

Chapter 6

Providing Transportation Choices

Introduction

Transportation planning is multi-faceted. A community must balance a transportation system that allows for the free movement of automobiles and trucks yet allows for safe travel of bicyclists and pedestrians. It also must meet the needs of citizens who are disabled or do not drive.

An efficient transportation system can attract new commercial businesses and industries that need to move and receive goods quickly or make it easy for residents to commute to work. Sidewalks and trails can attract new residents who view these as an indicator of the quality of life in the City. The best multi-modal transportation system is desired, but it does not come without a price. Construction of new roads, sidewalks, bridges, and trails can be expensive and once built, will have to be maintained.

Modes of Transportation

The movement of people and goods is accomplished through a variety of transportation modes. These modes include car, truck, rail, public transportation, ship, air, bicycle and pedestrian. For the most part, each mode fits a particular need. Automobiles function as the dominant mode for the movement of people. Trucks provide for the rapid movement of goods and products over the highway network. Air travel helps to move people and lightweight products quickly over long distances. The railroad functions primarily for the movement of bulk commodities over long distances, while bicycle paths and sidewalks provide for the movement of people. The most dominant mode of transportation in the City of Prescott is the automobile.

Local Streets and Highways

Streets and highways provide different levels of service. For example, highways provide for the movement of through-traffic while streets provide access to property. Most public roads in Wisconsin are classified according to their function and jurisdiction. A functional classification system groups roads and streets according to the character of service that they provide. It also helps determine eligibility for federal aid.

Functional Road Classification System

Functional classification is the process by which highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. Roadways are classified into the following functional types:

Arterials: Arterials serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. They also serve moderate to large-sized places (cities, villages, towns, and clusters of communities), and other traffic generators providing intra-regional and inter-area traffic movements. They are classified as principle arterials and minor arterials.

Collectors: Collectors provide service to smaller-to-moderate sized places and other intra-area traffic generators, and link those generators to nearby larger population centers (cities, villages, and towns) or higher function routes. They also provide service to all remaining smaller places, link the locally important traffic generators with their hinterland, and are spaced consistent with population density so as to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. Collectors are classified as major and minor.

Local Roads: Local roads provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances on an inter-township or intra-township basis. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors will be local function roads.

Prescott Road Classifications

The City of Prescott is served by primary access points State Trunk Highways (STH) 29 and 35 and United States Highway (USH) 10. Access is also provided through a network of local roads and streets.

STH 29 and STH 35 and USH 10 are classified as minor arterials and fall under WDOT jurisdiction. Cherry Street and Kinnickinnic Street are classified as minor collectors and are under Prescott’s jurisdiction. All other roads are listed as local and fall under local government jurisdiction as well.

Commuting Habits

Many residents in Prescott and the surrounding Towns drive through the City on the way to jobs in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Table 6-1 shows that 66% of working residents are commuting out of state. This compares to 59% of working residents in 2000.

Table 6-1: Place of Work: City of Prescott

Place of Work	2000	% Total	2012	% Total	Change 2000- 2012	% Change
Worked in State of Residence	837	41%	831	34%	-6	-1%
Worked in County of Residence	733	36%	611	25%	-122	-17%
Worked outside County of Residence	104	5%	220	9%	116	115%
Worked outside State of Residence	1,226	59%	1,612	66%	386	31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012

For many, the 33 mile commute from Prescott to downtown Minneapolis is convenient and is possible because of the three highways that serve the City and one bridge over the St. Croix River that connects Wisconsin to Minnesota.

Table 6-2 shows that more residents are traveling longer times to work. This would be consistent with the increase in residents working out of state. In 2000, 41% of working residents were traveling 19 minutes or less to work. In 2012, that percentage dropped to 19% of working residents.

Table 6-2 Travel Time to Work: City of Prescott

Transportation	2000	% Total	2012	% Total	Change 2000-2012	% Change
Less than 10 minutes	551	28%	490	15%	-61	-11%
10 to 14 minutes	64	3%	23	1%	-41	-64%
15 to 19 minutes	197	10%	76	3%	-121	-61%
20 to 24 minutes	260	13%	283	12%	23	9%
25 to 29 minutes	128	7%	285	12%	157	145%
30 to 34 minutes	224	11%	568	25%	344	154%
35 to 44 minutes	219	11%	297	13%	78	36%
45 to 59 minutes	255	13%	297	13%	42	16%
60 or more minutes	75	4%	122	5%	47	63%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012

Table 6-3 shows that 93% of commuters are traveling to work by car, truck, or van. Only 9% of these commuters carpooled. Six percent of workers indicated that they work from home which is becoming more common as telecommunications infrastructure such as smart phones, wireless internet service and fiber optics are becoming more available to and affordable for residents.

Table 6-3 Means of Transportation Workers 16 and Over: City of Prescott

Transportation	2000	% Total	2012	% Total	Change 2000-2012	% Change
Workers 16 and Over	2,063	100%	2,442	100%	379	18%
Car, Truck, Van	1,897	92%	2,279	93%	382	20%
Drove Alone	1,655	81%	2,055	84%	400	24%
Carpooled	232	11%	224	9%	-8	-3%
Public Transportation	15	1%	0	0%	-15	-100%
Walked	61	3%	22	1%	-39	-64%
Other Means	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Worked at Home	90	4%	141	6%	51	57%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012

Traffic Counts

Map 6-1 shows the Average Annual Daily Traffic counts as collected by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in July, 2012. The map shows that there are approximately 14,000 vehicles that cross the St. Croix River bridge between Wisconsin and Minnesota. Vehicle traffic is collected from STH's 29 and 35 and USH 10 which combines at the bridge as traffic flows into Minnesota. These highways disperse traffic as vehicles enter Prescott from Minnesota.

It is likely the traffic counts will continue to rise as the City and surrounding Towns continue to grow, residents continue to commute to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for work, and the area is promoted as a good place for new business and industry,.

North/South Arterial Planning

The City has been exploring the location of a future north/south arterial route since the first comprehensive plan was adopted in 2003. The purpose of planning for a north/south arterial route is so that local vehicle traffic from future development of the southeast, east, and northeast does not have to be directed through the downtown and combined with through-traffic to create congestion.

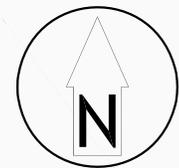
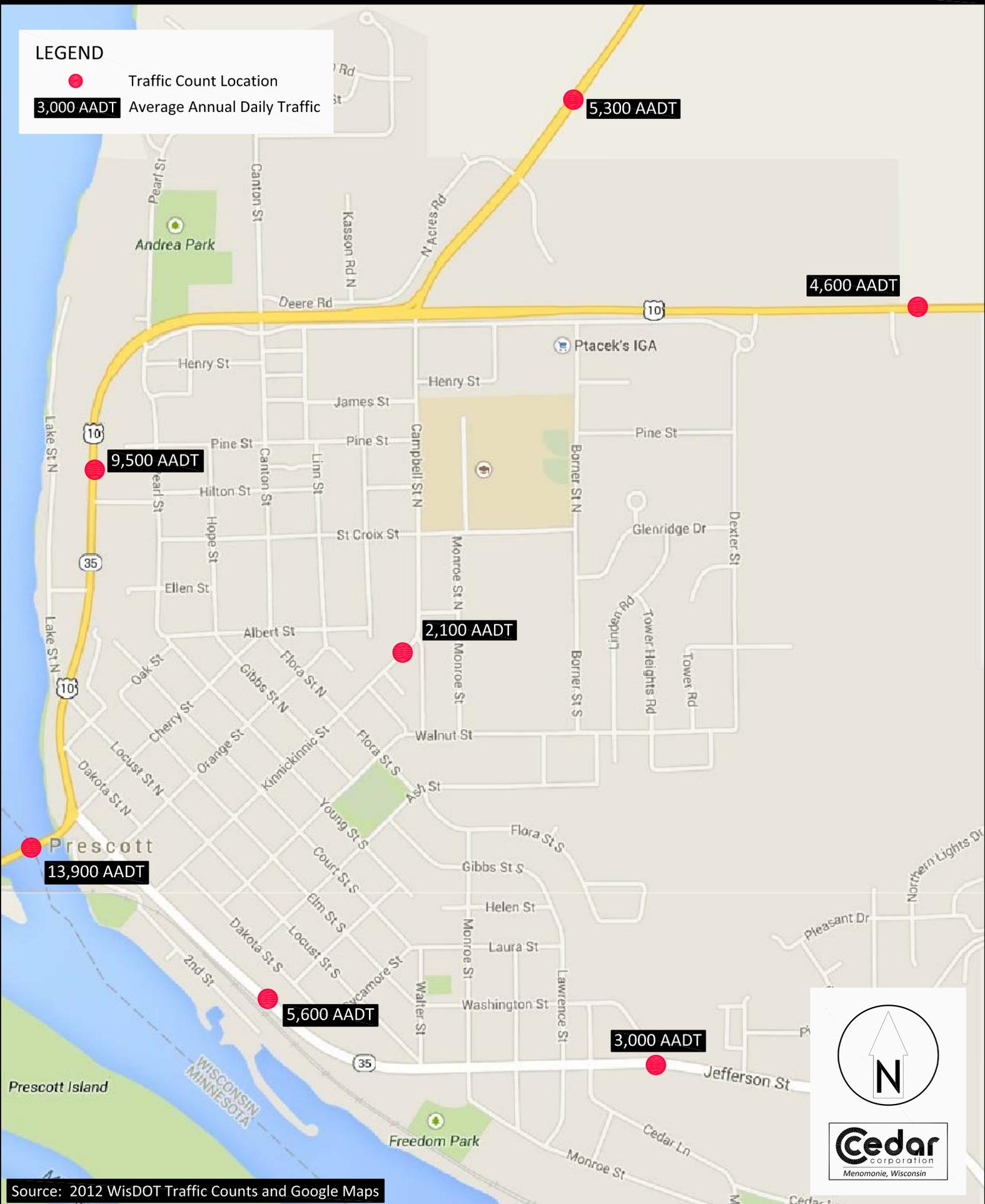
Map 6-2 shows the location of the proposed north/south arterial corridor and alternative route between Hollister Avenue and STH 35. Currently, a new grocery store, food distribution center, and High School are under construction on the north side of the City. More commercial and industrial development is anticipated in this area. Residents living on the southeast side of the City will likely drive on STH 35 and USH 10, through the downtown, to get to these future commercial and industrial development areas. An alternative route would allow residents in this area to take a more direct route to these areas without having to drive through the downtown.

The proposed north/south arterial corridor would function as an arterial street with limited driveways and appropriately spaced local road intersections. The City has adopted an Official Map of the arterial corridor between STH 29 and USH 10. The remainder of the corridor has not been officially mapped. The proposed north/south arterial corridor has some flexibility in its location which can be determined at the time of development in specific areas.

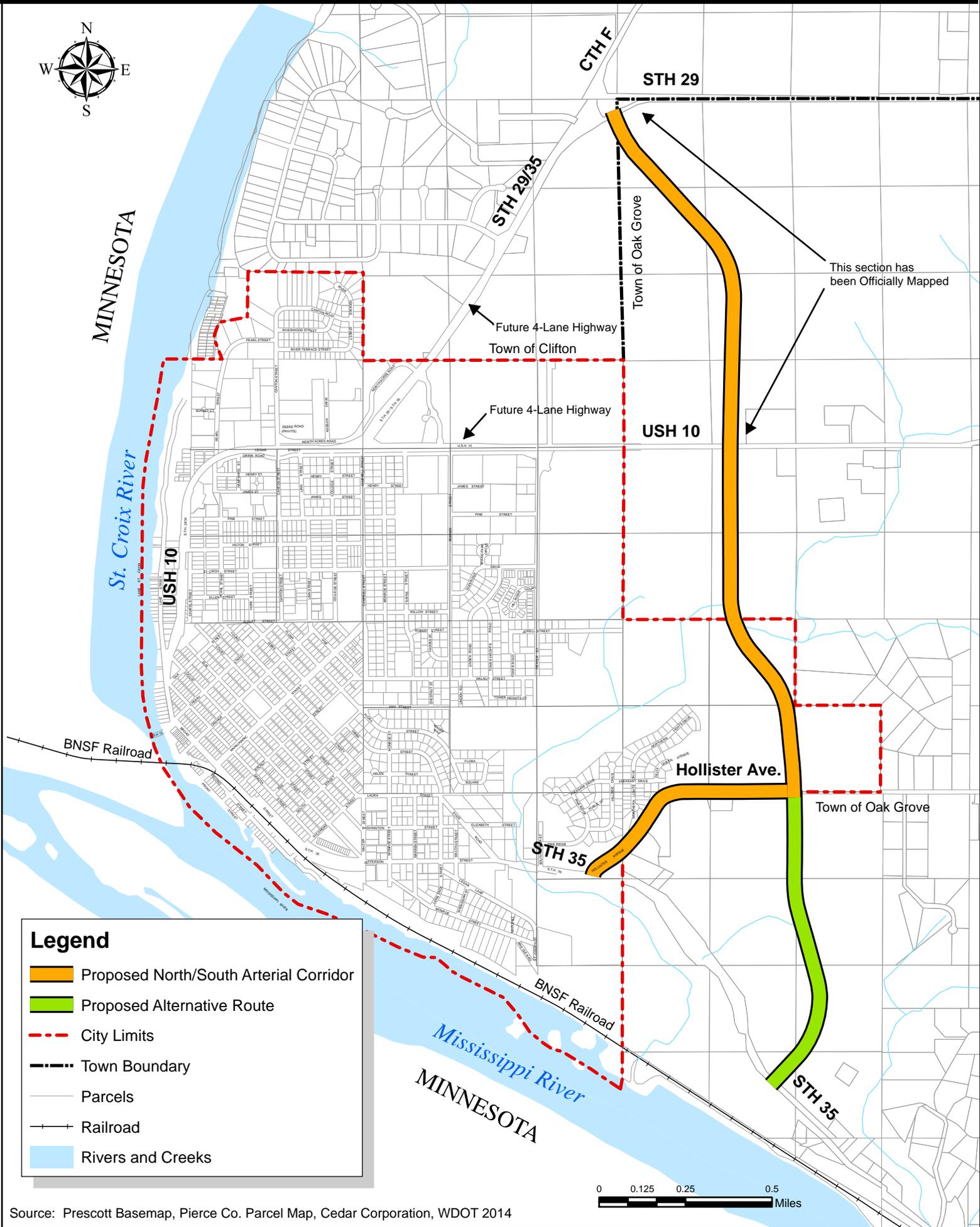
Map 6-1: Average Annual Daily Traffic 2012 - City of Prescott

LEGEND

-  Traffic Count Location
-  Average Annual Daily Traffic



Map 6-2: Alternative Routes - City of Prescott



MINNESOTA

St. Croix River

CTH F

STH 29

STH 29/35

Town of Oak Grove

This section has been Officially Mapped

Future 4-Lane Highway
Town of Clifton

Future 4-Lane Highway

USH 10

USH 10

Hollister Ave.

Town of Oak Grove

STH 35

Legend

-  Proposed North/South Arterial Corridor
-  Proposed Alternative Route
-  City Limits
-  Town Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Railroad
-  Rivers and Creeks

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Sidewalks and bicycle trails allow residents of all ages and physical abilities to move around the City without using a vehicle. Without this infrastructure, residents who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle can be isolated from areas in the community or forced to walk in the streets. At the same time, popular destinations that are not accessible by sidewalk or trails force residents to drive to these locations which can increase vehicle traffic.

Today, residents view walking and biking as acceptable ways to get around Prescott whether to exercise or to conduct daily business. A community that promotes walking and biking is often viewed as a place that promotes healthy lifestyles.

Studies have shown there are many benefits that the City and its residents receive from the development of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Economic Impact

- ◆ Trails can make the community a destination while bringing in revenue to local businesses.
- ◆ Biking and walking reduces traffic, parking needs, and energy consumption.
- ◆ Bicycling and walking are quality of life indicators and this attracts new residents and visitors.
- ◆ Homebuyers rank trails as the second most important amenity.
- ◆ Biking and walking reduces health care costs.

Social Impacts

- ◆ Walking helps children decompress and process the day's events as they come home from school.
- ◆ Walking creates community interaction, pride, and connectedness.
- ◆ Elderly are more likely to walk to nearby services and socialize in their community. It allows them more independence.
- ◆ Increased community interaction.
- ◆ Sidewalks and trails encourage residents of all ages to spend time outdoors.
- ◆ Children learn navigation skills, independence, and self-confidence.

Health Impacts

- ◆ Older adults near safe walking and biking paths are more likely to get enough exercise needed to maintain a healthy life.
- ◆ Studies show that residents in walk-able neighborhoods engage in more minutes per week of moderate and vigorous physical activity than residents in non-walkable neighborhoods.
- ◆ Biking and walking are easy ways to get in short sessions of exercise.

- ◆ Biking and walking reduces heart and lung disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes.
- ◆ Biking and walking helps fight obesity, a growing national problem.
- ◆ Active children tend to remain active.
- ◆ Biking and walking reduce automobile trips and related air pollution.

Map 6-3 shows the existing sidewalk network in the City of Prescott. There are no off-road multi-use trails in the City.

Residents who took part in the Community Conversation Workshops and Community Survey stressed the desire to have a well-connected safe sidewalk and bicycle trail network for residents to use and to attract visitors to the community as well. They also indicated that signage would benefit residents and visitors and improve their experience in Prescott. Areas of safety concerns included walking safely from the waterfront area across the railroad tracks to downtown and crossing locations across USH 10, STH 29, and STH 35 were also a concern.

The Great River Road is a popular route for bicycling and brings people from out of town who want to explore area bicycling opportunities. The ability to attract these bicyclists to provide a benefit to the local economy can be tied to a community's bicycle infrastructure that includes bicycle work stations, parking infrastructure, outdoor restrooms, safe trails and accessible water. Bike lanes are painted on STH 35 to accommodate bicyclists.

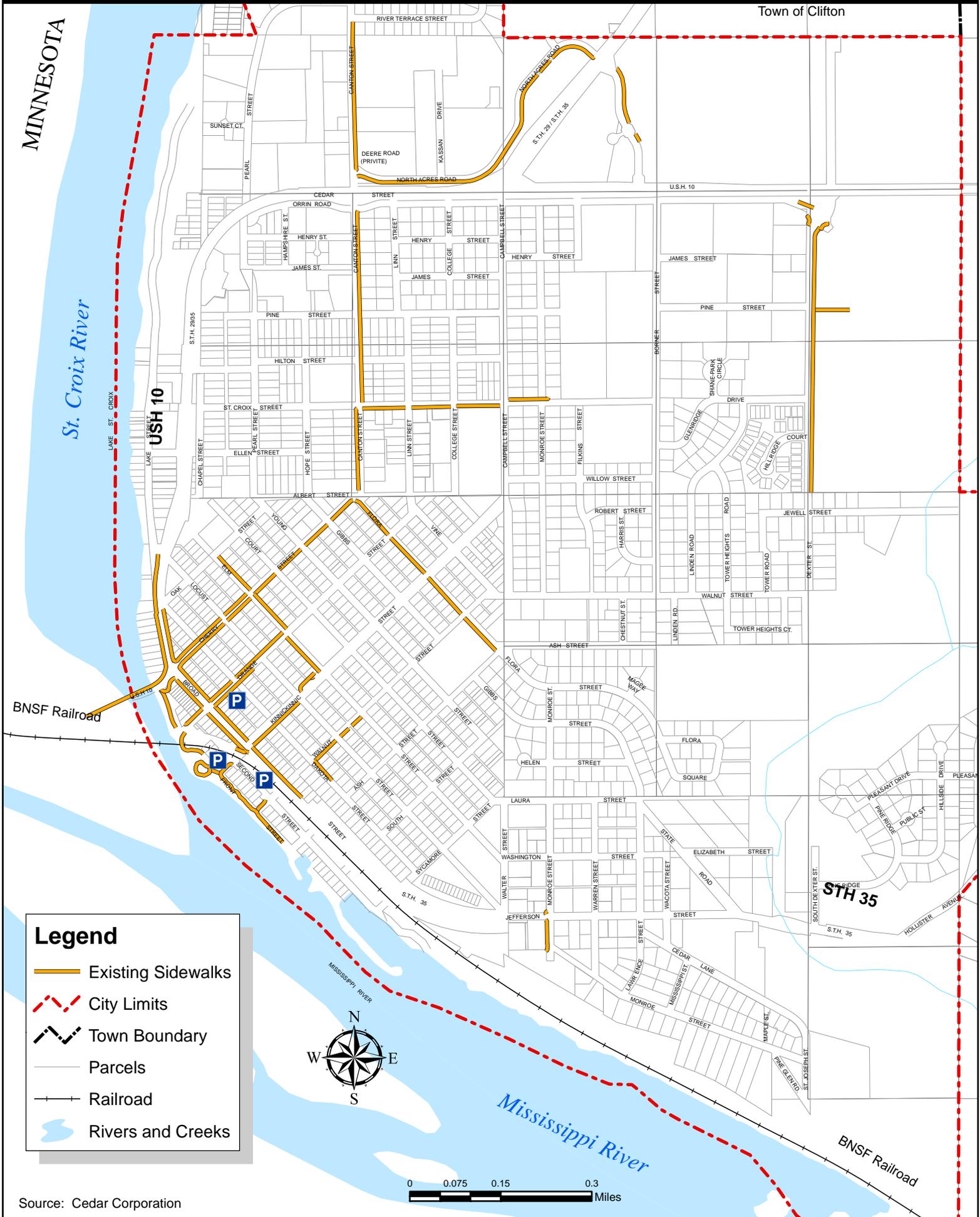
The Point Douglas Regional Trail is a walking and bicycling trail in Minnesota that will link the City of Hastings with the City of Prescott. This portion of the Minnesota trail will be completed in 2016 and is expected to attract 150,000 users a year. The Trail will connect to a walkway on the St. Croix River bridge that will take users to downtown Prescott. The trail provides a great opportunity for existing and future downtown businesses in Prescott.

The City of Prescott created a Pedestrian Network Plan in 2006 and collaborated with the Prescott School District on the Safe Routes to School Plan in 2007 (revised in 2008). The Plans identify future sidewalk and trail infrastructure improvements in the City and near the schools. The City should combine and update these plans to create a new community-wide pedestrian and bicycle plan that considers long range plans in adjacent communities and counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Railroads

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad provides freight rail service that travels through Prescott. Rail traffic through Prescott has increased recently because the area has large deposits of silica sand that are used in hydraulic fracturing in North Dakota. As the sand is transported to North Dakota, oil is transported back through Prescott to refineries. The increase in train traffic and the volatility of the oil has raised concerns

Map 6-3: Existing Sidewalks and Public Parking Lots



regarding the safety of the community if there was a derailment. Other rail related issues that were identified in the Community Conversation Workshops and Community Survey were creating a quiet zone through the City and pedestrian safety crossing the railroad tracks. Residents have access to Amtrak passenger rail service in Red Wing, MN, and St. Paul, MN.

Air Transportation

Regularly scheduled air passenger service is available 30 miles west at Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. The nearest private aircraft service is at Red Wing, Minnesota (25 miles Southeast).

Water Transportation

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has three small boat harbors, launching areas and/or docking facilities listed in Prescott. Point St. Croix Marina has 70 slips while Miss-Croix Yacht Harbor has 120. Both offer many other services. Prescott also provides public access at Leo's Landing to the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. The park has 30 slips.

Public Transit

There are no public transit services in Prescott. A WDOT Park and Ride lot is located at USH 10 and Pearl Street. There is no taxi service or commuter bus service at this time. Transportation for the elderly or disabled is provided by the Pierce County Office of Aging.

Snowmobile Routes

Many people use snowmobiles for recreation during the winter. Urbanization has made it increasingly difficult for snowmobilers to travel into or through communities. The City of Prescott adopted regulations identifying snowmobile routes in the City. The routes are shown on Map 6-4.

Golf Carts

In 2013, Prescott passed an ordinance allowing the use of golf carts as means of travel within the City. Golf carts are viewed as an effective way to travel for short distances and are allowed on all streets except the following:

- ◆ Broad Street
- ◆ U.S.H. 10 and S.T.H. 29/35.
- ◆ Any street where the posted speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour

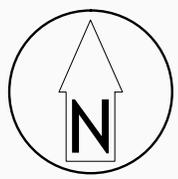
Public Parking

Finding a place to park in the downtown area can be difficult especially in the summer months when motorcycle traffic increases on the Great River Road. A lack of clearly marked public parking may discourage visitors for stopping in Prescott. In addition, someone driving in the downtown looking for a parking space will add to existing traffic.

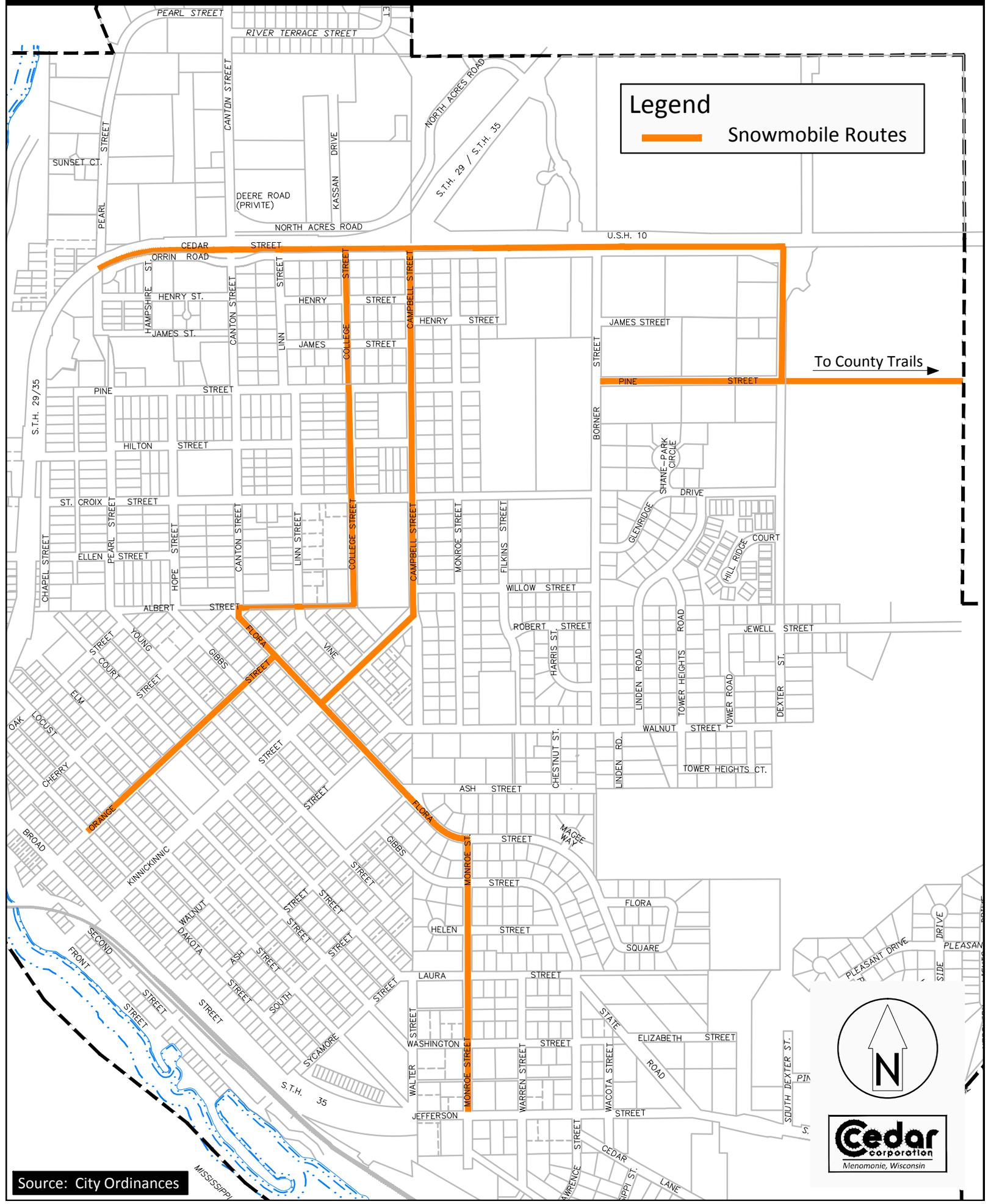
Map 6-4: Official Snowmobile Routes - City of Prescott

Legend
— Snowmobile Routes

To County Trails →



Source: City Ordinances



Prescott has three public parking areas near the downtown. These are located at Orange Street and Dakota Street, Mercord Mill Park, and 2nd Street and Walnut Street (see Map 6-3).

The City should explore additional locations for public parking for vehicles and motorcycles to help visitors quickly find these lots. The lots should be connected to points of interest such as the waterfront, downtown businesses, and Freedom Park by a network of multi-use trails and sidewalks. Using wayfinding signs may help visitors find existing parking lots.

Future Roads, Sidewalks and Multi-Use Trails

The City of Prescott has a good local road network that is well-connected and provides good movement of traffic throughout the City though traffic does not flow well in a few areas of the City where topography and development has influenced street patterns. Future roads will be planned for areas recently annexed and within the extraterritorial boundary extending into the Town of Clifton and Town of Oak Grove.

To ensure continued smooth traffic flow through the City of Prescott, these factors will be considered when planning future road corridors:

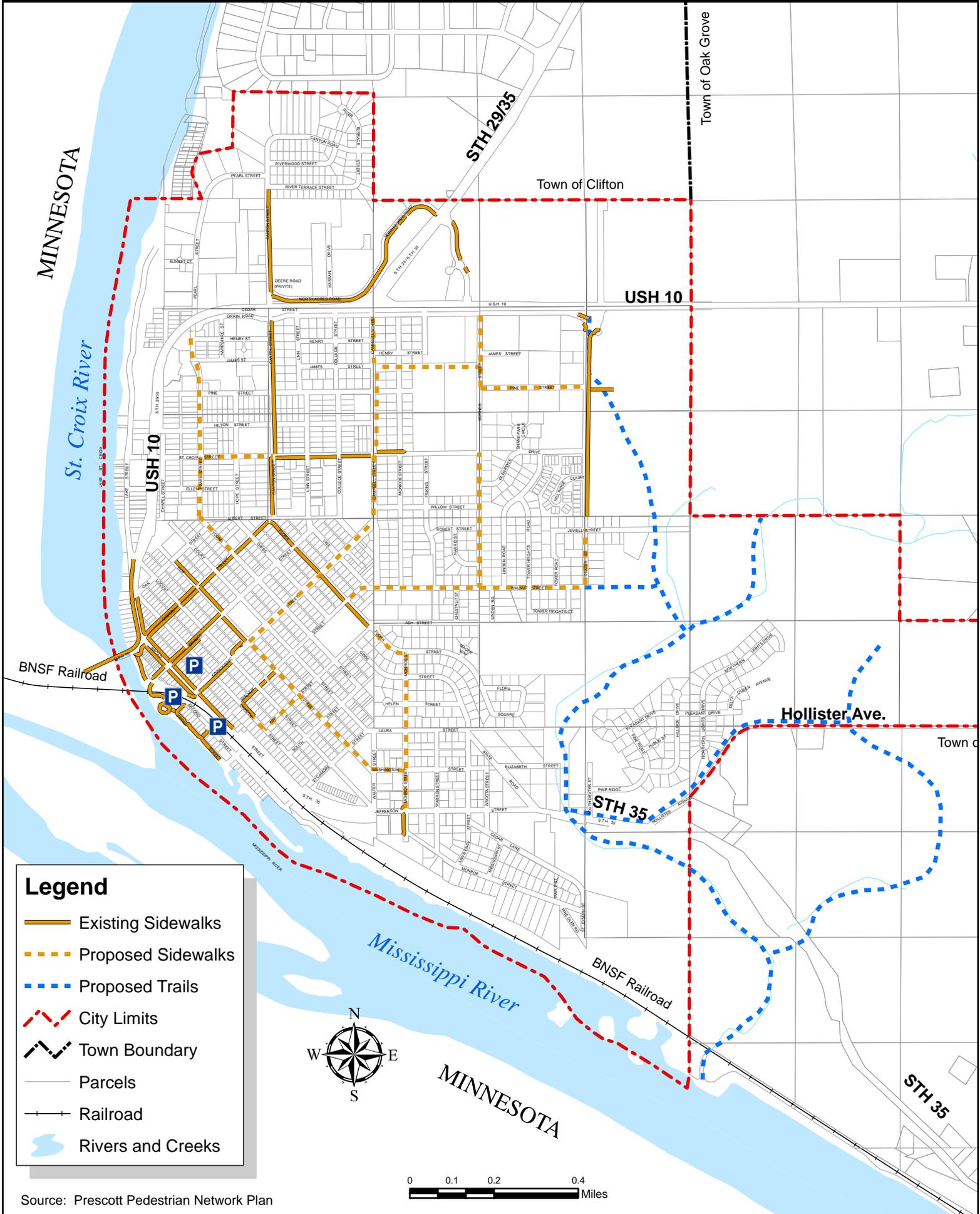
- ◆ Connect existing dead ends and stub roads where possible.
- ◆ Multiple access points for larger developments.
- ◆ Identify new or improve existing east/west, north/south corridors.
- ◆ Follow natural features and topography of the land.

Planning for future sidewalks and multi-use trails should take these factors into consideration:

- ◆ Provide safe passages to traffic generators such as the downtown, schools, waterfront, and areas identified in new developments.
- ◆ Plan sidewalks to provide connectivity to other sidewalks.
- ◆ Provide adequate road width and shoulder space for safe sharing of road space with other vehicles.
- ◆ Establish multi-use trails that link park and conservancy areas and provide parking for non-resident users.
- ◆ Incorporated signage to direct people to points of interest.

Map 6-5 shows the location of future sidewalks and trails. The sidewalks extend from existing sidewalks and connect neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas. The proposed trail network takes advantage of the areas attractive natural areas.

Map 6-5: Proposed Sidewalks and Trails



Road Expenditure Planning

Transportation infrastructure eventually needs to be maintained or expanded. A sound transportation system plan should attempt to foresee and plan for future upgrades and improvements. Two ways of doing this is by developing a road improvements plan and maintaining and monitoring PASER ratings. The City of Prescott does both.

The City of Prescott maintains a Five-Year Capital improvement Plan that includes transportation infrastructure projects.

Pavement ratings can be used for planning maintenance and budgets for local roadways. Municipalities and counties are required to assess the physical pavement condition of their local roads. A common method of doing this is referred to as Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating or PASER. PASER rates roadways from Failed (needs total reconstruction) to Excellent (no visible stress). PASER allows for better allocation of resources, a better understanding of pavement conditions, and allows for long term planning. PASER ratings are updated every two years.

Other Sources of Transportation Funding

Local multi-modal transportation projects can be funded through different sources. Some of the most common sources that are or could be used are:

- ◆ State Shared Revenue
- ◆ Local General Funds
- ◆ Community Development Block Grants
- ◆ WDNR Stewardship Grants
- ◆ WDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grants
- ◆ Private Foundations
- ◆ Corporate Foundations

Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

Goal 1: The City of Prescott has a safe, efficient, environmentally friendly and integrated multi-modal transportation system that meets the physical and economic needs of the community.

Objectives:

1. Reduce vehicle traffic by increasing the number of residents who walk or bike to school or work.
2. Promote environmentally friendly and healthy lifestyles.
3. Increase vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian education and awareness.
4. Increase bicycle tourism in the area.
5. Decrease the amount of fossil fuels consumed for local trips.

6. Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at intersections and when crossing major traffic corridors.

Recommendations:

1. Review and combine the Pedestrian Network Plan and Safe Routes to School Plan to identify sidewalk, multi-use trail, and safety improvements.
2. Identify points of interest within the community and link them through sidewalks and trails.
3. Inventory bicycle infrastructure in the City to identify needs such as work stations, parking infrastructure, restrooms and access to potable water to attract tourists and build a local sustainable economy.
4. Develop a wayfinding/signage plan to direct people to public parking areas and points of interest.
5. Explore forming or participating in a Committee to determine the feasibility of a commuter bus service or light rail to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
6. Establish metrics to benchmark and track bicycle related tourist dollars to measure the impact of promoting bicycling and constructing bicycle infrastructure.
7. Provide a page on the City's website related to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian rules, regulations, and safety.
8. Apply for grants to offset the cost of road, multi-use trail, and sidewalk improvements.
9. Require sidewalks and/or multi-use trails in new development that connects to existing infrastructure.
10. Continue to identify and preserve north/south and east/west arterial transportation corridors.
11. Identify locations for additional vehicle and motorcycle parking lots in the downtown and waterfront area.
12. Coordinate with the BNSF Railroad and WDOT on rail issues regarding noise and safety.
13. Work with the WDOT to designate and fund the best locations for pedestrian crosswalk improvement to move people safely across the STH 29, STH 35, and USH 10.
14. Explore funding mechanisms and support the development of a taxi service to meet the needs of residents.