

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background information on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Door County Highway Department, followed by an inventory of the existing transportation network within Door County, including: the roadway system; air, water, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation; and transportation service providers. This chapter also provides an inventory of transportation planning done for the county, including regional railroad, county highway, airport, and publicly-subsidized transportation. For detailed information on bicycle and pedestrian planning and resources, please see Chapter 12 of this Resource Report.

STATE AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENTS

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) officially was established in 1967 by combining independent agencies with the Department of Motor Vehicles. The goal of WisDOT is to meet ever changing and growing travel needs in Wisconsin by working with federal, state, and local agencies. Planning, building, and maintaining Wisconsin's network of state highways and the interstate highway system is one of the WisDOT's primary responsibilities. Additionally, the department plans, promotes, and financially supports air, bicycle and pedestrian, rail, and water transportation. The WisDOT shares the costs of building and operating all modes of transit at the county and municipal levels.



Picture: WisDOT Logo
Source: WisDOT

The primary funding source for maintaining, rehabilitating, and reconstructing county highways and local roads is the state's disbursement of general transportation aids. This is the largest WisDOT funding program, providing payments to counties for costs associated with such activities as road reconstruction, filling potholes, snow removal, and marking pavement. All local governments are required to file a certified plan with WisDOT each year indicating any increase or decrease in the mileage of public roads or streets. If there has been no change in total local road and street miles, the government must still file with WisDOT a certified plan or a certified statement to that effect.

WisDOT also administers the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), intended to "expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment." TAP is a legislative program that was authorized in Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), the federal transportation act signed into law in December 2015. With certain exceptions, projects that meet eligibility criteria for the Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancements, and/or the Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Program are eligible TAP projects, as described below.

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS). This program encourages children in grades K – 8 to walk and bike to school by creating safer walking and biking routes. SRTS programs promote healthier lifestyles in children starting at a young age, and decrease auto emissions close to schools as well.

- Transportation Enhancements (TE). In July 2012, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) discontinued the TE program as a distinct funding set-aside. However, TE projects generally remain eligible for funding within the TAP, a more comprehensive funding category.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (BFPF). BFPF funds projects that construct or plan for bicycle and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. The BFPF was impacted by MAP-21 as well, but is generally eligible for funding under the newer TAP category.

There are various options for rural transportation funding, including the Federal Formula Grant Program for Rural Areas, which supports capital and operating expenses for public transit services that are scheduled for and operated in non-urbanized areas (population under 50,000). In addition, there is the Wisconsin Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), which allocated federal funds to further development of skills and abilities for persons involved in providing transit services to rural and small urban areas.

Other types of local transportation planning and funding assistance provided by WisDOT are described throughout this chapter.

DOOR COUNTY HIGHWAY AND AIRPORT DEPARTMENT

The main goal of the highway division of the Door County Highway Department is to develop, maintain, and operate a safe and reliable transportation system in the county. Its primary responsibility is the ongoing maintenance, snow and ice control, design, and construction of the 592 miles of County Trunk Highways. The highway division also applies these services to state highways, three state-owned lift bridges, and local roads through agreements with towns and villages. The division provides service to approximately 1,174 miles of the 1,743 miles of local roads, equating to 2,030 lane miles of maintenance responsibility.

There are three highway shop facilities, located in the City of Sturgeon Bay (City), Village of Sister Bay, and Town of Brussels. Each facility distributes fuel to county and other government vehicles, with a fourth fueling location at the old Highway shop on 14th Avenue in the City. The Highway Department purchases the fuel, which in turn is used by over 400 vehicles belonging to 59 county departments and other agencies. The Highway Department also operates six mines, producing an average of 75,000 cubic yards of material per year, and a hot mix production plant, producing an average of 53,000 tons per year.

The main goals of the airport division of the Door County Highway Department Airport Department are to carry out the policies of the Federal Aviation Administration and the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and to ensure federal, state, and county laws pertaining to air transportation are being adhered to.

DOOR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

The Door County Transportation Department oversees the county's public transportation services and partners with outside organizations to connect people to transportation services that are affordable, available, and accessible. More information about public transportation in Door County can be found later in this chapter in the Transportation Service, Referral, and Coordination section.

INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

ROADWAY SYSTEM

WisDOT maintains the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), a comprehensive database developed by WisDOT to aid local governments with management of Wisconsin's 100,000 miles of local roads. The WISLR system can be used to help guide local planning and budgeting decisions by identifying both physical and administrative attributes of a municipality's roadway system, as listed below.

Physical attributes:

- Surface type
- Left and right shoulder
- One way
- Right-of-way
- Median type
- Left and right curb
- Parking
- Traffic lanes
- Pavement rating
- Sidewalks

Administrative attributes:

- Owner
- Road category
- Urban location
- Federal urban/rural
- Area
- Functional classification
- National Highway System data
- Highway
- Performance Monitoring System data
- International Roughness Index data
- High Occupancy Vehicle Lane data
- Strategic Highway Network data

According to WisDOT, as of 2019, Door County has 102 miles of state highways, 296 miles of county highways, and 1,002 miles of local roads; there are also approximately 186 miles of private roads. The backbones of the county's local transportation system are State Trunk Highways (STHs) 42 and 57. STH 42 runs approximately 59 miles, the entire length of the mainland of the county, from the Town of Forestville to Northport (in the Town of Liberty Grove). STH 57 runs over 53 miles from the Town of Union to the Village of Sister Bay. STHs 42 and 57 converge in the Town of Nasewaupée, approximately four miles southwest of the City of Sturgeon Bay, and split again about 2 miles northeast of the city, in the Town of Sevastopol. See Fig. 8.1.

WisDOT uses functional classification for general transportation planning, referencing highway and street construction standards, and to determine eligibility for allocation of federal funds. Door County's highways and roads are divided into three categories, or functional classes, as defined by WisDOT: 1) arterial roads, 2) collector roads, and 3) local streets and roads. Road category is determined by the function that the highway, street, or road serves in relation to population, land use, access, and traffic volume. The upper limits of the system – principal arterials, for example – emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas the lower-limit local roads and streets emphasize access. The county's functional classification system is illustrated on Map 8.1, found at the end of this document. Listed below are descriptions of each functional class/sub-classification and examples of these classifications in Door County.

Arterials

The function of an arterial is to move traffic quickly, safely, and efficiently over medium-to-long distances, often between regions as well as between major economic centers. Arterial highways are further categorized, based on traffic volumes, as either "principal" or "minor." Door County has two roads classified as arterial, described below.

- State Trunk Highway 42. STH 42 enters the county north of the City of Algoma where it is classified as a minor arterial. It becomes an "other" principal arterial where it converges with STH 57 in the Town of Nasewaupée until it splits in the Town of Sevastopol, where it becomes a minor arterial again. From there, STH 42 runs along the west side of the county through the Town of Egg Harbor, the Village of Egg Harbor, the Town of Gibraltar, the Village of Ephraim, the Town of Liberty Grove, and the Village of Sister Bay. STH 42 continues north from the Village of Sister Bay, through the Town of Liberty Grove, passing through the communities of Ellison Bay and Gills Rock, and ending at Northport.
- State Trunk Highway 57. STH 57 enters Door County north of the City of Green Bay in the Town of Union, near the western shore. It converges with STH 42 in the Town of Nasewaupée and splits in the Town of Sevastopol. STH 57 is classified as an "other" principal arterial between the Town of Union and the Town of Sevastopol, where it splits from STH 42 and becomes a minor arterial. STH 57 then continues on the east side of the county through the Towns of Jacksonport, Baileys Harbor, and Liberty Grove until it intersects with and ends at STH 42 in the Village of Sister Bay. In 2008, WisDOT completed an \$80 million expansion of STH 57 from a two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway, from the county border to the City of Sturgeon Bay.

Collectors

The primary function of roads classified as "collectors" is to provide general "area to area" routes for local traffic. Collector roads take traffic from the local road system (and the land-based activities supported by the local roads) and provide relatively fast and efficient routes to residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas.

- Major Collectors: Major collectors provide service to moderate-sized communities and other intra-area traffic generators, and link those generators to nearby larger population centers or higher-function routes.

- **Minor Collectors:** Minor collectors provide service to all remaining smaller communities, link the locally important traffic generators with their rural 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.

Examples of major collector roads include County Highways S and C in Southern Door and County Highways A, B, and F in Northern Door. Examples of minor collector roads include County Highways MM and U in Southern Door and County Highway I in Northern Door.

Local Roads

The primary purpose of local roads is to provide direct access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances on an inter-town or intra-town basis. They also tend to serve as the end destination of most trips. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are classified as local roads. Door County has approximately 878 miles of public local roads, comprising 76% of the total road miles in the county.

Driveways

Driveways to local roads and streets may impair vehicle safety if improperly sited and/or designed. The Wisconsin statutes allow municipalities to issue permits for all new driveways, including the potential prohibition of driveways that would be deemed unsafe due to location (at the base or top of hills, within a specified distance from an intersection, etc.). The permit process can also regulate the size and design of driveways. Most municipalities in Door County have driveway ordinances and the appropriate municipality should be contacted for further information. Note that Door County has a Uniform Addressing Ordinance, described further in Chapter 10, Land Use, which gives the Door County Land Information Officer authority to assign new addresses (such as when new driveways are being installed to accommodate new construction) and to oversee the naming of roads in all unincorporated areas.

TRAFFIC COUNTS AND CRASHES

The WisDOT provides all state communities with continuous and short-term traffic counts for state and county highways. Short-term traffic volume information is presented as Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) figures, calculated for a particular intersection or segment of road. The counts are conducted for 48 hours and then adjusted in order to report a 24-hour average weekday count for the specific data collection period. Average daily traffic volumes collected for Door County can be obtained on-line from WisDOT. Continuous count data is scheduled for hourly collections each day of the year; as of 2021, Door County had four continuous traffic counters.

Vehicle crash reports are filed with WisDOT by county and city police departments, providing the time, location, type, and severity of the crash. The number, location, and severity of accidents often indicate problems with road and street alignments, construction, or the geometric design of the street. A variety of measures, including alterations in the street geometry, enlargement of the intersection turning radii, placement of more prominent signs, relocation of access drives, and speed changes, are often used to alleviate problem areas. In 2020, Door County saw a total of 698 crashes, two of which resulted in fatalities. Detailed crash information for Door County can be found on-line from WisDOT.

BRIDGES

The WisDOT owns and funds operation of Door County's three movable bridges, all located in the City of Sturgeon Bay: the Michigan Street Bridge, the Maple-Oregon Bridge, and the Bayview Bridge. The WisDOT Northeast Regional Office in Green Bay does the specialized maintenance required of these bridges and contracts with the Door County Highway Department to operate the bridges. Navigation on Sturgeon Bay is under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard, which also has jurisdiction over the schedules of operation for all three bridges.

Michigan Street Bridge

The Michigan Street Bridge, centrally located in downtown Sturgeon Bay, was completed in 1930. This bridge was built as part of the State Hwy 42/57 corridor and was the only road connection between Southern and Northern Door until the opening of the Bayview Bridge in 1978. The Michigan Street Bridge is 1,420 feet long and has a vertical clearance of 14 feet above normal water in closed position – taller pleasure craft and most commercial vessels require opening of the bridge to pass through. The Michigan Street Bridge is on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places and is the only example in Wisconsin of a double-leaf, rolling lift, bascule through truss structure with overhead counter-weights.

Maple-Oregon Bridge

The Maple-Oregon Bridge was completed in October 2008 and carries traffic between Maple Street on the west side of the bay to Oregon Street on the east side. It is located between the Michigan Street Bridge and the Bayview Bridge, approximately 750 feet southeast of the Michigan Street Bridge and about 7,000 feet northwest of the Bayview Bridge. The Maple-Oregon Street Bridge is a rolling-lift bascule girder bridge with mechanically driven centerlocks. It is approximately 1,055 feet long from pier-to-pier and has 24 feet of vertical clearance above the water when in closed position.

Bayview Bridge

The Bayview Bridge, located approximately 7,800 feet southeast of Michigan Street, was completed in 1978 as part of a STH 42/57 bypass around the city. Its movable span is a double-leaf rolling-lift deck-girder bascule structure with Scherzer centerlocks. The bridge provides vertical clearance of approximately 49 feet at the centerline of its span in the closed position and opens upon request for all watercraft.

PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS

Park-and-ride lots are parking lots where individuals can leave their vehicles in order to carpool. Benefits include gas savings, decreased congestion on roads, decreased congestion in destination parking lots, and reduced pollution. The WisDOT opened its first park-and-ride lot in Door County near STH 57 and CTH C (Brussels) in 2008, which can accommodate up to 25 cars. There are also two park-and-ride lots in Brown County, located along STH 57. More information about these lots can be found at the WisDOT Web site listed in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter.

DOOR COUNTY COASTAL BYWAY

In 1999, a new state law authorized WisDOT to develop and administer a Scenic Byways program in order to take advantage of federal funding for highway improvement. In 2005, WisDOT created the Wisconsin Scenic Byways program, which currently has four state-designated scenic byways, including the Door County Coastal Byway (DCCB). This scenic byway program is a cooperative effort between local communities and WisDOT to identify and promote state highway corridors with scenic and/or historical attributes that provide travelers an enjoyable visual, educational, and recreational experience.

According to WisDOT, Wisconsin scenic byways should:

- be part of the state highway system (a numbered state or federal highway other than an interstate) and be at least 30 miles long;
- offer travelers outstanding scenic views or historic resources combined with recreational and/or cultural attributes; and
- be initiated/supported by local groups and governments.

Benefits of scenic byway designation include:

- eligibility to compete for federal discretionary scenic byway funds;
- increased tourism and economic development in communities along a designated byway;
- unique signs, markers, brochures, and ongoing promotional efforts that enhance a community's "marketability";
- potential designation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road, which are marketed to national and international travelers;
- promotion of partnerships between local governments, businesses, civic groups, and community leaders;
- strengthening of civic pride and promotion of communities as attractive places to live and work; and
- identification of an area's scenic, historical, and recreational treasures for the enjoyment of future generations.

The DCCB, established in 2010, is a 66-mile loop that begins in the City of Sturgeon Bay and loops around the northern part of the county along STHs 42 and 57, along the shores of Lake Michigan and Green Bay. All municipalities along the loop, except for the Town of Egg Harbor, are participating in the program. In order to be designated a scenic byway, Door County needed a 10-year Corridor Management Plan (CMP) in place that describes the vision and goals for the byway, including how the byway will be managed, promoted, and protected, and who will have responsibility for various projects along the byway. The CMP is intended to complement other planning documents, such as this plan.

The DCCB works with Destination Door County for marketing and promoting the Coastal Byway, as well as multiple other partners to implement the CMP. More information about projects resulting from the CMP are discussed in Chapter 9, Community Facilities and Utilities.

RUSTIC ROADS

In 1973, the Wisconsin State Legislature established the Rustic Roads program to help citizens and local governments identify and preserve the state's remaining scenic and lightly-traveled country roads. Each road in the program is labeled with a unique brown and yellow sign that contains a small placard identifying the road by its numerical number within the statewide system. These routes travel through some of Wisconsin's most scenic countryside and provide an opportunity for hikers, bikers, and motorists to travel along them with slower automobile speeds. The maximum speed limit on a Rustic

Road has been established by law at 45 miles per hour (mph). A speed limit as low as 25 mph may be established by the local governing authority.

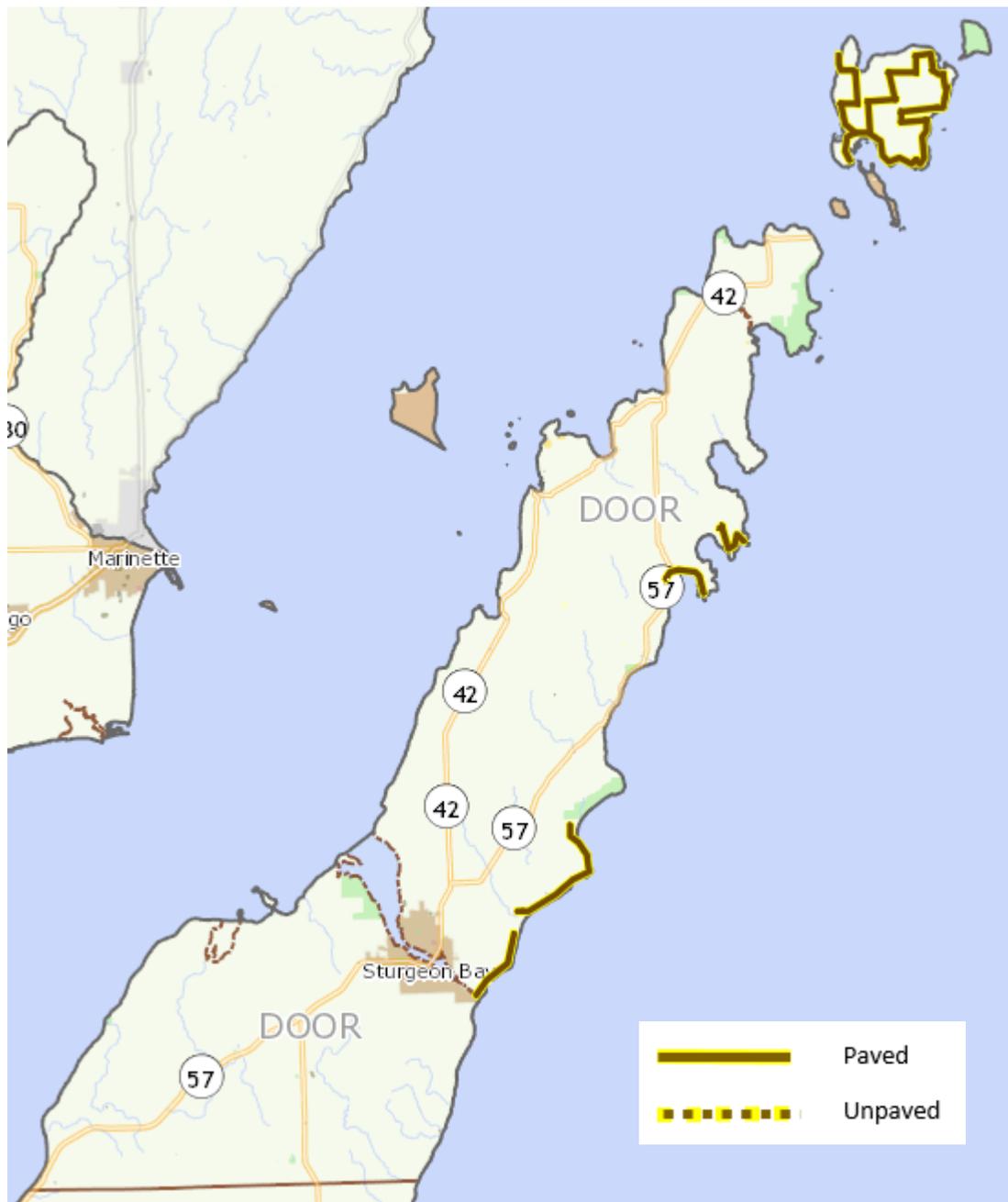
An officially designated Rustic Road continues to be under local control. The county, city, village, or town has the same authority over the Rustic Road as it possesses over other highways under its jurisdiction, and a Rustic Road is eligible for state aids just like any other public highway. A Rustic Road may be dirt, gravel, or paved, and one-way or two-way. It may also have bicycle or hiking paths adjacent to or incorporated in the roadway area. To qualify for the Rustic Road program, a road should:

- have outstanding natural features along its borders, such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, or native wildlife, or include open areas which singly or in combination uniquely set the road apart from other roads;
- be a lightly-traveled local access road, serving the adjacent property owners and those wishing to travel by auto, bicycle, or hiking for purposes of recreational enjoyment of its rustic features;
- be one not scheduled nor anticipated for major improvements which would change its rustic characteristics; and
- have, preferably, a minimum length of two miles and, where feasible, provide a completed closure or loop, or connect to major highways at both ends of the route.

Listed below are descriptions and locations of the five Rustic Roads in Door County. (See Figure 8.2.)

- Rustic Road 9 – County Highway T (Glidden Drive) between Brauer Road and Whitefish Bay Road is marked as Rustic Road 9. This 6.7-mile long road runs along the Lake Michigan shoreline, passing through sand dunes, heavily wooded areas, and streams containing natural spawning grounds for trout and smelt.
- Rustic Road 38 – Cana Island Road, extending from County Q east to Cana Island, is Rustic Road 38, a 2.5-mile long road passing through a unique boreal forest between Moonlight Bay and North Bay. The surrounding woods are filled with spruce, cedar, white pine, and various species of rare and valuable plants. This route provides scenic views of Cana Island Lighthouse and the Lake Michigan shoreline.
- Rustic Road 39 – The area of Ridges Road beginning at STH 57, continuing to Point Drive and the Old Lighthouse Point Natural Area is marked as Rustic Road 39. It is a 2.5-mile long route with panoramic views of heavily wooded areas and the lakeshore.
- Rustic Road 77 – County TT, running northerly to its intersection with Lake Michigan Drive, is marked as Rustic Road 77. This 3.5-mile long route begins at the Coast Guard station and lighthouse at its southern end and then runs north parallel to Lake Michigan. Many types of trees, including cedars, maples, white birch, and pines line this route.
- Rustic Road 119 – Beginning at the ferry docks and County W, Rustic Road 119 is comprised of various segments of County W and numerous town roads that hug the shoreline. There is also a route through the middle of Washington Island. Rustic Road 119 passes by forests, lavender farms, and vineyards.

Figure 8.2: Rustic Roads, Door County



Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Rustic Roads.

More information about rustic roads can be found at the WisDOT Web site listed in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

There are four public-use airports that service the region, three of which are located in Door County: Door County Cherryland, Ephraim-Gibraltar, and Washington Island. The fourth, Austin-Straubel International, is located near the City of Green Bay.

DOOR COUNTY CHERRYLAND AIRPORT

Door County Cherryland Airport, owned and maintained by the County of Door, is located on a 436-acre parcel one mile west of the City of Sturgeon Bay along Park Road and CTH C. This airport is classified as a Transport/Corporate airport, serving corporate jets, small passenger and cargo jet aircraft used in regional service, and small airplanes (piston or turboprop) used in commuter air service. These aircraft generally have a gross takeoff weight of less than 60,000 pounds, with approach speeds below 141 knots and wingspans of less than 118 feet. In Wisconsin, airports in this category normally have a primary runway length of 4,800 - 6,800 feet.

Cherryland's existing airfield configuration consists of two runways. Runway 2/20 is the primary runway with a length of 4,600 feet. Runway 10/28 serves as a secondary or crosswind runway with a length of 3,200 feet. Both runways have medium-intensity runway lights, four unit precision approach path indicators, and runway-end identification lights. Cherryland's primary runway length of 4,600 feet and pavement strength ratings – 16,000 pounds single-wheel and 22,000 pounds dual-wheel – restrict the size and types of aircraft able to safely use the airport. A feasibility study was conducted by the airport in 2003 regarding lengthening the east/west runway, but the Airport and Parks Committee decided in 2008 that the cost of extending the east/west runway far outweighed the benefits.

Occupying the 5,600 square-foot terminal are the Airport Director and staff, the Fixed Base Operator (FBO), and Avis Car Rental Agency. Express Airport Services, LLC is the fixed-base operator offering aircraft charter services. Other services provided include aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, scenic air rides, and fueling. The tie-down area has 33 paved tie-downs, with additional space available. There are a total of 60 hangar buildings on the airport property, with sizes ranging from 100 feet x 120 feet to 42 feet x 32 feet. There is no scheduled passenger service and none likely in the future due to security requirements put in place by the Federal Aviation Administration for all airports since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The terminal has 24-hour access to self-service fuel, a flight planning and pilots lounge, and restrooms.

EPHRAIM-GIBRALTAR AIRPORT

The Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport is owned and maintained by the Village of Ephraim and the Town of Gibraltar. The airport, located in the north central portion of the Town of Gibraltar, is classified as a Basic Utility-A airport facility. It is designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 12,500 pounds gross weight, with approach speeds below 121 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet. Such aircraft can be either single-engine or twin-engine piston. The facility has one 2,700-foot asphalt runway and one 2,364-foot turf runway.

This airport is open year-round, but staffed only from May to October and on-call in the off-season. It has a 216 square-foot terminal building, one courtesy van, car rental service, car parking, self-service aviation fueling, eight courtesy bicycles, and airport management services. The airport also has a 2,500 square-foot maintenance building. Vehicle parking facilities are available at 20 short-term and 23 long-term spots. The site currently has 29 hangars with two people on a waiting list for hangar space.

WASHINGTON ISLAND AIRPORT

The Washington Island Airport is owned by the Town of Washington and is located on Airport Road in the northwest portion of the island. It is classified as a Basic Utility-A airport designed to accommodate aircraft of less than 6,000 pounds gross weight, with approach speeds below 91 knots and wingspans of less than 49 feet. Such aircraft are typically single-engine or multi-engine, seating between two and ten people. The facility has two 2,230-foot turf runways and 15 hangars. No fuel service is available.

AUSTIN-STRAUBEL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Austin-Straubel International Airport is owned by Brown County and is located on Airport Drive, just west of the City of Green Bay. The third largest airport in the state, it is classified as an Air Carrier/Cargo airport, designed to accommodate virtually all aircraft including wide-body jets and large military transports. The airport has two concrete runways with lengths of 8,701 feet and 7,700 feet. Austin-Straubel, as of 2022, is served by five passenger airlines flying year-round to four destinations: Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Austin-Straubel also provides seasonal service to seven other destinations: Denver, Colorado; Ft. Myers, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, and Tampa, FL; Las Vegas, NV; and Phoenix, AZ. The Door County-Green Bay Shuttle provides year-round transportation between Austin-Straubel Airport and Door County.

Contact information is provided in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter for the four airports listed above. In addition to these four public-use airport facilities, there are also eight privately-owned airstrips or helicopter landing pads in Door County. These facilities, with turf runways ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet long, are primarily used by recreational pilots and for medical emergencies.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

The water transportation system in Door County consists of the Port of Sturgeon Bay and various ferry services. In addition, the U.S. Coast Guard maintains a local branch in Sturgeon Bay, overseeing multiple facets of water transit and recreational water usage, including inspections, law enforcement, and safety.

PORT OF STURGEON BAY

The Port of Sturgeon Bay houses the Bay Shipbuilding Company, a subsidiary of Fincantieri Shipbuilding, the major shipbuilding and ship repair facility on Lake Michigan. Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding has been building, converting, and repairing ships in Sturgeon Bay since 1968. They specialize in the construction of large commercial and government vessels such as barges, cruise ships, dredges, ferries, offshore support vessels, and platform supply vessels. The company operates a 63-acre custom-built facility on the Sturgeon Bay ship canal, housing the only graving dock in the Great Lakes capable of serving carriers over 1,000 feet. Additionally, the facility maintains a small graving dock along with a floating dock and numerous crawler and gantry cranes with a lift capacity of up to 200 tons. Most recently, Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding sent its newest built ship, the M/V Mark W. Barker, on its maiden voyage in July 2022; it is the first U.S.-flagged freighter to be built on the Great Lakes in nearly 40 years.

FERRIES

There are three ferry services in Door County with set schedules going to Washington Island/Rock Island and several operators within the Town of Gibraltar on call for trips between Fish Creek and Chambers Island. There is also a ferry that connects Manitowoc, Wisconsin with Ludington, Michigan.

- Island Clipper Passenger Ferry – The Island Clipper is a 65-foot ferry with 149 passenger seats. It carries people between Gills Rock (Town of Liberty Grove) and Washington Island from late May through mid-October.
- Washington Island Ferry – This ferry line has a fleet of five vessels which carry people, bicycles, cars, vans, motorcycles, scooters, snowmobiles, and trucks between Northport (Town of Liberty Grove) and Washington Island, year-round.
- Rock Island Ferry – The “Karfi” is a 49 passenger-only ferry that transports people between Jackson Harbor, Washington Island and Rock Island State Park. The ferry operates from mid-May to mid-October.
- Fish Creek to Chambers Island – Several operators are on call year-round, as long as the water is open, to transport people between Fish Creek and Chambers Island.
- Lake Michigan Car Ferry – This car and passenger ferry links Ludington, Michigan with Manitowoc, Wisconsin from mid-May to mid-October, reducing what would be a 450-mile drive to a four-hour ferry trip.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard “Marine Safety Detachment” Station, located at the east end of the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal, was established in 1886 as part of the U.S. Life Saving Service. There are also seasonal stations on Washington Island and in the City of Green Bay that operate only during the summer months. The Marine Safety Detachment unit, including the seasonal units, is a multi-mission unit responsible for executing the Coast Guard’s Port Safety and Security, Marine Environmental Protection, and Commercial Vessel Safety missions under the Department of Homeland Security. They perform a variety of tasks each day, ranging from conducting port security patrols, processing vessel arrivals, inspecting U. S. and foreign commercial vessels, and conducting waterfront facility exams for compliance with federal regulations.

The Coast Guard’s area of responsibility for marine inspections covers over 300 miles of coastline, extending 35 nautical miles offshore and including all navigable waters of western Lake Michigan (including all of Green Bay) from the city of Kenosha, Wisconsin on the Lake Michigan side, north to Thompson, Michigan (just west of Manistique, Michigan). This area includes 21 facilities that are subject to the Maritime Transportation and Security Act of 2002, including several oil transfer facilities. In an average year, these facilities receive 150 foreign vessel arrivals, 80 of which come from ports in Europe or South America, with the remainder coming from Canadian ports.

All stations conduct search and rescue operations, law enforcement operations, and provide recreational boating safety education. The Sturgeon Bay station conducts ice rescue operations during the winter. The typical case-load for a station during the summer is between 150 and 200 search and rescue operations and over 200 law enforcement boardings, with the Sturgeon Bay station also conducting 10 - 20 ice rescue cases during the winter.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

Door County municipalities have received various federal grants administered through WisDOT for bicycle and pedestrian projects, as listed in Table 8.1. The City of Sturgeon Bay and the Village of Sister Bay are the only municipalities to have received grant money for pedestrian-related projects. Bicycle facilities, as defined by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, include shared roadways (no signs or markings), signed shared roadways, bicycle lanes, and shared-use paths.

- Shared roadways have no bicycle designations or facilities. In Door County, shared roadways include all local roads, collectors, and minor arterials with low traffic volumes that are safe for bicycle travel.
- Signed shared roadways are designated by bicycle route signs and serve either to provide continuity to other bicycle facilities or to designate preferred routes through high-demand corridors.
- Bicycle lanes are established with appropriate pavement markings and signage along streets in corridors where there is significant bicycle demand and where there are distinct needs that can be served by the lanes. The purpose of bicycle lanes is to improve conditions for bicyclists on the street. As of the adoption of this Plan, only the City of Sturgeon Bay has bicycle lanes.

Table 8.1: WisDOT-Funded Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, Door County

Year	Project Title	Municipality	Cost
1994	Ahnapee Trail	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$220,000
1994	Ahnapee Trail	Door County	\$148,300
1994	Tri-County Recreational Corridor	Door County	\$500,000
1998	Ahnapee Trail Extension	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$56,500
1999	Sister Bay Bike/Pedestrian Path	Village of Sister Bay	\$71,000
2000	Ephraim/Fish Creek/Gibraltar/Egg Harbor Bike Path	Town of Gibraltar	\$181,100
2000	Regional Bike Plan	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$45,500
2000	Sturgeon Bay Bridge Bike Path	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$140,000
2000	Sister Bay Bike Path STH42	Village of Sister Bay	\$421,000
2004	Ahnapee Trail Extension	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$165,000
2007	Sturgeon Bay School District SRTS Plan	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$60,000
2008	Sidewalk Addition & Education Program	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$203,864
2010	Door County Bike & Pedestrian Plan	Door County	\$100,000
2016	Bay-Lake Regional Bike & Pedestrian Plan	Bay-Lake Region	\$108,000
2020	Walk, Bike, & Eggsplore Egg Harbor	Village of Egg Harbor	\$1,382,880

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Shared-use paths generally are used to serve corridors involving streets and highways not suitable for bicyclists or where wide utility or former railroad rights-of-way exist, permitting facilities to be constructed away from the influence of parallel streets. The City of Sturgeon Bay and the Village of Sister Bay have the only urban shared-use paths in the county. Other recreational shared-use paths

include the Ahnapee State Park Trail, Sunset Trail in Peninsula State Park, and Potawatomi Trail in Potawatomi State Park.

More information on a community multi-modal trail plan released in 20204 may be found later in this chapter. More information on recreational bicycle and other types of trails can be found in Chapter 12, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, REFERRAL, AND COORDINATION

DOOR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIUM/DOOR-TRAN

There are various transit options throughout the county available to residents and visitors. Door County Connect-Public Transit is the county’s official public transportation service. Door County Connect partners with Door-Tran, a community transit network dedicated to connecting people to transportation services that are affordable, available, and accessible. The following services are provided through this partnership:

- **Door-2-Door Rides (D2D).** D2D Rides is a shared ride taxi service that provides rides throughout majority of the county. Service is broken down by zone areas. (See Figure 8.3.) Service schedules and costs are based on the zone to or from which you are traveling. Some areas do not provide daily service due to lower demand.
- **Door County Connect Bus/Van Service (formerly ADRC Bus).** Door County Connect travels throughout the City of Sturgeon Bay and an extended area up to 10 miles from the ADRC. Service runs Monday – Thursday, 7:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., and Friday 7:45 – 1:15 p.m. Fares are \$2.00 per trip within the City, and \$5.00 per trip in the extended area.
- **Veteran Rider Program.** Door-Tran provides transportation to and from VA and medical clinics for veterans or residents available for veteran services. The program is completely volunteer run.



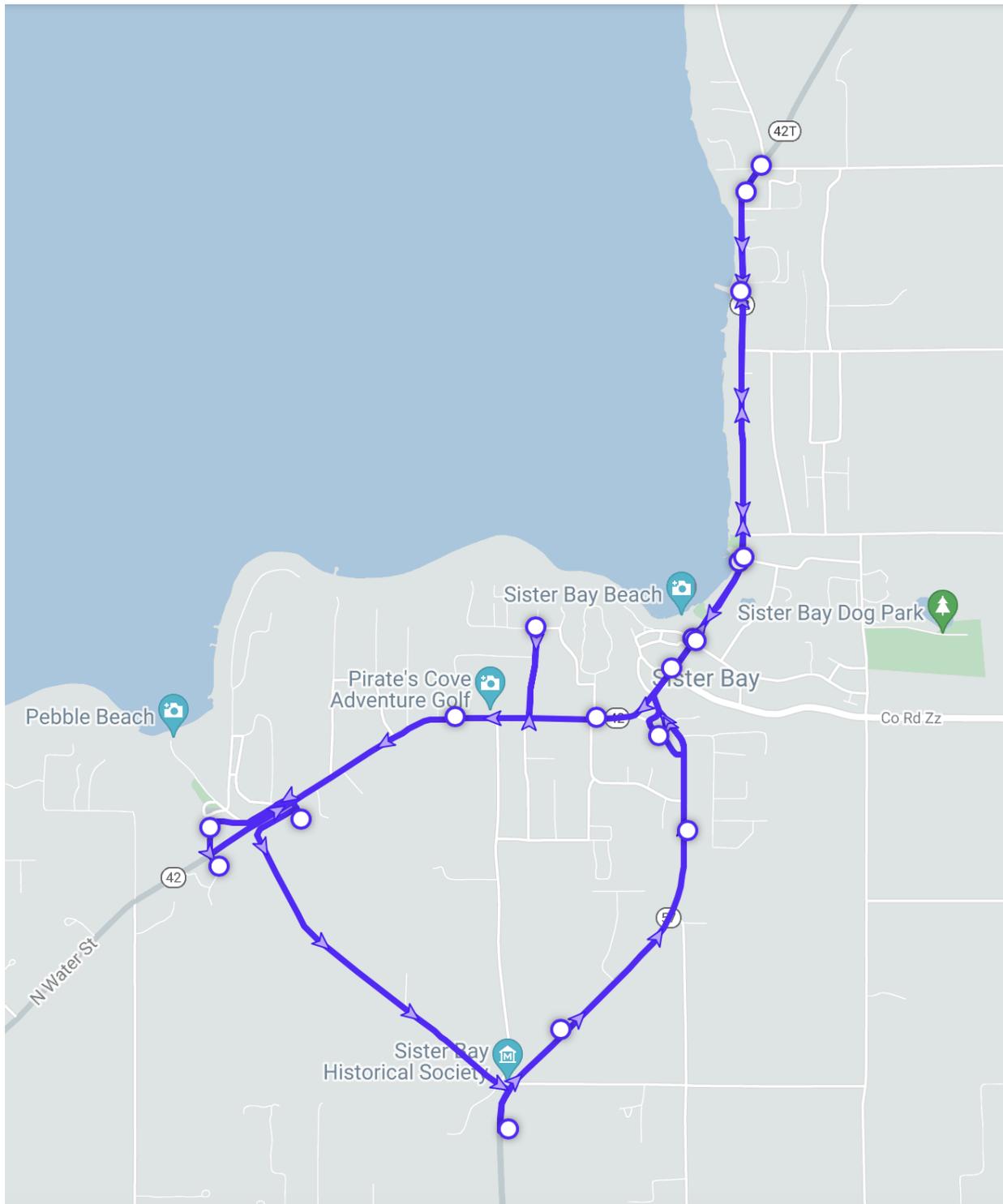
Pictured: Door County Connect Logo
Source: Door County Transportation Department

Other transportation services provided throughout the county include:

- **Sister Bay Shuttle Bus.** This free shuttle provides service to eighteen different locations around the Village of Sister Bay, from Labor Day through mid-October. (See Figure 8.4.) The Village Shuttle Bus runs every 30 minutes, Thursday – Saturday, from 5:00 p.m. to 2 a.m.
- **Tru-Way Transport.** Located in the Town of Brussels, Tru-Way Transport provides non-emergency medical transportation throughout Northeast Wisconsin for doctor appointments, hospital discharges, hospice transportation, dialysis, wound clinic, cancer treatments, inter-facility transit, and rehab.

Figure 8.3: Door-2-Door Taxi Zone Areas

Figure 8.4: Sister Bay Shuttle Route



Source: Village of Sister Bay, 2022.

INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

This section presents information on transportation planning activities in Door County and on existing state, regional, county, and local transportation-related plans relevant to Door County.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WisDOT has adopted Connect 2050 as Wisconsin's roadmap for transportation policymaking. Connect 2050 was revised from the previous plan to address strong support for strategies to improve multimodal transportation efficiency and reducing single occupancy vehicle travel. The goals from the plan are listed below.

Goal 1: Pursue sustainable long-term transportation funding.

Goal 2: Focus on partnerships.

Goal 3: Pursue continuous improvement and expand data-driven decision-making processes.

Goal 4: Increase options, connections, and mobility for people and goods.

Goal 5: Maximize technology benefits.

Goal 6: Maximize transportation safety.

Goal 7: Maximize transportation system resiliency and reliability.

Goal 8: Balance transportation needs with those of the natural environment, socioeconomic, historic, and cultural resources.

TRANSIT STUDIES

DOOR COUNTY TRANSIT STUDY, SRF CONSULTING

In 2018, SRF Consulting and Door County Transportation Resource Improvement Partners (TRIP) conducted a transit study examining the current transportation resources and conditions in the county, and then provided service recommendations based on the study's results. Suggested improvements include:

- Service monitoring for shared-ride taxi service;
- Restructure connector and rural service; and
- Creating a fixed route service in Sturgeon Bay.

DOOR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MODEL, LARSON & ASSOC.

Larson & Associates, LLC directed a transportation model study to analyze the effectiveness of Door County's current transportation model. Improvement possibilities were then provided, recommending a new transportation model with one managing entity for the county to make transit services more efficient and user-friendly.

WISDOT PROPOSED HIGHWAY & BRIDGE PROJECTS

A list of design projects and studies can be found here: <https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/ne/default.aspx>

WISCONSIN PORTS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Wisconsin Ports Strategic Plan is a comprehensive guide created by the Wisconsin Commercial Ports Association (WCPA), identifying ways in which the WCPA effectively prepares for a variety of potential futures, taking into account the many internal and external factors that impact WCPA. The mission of the Strategic Plan is to promote and grow Wisconsin's waterborne transportation.

AIRPORTS

The airport development process involves coordination between the Federal Aviation Administration, WisDOT Bureau of Aeronautics, and the airport owner. The WisDOT's Five-Year Improvement Program combines federal, state, and local resources to help fund improvements to over 100 public-use airports throughout the state primarily owned by counties, cities, towns, and villages. Improvements can include runway construction and reconstruction, land acquisition, navigational aids, and lighting. The Five-Year Improvement Program includes projects for the Cherryland, Ephraim-Gibraltar, and Washington Island airports.

DOOR COUNTY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Door County Transportation Department published the county's latest Coordinated Transportation Plan in 2021, which can be found here: <https://www.co.door.wi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3011/Door-County-Coordinated-Plan-2021---2024>. In general, this plan serves to increase planning efforts to address funding issues and unmet needs.

DOOR COUNTY MULTI-MODAL TRAIL TASK FORCE REPORT

A multi-modal trail task force report was developed and published in 2024 by a group working under the umbrella of the Door County Community Foundation. This report, the Green Fund Multi-Modal Trails Task Force Report, includes a comprehensive map of all trail related projects, both existing and planned, throughout the entire county. The purpose of the map is to provide information to communities to aid in the development of trails. The report and maps are available on-line at <https://www.doorcountygreenfund.org/trails/maps/>. More information about how this report was developed can also be found in Chapter 12, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities.

RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

LOCAL AGENCIES

Airports

- Austin-Straubel International Airport ([Austin Straubel International Airport \(flygrb.com\)](http://flygrb.com))
- Door County Cherryland (920-746-7131)
- Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport (friendsofephraingibraltairport.com – friendsofephraingibraltairport.com)
- Town of Washington (920-847-2448)

Door County Highway and Airport Department ([Highway and Airport | Door County, WI](#))

Door County Land Use Services ([Land Use Services | Door County, WI](#))

Door County Transportation Department ([Transportation | Door County, WI](#))

- Door County Connect ([Door County Connect | Door County, WI](#))
- Door-2-Door Rides ([Door 2 Door Rides | Door County, WI](#))

Ferries

- Island Clipper ([HOME | Island Clipper](#))
- Lake Michigan Car Ferry ([Ludington MI To Manitowoc WI SS Badger People & Car Ferry](#))
- Rock Island Ferry ([Rock Island Ferry Schedule and Rates | Door County, Wisconsin \(wisferry.com\)](#))
- Washington Island Ferry Line ([Washington Island Ferry | Door County, Wisconsin \(wisferry.com\)](#))

Sister Bay Shuttle Bus ([Free Sister Bay Shuttle Bus — Sister Bay, Door County](#))

Tru-Way Transport ([Ambulatory, Wheelchair & Gurney Transportation | Tru-Way Transport | Wisconsin \(truwaytransport.com\)](#))

STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES

Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission ([Home :: Bay-Lake Region Planning Commission \(baylakerpc.org\)](#))

Wisconsin Department of Transportation ([Wisconsin Department of Transportation \(wisconsin.gov\)](#))

- Bureau of Aeronautics ([Wisconsin Department of Transportation Travel by air \(wisconsin.gov\)](#))

FEDERAL AGENCIES

United States Coast Guard – Marine Safety Detachment Sturgeon Bay ([District 9 \(uscg.mil\)](#))

United States Department of Transportation ([Department of Transportation](#))

- Federal Aviation Administration ([Federal Aviation Administration \(faa.gov\)](#))