4. TRANSPORTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The transportation section emphasizes a multi-modal transportation system that includes transit, highways and roads, non-motorized transportation, aviation and freight movement. This section is comprised of five areas:

- **Roadways** - maps and describes existing roads and planned improvements, analyzes traffic volumes, addresses safety and capacity issues.
- **Transit** - outlines existing transit services and policies for developing transit service, transitways, and transit facilities to meet 2030 demand.
- **Trails** - references the bike and pedestrian strategies outlined in the Parks, Trails, and Open Space section.
- **Aviation** - identifies aviation related facilities, addresses airspace protections.
- **Railways** - outlines existing rail services and the associated impacts on developing a balanced and stable economic base.
TRANSPORTATION: ROADWAYS

This section is a summary of key elements contained within the entire Roadway Systems Plan. For more detail on any of the elements in this document or for information on existing roadway conditions in the county, please refer to the complete Roadway Systems Plan. The Roadway system plan is adopted as part of the 2030 Carver County Comprehensive Plan.

Roadway Plan Purpose
The main goals of the Carver County Roadway Systems Plan are to preserve the current roadway system, accommodate future growth and address emerging new transportation issues. Carver County officials have completed the Plan to help them provide a safe and efficient transportation system that can be supported by identified fiscal resources. By fulfilling these goals, the Plan provides direction and focus concerning future growth and projected travel needs of the county’s residents and businesses into the future. Therefore, the purpose of this Plan is four-fold:

1. Update the Current Plan to meet Metropolitan Council Requirements - The Metropolitan Council requires that counties within the seven county metropolitan region update their comprehensive plans every 10 years to ensure their plans stay consistent with Met Council's system plans. This transportation update addresses requirements outlined in the Local Planning Handbook for 2008.

2. Enhance the County's Arterial Roadway System - As a product of the population growth in Carver County there has been an increase in weekday commuting into and out of the county, spurred by the higher numbers of jobs in the metropolitan area. The future population growth in the county will increase traffic on the county's roadways. Arterial roadways in Carver County carry the majority of the traffic volume and serve as the main travel corridors for travel throughout the county. It is important that more arterial roadways are added to the county system to meet the future capacity demands that will be placed on the county's transportation system.

3. Reduce the Number of Crashes and Fatalities Within the County - The third purpose of the plan is to reduce roadway/intersection crashes and fatalities in the county. Roadway safety is a key consideration when planning for roadway or intersection improvements. Efforts to improve roadway safety in Carver County include reviewing county roadway geometrics and identifying improvement needs, enforcing speed limits along arterial routes and addressing problems at high-crash locations.

4. Incorporate Statewide Transportation Initiatives - There are two important statewide transportation initiatives that have been implemented since the last update of the Carver County Transportation Plan in 1999. These include the development of the Interregional Corridor System (IRC) and the development of new access management guidelines for all state roadways. These policies are recognized and are incorporated accordingly into this plan.
Roadway Plan Goals

COUNTY GOAL TR:R-1 SAFETY
Develop and maintain a roadway network that promotes safety of its users by:

- Reducing roadway/intersection crashes and fatalities in the county
- Maintaining infrastructure.
- Encouraging mode separation where possible.
- Reviewing geometric improvements annually.
- Evaluating and setting appropriate speeds

COUNTY GOAL TR:R-2 EFFICIENT MOVEMENT
Strive to ensure that the roadway network promotes the efficient movement of people and goods by:

- Establishing a 2030 proposed functional classification system
- Establishing a county roadway system that meets future capacity demands.
- Maintaining mobility on arterial routes to minimize through-traffic on neighborhood routes.
- Encouraging consistency between roadway jurisdiction, designation and functional classification.
- Managing access.

COUNTY GOAL TR:R-3
COORDINATION BETWEEN JURISDICTIONS

- Build cooperation and coordination among jurisdictions by:
- Coordinating transportation plans.
- Interacting with state and local agencies.

Roadway Plan Implementation
The Roadway Systems Plan provides valuable strategies, tools and practices that can assist county officials in implementing their recommendations and making wise long-term decisions. The Roadway system plan is adopted as part of the 2030 Carver County Comprehensive Plan.
TRANSPORTATION: TRANSIT

Introduction
Carver County is seeking to establish a comprehensive vision for the expansion of transit services over the coming years. The coming growth in the County will lead to a corresponding increase the demand for travel and transit services.

Currently, SouthWest Transit (formerly the SouthWest Metro Transit Commission) offers commuter bus service from the municipalities of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, and Victoria to downtown Minneapolis and the nearby University of Minnesota. SouthWest Transit (SWTC) also provides limited local bus routes within Eden Prairie and to nearby areas. SouthWest Transit’s key markets are downtown commuters, students and special event patrons. The greatest challenge for SouthWest Transit lies in accommodating the surging demand for commuter bus service both in the current service area and potential future service areas.

Carver County Transit (CART) provides demand-response bus services primarily to County residents with mobility or cognitive limitations. Seniors are also an important part of CART’s bus ridership. CART buses travel along quasi-fixed-routes throughout the County to pick up passengers on request. Currently CART provides service oriented towards seniors and persons with disabilities, and is primarily oriented toward local travel within the County, although transfers with SouthWest Transit and the Scott County Transit are made daily. CART uses are fleet of small buses equipped with wheelchair lifts. CART also relies on volunteer drivers to provide transportation to ambulatory customers (i.e. persons without mobility limitations). Volunteers provide most of the trips traveling out of Carver County to medical appointments. As with many volunteer services across the country, volunteer drivers for CART are not as numerous as the once were while demand for personalized mobility assistance continues to increase.

In addition to fixed-route commuter bus services, the regional paratransit provider Metro Mobility provides paratransit services for eligible persons with disabilities within ¾ miles of all fixed bus routes. As this population increases and the service area for fixed route service increases, so will the demand for paratransit services.

Demand for transit has been analyzed based on projected traffic forecasts, projected growth, estimates for transit usage based on current trends, and types of service available. Daily ridership estimates for those using transit increase by 95-225% depending on the above factors. Use of commuter rail was not forecasted specifically for Carver county, but an independent analysis by the met council has estimated a commuter rail ridership of 1,000 per day.
Key County Transportation: Transit Issues
The following key planning issues were identified during the planning process regarding transit in Carver County.

1) Establish a comprehensive vision for the expansion of transit services over the coming years.

2) Coming growth in the County will lead to a corresponding increase the demand for travel and transit services

3) The greatest challenge for the current bus service provider, SouthWest Transit lies in accommodating the surging demand for commuter bus service both in the current service area and potential future service areas.

4) Carver County Transit (CART) provides demand-response bus service to all County residents including those with mobility or cognitive limitations. CART is the primary mode of service for most of Carver County.

5) In addition to fixed-route commuter bus services, the regional paratransit provider Metro Mobility provides paratransit services for eligible persons with disabilities within ¾ miles of all fixed bus routes. As this population increases and the service area for fixed route service increases, so will the demand for paratransit services.

6) Transit-oriented development
Due to the nature of transit service in Carver County (both existing & proposed future), the reliance on transit hubs, park and ride facilities and easy connections to quick service, the need for proactive land use planning around these proposed facilities is important. Identifying transit oriented development, mixed land uses, higher density residential uses and key trail/sidewalk connections will make these facilities more productive and provide more non-auto choices for Carver County citizens and workers to increase safety, public health, mobility and convenience.

7) Commuter rail
Currently there is one active rail line in Carver County - a rail line, currently owned by Twin Cities Western which runs east from the Mcloed County border through the communities of NYA, Cologne, Chaska and Chanhassen then follows existing tracks to downtown Minneapolis. There has been a high level of interest in securing commuter rail options by the public, local decision makers, and the rail line. The challenge for the County is to seek a means to fund and operate a commuter rail line when competition for rail service is high and regional focus and priority is elsewhere.

As part of the planning process, Carver County and SouthWest Transit partnered to complete an analysis if existing issues and future needs and potential in the Carver County area. As part of this study, three hypothetical future transit networks were identified for further evaluation (Table 4.1).

SCENARIO ONE: NO TRANSIT NETWORK EXPANSION
In this scenario, SouthWest Transit and CART route networks (described above) remain unchanged in the future.
4.6 The Carver County 2030 Comprehensive Plan

SCENARIO TWO: ALL-BUS TRANSIT NETWORK – 2012 & 2030
Scenario Two envisions an expansion of commuter and local bus services into rapidly developing areas of Carver County. New park n’ ride lots and commuter routes will provide improved access to downtown Minneapolis, while enhanced local services bring riders to the commuter routes or local destinations. The key features of this scenario are the use of the completed Highway 212 to provide additional commuter services to Chaska, the development of feeder bus routes for western Carver County, and a new park n’ ride lot in Chaska.

SCENARIO THREE: REVISED LIGHT RAIL & BUS NETWORK
Scenario Three envisions the introduction of light rail service (LRT) from downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie and continuing to Chanhassen, by 2030. This scenario is intended to evaluate the synergies that might be possible in a cooperative arrangement between rail and bus service, the potential benefits to riders, and the overall impact on ridership demand in comparison with the all-bus service scenario.

TABLE 4.1: ESTIMATED DAILY TRIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trip Origin</th>
<th>2006 Observed Trips</th>
<th>2012 No Expansion</th>
<th>2030 (Low) No Expansion</th>
<th>2030 (High) No Expansion</th>
<th>2012 All Bus</th>
<th>2030 (Low) All Bus</th>
<th>2030 (High) All Bus</th>
<th>2012 Bus &amp; LRT</th>
<th>2030 (Low) Bus &amp; LRT</th>
<th>2030 (High) Bus &amp; LRT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eden Prairie</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>2,619</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>4,320</td>
<td>4,410</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>4,320</td>
<td>4,410</td>
<td>5,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chanhassen</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaska</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>1,530</td>
<td>1,181</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<td>530</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>804</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carver/Delores</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>194</td>
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<td>Waconia</td>
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<td>Cologne</td>
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<td>310</td>
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<td>Mayer/Network County</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Other Carver County</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott County</td>
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<td>246</td>
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<td>340</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Daily Trips</td>
<td>4,001</td>
<td>4,835</td>
<td>5,361</td>
<td>7,802</td>
<td>9,735</td>
<td>12,040</td>
<td>12,040</td>
<td>8,193</td>
<td>10,510</td>
<td>13,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this table shows, demand for trips increases with all scenarios, but most dramatically with an LRT corridor and bus expansion to more communities in Carver County.

Current Transit Services
Two agencies provide transit services within the study area SouthWest Transit and Carver County Area Transit. While the two agencies service some of the same parts of the County, they provide very different services to distinct markets.

SOUTHWEST TRANSIT (SWT)
SouthWest Transit (formerly the SouthWest Metro Transit Commission) offers commuter bus service from the municipalities of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, and Victoria to downtown Minneapolis and the nearby University of Minnesota. SouthWest Transit (SWT) also provides limited local bus routes within Eden Prairie and to nearby areas. A map of SouthWest Transit’s current route network can be seen below in Figure 4.1. In addition to fixed-route commuter bus services, the regional paratransit provider Metro Mobility provides paratransit services for eligible
persons with disabilities within ¾ miles of all fixed bus routes. SouthWest Transit’s key markets are downtown commuters, students and special event patrons. The greatest challenge for SouthWest Transit lies in accommodating the surging demand for commuter bus service.

CARVER COUNTY TRANSIT (CART)
Carver County Transit (CART) provides demand-response bus services to the general public including residents with mobility or cognitive limitations. Seniors are also an important part of CART’s bus ridership. CART buses travel along quasi-fixed-routes throughout the County to pick up passengers on request. Although there are no maps of CART routes, the timetable in the exhibit below outlines the four current routes. Currently CART provides service oriented towards seniors and persons with disabilities, and is primarily oriented toward local travel within the County, although transfers with SouthWest Transit and the Scott County Transit are made daily at the Walnut park n’ ride lot in downtown Chaska. CART uses are fleet of small buses equipped with wheelchair lifts. CART also relies on volunteer drivers to provide transportation to ambulatory customers (i.e. persons without mobility limitations). Volunteers provide most of the trips traveling out of Carver County to medical appointments. As with many volunteer services across the country, volunteer drivers for CART are not as numerous as they once were while demand for personalized mobility assistance continues to increase.
FIGURE 4.1: EXISTING TRANSIT BUS ROUTES (ILLUSTRATIVE SOUTHWEST TRANSIT ROUTES 2007 MAP)
County Transit Goals

COUNTY GOAL TR:T-1
Create a strong transit system which can be an integral part of growth and development in the County.

COUNTY GOAL TR:T-2
Establish multi-modal transportation options for Carver County residents and workers in order to support a high quality of life, economic development, a diverse workforce, and the needs of an aging population.

COUNTY GOAL TR:T-3
Recognize the importance of an integrated system of rail, bus, and trails in order to create non-auto options for County residents and workers.

County Transit Policies

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-1
Support and advocate for the growth of the current transit service areas to adjacent communities. Regional transit plans should be revised to reflect the 2030 demand for service in these growing areas and the need for growth and transit service to be planned for and occur simultaneously.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-2
Support the efforts of the Southwest Transit Commission (SWTC) in increasing capacity on the bus system, including park & ride/transit hub capacity, additional bus service, and an expanded service area.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-3
Support the expansion of the CART system as it accommodates growing demand from populations who cannot drive or choose to not drive.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-4
Support and encourage integrated land use planning and transit oriented development around current and proposed transit hubs.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-5
Advocate for the planning, funding, and construction of rail projects which serve Carver County residents and link to the region including the SW LRT corridor, the extension of this corridor, and the current TCW commuter rail line.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-6
Support an integrated transit system which creates opportunities and removes barriers to access by linking CART service to commuter and fixed route systems, linking bus service to potential rail service, and linking the trail network to transit stops and facilities.

COUNTY POLICY TR:T-7
Support stronger transit planning for Carver County at the regional and local level including rail planning, TOD planning, CART service planning and trail planning.
County Transportation: Transit Implementation

Figure 4.2 summarizes the existing and proposed transit services in Carver County including:

1. Existing bus service communities and facilities
2. Existing CART service areas
3. Proposed 2030 commuter bus service areas and facilities (NOTE: as described below, some of these areas are not consistent with current regional plan)
4. Proposed commuter rail transitway. (NOTE: as described below, this corridor does not appear in the current regional plan)

The following strategies will be implemented to achieve transit goals as guided by the transit policies.

• Involve Carver County in efforts to expand bus service to Carver, Victoria and Waconia in the next five years. These proposed service expansions are consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan’s transit system service areas.
  NOTE: These areas of Carver County lie within Metropolitan Council Regional Transit Market Areas III. Service options for Market Area III include peak-only express, small vehicle circulators, midday circulators, special needs paratransit (ADA, seniors), and ridesharing.

• Involve Carver County in efforts to expand commuter service to Cologne and NYA as hwy 212 expands to the west. The County would need to request Metropolitan Council service option changes to provide transit in this area as they are not consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan’s transit system service areas. The County however, feels these areas should develop with transit as a component of growth and believes regional plans should take these needs into account.
  NOTE: These areas of Carver County lie within Metropolitan Council Regional Transit Market Areas IV (Figure 4-3 of the Council’s 2030 Transportation Policy Plan). Current Regional Service options for Market Area IV include dial-a-ride, volunteer driver programs, and ridesharing.

• Pursue options for connection of the CART system as “feeder routes” to commuter bus service.

• Pursue options and provide stronger direction to expand the capacity and the connectivity of the CART service.

• Create a County transit advisory committee which provides guidance on implementing improvements to the transit system in the County. Makeup of this committee should include citizens, riders, county & city representatives and transit provider representatives.

• Advocate and organize leadership to support the SW LRT corridor including extension of the corridor to Chanhassen.
• Advocate and organize leadership to pursue alternative methods of financing and planning for Commuter rail service on the TCW corridor. The County would need to request changes to the current regional plan in order to plan for commuter rail service as the TCW corridor is not currently defined in the Transportation Policy Plan’s transit system 2030 transit ways map.

• Advocate for and pursue stronger position from the Metropolitan Council on future transit and expansion in Carver County.

• Organize County staff and leaders to better collaborate with other agencies including SW transit, Metro transit, adjacent Counties and non-profit transit providers.

• Advocate for a complete system of interconnected streets, pedestrian walkways, and other pedestrian facilities to increase pedestrian travel (active transportation) and support close coordination between jurisdictions and other modes of transportation.

• Encourage the multi-modal transportation system to connect all residents to services (e.g. employment centers, grocery stores, hospitals) allowing residents of all ages and ability to live, work and play in their community.

• Support a balanced transportation system that provides for the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, those with strollers, and those in wheelchairs at least equal to that of auto drivers.
TRAILS - BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

As stated in the Parks, Open Space, and Trails portion of the County Comprehensive plan, the County goal is to provide residents with a high quality, interconnected trail and bikeway system for recreation, fitness, and transportation and as a means to tie parks and open spaces together with local communities. Offering alternatives to auto use for commuting or other travel is key element of the entire transportation system. The over-arching goals of the trail system are to Develop an interlinking system of high value trails throughout the county that connect with local cities and townships and to provide an appropriate level of universal accessibility to trails throughout the system.

This section of the plan contains detailed information on trail development and planning and is summarized as follows:

- a description of goals, policies and plans regarding bicycle and pedestrian systems and programs
- benefits derived from providing a well planned and accessible trail system including support of active living and complete streets planning.
- an inventory and map showing existing and proposed regional level trails
- a description of bicycle and pedestrian classifications encouraging non-auto modes of travel and to coordinate their plans with neighboring jurisdictions
- Implementation strategies and funding mechanisms.
AVIATION

An airport is an area of land or water that is used for the landing and takeoff of aircraft, and includes any buildings and facilities. Carver County does not have any municipal airports or commercial airfields. There are several personal use landing strips that are used exclusively by the owner and/or possibly a friend or neighbor. "Molnau's Airport" in Laketown Township is a private field providing hanger space and the use of the field to persons determined by the owner. There are also several publicly owned airports in relatively close proximity to Carver County. The eastern portions of the County, including Chanhassen and Chaska, are close to Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie; there are public airfields in Winsted and Glencoe directly west of Carver County; and to the north there is a public airport in Buffalo. There is currently no airport related planning being conducted in the County.

Aviation Policies

POLICY TR: A-1 AIRPORTS
Applicable Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) Rules concerning seaplane operation and obstructions to air navigation will be incorporated into official controls of the County.

POLICY TR: A-2 AIRSPACE PROTECTION
Any sponsor who proposes any construction or alteration that would exceed a height of 200 feet above ground level at the site, or any construction or alteration of greater height than an imaginary surface extending outward and upward at a slope of 100:1 from the nearest point of the nearest runway of a public airport shall notify the Federal Aviation Administration and MN/DOT at least 30 days in advance as defined under code of federal regulations CFR - Part 77.

POLICY TR: A-3 SEAPLANE LAKES
The operation and use of seaplanes within the County will be prohibited on all public waters except for those described in Minnesota Rules 8800.2800. In Carver County lakes with allowed seaplane operation include: Goose Lake, Mud Lake, Hazeltine Lake, Lundsten Lake, Lake Minnewashta, Lake Minnetonka, Oak Lake, Lake Patterson, Parley Lake, Lake Riley, Pierson Lake, Lake Waconia, Tiger Lake.

POLICY TR: A-4 PRIVATE AIRFIELDS
Personal use landing areas as defined in MN/DOT Aeronautics regulations will be considered an appropriate use under certain conditions in the unincorporated areas of Carver County. Regulation of personal use landing areas will be provided by County land use controls in conjunction with the licensing procedures of MN/DOT. Map 2-4 shows the location of currently permitted private airfield operations, which are open for public use.
RAILWAYS

There is currently one active rail line in Carver County. The Twin Cities Western Rail line runs from the Hennepin/Carver County boundary in Chanhassen to the McLeod County boundary west of Norwood Young America. This line has seen a spike in activity in recent years as the cost of moving freight on rail has become competitive or cheaper than all-truck freight capacity alone. The County Comprehensive Plan identifies potential land use opportunities near the rail corridor in the land use section. The County supports the use of the corridor as an efficient method of moving goods to, from and through the County as a complement to a road network alone. As mentioned earlier, the corridor also has strong potential for providing movement of people as a commuter rail line in the future.

Railway Policies

POLICY TR: RR-1 TWIN CITIES WESTERN RAIL LINE USE

The county supports rail use along the current TCW corridor for the following reasons:

- Fewer additional trucks on the road thereby lessening increased congestion
- Rail can use less fuel resulting in 1/3 reduction in carbon emissions
- Create a diversified Tax Base and Jobs…a key cornerstone of the Carver County Board Vision Statement
- Rail facility could attract new or expanding business to Carver County communities.
- Potential reduced costs for building roads and other construction, as materials are here for lower bids for road construction costs
- Ag related uses can benefit farms for reduced distribution costs, local processing and collection points
- Rail access can reduce costs SUBSTANTIALLY for local businesses and suppliers by hauling large goods on rail vs. truck