

# 3

## Transportation Element

The Transportation Element of this plan contains a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation in and around Elkhorn. A summary of state and regional transportation is also provided. The transportation goals and objectives (included below) build on Elkhorn’s general ‘Planning Goals and Objectives’.

### **TRANSPORTATION GOALS:**

Ensure a complete and interconnected roadway system that provides safe efficient, and accessible passage for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians within Elkhorn and to other places in the region, and provides convenient access to traffic generators within the City, while emphasizing walking and cycling as viable alternatives.

### **TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES:**

1. Emphasize neighborhood interconnections which allow vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movement between neighborhoods, separate from cross-community traffic on arterials.
2. Promote accessibility and connectedness in the City’s roadway network, in addition to traditional transportation measures of performance such as vehicle capacity.
3. Create and maintain a safe, interconnected roadway system that efficiently moves people and goods, while keeping the capacity of public improvements and the effects on quality of life in balance.
4. Support a variety of modes of transportation to meet the needs of a diverse population. Extend the existing White River bikeway trail and downtown pedestrian network to new residential neighborhoods and mixed use developments.

#### **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:**

##### **For Roadways-**

1. Extend the existing roadway network into developing areas to enhance connectivity and extend community character.
2. Ensure that new roadways are designed with sidewalks, on or off-street bicycle lanes and parkways.
3. Acquire right-of-ways in sufficient width in advance of future road and intersection improvements. Right-of-ways should support building attractive corridors, not just roads.
4. Where feasible, require parkway plantings and ensure high design standards are set for street tree requirements and boulevard plantings.
5. High standards for public roads and trails should be matched by both the City and property developers.
6. Ensure that all public right-of-ways are safe and accessible to the elderly and the disabled.
7. Extension of roads serving new development should not compete with the City's capacity to fund and maintain existing roads.
8. Consider the use of modern roundabouts as an alternative to traffic signals as they are more effective at minimizing crash rates.
9. Utilize distinct pavement markings, colors and materials to clearly demarcate crosswalks, bicycle paths, and travel lanes while roadways are being improved.
10. Provide adequate street furniture along public right-of-way, including benches, waste receptacles, bike racks, street lights and other amenities, depending on the context of the street.
11. Provide street trees and ecologically sustainable landscaping treatments along public right-of-way.
12. Work with residents and businesses in the downtown area to create an access management and public parking plan.

##### **For bike facilities and complete streets-**

1. Create future bicycle paths along environmental corridors that connect to the White River Bike Trail, and Elkhorn area parks and schools.
2. Secure funding to produce a dedicated bike plan for the community.
3. While not every public right-of-way will have a bike path, ensure that there is adequate space and safe riding surface for bicyclists as well as motorists on local residential streets in order to encourage residents to bike as an alternative to driving.
4. Require the provision of sufficient bicycle parking close to the building entrance at employment and commercial locations, as well as schools and parks to provide employees and customers/users a safe place to park.
5. Utilize permeable paving materials for all dedicated bike trails.
6. Enhance existing bike trails with street furniture, signage and appropriate lighting.
7. Improve safety along the trails by ensuring that they are well lit and landscaping is trimmed and maintained along the route.
8. Make improvements and add appropriate signage along bike routes in accordance with AASHTO

(American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) design guidelines.

9. Design roadway bike facilities in accordance with 'Appendix B: REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ELEMENT FACILITY STANDARDS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES' of SEWRPC's 'A Regional System Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin:2035'.
10. Study opportunities to reduce the amount and speed of vehicular traffic in order to reduce bicycle and auto collision rates by including traffic calming measures, especially in areas that have higher crash rates.
11. Incorporate funding in a capital improvement program to improve and install sidewalks in the community, with priority to those areas within the walkable distance of a quarter mile around community amenities.
12. Ensure that streets are sufficiently lit and landscaping along the sidewalks are maintained to improved pedestrian safety.
13. Create a temporary four-way stop at the intersections during public events.
14. Consider traffic calming measures like curb bump-outs and lane narrowing, along streets through residential areas that are reported to have speeding issues.

## **EXISTING TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES**

### **Pedestrian Systems**

One of Elkhorn's most desirable characteristics is its compactness and walkability. Virtually every home, until recently, has been within 1 1/2 miles from downtown and the rectilinear street pattern provides numerous routes to the center without overloading arterials with cross-town traffic. However, not all streets are provided with sidewalks and the street system itself has some disconnections in several places (i.e. the creation of cul-de-sacs or dead end streets do not provide easy or uninterrupted vehicle and pedestrian access). This trend should be reversed if the opportunity arises and discouraged for new subdivision developments. Where appropriate, the grid system of streets with sidewalks should be extended into newly planned and developing areas. At a minimum, however, connectivity should be achieved via extended arterials and collector streets with sidewalks, especially when they lead to schools, parks and shopping areas. Sidewalks should also be required for all new developments. As described throughout the Comprehensive Plan, the principles of connectedness and walkability are to receive high priority so that Elkhorn can achieve its vision. A sidewalk gap analysis and survey of sidewalk and pavement conditions should be done for the community to determine priority areas and projects.

### **Roadway Functional Classification System**

Vehicular accessibility is one of the City's primary attributes. The City has a good location for businesses and residents as a result of being located at the convergence of I-43, U.S. 12, and several other state and County highways, that traverse Walworth County. The presence of this system attracts new development and related traffic.

As defined by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's 2035 Plan, the system of functional grouping or classification of roadways in Elkhorn are classified as below:

- **Freeways:** a special classification of highways providing a high-degree of mobility and function for heavy volumes of traffic traveling extended distances on roadways. Access is limited to grade separated interchanges, which are spaced at least one mile apart. These facilities are typically part of the state or federal highway system. In Elkhorn, I-43 and U.S. 12 are classified as freeways. U.S. 12 is a freeway extending from the Illinois border to the north side of Elkhorn; it then becomes a two-lane road north of Elkhorn.
- **Arterials:** streets and highways that carry relatively high volumes of local and through traffic at moderate speed with limited access to abutting properties.
- **Collectors:** streets and highways that connect minor streets and roads to arterials and collect or distribute traffic within neighborhoods while providing access to abutting properties.
- **Local Streets:** roadways whose primary function is to carry low volumes of traffic at slow speed to and from abutting properties.

The 2040 Transportation Plan for Elkhorn illustrated on Page 31 shows these classifications. Extension of collector streets into new sub-divisions are recommended to enhance connectedness. The long term financial plan for the City must anticipate maintenance and reconstruction costs commensurate with the anticipated life of roads and other public improvements.

Street and highway improvements are not limited solely to expanded capacity and improved traffic flow. It is important that their overall character as transportation/land-use/visual corridors be equally considered. The City's quality of life and the quality of community character presented to visitors is enhanced when vehicular passengers have a pleasant "view from the road", pedestrians and cyclists have a safe and attractive experience, and abutting property owners are buffered from the adverse impacts of traffic.

Elkhorn's tree-lined streets are among the City's most valuable assets, as are the attractive rural roadsides just outside the City boundaries. This character must be preserved and enhanced. If trees need to be removed to permit roadway improvements, they should be replaced with new trees of significant species, size and number. Additionally, existing trees should be safely protected from any new construction. Several existing streets and highways are lacking in trees and deserve new plantings. Average daily traffic is shown on the Exhibit 3.1: Transportation Plan.

#### **Existing Traffic Conditions and Roadway Deficiency**

Traffic volume provides a general indicator regarding roadway function. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) numbers for 2012 was obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation website. The highest traffic counts within Elkhorn occur along State Highway '67'. County Highway NN/Geneva Street, Court Street, Walworth Street and County Highway H also carry a good amount of traffic in and out of the community. However, Interstate 43 and U.S. Highway 12 by far have the highest traffic counts in the community. As the interchanges along these routes in Elkhorn provide accessibility and as the land along the interstates have great visibility from these freeways, Elkhorn should capitalize on this by a correct mix of land uses along the interstates as outlined in the land use element of this plan.

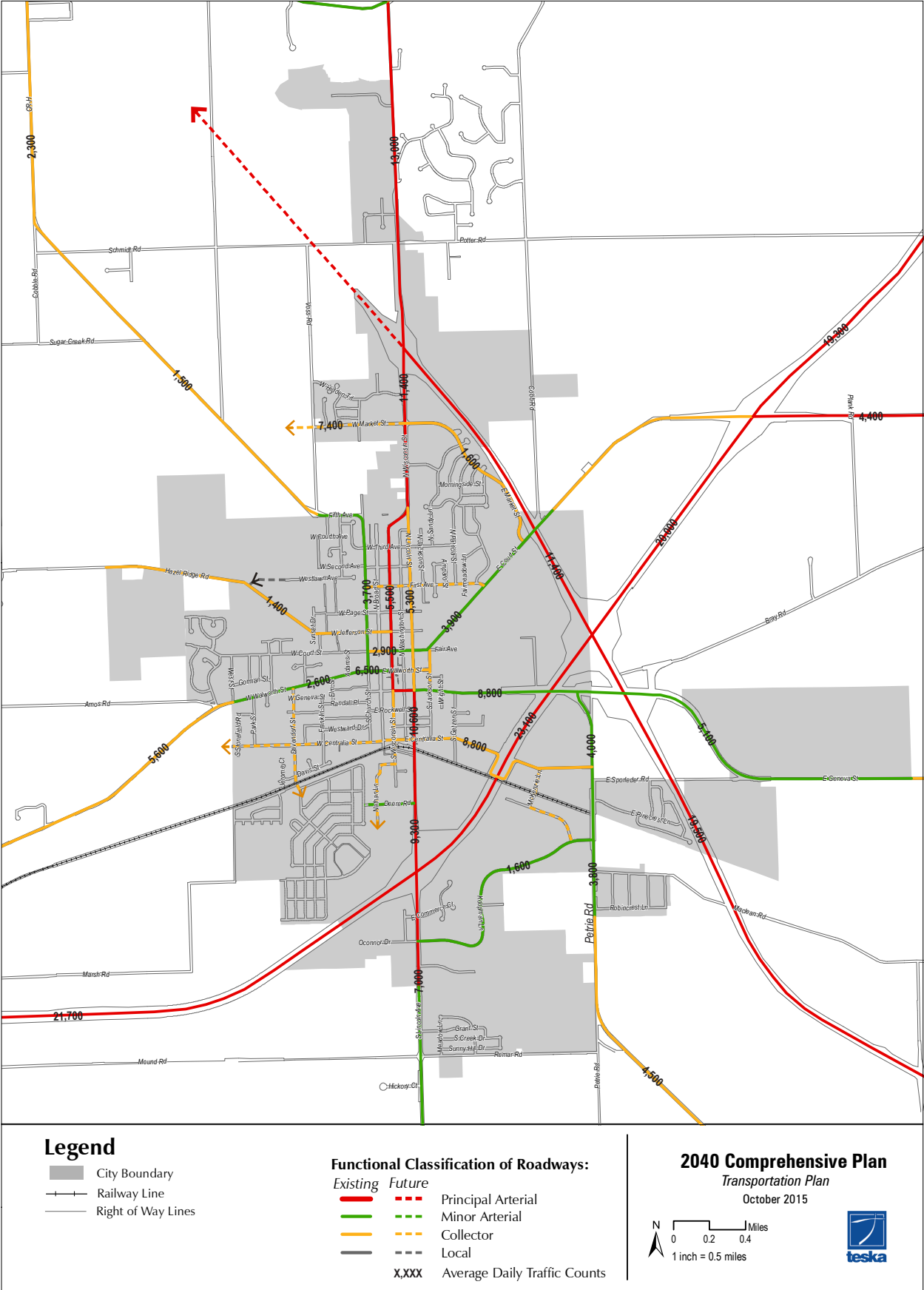


Exhibit 3.1: Transportation Plan

#### **Public Transit**

At present and for the foreseeable future, the City cannot support a system of local bus service. However, the State of Wisconsin has provided a park-ride facility along State Highway 67 just north of the U.S. 12 interchange to encourage ride-sharing and para-transit. It may also be desirable for the City to consider a form of public transit to serve special needs within the community, such as those of senior citizens and the handicapped. These groups will continue to expand in numbers in the future. Busing for school children is a given in many communities, including Elkhorn. Consideration should be given to the multiple uses of these vehicles and their drivers for other local services.

#### **Bikeways**

SEWRPC's 'A Regional System Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin:2035', recommends regional bikeways that serve Elkhorn in the form of:

- Off-street bicycle trail along the White River Trail. There is a vehicular parking lot for cyclists at the west terminus of the trail along County Highway H. There is also a connector trail across the highway to connect the trail to Babe Mann Park.
- Non-arterial connection along S Jackson Street to a surface arterial connection along E Court Street that goes along the County Fair Grounds and connects to another non-arterial connection along Cobb Road, and
- As bicycle accommodations along the arterial streets of Lincoln Street, county Highway H, Geneva Street and Walworth Street.

Improvements along these routes to accommodate bikeway facilities should be considered by Elkhorn when facilities are resurfaced or reconstructed.

The 2004 Elkhorn Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan provides additional recommendations for bikeways and trails within Elkhorn, However, given the importance of connectivity between parks, schools, neighborhoods and services, a dedicated bicycle plan for the community is recommended. To support community livability, Elkhorn should ensure that all future development is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. Future roadways should provide designated bike lanes where feasible. It is recommended that the City continue to pursue making Elkhorn a bicycle-friendly community, even to the extent that local residents are encouraged to bike throughout the community, and that regional cyclists consider Elkhorn to be a focal point of biking activity, including sales, repair and organized events. Proximity to the County Fairgrounds and the White River Trail help support this concept.

### **COMPARISON TO REGIONAL AND STATE PLANS**

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission adopted "A Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin" in May of 2003. The purpose of the plan is to develop a broad understanding of current and future freeway system needs and, based on that understanding, create a regional consensus as to how best approach the reconstruction of the most heavily used portions of the regional transportation system. As related to Elkhorn, the regional plan identifies the following roadway improvements-

- Future expansion of US12 north west of State Highway 67 with four lanes, an additional half interchange at 67 and full interchange at County Highway H.

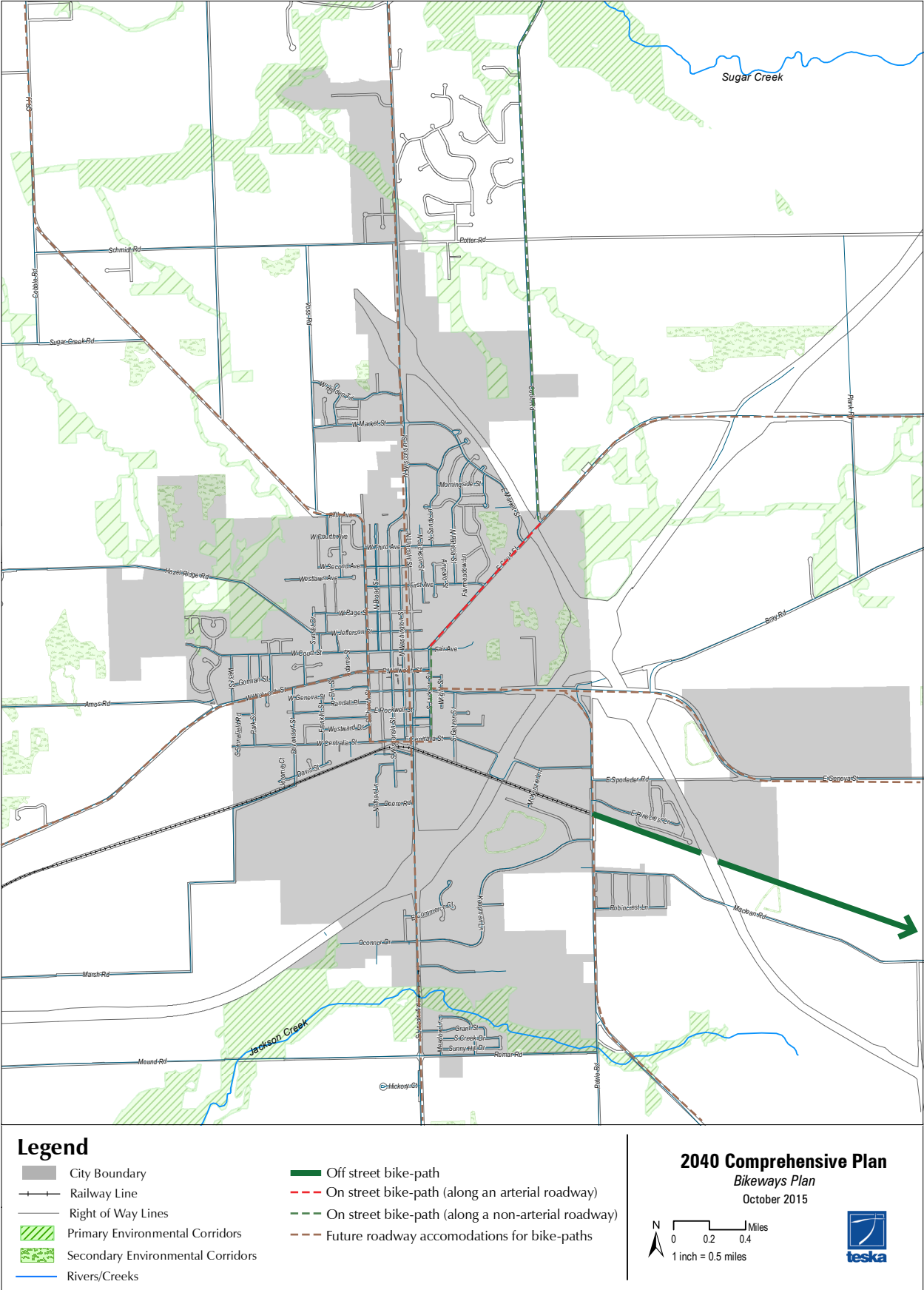


Exhibit 3.2: Bikeways Plan



- Lincoln Street/State Highway 67 improvements to four lanes to improve capacity
- State Highway 67 improvements to four lanes to improve capacity south of I-43.

In addition, Wisconsin DOT is conducting a major study for U.S. 12 along WIS 67 from Elkhorn to WIS 59 in Whitewater. The study will address the capacity and safety concerns along this route and will also suggest possible alignment adjustments and capacity improvements to address these concerns. The preliminary study is in progress and the environmental report is scheduled for completion in 2019. As for roadway maintenance, I-43 from Delavan to US 12 is scheduled between 2019 and 2021, WIS 67 south of I-43 for 2018, and pavement replacement for County Highway H in 2017. In general, the state plans recommend that local land use and transportation plans facilitate travel by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian movement to reduce dependence on automobile travel and improve walkability and accessibility.

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Future Transportation Plan recommends improving connectivity and accessibility in Elkhorn. In addition, to providing for safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections, the most significant recommendation is to connect existing arterials to those of future sub-divisions. The arterials should be designed with high quality aesthetics in mind, such as split planted boulevards in some areas and a generous parkway with landscaping through out.