**BY:** _____
**DATE & TIME:** _____

**MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**
**October 20th, 2026**

**Meeting Attendance:**
Chairperson Duane Gau, Sydney Eberhardy, Michael Wodalski, Dave Meurett (WisDOT), Jeff Gates, Ryan VanDeWalle, Greg Ulman, Jared Grande, Mark Thuot, Jeremy Kloss (WisDOT), MaKayla Galecki (Wausau MPO), Laurie Miskimins (Wausau MPO)

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
   In the presence of a quorum, with the agenda being properly signed and posted, the meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gau at 2:03 p.m. in the Wisconsin Room, 1000 Lake View Drive, Wausau, WI 54403 and virtually via Webex.
2. **Public Comment**

   Discussion: No public comment given or received.

3. **Approval of Minutes: September 11th, 2026, MPO Planning Commission Meeting**

   **Action: Motion/Second by Gates/Wodalski to approve September 11th, 2026, the MPO Planning Commission Minutes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.**

4. **Policy Issues, Discussion, and Possible Commission Action**

   A. NEVI TIP Amendment

   Discussion: Miskimins provided a brief overview of the project. Jeremy Kloss, a representative of the Department of Transportation (DOT), provided additional details and discussion regarding the project. Projects funded through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program require a local match from the applying entity. For this project, the applicant and matching entity is Universal EV LLC.

   **Action: Motion/Second by Thuot/Vandewalle to approve the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment as presented. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.**

   B. 2027-2030 Draft TIP Plan Adoption

   Discussion: Miskimins briefed the group on the draft and highlighted several revisions, including updates to the TIP Table 1 project extents, amendments to the TIP amendment procedures, and the addition of maps. Staff requested that members review the draft and bring any comments or suggested revisions to the next meeting. Funding amounts and percentage changes were also reviewed. The TIP Draft Plan was advertised, and an open house was held on October 5. No public comments were received.

   **Action: Motion/Second by Ulman/Gau to approve the 2027-2030 Draft TIP Plan as presented. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.**

   C. 2027 Draft UPWP Adoption

Discussion: Miskimins provided an overview of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and its purpose. She reviewed several activities included in the UPWP, such as updates to the bicycle and pedestrian plan, potential work associated with the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program if funding is awarded, and transportation planning activities related to the development of the new transportation plan.

**Action: Motion/Second by Thuot/Wodalski to approve the 2027 Draft UPWP as presented. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.**

## 5. Educational Presentations and Commission Discussion

A. LRTP

Discussion: Miskimins presented an overview of the travel demand model (TDM) data received from WisDOT. The analysis identified two locations operating at Level of Service (LOS) D and two locations approaching LOS D; however, 30-year population projections indicate a population decline, resulting in no projected LOS D concerns within the MPO planning area. MPO and DOT staff discussed using a slight-growth model that maintains a consistent growth rate and will use the TDM to evaluate projects on the illustrative project list. Updated mapping from WisDOT is expected next week and will be shared at the November meeting. During discussion, V. Rib Mountain noted that it appeared areas of local significance were not identified. DOT staff clarified that the model does not capture some small-scale infrastructure improvements. Questions were raised on the timing of which data was collected to produce the model, and it was explained that LOS analyses are typically based on peak traffic periods. MPO staff will follow up with the Village of Rib Mountain regarding current LOS conditions, and the recommendations section may be revised as additional information becomes available. It was requested that the group look through and bring notes to the next meeting for the recommendations chapter.

## 6. Next Meeting Date & Time, Announcements, and Future Agenda Items

A. Next Meeting Date and Time – Tuesday, November 10, 2 pm, Duane may be unavailable
B. Future Agenda Items –Draft TIP, LRTP (TDM), City of Wausau NHS changes

## 7. Adjournment

**Action: There being no further business before the members, Motion/Second by Vandewalle/Ulman to adjourn the meeting of the Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission at 2:32pm Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.**

Submitted by:

Laurie Miskimins, Wausau MPO Director

Wausau MPO

# Chapter 5 - Traffic Model

The regional traffic model provides an examination of the current system of functionally classified roads as well as a look into the future to help plan for difficulties that could be present with future growth patterns. The traffic model data includes number of households, employment data broken into job type, and number of school age children. These are divided into defined areas called Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) and the model calculates the number and type of trips between each zone. By applying those numbers to the road network an estimate of the volume is made and referenced against the road type (2-lane, turn lanes, stop signs, etc.) and level of service is estimated.

This model measures the delay in travel time as a function of the roadway performance called Level of Service (LOS). This was first used by the 2016 LRTP to replace the previous capacity model. LOS calculates how well the roadway design moves traffic through the given infrastructure. It should be noted that no predictive model is perfect or definite but rather provide a glimpse at a possible future. The model runs are performed by WisDOT in concert with the MPO staff, and input from local agencies about future development plans.

The regional traffic model is a macro-level analysis. Municipal or micro-level traffic studies often reveal issues that a macro, state level traffic model cannot capture. Because the regional model operates at a large scale and focuses on average weekday traffic, it smooths out localized fluctuations, site-specific congestion patterns, and operational details that smaller studies depend on. As a result, local agency observations or studies may identify additional operational issues, development trends, safety concerns, or capacity constraints that are not fully captured by the regional travel demand model. These observations and studies provide important context for interpreting model results and future scenario options to demonstrate in the regional model. Both the regional model outputs and local knowledge are also important to consider when considering project prioritization and recommendations presented in Chapter 6.

## Base Year Model -2022

The base year model uses 2022 socioeconomic data for Marathon County and the corresponding job and household estimates. Some minor changes, removal and addition of planned land use projects, adjustment of jobs numbers, were added to the base year information based on input from MPO staff and local agency staff. See Map X-X.

### Areas of interest – 2022 Base Model

Two areas showed concern at level of service D within the base model. They are:

- STH 153 (Main St) between 4th St and Old Hwy 51 in Mosinee
- Bridge Street over the Wisconsin River section

Two other areas in the model are approaching level of service D within the base model:

- W Thomas St between S 3rd Ave and Cleveland Ave
- Bus 51 (Grand Ave) between CTH N (Townline Rd) and Thomas St

INSERT MAPS AND TABLES FOR THESE FOUR SEGMENTS

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## Future Year Base Models -2055

The future year model is a 30-year projection which is best used to try and anticipate land use changes that will impact future housing and industry, and anticipated population changes. Input was sought from MPO communities to inform this future year update. New population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration are predicting population growth to be relatively flat through 2030, then experiencing a slight decline through 2050. Year to year growth in the area has shown a very small increase, at about .20 percent, over the last few years. As such, the MPO asked WisDOT to create two future year models:

- **State Projected Change Model:** Future TAZs are shown exactly as predicted based on DOA population projections, meaning some TAZs show declines in population and household size values. As no areas show deficiency in this future year model, no map was created.
- **Stabilized Growth Model:** Future TAZs with no or declining growth are set at 2026 levels. Future TAZs projecting growth are kept as predicted. INSERT MAP

### Areas of interest – 2055 State Projected Change Model

In this future year model, due to the projected declines in growth, there are no roadway segments performing below level of service (LOS) D in the model.

### Areas of interest – 2055 Stabilized Growth Model

In this future year model, due to slight growth in some TAZs and stabilized household populations in others, STH 153 (Main St) between 4th Street and Old Hwy 51 in Mosinee and Bridge Street over the Wisconsin River section, remain at LOS D.

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# TRAFFIC MODEL SCENARIOS - FUTURE POTENTIAL PROJECTS

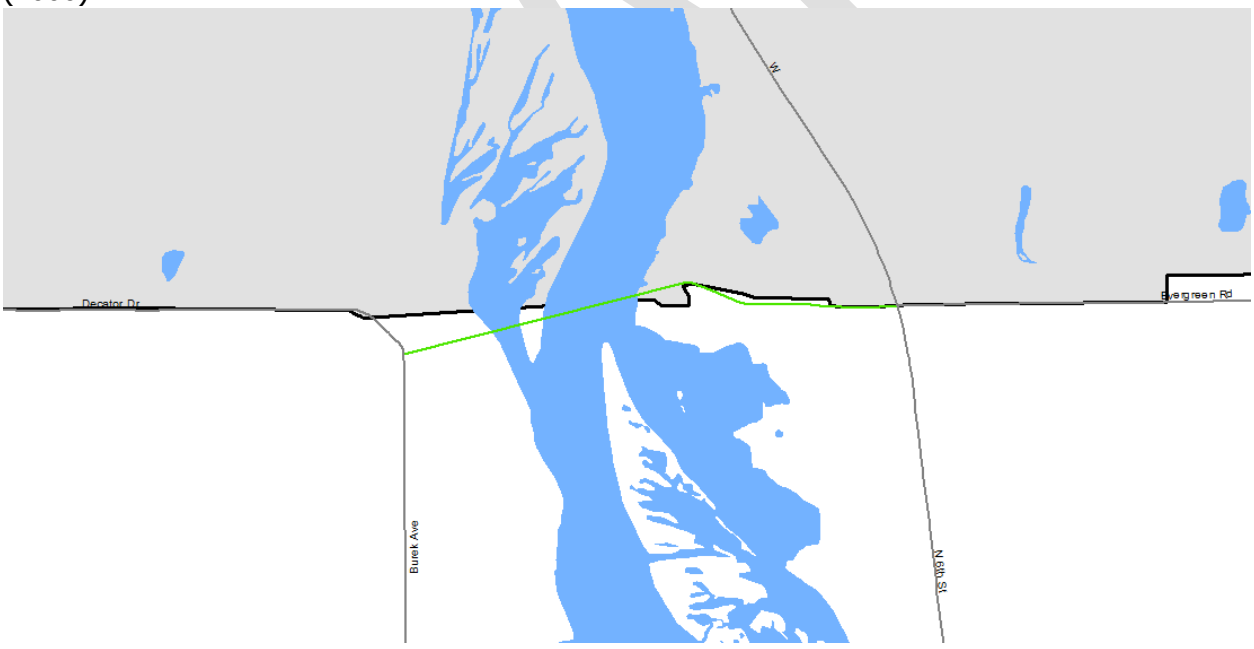
Projects with regional significance and/or the potential to address transportation deficiencies identified in the Future Year- 2055 Stabilized Growth Model were selected by the MPO Planning Commission for further evaluation. MPO staff collaborated with WisDOT staff to refine each project concept and assess its impacts through the travel demand model. A summary of the projects evaluated, and the modeling results, is provided below.

None of the projects analyzed were found to have significant adverse impacts on the surrounding transportation network. Scenarios 1 and 2 improved traffic operations on the Bridge Street crossing of the Wisconsin River, increasing the Level of Service (LOS) from D to C. While this represents a measurable improvement, the overall benefit was relatively modest. The remaining scenarios did not improve Level of Service at any of the roadway segments identified as deficient in the 2055 Stabilized Growth Model.

## BRIDGES

1. Evergreen/Decatur:

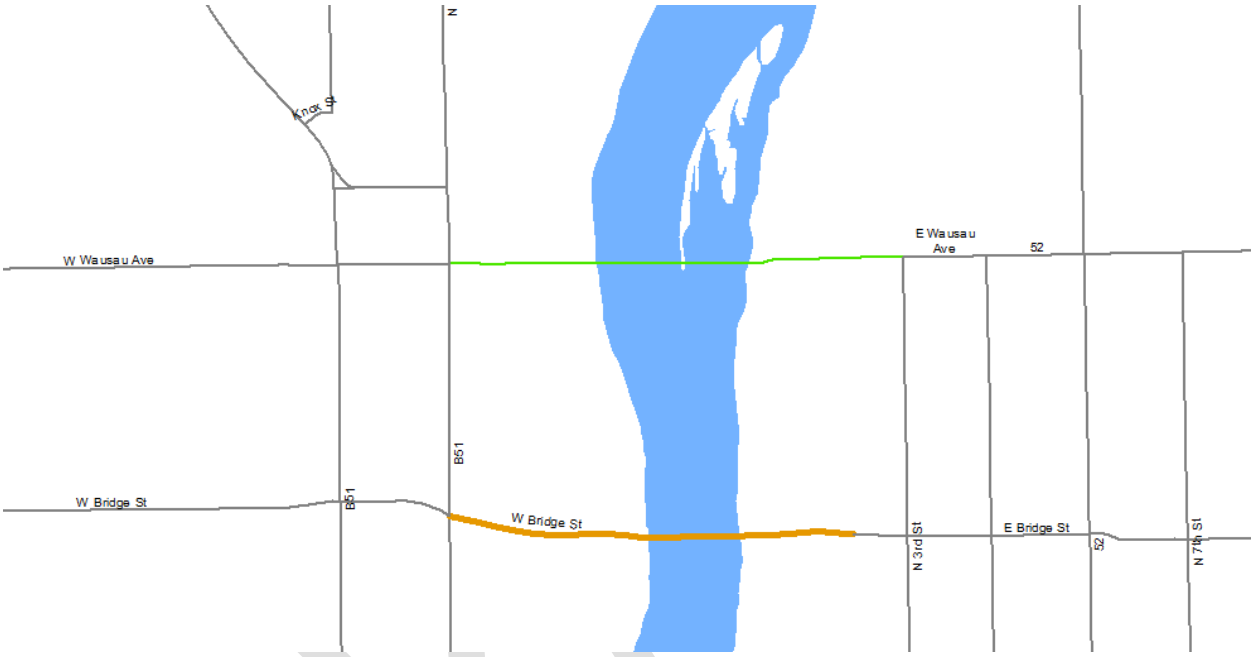
Bridge crossing the Wisconsin River in the City of Wausau and Village of Maine at Evergreen and Decatur. This project has been envisioned as an alternative to CTH WW and Bridge Street while serving the regional circulation system as outlined in the Local Arterial Circulation Plan (2000).




| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bridge | Evergreen/Decatur | | | | | | |
| | | Bridge St Bridge | 24,697 | D | 25,450 | D | 23,297 | ABC |

2. Wausau Ave:

Bridge crossing the Wisconsin River in the City of Wausau at Wausau Avenue. One of a few possible crossings between Bridge Street and Evergreen that could relieve traffic volumes on Bridge Street. It should be noted that this model did not optimize the road network on either side of the bridge. A more detailed analysis would likely extend from 6th Street to 3rd Avenue.

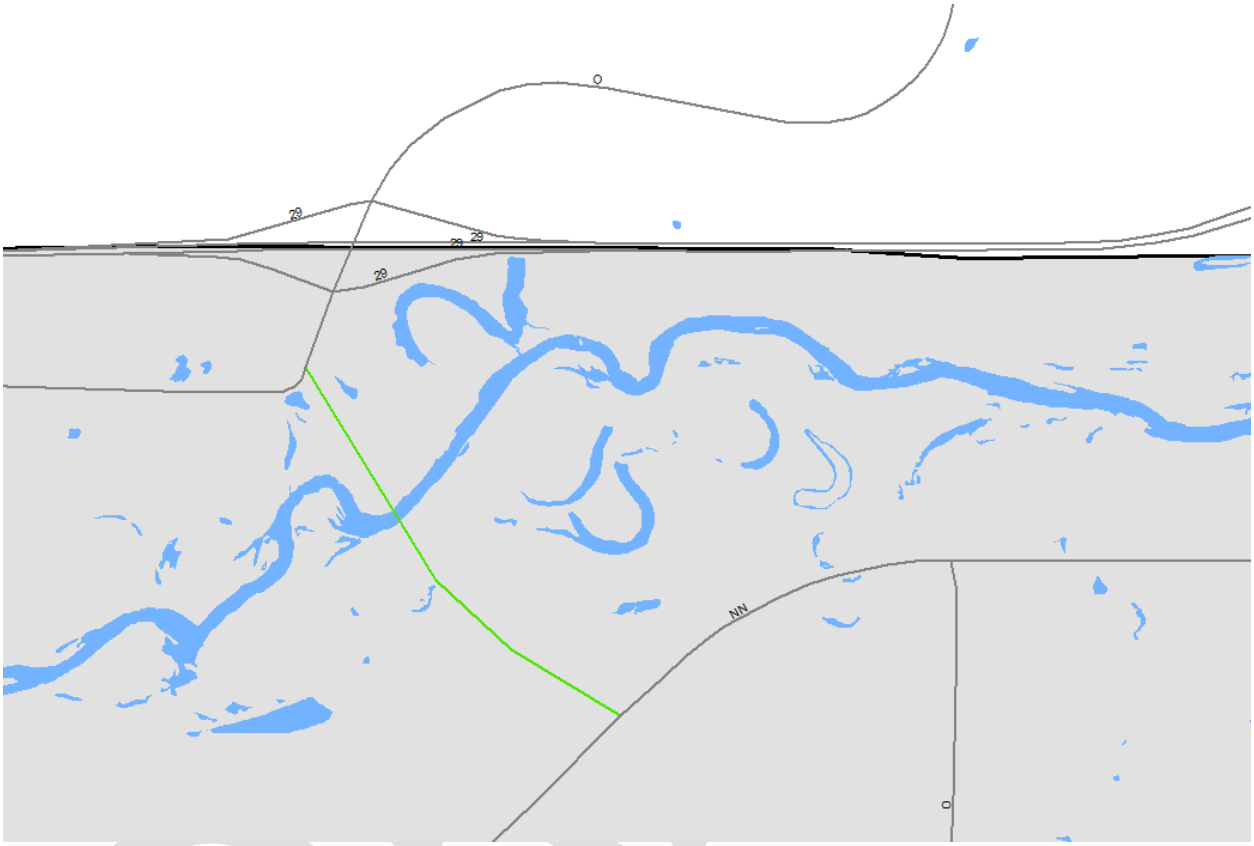



| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Bridge | Wausau Ave | | | | | | |
| | | Bridge St Bridge | 24,697 | D | 25,450 | D | 21,045 | ABC |

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3. County Highway O:

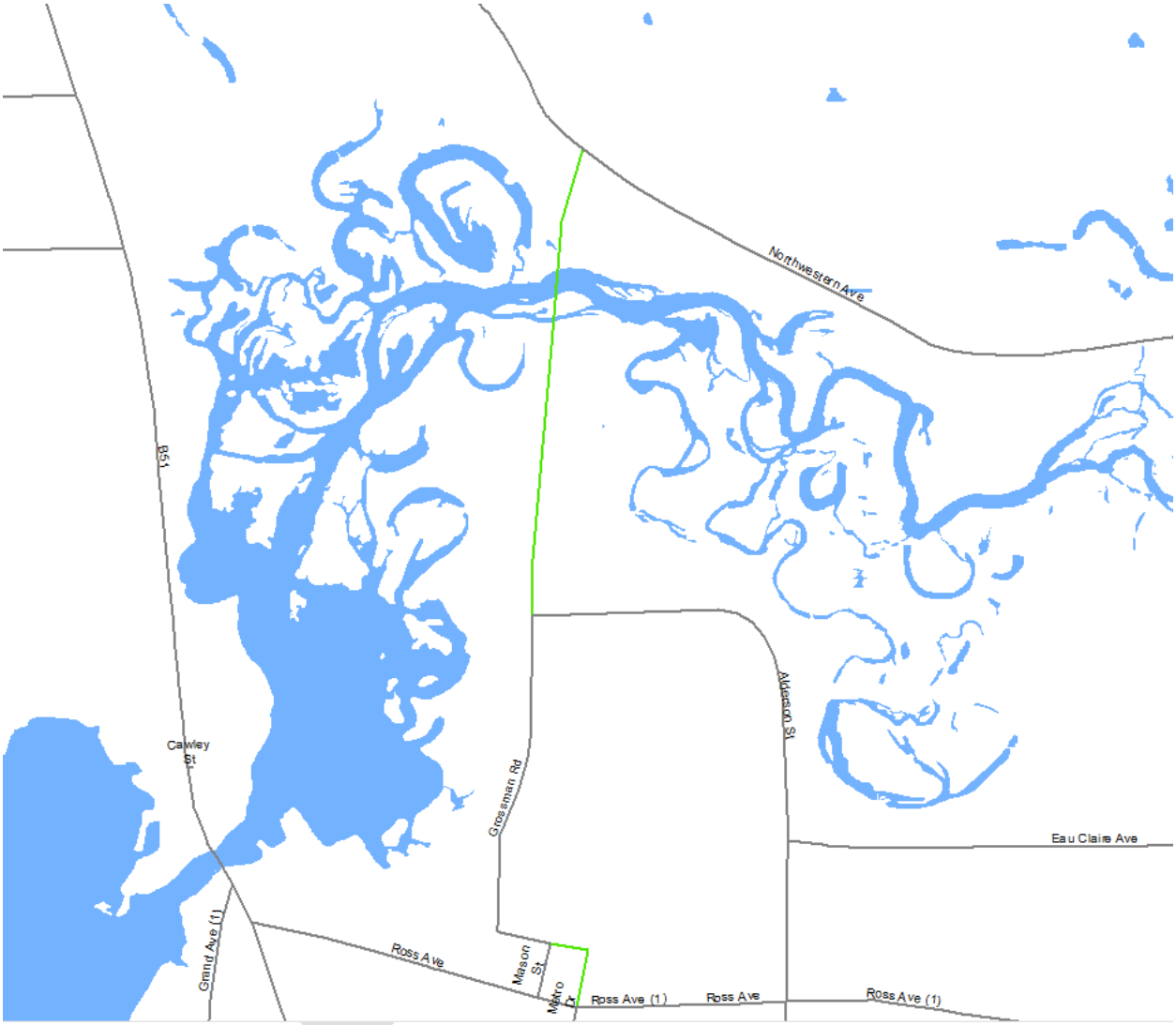
This project would extend the southern end of the CTH O interchange across the Rib River and intersect with CTH NN. This was designed to examine the effectiveness of a bridge between Marathon City and CTH R. Although the model shows an access road along Hwy 29, this link carried no traffic volume and had no impact on the results.




| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Bridge | CTH O Bridge | - | - | - | - | 791 | ABC |
| | | CTH NN east | 762 | ABC | 359 | ABC | 965 | ABC |
| | | CTH NN west | 354 | ABC | 359 | ABC | 212 | ABC |
| | | STH 107 Overpass | 3899 | ABC | 3468 | ABC | 1898 | ABC |
| | | CTH R Bridge | 1543 | ABC | 1404 | ABC | 1513 | ABC |
| | | CTH O north | xxx | ABC | 602 | ABC | 757 | ABC |

4. Grossman Bridge:

This project would extend Grossman Drive north from the Schofield industrial park, across the Eau Claire River and connect with Northwestern Avenue. This was designed to serve as an alternative to Grand Ave/Bus 51. It should be noted the streets in the industrial park connecting to Metro Dr were slightly altered in the model however a more significant change is likely needed for a more detailed analysis.




| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Bridge | Grossman Dr | - | - | - | - | 5733 | ABC |
| | | BUS 51 Bridge | 19,621 | ABC | 19,474 | ABC | 19,022 | ABC |
| | | Northwestern Ave east | 3795 | ABC | 3560 | ABC | 6866 | ABC |
| | | Metro Dr | 2479 | ABC | 2384 | ABC | 2675 | ABC |

5. Military Road:

This project extends Military Road to the west, across the Wisconsin River, into Foxglove Road. This bridge could be an alternate to Hwy 29 between Rothschild and Rib Mountain. This scenario only reflects the addition of a bridge, further changes are modeled in scenario #11.

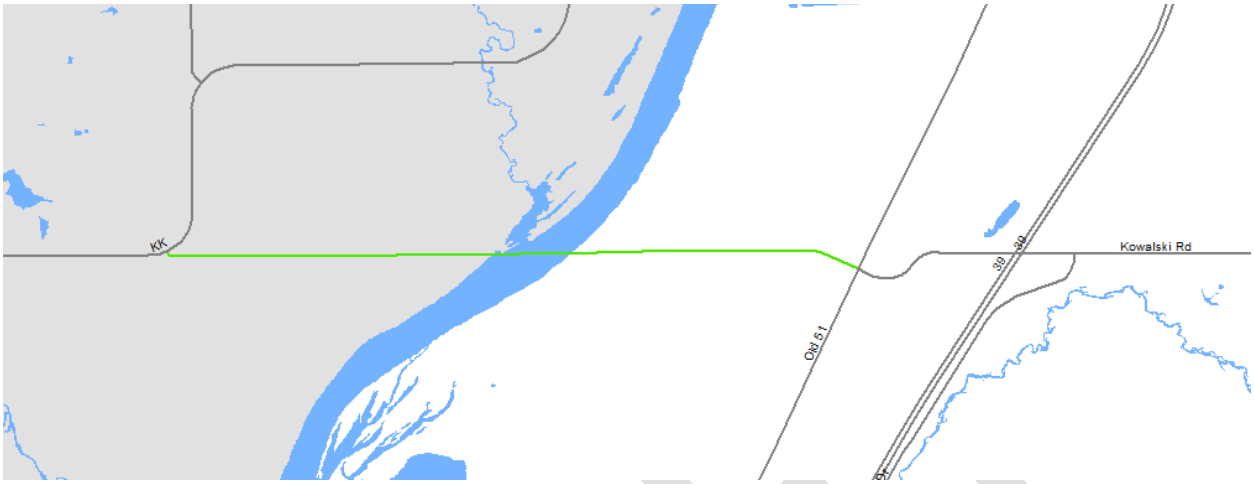



| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Bridge | Military Rd Bridge | - | - | - | - | 5121 | ABC |
| | | Military Rd east Bus 51 | 4005 | ABC | 3613 | ABC | 4444 | ABC |
| | | Foxglove Rd | 42 | ABC | 39 | ABC | 3057 | ABC |
| | | Hwy 29 WB on ramp | 8599 | ABC | 8633 | ABC | 8641 | ABC |
| | | Bus 51 South | 10,662 | ABC | 10,600 | ABC | 10,434 | ABC |

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6. Gardner Park Road:

This project is another likely crossing point of the Wisconsin River in the southern MPO area. This would provide an alternate to STH 153 in Mosinee or possibly use of I-39. This scenario only reflects the addition of a bridge, further changes are modeled in scenario #12.



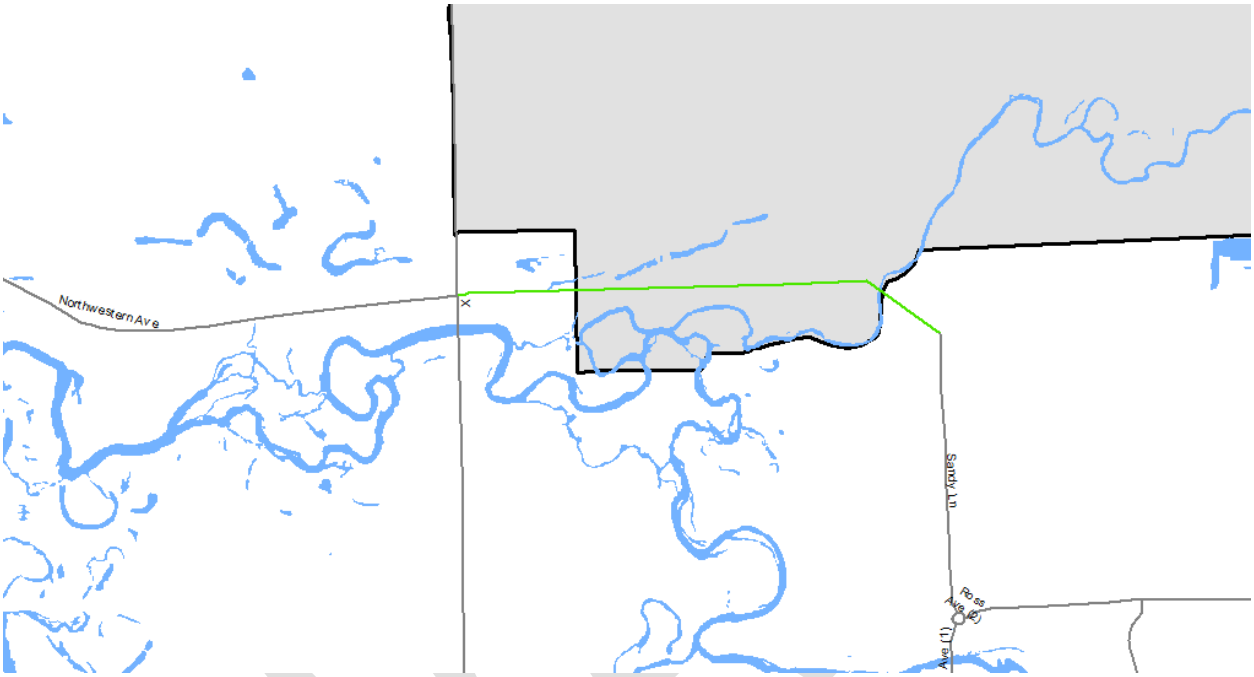

| Project # | | | 2022 Base Volume | LOS | 2055 SG Future Volume | LOS | Scenario Volume | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Bridge | Gardner Park | - | - | - | - | 2997 | ABC |
| | | CTH KK | 1211 | ABC | 1268 | ABC | 506 | ABC |
| | | Kowalski | 1417 | ABC | 1509 | ABC | 1880 | ABC |
| | | Old 51 south | 3733 | ABC | 4245 | ABC | 4681 | ABC |
| | | Old 51 north | 1934 | ABC | 2474 | ABC | 3479 | ABC |
| | | STH 153 Bridge – Mosinee | 15618 | D | 15808 | D | 15891 | D |

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# ROADS

7. Northwestern Avenue Extension:

This project extends Northwestern Avenue in Weston to the east from CTH X to Sandy Lane. This road would cross the Eau Claire River and provide an alternate to Ross Avenue for the residential neighborhood.




| Project # | | | Base Vol | LOS | Future Vol | LOS | Scenario Vol | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Road | Northwestern Ave East | - | - | - | - | 3993 | ABC |
| | | Ross Ave south of round | 6465 | ABC | 6391 | ABC | 7047 | ABC |
| | | Camp Phillips north of Ross | 5062 | ABC | 4844 | ABC | 3894 | ABC |
| | | Northwestern Ave west of Camp Phillips | 4470 | ABC | 4194 | ABC | 5459 | ABC |

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## INTERCHANGE

8. Kowalski Interchange:

This project would provide access to and from I-39 to Kowalski Road in the Village of Kronenwetter. Although modeled as a standard diamond interchange it is likely the ramps would have a different configuration.

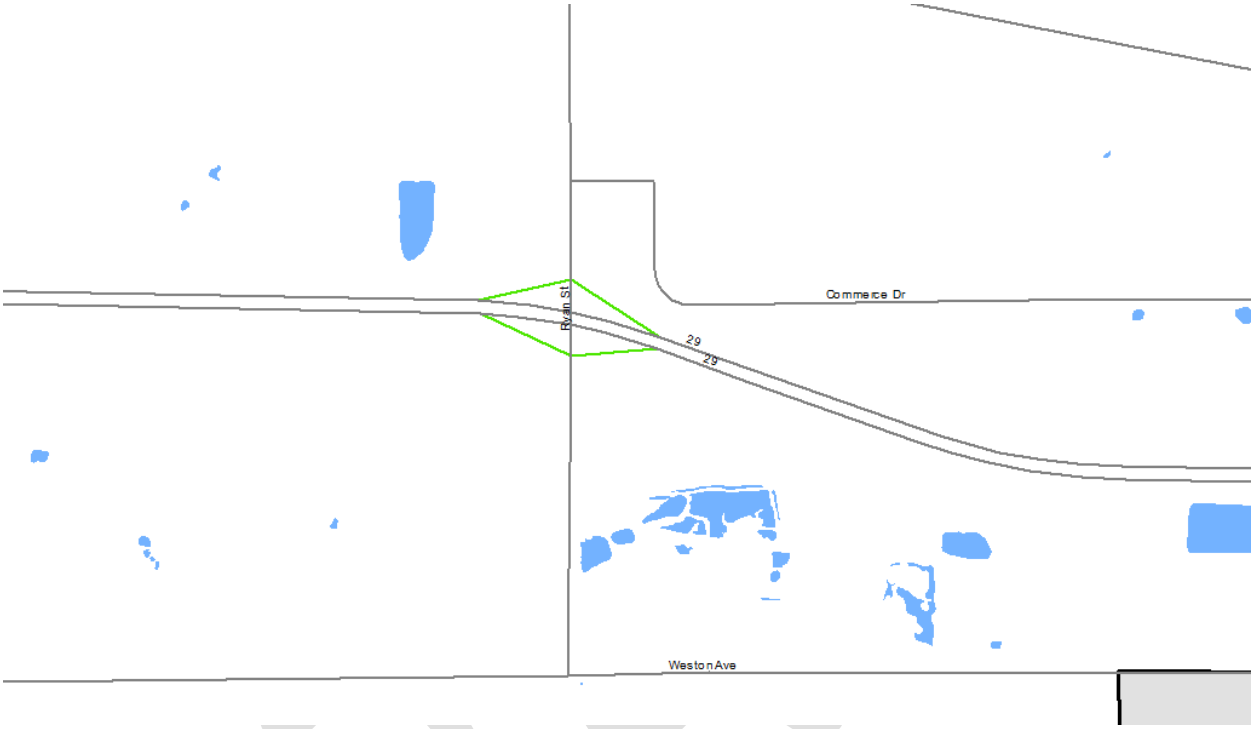



| Project # | | Base Vol | LOS | Future Vol | LOS | Scenario Vol | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Kowalski Interchange | - | - | - | - | 16267 | ABC |
| | Ramps | - | - | - | - | 2070 - 2918 | ABC |
| | Kowalski & Tower Dr | 3809 | ABC | 4168 | ABC | 8624 | ABC |
| | Old 51 south | 3733 | ABC | 4245 | ABC | 2604 | ABC |
| | Old 51 north | 1934 | ABC | 2474 | ABC | 1122 | ABC |
| | CTH XX | 3780 | ABC | 4092 | ABC | 3254 | ABC |
| | CTH X | 2634 | ABC | 3312 | ABC | 2424 | ABC |

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9. Ryan Street Interchange with Hwy 29:

This project adds a diamond interchange at Ryan Street in Weston. This would provide more immediate access to the industrial park and future developments south of Hwy 29.

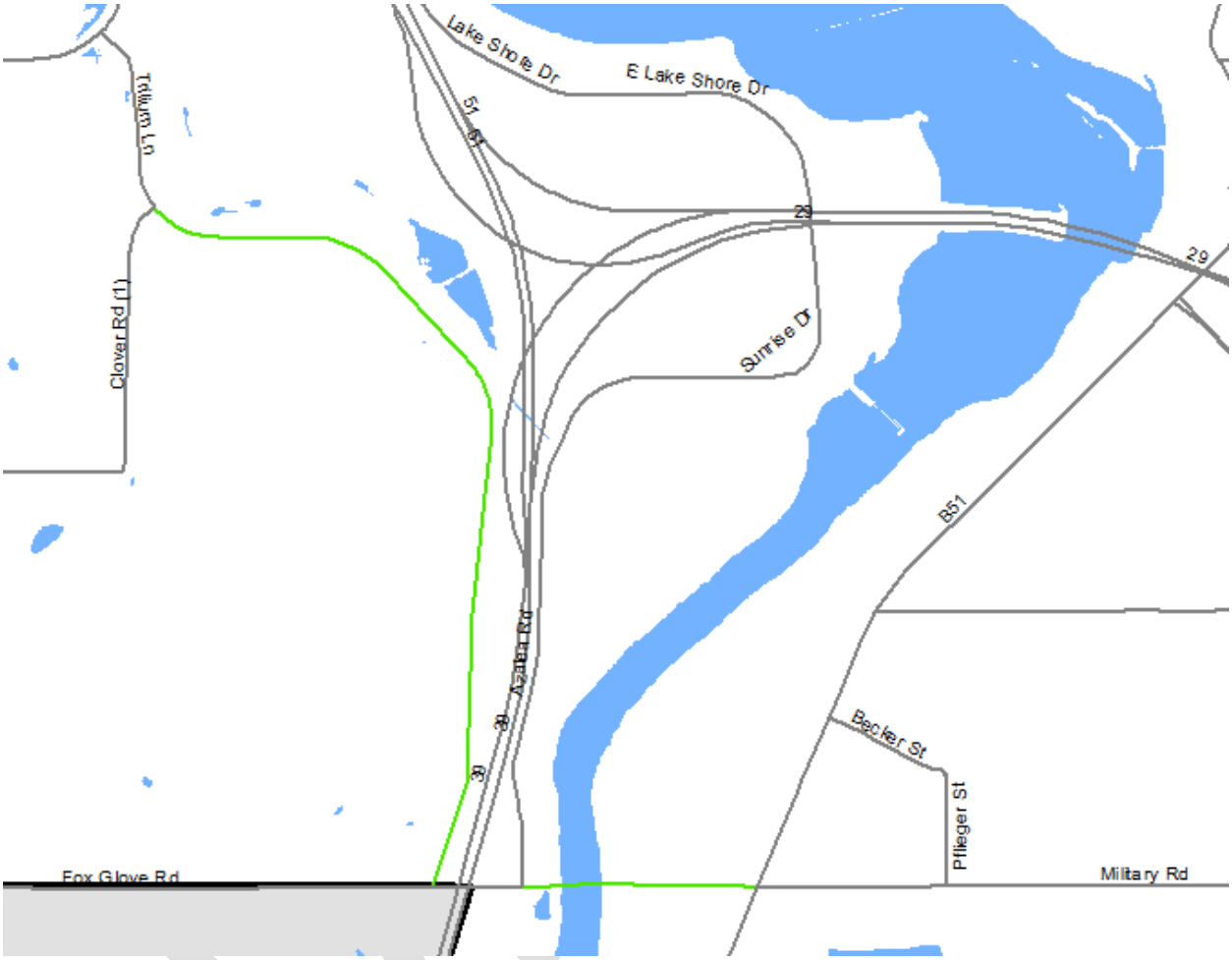



| Project # | | Base Vol | LOS | Future Vol | LOS | Scenario Vol | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Ryan St Interchange | 9173 | ABC | 9336 | ABC | 9219 | ABC |
| | East off ramp | - | - | - | - | 2503 | ABC |
| | West on ramp | - | - | - | - | 2841 | ABC |
| | Ryan St south | 1140 | ABC | 1148 | ABC | 349 | ABC |
| | Ryan St north | 1140 | ABC | 1148 | ABC | 5716 | ABC |

## COMBINED

10. Military Road and Trillium Extension:

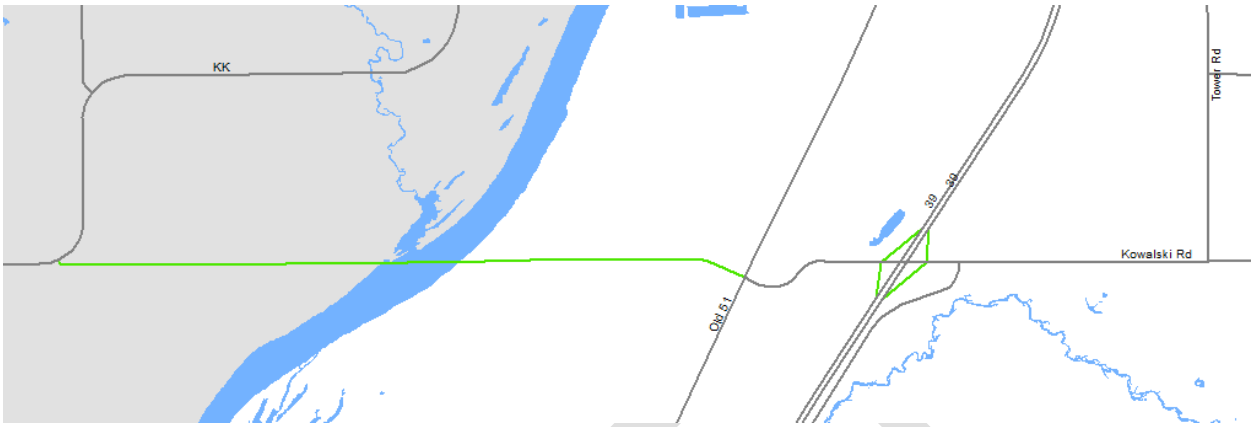
This scenario is designed to measure the effect of creating a more direct route from Rothschild to Rib Mountain Drive by extending Trillium Lane in the path of the current multi-use trail.




| | | Base Vol | LOS | Future Vol | LOS | Scenario Vol | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Military Bridge | - | - | - | - | 6982 | ABC |
| | Trillium Lane ext. | - | - | - | - | 4205 | ABC |
| | Military east of Bus 51 | 4005 | ABC | 3613 | ABC | 5033 | ABC |
| | Foxglove Rd | 42 | ABC | 39 | ABC | 5786 | ABC |
| | Hwy 29 WB on ramp | 2180 | ABC | 2098 | ABC | 2426 | ABC |
| | Bus 51 South | 10662 | ABC | 10600 | ABC | 9480 | ABC |

## 11. Gardner Park Bridge and Kowalski Interchange:

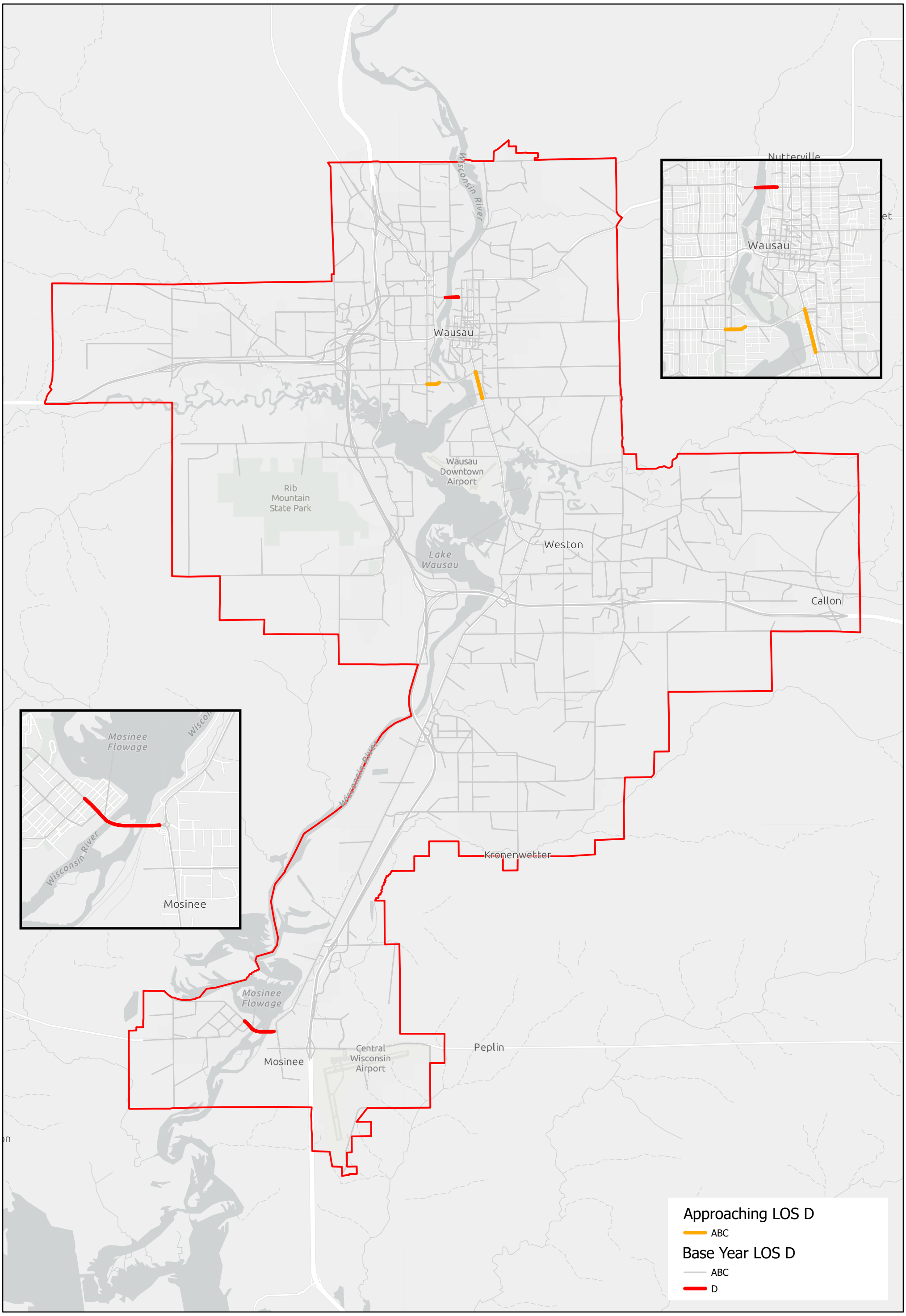
This scenario is designed to measure the effect of both the I-39 interchange and a bridge over the Wisconsin River.




| | | Base Vol | LOS | Future Vol | LOS | Scenario Vol | LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Gardner Bridge and Interchange | | | | | | |
| | Ramps | - | - | - | - | 2350-3071 | ABC |
| | Kowalski & Tower Dr | 3809 | ABC | 4168 | ABC | 8929 | ABC |
| | Old 51 south | 3733 | ABC | 4245 | ABC | 2707 | ABC |
| | Old 51 north | 1934 | ABC | 2474 | ABC | 1535 | ABC |
| | CTH XX | 3780 | ABC | 4092 | ABC | 3224 | ABC |
| | CTH X | 2634 | ABC | 3312 | ABC | 2442 | ABC |
| | Mosinee Bridge | 15618 | D | 15808 | D | 16045 | D |
| | CTH KK North | 1211 | ABC | 1268 | ABC | 528 | ABC |
| | CTH KK South | 1211 | ABC | 1268 | ABC | 2341 | ABC |

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# Wausau MPO - Traffic Model - LOS D & Approaching LOS D




Source: Wausau MPO, WisDOT

Map Created October 2026

# CHAPTER 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS

## PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the recommendations that will guide the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in shaping a safe, efficient, and future-ready regional transportation system. These recommendations are designed to help the MPO achieve the goals and objectives identified in Chapter 2, address emerging and potential level-of-service deficiencies, and ensure that the transportation network continues to support the quality of life and economic vitality of the region.

The strategies and actions presented in this chapter draw heavily from the numerous plans and studies previously completed for the metropolitan area. Each of those documents contains its own set of goals, analyses, and recommendations tailored to specific modes, corridors, and community needs.

Over the next year, the federal landscape for transportation planning may evolve significantly with the anticipated reauthorization of national surface transportation programs. These changes could influence MPO priorities, programs, funding sources, and policies, shaping the opportunities available to communities throughout the region. As such, these recommendations are intended to provide both direction and flexibility, ensuring the region remains well-positioned to adapt to new requirements, leverage future funding opportunities, and continue to improve the transportation system for all users.

## ROADWAY SYSTEM

### Transportation System Management

Some of the Transportation System Management measures to be taken to improve how traffic flows at certain locations to increase safety and efficiency are listed below:

- Traffic Signals
- One-way conversions
- Two-way conversions
- Removal of on-street parking
- Road Diets
- Roundabouts
- Traffic and turn movement restrictions

### Transportation Demand Management

Some of the Transportation Demand Management measures to be taken to reduce the traffic volumes at specific times or periods of the day are:

- Flexible employee work hours
- Improvement or expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Examining the use of microtransit to certain job centers in the region

## TRANSIT SYSTEM

Metro Ride, the area transit system, provides fixed route service within Wausau city limits providing over 400,000 rides per year. Ridership faced a steep decline during COVID but has started to recover over the past few years. Reductions in funding in recent years, along with the service area be limited to the City of Wausau, continue to present challenges for the transit system.

The 2022 Transit Development Plan survey, building on a broader survey done in 2017, indicated most citizens were in favor of developing transit routes in their communities, expanding beyond the City of Wausau, and expanding service hours. A sub-group of the MPO Planning Commission met in 2024 and early 2025 to discuss expansion interest. While the group discussed and agreed there was a community desire, the scenarios as presented in the 2022 TDP were not considered financially feasible for surrounding communities at this time.

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Public transit budgets are dependent upon public funding. As with many transit systems across America today, sustaining sufficient funding from Federal, state, and local sources is a primary concern for Metro Ride and any of the MPO communities that would want to consider transit service. While a significant portion of the Metro Ride operating and capital budgets come from the Federal Transit Administration, revenue is necessary from passenger fares, and state and local sources to make transit service viable to provide and efficient to use. In order for those communities to agree to provide transit services in the future a new and stable funding source needs to be established.

Marathon County and Metro Ride have received funding to update the TDP in 2027. The update is expected to examine opportunities for expanding on-demand microtransit, improving connections to employment centers, and enhancing service options for specialized populations. These will likely serve as the primary focus areas of the plan update.

For transit to be a regional service, it means making and improving the connections with the neighboring communities, most specifically, the Villages of Weston and Rothschild, City of Schofield, and the Village of Rib Mountain. The creation of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) remains an excellent organizational strategy for developing a stable funding source. Formation of an RTA would require a change in state legislation, or an appeal to make an exception. RTAs have been a contentious issue in Wisconsin but offers the best solution for developing both a sustainable plan as well as a truly regional system. The RTA would create the ability to have new funding streams and then a financially solid regional transit system. The success of an RTA could only happen if there is a great deal of planning and discussion amongst the area communities and those who are dependent on the bus service as their sole means of mobility.

## ELDERLY AND DISABLED SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION

Marathon County administers the Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation program, funded almost completely with the 85.21 Grant program from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. In Marathon County, the 85.21 program provides rides to those that are aged 60 and over and disabled individuals at any age. Funding is prioritized for medical, nutrition, and employment purpose trips.

Currently, Metro Ride provides ADA compatible rides to all that qualify, only in the City of Wausau, and within ¾ of a mile of a fixed route. North Central Health Care (NCHC) provides rides throughout the whole county. The elderly and disabled transportation program has seen slight reductions in ridership over the last few years. Only having fixed-route transit service in the City of Wausau and not the entire metropolitan area has impacted Metro Ride's ability to develop this program to its full potential. For NCHC the decline is a combination of some services now being served by other agencies, and a reduction in volunteer drivers to serve client needs, resulting in the client finding another source of transportation.

Through community surveys and planning efforts, the general sense is there is unmet demand in the region. The region's population continues to age, with a growing proportion of residents entering their senior years. As more individuals choose to age in place the need for reliable,

accessible transportation increases. These individuals also often live longer with chronic conditions or disabilities and will increasingly need transportation for medical appointments, social engagement, nutrition access, and independent living. Veterans and unhoused or housing insecure individuals have also been identified as groups in need of more transportation choices. Veterans needing transportation for medical services throughout the state, or even in the Twin Cities, has been another common need expressed.

Volunteer drivers, that have often served both government and non-profit agencies in providing transportation to specialized populations, are also on the decline. This is largely due to state statutes that allow insurance companies to reclassify a volunteer driver's policy for commercial use if they receive any kind of reimbursement.

Further examination to better define the unmet needs, design affordable and accessible services, and identify funding sources will be needed over the next few years.

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

This plan supports the recommendations of the current Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, updated in 2021. The plan will be updated in 2028. The current plan identifies four common and practical strategies that remain the focus of the MPO:

1. Modify roadways to utilize existing pavement. These may be in the form of striping existing pavement, reconfiguring on-street parking, and lane road diets.
2. Enhance suitable bicycle routes with wayfinding and regulatory signs and markings.
3. Coordinate bikeway, path, and sidewalk implementation with upcoming roadway projects.
4. Prioritize stand-alone projects that provide high-value regional connections.

The plan has its own list of recommendations based on the concept of Near-Term and Build-Out situations. The Near-Term projects are relatively easy to implement right away over the next few years. The Build-Out projects are typically more challenging and may have to wait until the roadway is scheduled for a complete reconstruction. For a complete list of specific bicycle and pedestrian projects, refer to the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2021*.

In 2026 the Village of Weston adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to establish a long-range framework to guide the development of a connected network of sidewalks, trails, and bikeways within Weston over the next 10-20 years. The plan includes network objectives that align with the Wausau MPO plan and are meant to:

- Fill gaps in the existing network for biking and walking.
- Create loops for leisure and recreational walking and biking.
- Connect bicyclists and pedestrians across major barriers.
- Address safety and connections near schools, parks, and places of employment.
- Connect to natural areas.

In 2025 the MPO re-established its Bicycle and Pedestrian Sub-Committee. A few communities within the MPO also maintain regular bicycle and pedestrian groups or committees. Across all groups, efforts focus on:

- Improving safety and comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians via evaluation, engineering, encouragement, education, and enforcement.
- Expanding connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian networks to provide improved access and options.

As funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities remains limited, the MPO will continue to focus efforts on incorporating improvements into existing roadway projects, safety education, and encouragement for active transportation. Further the focus over the next few years will be on updating the Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to identify regional priorities and examine the bicycle network to see how it works or can be modified to provide greater regional connectivity. The MPO monitors the increasing use of out-of-class devices (e-motos), and the challenges they can pose to safety.

## FREIGHT – RAIL

There are two areas of concern for rail freight movement in the Wausau metro area. The first issue is around at-grade crossings and the need for signalization or other measures at those crossings. The second issue is that of rail shipment volumes in the area.

Safety and operational efficiency across both the rail lines and the roadway network are central considerations when evaluating the impacts of at-grade crossings. While signalization, crossing consolidation, or grade separations can improve safety, each carries distinct implications for nearby neighborhoods. Research shows that collisions continue to occur even at crossings equipped with warning devices. Grade separations can eliminate these crashes, yet they also risk dividing communities, reducing connectivity, and creating longer more indirect travel routes for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and even emergency responders whose optimal routes may be blocked or significantly detoured by rail infrastructure.

Rail corridors serve essential economic functions, their protection is important, but so is practical access and mobility for the broader community. Ongoing monitoring of crossing-related crash hotspots is crucial, allowing early identification of emerging safety issues. Where problems arise, the community should consider a full range of mitigation strategies, from enhanced warning systems and operational changes to grade separation, ensuring that any chosen solution improves safety while preserving access, mobility, and quality of life for residents.

The volume of rail traffic in the metro area has changed in the past few years. Coal going to the Weston Electric Power Generation Facility in the Village of Kronenwetter remains the major cargo moved by rail freight. In 2022 the Fox Valley and Lake Superior Rail System (FOXY) took over Canadian National and has increased transport of forest products and construction materials through the Wausau area.

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## FREIGHT – TRUCK

Truck transportation in the freight industry has not changed much in the Wausau metro area. With good access to the interstate and state highway systems, trucking operations and manufacturing and industrial businesses that rely on good access to the freeway systems are doing well in the Wausau area. The "Last Mile" concept in the truck freight industry is well accommodated in the area. Most industrial parks and larger commercial companies that have truck freight needs are located within the first mile or two of the freeway systems.

A few locations need to be monitored or studied to address the needs and concerns of truck traffic on the local street network. These include:

- Wausau Industrial Park connection from STH 29 to Stewart Avenue at 72nd Avenue
- Camp Phillips Road connection to the Schofield and Weston Industrial Park off Ross Avenue
- Turn movements and traffic volumes at several key intersections.
- Minor arterials and major collectors in the area use by businesses like the 3M Corporation and Kolbe & Kolbe Corp.

Another truck freight issue in the area is the potential creation of an intermodal rail to truck transfer location. This transfer location could provide the area with a rail connection to the entire U.S. that could potentially open doors of opportunity in the commercial and industrial sectors of the area economy.

The need for over-the-road (OTR) drivers continues to be an issue as the number of drivers continues to diminish. The future reduction of qualified drivers will have an impact on the merchandise delivery systems that are now in place to get products to people in the shortest amount of time. The adaptation of autonomous vehicles mentioned in Chapter 4, in the trucking industry, would play an ever-expanding role in the future.

## LAND USE

Transportation and land use have long been interdependent, each shaping the form and function of the other. Both can serve as catalysts for development, influencing not only where growth occurs but also the type and intensity of that development. When land use expands in an uncoordinated or unmanaged manner, it can quickly outpace a community's ability to provide adequate transportation infrastructure, particularly for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit systems. Transit services typically respond to established development patterns, while bicycle and pedestrian facilities are most effectively incorporated during roadway reconstruction, reducing the need for costly and disruptive retrofits.

Land use decisions influence transportation systems in multiple ways. By guiding growth toward more compact and connected patterns, communities can support efficient public transportation, reduce infrastructure costs, enhance opportunities for disadvantaged populations, and improve

public safety. Conversely, sprawling development makes it more difficult to deliver cost-effective services and maintain a well-functioning network.

As the region continues to evolve, communities will need to engage in thoughtful discussions about future land use to reduce conflicts between development and transportation. Key challenges include balancing high-volume traffic with safe bicycle and pedestrian access, ensuring that road construction projects do not create barriers or fragment neighborhoods, and addressing intersections with high crash rates or congestion. Through coordinated planning, communities can foster transportation systems that remain safe, efficient, and accessible while supporting sustainable land use patterns that enhance overall quality of life.

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES

Building new roads and adding capacity to existing roadways is very costly for communities. To make the most of limited transportation funding, communities are using travel demand management (TDM) and transportation system management & operations (TSM&O) strategies to increase the capacity and efficiency of existing roadways.

The following are best practices that could be considered for the Wausau area. While the MPO is not directly responsible for the implementation of transportation improvements, they work closely with the member communities towards increasing efficiency and performance of the existing transportation system.

### Travel Demand Management

Travel Demand Management strategies seek to either reduce the number of cars on roadways through:

1. Encouraging the use of transit, walking, biking, or employer-based activities.
2. Increasing the number of people traveling in each vehicle.
3. Redistributing demand away from congested areas and peak travel times through methods like use restrictions, ramp metering, or other methods.

### Transportation System Management & Operations

Strategies concerned with the management and operation of the transportation system are designed to improve the performance of existing roadways through increased efficiency and throughput. Poor system performance is caused by a variety of factors, i.e., poor signal timing, bad weather, geometric bottlenecks, etc.

Unlike adding a roadway or additional travel lane, TSM&O strategies offer lower cost alternatives and require a shorter time to get started. The TSM&O approach integrates planning and programming, systems and technology, performance monitoring, technical understanding and leadership, organization and workforce development, and collaboration and partnerships. TSM&O

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activities focus on traffic signal timing, access management, special event or incident management, traveler information, and others to improve the efficiency and reliability of the transportation network.

### Best Practices in Transportation System Management & Operations

Additional TSM&O activities could be considered for implementation in the Wausau area, as they have proven useful in similar-sized areas.

### Traffic Signal and Intersection Improvements

Traffic control signage and intersection signals are everywhere, and while they provide traffic control and improve safety at intersections, they can also be a significant source of delay. Improving intersection traffic control is a cost-effective way to facilitate improved traffic flow.

- Replace older traffic signal control technologies with newer options, phasing out in-pavement magnetic loops in favor of automatic detection; update to detection devices that better detect bicycles and pedestrians.
- Review timing and phasing of signalized intersections periodically and optimize signals to decrease congestion, improve flow, and reduce queue length.
- Coordinate signals along designated high-priority corridors to increase the throughput volume of critical thoroughfares.
- Review intersection design and traffic movements to determine the need for channelization changes or protected left turns.

### Access Management

Effective access management improves mobility, accessibility, and safety by reducing crashes, increasing capacity, reducing travel time and delay. Access management regulates the number of access points between land parcels and the adjacent roadways, addressing the number of driveway/curb cuts, placement of medians, and function of service roads. Access management strategies can be used for only certain locations or as part of an integrated corridor access management program.

- Median's control turning movements to decrease the potential for accidents: they also provide a refuge area for pedestrians or turning vehicles and reduce mid-block accidents. Medians at critical intersections can have a low curb to ensure access for emergency response.

- Design large parcels with major roadway frontage, but access only from the frontage road, to decrease the number of driveways along thoroughfares. Design residential driveways to have a shared access point to the major roadway.

- Monitor number of driveways and encourage proper spacing to provide safe and reasonable access to sites; consult adjacent landowners to avoid conflicting designs.

### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming improvements are self-enforcing devices that can assist law enforcement in influencing driver behavior. Traffic calming is often applied to residential streets with lower speeds

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and discourage through traffic. Designed to slow all vehicles, traffic calming can impact access and response times for emergency response. Examples include:

- Impose designated movement of traffic at an intersection through forced turn islands.
- Require entering traffic to yield to vehicles already in the intersection through construction of roundabouts, which have proven effective in reducing intersection speed and severity of crashes, without compromising throughput.
- Consider speed humps to reduce travel speeds, caused by driver discomfort when traversed at speeds higher than the posted speed limit.
- Evaluate the use of road diets, where appropriate. For roads with appropriate traffic volumes, there is strong research to support achieving safety benefits through converting four-lane undivided roads to three-lane cross sections with two-way-left-turn lanes. Operational and design changes associated with road diets that promote safety include reduced vehicle speeds, reduced vehicle-pedestrian, vehicle-bicycle, and vehicle-vehicle conflicts.

**Additional Management Strategies**

The following sections briefly touch on additional strategies that could be explored for implementation in the Wausau area.

- Regional Traffic Incident Management -
  Detecting, responding to, and clearing traffic incidents to restore normal traffic flow as safely and quickly as possible is the main function of traffic incident management (TIM) strategies. Effective TIM involves coordination among public and private stakeholders, including law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, traffic control, towing and recovery, hazardous material contractors, and the media.
- Traveler Information Systems -
  Using technology to detect, analyze, and disseminate traffic and transit conditions helps travelers choose the best mode and route to reach their destination based on current conditions. Traveler information can include data on next bus arrival, emergency alerts, traffic delays, alternate routes, work zones, planned special events, tourism, and parking management, etc.
- Targeted Traffic Enforcement -
  In areas with complaints about speeding and reckless drivers, targeted speed and law enforcement can be employed to discourage unlawful and dangerous driver behavior. Local law enforcement can assist with the identification of hotspots to maximize the impact of enforcement activities.

# TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SECURITY

## Introduction

The Wausau MPO assists communities in addressing safety and security through the programming of transportation improvements, and although the MPO's role in the implementation of safety and security measures may be limited, the MPO plays a key role in the coordination among various federal, state, local agencies, all of which have a stake in safety and security in the area. By integrating the safety and security goals and objectives of various agencies into the transportation

planning process, the MPO helps ensure that its 2050 Plan and identified programs and studies are consistent with, and help support, regional safety and security planning.

## Safety

Safety usually refers to crashes for all modes of transportation and other unintentional events, which result in loss of property, injuries, or fatalities. Safety planning focuses on improving the operational efficiency of the transportation network as well as influencing individual behavior to reduce the number of crashes. Safety goals have consistently been reaffirmed through surface transportation authorization bills as part of the comprehensive approach to managing the performance of the transportation system. The national safety goal calls for zero deaths or serious injuries on all public roadways.

## Security

Security typically refers to harm inflicted by people, such as terrorist acts and other criminal activities, as well as harm caused by natural disasters, such as flooding, or severe weather events. Security planning is carried out by various agencies at multiple levels of government, and involves the four phases of emergency management:

- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery
- Mitigation

State, county, and local jurisdictions follow the six components of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a framework for facilitating operations during emergencies:

- Command and management
- Preparedness
- Resource management
- Communications and information management
- Supporting technologies
- Ongoing management and maintenance

During a time of emergency, coordination of efforts across various jurisdictions is a top priority, especially to meet transportation needs.

## Safety and Security Recommendations

The success of improving safety depends on local participation. A data driven approach should be utilized to assist with prioritizing programs and projects, as it is important to understand which factors are contributing to the most fatalities and serious injuries locally. This vision can be more effectively achieved through the implementation of the following recommendations:

- Encourage communities to identify and implement relevant Highway Safety Plan strategies.
- Consider giving funding preference to projects that incorporate safety improvements.

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The MPO has been pursuing a Federal Highway Safe Streets for All planning grant. The grant, if awarded, would allow the MPO to comprehensively evaluate safety issues in our area and outline strategies or solutions to address these issues. If awarded, the MPO plans to complete the study in 2028. Completion of this study will assist the MPO in identifying where to focus safety improvements in the years ahead.

## AREA NEEDS SUMMARY

### Level of Service Needs

It is important to note that the regional traffic model is designed to estimate traffic Levels of Service on main line roads and highways. The modeled LOS deficiencies should not be taken at face value but should be reviewed with respect to individual roadway geometric and operational characteristics that would impact service levels.

If the regional traffic model indicates a road segment has a low level of service and additional evidence supports these findings, the roadway should be studied from an operational/traffic engineering perspective, utilizing small area traffic level of service analyses and/or traffic simulation software. Some smaller improvement projects, like geometric changes and traffic signal modifications to the intersections can improve traffic flow along a roadway without having to do a major capacity expansion project. The results of the regional traffic model indicated a few LOS deficiency problem areas. The corridors identified range from levels A to D and were discussed in Chapter 5.

A list of transportation improvement alternatives based on the regional traffic model and local knowledge has been established for this plan. These locations focused on improving level of service that has been identified in Chapter 5 as having a level of service D or worse. The base and future models created by WisDOT in 2026 found no roadway segments with level of service worse than D. All other roadways are identified as being at a level of A, B, or C.

### Base Year Regional Model - 2022

INSERT FINAL MAP OF LOS MAP FOR ANYTHING D, E, or F.

Level D Slightly Congested:

- Bridge Street, City of Wausau from 1st Street to 1st Avenue
- STH 153 (Main Street) between 4th Street and Old Highway 51 in Mosinee

Two other roadway segments are near Level D in the base year model, however, based on future population projections, the model predicts they will be level of service C or better in the future. These are still worth monitoring. They are:

- West Thomas Street between South 3rd Avenue and Cleveland Avenue
- Business 51 (Grand Ave) between County N (Townline Road) and Thomas Street

**Future Year Base Models - 2055**

Two future year models were considered for this plan.

- **State Projected Change Model:** Future TAZs are shown exactly as predicted based on DOA population projections, meaning some TAZs show declines in population and household size values.
- **Stabilized Growth Model:** Future TAZs with no or declining growth are set at 2026 levels. Future TAZs projecting growth are kept as predicted.

In the State Projected Change Model, due to the projected declines in growth, there are no roadway segments performing below level of service (LOS) D. In Stabilized Growth Model, due to slight growth in some TAZs and stabilized household populations in others, STH 153 (Main St) between 4th Street and Old Hwy 51 in Mosinee and Bridge Street over the Wisconsin River section, remain at LOS D.

## ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the past 30-plus years, the Wausau Area has seen many roadway and highway projects that have greatly shaped the way people and goods move through the area. WisDOT has dedicated a lot of financial resources to creating a freeway system that has the capacity to carry the projected traffic well into the future as well as creating a safer travel environment. With these investments, the local communities have also identified the need to provide for the local roadway system that will allow the area to grow and develop to their desired outcomes. The area communities continue to focus on maintenance and preservation efforts versus capacity expansion and development of new roadways.

The area regional traffic model was used to evaluate the level of service for specifically identified road projects in the Metro Area as described in Chapter 5. Of all the projects being evaluated, none of them specifically impact an area determined to have a lower level of service. The MPO will continue to evaluate the model on a 5-year basis to determine what projects may need to be studied to address potential roadway deficiencies.

The regional traffic model is a macro-level analysis. Municipal or micro-level traffic studies often reveal issues that a macro, state level traffic model cannot capture. Because the regional model operates at a large scale and focuses on average weekday traffic, it smooths out localized fluctuations, site-specific congestion patterns, and operational details that smaller studies depend on. As a result, local agency observations or studies have identified potential additional operational issues, development trends, safety concerns, or capacity constraints that are not fully captured by the regional travel demand model.

## ROADWAY PLANNING STUDIES & ILLUSTRATIVE ROADWAY PROJECTS

The following are projects or efforts that have been previously identified by the communities or by MPO staff as potentially needing to be evaluated, studied, or implemented to indicate the benefits to the metropolitan area or community road networks.

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**Village of Kronenwetter:**

- Evaluate the ability to construct an interchange at I39 and Kowalski Road.
- Implement roadway improvements in the 2026 10-year Capital Plan.

**City of Mosinee:**

- STH 153 Bridge Expansion and 4-lane roadway through the central business district.

**Town of Rib Mountain:**

- Investigate a bridge crossing the Rib River at County Highway O and STH 29 interchange.

**Village of Rothschild:**

- Expansion and 4-lane roadway of Business US Highway 51 from Eagle's Nest Boulevard to Military Road.
- Further analysis of operational issues at southern end of Rib Mountain Drive, and at ramps to/from I-39.

**City of Schofield:**

- Reconstruct Business US Highway 51/Grand Avenue from Metro Drive to the Eau Claire River Bridge, to include accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Construct the Eau Claire River Bicycle and Pedestrian facility to provide separate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations through this area.

**City of Wausau:**

- Continue to implement 5-year Street Reconstruction Plan.
- Grand Avenue, especially from Kent Street to Thomas Avenue. Provide adequate turn lanes at major intersections, as well as creating the appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.
- Evaluate the need for a new bridge over the Wisconsin River north of Bridge Street and South of the Village of Brokaw, or the expansion of an existing bridge.
- Finish construction of Business Campus Trail E/W Connector to provide separate bicycle and pedestrian facility to and between the Wausau Business Campus.
- Continued implementation of opportunity areas identified in the River Edge Parkway Master Plan Update, to provide for separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**Village of Weston:**

- Redevelop the Camp Phillips Road Corridor from Weston Avenue to Ross Avenue with the initial emphasis on the Weston Avenue to STH 29 interchange to accommodate the mixed-use development in the southeast quadrant of the interchange. Subsequent project would be commercial development along the corridor from STH 29 to Schofield Avenue with

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intersection improvements, and additional improvements from Schofield Avenue to Ross Avenue to accommodate the needs of the industrial park and the elementary school.

- Investigate the need for a new full interchange at Ryan Road and STH 29.
- Continue implementation of the transportation improvements proposed in the Schofield and Weston Avenue Corridor Plans.

**Region-wide:**

- Investigate the need to new bridge crossings of the Rib, Wisconsin and Eau Claire Rivers in the metro area.
- Investigate the need for jurisdictional transfers of roadways to different municipalities.
- Update the MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to identify regional priorities and then work toward building those projects.
- While the regional travel demand model provides a valuable system-wide perspective, future transportation planning efforts should incorporate targeted corridor and intersection studies to identify localized congestion, operational, capacity, and safety issues that may not be fully captured at the regional scale.

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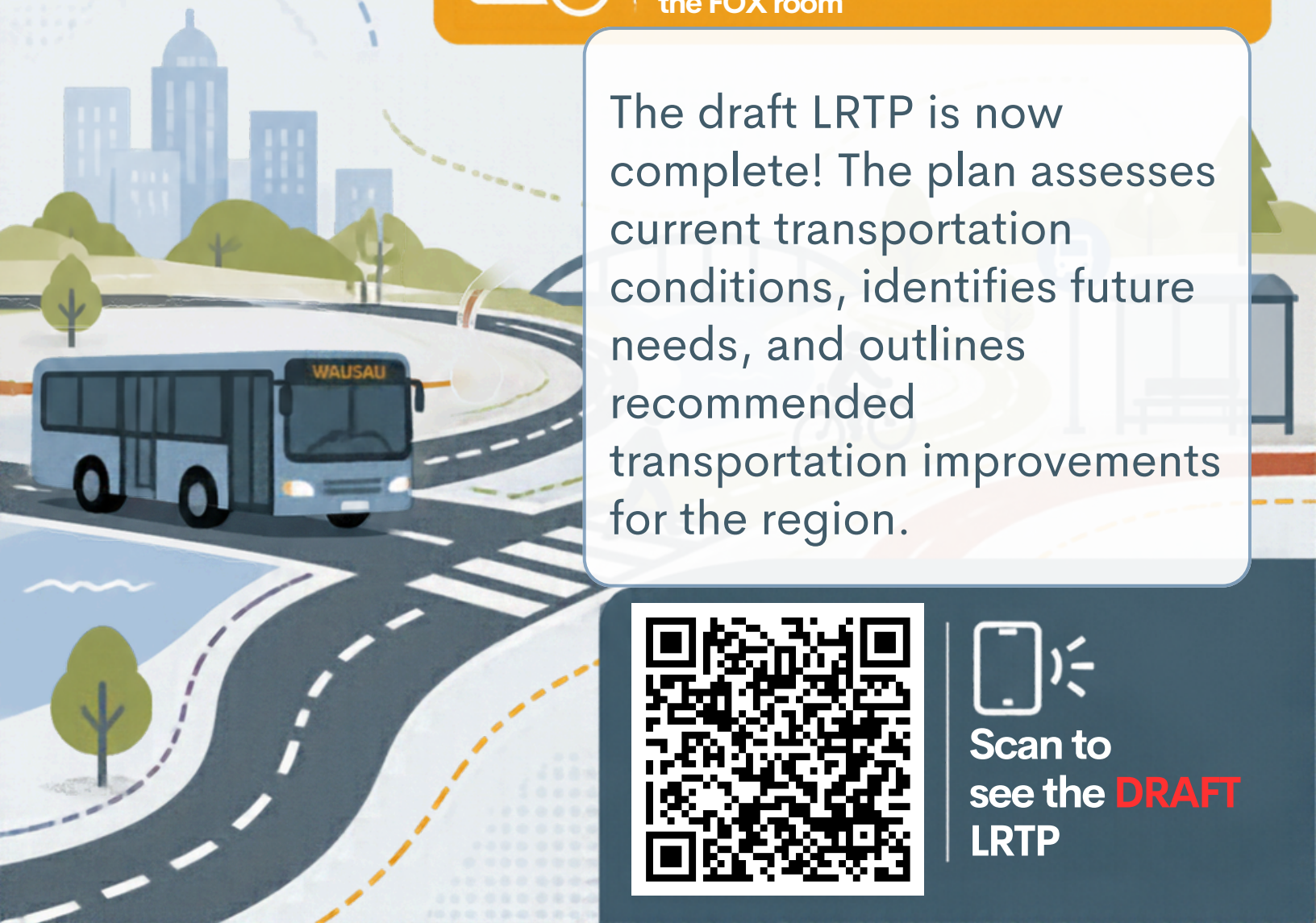
# Wausau MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

## Open House

**DRAFT LRTP REVIEW**

Review the draft plan and share your feedback

**December 15th 1-3 pm**
**December 16th 4:30-6:30 pm**
**at 1000 Lake View Dr, Wausau, WI, 54403 in the FOX room**




The draft LRTP is now complete! The plan assesses current transportation conditions, identifies future needs, and outlines recommended transportation improvements for the region.

**Scan to see the DRAFT LRTP**