

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

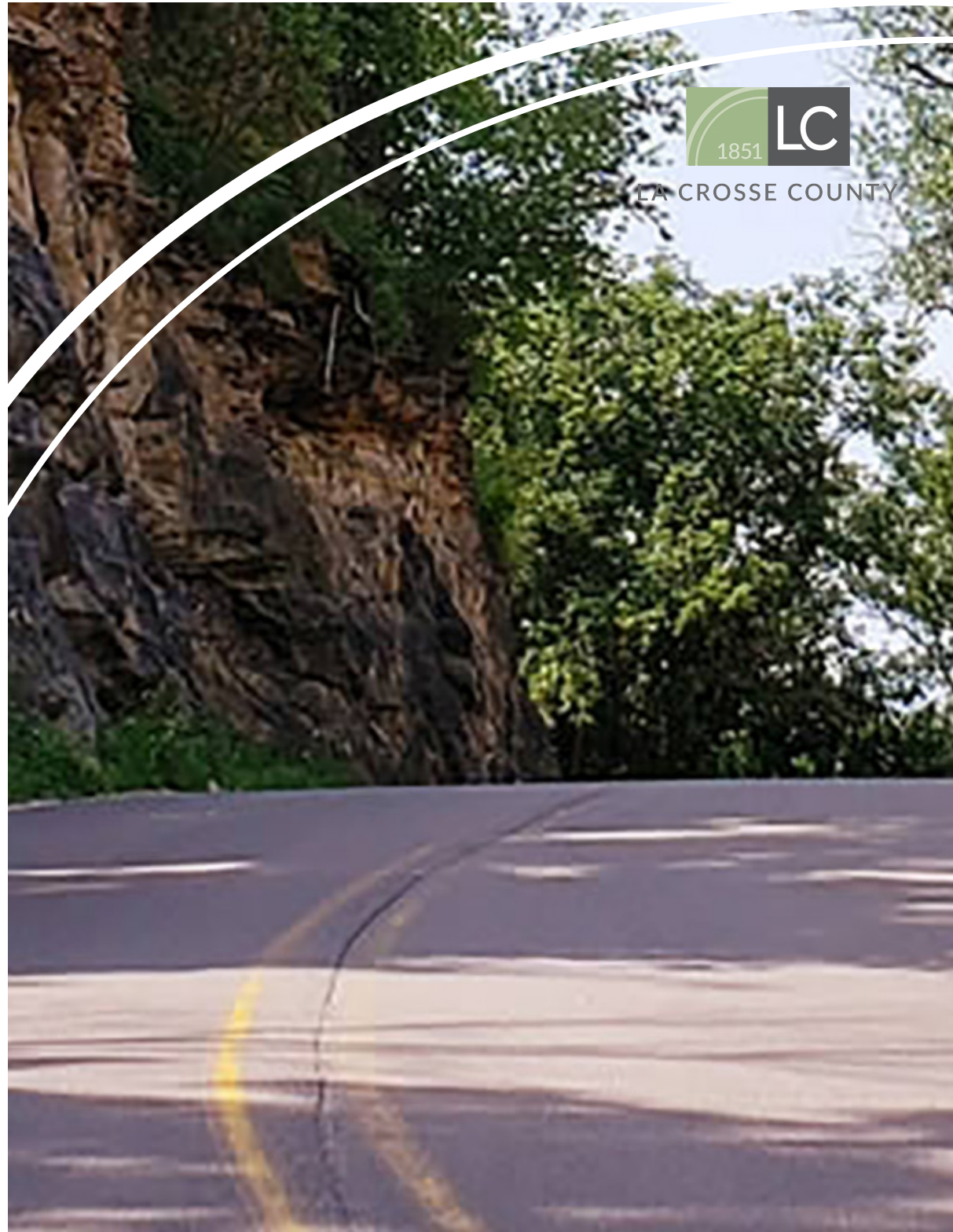
Policies and Procedures Manual

La Crosse County, Wisconsin

March 2023 modification



LA CROSSE COUNTY



Highway Department Policies and Procedures Manual

La Crosse County, Wisconsin



LA CROSSE COUNTY

***Approved by the La Crosse County Highway Department
and the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee***

March 8, 2021

Disclaimer

This manual was prepared to summarize the policies and procedures of the La Crosse County Highway Department. It is intended to be a living document that conveys the Highway Department procedures that relate to or directly impact the County Highway system. Most sections in this manual reference specific laws, rules, and regulations including, but not limited to, the Wisconsin State Statutes and the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances. This manual is not intended to be a substitute for the specific laws and regulations contained in those or any other documents.

The La Crosse County Highway Department and Public Works & Infrastructure Committee reserves the right to review and revise the policies and procedures in this manual. At a minimum, this document will be reviewed on an annual basis (March of each year) and will be updated accordingly to reflect changes to ordinances, State Statutes, State Administrative Code, and other relevant rules and regulations. The Highway Department and Public Works & Infrastructure Committee also reserves the right to make decisions on a case-by-case basis regarding issues that are not contained in this manual.

Prepared by

AECOM

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List of Acronyms

A

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ADT – Average Daily Traffic
ANSI – American National Standards Institute
ATV – All terrain vehicle

B

BMP – Best Management Practices

C

CIR – Cold In-Place Recycling
CMP – Corrugated Metal Pipe
CTH – County Trunk Highway

D

DNR – Department of Natural Resources

E

(none)

F

FDM – Facilities Development Manual
FHWA – Federal Highway Association

G

(none)

H

HVAC – Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
HMM – Highway Maintenance Manual

I

IoH – Implements of Husbandry
ISEA – International Safety Equipment Association

J

(none)

K

(none)

L

(none)

M

MUTCD – Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices

N

(none)

O

OSOW – Oversize/Overweight [Vehicles]

P

PASER – Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating
PSC – Public Service Commission

Q

(none)

R

RCP – Reinforced Concrete Pipe

S

SDD – Standard Detail Drawing
SIS – Specific Information Sign
SMFA – State municipal Financial Agreement
STH – State Trunk Highway

T

TTC – Temporary Traffic Control
TEOpS – Traffic Engineering, Operations & Safety [Manual]
TODS – Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

U

USPS – United States Postal Service

V

VCT – Vision Clearance Triangle
VMT – Vehicle Miles Traveled

W

WCHA – Wisconsin County Highway Association
WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation
WISLR – Wisconsin Information System on Local Roads

X

(none)

Y

(none)

Z

(none)

List of Website Links

1 Introduction

La Crosse County Highway Department:
<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/highway>

La Crosse County Public Works and Infrastructure Committee:
<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/countyboard/publicWorks.asp>

2 County Trunk Highway System

FHWA Highway Functional Classification Concepts:
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/section03.cfm#Toc336872980

WisDOT Functional Classification Maps:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/data-plan/plans/function.aspx>

3 Public Right-of-Way

WisDOT Roadside Memorials:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/roadsides/memorials.aspx>

WisDOT Improperly Placed Signs:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/outdoor-adv/improp-placed-signs.aspx>

4 Safety

FHWA Worker Safety and Visibility:
<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/fhwasa03009/>

Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD):
<https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/index.htm>

MUTCD Sign Retroreflectivity Requirements:
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/night_visib/policy_guide/fhwasa07020/fhwasa07020.pdf

WisDOT Traffic Engineering, Operations & Safety (TEOpS) Manual – Speed Limits:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/dtsdManuals/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/teops/13-05.pdf>

WisDOT Standard Detail Drawing (SDD) “Asphaltic Rumble Strips at Intersection”:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/rdwy/sdd/sd-13a08.pdf#sd13a8>

WisDOT Work Zones and Mobile Devices:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/workzone/mobiledeviceswz/default.aspx>

Wisconsin Flagging Handbook (2020):
<https://wisconsindot.gov/dtsdManuals/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/flagger.pdf>

Wisconsin Work Zone Field Manual (2020):
<https://wisconsindot.gov/dtsdManuals/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/wzfm/wzfm.pdf>

5 Utility Accommodations

(none)

6 Driveway Permits

La Crosse County Zoning Department:
<https://lacrossecounty.org/zoning/>

La Crosse County Board of Adjustment Committee (Zoning):
<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/countyboard/boardAdjustment.asp>

7 Winter Maintenance Guidelines

WisDOT Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM):
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/hwy-mnt/mntc-manual/default.aspx>

WisDOT Real-Time Travel Information:
<https://511wi.gov/>

WisDOT Winter Maintenance:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/hwy-mnt/winter-maintenance/default.aspx>

8 Pavement Management

PASER Asphalt Roads Manual:
<http://www.apa-mi.org/docs/Asphalt-PASERManual.pdf>

2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan:

<http://www.lapc.org/content/plans/Plan%20documents/Bike%20Plan/Coulee%20Regional%20Bicycle%20Plan%20Final.pdf>

9 Bridge Program

WisDOT Local Bridge Improvement Assistance:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/highway/localbridge.aspx>

10 Road Debris and Obstructions

(none)

11 Other Highway Maintenance

DNR Invasive Species:
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives>

DNR Suggested Mowing Times for Invasive Species:
<https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Documents/InvasiveSpecies/Suggested-mowing-times-for-select-species-in-so-WI.pdf>

DNR Suggested Timing for Control of Invasive Species:
<https://councilonforestry.wi.gov/Documents/InvasiveSpecies/Suggested-timing-of-control-for-select-species-in-so-WI.pdf>

12 Traffic Impact Studies

(none)

13 Oversized/Overweight (OSOW) Vehicles

WisDOT OSOW Escort Vehicle Requirements:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/com-drv-vehs/mtr-car-trkr/osow-requirements.aspx>

WisDOT Agricultural Vehicle Safety:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/agri-eq-veh/ag-veh-safety.aspx>

WisDOT Frozen Road Declaration:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/com-drv-vehs/mtr-car-trkr/ssnl-wt-rsrtctns/frozenroad.aspx>

14 Adopt-A-Highway

WisDOT Adopt-A-Highway Program:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/roadsides/adopt-hwy/default.aspx>

WisDOT Adopt-A-Highway Safety:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/real-estate/roadsides/adopt-hwy/safety.aspx>

WisDOT Adopt-A-Highway Safety Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozuH9WG1axM&feature=emb_logo

WisDOT Adopt-A-Highway Safety Brochure:
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/real-estate/roadsides/adopt-hwy/br-safety-2015.pdf>

15 Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

(none)

16 Snowmobile and ATVs

La Crosse County Facilities Department:
<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/facilities/>

La Crosse County Snowmobile Information:
<http://www.laxsnowmobile.org/>

Statutes, Codes, and Administrative Rules

Wisconsin State Statutes:
<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/prefaces/toc>

La Crosse County Code of Ordinances:
<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/code/table.htm>

Wisconsin Administrative Code:
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code

Miscellaneous WisDOT Information

Facilities Development Manual (FDM):
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrces/rdwy/fdm.aspx>

Highway Structures Information System (HSI):
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrces/strct/hsi.aspx>

Rest Area
<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/travel/road/rest-areas/default.aspx>

Road Salt Storage (Trans 277):

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/hwy-mnt/winter-maintenance/rd-slt-strg.aspx>

Roundabouts:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/safety-eng/roundabouts/default.aspx>

Rules and Pointers for Pedestrians and Drivers:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/pedestrian/rules.aspx>

Six-Year Highway Improvement Program:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/6yr-hwy-impr/overview/default.aspx>

Southwest Region Highway Projects and Studies:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/sw/default.aspx>

Southwest Region Long Truck Operators Map:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/dmv/shared/ltr-sw.pdf>

Southwest Region Organizational Structure:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/contracts/misc/sw-region.pdf>

Standard Detail Drawings (SDD) List:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/rdwy/sdd/sd-00-00toc.pdf>

Standard Specifications:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/rdwy/stnds-spec.aspx>

State Patrol Safety and Weight Enforcement Facilities (SWEF):

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/com-drv-vehs/mtr-car-trkr/mc-safety/scale-locations.aspx>

Traffic Counts:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/data-plan/traf-counts/default.aspx>

Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT):

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/data-plan/veh-miles/default.aspx>

1 INTRODUCTION

The La Crosse County Highway Department operates the highway system under its jurisdiction to provide a safe and convenient means for the vehicular transportation of people and goods. The department oversees the maintenance of over 280 miles of the county trunk highway system and annually contracts with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to maintain an additional 157 lane miles of State and Federal Highway System roads (see **Figure 1.1**). The Highway Department also provides technical assistance, financial aid, and various services to other local units of government. These services are critical to maintaining a safe, convenient, and efficient transportation system serving communities, residents, and businesses throughout La Crosse County.

1.1 Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to outline specific transportation policies and procedures as they relate to the La Crosse County Highway Department. The manual is intended to provide important information to the general public and to serve as an internal manual to provide direction to department staff and decision makers.

This manual is a combination of La Crosse County Highway Department policies with references to Wisconsin State Statutes, the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances, Wisconsin Administrative Codes, and WisDOT policies. All information provided in this manual is current as of the adopted date, or update dates reference on the cover.

1.2 General Maintenance Activities

The La Crosse County Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance of county highways and state roads through contract with WisDOT. General maintenance consists of all

activities aimed at keeping the system in a serviceable condition. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Pothole repairs
- Mowing
- Centerline painting
- Culvert replacement
- Ditching
- Wheel rut repairs
- Minor overlays
- Signing
- Litter control

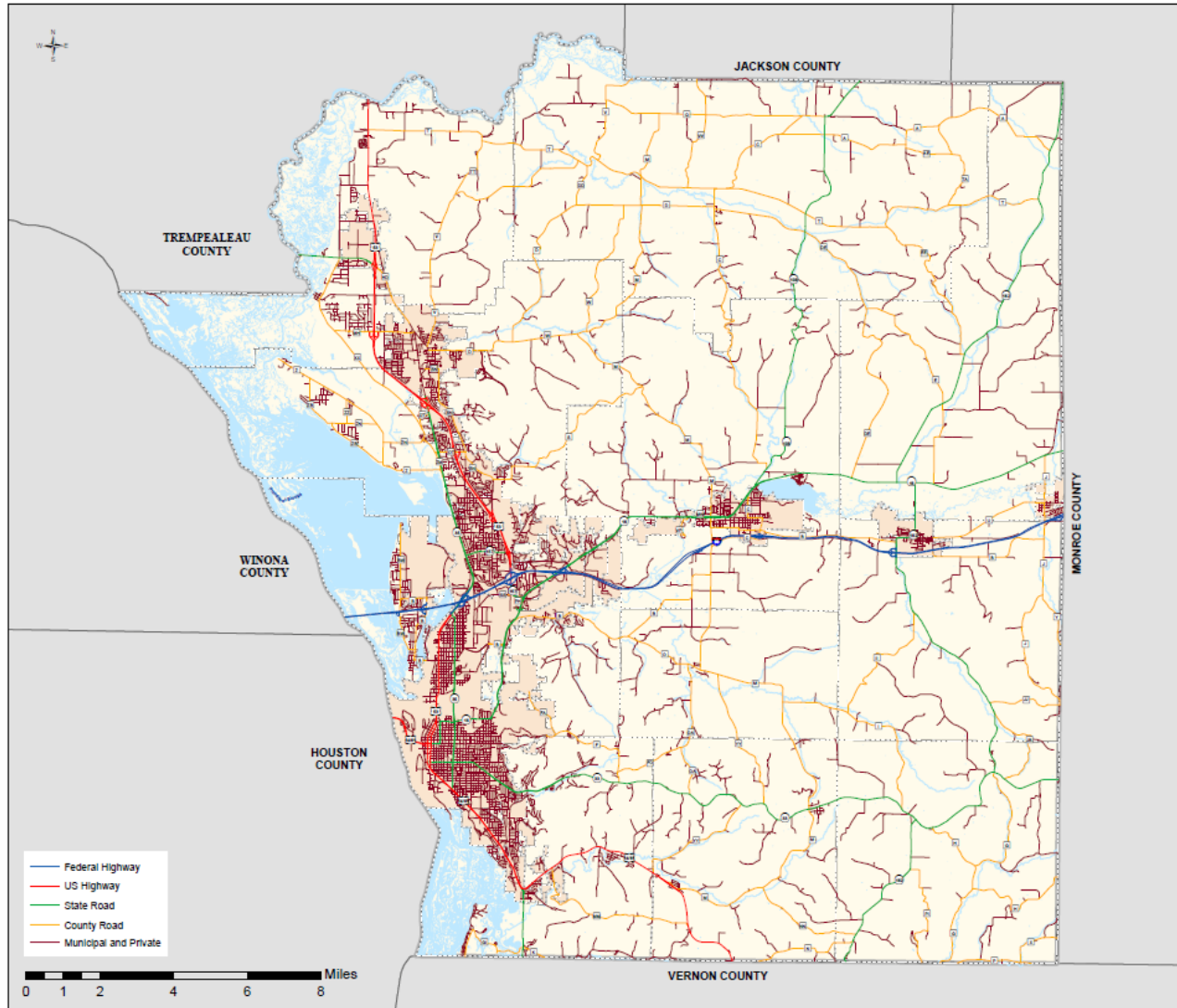
A primary concern is to maintain a safe and drivable pavement while protecting the County's investment in quality roads. When necessary, the Highway Department will reconstruct or resurface roadway segments that do not meet current design standards. Additional improvements may include widening the pavement and shoulders, flattening ditch in-slopes, flattening horizontal curves, improving, or increasing sight distance, and drainage improvements.

Mission Statement

The La Crosse County Highway Department is dedicated to providing and maintaining a safe, cost-effective highway system for the traveling public and the taxpayers of La Crosse County.

Figure 1.1 – La Crosse County Roadway System

Click here to view a larger map [online](#).



1.3 Public Works & Infrastructure Committee

The La Crosse County Public Works & Infrastructure Committee is a seven-supervisor committee, appointed by the County Board Chair, that acts as the policy oversight for Facilities, Highway, and Solid Waste Departments. The Committee makes policy, legislative, and funding decisions related to all county-owned buildings, highways, bridges, parks, and solid waste facilities, as well as other real estate and properties, per Wisconsin Statute 83.015 and La Crosse County Code of Ordinances Section 1.44.

Issues typically addressed by the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee include:

1. Capital Improvement Projects
2. Facilities Maintenance
3. Preventative Maintenance
4. Construction
5. Personal Property and Real Estate
6. Operation, Repairs, and Upkeep of Assets

1.4 Highway Department

The La Crosse County Highway Department oversees all maintenance, repairs, and reconstruction of roads and bridges under the County's jurisdiction, including snow removal and other winter maintenance activities.

1.4.1 Highway Commissioner

The La Crosse County Highway Department is led by the Highway Commissioner. The Highway Commissioner, under the direction of the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee according to state statute, is in charge of the construction of highways built with county aid and the maintenance of all highways maintained by the County, and responsible for the proper maintenance, repair, and storage of all road machinery

and tools and for the fiscal and personnel management of the Highway Department.

1.4.2 Contact Information

To report problems regarding county roadways and bridges or to submit general concerns or comments, please use the following:

301 Carlson Road
West Salem, WI 54669
Phone: (608) 786-3810
Fax: (608) 786-3816

Or visit the La Crosse County Highway Department's website.

1.5 Procurement

All procurement for various departments and services overseen by La Crosse County government, including the Highway Department, is completed by the La Crosse County Finance Department.

La Crosse County Administrative Center
212 6th Street North
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: (608) 785-9580

Or email Keith Back at kback@lacrossecounty.org.

2 COUNTY TRUNK HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The County Trunk Highway (CTH) System, established in 1925, forms the secondary system of highways within the state and constitutes the interconnecting highways supplementing the State Trunk Highway (STH) System. It is comprised mainly of highways of secondary through-traffic importance and generally consists of highways that provide and facilitate local service. The County Trunk Highway System is administered by the La Crosse County Highway Department as authorized under Section 83 of the Wisconsin State Statutes.

The County Trunk Highway System includes all highways that have been selected by the La Crosse County Board and approved by WisDOT in accordance with Section 83.025 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. County highways are designated alphabetically, and the marking and signing is uniform throughout the state. Improvements or construction of highways on the CTH System must conform to minimum geometric design standards established in Trans. 205 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code and Chapter 11 of the Wisconsin Facilities Development Manual (FDM).

2.1 Purpose

County highways are meant to provide a high level of mobility to the traveling public. County highways historically provided farm to market routes and connected cities and villages to higher level state highways. Highways within urbanized areas generally will have high levels of access control to ensure they meet the requirement of providing mobility with a minimum number of access points. Roads providing primary access to commercial areas and residential areas should be located on the local road system.

2.2 Jurisdiction

Highways are commonly classified by ownership or purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to governmental ownership of a particular road; however, governmental ownership does not necessarily reflect who is responsible for the on-going maintenance of the facility. For example, State owned roads are maintained by the La Crosse County Highway Department or local jurisdictions through contract with WisDOT. The Highway Department is responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on state and federal highways as directed by WisDOT. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the WisDOT.

2.2.1 Cooperative Agreements

The La Crosse County Highway Department may enter into cooperative work agreements with surrounding counties concerning projects, equipment, and operations. Additionally, the La Crosse County Highway Department may enter into a State Municipal Financial Agreement (SMFA), or project agreement, whenever items are not eligible for payment by WisDOT and need to be funded by the project sponsor or municipality that the project is located within, either in whole or a percentage of the cost.

2.3 Classes of Highways

La Crosse County has divided highways into three classifications:

1. Class 1 Highways – Town or other public roadways not identified as Class 2 or Class 3 highways.
2. Class 2 Highways – County roadways.
3. Class 3 Highways – State or Federal roadways.

2.4 Functional Classification

Functional classification is a process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. Federal regulations require that each state classify roadways in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures. The functional classification hierarchy is generally defined as:

- **Principal Arterials** serve major centers of metropolitan areas, provide a high degree of mobility, and can also provide mobility through rural areas. Unlike their access-controlled counterparts, abutting land uses can be served directly. Forms of access for principal arterial roadways include driveways to specific parcels and at-grade intersections with other roadways.
- **Minor Arterials** provide service for trips of moderate length, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their principal arterial counterparts and offer connectivity to the higher arterial system.
- **Collectors** serve a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling them to the arterial network. Within the context of functional classification, collectors are broken down into two categories: major collectors and minor collectors.
- **Local Roads** account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long distance travel, except at the origin or destination end of the trip, due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. Bus routes generally do not run on Local Roads. They are often designed to discourage through traffic. As public roads, they should be accessible for public use throughout the year.

It is the policy of the La Crosse County Highway Department to review the County Trunk Highway System on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the roadways are serving their intended purpose (i.e., mobility or accessibility). The primary criteria for defining county highways includes functional classification, average daily traffic (ADT) volumes, posted and observed travel speeds, and access control.

WisDOT provides functional classification maps by County, urbanized areas, and rural areas. For La Crosse County, there are functional classification maps for the entire county and for the urbanized area of La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, and West Salem. See WisDOT's website for the most recent functional classification maps.

2.4.1 Rural vs. Urban

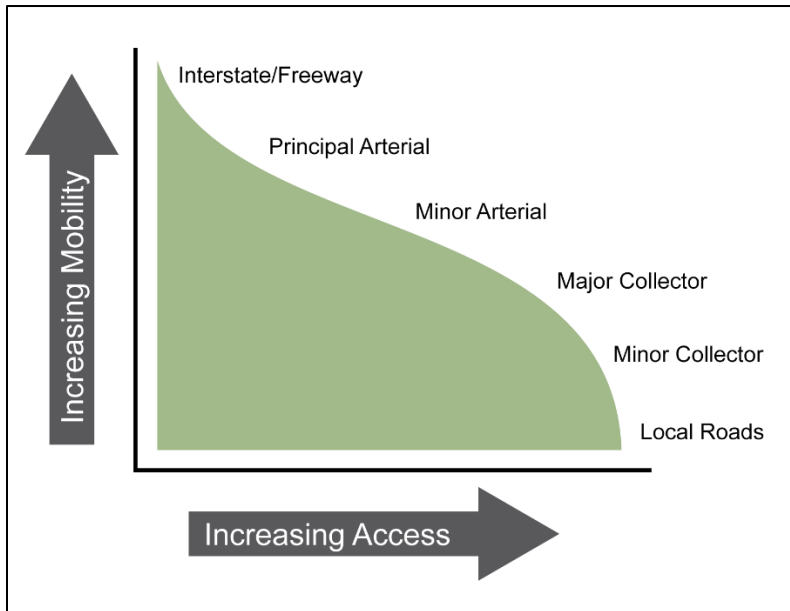
The CTH System connects cities, towns, and villages. In rural areas, larger cities are generally connected via arterial highways that provide direct service between the urban areas. These arterials are generally State or County owned and the La Crosse County Highway Department is likely responsible for the maintenance of these roads, directly for County roads or through contract with WisDOT for State roads. The collector roadways in rural areas generally serve small towns and villages directly, connecting them to the arterial network. The collectors gather traffic from the local roads, the lowest functionally classified roads which serve individual residences, farms, and other rural land uses.

2.4.2 Accessibility vs. Mobility

A highway network serves a dual role in providing (1) access to property, and (2) travel mobility. Access is a fixed requirement, necessary at both ends of any trip. Mobility, along the path of such trips, can be provided at varying levels, usually referred to as "level of service." It can incorporate a wide range of elements (e.g., riding comfort and freedom from speed changes) but the most basic is operating speed or trip travel time.

The functional classification of a roadway dictates the general level of accessibility vs. mobility (see **Figure 2.1**). Principal arterials (particularly in urban areas) reduce access, generally connecting to minor arterials and collector streets, to maximize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel). Minor arterials and collector streets in turn provide increasing levels of accessibility to commercial, office, and industrial lane uses, as well as connections to local streets. With increased mobility on minor arterials and collector streets, these facilities provide reduced traffic mobility, offering a compromise or transition between both functions.

Figure 2.1 – Accessibility vs. Mobility



3 PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

Right-of-way is the land over which an existing or planned public highway or railroad is intended and the boundary of which is shown on a legal map, plat, survey, or plan, or described in a recorded document. The most common type of right-of-way, referred to in this document, is land owned or leased by La Crosse County, adjacent to county trunk highways or recreational trails owned by La Crosse County.

In addition to accommodating county highways or travel ways, the public right-of-way is commonly used to accommodate public utilities. Utility companies may on occasion work within the public right-of-way to repair existing utilities or to install new utilities to accommodate new developments. More information regarding utilities within public right-of-way is available in [Section 5](#) of this manual.

3.1 Purpose

It is the goal of the La Crosse County Highway Department to provide right-of-ways which are safe and free of unnecessary hazards for the traveling public. It is also necessary for utility companies to have access to right-of-ways to provide valuable and necessary services to La Crosse County residents and businesses. This section describes proper and improper uses of the public right-of-way.

3.2 County Highway Right-of-Way

The right-of-way adjacent to county highways may vary but is generally 66 feet in total width. If a legal map, plat, survey, plan, or other recorded document does not exist to determine the exact location of the right-of-way, 33 feet on either side of the traveled centerline shall be considered the right-of-way.

3.2.1 Locating Right-of-Way Boundaries

If a private property owner is unsure of the exact location of the highway right-of-way adjacent to their property, at no cost to the property owner, the La Crosse County Highway Department will physically mark the right-of-way line adjacent to the highway on the private property. Property owners may also obtain property records from the La Crosse County Surveyor.

The La Crosse County Surveyor and/or Highway Department will not survey on private property or to establish present private property boundaries. See the La Crosse County Surveyor Department website for more information on their responsibilities.

3.2.2 Work Within Right-of-Way

Wisconsin State Statute 86.07(2) requires that the La Crosse County Highway Department issue a permit for any work done within county highway right-of-way. Anyone planning on performing work within a county highway right-of-way should contact the La Crosse County Highway Department prior to starting any work. Anyone who fails to contact the Highway Department and performs work within the county highway right-of-way will be responsible for any costs associated with correcting any work if necessary.

3.3 Vision Clearance

Vision clearance, sometimes referred to as a vision clearance triangle (VCT), provides for proper sight distance for motorists traveling within La Crosse County. Vision clearance is essential to traffic safety, but the regulations cannot guarantee unobstructed vision due to topography, natural vegetative growth, and development that may encroach. Vision clearance setbacks are intended to provide motorists a safe braking and

stopping distance to avoid accidents and to provide motorists turning onto roads, streets, and highways a safe accelerating distance to merge with traffic to reduce traffic congestion.

The area of vision clearance is calculated by connecting the endpoints of line segments which begin at the intersection of two highways, as shown in **Figure 3.1**.

1. 150 feet along the centerline of Class 1 and Class 2 highways.
2. 250 feet along the centerline of Class 3 highways.

3.4 Highway Setbacks

Highway setback lines are established to promote the public safety, general welfare, and convenience outside the limits of incorporated cities and villages within La Crosse County. Guidelines for highway setback lines are provided in Section 17.06 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances.

3.4.1 Setback Distances

The setback distances for the respective highway classes are as follows (see **Figure 3.1**):

1. 60 feet from the centerline of Class 1 highways, but not less than 25 feet from the highway right-of-way line.
2. 80 feet from the centerline of Class 2 and Class 3 highways, but not less than 50 feet from the highway right-of-way line.
3. For parcels that do not abut Class 1, 2, or 3 highways, a 25-foot front yard setback applies.

3.4.2 Structures Allowed Within Highway Setbacks

The following may be placed between setback lines but shall not be placed within the highway right-of-way:

1. Open fences.
2. Parking lots.
3. Utility transmission lines and power poles.

4. Utility structures not exceeding 64 square feet in size and 5 feet in height if they are not located within the vision clearance area.
5. Underground structures if they are not capable of being used as foundations for future prohibited structures.
6. Shrubs, trees, or other ornamental vegetation, as well as agricultural field crops if they are not located within the vision clearance area.
7. Other landscaping and ornamental features which do not exceed 16 square feet and 6 feet in height.
8. Retaining walls that do not obstruct vision.
9. Structures for public use such as bus shelters, salt boxes, drinking fountains, etc.

3.4.3 Structures Prohibited Within Highway Setbacks

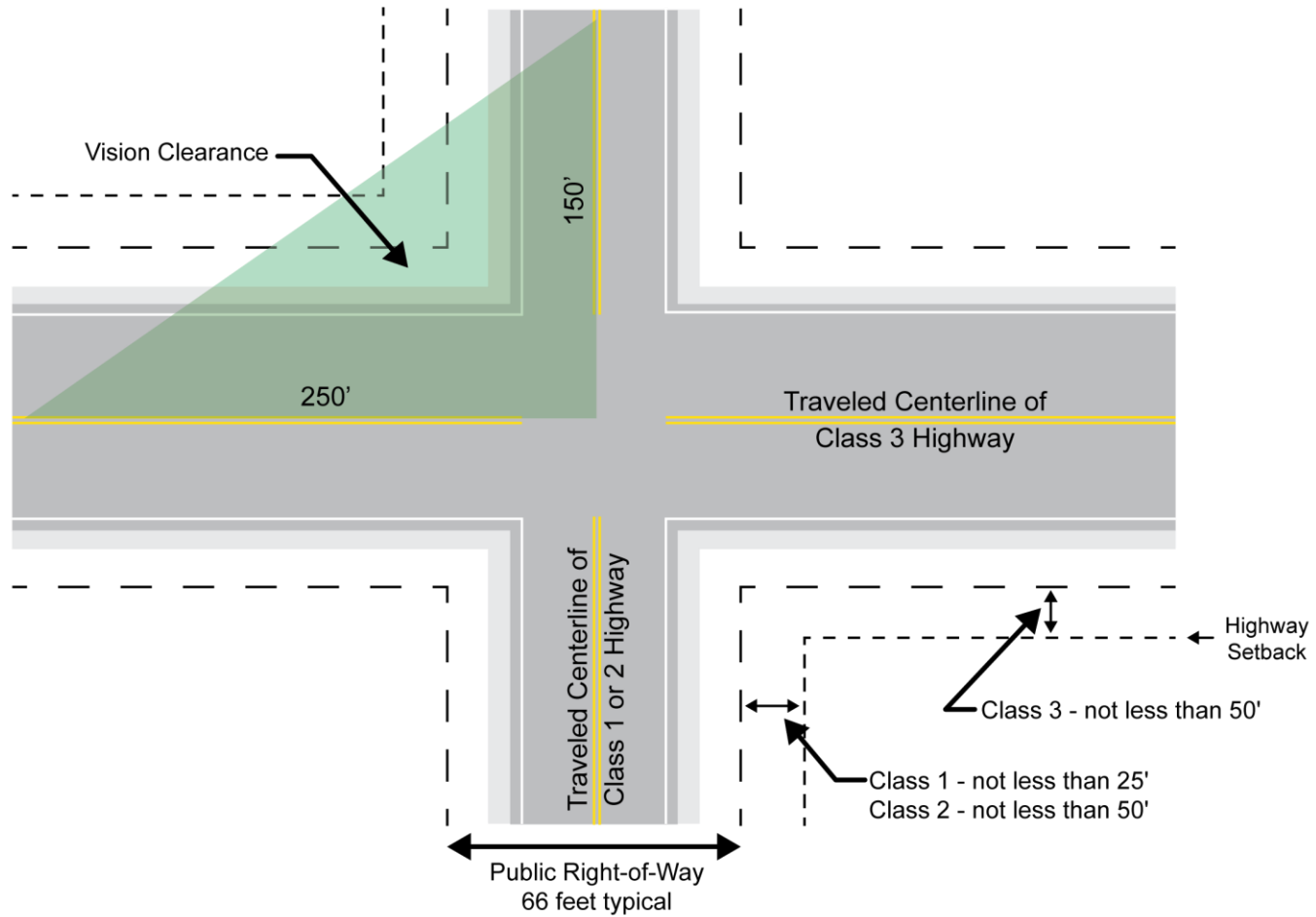
The following are prohibited within the highway setback lines:

1. New building or structure, including new additions to existing buildings or structures.
2. Solid fences.

3.4.4 Removal of Noncompliant Structures

It is the policy of the La Crosse County Zoning Department to review on a case-by-case basis structures that do not meet the VCT requirements. The Zoning Department may take action to correct the situation to meet the VCT requirements. Such action may include the removal of noncompliant structures.

Figure 3.1 – Vision Clearance and Highway Setback



3.5 Right-of-Way Encroachments

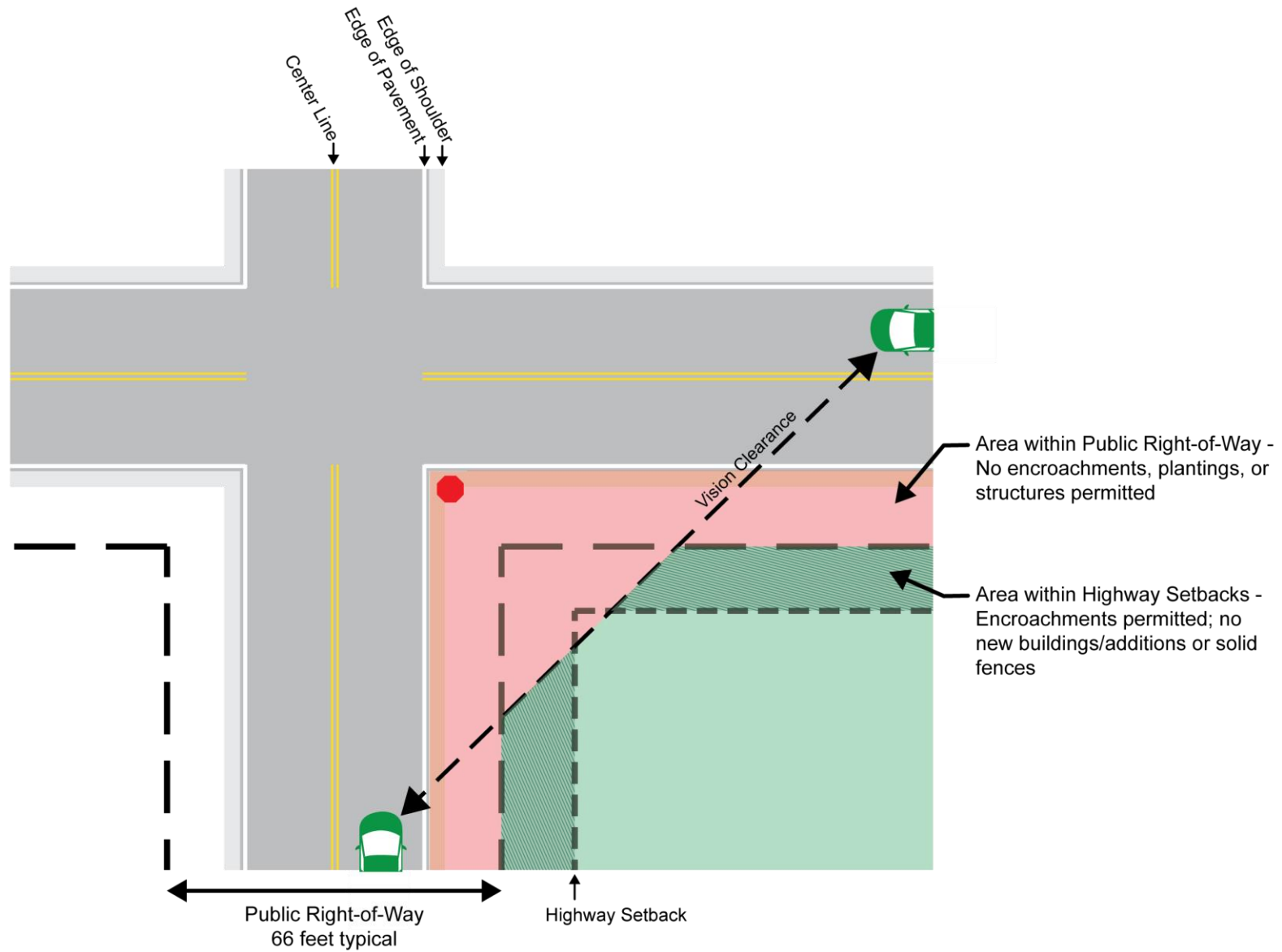
Encroachments upon the highway right-of-way in Section 86.04 of the Wisconsin State Statutes states in part as follows:

“If any Highway right-of-way shall be encroached upon, under or over by any fence, stand, building or any other structure or object ... the county highway committee, in the case of a county trunk highway ... may order the occupant or owner of the land through or by which the highway runs, and to which the encroachment shall be appurtenant, to remove the encroachment beyond the limits of the highway within 30 days.”

Typically, encroachments are not permitted within the public right-of-way and come under the discretion of the Highway Department. Additionally, some encroachments are not permitted within the highway setbacks or VCT at intersections. **Figure 3.2** provides guidance to where encroachments are permitted.

The Highway Department may on occasion come upon right-of-way encroachments created by private property owners. An encroachment is any prohibited use or activity within the right-of-way therefore restricting the full use or purpose for which the right-of-way was established. It is the policy of the La Crosse County Highway Department to review and correct these right-of-way encroachments on a case-by-case basis. Examples of some common encroachments follow Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 – Encroachments



3.5.1 Plantings, Crops, and Other Vegetation

Plantings, crops, and other vegetation that is growing within the public right-of-way has the potential to create a safety hazard, may make it difficult for the Highway Department to perform routine maintenance, and may interfere with existing utilities and/or traffic control devices (i.e., stop signs, speed limit signs, no passing signs, etc.). The Highway Department will take action to correct such obstructions if they become a hazard.

3.5.1.1 Obstruction of Intersections

No person shall maintain, plant or permit to remain on any private or public premises situated, at the intersection of two (2) or more roads, any hedge, tree, shrub or other growth which may obstruct the view of the operator of any motor vehicle or pedestrian approaching such intersection.

3.5.1.2 Obstruction of Traffic Signs

It is unlawful for any person to plant, cause to grow, allow to grow, or maintain any trees, bushes, shrubbery, or vegetation of any kind which is an obstruction to the clear and complete vision of any traffic sign. It shall be the duty of every owner of such tree, brush, shrubbery, or vegetation to remove such obstruction. If the owner does not adequately maintain any trees, bushes, shrubbery, or vegetation then the Highway Department has the authority to perform the necessary maintenance including the possible removal of the obstruction.

3.5.1.3 Routine County Maintenance

The Highway Department performs routine mowing and other maintenance along most County Highways throughout the growing season. In the process of mowing, or other maintenance activities, the Highway Department personnel may come upon plantings, crops, or other vegetation that encroaches on the public right-of-way. In extreme cases, the Highway Department personnel should notify the Highway Commissioner of the encroachment. The Highway Commissioner will inform the Highway Department personnel

on how to proceed which may include the immediate clearing of the obstruction if it creates a potential safety hazard to the traveling public. If it is determined that the obstruction does not create an immediate hazard, the Highway Commissioner or designated department personnel may notify the property owner of the encroachment and request removal.

3.5.1.4 Utility Maintenance

Utility companies may on occasion clear trees, bushes, shrubbery, or vegetation that might interfere with overhead and other utilities located within the public right-of-way. This practice is done to ensure a safe and reliable provision of services throughout the County.

3.5.1.5 Owner Responsibility

A property owner may mow the portion of their property that is located within the public right-of-way. Property owners may also clear vegetation within the right-of-way. Extreme caution should be taken when performing maintenance within the public right-of-way. Please note that a permit is required when performing excavation within the county right-of-way. A permit may be obtained through the La Crosse County Highway Department.

3.5.2 Trees

Questions such as “Who owns the trees?” and “Who is responsible for their care?” often arise when trees are located near or within the public right-of-way. The following sections provide details regarding trees that are located within and outside the public right-of-way. **Figure 3.3** displays an example of who is responsible for the care of these trees.

3.5.2.1 Trees Within Public Right-of-Way

The duty for caring for trees in the public right-of-way resides with the La Crosse County Highway Department. The Highway Department has the authority to trim, prune, or cut down trees within a public right-of-way. This is a power that the Highway

Department may, not must, exercise. The Highway Department will cut down a tree if it lies within the public right-of-way and constitutes a hazard to the traveling public. Utility companies may also have the authority to trim, prune, or cut down trees that are located with the public right-of-way and may impact the utility lines or other utility services.

3.5.2.2 Trees Outside Public Right-of-Way

The duty for caring for trees outside the public right-of-way resides primarily with the property owner. If a tree overhangs or extends into the public right-of-way, the Highway Department may trim or prune the tree to improve sight distance, eliminate any obstruction of traffic control signs or devices, and other reasons as determined by the Highway Department.

In some cases, it may be necessary for a tree that is located outside the public right-of-way to be cut down to improve safety for the traveling public or to eliminate potential conflicts with utility lines. Examples may include trees outside the public right-of-way that are dead, dying, diseased or severely leaning, that could cause damage. In such cases the Highway Department will notify the property owner of the specific concern. It is the property owner's responsibility to arrange for the removal of those trees.

3.5.2.3 Right to Wood

When it is necessary to remove trees located in the public right-of-way, the adjacent property owner shall have the right of first refusal to keep the wood, per Wisconsin State Statute 86.03(2). Except in cases of diseased trees (Ash Bore for example), the Highway Department may dispose of the wood to prevent the potential spread of any diseases.

3.5.3 Fences

No fences, open or closed, are permitted within the public right-of-way. Only open fences, which are fences composed of at least 50% open spaces, are permitted outside the public right-

of-way and within the highway setbacks. Any fence, open or closed, is permitted outside the highway setbacks. **Figure 3.4** provides examples of the proper and improper location of any type of fence as they relate to the public right-of-way and highway setbacks.

Wisconsin State Statute 86.04 provides for the order of removal for any and all encroachments. On a case-by-case basis, the Highway Department will consider a revocable right-of-way occupancy permit for such fences.

Figure 3.3 – Tree Care Responsibility

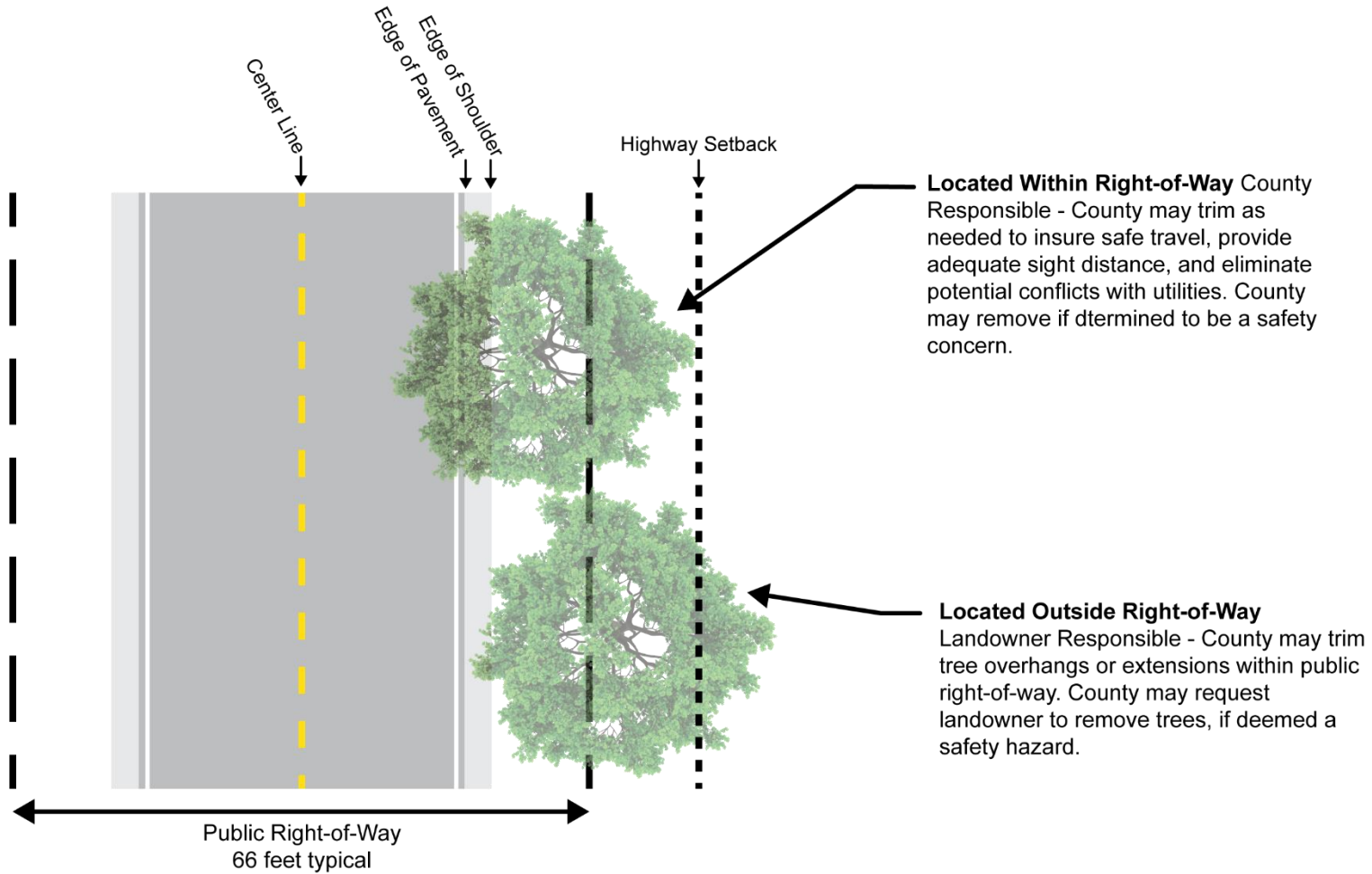
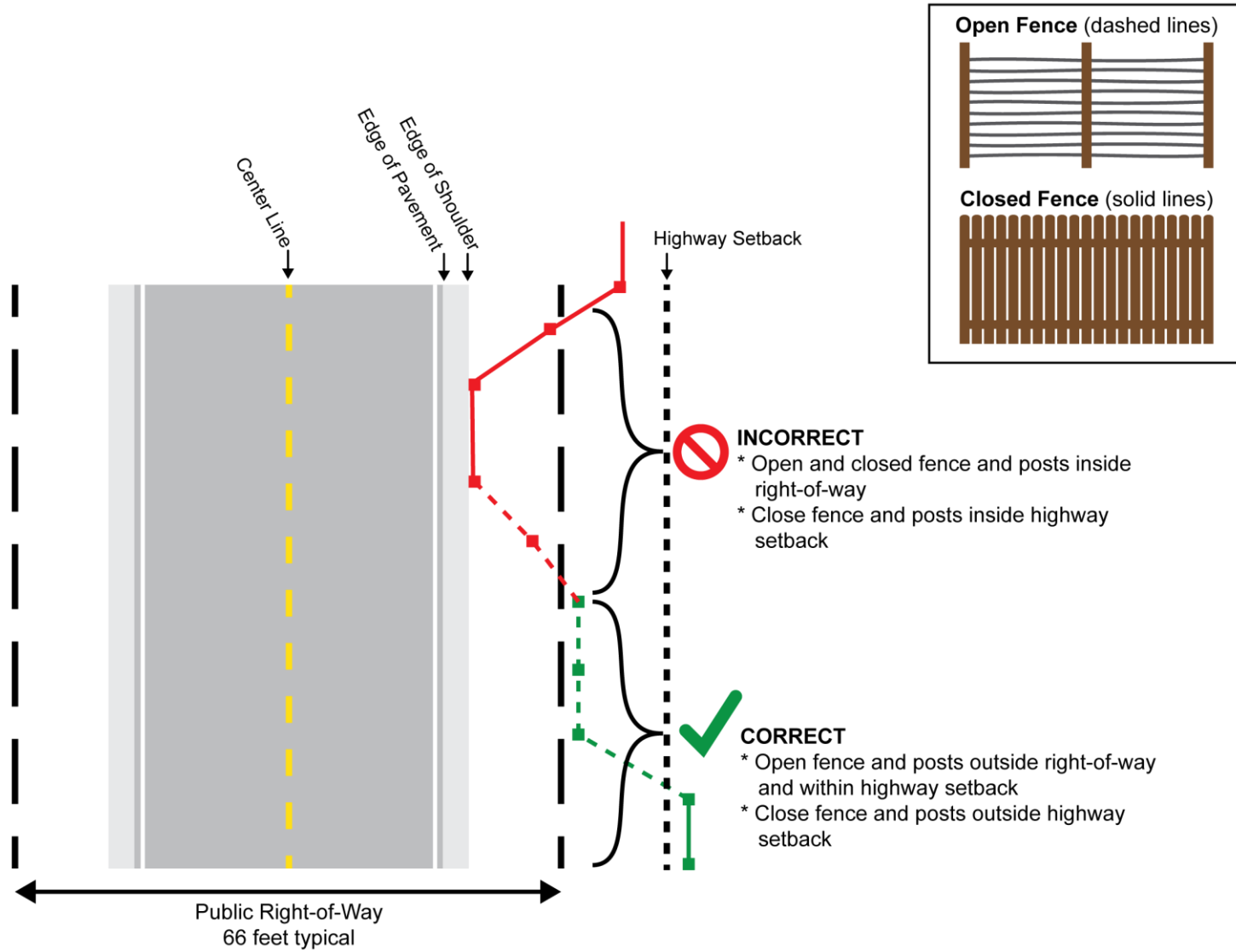


Figure 3.4 – Proper Fence Installation



3.5.4 Mailboxes

Mailboxes are the only structure that private owners are permitted to install within the public right-of-way. No issue of written permit is required for the placement of mailboxes within the public right-of-way.

3.5.4.1 Ownership and Liability

The mailbox installation and support, along with the on-going maintenance and conformity with current United States Postal Service (USPS) standards, are the responsibility of the property owner. All mailboxes placed within the public right-of-way are owned by the property owner and are placed there at the owner's risk. This section of the manual is not intended to and shall not be construed to create any affirmative duty on the part of the La Crosse County Highway Department to locate and remove improperly installed mailboxes.

The USPS states that Customers must remove obstructions, including vehicles, trash cans, and snow, that impedes the efficient delivery of mail. The Highway Department also encourages the removal of snow near mailboxes to help facilitate the safe and convenient delivery of mail, reduce potential conflicts between mail delivery vehicles and the traveling public, and to reduce the possibility of damaged mailboxes resulting from repeated snowplowing and pushing of snow toward the mailbox.

3.5.4.2 Location and Installation of Mailboxes

The proper location and installation of mailboxes can minimize potential hazards and provide for safe travel, convenient mail delivery, and effectively accommodate maintenance activities. **Figure 3.5** displays the proper location of a mailbox. Mailboxes should be located on the right-hand side of the road in the carrier's travel direction and should be conveniently placed so the carrier does not have to leave the vehicle to deliver the mail.

All mailboxes should be mounted at a height of 42 to 48 inches from the road surface to the bottom of the mailbox. The USPS recommends that property owners contact the postmaster or carrier before erecting or replacing mailboxes and supports as installation recommendations may vary due to road, shoulder, and curb conditions.

3.5.4.3 Mailbox Supports

Mailbox supports must be designed so that if struck, it will bend or fall away from the striking vehicle to prevent severe damage to the vehicle or injury to the traveling public. Massive supports such as telephone poles, heavy metal posts, concrete posts, antique farm equipment, or other similar items are prohibited. No other objects, including, but not limited to, landscaping boulders or fences may be placed near the mailbox. If possible, all newspaper tubes and mailboxes shall be placed on the same post to avoid unnecessary posts within the public right-of-way. Supports that are not properly designed will be noticed as Highway Encroachments under the process described in Section 86.04 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. The following are examples of unacceptable mailbox installations and supports:

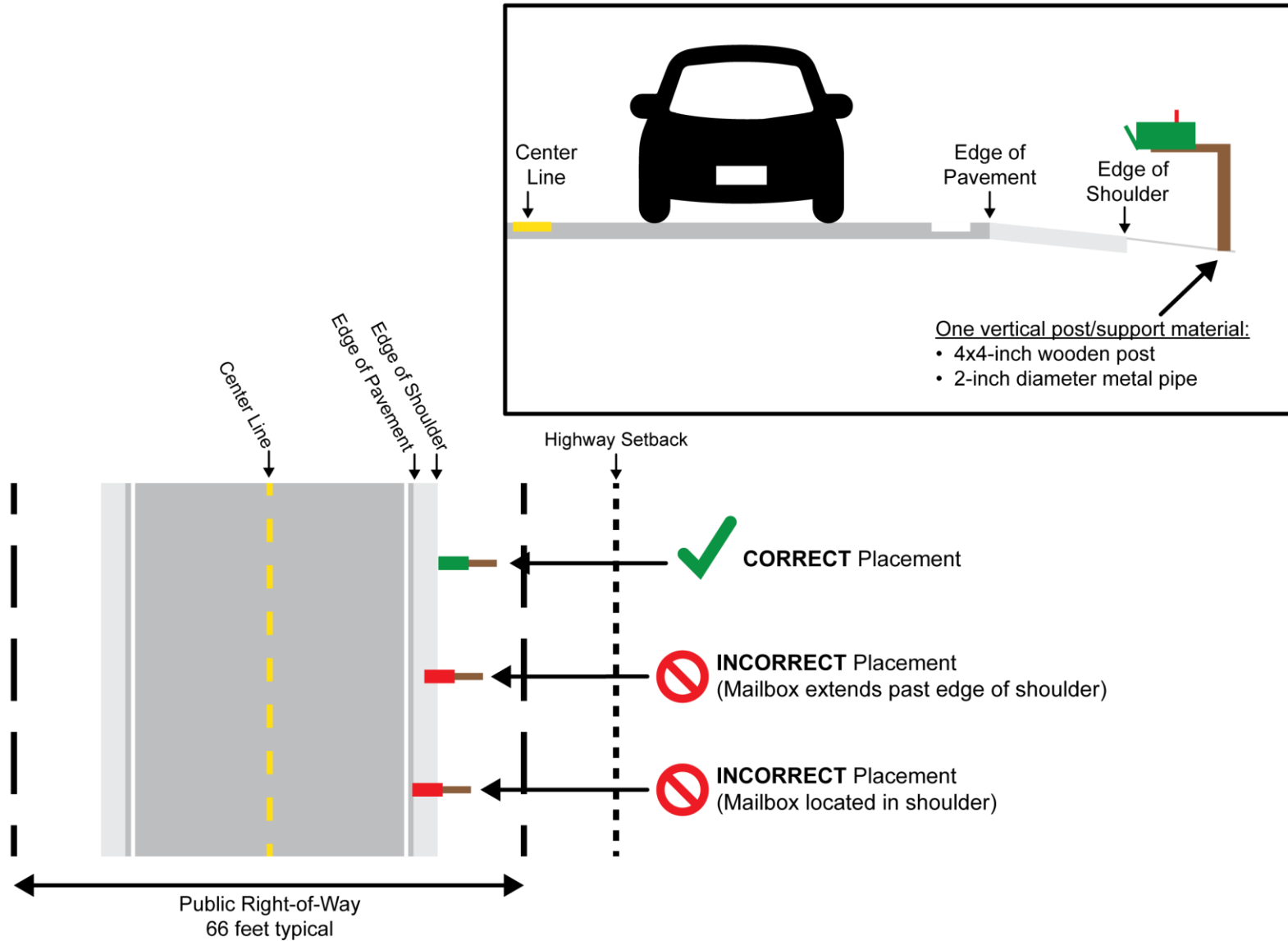
1. Mailboxes or supports that encroach upon the travel way or shoulder of a roadway.
2. Installations with more than one vertical support.
3. A single support containing more than two mailboxes unless specifically approved by the Highway Department.
4. A support using unsafe materials stronger than a wooden 4x4-inch post or a 2-inch diameter metal pipe that weighs more than three (3) pounds per lineal foot.
5. A mailbox that is not U.S. Postal Service approved.
6. Adjacent mailbox installations whose respective supports are spaced closer than 30 inches measured from center of support to center of support.
7. Any neighborhood delivery or collection box units.

3.5.4.4 Replacement of Damaged Mailboxes

The La Crosse County Highway Department will repair or replace properly located and installed mailboxes and/or supports damaged by actual physical contact with a county highway department truck or equipment. Any mailbox that is repaired or replaced by the La Crosse County Highway Department does not imply a change of ownership. The Highway Department does not provide special mailbox installations or decorative designs.

The Highway Department will attempt to replace all damaged mailboxes within seven (7) days of being notified. However, weather conditions and/or maintenance activities (e.g., excessive snow piles, frozen ground, on-going snow removal) may delay repair or replacement of damaged mailboxes. If this occurs, a temporary mailbox may be installed until such time that the damaged mailbox can be adequately repaired or replaced.

Figure 3.5 – Proper Mailbox Placement



3.5.5 Headwall Structures

Headwalls, or retaining walls, while being aesthetically pleasing, may pose potential hazards to the traveling public and may hinder highway maintenance and/or snow removal. If a property owner constructs a headwall, the entire structure must be located outside the public right-of-way. Improperly constructed headwall structures, within the public right-of-way, will be required to be removed.

3.5.6 Refuse Containers

Refuse containers (including garbage and recycle containers) are not to be placed on the shoulder of roadways. They are best placed in the driveway to which they serve, off the shoulder line of the highway. Any encroachment should be brought to the attention of the local unit of government that holds the contract with the firms serving the refuse service (i.e. Town, Village, or City) for corrective action. La Crosse County Highway Department does not issue written permits for the placement of containers within the public right-of-way.

3.5.7 Memorials

Loss of life related to a traffic crash has a devastating impact on families and friends of the victim. The Highway Department understands the distressing shock of such a loss of life and recognizes that some people desire to grieve by placing a memorial near the crash site.

La Crosse County Highway Department works to mirror the guidelines noted for state highways regarding the placement and maintenance of memorials along highways (information on WisDOT's Roadside Memorials website). The Highway Department does not permit placing memorials within the public right-of-way and may remove such memorials.

It is best to remove the memorial as soon as possible if it poses a safety concern, for example:

- If it is in a dangerous area (crash already has occurred).
- If it interferes with roadway safety features or vision.
- If it negatively impacts the free flow of traffic.
- If it would be hazardous if it were hit.

A memorial may also be removed if:

- It interferes with routine maintenance.
- It falls into disrepair.
- The department receives a complaint.

3.5.8 Miscellaneous Signs

Any signs along roadways (within the public right-of-way), including political/campaign signs, garage sale, for sale, etc. pose potential hazards. Improperly placed signs can:

- Obstruct a motorist's view.
- Distract a driver's attention.
- Compound damages or injuries in the event of a crash.
- Endanger the safety of individuals who are erecting signs along busy highways.
- Present obstacles to crews who maintain (mow) roadways.

Private signs, especially larger billboard-type signs, are particularly dangerous when placed in vision areas at intersections. According to Section 86.19(3) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, the county highway committee can fine not less than \$10 nor more than \$100 for first offenses where signs violate the law. The La Crosse County Highway Department removes all signs at such time as there are complaints regarding private signage on highway right-of-way.

Typically, the Highway Department is directed to remove signs found within highway right-of-way, especially if the signs pose a

safety hazard. The Highway Department will make reasonable attempts to preserve signs that are taken down and to provide sign owners with an opportunity to claim the signs.

3.5.9 Manure Pipelines

Agriculture activities often require the transport of manure from lagoons or other storage areas to farm fields. Transporting this material in vehicles is costly for farm operations and results in repeated heavy loads on county highways. To reduce agricultural operating costs and reduce heavy loads on county highways, it is mutually beneficial for manure pipeline systems to be used for transporting material to the farm fields. Occasionally this will require the pipeline to cross a county highway. Existing culverts are typically permitted to be used for these crossings. When an existing culvert is not available, the Department may work with farmers to install a culvert to be used. Requests for culverts must be submitted through the Utility permit process (outlined in Section 5). Requests will typically be approved if the following conditions are met:

- The applicant pays 100% of the project costs.
- The culvert installation won't compromise highway safety.
- The culvert installation won't compromise the highway's structural integrity.
- The culvert installation will not cause extra or unwanted water flow onto adjacent parcels.
- The project is constructed with boring equipment if the roadway pavement is less than 5 years old.
- The crossing is more than 250 feet from an existing culvert suitable for using as a manure pipeline crossing.

Manure pipeline requests that do not meet the conditions above will typically be denied by Department staff.

4 ELEMENTS RELATING TO SAFETY

In line with the La Crosse County Highway Department's mission statement, safety is of the utmost importance and is highly considered in many tasks that the Highway Department performs. Safety is not for just roadway users, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, snowmobilers, All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) users, and adjoining property owners.

4.1 Signing

Traffic signs play a very significant role in transportation safety, acting as a form of communication for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Whether signs are informing users of traffic rules, hazards, how to get somewhere, or where services are located, all signs on county highways follow Federal and State guidelines.

4.1.1 Manuals for Uniform Traffic Control Devices

The La Crosse County Highway Department inventories and updates county signs according to the guidelines set forth in the Federal Highway Association's (FHWA) Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and Wisconsin's MUTCD supplement. Sign reflectivity standards are addressed in these manuals along with various other sign regulations including colors, sizes, and types.

4.1.2 Sign Requests

Signing requests (whether it be to add, remove, or change a sign) can be made to the Highway Department in writing, with justification for the requests, such as days of the week and/or times of the day that a concern is occurring. Changes are not made merely because of personal preference. The Highway Department utilizes the MUTCD, WisDOT guidance, and engineering judgement in determining any needed sign modifications.

Regulatory signs provide users with information about rules for traffic direction, lane use, turning, speed, parking, and other special situations. These signs are regulated by FHWA for sign contents, size and dimensions, colors, and sign materials. They are also regulated in their use and appropriate location. These requirements will be adhered to when reviewing sign requests for regulatory signs.

Non-regulatory signs are those not regulated by FHWA or WisDOT but are helpful to assist roadway users of additional hazards to be aware of. Signs such as "Blind Entrance" or "Deaf Child Area" are types of non-regulatory signs.

4.2 Speed Limits

Fixed speed limits, per Wisconsin State Statute 346.57(4), for roadways are determined by various roadway characteristics, such as the type of roadway (freeway, state highway, county highway, etc.), location and surrounding land use, etc. Local governments, per Wisconsin State Statute 349.11, can raise or lower those fixed speed limits when deemed appropriately. Speed limits for all La Crosse County Trunk Highways are listed in the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances Chapter 7.04.

When determining appropriate speed limits for existing or new county highways, La Crosse County follows methods laid out in Chapter 13-5 of WisDOT's Traffic Engineering, Operations & Safety (TEOpS) Manual.

4.3 Intersection Control

Intersection crashes on the County Highway system will be reviewed annually. Intersections found to have developed a pattern of crashes involving failure to yield at a stop sign controlled intersection will be investigated further by the

Highway Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee. If the reviewer determines the frequency or severity of crashes at a particular intersection is significant, the intersection will be further investigated by surveying/inspecting the intersection and reviewing the crash reports.

The intersection survey/inspection will include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- Visibility of approach from all directions
- Location of existing signs
- Conformity of sign to MUTCD requirements (i.e. size, height, etc.)
- Condition of signs
- Pavement condition (i.e. bare, ice covered, ruts, etc.)

The crash reports will be reviewed to determine:

- What caused the crashes?
- Did crashes occur due to failure to stop?
- Did crashes occur due to failure to yield upon leaving the stop location?

Based on the review of the intersection and the crash reports, the following countermeasures may be implemented:

- Double stop signs
- Double stop ahead signs
- Larger than standard signs
- Install flags on the signs
- Four-way stop signs
- Reduced speed on approaching highway
- Relocation of all signs (to avoid visual clutter, blending into background, make signs more prominent, etc.)

Rumble strips will be considered if the use of any or all of the above fails to significantly reduce the frequency and/or severity

of the crashes, or if deemed necessary due to the frequency and severity of crashes at an intersection.

Prior to installing rumble strips, the following shall occur:

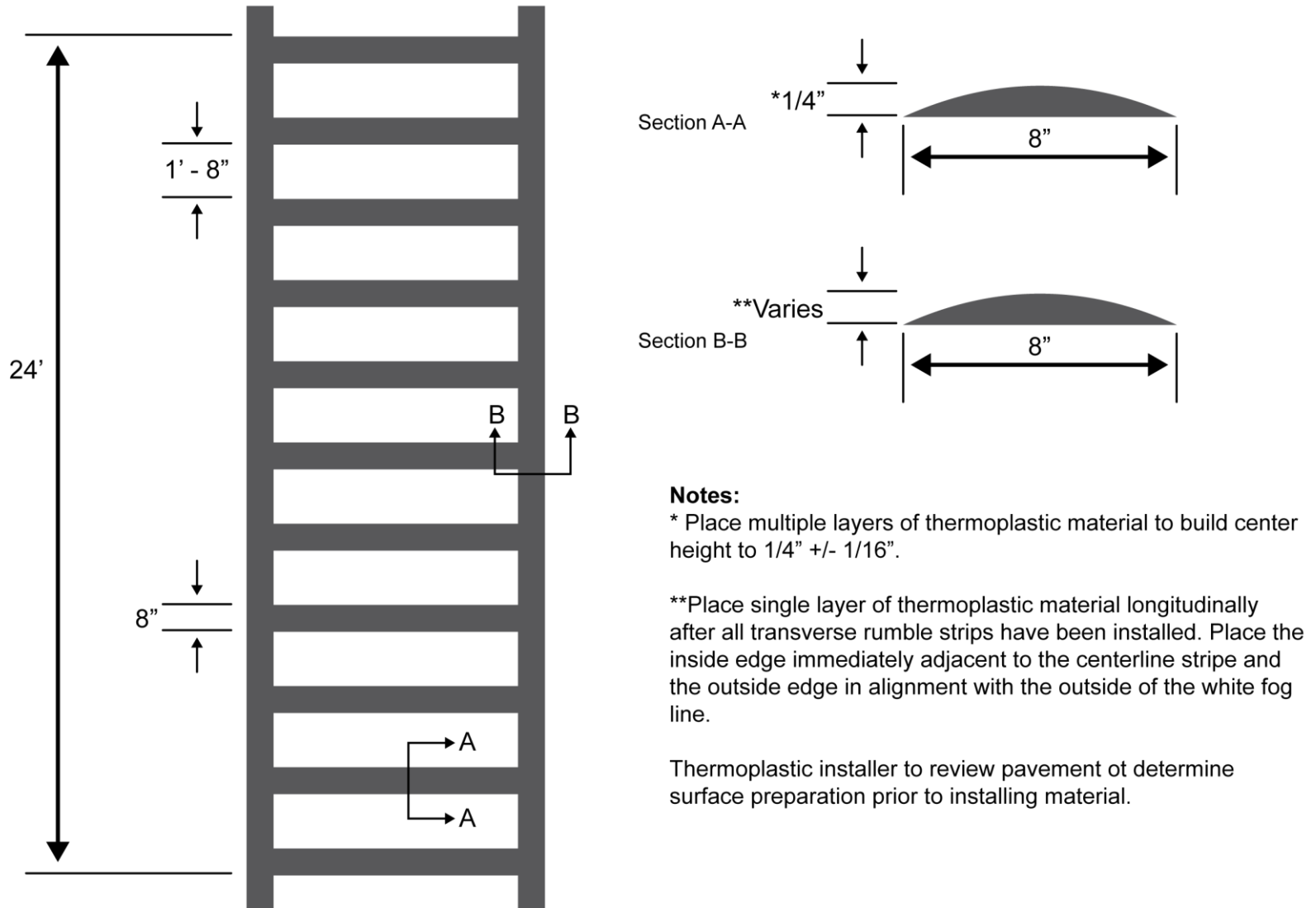
- The La Crosse County Highway Safety Commission will review the intersection and provide recommendation to the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee.
- A public meeting or public hearing will be held.
- The La Crosse County Public Works & Infrastructure Committee will make the final decision regarding the installation of rumble strips at any county highway intersection.

Notes:

1. Existing rumble strips will be replaced at intersections when the roadways are reconstructed. Permanent rumble strip removal must be approved by the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee.
2. Rumble strips can be an effective means of alerting the public to an upcoming potential hazard when other means have failed to achieve a reduction in accidents. To be truly effective, rumble strips need to be used only in those locations determined to be unusually hazardous. Care needs to be taken to prevent drivers from relying on rumble strips to indicate that a stop sign is coming up. With limited installation, the rumble strips will immediately alert the motorist to the hazardous situation they will be encountering.

Rumble strips will be installed according to WisDOT design standards, following WisDOT Standard Detail Drawing (SDD) "Asphaltic Rumble Strips at Intersections". In special situations, thermoplastic rumble strips, as illustrated in **Figure 4.1** may be installed. The thermoplastic material does have higher initial installation costs as well as more maintenance costs compared to milled in rumble strips.

Figure 4.1 – Thermoplastic Rumble Strip Application



4.4 Work Zone Safety

Experience has shown that following the principles and procedures developed and documented for proper temporary traffic control in the MUTCD manuals enhance the safety and communication in work zones. These principles and guidelines are utilized to the best of the Highway Department's ability to ensure the most safe and practical environment for both workers and the traveling public.

4.4.1 No Handheld Mobile Devices in Work Zones

Mobile devices continue to be a leading cause of distracted driving throughout the United States. Given that Wisconsin sees an average of nearly 2,000 work zone crashes annually, a new law, 2015 Wisconsin Act 308, was passed as part of ongoing efforts to reduce distracted driving and increase safety for motorists and workers throughout the state. This law makes it illegal to talk on a handheld mobile device while driving in a Wisconsin road work zone. As of 2019, violations including court costs are \$162.70 for a first offense and \$200.50 for a second offense. Note that fines are subject to change in accordance with Uniform Traffic Deposit Schedule.

4.4.2 Temporary Traffic Control

Temporary traffic control (TTC) is often required during construction, maintenance, or emergency response activities that affect road users, including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Planned construction and maintenance activities may include prepared documents that provide TTC plans, specifications, and special provisions as it relates to that specific activity. However, often times TTC methods are to be provided in the field and fit to certain situations and conditions. For these instances, the Highway Department uses and enforces the policies outlined in WisDOT's Wisconsin Work Zone Field Manual. The manual is available online through WisDOT's website and includes the following information:

- Individual and general responsibilities such as permission to work within the right-of-way; installing, inspecting, and removing TTC devices; and roadside safety.
- TTC devices including trailer mounted devices, high-visibility clothing, vehicle warning lights, and roadway devices.
- Layouts for typical situations that may be encountered in the field.

4.4.3 Safety Apparel

Worker visibility personal protective safety clothing is intended to provide conspicuity (to make readily visible) during both daytime and nighttime usage, and also needs to meet the performance class requirements standards established by the American National Standards Institute/International Safety Equipment Association (ANSI/ISEA).

Because standards for minimum reflectivity has changed over the years, La Crosse County Highway Department uses the most current MUTCD manuals available as a resource in updating the Highway Department's safety apparel.

Further information on worker safety and visibility is available on FHWA's website.

4.4.4 Flagging Operations

Construction, maintenance, or emergency response activities may require the use of flaggers on county highways. Flaggers guide traffic safely through work areas, protect their fellow workers, prevent unreasonable delays for road users, and answer motorists' questions politely and knowledgeably.

The Highway Department uses and enforces the policies outlined in WisDOT's Wisconsin Flagging Handbook, which is based on Wisconsin State Statutes 340.01(22e) and 346.27, as well as Part 6 of the MUTCD. The handbook includes

information on rules of conduct, flagger apparel and equipment, flagger position appropriate to activity, and methodology for various operations. This handbook is available online through WisDOT's website.

Most flagging activities require flaggers to be trained and certified. La Crosse County requires flaggers to be certified through WisDOT's training certification course.

4.5 Use of Video Cameras in Highway Vehicles

Motorists at times will operate improperly in work zones or create dangerous situations. The use of vehicle cameras on flagger vehicles and attenuator trucks will assist local law enforcement officers in enforcement of construction zone and other vehicle violations and may also be a deterrent to future violations. Vehicle cameras in management vehicles showing interactions between the public and county highway management will help to increase public confidence in the services provided by the Highway Department.

4.5.1 Placement of Cameras

Video cameras shall be placed in certain highway vehicles looking forward and to the rear of the vehicles. The cameras were installed in management vehicles, flagger vehicles, and attenuator trucks initially. As the Department has found the use of the cameras invaluable, they are gradually being installed in all other Highway Department vehicles. The cameras shall be activated at all times that the vehicle is in use.

4.5.2 Retention of Video Recordings

Video recordings shall be retained for a minimum of 120 days in accordance with the La Crosse County policy. If a claim is filed or a lawsuit is filed as a result of an incident where the camera recording is relevant to the incident, the recording shall be kept as long as the case or claim is pending.

Failure of an employee to maintain camera recordings in accordance with this policy may result in disciplinary action against the employee.

5 UTILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Utility companies provide essential public services that are necessary to accommodate existing and future development throughout La Crosse County. Utilities are frequently located within the public right-of-way and as such impact the maintenance and operation of the county highway system. The coordination between utility companies, contractors, and the Highway Department is essential if public services are to be provided in an effective and efficient manner. The La Crosse County Highway Department has developed a Utility Accommodation Policy, derived from the Wisconsin County Highway Association's (WCHA) Utility Accommodation Policy. A full version of this policy is available at the County Highway office.

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to outline the key policies and procedures, as described in La Crosse County's Utility Accommodation Policy, that shall be met by any utility whose facility currently occupies, or will occupy in the future, any highway right-of-way or bridge over which the La Crosse County Highway Department has jurisdiction.

5.2 Utility Accommodation Requirements

The Highway Department regulates the use, occupation, and utility accommodation of the county trunk highway system under Sections 66.0831, 84.08, 85.15, 86.07(2), 86.16, and 182.017 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. These policies apply to all existing utility facilities retained, relocated, replaced, or altered, and to new utility facilities installed within the highway right-of-way.

Highway facilities (e.g. lighting, traffic signals, changeable message boards, etc.) operated by the Highway Department for

the purpose of ensuring motorist safety shall not be bound by these policies and procedures.

5.2.1 Utility Permit

A utility's request to use and occupy the right-of-way cannot be considered until adequate information is provided regarding proposed work. The amount of detail will vary with the complexity of the work, but all must include:

1. **Permit Application Form** – The permit application form is completed online through the Highway Department's Permit Sale Site. Select public or private utility to begin.
2. **Dimensioned Drawings or Sketches** – The limits of the proposed work and dimensions from the proposed work to the commonly accepted right-of-way line and edge of travel way are required. For highway crossings, a cross-section detail showing depth of bury or overhead clearance is required.
3. **Installation Information** – Installation information shall be provided that includes, but is not limited to, the general location, size, type, nature, and extent of impacts to the right-of-way by the utility facilities being installed or adjusted. At the request of the Highway Department, details regarding the proposed construction procedures, traffic control and protection measures, proposed access points, or trees to be removed may be required. If facilities are attached to a structure, additional information is required, including but not limited to structure number, weight of lines, hanger spacing, hanger details, and expansion/contraction details.

5.2.2 Coordination with Planned Improvements

The La Crosse County Highway Department encourages the coordination of utility repairs and installations to be completed

in conjunction with planned roadway maintenance and reconstruction. Combining the installation of utilities with road repairs is the most efficient and effective way to accommodate utilities and in the long run is better in terms of providing a sound, well maintained travel way for the public. This is of particular importance when new roadways are being constructed as it is the goal of the Highway Department to avoid unnecessary open cuts on new or nearly new roadways within the County. Any open cut utility work, regardless of how well the road is repaired, has the potential to compromise the integrity of the pavement surface, the base, and sub-base materials which can lead to significant maintenance problems and potentially shorten the life of the roadway segment.

5.3 Preferred Utility Accommodations

The La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy, as derived from WCHA's Utility Accommodation Policy for utility accommodations, includes information regarding:

1. Emergency Work
2. Abandoned Facilities
3. Environmental Conditions
4. Annual Service Connection Permits
5. Location Requirements
6. Construction Requirements
7. Specific Requirements

5.4 Authority to Enforce Policy

The Highway Commissioner has the authority to enforce the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy and the specific requirements of an individual utility permit. All utilities, including all consultants, contractors, and subcontractors working for utilities, are required to abide by this policy and the specific provisions related to individual utility permits.

The utility must first appeal to the permit reviewer, La Crosse County Highway Commissioner, and the La Crosse County Public Works & Infrastructure Committee. In the final appeal process, utilities can appeal to WisDOT if they feel the County is not treating them fairly.

5.4.1 Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy will result in corrective actions and/or monetary penalties against the utility. At the Highway Department's option, the following measures may be taken if a utility fails to comply with the policy or specific permit provisions.

1. **Verbal Request for Corrective Action** – The verbal request shall include:
 - a. The reason(s) why the present or completed operation is or was not in compliance with the WCHA's Utility Accommodation Policy, as adopted by the La Crosse County Highway Department, or the permit provisions.
 - b. What steps shall be taken to correct the situation.
 - c. What additional action may be taken if correction is disregarded.
2. **Written Reprimand** – A written reprimand shall be sent to the utility for violating the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy or the utility's permit provisions when the utility does not comply with the verbal request. The written reprimand shall contain the same information as the verbal request for corrective action and shall serve as documentation for the violation. The La Crosse County Highway Department shall be responsible for writing and sending this reprimand.
3. **Suspension of Work Activities** – If a responsible person of an inspected work site fails to comply with a verbal request, the inspector may order the suspension of all work activities at the site. If this occurs, the La Crosse County Highway Commissioner shall be informed of the situation. The Highway Department shall then contact an authority of

the utility to explain why the operation was suspended and what action needs to be taken before work can resume.

4. **Removal of Installed Facilities** – Any facility installed by a utility shall be in the location shown on the approved permit. If such a facility is discovered in an unacceptable location, and the utility is notified, the utility shall have two weeks of response time to decide on its corrective action. If the utility fails to take corrective action, the Highway Department shall take action to have the facility relocated or removed, at the utility's expense. The permittee shall remove the improperly placed facility and put it in an approved location. If the utility fails to relocate its own facility, the Highway Department shall have the facility removed and bill the permittee for such work.
5. **Permit Revocation** – If a utility continues to be in noncompliance with the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy or specific permit provisions, the Highway Department may revoke the utility's permit. The utility may reapply for a permit with the Highway Department when it can demonstrate a good faith effort to comply.
6. **Public Service Commission (PSC) Notification** – Continued violations by a utility of the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy or the utility's permit provisions may result in notification to the PSC, in which the Highway Department would request their assistance in correcting the situation.
7. **Withholding Approval of Future Permits** – Continued violations by a utility of the La Crosse County Utility Accommodation Policy or the utility's permit provisions may result in withholding approval of all permit applications for that utility until violations are corrected to the satisfaction of the Highway Department. The severity and number of written reprimands against a utility may serve as a guide in determining future permit approvals.

6 DRIVEWAY PERMITS

In accordance with Section 86.07(2) of the Wisconsin State Statutes and Section 8.04 of the La Crosse County Ordinance, a driveway permit is required to construct, reconstruct, or change the principal use of a driveway or road that abuts a county highway or within 200 feet of an intersection to a county highway on another roadway.

6.1 Purpose

Through the driveway permit, the La Crosse County Highway Department is able to ensure that driveways will provide safe access to and from county highways, preserve the public interest and investment of the county trunk highway system, and help maintain speed limits and mobility of traffic.

6.2 Permit Process

To apply for a driveway permit, an application must be completed through the La Crosse County Zoning Department's online system. Once the application is submitted, the information is submitted to the Highway Department for inspection and consideration of approval. Within 30 days of receiving the completed application, the Zoning Department will notify the applicant of acceptance or rejection. If accepted, the permit will be issued upon collection of the permitting fee.

6.3 Design Guidelines

The La Crosse County Highway Department uses the following design guidelines in reviewing Driveway Permits. **Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2** displays an example of the driveway design guidelines for urban and rural driveways, respectively. Meeting these design guidelines does not guarantee approval of the Driveway Permit. Consideration will be given to the impact the access will have on the traveling public.

1. **Sight Distance** – A sight distance of at least 500 feet in both directions is recommended. In cases where it may not be feasible due to topography and existing land uses, a location that maximizes the sight distance is recommended. The Highway Department may require a sight distance study be completed by a registered professional, at the applicant's expense.
2. **Location** – It is preferred that driveways be located on local routes whenever possible, instead of on county highways. Additionally, driveways on county highways shall be spaced a minimum of 500 feet from other driveways or access points.
3. **Number of Access Points** – There is no guarantee that access will be granted to lots that have been subdivided from a larger parcel that has a single access prior to subdividing the parcel. If additional land is located behind a row of lots which are located along the frontage, a new road may be required to give rear access to all lots that are available for development.
4. **Traffic** – Current traffic volume and anticipated increases in traffic and development will be considered in granting access. Every effort will be made to avoid the potential of having to buy back access as development increases.
5. **Driveway Angle and Slope** – Driveways should be constructed at a 90° angle (perpendicular) to the roadway for at least 20 feet from the edge of the roadway pavement. Additionally, driveways should be constructed at a maximum slope of 5% for at least 20 feet from the edge of the roadway pavement with a slight depression so that drainage and debris flow away from the roadway.
6. **Maximum Width of Driveway** – **Table 6.1** displays the maximum surface width of driveways based on use of property and if the roadway is rural or urban:

Table 6.1 – Driveway Width Requirements

Use of Property	Rural (At Culvert)	Urban (At Sidewalk)
Residential	22 feet	33 feet
Shared Driveway	24 feet	33 feet
Agricultural	32 feet	33 feet
Commercial	32 feet	40 feet
Industrial	40 feet	40 feet

7. **Culverts** – The La Crosse County Highway Department will determine the need for culverts at driveways, which would be installed at the applicant’s expense. Culverts within County right-of-way need to be designed to carry a minimum of a 25-year storm event (2.9 inches or rainfall within a 24-hour period), unless otherwise directed. The Highway Department may require the culvert design to be completed by a registered professional, at the applicant’s expense. All culverts must be a minimum of 18 inches corrugated metal pipe (CMP) or reinforced concrete pipe (RCP). Use of culverts other than CMP or RCP must be certified by a registered professional. Culvert size, material, length, and end treatments must be included in the driveway permit.

6.4 Construction Guidelines

Once a permit is issued, construction of the driveway must be completed within 6 months. If the driveway is not completed within this deadline, the initial permit becomes null and void and a new driveway permit application must be submitted. Construction work may not continue until a new permit is issued.

All construction costs are at the expense of the applicant. Work related to construction should not restrict roadway traffic and must follow the guidelines listed below.

1. **Erosion Control** – Any land disturbance during construction requires proper erosion control measures that comply with Chapter 21 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances. These erosion control measures should be installed and maintained to eliminate sediment from entering the roadway. In addition, there should be no sediment, brush, or other debris in the roadway right-of-way following construction.
2. **Side Slopes and Grading** – Side slopes within the County right-of-way need to be constructed with maximum slopes of 3:1 and safe for vehicle recovery.
3. **Rural Driveways** – If a rural concrete driveway extends into County right-of-way, the concrete should be constructed 6 feet from the edge of the roadway pavement. Asphalt or similar material as the roadway is to be used on the driveway where matching into the roadway.
4. **Urban Driveways** – Urban driveway construction that requires removing existing curb and gutter must construct new curb and gutter of equivalent material, size, and shape. All curb flares should be constructed tangent to the curb line and within the County right-of-way. The driveway surface must connect with the highway pavement and sidewalk, if present. Replace adjacent sidewalks, if damaged by driveway construction activities, with equivalent material and size.

6.5 Appeal Process

If a driveway permit is rejected or any person has a concern related to a Driveway Permit, an appeal can be made to the La Crosse County Zoning Board of Adjustment. The appeal must be made in writing within 30 days from notification of rejection of the driveway permit application and requires filing of the appeal fee be paid by the applicant.

Figure 6.1 – Urban Driveway Guidelines

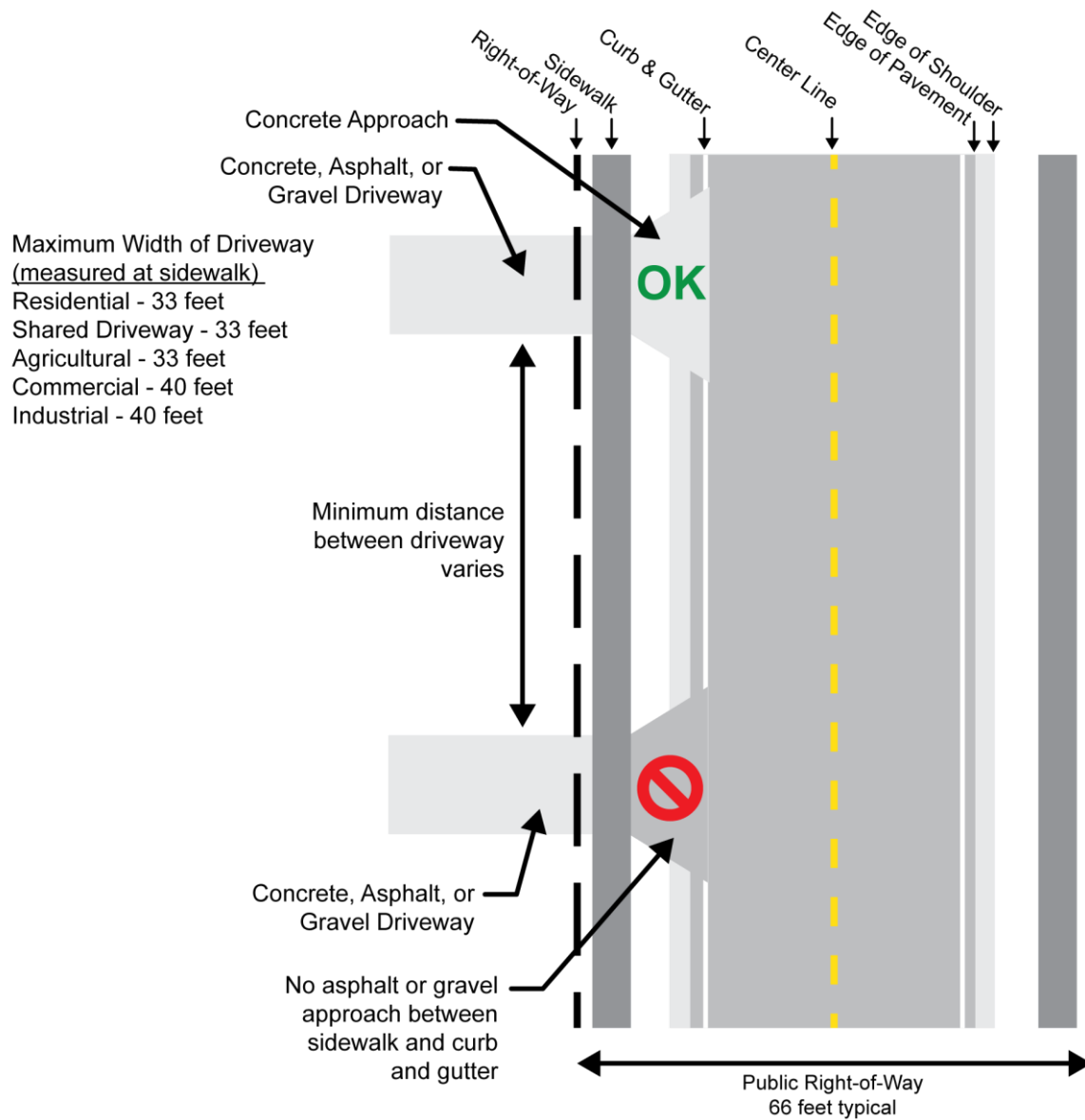
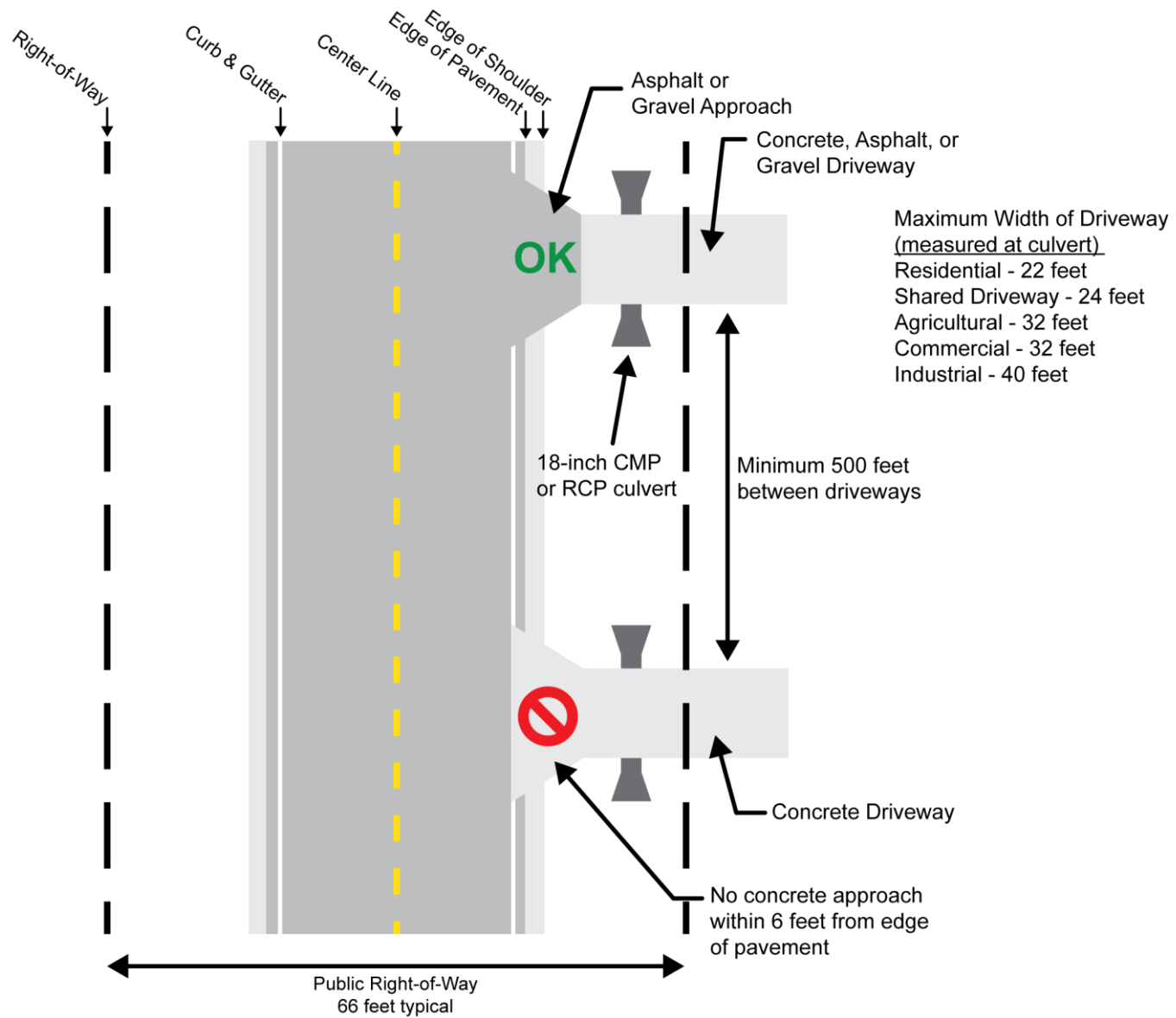


Figure 6.2 – Rural Driveway Guidelines



7 WINTER MAINTENANCE

The La Crosse County Highway Department is responsible for the winter maintenance (snow and ice removal) of approximately 280 miles of county highways and an additional 157 lane miles of state highways through contract with WisDOT. The La Crosse County Highway Department closely follows procedures outlined in Chapter 6 of WisDOT's Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM) in addition to the information provided in this manual.

7.1 Purpose

The goal of winter maintenance is to provide mobility over county highways during the winter months. The ease or difficulty of mobility is determined by the type, severity, length, and timeliness of winter storm events, as well as staffing or equipment availability and budgetary constraints. Therefore, motorists should expect inconveniences and will be expected to modify their driving to adapt to changing weather and/or highway conditions. Mobility is not travel at the posted/statutory speed limit at all times during any day without regard for changing weather and/or highway conditions.

7.2 Winter Maintenance Procedures

The following section outlines the winter maintenance procedures used by the La Crosse County Highway Department prior to, during, and after winter storm events. Exceptions to this policy may occasionally be necessary as dictated by weather and road conditions.

7.2.1 Anti-Icing

The goals of anti-icing are to:

1. Prevent the bond between winter precipitation and the roadway surface.

2. Protect the motoring public by removing the threat caused by incidents such as frost, black ice, and light precipitation.
3. Provide an extended window of safety during the Highway Department's response time during winter storm events.

The department will perform anti-icing operations in the form of spraying salt brine weekly in advance of winter storms as conditions and temperatures permit. Areas to be sprayed are hills, curves, intersections, and bridge decks along with any other areas that have a history of being troublesome.

7.2.2 Decision to Begin Snow Removal

Several factors impact when the Highway Department begins the snow removal process. Each storm presents unique challenges which must be dealt with accordingly. Given the overall size of La Crosse County, it is possible for weather and road conditions to vary greatly from one area of the County to another area. The Highway Department will take all factors into consideration, including the input of law enforcement officials.

7.2.3 Snow Removal Methods

Plowing is the primary method used for snow removal. A salt/sand mixture is spread over limited areas (at intersections, some driveways, curves, hills, and shaded spots) of the highways to increase traction. Sand may be occasionally "spiked" with additional salt to promote thawing of severe icy spots or freezing rain. Pure salt is used (depending on pavement temperature) on the high traffic volume roads and in urban areas where the use of sand would hinder storm sewer systems. In instances of high winds causing blowing and drifting of the snow or extreme cold temperatures, when salt is ineffective, use of chemicals will be suspended.

7.2.4 Hours of Service

All county highways will receive normal service between the hours of 4:00 am and 8:00 pm Monday through Friday. Night services between the hours of 8:00 pm and 4:00 am will not normally be provided except in rare occasions.

During weekends and holidays, service will be provided when the Highway Department makes the determination that the situation merits service between 4:00 am and 8:00 pm. No service between the hours of 8:00 pm and 4:00 am will be provided except in rare occasions.

Special attention and cooperation will be given to emergency requests from law enforcement officials to plow open highways when an impending threat of health or life exists, which would require an ambulance or fire truck.

7.3 Road Conditions

Winter road conditions can be obtained through WisDOT by calling 511, downloading the 511 Wisconsin app on your smartphone, or online at 511wi.gov. The public is encouraged to check road conditions prior to traveling.

7.3.1 Snow Emergency

A snow emergency may be declared when the visibility declines to a point that it is hazardous to the driving public or snowplow operators to be on the roads. Under these conditions, snowplowing and/or ice control operations may be suspended until visibility improves. The Highway Department may on occasion determine that it is in the best interest of the traveling public to close a road, or roadway segment. When a snow emergency is declared, the Highway Department will notify the Sheriff's Department, WisDOT, and if possible, local media regarding the specific concerns of the emergency. When a snow emergency has been declared, the level of service, snow removal hours, and/or department personnel hours may be adjusted as needed to best accomplish the snow removal

process. The Highway Commissioner has the authority to declare a snow emergency.

7.4 Stalled Vehicles

Stalled vehicles shall not be moved by La Crosse County Highway Department personnel or equipment. Department personnel encountering such obstacles shall notify their immediate supervisor and emergency dispatch.

7.5 Damaged Mailboxes

Operators who hit mailboxes with their plow or wing shall note time and place of the incident and report it to their immediate supervisor as soon as practical.

Damaged mailboxes and/or posts will be repaired or replaced, in accordance with [Section 3.5.4.4](#) of this manual.

8 PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT

Roadway pavement represents one of the largest infrastructure investments for the La Crosse County Highway Department. Maintaining pavements throughout the County involves complex decisions about how and when to resurface or apply other treatments to keep the highway performing at acceptable levels and costs at a reasonable level. The La Crosse County pavement management system consists of three major components:

1. A system to regularly collect pavement condition data.
2. A computer database to store and sort the data.
3. An analysis program to evaluate preservation and repair strategies to identify cost-effective solutions to maintain county highways.

8.1 Purpose

Critical decisions are made every day that affect the overall performance and operating costs of La Crosse County roadways. Information from a pavement management system provides an effective way to achieve better performance with less cost by providing valuable information to the appropriate decision-makers about when and how to repair roadway pavement throughout the County. The purpose of a pavement management program is to maximize the life of the pavement while minimizing the cost of maintaining the roadways.

8.2 Pavement Ratings

The La Crosse County Highway Department is required by Wisconsin law to record pavement condition data on a bi-annual basis in the Wisconsin Information System on Local Roads (WISLR). In compliance with this law, the Highway Department rates pavement conditions utilizing the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) rating system.

PASER uses visual inspection to evaluate pavement surface conditions on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best). **Table 8.1** shows the PASER pavement ratings. The key to a useful evaluation process is identifying different types of pavement distress and linking them to a cause. Understanding the cause for current conditions is extremely important in selecting an appropriate maintenance or rehabilitation technique.

8.2.1 Training Assistance

Cities, Villages, and Townships are required by law to collect pavement condition data on a bi-annual basis. It is in the best interest of the local agencies and the County to use consistent pavement ratings to identify appropriate maintenance or reconstruction measures. If requested, the La Crosse County Highway Department will provide cities, villages, and townships training regarding pavement condition ratings.

Table 8.1 – PASER Pavement Condition Ratings

Surface Rating	Typical Visible Distress	General Condition/ Treatment Measures
10 Excellent	None.	New construction.
9 Excellent	None.	Recent overlay. Like new.
8 Very Good	No longitudinal cracks except reflection of paving joints. Occasional transverse cracks, widely spaced (40 feet or greater). All cracks sealed or tight (open less than 1/4-inch).	Recent sealcoat or new cold mix. Little or no maintenance required.
7 Good	Very slight or no raveling, surface shows some traffic wear. Longitudinal cracks (open 1/4-inch) due to reflection or paving joints. Transverse cracks (open 1/4-inch) spaced 10 feet or more apart, little, or slight crack raveling. No patching or very few patches in excellent condition.	First signs of aging. Maintain with routine crack filling.
6 Good	Slight raveling (loss of fines) and traffic wear. Longitudinal cracks (open 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch), some spaced less than 10 feet. First sign of block cracking. Slight to moderate flushing or polishing. Occasional patching in good condition.	Shows signs of aging. Sound structural condition. Could extend life with sealcoat.
5 Fair	Moderate to severe raveling (loss of fine and coarse aggregate). Longitudinal and transverse cracks (open 1/2-inch) show first signs of slight raveling and secondary cracks. First signs of longitudinal cracks near pavement edge. Block cracking up to 50% of surface. Extensive to severe flushing or polishing. Some patching or edge wedging in good condition.	Surface aging. Sound structural condition. Needs sealcoat or thin non-structural overlay (less than 2-inch)
4 Fair	Severe surface raveling. Multiple longitudinal and transverse cracking with slight raveling. Longitudinal cracking in wheel path. Block cracking (over 50% of surface). Patching in fair condition. Slight rutting or distortions (1/2-inch deep or less	Significant aging and first signs of need for strengthening. Would benefit from a structural overlay (2-inch or more).
3 Poor	Closely spaced longitudinal and transverse cracks often showing raveling and crack erosion. Severe block cracking. Some alligator cracking (less than 25% of surface). Patches in fair to poor condition. Moderate rutting or distortion (1-inch or 2-inch deep). Occasional potholes.	Needs patching and repair prior to major overlay. Milling and removal of deterioration extends the life of overlay.
2 Very Poor	Alligator cracking (over 25% of surface). Severe distortions (over 2-inch deep). Extensive patching in poor conditions. Potholes present.	Severe deterioration. Needs reconstruction with extensive base repairs. Pulverization of old pavement is effective.
1 Failed	Severe distress with extensive loss of surface integrity.	Failed. Needs total reconstruction.

8.3 Pavement Analysis

The La Crosse County Highway Department utilizes the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) to store and analyze pavement conditions. The PASER pavement ratings, as recorded by the Highway Department, are submitted to WisDOT and are recorded in WISLR. The WISLR program includes an evaluation program that analyzes current and future roadway and pavement conditions. The analysis part of the pavement management system helps forecast how long a pavement segment will last when certain repairs are performed under the given traffic loads, current road conditions, and other factors.

8.3.1 Life Cycle Maintenance Approach

The La Crosse County Highway Department uses a Life Cycle approach as opposed to a Worst First maintenance approach. A Worst First maintenance approach is one that fixes the poorest rated roadways / pavement first. A “life cycle” approach is one that focuses on extending the life of the pavement throughout the entire County. For example, rather than spending 50% of pavement maintenance on the poorest rated roadways the County might spend 20% to 25%. The money saved from less reconstruction can be used on higher rated roadways to extend their life. By consistently following this process the number of miles rated as poor will gradually decline as the pavement life increases.

8.3.2 Five-Year Needs Analysis

The Highway Department utilizes the WISLR cost-benefit analysis to generate an annual list of priority pavement improvements for a five-year period. The Highway Department utilizes historical cost data for materials to estimate pavement maintenance for this period. It is important to note that the WISLR cost-benefit analysis is a tool used to prioritize projects. Simply because a roadway project is identified as needed within a certain time period does not mean that it must be completed

at this time. The Highway Department will use the WISLR data to help prioritize pavement maintenance and/or reconstruction projects. The combination of the pavement analysis tool, along with the local knowledge of the Highway Department, will lead to the efficient selection of roadway improvements throughout the County.

8.4 Typical Maintenance Activities

Typical pavement maintenance is tied directly to the pavement condition ratings. A typical Wisconsin pavement experiences extreme temperature ranging from sub-zero temperatures in the winter months to near 100-degree temperatures during the peak summer months. These extremes have significant impacts on roadway conditions. To best handle these conditions, it is important to have a maintenance process in place.

A typical roadway pavement will require some maintenance approximately every five (5) years. Some roadways will require maintenance sooner while others may be longer. Much of this depends on traffic levels, traffic mix (i.e., passenger cars, heavy trucks, etc.).

Maintenance activities generally coincide with the PASER pavement rating. As the pavement age increases, the condition of the pavement decreases at an exponential value, as shown in **Figure 8.1**.

Figure 8.1 – Pavement Condition vs. Pavement Age



The recommended maintenance activities related to the PASER pavement rating is described in **Table 8.2**.

Table 8.2 – Recommended Maintenance

PASER Rating	Recommended Maintenance
9 & 10	No maintenance required
8	Little or no maintenance
7	Routine maintenance, cracksealing, and minor patching
5 & 6	Preservative treatments (sealcoating)
3 & 4	Structural improvement and leveling (overlay or recycling)
1 & 2	Reconstruction

8.4.1 Crack Sealing

Crack sealing is the process of cleaning and sealing or resealing cracks in asphalt concrete pavements. This technique is used to fill longitudinal and transverse cracks,

including joint reflection cracks from underlying concrete slabs, that are wider than 1/8 inch. The primary purpose of crack sealing in asphalt pavements is to prevent surface water infiltration into the pavement foundation. It is more cost effective to use this technique as a preventative measure when the overall pavement condition is good or better. Sealing cracks in a deteriorated pavement is not cost effective. The technique consists of the following steps:

1. Remove old sealant and form a sealant reservoir. Use a vertical spindle router or hand tools. Remove the loose material along edges. The sealant reservoir depth should be at least the width of crack plus 1/4-inch.
2. After routing, clean the crack using compressed air (do not sandblast).
3. Apply sealant. This is completed in a manner that allows over-banding, the “shoulder” of material on each side of the crack, which adheres to the surface as well as the crack sides.

8.4.2 Minor Patching

Minor patching is the process of cleaning out and filling with bituminous patch material potholes in asphalt concrete pavements. This technique is used as a stop-gap maintenance for areas where the asphalt is cracked and broken to the point where a hole has formed. Potholes can form because of severe cracking due to weather or material deficiencies or from normal traffic and plowing activities. Patches are also used as a result of utility repairs and pavement damage due to construction. The primary purpose for minor patching in asphalt pavements is to prevent surface water infiltration into the pavement foundation and to prevent hazardous conditions for vehicles. The technique consists of the following steps:

1. Remove cracked and loose asphalt from inside the pothole and around the edges.

2. After removing loose material, insert bituminous patching material, rake and compact to create a smooth surface.

8.4.3 Chip Seal Coating

A seal coat or chip seal is one of many types of surface treatments used in road maintenance. A seal coat is an application of asphalt emulsion followed immediately with an aggregate cover. Seal coats can waterproof the surface, provide low-severity crack sealing, and restore surface friction. Seal coating can be performed at any time in the life of a pavement and lasts an average of three (3) to six (6) years.

The primary purposes of seal coating are to protect the street from deterioration caused by sun and water, as well as to provide a new wearing surface for better friction. A seal coat provides a waterproof membrane that keeps the pavement from becoming brittle and cracking, and also helps keep water from seeping through the pavement and causing problems to the base material.

8.4.4 Mill and Overlay

There are several maintenance practices that involve milling. An edge mill typically consists of grinding the old bituminous surface along the outer 8 feet of the street. This helps establish a uniform cross-section, especially in instances where the crown in the street is relatively flat. A full width mill, or resurfacing, is necessary when the upper surface layer of pavement has deteriorated considerably. Significant surface pavement distresses and more extensive “thermal” cracking need to be removed and/or repaired with a full width and uniform depth milling process. Both edge mills and full width mills are typically 1.5 to 2 inches thick but can vary on a project by project basis.

Milling creates an even surface to ensure a uniform overall thickness to the new overlay. An asphalt overlay of 1.5 to 2 inches over the entire pavement width forms a smooth crown,

renews the street surface, restores the structural capacity and proper drainage, and extends the life cycle of the original pavement.

A full depth mill can be used on a street that has already been reconstructed with a good base section, but the pavement has deteriorated to a point where the seal coating or a standard mill and overlay is not effective. A pavement section with significant cracking will end up reflecting through the new pavement. The full depth of the pavement is ground up and removed. This process may also involve some subgrade soil corrections and some removal of aggregate base, if it has been contaminated or is sub-standard. The street is paved with the same thickness of new asphalt.

Pavement can also be reclaimed, where approximately 8 inches of the existing asphalt and base are ground up in place. This forms a new more stable base without adding new material. The road is then paved with new asphalt. This is only recommended where there is no curb and gutter on the road since the existing materials stay in place and a higher road elevation is created once the new pavement thickness is added.

8.4.5 Asphalt Pulverizing

Asphalt pulverizing is the process of breaking up the existing pavement and blending it in to the existing base. The new base is re-compacted, graded and made ready for new paving. Pulverizing is a very cost-effective way to reconstruct your existing pavement if no utility repairs are necessary and no grade modifications are needed. If the pavement has failed and milling/overlay is not a feasible option, consider asphalt pulverizing.

8.4.6 Cold In-Place Recycling

Cold In-Place Recycling (CIR) is the process of milling and crushing the existing asphalt pavement, adding foamed asphalt or asphalt emulsion, and re-laying the mixture with a paving

screed. A hot or warm mix surface layer is placed over the CIR layer. Consider CIR for highways that have adequate structures to support the CIR paving equipment and significant grade corrections are not required.

8.4.7 Reconstruction

Reconstruction is generally required when a road has reached the end of its life cycle. When a road is fully reconstructed, the existing asphalt and base are completely removed and replaced. Reconstruction may also involve subgrade soil corrections. For roads that do not meet current design standards for width, curb and gutter, and drainage, an upgrade may also be incorporated.

8.4.8 Lane Wedging

Lane wedging is a process using fine hot asphalt to fill in wheel ruts in the lanes. Normally this procedure is done on ruts greater than one inch on roadways not included in the five-year program.

8.4.9 Shoulder Paving Policy

For pavement replacement projects, shoulders will typically be paved on La Crosse County Highways according to traffic volumes, truck percentages and local conditions.

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the urbanized area of La Crosse, Wisconsin and La Crescent, Minnesota prepared the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan, which provides a study of existing bicycle facilities and recommendations for future bicycle facilities throughout La Crosse County. Various county highways are called out in the plan with recommendations of 3-foot or 5-foot paved shoulders for bicycle accommodations. See maps 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5 (Recommended Bicycle Accommodations for various regions in La Crosse County) in the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan for more information.

Typically, the pavement rehabilitation projects the County constructs do not include earthwork and ditch re-grading; therefore, the width of the paved shoulder will be limited to the width of the existing roadbed. However, pavement replacement and roadway reconstruction projects may include paved shoulders or bicycle accommodations as identified in the 2035 Coulee Regional Bicycle Plan.

8.5 Liability

The La Crosse County Highway Department is not responsible for damage to vehicles caused by normal or routine maintenance activities.

9 BRIDGE PROGRAM

Bridges are a vital part of the county highway system that directly impacts the traveling public. The functional loss of a bridge not only impacts mobility but may also reduce accessibility to area businesses, industries, and residential neighborhoods. The La Crosse County Highway Department is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of approximately 145 county and municipal (town) bridges.

9.1 Purpose

The purpose of the La Crosse County Highway Department bridge management program is to focus on efficient and effective proactive maintenance with the ultimate goal of extending the life of bridges within the County. Providing safe and secure bridges throughout the County is a priority.

9.2 Inspection Process

The La Crosse County Highway Department is required by Trans 212 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code to inspect bridges every other year. In compliance of this law, the La Crosse County Highway Department conducts bridge inspections for county bridges during odd years and township bridges during even years.

The following guidelines can be used to help determine whether a structure is considered a bridge or a culvert. Many structures have abutments, decks, and railings but are considered culverts. Please note that clear span is measured from abutment face to abutment face.

A bridge is defined as a structure that has a clear span of 20 feet or more. Bridges may be eligible for either County Bridge Aid or Federal Bridge Aid. If the structure has a clear span of less than 20 feet, it is considered a culvert and an inspection is

not mandatory. Culverts are not eligible for County Bridge Aid or Federal Bridge Aid.

9.2.1 Visual Inspections

Bridge inspections and condition assessments are the first step in a bridge preventative maintenance program. The inspection process consists of a visual evaluation of the structure to determine what deficiencies, if any, exist. The inspections help provide direction with regard to potential maintenance or rehabilitation treatments but do not define specific treatments or actions. Given the unique details and conditions of each bridge, the Highway Department determines specific bridge repairs based on a case-by-case basis.

During the inspection process, a WisDOT rating system is used to categorize bridge conditions and ultimately prioritize the maintenance, repair, or replacement of specific structures.

9.2.2 Bridge Maintenance

Areas of maintenance around a bridge may include signage, waterways, approaches, substructures, superstructures, and the road deck. These areas have the potential of requiring either structural or nonstructural maintenance. Many non-structural maintenance treatments are low cost and directly contribute to extending the life of the bridge, when executed in regular intervals. Areas considered to be nonstructural maintenance include debris cleaning, sweeping, joint cleaning and repair, scupper or drainage cleaning, crack filling, deck patching, and guardrail repair.

It should be understood that bridges, like any infrastructure, will eventually need to be replaced. However, preventative maintenance can extend the life of a bridge in structural and nonstructural areas. Nonstructural preventive maintenance can

alleviate the need for structural preventive maintenance. Timing in these cases is of the utmost importance with savings benefits potentially reaching into the thousands of dollars per bridge.

Many agencies perform routine maintenance including such actions as crack fillings and sealing, pothole fillings, overlays, checking bridge abutments, cleaning scuppers, checking joints and bearing pads, and painting. These principles of maintenance are generally accepted when applied towards highways and roads, so the same process is essentially applied toward individual bridges.

9.3 County Bridge Aid

Wisconsin State Statute 82.08 provides for county aid to construct or repair town culverts and bridges. The County Board, by resolution, restricts such county aid to structures that are bridges. All La Crosse County municipalities participate in County Bridge Aid except for the City of La Crosse.

9.3.1 Application Process

Municipalities must submit their application by June 1st of the year prior to project construction. The Department will review projects during the budget process. The Public Works & Infrastructure Committee will approve the final project list during the October Committee meeting.

Municipalities must submit a petition form to the La Crosse County Highway Department. Applicants should provide a map and mileage to the nearest intersection, name of stream, section numbers, adjacent property owner or any additional information that will be of assistance in locating the structure. Municipalities are encouraged to submit their applications as early as possible to allow the Highway Department adequate time to review the application and complete any engineering work that may be required. Any late applications, which are

accepted by the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee, may be reimbursed in the following cycle.

9.3.2 County Bridge Aid on Federal Aid Projects

County funding is available for half of the matching cost, provided the amounts are obligated by a written contract. For example: If you replace or make major renovations to a bridge under Federal/State Aid (80% Federal/State funding) the County would normally pay half of the remaining 20% (on the structure and 100 feet of the approach work). Guardrail installation is not eligible for federal aid but is cost shared 50-50 between the county and municipality. To receive such county aid, the municipality must have submitted a petition.

9.3.3 Concurrent Action

Concurrent action is necessary when a bridge is a joint responsibility with another municipality (on a town boundary) unless there is a written agreement.

10 ROAD DEBRIS AND OBSTRUCTIONS

The La Crosse County Highway Department is responsible for keeping the county highways free from dangerous obstructions including storm debris, dead animals, farm debris, and other various roadway obstructions.

10.1 Purpose

It is the goal of the La Crosse County Highway Department to provide public travel ways that are safe and free of unnecessary hazards. Highway and/or roadside debris may at times compromise public safety. This section outlines a process for keeping roadways free of debris and obstructions.

10.2 Debris and Obstructions

The public is encouraged to report any unsafe conditions observed on the County Highways. Downed trees, road obstructions, debris should be reported as soon as possible. Road hazards on County Maintained Highways may be reported to the La Crosse County Highway Department during normal business hours. Hazards may be reported after hours by calling 911 and notifying the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department.

10.2.1 Litter

Wisconsin law prohibits intentional littering. The majority of litter will likely not impact safety but does impact aesthetics along the county highway system. La Crosse County has an adopt-a-highway program which promotes anti-litter campaigns within the County. Details regarding this program are provided in [Section 14](#) of this manual.

10.2.2 Storm Debris

Storm debris can create unsafe travel conditions along county highways. Fallen trees and/or temporary flooding of low-lying

areas are common storm related problems. The public should use caution when handling storm debris as there could potentially be hazardous items including downed power and utility lines in the area.

10.2.2.1 Removal of Fallen Trees

If any tree falls from adjacent land into any highway, the owner or occupant of the land shall immediately contact the Highway Department. The Highway Department will take care of the removal when that tree is within the County right-of-way.

10.2.3 Animal Removal

The La Crosse County Highway Department provides large animal removal from County roadways (dead deer removal service is provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for State and Federal Highways). If the animal remains create a road hazard, please call 911 and report the location to the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department.

10.2.4 Farm Debris

Any debris that is left on a county highway as a result of farming activities should be promptly removed by the farmer, contractor, or property owner. If the debris creates an immediate hazard the Highway Department may remove the hazard at the property owner's expense.

10.2.5 Snow and Ice

The pushing of snow and other materials onto or across the highway, or into the public right-of-way, from side roads and driveways is prohibited by Wisconsin Statutes 86.01 and/or 346.94(5). Doing so may create potential safety concerns for

the traveling public and may impede the snow and ice removal process. Furthermore, snow shall not be stored in any manner which will obstruct or limit vehicular or pedestrian vision, movement, or access. If the Highway Department becomes aware of a violation, the property owner may be subject to a fine.

10.2.5.1 Public Notification

At least once each year the County shall remind the public of this safety concern through the news media. A typical notice is included to the right.

Figure 10.1 – Public Notification Example

PUSHING SNOW OR OTHER MATERIALS ONTO OR ACROSS HIGHWAYS FROM PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS CAN CAUSE ACCIDENT AND DEATH, AND IS PROHIBITED BY WISCONSIN STATUTES 86.01, AND/OR 346.94(5). Doing so may create potential safety concerns for the traveling public and may impede the snow and ice removal process. Furthermore, snow shall not be stored in any manner which will obstruct or limit vehicular or pedestrian vision, movement, or access.

Obstruction of vision clearance triangles at intersections is prohibited by 86.191 of State Statutes and by Sections 17.06 of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances. Placing mailboxes away from driveways and intersections helps to avoid vision restricting snowbanks in late winter, and helps to avoid damage to your mailbox. The nearest part of your mailbox should not be closer to traffic than the shoulder line, with box and base strong enough to withstand wind, flying snow and slush from traffic and snowplows.

Avoid penalty and liability, and cooperate towards safer highways. The life you save may be your own. La Crosse County Highway Department, La Crosse County Towns & Villages cooperate with the County Sheriff's Office, and the County Highway Safety Commission to enforce these laws.

BY ORDER OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE & LA CROSSE COUNTY TOWNS & VILLAGES.

11 OTHER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

11.1 *Within Incorporated Municipal Boundaries*

La Crosse County has adopted a policy for maintenance of county trunk highways within incorporated municipal boundaries, as discussed in this section.

11.1.1 Authority

Under Section 83.025(2) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, the County has the responsibility to maintain county trunk highways. Under this authority, the County deems it necessary and desirable to specifically define the maintenance responsibility within municipalities, including cities, village, and towns. Under Section 990.01(22) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, the term municipality includes cities and villages, and may be construed to include towns.

11.1.2 Policy

A county trunk highway that goes through a municipality remains on the county-maintained highway system unless it is jurisdictionally transferred to the municipality. If it is not jurisdictionally transferred, the responsibility for maintenance of the travel way remains with the County. The traveled way is defined as the width of roadway accommodating through traffic and all marked turn lanes, and only includes the paved surface and base course.

The maintenance of features outside or under the traveled way within a city, village, or urban-section township, is the responsibility of the municipality. These features include, but are not limited to, maintenance of the parking lanes, curb and gutter, sidewalks, sidewalks on bridges, multi-purpose paths, drainage facilities (including all storm sewers, inlets, related manholes and structures, storm water quality devices, etc.

either outside or under the traveled way). Snow removal from parking lanes, sidewalks, and sidewalks on bridges is also the responsibility of the municipality. This policy applies except where an existing agreement states otherwise.

In those areas where the county's past practice has been to maintain features outside the traveled way despite having no specific agreement, the county should cease doing so or formalize the added maintenance responsibility in writing.

11.2 *Driveway Maintenance*

Driveways for private property onto county highways are to be regulated by the La Crosse County Highway Department. Further information related to driveway design and permitting is available in [Section 6](#) of this manual.

11.2.1 Maintenance

The maintenance and replacement of a driveway, and culvert, is the responsibility of the property owner or occupant. The maintenance and replacement of intersecting side roads are the responsibility of the municipality. Any expense incurred by the La Crosse County Highway Department due to lack of proper maintenance may be at the owner's expense (i.e., thawing of culvert pipe not cleaned, not structurally sound, obstructed by excessive snow pushed into ditch, etc.).

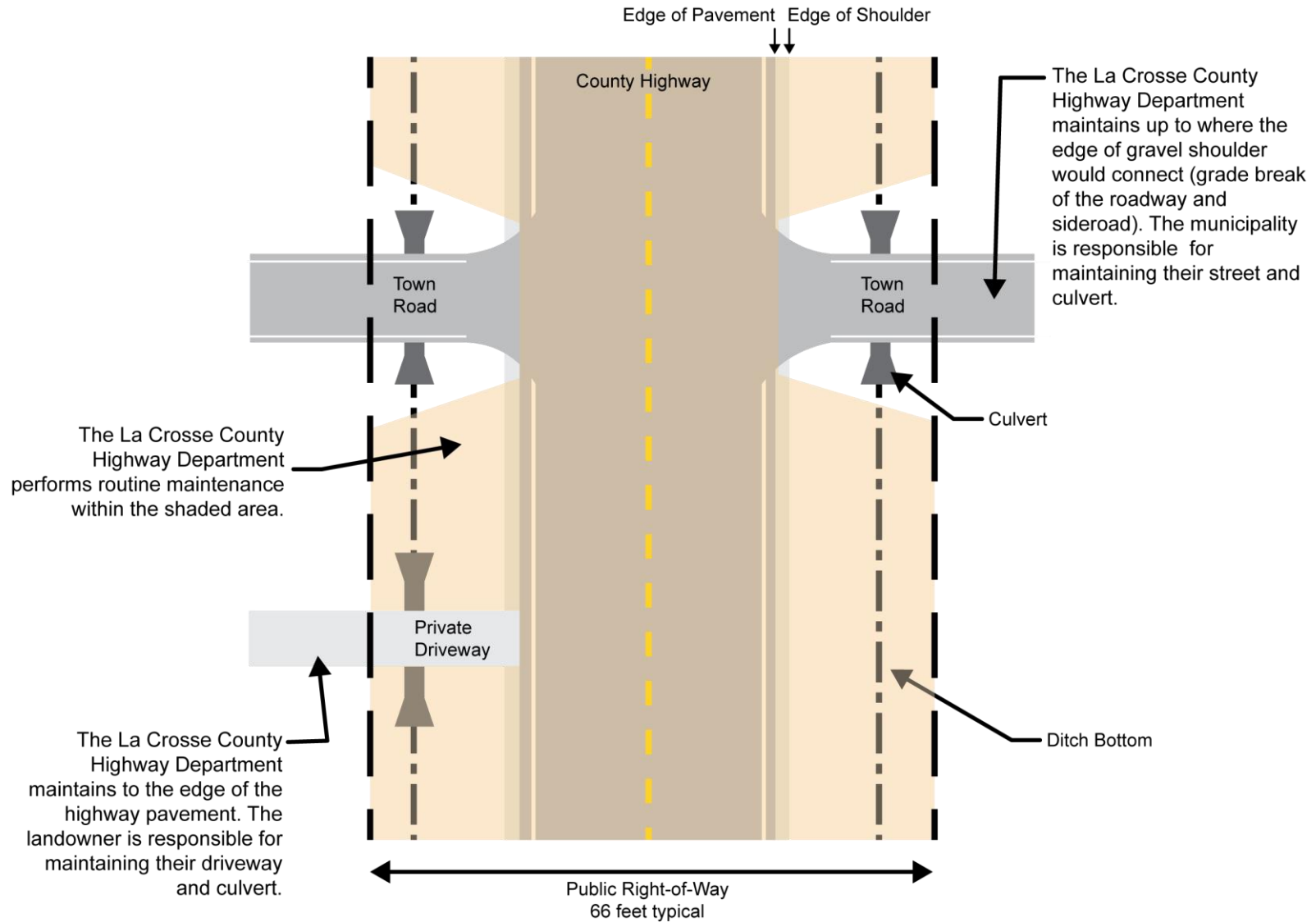
The typical maintenance limits where county roads intersect private driveways and municipal side roads are illustrated in **Figure 11.1**.

11.2.2 Work by Highway Department

Any driveway disturbed during construction activities by the La Crosse County Highway Department will be restored in-kind for

material (such as blacktop, gravel, etc.), size, and geometry, but only to the extent removed. If a driveway culvert is impacted by a Highway Department project, the culvert will also be replaced at the Highway Department's expense.

Figure 11.1 – Maintenance Limits for County Highways



11.3 Roadside Maintenance

The La Crosse County Highway Department typically follows highway maintenance procedures outlined in WisDOT's Highway Maintenance Manual. Additional information regarding the Highway Department's procedures is outlined in this section.

11.3.1 Vegetation

The La Crosse County Highway Department typically mows the "top round" of roadways for vision purposes twice a year, with the second mowing around November 1st. More frequent mowing may be needed depending upon the growing season and safety issues.

11.3.2 Brush Pick-Up

The La Crosse County Highway Department does not provide brush pick-up service.

11.3.3 Invasive Species BMPs

The La Crosse County Highway Department strives to manage invasive species as a part of normal routine maintenance activities by following the Best Management Practices (BMPs) listed below.

Vegetation management, inspection, and monitoring BMPs:

- Mow early to prevent seed production and to deplete root reserves. The DNR provides guidance on when mowing should or should not occur based on the invasive species that may be present, see their website for more details.
- Spray herbicides for invasive species. The DNR provides guidance on when control for various invasive species should occur, see their website for more details.
- Avoid mowing/disturbing areas with known invasive species that are post-flowering stage and seeds are present.

- Limit transport of invasive species by cleaning mowers to the extent practical; increased cleaning should occur when the operator mows an area known to contain invasive species.
- Monitor county owned right-of-ways during the growing season and determine treatments based on the known presence of invasive species. The La Crosse County Highway Department typically applies chemical treatments.

Soil disturbing activities and moving of materials such as soil, trees, woody vegetation, etc. BMPs:

- Prior to implementing activities, scout for and locate invasive species infestations.
- Plan activities to limit the potential introduction and spread of invasive species, minimizing impact to areas known to contain invasive species.
- Inspect and clean as necessary all equipment, clothing, footwear, and gear for soils, seeds, plant parts, or invertebrates before and after activities to the extent practical.
- Select appropriate species and materials for re-vegetation and landscaping activities.
- Re-vegetate disturbed soils as soon as feasible to minimize invasive species establishment.
- Minimize movement of materials known to contain invasive species and properly dispose of materials containing invasive species.

The list of invasive species is maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and is constantly changing. Therefore, the current list of invasive species being treated by the Highway Department can be found on the Wisconsin DNR website.

11.3.4 Noxious Weeds

As defined in Section 66.0407 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, noxious weeds are Canada thistle, leafy spurge, field bindweed, any weed designated as a noxious weed by the DNR by rule, and any other weed the governing body of a municipality or the county board of any county by ordinance or resolution declared to be noxious within its respective boundaries. No additional noxious weeds are noted by La Crosse County in the Code of Ordinances.

The Highway Department strives to kill noxious weeds within the County right-of-way upon discovery.

12 TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDIES

Under section 17.04(3)(g) of the La Crosse County Code of Ordinances, it states that all conditional use permits generating an increase in traffic by more than 200 vehicle trips per day may require the following conditions:

1. Traffic impact analysis.
2. Reimbursement to the appropriate local unit of government for the improvement of any public facility or infrastructure to minimize any negative traffic impact.

This policy is to provide for consistency in the preparation of traffic impact studies using certain established criteria. These guidelines will assist consultants, developers, and others interested in evaluating traffic impacts with La Crosse County. Consultants are invited to discuss proposed projects with the La Crosse County Highway Department prior to beginning the analysis. Doing so will provide an opportunity to discuss and determine parameters to be used and open a communication link between County staff and the developer/consultant. This communication will help in creating land uses with traffic characteristics that are in the best interest of the entire County.

All final submittals for traffic studies and/or reports shall be signed and sealed by a Wisconsin Registered Civil Engineer.

12.1 Purpose

The purpose of the traffic impact study is to determine:

1. What impact traffic traveling to and from the site will have on nearby streets.
2. What specific traffic problems can be anticipated.
3. What roadway or signal improvements can alleviate the anticipated traffic problems, and their associated costs.

12.2 Thresholds for Requiring a Study

The following minimum thresholds for required traffic impact studies are used:

1. 50 single-family homes
2. 30 multi-family homes
3. 30,000 square feet of general office space
4. 10,000 square feet of retail space
5. Developments that generate 200 or more trips per day

For developments less than the above thresholds, the following mitigation factors may necessitate a traffic impact study:

1. High traffic volumes on the adjacent roadway that may affect movement in or out of the site.
2. Lack of existing left turn lanes on the adjacent roadway at the proposed site access point(s).
3. Inadequate horizontal or vertical sight distance at access point(s).
4. The proximity of the proposed access point(s) to other existing driveways or intersections.
5. The proposed use is a special use or conditional use zoning classification.
6. The proposed use involves a drive through operation.
7. Increased pedestrian and/or recreational traffic such as bicycles, ATVs, etc.
8. Other mitigating factors identified by the La Crosse County Highway Department.

12.3 Financial Responsibility

Traffic studies must be provided at the developer's expense. The County will either designate a traffic consultant or allow the developer to hire their own traffic consultant. If the developer

retains their own traffic consultant, the County must approve the selected consultant prior to beginning the study.

The County may review the traffic impact study in-house or elect to choose a consultant to perform an independent review. The review consultant would be hired at the developer's expense.

12.4 Study Criteria

The scope of the traffic impact study will be determined before proceeding with the study. Elements which need to be determined include:

1. Traffic related issues or problems identified by County staff need to be addressed in the traffic impact study.
2. The study area, or geographical area, to be included in the study needs to be identified. It should be large enough to include all significant impacts of the proposed development. At a minimum, the area should include the adjacent controlled intersections.
3. The time frame in which projected traffic demands should be based on fully occupied conditions. For multi-phase developments, traffic demands at the end of each phase should be determined.
4. Other factors such as non-site traffic growth in the study area, pedestrian traffic, school traffic, programmed transportation improvements, and other miscellaneous factors should be considered where appropriate.

The following is an outline of what should be included in the traffic impact study:

I. Introduction

- a. Letter of transmission identifying who did report for whom.
- b. Description of proposed land use and building floor space in development.

- c. Identification of peak hours and whether weekday or Saturday, to be used in impact analysis.
- d. Description of study area.
- e. Location of proposed access points.

II. Base traffic conditions

- a. Description of road network and intersections in vicinity of site specifically at the access points.
- b. Counts during peak-impact hours.
- c. Gap or queue length studies, if appropriate.

III. Site traffic generation

- a. Trip generation rates used and source.
- b. Traffic generated during peak-impact hours.

IV. Site traffic distributions

- a. Method used.
- b. Table or figure showing estimated site traffic movements by direction.
- c. Discussion of method used for traffic assignment and assumptions used for assignment of traffic to network.

V. Non-site traffic projections

- a. Definition of design year (opening of proposed development or other agreed upon points in item).
- b. Identification of developments in study area whose traffic is to be included in impact calculations.
- c. Adjustment of off-site through traffic volumes, if needed, using agreed upon growth rate.
- d. Assembling of off-site traffic forecast for design year, if needed.

VI. Traffic assignments

- a. Assignment of peak period traffic to intersections and access points.

- b. Figures for existing peak impact hours traffic, site traffic, and total traffic.
- c. Recommended access design and improvements.

VII. Review of site plan

- a. Internal reservoir at access points.
- b. Parking layout.
- c. Loading dock locations and access, including design truck used.
- d. Recommended changes.

VIII. Discussion of future traffic conditions (if needed)

- a. Through traffic growth.
- b. Other developments in area.

- IX. Summary of findings and recommendations** (may be listed in outline for at beginning of report). The final report should include all assumptions and data used in the technical analyses. Any recommendations in the report should be reviewed with County staff before presentation at a public meeting or hearing.

13 OVERSIZE/OVERWEIGHT VEHICLES

The La Crosse County Highway Department requires permits for oversize and/or overweight (OSOW) vehicles. Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 348 discusses width, height, and length of vehicles when needing permits, as well as weight limitations for various highways.

13.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to define OSOW vehicles that will require a single trip or annual permit for hauling within La Crosse County. This requirement emphasizes safety for the traveling public and helps minimize the potential damage that might be caused to county highways, traffic control devices, public utilities, and other infrastructure.

13.2 Permit Applications

The La Crosse County Highway Department requires permits for OSOW vehicles that exceed the following dimensions:

Table 13.1 – OSOW Vehicle Dimension Requirements

Dimensions	
Width	8 feet, 6 inches
Height	13 feet, 6 inches
Length (single vehicle and load)	45 feet
Length (combination of 2 vehicles)	70 feet
Length (truck/tractor and semi-trailer)	75 feet *

* See Trans 276 for more information and exceptions.

The La Crosse County Highway Department requires permits for OSOW vehicles that exceed the following weights depending on if travel is occurring on a Class “A” or Class “B” highway:

Table 13.2 – OSOW Vehicle Weight Limits

Axels	Class “A” Highway Weights	Class “B” Highway Weights
Any wheel or wheels supporting one end of an axle	11,000 lbs.	6,600 lbs.
Truck tractor steering axle	13,000 lbs.	7,800 lbs.
Single axle	20,000 lbs.	12,000 lbs.
Tandem axles	34,000 lbs.	20,400 lbs.
Maximum gross vehicle weights on all axles	80,000 lbs.	48,000 lbs.

Permits for OSOW vehicles can be applied for either as a single trip or annual trip. The permit application form is completed online through the Highway Department’s Permit Sale Site. Select single trip oversize move or annual oversize move permit to begin.

13.2.1 Single Trip Permit

A Single Trip Permit is valid for five days for one trip only. A return trip is allowed without additional permits if requested on the original permit. Examples of some loads that might require a Single Trip Permit include construction materials such as beams, trusses, or construction equipment; pre-built buildings such as houses, garages, or temporary-use shelters; and mechanical equipment such as transformers or heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units.

13.2.2 Annual Trip Permit

An Annual Trip Permit (sometimes referred to as a Multiple Trip Permit) is valid for three months up to one year (12 months) with no limit on the number of trips. Annual Trip Permits for divisible loads are not valid during spring thaw, except where specified

in permit descriptions. Examples of some loads that might benefit from an Annual Trip Permit vs. a Single Trip Permit include loads related to aggregate; and garbage, refuse, and recyclable scrap.

13.3 Haul Routes and Responsibilities

The applicant is responsible for reviewing the haul routes to identify bridge crossings, box culvert crossings, ability to make corners, special traffic control needs, and any other concerns that exist along the proposed haul routes. For routes that are not on the County Trunk Highway System, the applicant should contact the local municipalities including WisDOT.

The applicant is responsible for notifying the La Crosse County Highway Department of any signs or other traffic control devices that might be impacted. Any signs that need to be removed will be completed by the La Crosse County Highway Department. The applicant is responsible for coordinating traffic control with the La Crosse County Sheriff's Department during sign removal.

13.3.1 Insurance

Carriers are required to have the proper amounts of liability insurance, as stated on the permit. Each permit and type of load being carried dictates the amount of insurance required. The La Crosse Highway Department may require proof of insurance.

13.3.2 Escort Vehicles

Permit conditions may require the use of an escort vehicle(s) and/or law enforcement as a condition of operation under any OSOW permit. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide an escort vehicle. For more information on escort vehicle requirements (when escorts are needed and what qualifies as an escort vehicle) see WisDOT's website for OSOW permit requirements.

13.3.3 Costs and Fees

Any costs associated with obtaining insurance, escort vehicles, and use of law enforcement for various needs such as roadway sign removal, traffic control, or traffic impedances are the carrier's responsibility.

Additionally, permit fees will apply and are to be paid at the time the application is completed. Permit fees may vary based on the type of permit and type of load being carried. Annual Trip Permit fees are billed to the applicant on a monthly basis. Failure to pay the previous month's bill will result in the withholding of additional permits and may require payment with any new permit requests.

13.4 Implements of Husbandry (IoH)

The implements of husbandry (IoH) are self-propelled vehicles manufactured, designed, or reconstructed to be used and is exclusively used for agricultural operations. IoH vehicles are divided into three categories:

1. Category A – Farm tractors.
2. Category B – Self-propelled vehicles that directly engage in harvesting farm products; directly applies fertilizer, spray, or seeds (but not manure); or distributes feed to livestock.
3. Category C – Vehicles intended to tow, pull, or be towed by another IoH vehicle.

Agricultural commercial motor vehicles are not included as IoH vehicles, as stated in Section 340.01(24)(a) and (b) of the Wisconsin State Statutes.

13.4.1 Dimensions

There are typically not many limitations for IoH vehicles, but limitations for dimensions are listed below. Further information beyond what is described in this manual can be found in Chapter 348 of the Wisconsin State Statutes.

1. **Width** – No width limitations for loH vehicles; however, loH vehicles over 8 feet, 6 inches wide being transported on interstate highways must apply for an OSOW permit.
2. **Height** – No height limitations for loH vehicles, but the operator is responsible for ensuring safe clearances of any overhead obstructions.
3. **Length** – Single vehicles are limited to 60 feet; a no-fee permit may be required for single loH vehicles over 60 feet. Two-vehicle combinations are limited to 100 feet; a no-fee permit may be required for loH two-vehicle combinations over 100 feet. Three-vehicle combinations are limited to 100 feet with a speed restriction of 25 mph or 70 feet at a speed greater than 25 mph; a no-fee permit may be required for loH three-vehicle combinations over 100 feet. There is no length limit for an irrigation system being towed by an loH vehicle.
4. **Weight** – Maximum single-axle weight of 23,000 pounds and a gross vehicle weight of 92,000 pounds (each dependent on the number of axles and axle spacing). A no-fee permit may be required if gross single-axle weight or gross vehicle weight exceeds the required maximum weight.

13.4.2 Hours of Operations

There are no limits on hours of operation for loH vehicles. However, all loH vehicles must meet lighting and marking requirements, as noted on WisDOT's Agricultural Vehicle Safety website. Specific lighting and marking requirements apply to loH vehicles that are 15 feet or wider, or that extend over the center of the roadway.

13.5 Wisconsin Frozen Road Law

The La Crosse County Highway Department follows the guidance and dates declared by WisDOT.

The frozen road declaration is normally in effect from mid-December to late February or early March. Eligibility for

increased weight limitations is restricted to vehicles hauling abrasives or salt for highway winter maintenance and peeled or unpeeled forest products cut crosswise, not to include woodchips. For legally licensed vehicles hauling these loads, no special permit is required during this period. Legally licensed means currently registered for 80,000 pounds, or the maximum gross vehicle weight if less than 80,000 pounds.

For more information and current declaration dates regarding the Wisconsin Frozen Road Law, visit WisDOT's website.

14 ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

The La Crosse County Highway Department supports the Adopt-A-Highway program put in place by WisDOT, which allows an organization (or groups) to volunteer and support the County and State's anti-litter efforts. The Highway Department is responsible for all Adopt-A-Highway segments within La Crosse County, regardless of who owns or maintains the facility. Additional information regarding the Adopt-A-Highway program is available on WisDOT's website.

14.1 Purpose

Adopt-A-Highway reduces litter along Wisconsin highways, builds statewide support for the anti-litter and highway beautification programs, educates the traveling public to properly dispose of litter, and enhances the environment and beautifies Wisconsin's roadsides. The program supports various generous volunteers who choose to be responsible for a 2-mile segment of highway throughout Wisconsin.

14.2 Sponsor Group Requirements and Responsibilities

Any group organized for some special purpose or task can sponsor an Adopt-A-Highway segment, except partisan or political groups. The Adopt-A-Highway sponsor group is responsible for litter control on a 2-mile segment of highway. The group picks up litter on this segment at least three times a year between April 1st and November 1st.

Each group must provide one adult supervisor for every five or six volunteers. All volunteers must be at least 11 years of age or in the 6th grade, unless working on 4-lane expressways, freeways, or interstates, in which volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.

14.3 Application Process

Interested organizations may obtain Adopt-A-Highway application materials from the La Crosse County Highway Department during regular business hours.

The Highway Department will provide application materials which will include:

1. A detailed description of the Adopt-A-Highway program and requirements.
2. A county map the group can use to request a highway segment for the Adopt-A-Highway program.
3. An application form that must be completed and returned to the Highway Department for approval.

14.4 Approval Process

The La Crosse County Highway Department will review the completed application materials and each qualified group will be assigned the two-mile segment of their choice, if available. The Highway Department will provide a permit to work within the highway right-of-way and further instructions.

14.5 Signage

A sign, with your group's name, will be placed at the beginning and end of the highway segment. The sign announces to the motoring public your group's sponsorship for litter control. Each group may request the name (or acronyms) that will appear on the signs on the application. Up to three lines with 12 characters per line will be allowed.

The La Crosse County Highway Department reserves the editorial right to work with sponsors to revise group names and/or acronyms that might be offensive to the general public.

14.6 Safety Requirements

The Adopt-A-Highway program emphasizes safety. As part of this emphasis, the Highway Department requires all sponsors and volunteers to watch the WisDOT Adopt-A-Highway Program Safety Video. Additionally, all sponsors and volunteers should review and abide by the Wisconsin's Adopt-A-Highway Program Safety Facts for Volunteers brochure, on WisDOT's website, which includes the following information:

1. Who is your guide?
2. Where to work
3. How to dress
4. How to be safe while you work
5. What to do
6. When you're done

14.6.1 Items Supplied by the Highway Department

A portable "people working" sign needs to be placed at both ends of the highway segment while you are working. Each volunteer must wear a high visibility safety vest while working. Signs and vests are provided by the La Crosse County Highway Department upon request.

14.6.2 Hazardous Waste

Hazardous Waste found along highways could pose potential dangers to volunteers. Materials that should never be picked up include:

1. Dead animals
2. Bottles or containers with liquid
3. Abandoned barrels
4. Meth lab or illegal drug waste

15 TOURIST ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL SIGNS (TODS) PROGRAM

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) provide motorists with directional information for qualifying tourist-related businesses, services, or activities.

15.1 Qualifying Businesses

Tourist-related businesses, whose major portion of income of visitors is derived from visitors who do not reside in the immediate area where the business is located, qualify for TODS. The business doesn't need to have direct access to a state or U.S. highway, but must be located within five miles of a state or U.S. highway.

Businesses qualify for TODS in five categories:

1. **Gasoline** – Must be open at least 12 hours per day, seven days per week, and provide restrooms, drinking water, and a public telephone.
2. **Food** – Must be open five days per week from at least 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and have at least 50% of gross receipts from food and non-alcoholic beverages.
3. **Lodging** – Includes hotels, motels, resorts, boarding houses, or bed and breakfast establishments. Must have parking accommodations.
4. **Camping** – Must provide restrooms, drinking water, and public telephone.
5. **Tourist Attraction** – Must be open at least eight hours per day, five days per week for at least three consecutive months, and provide restrooms and drinking water. The attraction must also be of significant interest to the traveling public (shops, amusement parks, etc.).

15.2 Prohibited Use of TODS

In some cases, use of TODS is prohibited. This may include:

- Some urban areas prohibit TODS. Contact the Highway Department for further information.
- Highways designated as Specific Information Sign (SIS) highways (most freeways and expressways) prohibit TODS. For more information on SIS, Contact Wisconsin Logos at (608) 579-1570.
- Businesses with illegal outdoor advertising signs do not qualify for TODS.

15.3 Costs

The TODS program is self-funded. No state or federal funds support the program. All administration, manufacturing, and installation costs are paid by applicants.

The TODS life is estimated to be 10 years, but fees are collected for a 5-year period. Total estimated costs over the 10-year period are approximately \$550 – that's \$55/year or approximately \$1/week for each sign. A breakdown of these costs are as follows:

- Administration fee - \$200/sign (\$20/year fee)
- Sign cost - \$100/sign (Fees vary based on size)
- Installation fee - \$250/sign

15.4 Obtaining a TODS

1. Contact the La Crosse County Highway Department to obtain a TODS application.
2. Complete the application and attached a check for \$100 payable to the La Crosse County Highway Department (this is the administration fee for a five-year period). If you don't qualify for the program or there isn't room for a TODS at the desired location, the check will be returned.
3. Businesses that qualify for a TODS will receive a list of qualified TODS manufacturers. Contact as many manufacturers as you wish to get the best price.
4. Bring the sign to the Highway Department with a check for \$250 payable to the La Crosse County Highway Department (this is the installation fee).
5. The La Crosse County Highway Department will install the sign.

16 SNOWMOBILES AND ATVs

Snowmobiles and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) are popular recreational activities within La Crosse County. While the large majority of snowmobile and ATV trips occur off county roads and outside the public right-of-way, there are times when these recreational vehicles must cross or are shared use with a county highway. As such, the Highway Department shall review all trail crossing or shared-use locations with highways throughout La Crosse County.

16.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to summarize the proper use of snowmobiles and ATVs along, or across, La Crosse County highways and roads. A primary concern of the La Crosse County Highway Department is to maximize safety for the traveling public, including snowmobile and ATV riders.

16.2 Snowmobile Trails

La Crosse County has six snowmobile clubs that jointly cooperate to offer over 130 miles of safe, groomed snowmobile trails. These clubs mark and maintain the trails, which provide year-round use for other activities such as biking and hiking.

The La Crosse County Code of Ordinance Section 7.05 outlines specific rules and regulations for snowmobiles within the County, including state snowmobile laws adopted, the applicability of rules of the road to snowmobiles, enforcement, and restricted uses of snowmobiles.

16.2.1 Snowmobile Trail Coordinator

Although the snowmobile clubs designate the location of trails and maintain them, all snowmobile trails and routes must be approved by the La Crosse County Facilities Parks/Office Manager:

Mary Kaufmann, County Facilities Parks/Office Manager
La Crosse County Administrative Center
212 6th Street North – Room 1800
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: (608) 785-9770
facilities@lacrossecounty.org

16.2.2 Snowmobile Trail Operations

The snowmobile season is determined by the snowmobile coordinator and will vary depending on weather conditions. When trails are open or closed, it will be posted online at the La Crosse County Snowmobile website and on various publication outlets, including social media. To get the current trail conditions report, call (608) 782-4500.

Trail maps can be requested from the La Crosse County Facilities Parks/Office Manager or online from the La Crosse County Snowmobile website.

16.2.3 Highway Crossings

All crossings of state and county highways and roads shall be coordinated with the La Crosse County Facilities Parks/Office Manager and approved by the La Crosse County Highway Department. ***Any maintenance cost to maintain a positive water flow due to any obstruction caused by the trail or trail grooming shall be the responsibility of the snowmobile club.***

Snowmobile riders are encouraged to use designated trails and highway crossings. Snowmobile crossings can cause significant roadway damage if crossing areas are not properly maintained. Riders can directly cross any roadway having fewer than 5 lanes, but only after stopping and yielding the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching on the roadway. Crossings

should be made only at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing. An obstruction may include, but is not limited to, impairment of view and potentially hazardous roadway conditions. See **Figure 16.1** for safe trail crossing design.

16.3 ATV Routes & Trails

La Crosse County has one ATV club that offers one well-marked, safe, and well-groomed trail of approximately 16 miles in length. There is an additional private 7-mile trail open to club members for a single or annual fee.

The La Crosse County Code of Ordinance Section 7.08 outlines specific rules and regulations for ATVs within the County, including state ATV laws adopted, the applicability of rules of the road to ATVs, operation on county property, and ATV routes.

16.3.1 ATV Trail Operations

Trails are open year-round to users. When trails are closed due poor trail conditions, it is posted on the ATV Club, Tri-County Trailblazer's social media page. To get the current trail conditions report, call (608) 399-1282.

Trail maps are available online through the ATV Club, Tri-County Trailblazer's social media pages.

16.3.2 ATV Routes on County Highways

To connect the off-road trail portions together, ATVs are permitted on county highways in the locations shown in Figure 16.2.

Since these routes are shared use with county highways, the following conditions apply to all operators and passengers:

1. All ATV operators shall obey posted roadway speed limits.
2. All ATV operators shall ride single file.
3. All ATVs shall operate only on the extreme right side of the paved portion of the roadway. Operation of an ATV on the shoulder, ditch, or right-of-way is prohibited and illegal.
4. Headlights and taillights must be turned on at all times.
5. All persons under the age of 18 operating or riding an ATV must wear a helmet.
6. Routes must be signed in accordance with NR 64.12 and NR 64.12(7)(c).

These regulations are enforced by local law enforcement officials.

16.3.3 Application for New ATV Route

To designate a new portion of an ATV route within La Crosse County, the municipality in which the route is located and/or an organized and established club must complete an application with the La Crosse County Highway Department. The application includes:

1. Name and sponsoring entities (municipality and/or organized and established club).
2. Input from jurisdictional law enforcement for the route's location (provide to the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee and County Board).
3. Estimated cost for trail signage, which is the applicant's responsibility to pay for the initial cost and installation of all trail signs.
4. Support or opposition from the local municipality(ies) in which the proposed route is located.

5. A map of the proposed route with logical destination and ending, and applicable connections for both routes (shared-use) and trails.
6. A review of the possibility of future connections to the overall system.
7. Considerations for amenities along the route, such as the availability of fuel, food/drink, and lodging.

16.4 Liability

It is the reasonability of snowmobile and ATV riders to be familiar with and to observe all La Crosse County Ordinances and regulations that relate to the use of recreational vehicles within the County. The Highway Department, and La Crosse County, assumes no liability as to trails, machines, or individuals.

Figure 16.1 – Snowmobile Trail Crossing

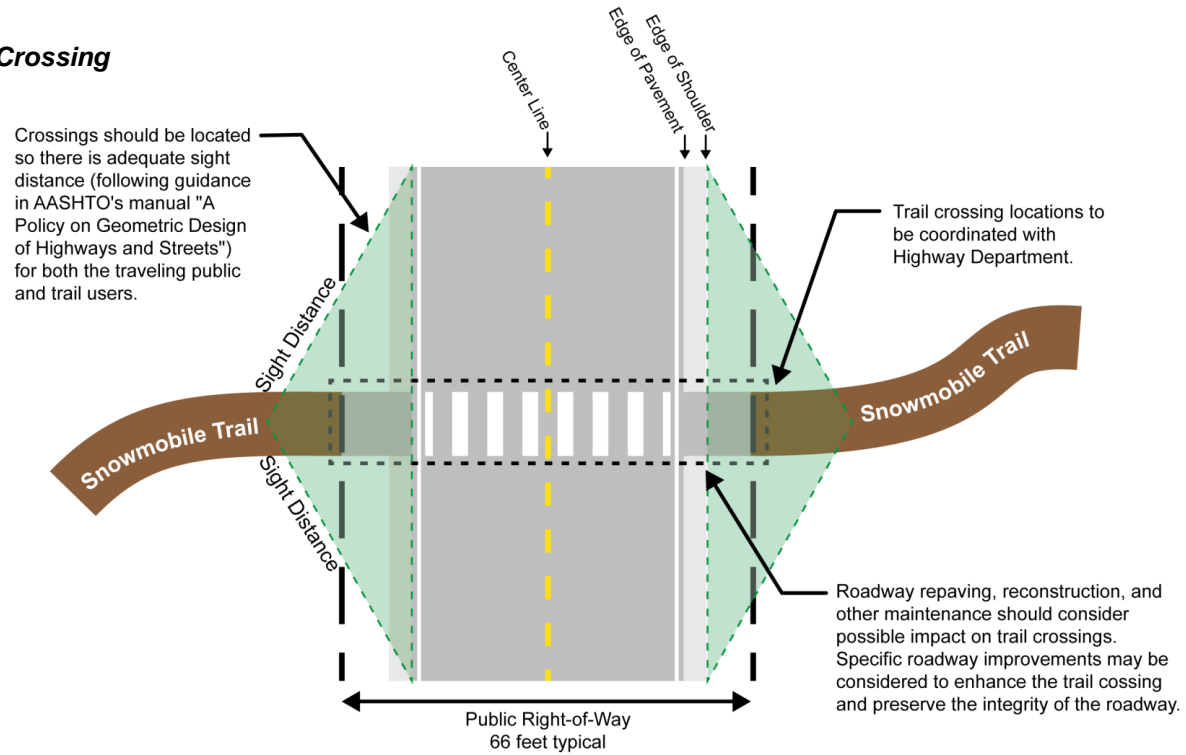


Figure 16.2 – ATV Trail Map

