

## CHAPTER 9 — TRANSPORTATION

This chapter describes Cowley’s transportation resources—the town’s street system, sidewalks and walkways, Cowley’s Main Street (U.S. Highway 310), and the local airport. Each of these is important in terms of the future growth and development of Cowley.

### TOWN STREET SYSTEM

The street system in Cowley presently consists of a grid of town-maintained streets and the state-maintained U.S. Highway 310. (See Map 5.) About 1.4 miles of U.S. 310 are within the town limits. The highway is two lanes where it runs north-south, entering town at the southeast corner of town. Where the highway turns west, it becomes Cowley’s Main Street and it widens out to four lanes with a small, raised, central median.

The town-maintained streets are located within the 99-foot wide street rights-of-way as laid out on the original 1900 Cowley town site plat. There are about 7.7 miles of constructed streets in Cowley. Most are paved, generally with 28 feet of paved surface. There is about one-half mile of gravel streets in various locations in Cowley. Because of the width of the typical town street right-of-way is 99 feet and the typical street surface is 28 feet, there are extensive street margin areas.

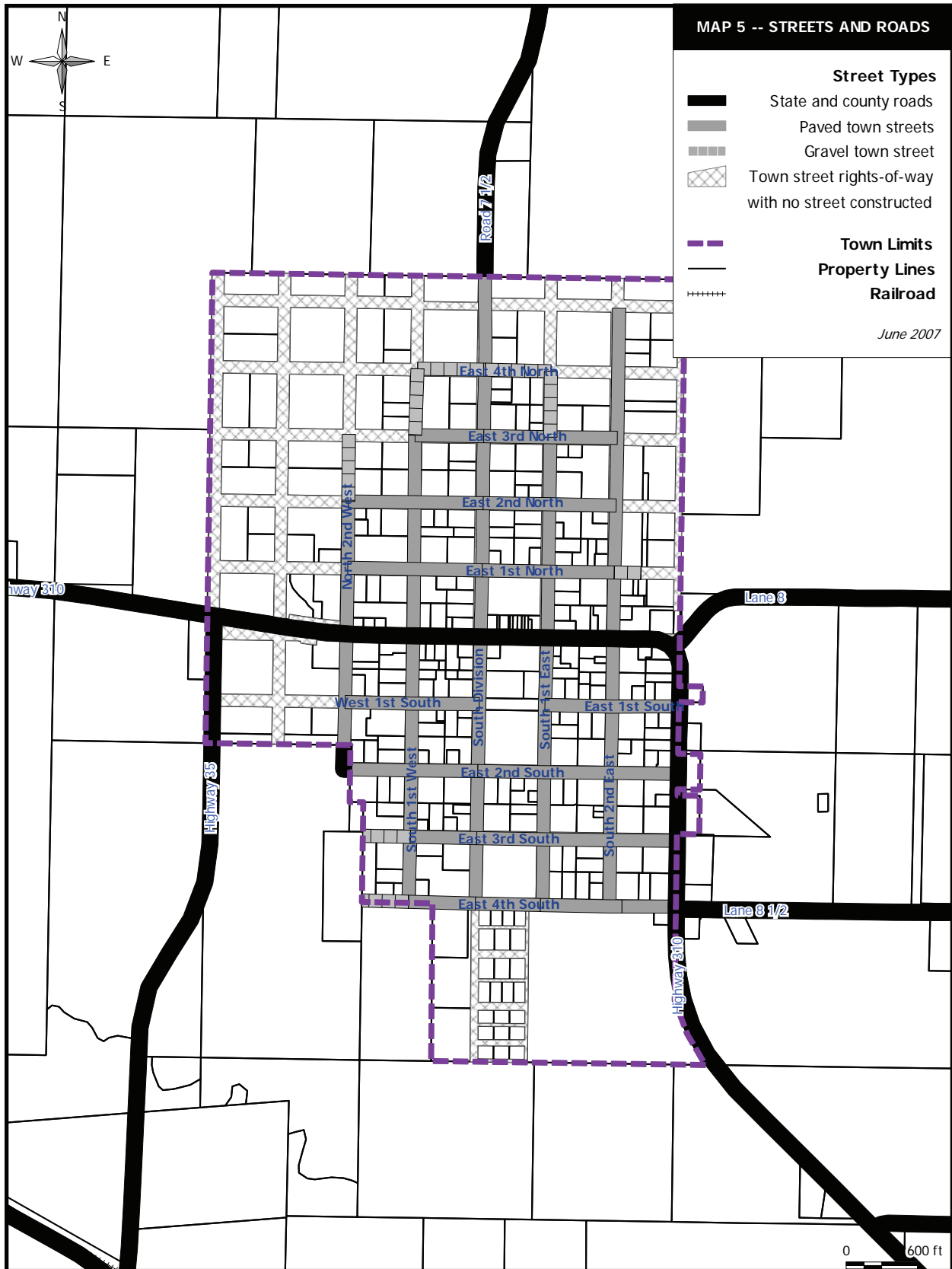
Cowley’s street system is one area where major improvements are anticipated in the future. Most existing, town-maintained streets are in need of crack sealing and new chip seal surfacing. The Town is also committed to building the streets in the new Steven’s Memorial Estates subdivision on 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, first as gravel streets and then paved as funds are available.



*Wide street margin area between sidewalk and street on First Street East*

Cowley’s 2007 Street Improvement Master Plan is an eleven-year schedule of street projects including road surface maintenance work, installation of drainage features, and paving of gravel streets. The first year involves patching, crack sealing, chip sealing all streets and some drainage work. In the subsequent seven years, the plan will focus on installing drainage improvements. The last three years of the plan

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will see paving of unpaved streets including the Steven's subdivision streets and putting a two-inch pavement overlay on all town streets. The total project cost is estimated at \$5,680,000.

The Town is exploring an additional street project—the installation of curb and gutter on town streets. The present lack of curbs and gutters allows vehicles to breakdown the edges of street pavement. Adding curb and gutter would reduce street repair costs and would help control surface drainage. Related to this is the question of what to do with the wide street margin areas between the edge of the street and the walkways. The Town does not need such wide rights-of-way and the maintenance of the margins is an added expense. The Town should ask the Planning Commission to study these issues and provide recommendations to the Town Council.

In discussion about this issue, the planning committee concluded that new sidewalks that are going to be installed in the next year should be placed within the street rights-of-way as if the rights-of-way were 60 feet wide (outer edges of a new sidewalk would be about 60 feet from the new sidewalk on the opposite side of the street). By doing this, the town would standardize sidewalk locations and would set the stage dealing more completely with the town's wide street margins.

Concerning the street margins situation, the committee agreed that the Town does not need to have street rights-of-way as wide as they presently are (99 feet). Furthermore, the committee felt it is important to establish identifiable borders between private land and the town street right-of-ways and that doing so would enhance private maintenance of the private land adjoining the streets. Curbing and/or sidewalks could be used to delineate the border. In any plan to reduce street rights-of-way widths, the Town will need to ensure that it has adequate rights-of-way for streets, sidewalks, walkways, drainage structures, and utilities.

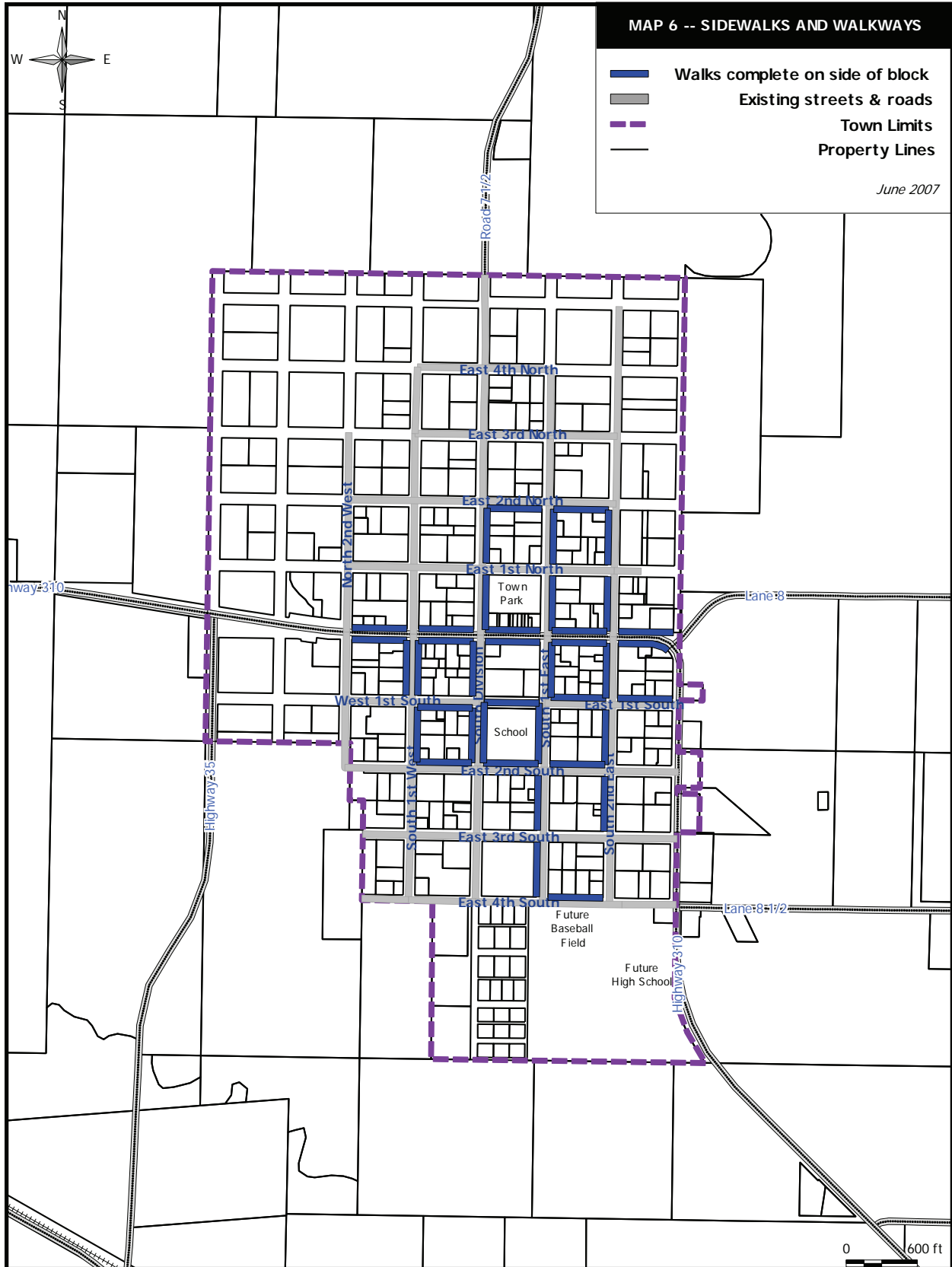
### U.S. HIGHWAY 310

WYDOT (the Wyoming Department of Transportation) is planning a major reconstruction project for U.S. Highway 310 through Cowley. The WYDOT project will change Main Street from its present four-lanes and median to three lanes with no median. Furthermore, the project will create wider sidewalks in the boulevard style, with landscaped space between the street and the walkway (except in the downtown business block where sidewalks will extend from buildings to street). The project will include extensive landscaping. The overall effect of the project will be to make Cowley's Main Street more attractive, inviting and pedestrian friendly while adequately accommodating all vehicular traffic.

### SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

One area where Cowley has made great strides in creating family-friendly residential neighborhoods is with its sidewalks and walkways. Many blocks in town have sidewalks or walkways because Cowley has energetically sought grant funding for them. (See Map 6.) These sidewalks and walkways provide

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safer routes for children walking to school. Other pedestrians appreciate the sidewalks and walkways as well—more than two-thirds of townspeople responding to the Planning Survey felt sidewalks should be installed around every block in town.

The Town has recently received a grant from the Wyoming Highway Commission to install approximately one additional mile of walkways. The Town is working with school officials to identify walkway segments to be added.

### RAILROAD

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company's Casper line runs from Laurel, Montana through Lovell to Casper, Wyoming with a spur between Frannie and Cody. The rail line runs about one mile south of Cowley and includes a siding near the crossing of State Highway 35. The Casper line is a low-density rail line that carries limited rail traffic.

### NORTH BIG HORN COUNTY AIRPORT

The North Big Horn County Airport, also known as the Lovell-Cowley-Byron Airport, is a general aviation airport located about three miles north of town. The airport provides another transportation option that can be a positive consideration for prospective businesses. In addition, aviation-related businesses can potentially be located at the airport. Federal airport rules limit or may prohibit non-aviation commercial development on airport grounds. The town water line, which runs near the airport, could be used to provide water service to businesses at or near the airport. The Town should work with the airport board to investigate these issues and opportunities.

As a consequence of accepting federal grant funds, the airport is obliged to try to reduce land use conflicts near the airport. The airport has a 2002 land use plan that delimits several different types of airport zones each with different land use restrictions. The Town should review any proposed development located between town and the airport to see if it is in one of the airport zones. If so, the development should be referred to the airport board for their comments on how to preclude land use conflicts.