

# Highway Department Policies and Procedures Manual

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin



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ACRONYMS

<b>ADT</b>	Average Daily Traffic count
<b>Ag CMV</b>	Agricultural Commercial Motor Vehicle
<b>ANSI/ISEA</b>	American National Standards Institute & International Safety Equipment Association
<b>ATV</b>	All-Terrain Vehicles
<b>BIA</b>	Bureau of Indian Affairs
<b>BMP</b>	Best Management Practices
<b>CHI</b>	County Highway Improvement Program (formerly CHIP)
<b>CTH</b>	County Trunk Highway
<b>DNR</b>	Department of Natural Resources
<b>FDM</b>	Facilities Development Manual
<b>I or IH</b>	Interstate Highway
<b>IoH</b>	Implement of Husbandry
<b>LFA</b>	Local Force Account
<b>MSIP</b>	Municipal Street Improvement Program
<b>MUTCD</b>	Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices
<b>NBI</b>	National Bridge Institute
<b>PASER</b>	Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating

<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>PS &amp; E</b>	Plan, Specifications and Estimate
<b>ROW</b>	Right-of-Way
<b>§</b>	State Statute (Section or Chapter)
<b>STH</b>	State Trunk Highway
<b>STP-R</b>	Surface Transportation Program - Rural
<b>STP-U</b>	Surface Transportation Program - Urban
<b>TRI</b>	Town Road Improvement Program (formerly TRIP)
<b>USH</b>	United States Highway
<b>WCHA</b>	Wisconsin County Highway Association
<b>WisDOT</b>	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
<b>WISLR</b>	Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads
<b>VCT</b>	Vision Clearance Triangle

## **Introduction**

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The Eau Claire 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 421 miles of the county trunk highway system and annually contracts with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to maintain over an additional 150 miles of State and Federal Highway System roads (see **Figure 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 Eau Claire County.

### ***Vision Statement***

The vision of the Eau Claire County Highway Department is to provide a service to the taxpayer that, to the best of our ability, provides safe and efficient travel through the use of new technology, proper utilization of resources and transparency. Internally we strive to foster a culture of belonging and personal improvement through effective communication and leadership development.

### ***Mission Statement***

Our Mission is to construct and maintain the county trunk highway system of Eau Claire County and to maintain, under contract, the state trunk highway system as well as some of the township highways.

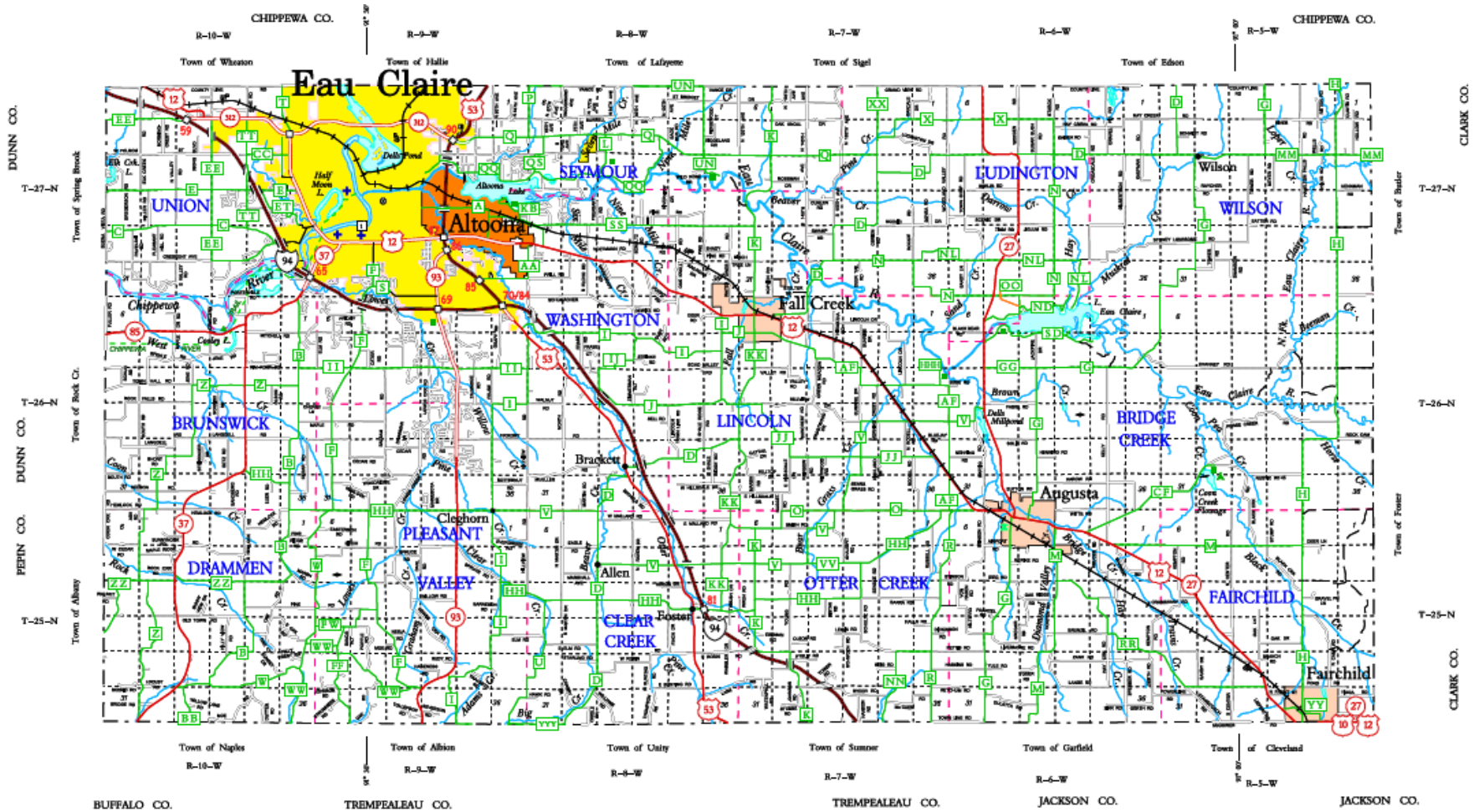
### ***Purpose***

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

### ***General Maintenance Activities***

The Eau Claire County Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance of county highways and state roads through contract with WisDOT. The 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 and litter control. A primary concern is to maintain a safe and drivable pavement while protecting the County's investment in quality roads.

Figure 1. State and County Highway System



**Highway Commissioner**

The Eau Claire County Highway Department is led by the Highway Commissioner. The Highway Commissioner is in charge of all operations on the County Trunk Highway System as well as maintenance, under contract with the state, of the State highways in the county.

***Highway Department Contact Information***

To report problems regarding a county road or to submit general concerns or comments, please use the following:

**Mail**

2000 Spooner Avenue  
Altoona, Wisconsin 54720

**Phone**

715-839-2952

**Fax**

715-839-4952

**Internet**

Visit the Eau Claire County Highway Department website at

[https://www.eau Claire county.gov/our-government/departments-and-facilities/department-directory/highway#!/a>](https://www.eau Claire county.gov/our-government/departments-and-facilities/department-directory/highway#!/)



### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The following are some frequently asked questions that relate to Eau-Claire County Highway Department services. Additional information regarding these questions can be found in this manual.

#### **I noticed a dead animal on the road, who do I contact?**

Dead animals on the roadway may create a potential hazard to the traveling public. If a large dead animal (i.e., deer, a large dog, etc.) is lying on the roadway please contact the appropriate highway authority that has jurisdiction of that road (for example, County, City, Village, or Township). If it is a County maintained highway, please contact the Eau Claire County Highway Department at (715) 839-2952.

#### **How do I find out where the right-of-way is located on my property?**

If you are unsure of exactly where the right-of-way line is for your property, please contact the appropriate highway authority. Before doing anything within the right-of-way, it is important that you contact the Highway Department for approval. Please note that the Eau-Claire County Highway Department does not locate property lines. The property owner should call a surveyor to locate property lines.

#### **Do I need a permit to construct a new driveway / access point to a County Highway?**

Wisconsin law requires property owners to acquire a driveway/access permit prior to constructing a new access point connecting to the County Trunk Highway System. You should contact the Eau-Claire County Highway Department for specific details on obtaining a permit.

#### **Does the Highway Department provide dust control on Town roads that motorists use as a detour or alternate route around County Highways that are under construction?**

The Department does not normally provide dust control. If a County Highway is required to have a **signed detour on a Town Road** for a project lasting 4 days or more, the Department will evaluate the need for providing dust control.

#### **Who do I notify if there is a road hazard on or along a county road?**

Hazardous conditions may develop on county roads for a number of reasons. Storms may cause trees or limbs to fall onto the roadway while heavy rain may result in flooding at isolated highway locations. Potential hazards may result from debris falling off of trucks or other vehicles. If a potentially hazardous condition exists on a road, you should contact the Sheriff's Department at (715) 839-4709. The Sheriff's Department will in turn notify the appropriate Highway Department personnel to remove the hazard.

**My property (mailbox, fence, etc.) was damaged by a snowplow, who should I contact?**

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The Eau Claire County Highway Department does not replace broken or damaged mailboxes.

**The County is not responsible for the following:**

- Damage that is caused to a mailbox, or other properly located structures outside the public right-of-way, as a result of plowed snow or the force of snow being discharged by County snow removal equipment.
- Damage that is caused to any fences, headwalls, trees, shrubs, plantings, and other structures that are improperly located within the public right-of-way (please refer to **Public Right-of-Way** section of this manual for additional details).
- Damage that is caused to lawns or for the deposition of gravel in road ditches. If there are extenuating circumstances, these situations may be reviewed at the County's discretion on a case-by-case basis. Any vegetation damage sustained due to de-icing products used on the roadway will not be treated or repaired by the County.
- Damage to abandoned vehicles that have been left on the County Highway. If the Highway Department personnel come upon an abandoned vehicle, they will contact the Sheriff's Department to request the vehicle to be removed at the owner's expense. If a vehicle is blocking one or more lanes halting snow and ice control operations, the Highway Department has the authority to move the vehicle by whatever means are necessary to reopen the roadway. Any damage

incurred in such a move shall be the owner's responsibility.

## County Trunk Highway System

The County Trunk Highway System, established in 1925, forms the secondary system of highways within the state and constitutes the interconnecting highways supplementing the State Trunk Highway 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 Eau Claire County Highway Department as authorized under Section 83 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The County Trunk Highway System includes all highways that have been selected by the Eau Claire County Board and approved by WisDOT in accordance with Section 83.025 of the Wisconsin Statutes. County highways are designated alphabetically, and the marking and signing is uniform throughout the state. Improvements or construction of highways on the County Trunk Highway 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.

### **Purpose**

County Trunk Highways are meant to provide a high level of mobility to the traveling public. County Trunk Highways have historically provided farm to market routes and connect cities and villages to higher level state highways. Highways within urbanized areas 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.

### **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 Eau Claire 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. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the WisDOT.

### **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 corridor movements having trip lengths and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 or connect major centers of activity.

- **Minor Arterials**, like principal arterials, serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-community continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- **Collectors** provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets.
- **Local Streets** comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. Local streets provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher order of systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility, and through-traffic movement on this system is generally discouraged.

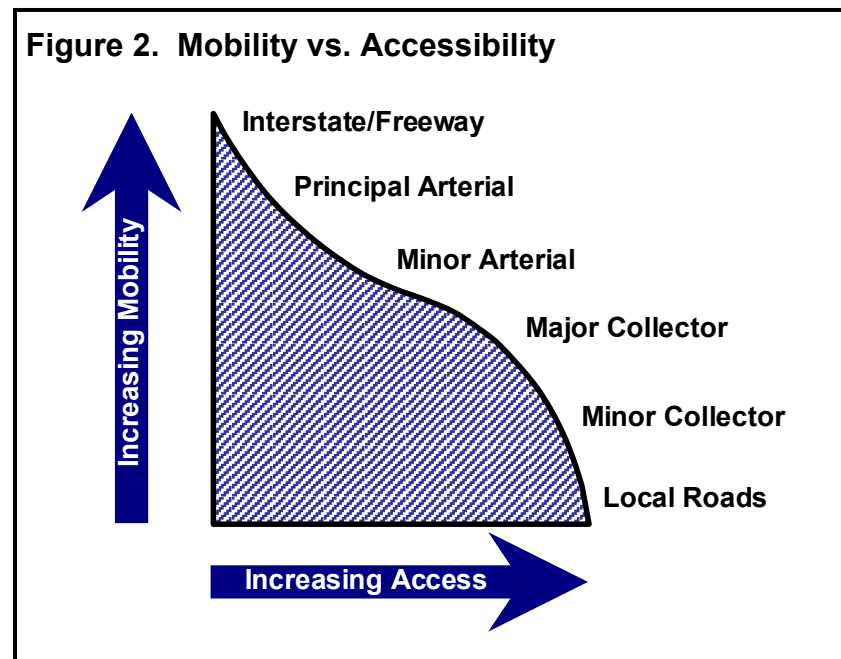
It is the policy of the Eau Claire County Highway Department to review the County Trunk Highway System on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the roadways are serving their intended purpose (i.e., mobility or accessibility). The primary criteria for defining County Trunk Highways includes functional classification,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

**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**). At the upper limit of the system (e.g., principal arterials) are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas facilities at the lower limits (e.g., local roads) are designed to emphasize land access. Collectors offer a compromise or transition between both functions.



## **Rural vs. Urban**

The County Trunk Highway System connects cities, towns, and villages, often located in rural areas, to larger urban areas, or other major trip centers. **Figure 3** displays a schematic illustration of a functionally classified rural and urban roadway network. How the County Trunk Highway System is intended to function within rural and urban areas is discussed in the following.

In the rural area, 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 Eau Claire 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, generally speaking, gather traffic from the local roads, the lowest functionally classified roads which serve individual residences, farms, and other rural land uses.

The same basic concepts apply within an urban area; however, because of higher intensity and varying land uses other considerations, such as access locations and spacing, ADT volumes, posted and observed travel speeds, and traffic control devices become even more important in defining a logical and efficient County Trunk Highway System. It is not uncommon for a State or County highway to pass through an urban area. In fact, this is necessary for the County Trunk

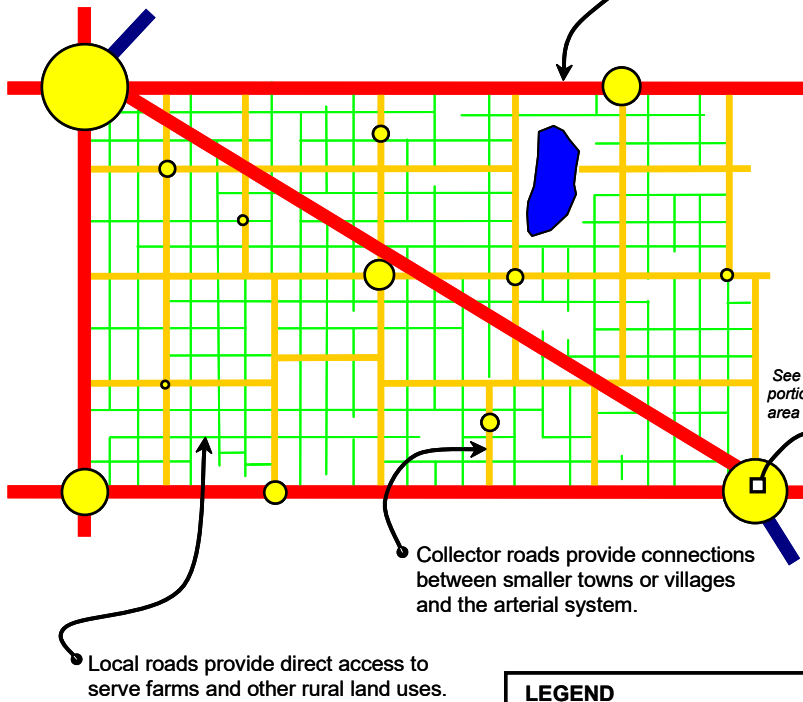
Highway System to function properly and ultimately accomplish its primary purpose of connecting cities and villages. When a County Trunk Highway passes through an urban area it is critical that this facility provides a high level of access control to ensure that it is meeting the primary purpose of providing mobility with a minimum number of access points. When a segment of the County Trunk Highway System is no longer serving this purpose, it may be appropriate to evaluate the highway corridor, or segment in question, to determine what actions might be necessary to ensure that the facility serves the intended purpose.

As displayed in **Figure 3**, the principal arterial (State or County) in the urban area should have limited access generally connecting to minor arterials (local municipality) or collector streets. The minor arterials and collector streets in turn provide increasing levels of accessibility to commercial, office, and industrial land uses. The collector roads also provide the primary connection to local streets which provide direct access to neighborhoods and residential areas. Generally speaking, roadways serving a local function should be the local jurisdiction's responsibility and roadways serving a more regional function should be the responsibility of the State or County.

Figure 3. County Highways – Rural vs. Urban Areas

**Rural Area**

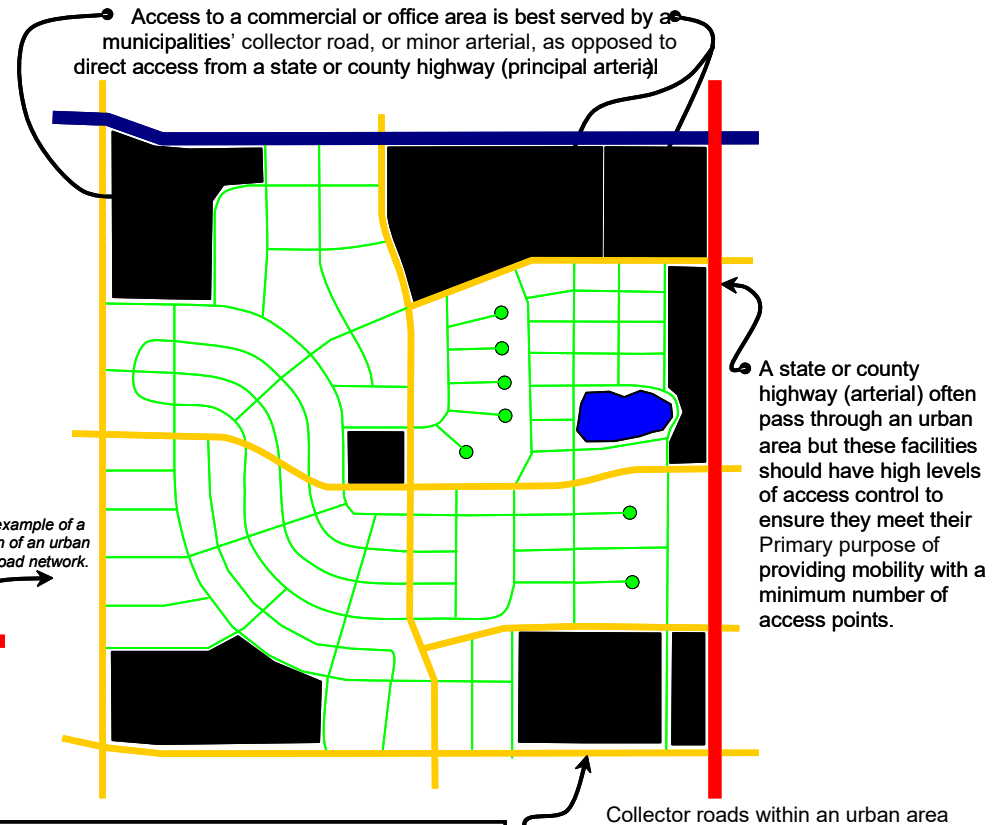
Arterial roads within a rural area are likely state or county owned and are meant to provide a high level of mobility to the traveling public connecting cities and villages.



NOTE: Schematic Drawing..Not to Scale.

**Urban Area**

Access to a commercial or office area is best served by a municipalities' collector road, or minor arterial, as opposed to direct access from a state or county highway (principal arterial)



LEGEND	
	Arterial (State or County Highway)
	Arterial (Local Municipality)
	Collector
	Local Street
	Urban Area (City, Town, or Village)
	School
	Commercial
	Office
	Park / Open Space

## Driveway Permits

Wisconsin law requires a written permit to refill or install a driveway or culvert. Driveway permits are issued by officials of the Eau Claire County Highway Department and are required for all residential and commercial access onto a county highway.

### Purpose

The review of driveway permits helps improve the design and placement of driveways, medians, and other access control measures. The overall goal is to eliminate or limit potential traffic conflicts and ultimately increase safety. The proper placement and spacing of driveways can also improve traffic flow by reducing potential conflict points.

### Guidelines

In Accordance with Title 18.22.030 of the Eau Claire County Code the Eau Claire County Highway Department uses the following guidelines in reviewing driveway/access onto the County Trunk Highway System. **Figure 4** displays an example of the guidelines. Meeting the Guidelines does not guarantee access will be granted. Consideration will be given to the impact the access will have on the traveling public.

1. **Stopping Sight Distance** – Drivers traveling at posted speed limit or median speed observed by Department staff must be able to see a three (3) foot tall object at a distance according to FDM 11-5 guidelines to provide a safe stopping distance. A driveway permit will be denied if there is a significant problem with the

stopping sight distance when an alternate access is available.

2. **Proximity to Stop Controlled Intersections** – A corner lot will be required to access onto the minor road which is controlled by a Stop Sign. Only one (1) access will be allowed (access will not be granted to each road). Exceptions may be granted for large corner lots. Driveways will not be granted within 350 feet of the right-of-way of the intersecting road. Access will be considered onto the County Trunk Highway System if the terrain (wetlands, etc.) prevents access to the minor road. Mailboxes on the County Trunk Highway will be located as far from the intersection as possible.
3. **Spacing** – Permitted driveways must meet the following conditions:
  - Minimum of 100' separation between driveways on adjacent parcels or equal to the lot frontage located outside the urbanized area as identified on the most current metropolitan planning organization map.
  - Minimum of 75' separation between driveways on adjacent parcels located inside the urbanized area as identified on the most current metropolitan planning organization map.
  - Minimum 300' separation between driveways on single parcels.
  - A new road will require a minimum of 400' separation from right-of-way of new road to right-of-way of adjacent road intersection. If the

posted speed limit is 35 mph or less, the new road will require a minimum of 300' separation.

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



**Number of Access Points** – Only one access point will be allowed per 300 feet of frontage. 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. U turn designed driveways are not acceptable

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. **Maximum Surfaced Width of Access** – The following are the maximum surface width of access points.

Residential	- 20 feet	Commercial	- 35 feet
Agricultural	- 24 feet	Industrial	- 35 feet

6. **Permit Fee Schedule** –

Residential –	\$100.00
Commercial / Industrial –	\$150.00
New Street or Road –	\$350.00

7. **Culvert Replacement as part of Pavement Replacement and Ditch Re-grading projects** – The Eau Claire County Highway Department will complete culvert replacements as part of Pavement Replacement and Ditch Re-grading projects.

**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 Eau Claire County Highway Department due to lack of proper maintenance will 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 5.

**Driveway Surfacing**

Any driveway disturbed during construction activities will be restored in-kind (such as blacktop, gravel, etc.), but only to the extent removed by the Highway Department personnel. Blacktop surfacing shall be permitted to the roadway surface, but typically shall conform to the normal elevation of adjacent highway shoulders, sloping down, and away from the roadway surface. At no time does the Eau Claire County Highway Department allow a concrete driveway surface within ten (10) feet from the edge of the roadway pavement (see **Figure 4**).

**Culverts**

All culverts must be 15” minimum diameter or larger depending on site conditions. The overall culvert size, length, and material must be approved by the Eau Claire County Highway Department.

Figure 4. Highway Access / Driveway Policy

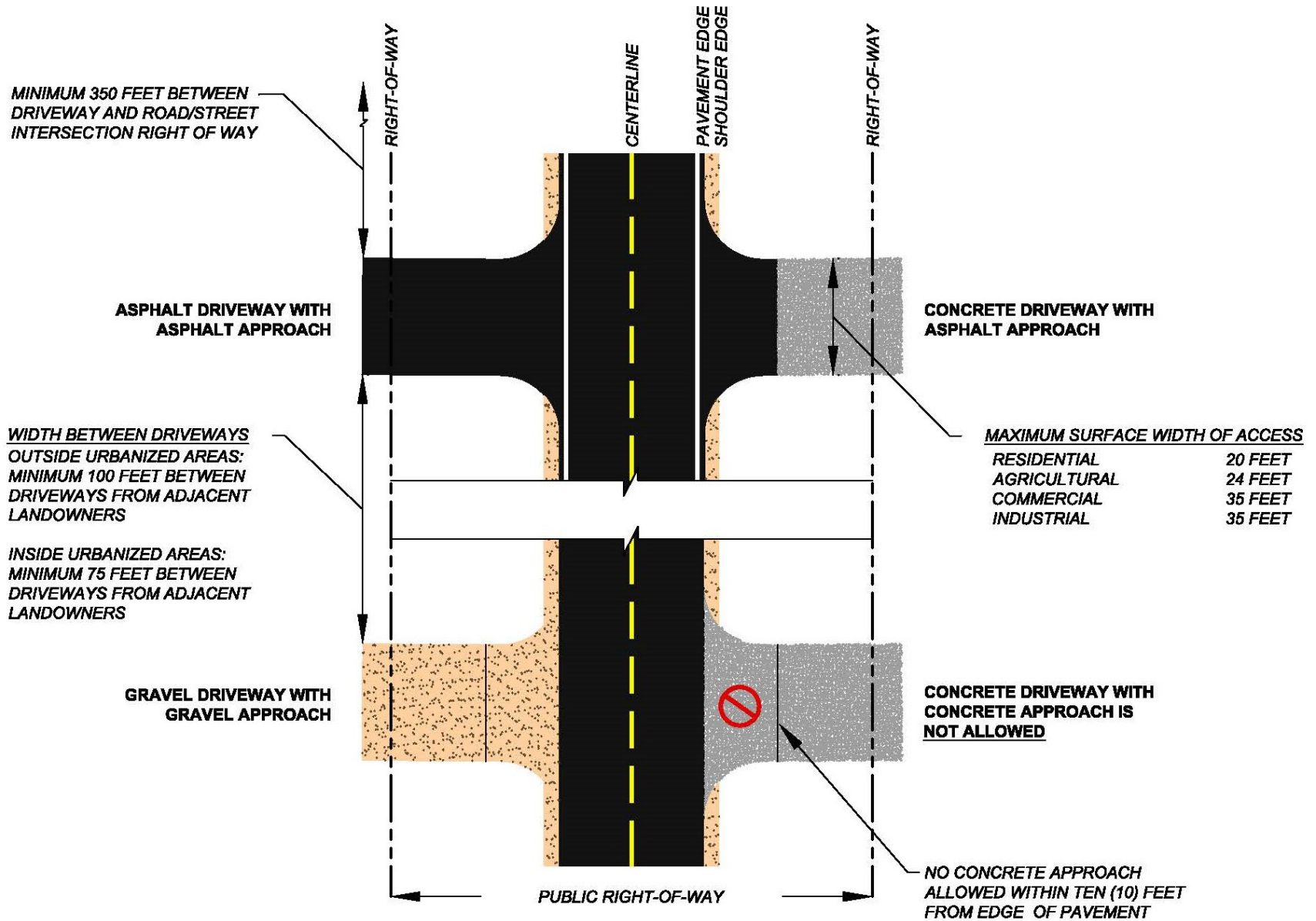
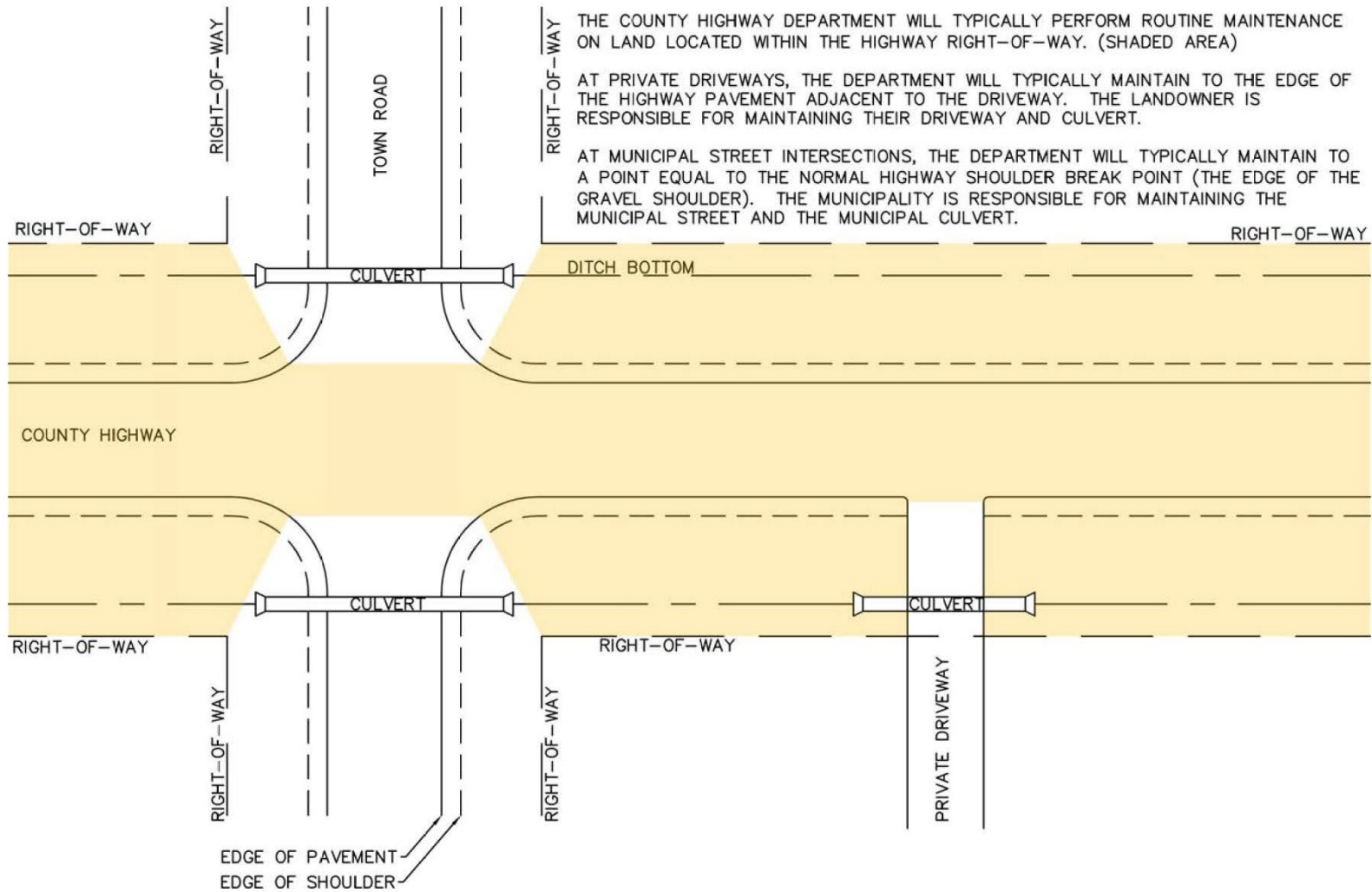


Figure 5. Typical Maintenance Limits for County Highway Intersections with Side Road and Driveways



## **Public Right-of-Way**

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A public right-of-way is an easement that allows the public to traverse private property. The most common right-of-ways are land owned by the county adjacent to County Trunk Highways and along recreational trails. The Eau Claire County Highway Department will provide right-of-way information to property owners, registered land surveyors, and utilities for county-maintained roads and trails.

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

### ***Purpose***

It is the goal of the Eau Claire 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 Eau Claire County residents and businesses. This section describes proper and improper uses of the public right-of-way.

### ***County Highway Right-of-Way***

Wisconsin State Statute 86.07(2) requires that the Eau Claire County Highway Department issue a permit for any work done within a county highway right-of-way. The county highway right-of-way is typically described by a line extending 33' or 41.25' on each side of the highway centerline (see **Figure 5**).

Anyone planning on performing work within a county highway right-of-way should contact the Eau Claire 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 may be subject to a fine that is twice the current fee and will be responsible for any costs associated with correcting any work if necessary.

### ***Public Utilities***

Utilities are often located within the public right-of-way adjacent to county highways. Maintenance is common near existing utilities and new utilities may be installed to accommodate new developments. Please see the ***Utility Accommodations*** section of this manual for specific details regarding the repair or installation of utilities within the public right-of-way.

### ***Private Property***

The following sections describe common issues that arise regarding the public right-of-way and private property.

## **Right-of-Way Encroachments**

### ***Order and Notice:***

Encroachments upon the highway right-of-way in [Wisconsin §86.04](#) states in part as follows:

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

Thus, as with other encroachments to a highway, “roadside receptacle” is accidentally damaged in the process of removing snow, mowing the right-of-way graveling the shoulder, or any other act of maintenance or construction on the roadway right-of-way, it is the owner of the object, the landowner’s or occupant’s obligation and responsibility to repair or replace the receptacles.

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 Eau Claire County Highway Department to review and correct these right-of-way encroachments on a case-by-case basis. Encroachments may include, but are not limited to, improperly located mailboxes, trees, signs, crops, fences, headwalls, etc.

## **Memorials**

Loss of life from 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 within a highway right-of-way near the crash site. The Highway Department also recognizes the fact that roadside memorials may be a safety hazard. It typically is not a good idea to place memorials in the right-of-way as they distract driver attention from the road.

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 (an accident 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:

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

**Eau Claire County Highway Department works to mirror the guidelines noted for state highways regarding the placement and maintenance of memorials along highways located at:**

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/memorials.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/memorials.htm)

### **Miscellaneous Signs**

Any signs along roadways, 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

Political/campaign signs, especially larger billboard-type signs, are particularly dangerous when placed in vision areas at intersections. **Wisconsin §86.19** does provide for a \$10 to \$100 fine for signs that violate the law. **Wisconsin Administrative Rule Trans 201.16-Political Signs** and the WisDOT political sign area of their web site also provide political sign and other miscellaneous sign information.

Political/campaign sign resources:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/Stat0086.pdf>

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/rsb/code/trans/trans201.pdf>

<http://dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/property-signs-political.htm>

Typically, the Highway Department is directed to remove political signs found within highway right of way, especially if the signs pose a safety hazard. The Highway Department will make reasonable attempts to preserve campaign signs that are taken down and to provide campaign offices with an opportunity to claim the signs.

Eau Claire County Highway Department works to mirror the guidelines noted for state highways regarding the placement of political signs along highways located at:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/property-signs-political.htm>

### **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. Eau Claire County Highway Department does not issue written permits for the placement of containers within the public right-of-way.

### **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. These requests are reviewed on a case-by-case base by the Infrastructure Committee. Requests for culverts should be submitted to the Highway Commissioner.

## **Mailboxes**

Mailboxes are the only structure that private owners are permitted to install within the public right-of-way. Neither the Eau Claire County Highway Department nor U.S. Postal Service issue written permits for the placement of mailboxes within the public right-of-way.

### *Ownership and Liability*

The mailbox installation and support, along with the on-going maintenance and conformity with current U.S. Postal Service 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 Eau Claire County Highway Department to locate and remove improperly installed mailboxes.

### *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 6** 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 U.S. Postal Service 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.

### *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. The following illustrates 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 4 x 4-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.

*Replacement of Damaged Mailboxes*

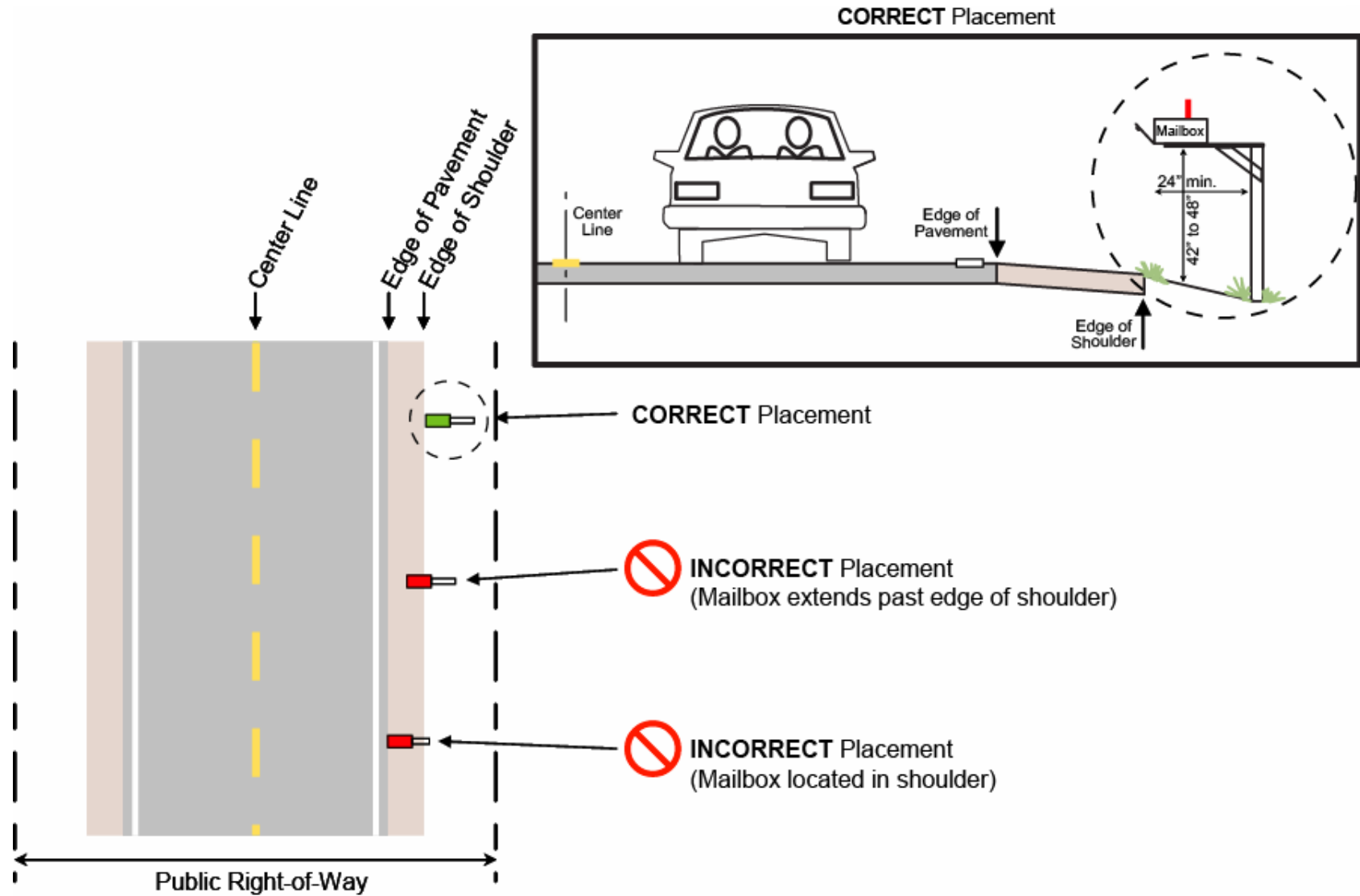
The Eau Claire County Highway Department will not repair or replace mailboxes that are damaged due to snow removal.

*Owner's Responsibilities*

**The U.S. Postal Service 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**



Figure 6. Proper Mailbox Installation



## **Plantings, Crops, and Other Vegetation**

The Eau Claire County Highway Department is responsible for providing a safe and reliable travel way to accommodate the traveling public. 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. **Figure 7** displays an example of how planting, crops, or other vegetation might obstruct the traveling public.

### *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.

### *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 will have the authority to perform the necessary maintenance including the possible removal of the obstruction.

### *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.

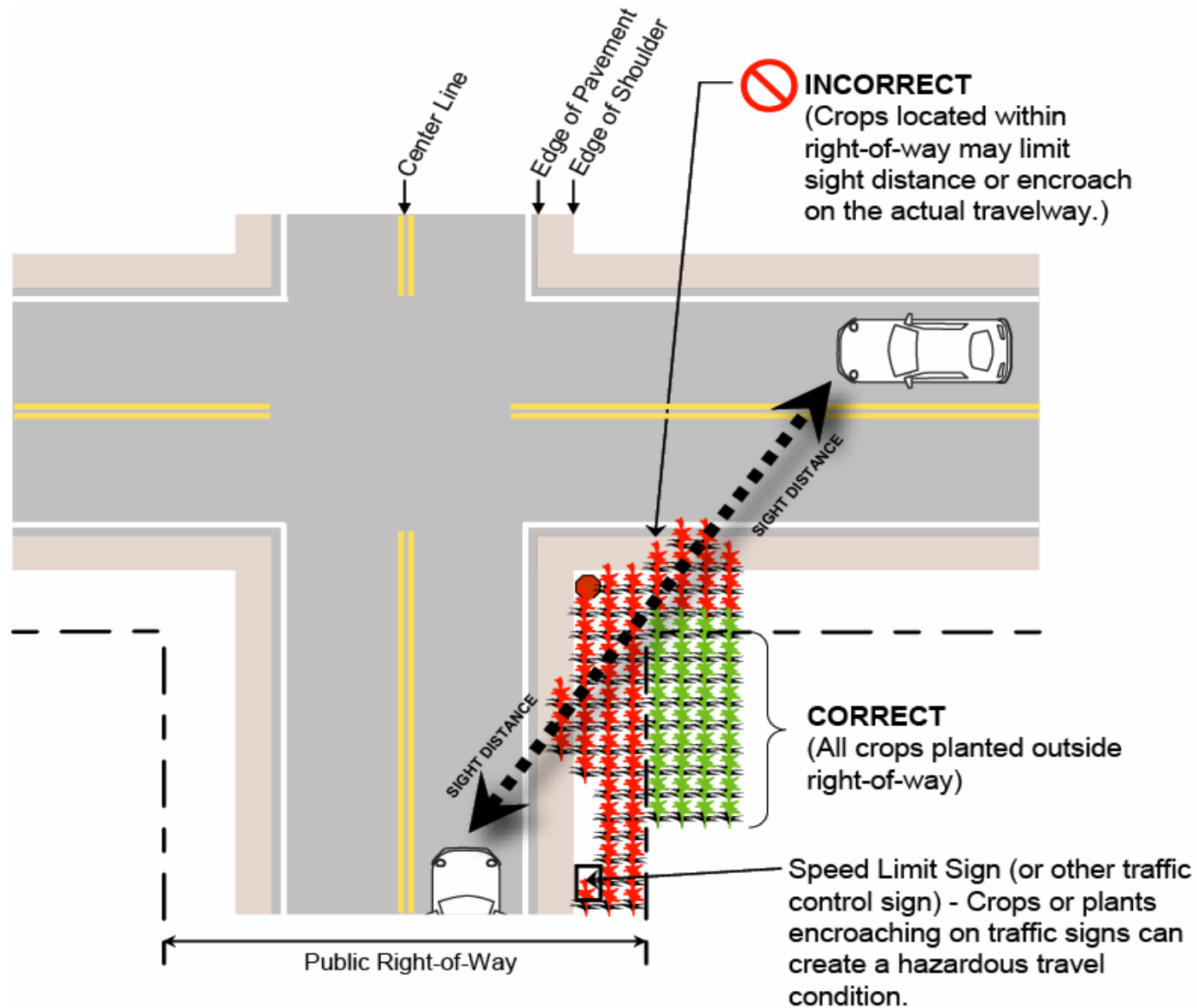
### *Utility Maintenance*

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.

*Owner Responsibilities*

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 by calling (715) 839-2952.

Figure 7. Plantings, Crops and Other Vegetation



## **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 provides details regarding trees that are planted within and outside the public right-of-way.

**Figure 8** displays an example of who is responsible for the care of these trees.

### *Within Public Right-of-Way*

The duty for caring for trees in the public right-of-way resides with the Eau Claire County Highway Department. The Highway Department will have the authority to trim, prune, or cut down trees within a public right-of-way. This is a power that the Highway Department may 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 or is creating shade on the roadway that prevents effective snow and ice removal during the winter. 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.

### *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. After receiving notice that a tree is to be removed, the adjacent property owner shall have fourteen (14) days to remove the tree. Despite the landowner’s ownership of the tree, the Highway Department has the final say in who may cut it down.

### *Rights to Wood*

When it is necessary to remove trees located in the public right-of-way, the adjacent property owner shall have a right of first refusal to keep the wood. 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.

## **Fences and Other Structures**

Fences and other structures are required to be located outside the public right-of-way. Wisconsin State Statute 86.03 states that no person shall build or reconstruct any fence within the public road right-of-way. **Figure 9** displays an example of the proper and improper location of fences as they relate to the public right-of-way.

### **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. **Figure 10** displays an example of the proper and improper location of headwalls as they relate to the public right-of-way. Improperly constructed headwall structures, within the public right-of-way, will be required to be removed.

### **Driveway Approaches**

All driveway approaches that connect directly to a County Highway must receive approval from the Eau Claire County Highway Department prior to construction. Concrete driveway approaches within the public right-of-way must be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the edge of the pavement. Please refer to the **Driveway Permit** section of this manual and **Figure 4** for additional details.

Figure 8. Tree Care Responsibility

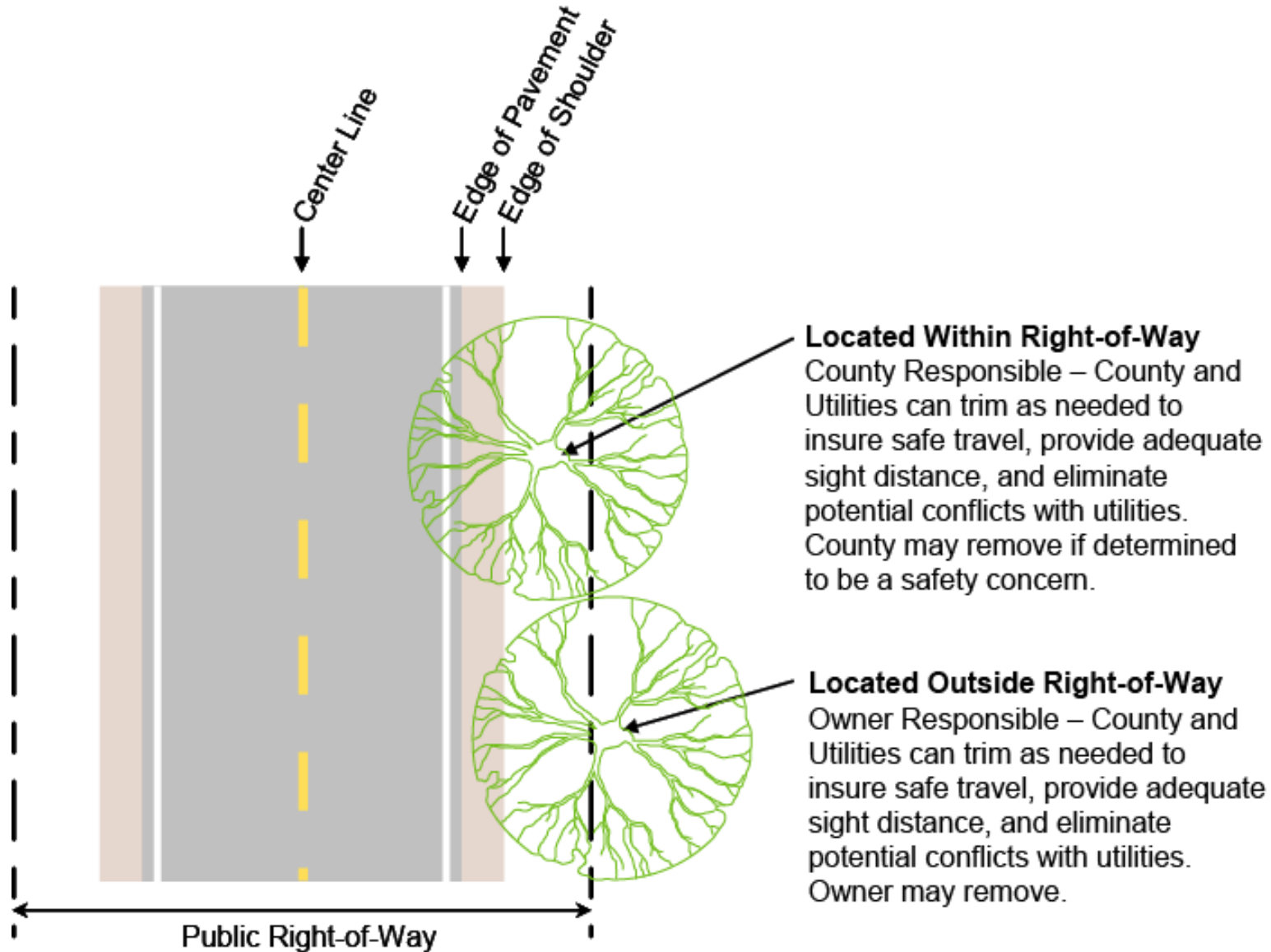


Figure 9. Proper Fence Installation

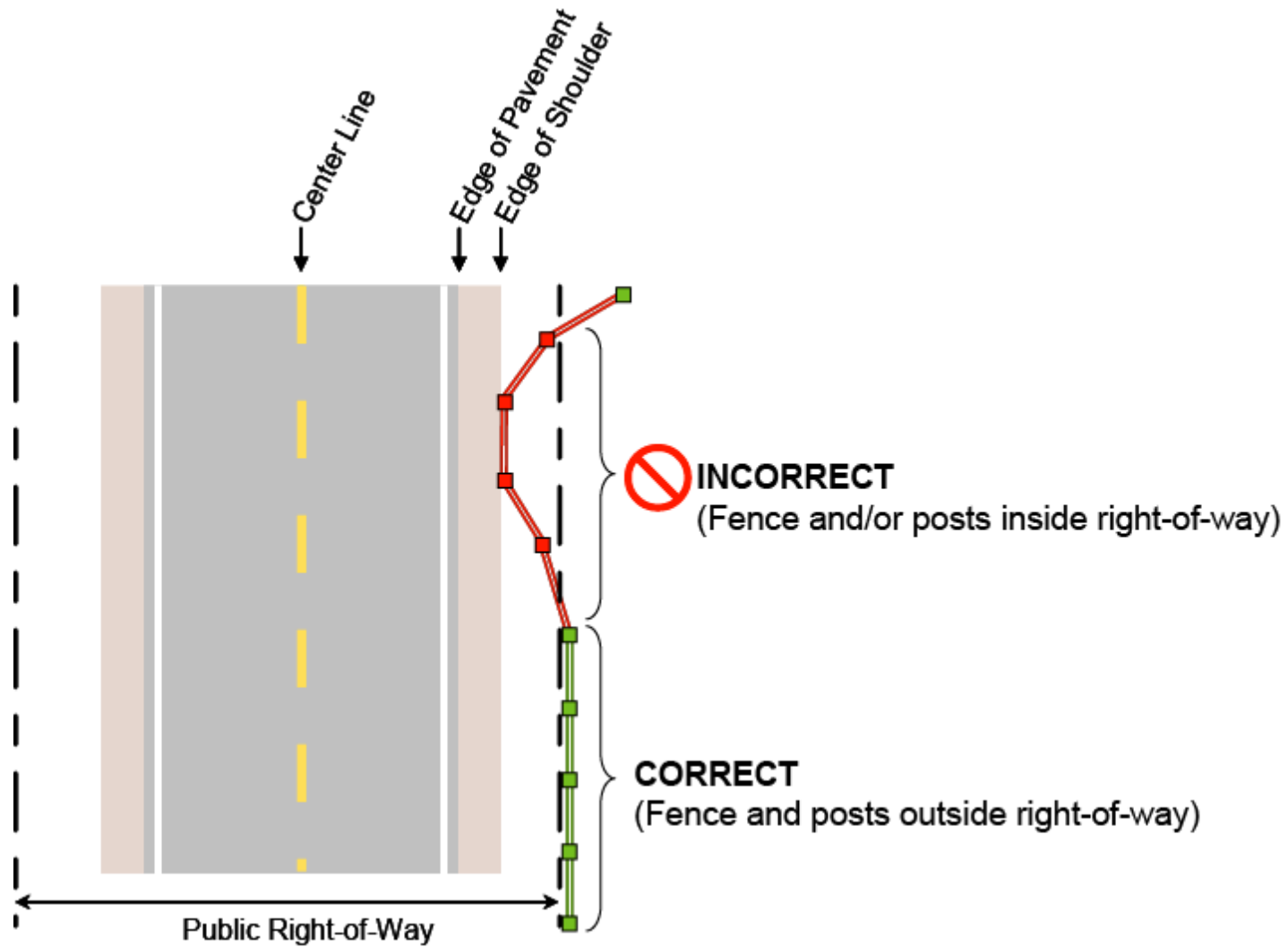
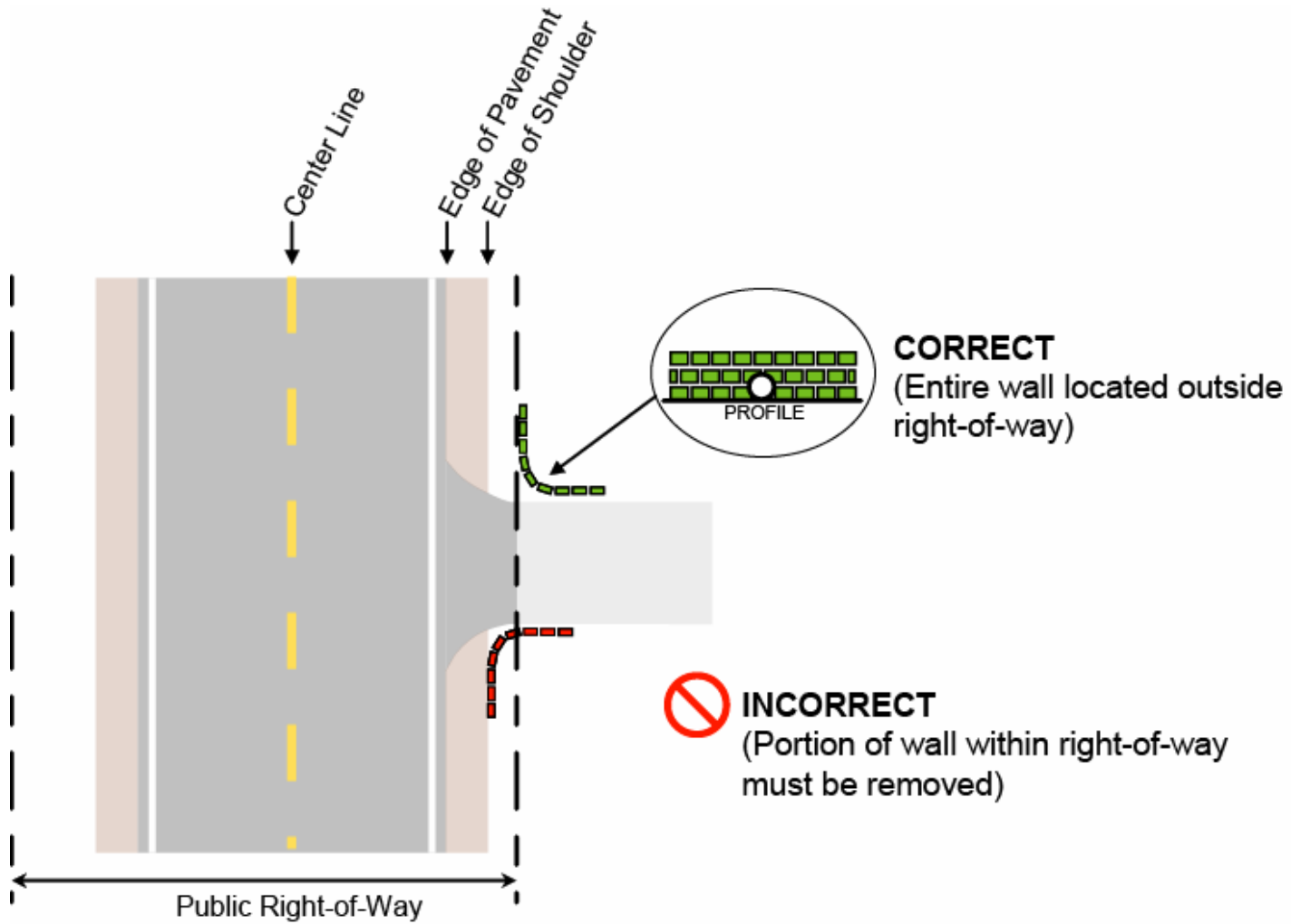




Figure 10. Proper Headwall Installation



## **Vision Clearance Triangle**

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The vision clearance triangle (VCT) provides for proper sight distance for motorists traveling within Eau Claire County. The VCT is essential to traffic safety, but the VCT regulations cannot guarantee unobstructed vision due to topography, natural vegetative growth, and development that may encroach. Obstacles to be kept out of VCT need only be capable of causing a traffic hazard; they need not actually be shown to cause unsafe traffic conditions. Obstacles which may be allowed are ones which a typical motorist in a vehicle can be expected to see over, under or through reasonably enough to see approaching traffic (see section 12.34.250 of the General Code of Ordinances for Eau Claire County). **Figure 11** displays a typical Vision Triangle.

### ***Purpose***

The VCT 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.

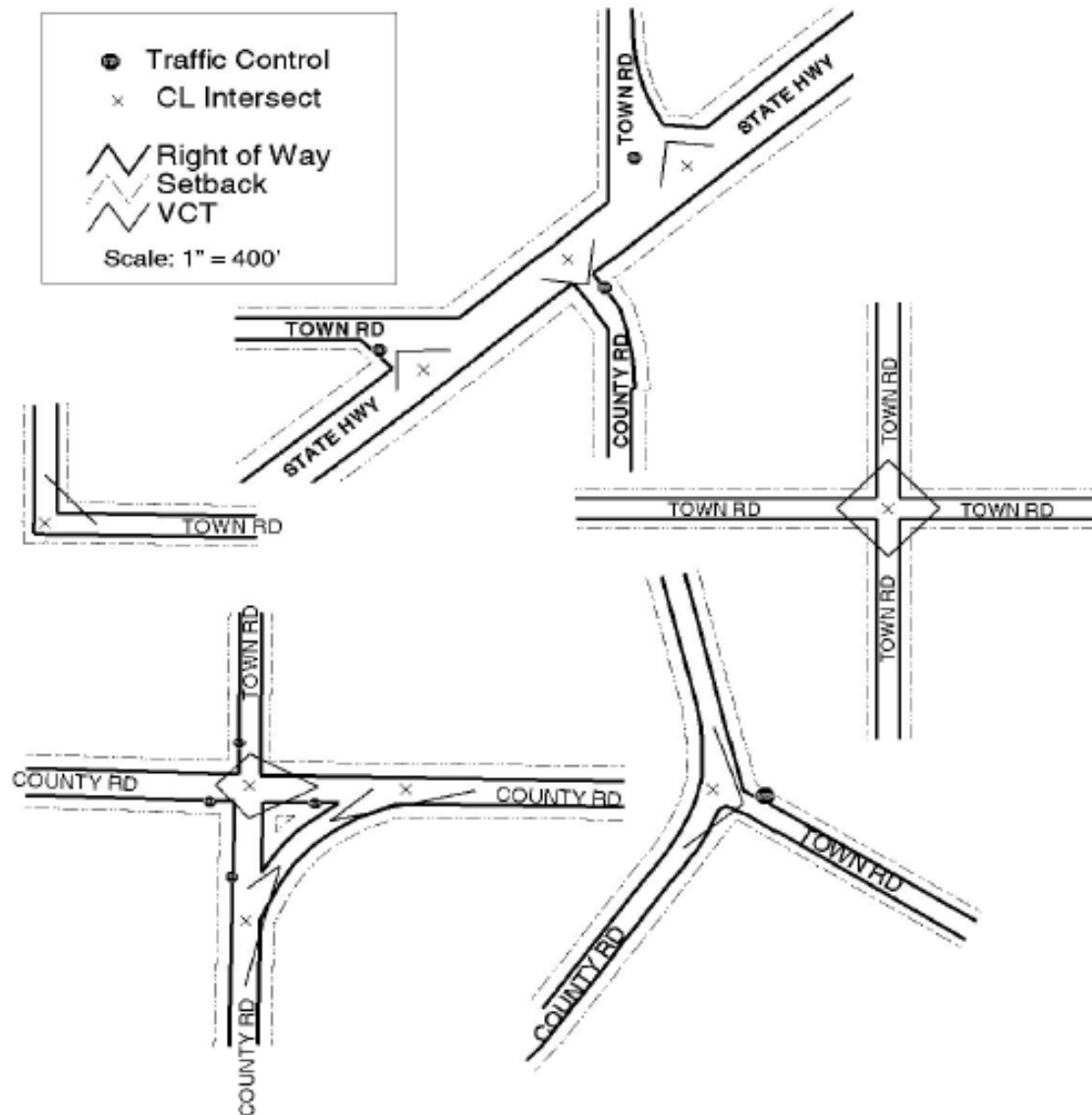
### ***Standards***

The following standards are taken from section 18.22.025 of the General Code of Ordinances for Eau Claire County.

1. At each uncontrolled road intersection or road-railroad intersection in any of the Agricultural Zones (A-1, A-2, A-3(M), and A-4(M)) there shall be a VCT bounded by the road centerlines and a line connecting points on them 300 feet from a Class A highway intersection, 200 feet from a Class B highway intersection, and 150 feet from a Class C highway and private easement road intersections.
2. At controlled intersections vegetation and landscape restrictions shall be as follows:
  - a. In agricultural zones, when one road has a stop or yield sign: The leg of the VCT following the centerline of the road that has no stop or yield sign shall be the length as required in Eau Claire County Ordinance Section. The VCT line shall extend from the end of that line to a point on the Center line of the street which has the stop or yield sign, and which is 100 feet from the intersection of the centerlines of the two streets.
  - b. When both roads have stop signs, yield signs, or traffic lights, or the intersection is in a non-agricultural zone, vegetation and landscape restrictions shall be as follows: The VCT line shall be bounded by the street centerlines and a line connecting points on them 100 feet from the intersection.
3. Within a VCT, no structure shall be constructed, and no vegetative material shall be planted, or landscaping done that causes or will cause an obstruction to view between a height of 2 ½ feet and 10 feet above the elevation of the road or highway. Vegetation or landscaping occurring in the VCT may be ordered to be pruned, trimmed, and/or removed if it is capable of causing a traffic

hazard and removal of the obstacle to view has been requested by the unit of government having jurisdiction over one or more of the intersecting roads, streets, or highways, or by a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Figure 11. Typical Vision Triangle



### **Highway Setbacks**

- (1) The following standards are taken from section 18.22.020 of the General Code of Ordinances for Eau Claire County. For the purpose of determining the distance buildings and other structures shall be setback from streets and highways, the streets and highways of the County are divided into the following classes:
- (2) Class A Highways - All State and Federal Highways are hereby designated as Class A highways.
- (3) Class B Highways - All County Trunk Highways are hereby designated as Class B highways. For the purpose of this chapter any road will considered as a County Trunk Highway after it has been placed on the County trunk system by the County Board and approved by the State Department of Transportation.
- (4) Class C Highways - All town roads, public streets and highways not otherwise classified are hereby designated Class C highways.

Refer to **Figure 12** for specific highway, road, and railroad setback requirements.

### **Removal of Noncompliant Structures**

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

**Figure 12. Highway, Road, and Railroad Setback Requirements**

Table 18.71.030-1 Highway, Road, and Railroad Setback Requirements	
Highway Classification	Highway, Road, or Railroad Setback
Class A Highway (not divided)	The greater of: 110 ft from highway centerline, or 50 ft from ROW line
Class A Highway (divided)	50 feet from ROW line
Class B Highway	The greater of: 83 ft from highway centerline, or 50 ft from ROW line in A-1, A-2, A-3, A-R, AC-R A-P RH, C-3, F-1, F-2, I-L and I-H district.  The greater of: 63 ft from highway centerline, or 30 ft from ROW line in R-L, R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 and C-2 districts.
Class C Highway	50 ft from ROW line in A-1, A-2, A-3, A-R, AC-R A-P RH, C-3, F-1, F-2, I-L and I-H district.  30 ft from ROW line in R-L, R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1 and C-2 districts.
Private Road Easement or Railroad ROW	30 ft from edge of easement or ROW*
All roads, when adjacent to land zoned C-2 and located in the Urban Mixed Use Planning Area**	20 ft from ROW line
ft = feet   ROW = right-of-way	
* In the case of an easement that does not have a legal description; the setback is 30 ft from the nearest point on the edge of the traveled way.	
** As shown on the Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (Map 9 in the 2010 Plan).	

## **Utility Accommodations**

Utility companies provide essential public services that are necessary to accommodate existing and future development throughout Eau Claire 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. All utilities must follow guidelines illustrated in the Eau Claire County Utility Accommodation Policies and Procedures Manual which is available at the County Highway office.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this section is to outline the policies and procedures 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 Eau Claire County Highway Department has jurisdiction.

### **Utility Accommodations Requirements**

The Highway Department regulates the use, occupation, and utility accommodation of the county trunk highway system under sec. 66.047, 84.08, 85.15, 86.07(2), 86.16, and 182.017 of the Wisconsin 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. While the Eau Claire County Highway Department strives to accommodate utilities whenever possible, the permitted use and occupancy of highway right-of-way for non-highway purposes is subordinate to the primary interests and safety of the traveling public.

### **Utility Permit**

An application for a utility permit must be completed and submitted to the Eau Claire County Highway Department. A written request detailing the utility installation and specific location must also be submitted with the application. A map outlining the county road in which the utility will be located should be provided and a schematic of the proposed work will be required along with a profile view of the bore, if applicable. Refer to **Figure 13** for utility permit fee schedule.

### **Coordination with Planned Improvements**

The Eau Claire 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.

### **Preferred Utility Accommodations**

The Eau Claire County Highway Department encourages the use of boring as the preferred method to bury utility lines within the public right-of-way. Trenching is also an acceptable method for accommodating utilities parallel to any County Highway. The

Highway Department discourages open cut utility accommodation. The decision to allow an open cut will rest with the Eau Claire County Highway Department.

**Figure 13. Utility Permit Fee Schedule**

<b>Parallel Length</b>	<b>Permit Fee</b>
0-feet to 500-feet	\$200.00
501-feet to 5,280-feet	\$400.00
5,281-feet and greater	\$950.00



### **On-Site Requirements**

Traffic control devices (i.e., signs, cones, etc.) must be used when work is being performed in the public right-of-way. Work zone signage shall follow MUTCD standards. The utility or contractor should make every effort to minimize the disruption of traffic when working within the public right-of-way.

### **General Requirements**

1. Any utility lines shall be installed as near as practical to the outside limits of the public right-of-way. This is also to include above ground installation and the setting of utility poles.
2. Contractors should use care when loading and unloading equipment within the public right-of-way. No ditching machinery shall be operated upon the crown of any roadway unless specifically permitted by the Highway Department. The Contractor shall pay for any damage to the roadway or right-of-way.
3. The applicant will remove and relocate its utility lines should it become necessary in order to accommodate widening, realigning, and/or improving County roads at no cost to Eau Claire County.
4. All utilities, including all consultants, contractors, and subcontractors working for utilities, are required to abide by the policy and the specific provisions as provided in the Eau Claire County Highway Department Utility Accommodation Policies and Procedures Manual.

### ***Authority to Enforce Policy***

The Highway Commissioner, or designee of the Eau Claire County Highway Department, has the authority to enforce the Utility Accommodation Policy and the specific requirements of an individual utility permit.

### **Failure to Comply**

Failure to comply with the Utility Accommodation Policy will result in corrective actions and/or monetary penalties against the Utility as provided in the Eau Claire County Highway Department Utility Accommodation Policies and Procedures manual.

### ***Utility Accommodations for Bridge Structures***

Utilities wanting to use bridge structures as a way to transport their utility will need to use a non-destructive anchor method. The anchor system that is supplied with the permit will not be allowed on the structural members of the bridge. The anchor system must also provide clearance for inspection and maintenance operations.

## **Road Debris and Obstructions**

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The Eau Claire 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.

### **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 Eau Claire County Highway Department during normal business hours. Hazards may be reported after hours by calling 911 and notifying the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department.

### **Litter**

Wisconsin law prohibits intentional littering. The majority of litter will likely not impact safety but does impact aesthetics along the county highway system. Eau Claire County has an adopt-a-highway program which promotes anti-litter campaigns within the County. Details regarding this program are provided in the **Adopt-A-Highway** section of this manual.

### **Storm Debris and Obstructions**

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.

### **Removal of Fallen Trees**

If any tree falls into the highway right of way, the owner or occupant of the land shall immediately contact the Highway Department. The Highway Department may assist in the removal in certain situations.

### **Animal Removal**

The Eau Claire County Highway Department when needed provides large animal removal from County roadways. If the animal remains create a road hazard, please call 911 and report the location to the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department.

### **Miscellaneous Debris**

Any debris that is left on a County Highway as a result of miscellaneous activities should be promptly removed by the responsible party, such as 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. The County may impose a fine under sec. 346.9 (5) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

### **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, 86.07, and/or 346.94. 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.

### **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.

#### *Example of Public Notification*

**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. 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. Eau Claire County Highway Department, the County Sheriff's Office, and the County Highway Safety Commission to enforce these laws.

## **Adopt-A-Highway Program**

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The Eau Claire County Highway Department has developed an Adopt-A-Highway program which allows organization (or groups) to volunteer and support the County and State anti-litter efforts.

**Purpose**

The program offers groups an inexpensive project that gives its members the satisfaction of making a contribution to their community and their state. At the same time, the Adopt-A-Highway program generates publicity for the group’s service activities.

**Application Process**

Interested organizations may obtain Adopt-A-Highway application materials from the Eau Claire County Highway Department during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) or on the Eau Claire County website (<http://www.co.eau-claire.wi.us/home>) under Departments - Highway. Any organized group may volunteer to participate; however, partisan political groups are not permitted. Application materials can be requested in person or by calling (715) 839-2952.

The Highway Department will provide application materials which will include:

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

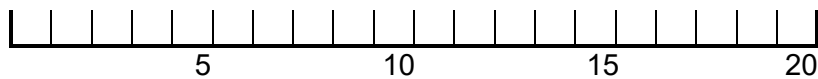
**Approval Process**

The Eau Claire County Highway Department will review the completed application materials and each qualified group will be assigned a nominal two-mile segment of county highway for litter control. Prior to beginning any work on the roadways, the group should watch the safety video located at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/adopt-a-highway.htm>

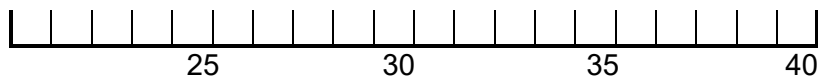
**Signage**

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. Up to two (2) lines and 40 characters (20 characters per line) will be allowed (see example below).

LINE 1



LINE 2



The Eau Claire 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.

### ***Adopt-A-Highway Program Requirements***

The Adopt-A-Highway program is intended to provide an opportunity for groups to participate and contribute to the overall beautification of the County. There are however requirements that must be followed to maintain good standing. These requirements include the following:

#### **Annual Requirements**

- 1) The group must pick-up litter on its designated highway segment at least two (2) times a year between April 1 and November 1.
- 2) The organization may retain their designated highway section if they are in compliance with all the Adopt-A-Highway Requirements. The Eau Claire County Highway department sends a continuation letter to each organization in the spring that must be returned promptly identifying if the organization is going to continue sponsorship for that calendar year.

#### **Age and Supervision Requirements**

- 1) All workers must be at least 11 years of age or in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to participate in the roadside clean-up.
- 2) The group will be required to provide one (1) adult supervisor for every four (4) workers. This adult supervisor will be designated as the crew chief.
- 3) The crew chief should keep the workers together as a team and is responsible to enforce all safety rules.
- 4) The crew chief should always carry a first aid kit and should be aware of the nearest emergency room and the best route to reach it before beginning any cleanup work.
- 5) The crew chief should carry a cell phone.
- 6) Only eligible, group volunteers should be in the designated roadside cleanup area. No other persons should be on the work site.

#### **Safety Requirements**

- 1) The group will at all times emphasize safety when traveling to/from the designated Adopt-A-Highway segment and when working in the roadside cleanup area.

- a. All workers are required to review the safety video located at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation website (see link below). Review of the safety video should be completed by the group on an annual basis (at a minimum) and should be shown to any new volunteers before participating in a cleanup session.  
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/adopt-a-highway.htm>
- b. The crew chief will hold a safety meeting at the beginning of each clean-up day. This meeting is intended to ensure that each person is fully aware of the safety precautions. This meeting should take place prior to arriving at the designated highway cleanup area.
- c. All workers are always required to wear safety vests (obtain from the Highway Dept.). Hiking boots, or shoes with thick soles, are recommended to prevent foot injuries from any sharp objects. Additional items that are recommended include work gloves, sunscreen, baseball caps or wide-brimmed hats, long sleeve shirts, and long pants.
- d. The group will not work in potentially dangerous areas including the pavement (traveled way), shoulders, medians, bridges, tunnels, overpasses, and steep slopes.
- e. The group should only conduct a cleanup session between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and when adequate daylight is available. The group should not work during inclement weather.
- f. Group volunteers should avoid overexertion and everyone should know their physical condition and limitations. The crew chief should be aware of any special needs of any crew members.
- g. Group volunteers should stay alert for any potential hazards including snakes, stinging insects, ticks, poison ivy, mowing equipment, construction equipment, parked cars, and other equipment.
- h. Group volunteers should stay mentally alert while at the designated roadside cleanup area. No one should use headsets, stereos, and radios as this could distract volunteers and make it difficult to hear oncoming traffic.
- i. The group should bring plenty of water, especially on hot, humid days, and alcoholic beverages are not permitted at the designated roadside cleanup area.

### **Transportation to the Cleanup Area**

- 1) The group should meet at a safe location prior to proceeding to the designated roadside cleanup area. This meeting location provides a good opportunity to conduct the safety meeting before traveling to and beginning the roadside cleanup.

- 2) The group should carpool to the designated roadside cleanup area and use as few vehicles as possible.
- 3) All vehicles should park parallel to the road and at least three (3) feet away from the pavement surface before unloading the group. All vehicles should park on the same side of the road that the group plans to work on.
- 4) Upon arriving at the cleanup area, the group should place highway worker signs on the AAH sign brackets at the beginning and end on the assigned area signs. The signs should be positioned to alert on-coming traffic, from both directions, that workers are present.
- 5) When the cleanup is complete, the group will take down the highway worker signs that were placed on the AAH sponsored signs.

### **Handling the Litter**

- 1) Group volunteers should not touch or pick-up anything that cannot be identified. Some materials may be hazardous (hazardous materials are commonly found in closed metal containers). Please contact the Highway department concerning these items.
- 2) Do not overload the trash bags as this could cause the bag to break and make the pick-up more difficult. (Bags for cleanup are located at the highway department)
- 3) The group may keep any recyclable materials that are collected. A trash bag may be used to remove these materials from the site.
- 4) Place filled trash bags at a designated pickup site. The organization will then call the Eau Claire Highway department office (715-839-2952) and indicate where the bags were placed for pickup.

Figure 14. Parking at the Roadside Cleanup Area

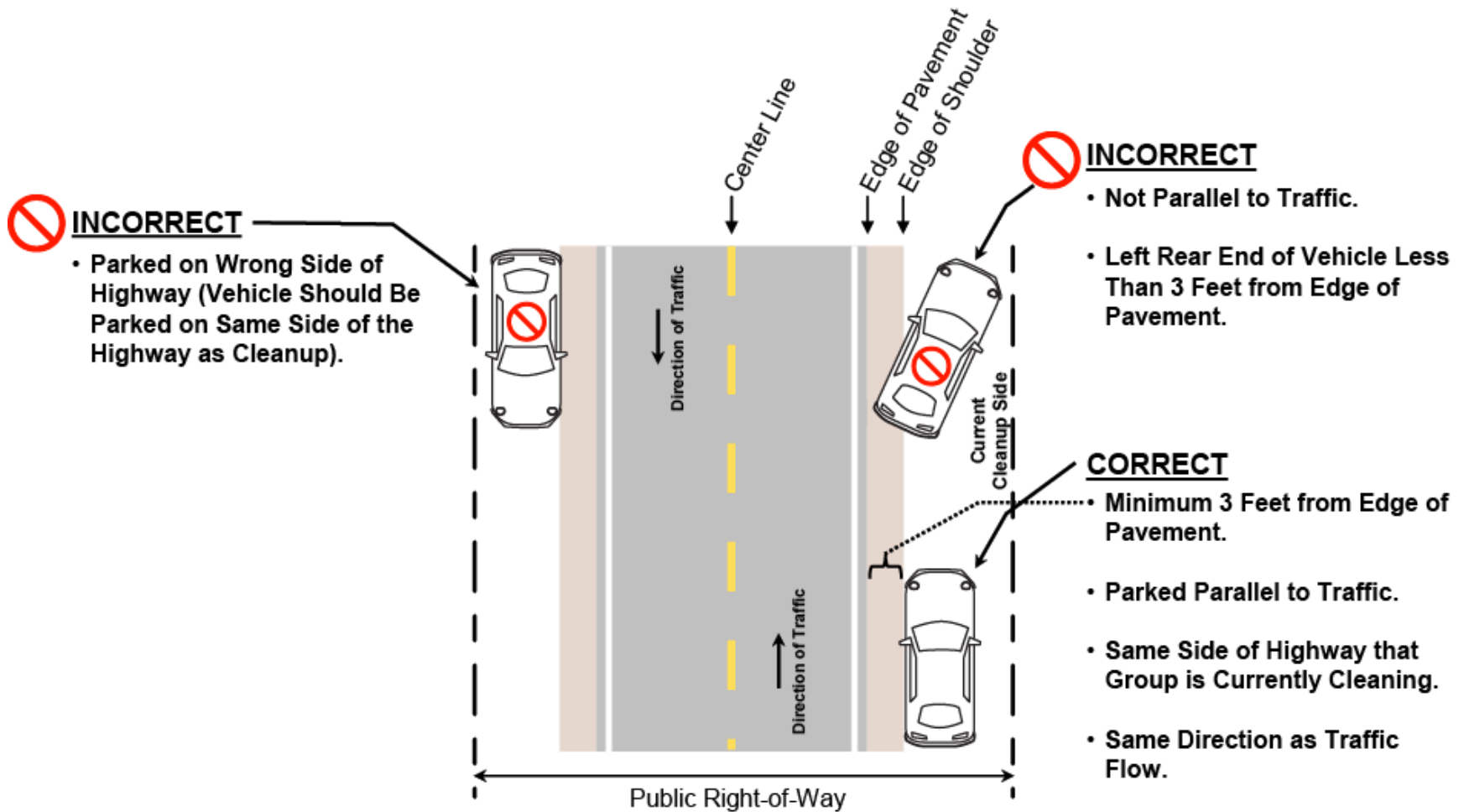
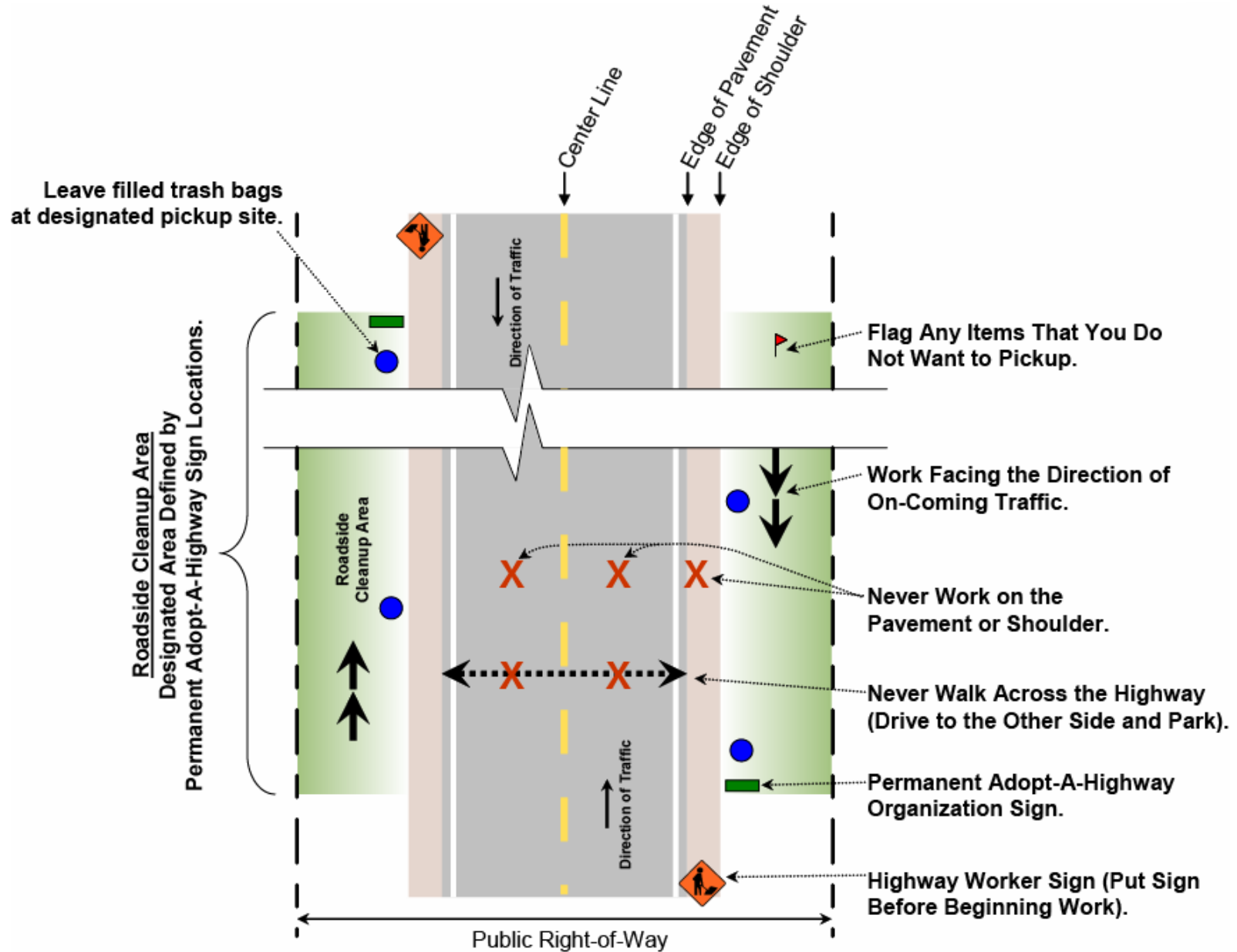




Figure 15. Roadside Cleanup Area



## **Snow and Ice Removal**

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The Eau Claire Highway Department is responsible for the snow and ice removal (referred to as snow removal) of approximately 839.68 lane miles of County Trunk Highways, 91 lane mile of Township roads and an additional 539.46 lane miles of State Highways through contract with the WisDOT. Snow removal activities may occur any time of the day or night and likely require overtime by the Highway Department personnel. Careful planning and preparation must be done prior to the winter season to ensure the safe and efficient snow removal throughout Eau Claire County.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this section is to define the level of expectations for snow and ice removal of County maintained roads during a winter storm event. The primary goal of winter maintenance is to achieve “passable roadways” within the limitations imposed by climatological conditions, the availability of resources, and environmental concerns during a winter storm event.

### ***Snow Removal Procedures***

The following section outlines the snow removal procedures used by the Eau Claire County Highway Department. Exceptions to this policy may occasionally be necessary as dictated by weather and road conditions.

### **Decision to Begin Snow Removal**

Several factors impact when the Highway Department begins the snow removal process. These factors include, but are not limited to, current roadway conditions, current weather conditions, forecasted weather conditions, and the time of day. Each storm presents unique challenges which must be dealt with accordingly. Given the overall size of Eau Claire 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 and will make a determination on the appropriate time to begin the snow removal process. Snow removal will begin on County roads when there is 2” of accumulation or more. County roads that connect to 24 hours service routes, such as State highway or City arterials will receive treatment at less than 2”.

### **Snow Removal Methods**

The primary method of snow removal shall be by mechanical plowing, use of salt, salt/sand, or salt with other additives may be used to enhance snow removal or to improve traction. Motorists should expect that snow will be plowed into cross streets and driveways as a normal part of snow removal operations.

### **Passable Roadway**

The intent of the snow removal process within Eau Claire County is to maintain a safe environment for the traveling public. This does not mean that the traveled portion of a roadway will be cleared to the pavement. In fact, the public should be aware that the traveled

portion of a roadway and/or bridges will, at times, have snow and/or ice which will create slippery conditions. Motorists should be aware of these conditions and should exercise caution when driving during these conditions.

The goal of the Highway Department is to create a "passable roadway." A passable roadway is defined as a roadway surface that is free from drifts, snow ridges, and as much ice and snowpack as is practical and can be traveled safely at reasonable speeds. A passable roadway should not be confused with a "dry pavement" or "bare pavement", which is essentially free of all ice, snow, and any free moisture from shoulder to shoulder. This "dry/bare pavement" condition may not exist during winter weather conditions and may not be attained until weather conditions improve to the point where this pavement condition can be provided.

The definition of "reasonable speed" is considered a speed that a vehicle can travel without losing traction. During and immediately after a winter storm event, a reasonable speed will most likely be lower than the posted speed limit. Motorists can expect some inconvenience and will be expected to modify their driving practices to suit road conditions.

### **Level of Service and Hours of Operation**

The level of snow removal service depends on the type of roadway being serviced. The Highway Department maintains both State and County roadways. These roadways are divided into three (3) classes which determine the priority, level of service, and hours of operation. The three classes of roads shall be serviced as described in the following.

#### *Class One (1) Roads*

Class one (1) roads are defined as Interstate highways and other major state routes. These roadways are subject to specific service WisDOT requirements. These roadways may be serviced twenty-four hours, seven days per week. For additional information you may view the WisDOT website at:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/winterbrochure.htm>

#### *Class Two (2) Roads*

Class Two (2) roads are defined as those routes having an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 1,000 vehicles or more. Snow plowing services on class two roads will include regular service (4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), reduced service (9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.), and emergency service.

#### *Class Three (3) Roads*

Class Three (3) roads are defined as those routes having an ADT volume of less than 1,000 vehicles. Snow plowing services on class three roads typically include regular service (4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and emergency service primarily during the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

The majority of snow removal within Eau Claire County will occur between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. It should be noted that these service hours are provided as a guideline and may be modified on a case-by-case basis. With the exception of twenty-four roadways, the Highway Department will provide reduced service on County and Township Roads beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Highway Department will also provide emergency service between 6:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. primarily at the request of the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department. The Highway Department maintains communication with the Sheriff's Department and will respond to specific requests of the Sheriff's Department.

### **Road Conditions**

Winter road conditions can be found at:

<https://511wi.gov/>

### **Service Areas**

**Figure 16** displays the current snowplow routes for State Highways while **Figure 17** displays the current snowplow routes for County Highways. The Highway Department reviews snow routes on a regular basis and makes adjustments as needed to most effectively and efficiently accomplish the snow removal process.

### **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.

### **Authority to Declare**

The Highway Commissioner will have the authority to declare a snow emergency. In the absence of the Highway Commissioner, an appointed Highway Department designee will have the authority to declare a snow emergency.

Figure 16. Snowplow Route (State Roads)

### EAU CLAIRE COUNTY STATE SNOW PLOW ROUTES

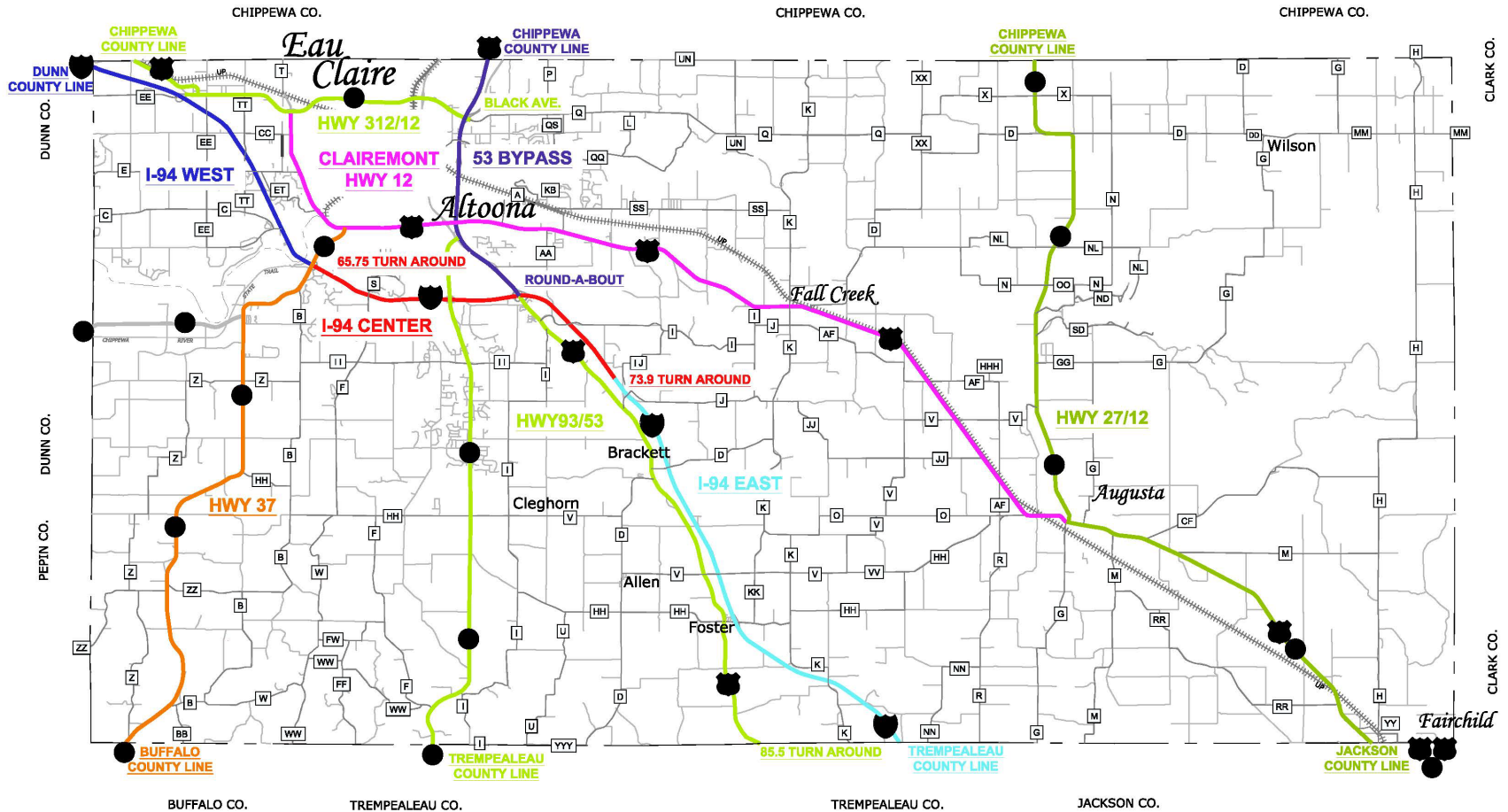
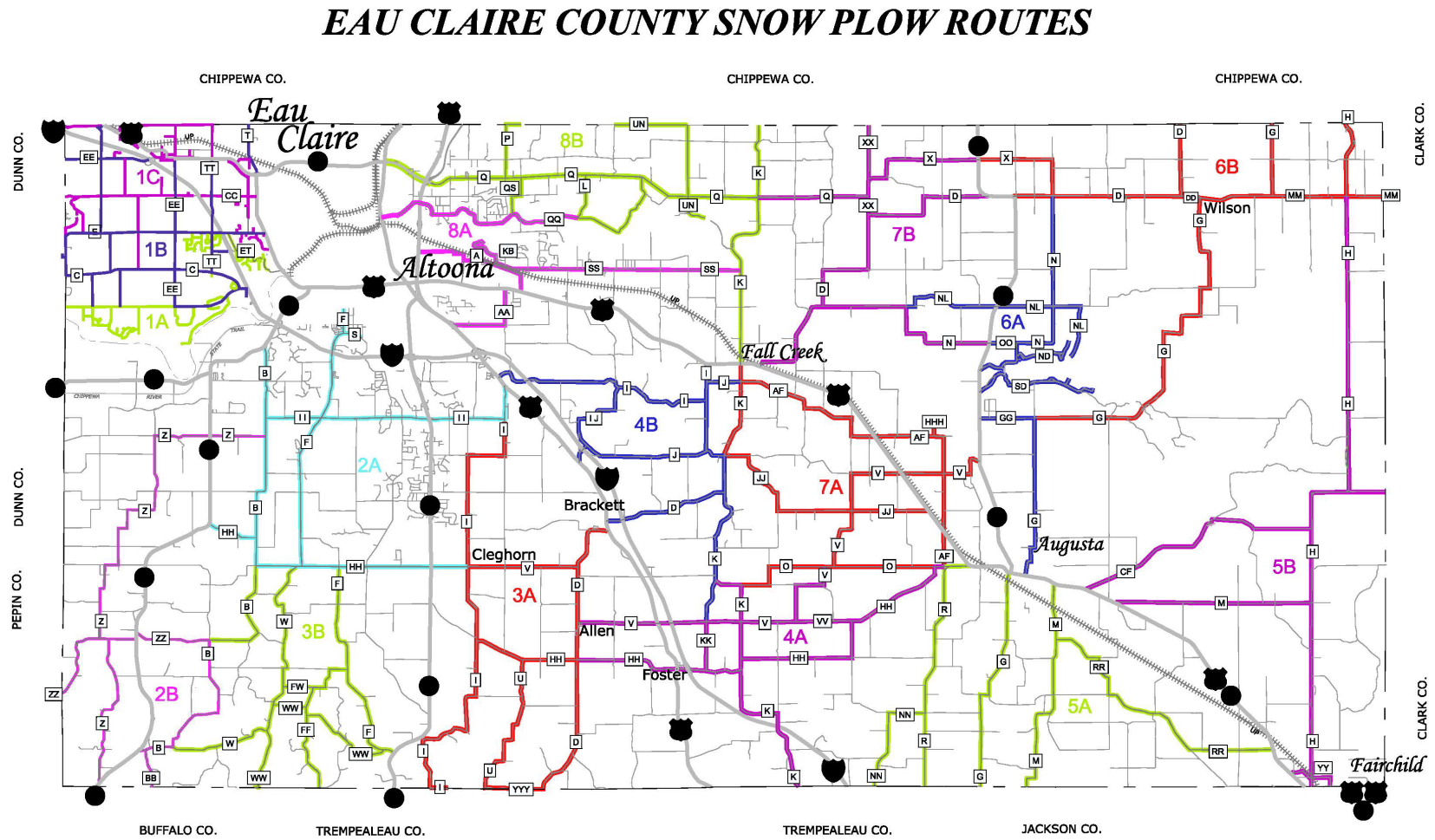


Figure 17. Snowplow Routes (County Roads)



JANUARY 2020

### **Highway Department Personnel**

Snow removal is a long and tiring process that may require drivers to work overnight. It is a primary concern of the Highway Department to maximize safety for the traveling public and department personnel. As such, every attempt will be made to limit Highway Department personnel to a maximum of 18 hours of snow removal operations at which time drivers will take a minimum six (6) hour break. In some cases (i.e., extreme weather conditions, declared snow emergency, or other emergency situations) it is possible that some drivers may exceed the time limits.

### **Annual Training**

The Highway Department will conduct an annual review and training session to cover snow removal policies and will review snowplow routes. Snowplow drivers will drive their route prior to the winter season to observe any potential hazards that might hinder the snow removal process.

### **Damage to Private Property**

The Highway Department makes every effort to avoid damage to private property during the snow removal process. However, on occasion a piece of County snow removal equipment may damage private property located immediately adjacent to the roadway.

### **Motorists Responsibilities**

Motorists should limit their travel when hazardous conditions exist. If you must drive, motorists are advised to reduce their speed below the posted speed limits during adverse weather.

### **Highway Department Assistance**

It is the policy of the Eau Claire County Highway Department that no County equipment will be used to push, pull, or tow a stranded, private vehicle from a roadway or ditch unless it is necessary to reopen a roadway or public travel way. In a life or health threatening situation, Highway Department personnel may provide assistance or call for emergency response. At no time will any Highway Department personnel use a County vehicle to perform any snow removal on private or commercial property unless in a life threatening or emergency situation.