



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

7A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: 10-28-25

Title of Item: Proposed Changes to Roadway Designations

☒ REGULAR AGENDA ☐ CONSENT AGENDA ☐ INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: ☐ Approve/Deny Motion ☐ Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	☐ Direction Requested ☒ Discussion Item ☐ Hold Public Hearing*
Submitted by: John Welle		Department: Highway
Presenter (Name and Title): John Welle, Aitkin County Engineer		Estimated Time Needed: 30 minutes
Summary of Issue: See attached summary for proposed changes to various segments of CSAH, CR, and Unorganized Township Roads..		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Discussion only for potential future action.		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Proposed Changes to Roadway Designations

There are three systems of Roads Maintained by Aitkin County:

1. County State-Aid Highway (CSAH)
 - 382 miles
 - i. 250 miles paved
 - ii. 132 miles gravel-surfaced
 - Generally higher traffic
 - Secondary roads that connect other secondary roads and major highway corridors
2. County Roads (CR)
 - 135 miles
 - i. 27 miles paved
 - ii. 108 miles gravel-surfaced
 - Generally lower traffic
 - Secondary roads that connect other secondary roads and major highway corridors
3. Unorganized Township Roads
 - 38 miles, all gravel-surfaced
 - Generally local, very low volume roads that are used primarily for local traffic
 - Often are dead-end roads

Change the Designation of CSAH and CR Routes

There are two main reasons for the proposal to change the designation of CSAH and CR routes at this time. First, in the coming years, CSAH 5 through the Kimberly area will be improved to a paved route with a sequence of projects in 2026 and 2028. When completed, the continuous improved route between CSAH 4 and TH 210 will consist of 3.1 miles of CR 53 and 4.7 miles of CSAH 5. For route continuity, CSAH 5 should follow the improved route to/from CSAH 4 rather than meandering through 6 miles of graveled surface road between CR 53 and State Highway 47. Upon the changed designation, CSAH 5 would be a continuous paved route between CSAH 4 and State Highway 210. The existing segment of CSAH 5 from CR 53 to TH 47 would become a county road. This change would result in a net reduction of 3.6 miles to our CSAH system

The second reason involves CR 51, which is a 4.9 mile segment of gravel surfaced road between TH 18 in Wealthwood and CSAH 28. It's likely that the first phase of construction to improve this segment to a paved road will be included in our 5-year Capital Road Improvement Plan within the next two years. If this route were to remain as a county

road designation, the two-phase, \$6 million project would require either an extended period of time to pay for it with local levy funds or a significant increase to the \$740,000 that we levy annually for county road improvements. Changing this route to a CSAH route and being able to utilize CSAH funding will allow the improvement of this segment to be completed sooner and at a lower cost to Aitkin County property owners. Because of its location on the highway system in that area, it fits very well on the CSAH system. Changing this 4.9-mile route to a CSAH route, combined with the 3.6-mile reduction from CSAH 5 as outlined previously would result in a net 1.3-mile addition to our CSAH system.

Simply adding mileage to our CSAH system is not a feasible option, as state-aid rules require a process whereby the County Engineers Screening Board scrutinizes any mileage request. Being granted an additional 1.2 miles is extremely unlikely since Aitkin County already has a large CSAH system compared to the size of our CR system. Therefore, additional changes would be needed to achieve a zero net gain of CSAH mileage. The proposal to accomplish this with further changing the designation of CSAH 26, CR 75, and CR 81, is outlined as follows:

Change 15.8 miles from CSAH to CR:

- a. 5.7 miles of CSAH 5 to CR 55
- b. 1.0 mile of CSAH 5 to CR 50
- c. 9.1 miles of CSAH 26 to CR 51

Change 15.8 miles from CR to CSAH:

- a. 3.1 miles of CR 53 to CSAH 5
- b. 4.9 miles of CR 51 to CSAH 42
- c. 6.8 miles of CR 75 to CSAH 27
- d. 1.0 miles of CR 81 to CSAH 43

The attached map shows these changed designations. Note that the 4.2 mile segment of CSAH 34 from CSAH 2 to CR 75 would also be re-numbered to CSAH 27 for continuity.

Change the Designation of CR and Unorganized Township Routes

There are two unorganized township routes in Unorganized Townships 52-24 and 52-27 that carry significant volumes of thru-traffic and connect secondary roads and major highway corridors. Both of these routes need significant gravel road improvements that are difficult to complete with very limited unorganized township funds.

There are also two segments of CR 68 in Unorganized Townships 50-26 and 50-27 that are dead-end local routes and carry primarily local traffic. Both of these routes would

be more appropriately designated as unorganized township roads. Note that the middle portion of CR 68 from State Highway 169 to CSAH 29 would remain as a CR.

The proposed changes to the CR and Unorganized Township road systems are summarized as follows:

Change 4.0 miles from Unorganized Township to CR:

- a. 2 miles of 420th Avenue (Miller Road) from CR 67 to State Highway 200 in Unorganized Township 52-27 to CR 52
- b. 2 miles of 250th Avenue (Rabey road) from State Highway 200 to Itasca CR 448 in Unorganized Township 52-24 to CR 53

Change 3.2 miles from CR to Unorganized Township:

- a. 2 miles of CR 68 (540th Lane) from CSAH 29 to 410th Lane in Unorganized Township 50-27
- b. 1.2 miles of CR 68 (540th Lane) from US Hwy 169 to end of road in Unorganized Township 50-26

The attached map shows these system revisions.

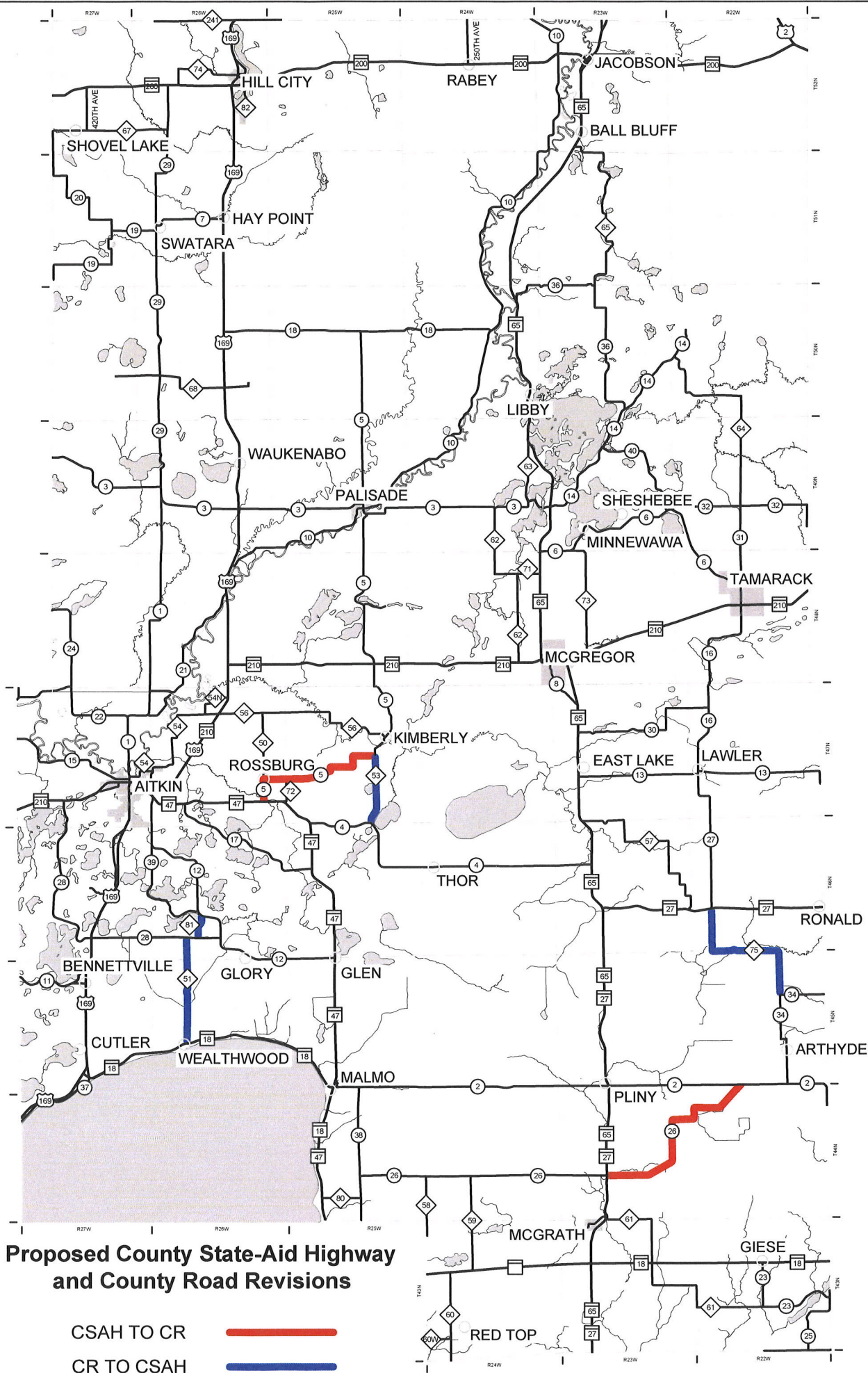
Addition of CR route

Access to our Gun Lake Pit includes an 0.6-mile segment of 439th Lane from 309th Place to CH 5. Much of this road has an extensive history dating back to 1988 of easements being granted, a cartway being established by Fleming Township, and recent court action to grant legal access to properties on the north side of Wilkins Lake. Ongoing maintenance of this road is a combination of work done by Aitkin County as a pit access road, with other private individuals also performing various maintenance activities. To clarify access to the Gun Lake Pit and to allow maintenance of this road by Aitkin County, designation of this 0.6 mile segment as a county road is being requested.

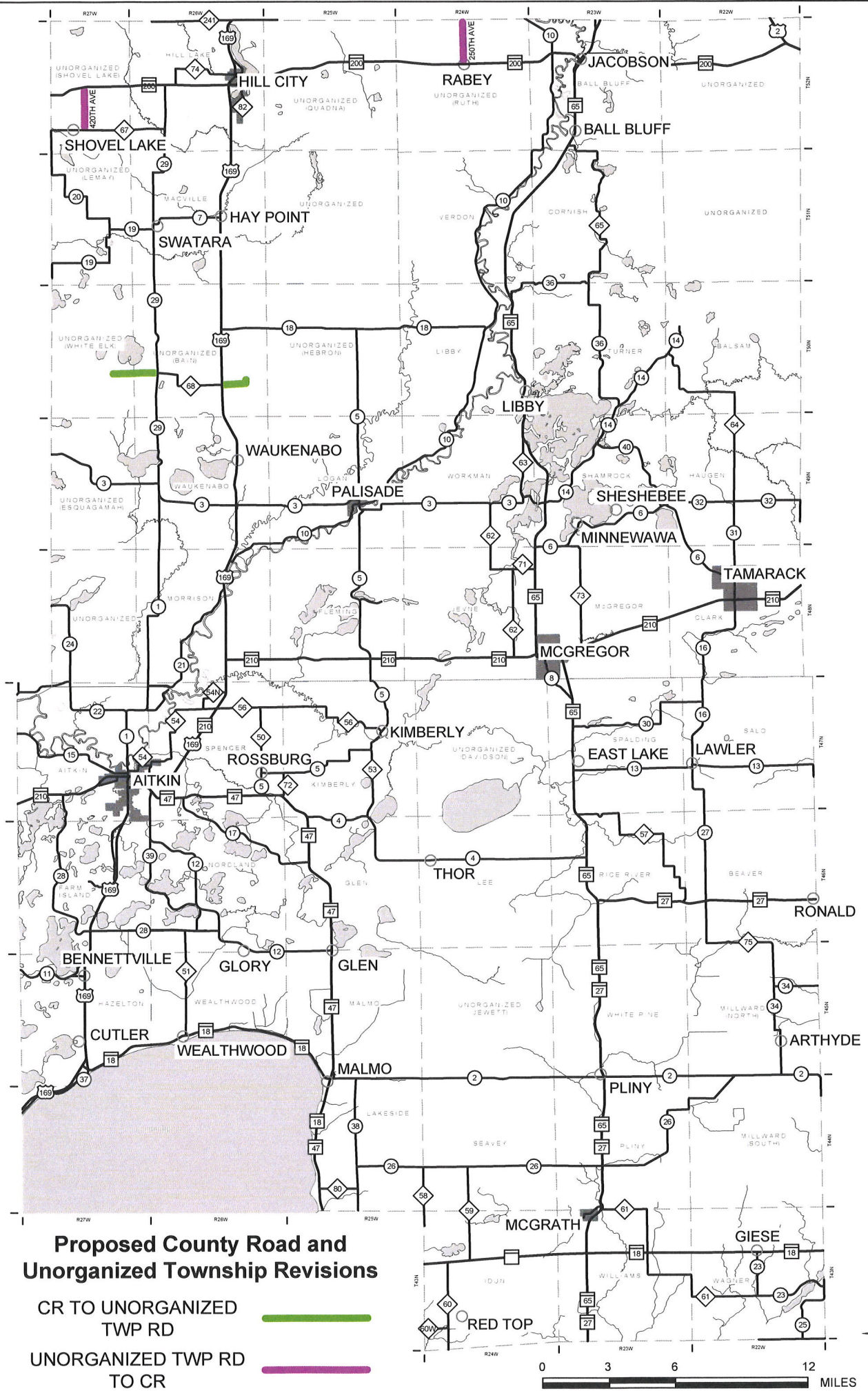
Designate 0.6 mile of private road to CR:

- a. 0.6 miles of private road from 309th Place to CSAH 5 as CR 78

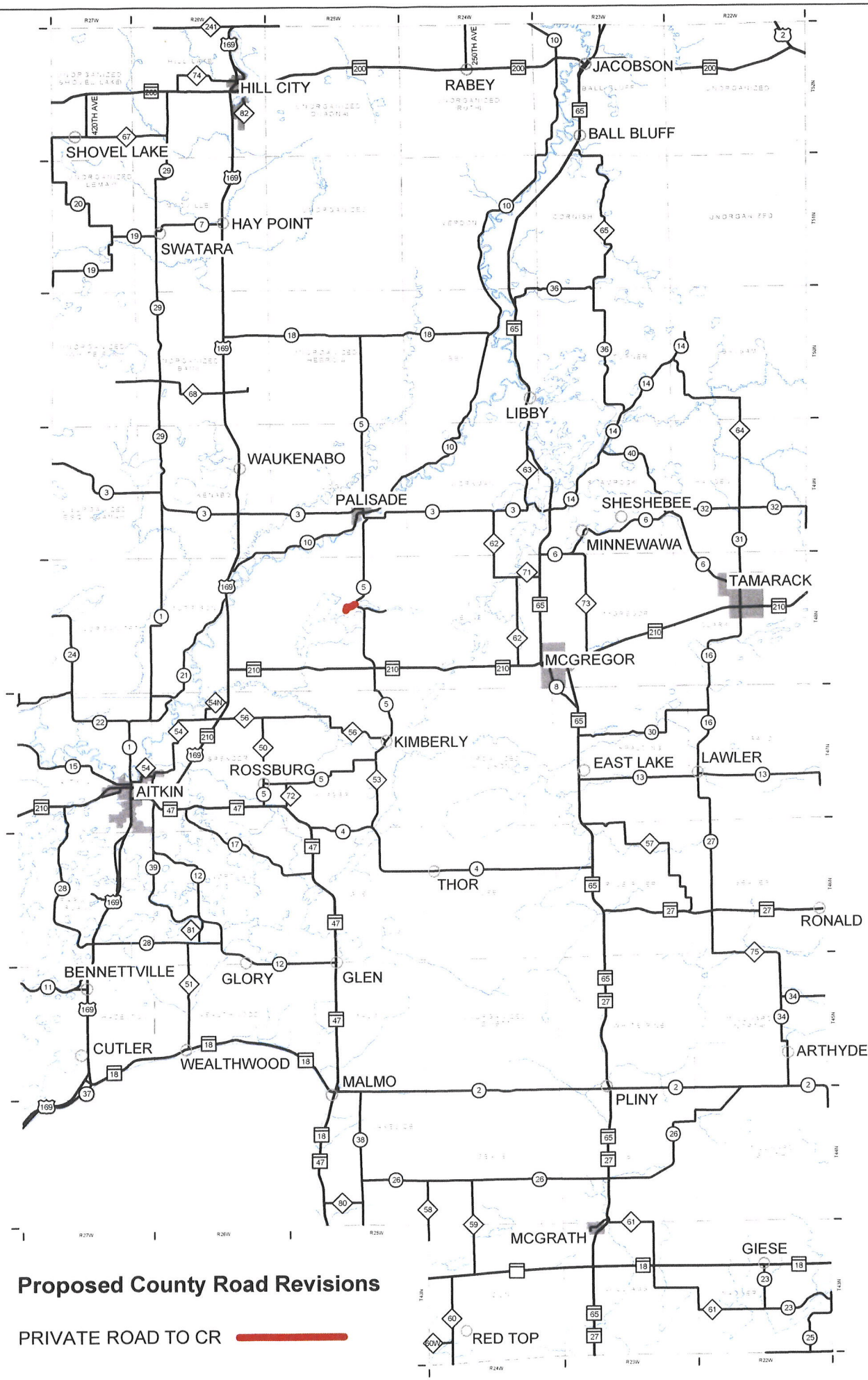
The attached map shows this system revision.



Aitkin County, MN



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