

Portage County Rural Transportation Project

July 2007



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Final Report

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Prepared for: Portage County**

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I. Issues, Needs and Opportunities

Overview

Ensuring an adequate system of transportation options for all people is critical to ensuring basic human services are being delivered and that an adequate quality of life is being maintained. Recognizing this need, Portage County undertook a study to comprehensively address rural transportation needs, issues and opportunities. This study was funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation with match funds provided by Portage County and is intended to identify and define the needs for rural public transportation and recommend actions necessary to meet these needs. See Figure 1 for a depiction of Portage County in relation to the state of Wisconsin.

Trends and Directions

Most studies of transportation needs begin with a snapshot examination of demographic trends and directions. This is important because the main factors behind determining the transportation solutions that make sense for a community are driven by discovering where people live and examining, both literally and figuratively, where they are going.

General Population Trends

Portage County is a predominantly rural county located in central Wisconsin, with a current (2006) population of 67,484 (U.S. Census Bureau). This population is spread across approximately 810 square miles of rolling farm and woodlands. The City of Stevens Point, with a 2000 population of 24,551, is the County's largest urban area with the Village of Plover, located just south of Stevens Point along STH 54, being the other significant urban area in the County, with a population of 10,520 (U.S. Census Bureau).

Similar to most other areas of the United States, Portage County's population has become increasingly urbanized since 1970, when urban area residents of the County began to outnumber rural residents. According to the 2000 census, a total of 37,319 persons (56 percent of the total population) lived in urban areas of Portage County with 29,863 (or 44 percent) living in rural areas. By the year 2020, there will be 42,484 Portage County residents living in the City of Stevens Point, Village of Park Ridge, Village of Whiting or the Village of Plover. The largest increase is expected to occur in the Village of Plover, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Urban / Rural Projected Population Growth (2000 to 2020)

	2000	2010	2020	2000-2020 % Change
Stevens Point, Park Ridge, Whiting	26,799	27,598	27,986	4%
Village of Plover	10,520	12,627	14,498	38%
Remainder of County	29,863	32,034	33,686	13%
Portage County	67,182	72,259	76,170	13%

Source: Wisconsin Demographic Services Center



PROJECT LOCATION

PORTAGE COUNTY RURAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
Portage County

Figure 1

Overall, Portage County’s population is anticipated to steadily increase, from a 2000 total population of 67,182 to a projected population in 2030 of 81,177, representing an approximate growth of 5,000 persons every ten years (see Table 2 below).

Table 2
Portage County Population (2000 to 2030)

2000 Population	67,182
2010 Projected Population	72,259
2020 Projected Population	76,170
2030 Projected Population	81,177

Source: Wisconsin Demographic Services Center

Aging Populations

Another national trend reflected in Portage County’s demographic statistics is an increase in aging populations. In 2000, approximately 19 percent of the County’s population was 55 and older; by the year 2020 over 30 percent of the County’s population will be age 55 or older, with 7 percent of its residents aged 75 or older. See Table 3 below for a summary of aging population growth and Figure 2 for a depiction of concentrations of elderly people in Portage County based on information from the 2000 Census.

Table 3
Population Growth by Age (55 and older)

Percent of Population	2000	2010	2020
55 and Older	19%	24%	30%
65 and Older	11%	12%	17%
75 and Older	5%	6%	7%

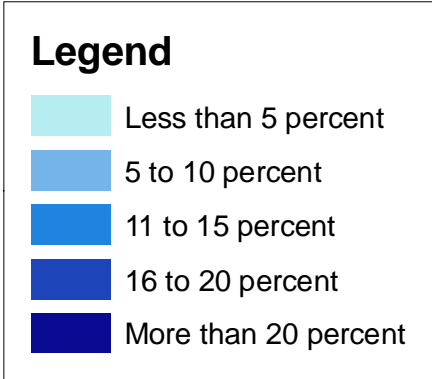
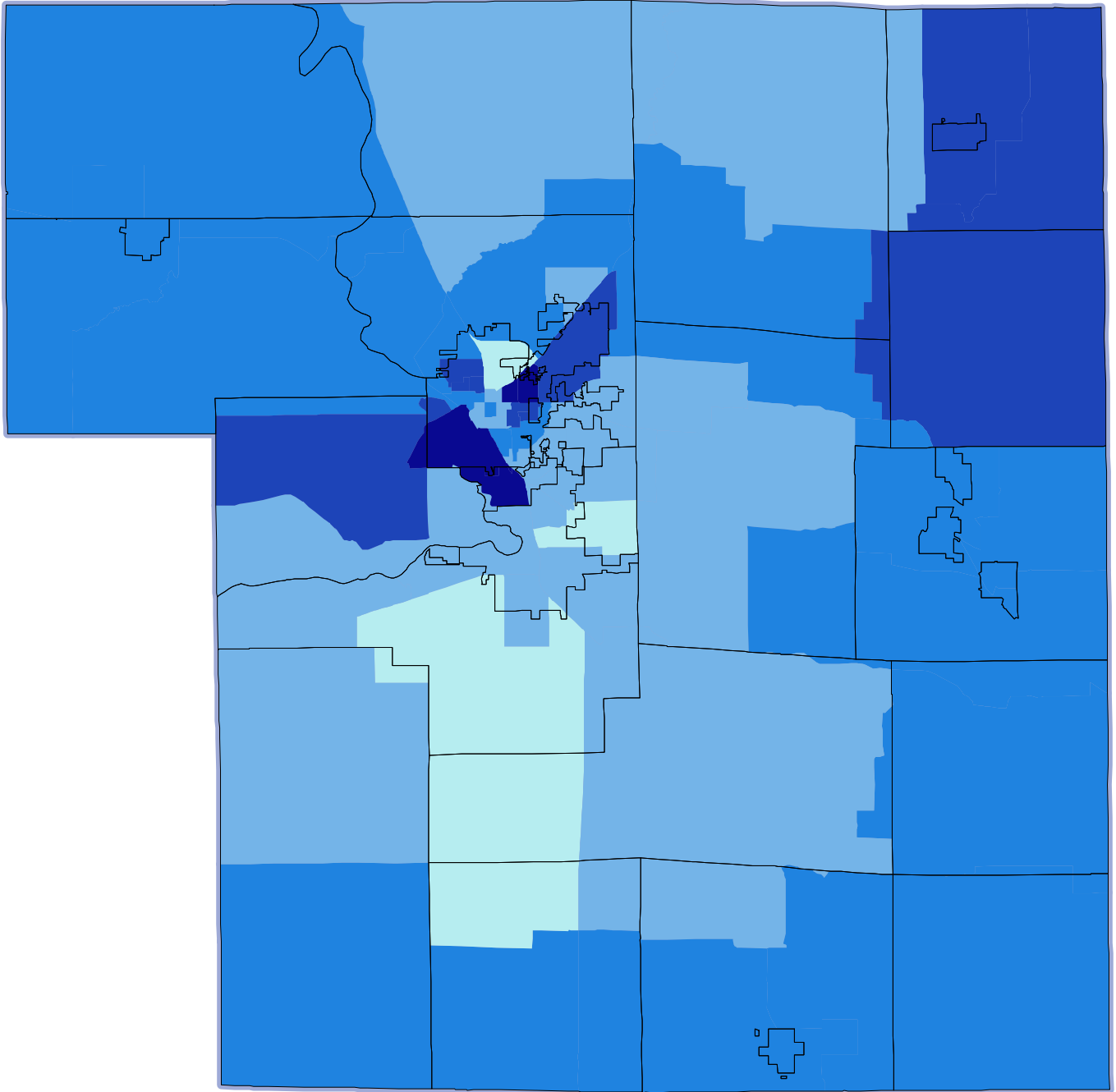
Source: Wisconsin Demographic Services Center

Low-Income Populations

From 1990 to 2000, Portage County as a whole saw a substantial decrease in the numbers of people living in poverty, as defined by the U.S. Census. In 1990, a total of 7 percent of all Portage County families were living in poverty. By 2000, this rate had declined to 4.4 percent. Overall, the highest poverty rates are found amongst single people living in urban areas, with 11.8 percent of those persons living in poverty in 2000. See Figure 3 for a depiction of concentrations of low-income persons in Portage County based on 2000 Census data.

Transit Dependent Populations

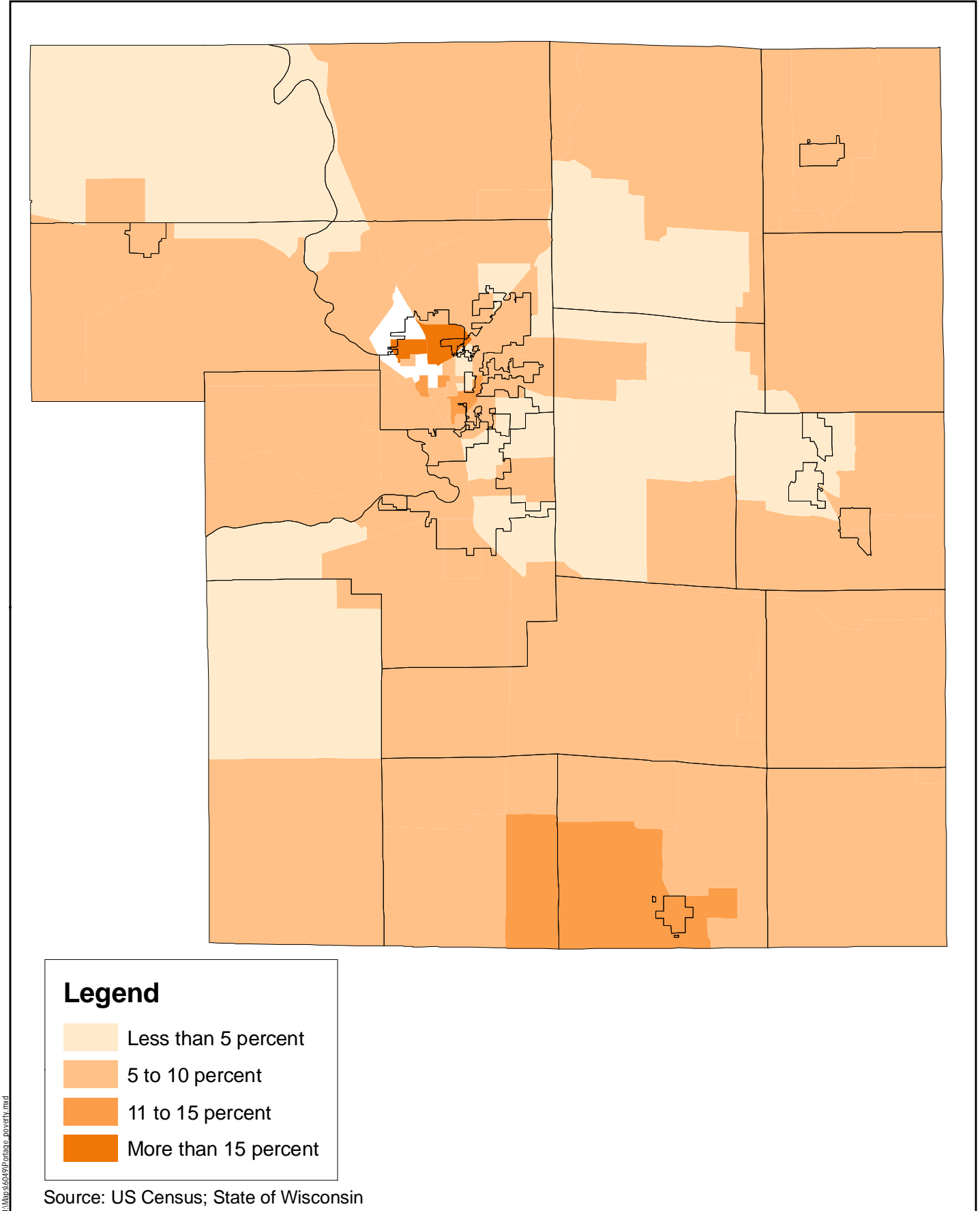
Transit dependent population may or may not consist of low-income persons, the elderly, the disabled and others who, for one reason or another, do not have access to an automobile. Figure 4 depicts the location of persons in Portage County considered to be transit dependent based on their request for and usage of Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) services.



Source: US Census, State of Wisconsin

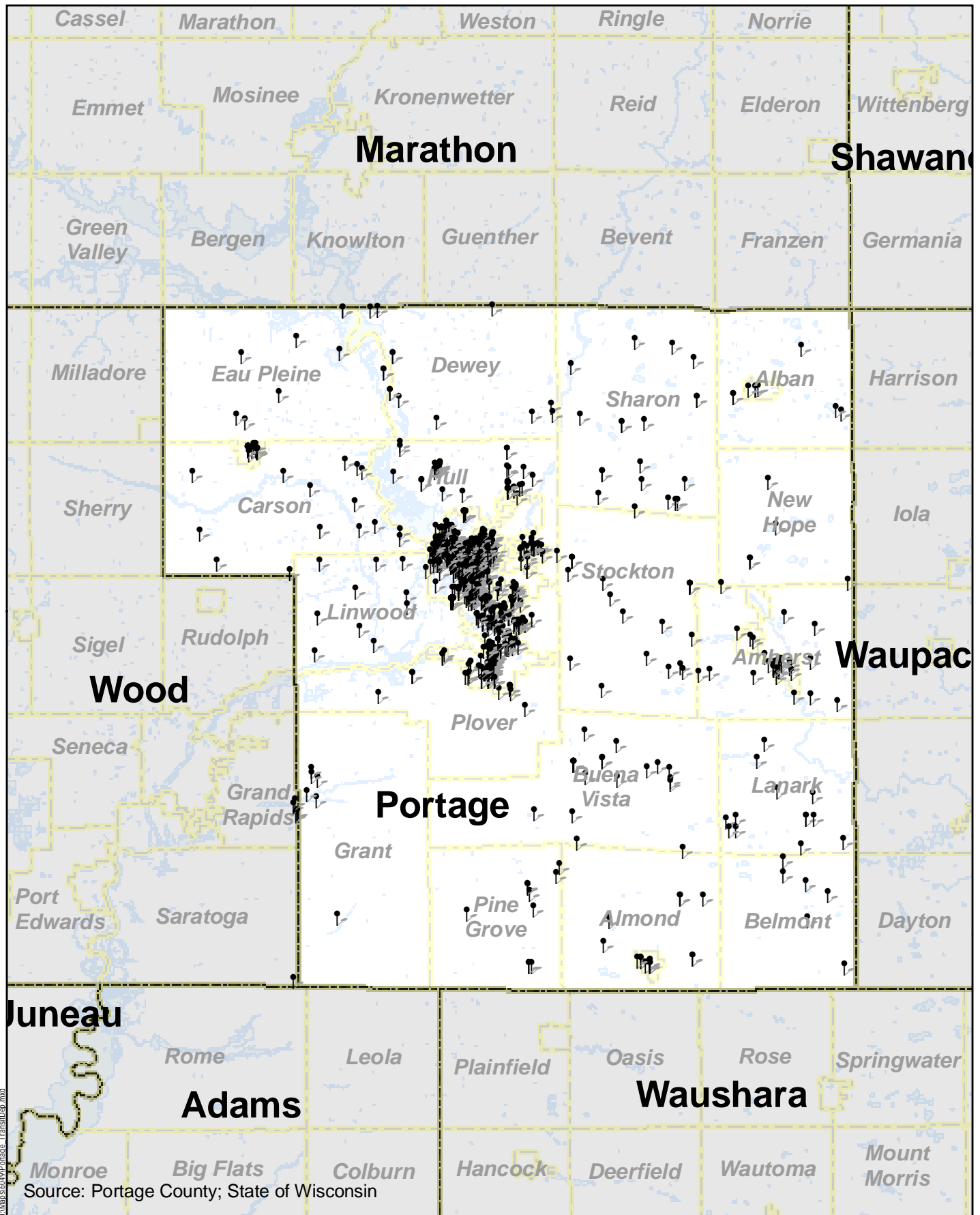
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Current Transportation Services

Portage County is served by a number of transportation options, ranging from Stevens Point Transit, a traditional urban public transit system with large buses operating on fixed routes, to volunteer, faith-based organizations that serve individuals by providing rides in private automobiles. In order to begin to identify gaps in services, whether these gaps are geographic gaps in service, gaps in service time, or gaps in population served, it was important to first map the services that presently exist. Figure 5 illustrates these services, their relationship to one another, and the major funding streams they access.

As can be seen, the services that most directly interrelate are those operated under the traditional “public transit” umbrella, located primarily in the City of Stevens Point as well as the Village of Plover. These consist of Stevens Point Transit, a municipally-owned public transit service provider, Plover Shared Ride Taxi service operated by Plover Taxi, which provides demand-responsive public transportation within the Village of Plover for a flat fee and outside Village borders on a per-mile basis, and UWSP Campus Service, a fixed-route operated by Stevens Point Transit serving the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. All of these services are open to the general public and are accessible to people of all ranges of mobility.

Other transportation services in the County are primarily aimed at more specialized markets, including the elderly, the disabled, low-income persons, veterans, or school-age children.

Table 4 that follows lists all the major transportation providers currently serving Portage County, and identifies the primary markets they serve, service area, time of service, and type of service operated.

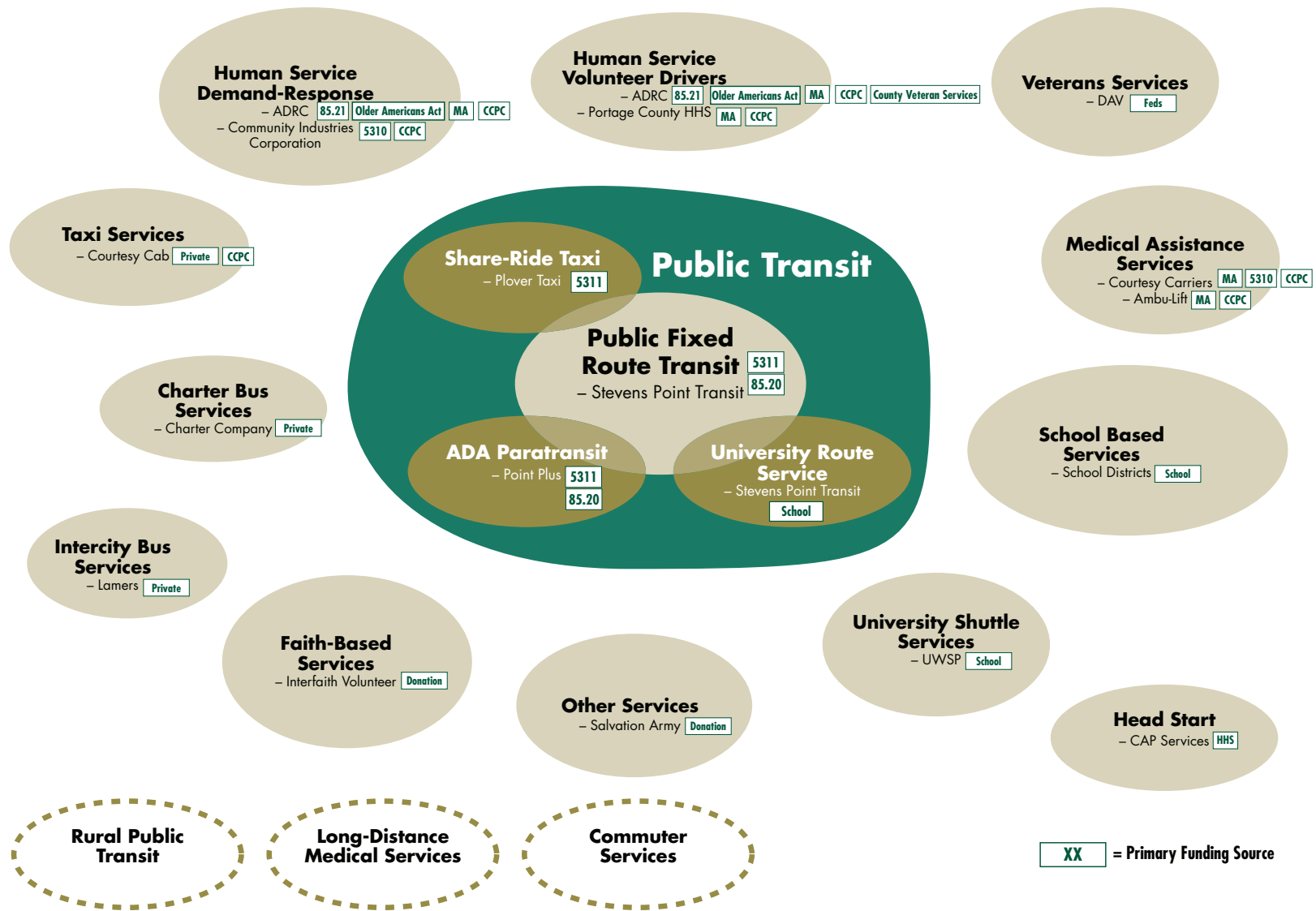
In terms of markets served, there are only a few public transit services available to the general public. Most services within the county are directed to serve specific customers. Stevens Point Transit operates fixed route service and a limited amount of on-demand service within the City of Stevens Point and the communities of Whiting, Park Ridge and a connection to Plover at Crossroad Commons. The Plover Shared Ride Taxi service operates primarily within the village but is available throughout the county if needed. Overall, there are very few public transportation options for the general public to travel out in the county.

Most of the remaining transportation services operated within the county are aimed at serving the needs of the elderly, disabled and to a lesser degree, the low income populations. Of the twelve primary transportation providers within the county, eight focus primarily on those customers. Although there appears to be some degree of coordination across some of these providers, most of the time they tend to operate fairly independent of one another to focus on their own customer needs. This is often quite common as these services tend to be funded from independent sources with independent program goals.

Three of the providers, Courtesy Carriers, Inc., Ambu-Lift and Disabled Veterans Transportation, focus exclusively on medical needs. One provider, CAP Services, focuses exclusively on Head Start pupil transportation.

Most services tend to operate Monday through Friday. There are a few options available for Saturday travel and even fewer options for Sundays.

Portage County Transportation Services



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PORTAGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

PORTAGE COUNTY RURAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
 Portage County

Figure 5

Portage County Transportation Providers

Table 4

Providers	Primary Markets Served						Area Served				Service Times			Service Type			Vehicle Type				Operations		
	General Public	Elderly	Disabled	Low-Income	Veterans	Students	Stevens Point	Plover	County	Outside County	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun	Fixed Route	Demand	Volunteer	Medium Bus	Small Bus	Vans	Sedans	Reservation Time	Annual Rides	
Stevens Point Transit-Route	●	○	○			●	●	○		●	●		●	○		6					15 Min.	189,000	
Point Plus			●				●			●	○			●				3			24 Hr.	9,300	
Plover Shared-Ride Taxi	●	○	○					●	○		●	○	○		●				1	2			
Aging and Disability Resource Center		●	○	●			●	●	●	○	●			●	○	●		4		40	Prefer 48 Hr., Some Same Day	28,100	
Portage County Health and Human Services		○	○	●			●	●	●	●	●				●					6	Prefer 48 Hr., Some Same Day	1,000	
Community Industries Corporation		○	●				●	●	●		●	○	○	●					13		24 Hr.	9,000	
Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers		●	○	○			●	●	●		○	○	○			●					58	72 Hr.	1,000
DAV Transportation					●		M	M	M	M	●				●				1		24 Hr.	420	
Courtesy Carriers, Inc.		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	○	○		●					7		24 Hr.	
Ambu Lift			●				M	M	M	M	●	●	●		●					4		Same Day	
CAP Services						●	●	●	●		○			●					4		NA		
Courtesy Cab	●										●	●	●		●			2	7	2			

○= Partial or Limited

M=Medical trips only

 Information Not Provided

Providers who transport the most passengers tend to operate some degree of fixed route services as it is most efficient. Almost all providers offer some degree of on-demand service and there are at least three of the major providers who utilize volunteers for that demand service.

There is a quite a mixture of vehicle types operating in the county with only a few operators using traditional transit vehicles- Stevens Point Transit, ADRC and CAP Services. These are all small to medium capacity vehicles which keep running costs low and provide maximum flexibility to the operators. Many providers rely on vans, some large, some small, some accessible, some not. There is also a sizeable fleet of volunteer vehicles utilized within the county.

The response time for customers to access on-demand services is generally quite reasonable within the county. At least four providers offer some degree of same day service if space is available while most of the others require at least day in advance reservations.

All together, according to the survey responses for this study, there were around 250,000 rides provided in 2006 through these services. That is a sizeable number given the overall county population.

Existing Demand for Services

Part of the driving force behind this study was the sense locally that demand for services had been increasing in recent years and that future years would bring even more challenges. In order to begin to understand this demand, a survey of Portage County transportation providers was conducted to identify current services and transportation needs. In addition to providing information summarized in Table 4, questions were asked of providers regarding whether they ever had to deny trip requests made by their customers.

Of the eight providers responding, seven indicated that they did have to deny trip requests.

- Five of the seven responded to say they had to deny trip requests once a week.
- Two of the seven indicated they had to deny trip requests once a month.

Reasons for trip denials were given as follows:

- Type of customer making request was not one served by our system (3 responses)
- We had no driver available to fulfill their request (3 responses)
- Type of trip the customer was making was not one for which our system provides service (2 responses)
- Customer requested service without giving adequate notice to dispatch/driver (2 responses)
- We had no vehicle available to fulfill their request (3 responses)
- Customer needed to travel at a time we do not provide service (2 responses)
- Customer's trip origin and / or destination was outside our service area (2 responses)

In total, according to responses received from the survey of Portage County transportation providers, approximately \$1.6 million was spent in 2006 to provide transportation services to Portage County citizens.

Transportation Needs Listening Sessions

Rural transportation needs are diverse and require community-based solutions. Although some transportation needs can be understood by examining information on current service providers and other sources of demographic data, many of the needs can only be understood by hearing directly from stakeholders. In order to begin this dialogue, a daylong series of listening sessions was held at the Aging and Disability Resource Center in Stevens Point on May 17, 2007. These sessions were aimed at gathering input from key stakeholders to identify needs, opportunities and issues through facilitated discussions. Participants invited to attend included transportation service providers, local elected officials, human service agency representatives, employers, and medical providers. In addition, notice was published in area newspapers and advertised on local radio.

The listening sessions covered three basic themes:

- How well are current services meeting transportation needs (area served, time operated, eligible customers, equipment used, information provided, user costs)
- What would an ideal system in Portage County look like
- What barriers exist to realizing an ideal transportation system

A total of seven sessions were held over the course of the day, including two sessions open to the general public, with over 40 people attending.

Identified Needs

During the course of the daylong listening sessions, a number of transportation needs were identified and discussed. The following is a consolidated list of all needs expressed.

- Need better regional connections to Wausau for connection to work centers, training, and technical centers.
- Need later evening bus service in Stevens Point.
- Emerging challenges caused by increased immigrant populations.
- Point Plus can't meet all the needs (trip denials).
- Clinic workers occasionally provide last minute rides to patients who would otherwise have to cancel due to lack of transportation.
- Maybe smaller buses would be more cost effective to provide service to more places.
- Portage County Health and Human Services does a good job of handling trips to Wausau and Marshfield.

- Commuter needs from Portage County into Stevens Point need attention.
- Continually changing transportation needs require continually changing services.
- There is a need to change the mindset of potential users to encourage a culture of using transit and alternative transportation services.
- Might need to offer incentives to get people to try transit.
- Need connection to training opportunities in Wisconsin Rapids.
- Need to recruit more volunteer drivers from around the County.
- Consider developing a “rider board” at grocery stores, churches, community centers, etc. to connect potential drivers to riders.
- Volunteer driver services are supposed to focus on medical, nutrition, and employment trips but sometimes drivers respond to other needs.
- Almost all volunteer drivers carry personal cell phones which are used for communicating on the road. However, most drivers must use their personal cell phones for this purpose.
- Volunteer drivers need training and orientation to subjects like sensitivity, confidentiality, etc.
- “Linked” trips are very difficult to serve with traditional transit services, in other words, trips that involve more than one stop, such as a mother taking kids to day care and continuing to work.
- Cost of accessible transportation outside of the county is very expensive.
- A transit “ambassador” program would help train new riders.
- A computerized reservation system would help identify open capacity across several providers.
- Regional intercity service to Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids, and Wausau is going to be more important in the future.
- The 211 system can be a key in getting information out to users.
- Park-and-Ride or Park-and-Pool lots should be set up in outlying areas of the County.
- Life-enhancing transportation needs are often overlooked because of a lack of money.
- A mobility manager could be used to help with arranging transportation.
- Stevens Point and Plover should work out a fare transfer policy so that customers don’t have to pay two full-price fares to transfer.
- Stevens Point and Plover should look to partner more and develop a “seamless” system between the two cities.

- Fixed routes in Stevens Point don't cover all the major destinations needed for human services.
- Customers could use better information about the services available; there is a lack of awareness about the range of existing services.

Needs Strategies

Following the all-day series of listening sessions, a meeting with the STRAP team overseeing the Rural Transportation Project was scheduled. At this meeting, the above list of needs was distilled into a "Top 9" list, reflecting the needs heard most frequently from a range of stakeholders. This list was presented to the STRAP team for their comment and review. In addition, a prioritization exercise was used to identify the top strategies for the County to undertake in order to meet identified needs. This exercise consisted of each STRAP team member identifying their three most important strategies for the County to use to meet emerging needs.

The top priority strategies are presented as follows, in rank order.

1. Build awareness of services that already exist (marketing, bulletin boards, Web sites, etc.).
2. Expand services into rural centers in Portage County.
3. Designate Park-and-Pool or Park-and-Ride lots in outlying areas of the County.
4. Fund a mobility manager / transit ambassador who would help match potential riders with available services and promote transportation services in the County generally.
5. Purchase automated dispatch and scheduling software and use jointly amongst multiple providers to provide more comprehensive and cost effective services.
6. Develop transportation solutions to better meet the needs of County commuters and employers.
7. Create a more unified transit / transportation system between Stevens Point and Plover providing a seamless service between these communities.
8. Develop transportation solutions focused on providing service outside the County, specifically to Wausau, Marshfield, and Wisconsin Rapids.
9. Extend the hours of service provided in Stevens Point to provide later evening service.

II. Findings and Recommendations

Evaluation of Current County Transportation Services

It is common in the transportation industry to establish metrics for measuring transportation system performance by describing “levels of service” provided. This is most frequently done using quantitative measures that are accepted as standards in the planning community. Metrics establishing the adequacy of service for human service and public transit transportation needs are not as well established, so an explanation of the scale used to report the levels of service provided by transportation providers in Portage County is given here.

Levels of service (LOS) typically are reported in ranges, with level A being the highest and level C (or below, depending on the scale) being the lowest. Based on studies elsewhere as well as considerations for Portage County circumstances, the following ranges for level of service were used to evaluate services in Portage County.

Table 5
Portage County Transportation Levels of Service (LOS) Measures

Human Service-Oriented Transportation (e.g., medical, supportive services, and life-sustaining transportation services)		
Level of Service	Amount of Service Provided	Adequacy/Effectiveness
A	5 days/week or more 9 hours/day or more	Excellent
B	4 days/week 8 hours/day	Good
C	Less than 4 days/week Less than 8 hours/day	Inadequate
Public Transit (e.g., commuter, recreational, shopping and general transportation services)		
A	7 days/week 12 hours / day	Excellent
B	6 days/week 10 hours/day	Good
C	Less than 6 days/week Less than 6 hours/day	Inadequate

For Human Services Oriented Transportation services, Level of Service A would be achieved if a provider operated 5 days per week or more for at least 9 hours per day. This type of service allows for full coverage of time periods where most life-sustaining activities take place through agencies. Levels of Service B and C represent lesser amounts of service being available for clients requiring more planning and somewhat fewer opportunities.

For public transit services, Level of Service A represents full 7 day a week coverage with service available for 12 hours per day or more. This level would provide coverage beyond the traditional work week to allow time for personal business, social or shopping trips to be made. Operating less than 7 days per week and less than 12 hours per day limits the effectiveness of transit as a core travel mode and requires more advanced planning by potential customers.

Level of Service

Based on the metrics for measuring levels of service, all of the current Portage County transportation providers were evaluated and their rankings are reported below in Table 6.

Overall, the current Human Services providers get very high marks for the level of service they provide in the county. The public transit providers rank slightly lower but still provide a good amount of service for the area. Information for two of the human service providers was not available for this assessment.

Table 6
Portage County Transportation Providers
Level of Service Provided

Human Service Transportation Providers	
Aging and Disability Resource Center: Bus	LOS B
Aging and Disability Resource Center: Volunteer Escort Program	LOS A
Portage County Health and Human Services: Volunteer Program	LOS A
Community Industries Corporation	LOS B
Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers	LOS A
DAV Transportation	LOS A
Courtesy Carriers, Inc.	LOS A
Ambu Lift	N/A *
CAP Services	N/A *
Courtesy Cab	LOS A
Public Transit	
Stevens Point Transit	LOS B
Point Plus	LOS B
Plover Shared-Ride Taxi	LOS B

* Information to determine LOS not provided

Area Served

Another measure of effectiveness for transportation services is to gauge how well they cover the geographic service areas. Since over half of the county's general population and the majority of transit dependents is found in the general Stevens Point vicinity, and the city is the prime destination for most of the jobs and services, it is reasonable to see most of the transportation services focused on Stevens Point. Some Human Service providers do operate to the county-wide communities, albeit on a somewhat infrequent basis, to provide connections to life-sustaining activities in the city. Essentially no public transit service is available outside of Stevens Point or Plover.

Service beyond the county is quite limited. Connections to some long-distance medical services are provided by various human service providers but this tends to be quite specialized service. The ADRC Volunteer Escort Program travels outside of the county on an almost daily basis.

Vehicle Availability

In Portage County, there are 16 buses, medium and small size, operated by human service and public transit providers. In addition, there are 36 vans, full size to mini-vans, operating along with over 100 volunteer vehicles. Altogether, this presents a capacity in excess of 600 seats per day. That may appear to be a significant amount but it translates into one seat for about every 100 County residents. Certainly the seats can be used by more than one person in a day, but the way in which some services operate or the times they are available does limit the number of times the seat can be re-used. What this suggests is that opportunities to broaden the use of existing resources and possibly expand services should be explored where possible.

Sharing of vehicles amongst providers can be a solution that provides increased service coverage while maximizing existing resources. In Portage County, the possibility exists to share vehicles between the Aging and Disability Resource Center and Portage County Health Care Center. However, substantial barriers stand in the way of expanding the sharing of vehicles amongst many of the other providers of transportation services in the County. Vehicle types may not be compatible between the services provided (e.g., using a large transit bus to provide one-on-one transportation of individuals across the County is not cost effective) and/or regulatory barriers may prohibit sharing (e.g., the use of school buses to provide transportation to non-student populations). For this reason, the determination was made that there is a low potential for sharing and/or reassignment of a significant number of vehicles amongst providers. A better solution will be to open available seats to customers from other needs groups where permitted and practical.

Financial Strategies

There are a large number of funding streams, consisting of federal, state, local and private assistance, that Portage County transportation providers access to fund their program of services.

Federal programs that support public transportation services include the following:

- Section 5310: Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program: This is a capital assistance grant program for the purchase of accessible buses and vans to provide transportation services to the disabled and elderly.
- Section 5311: Section 5311 is a formula grant program for small urban and rural areas (under 50,000 population) that funds capital operating and administrative expenses.
- JARC (Section 5316): The Job Access and Reverse Commute formula-based program provides job access transportation designed to meet the needs of individuals who are not effectively served by public transportation.
- New Freedom Program (Section 5317): This program provides for new transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by ADA to provide assistance to persons with disabilities.

State programs that support public transportation services include the following:

- 85.20: This program is limited to the operating expenses of an urban mass transit system. There are four tiers within this program, with each tier having a separate appropriation. Portage County is in the Tier C category for funding.
- 85.21: This program provides operating assistance for counties to provide specialized transportation services to elderly and disabled populations.
- Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP): This is a state administered, federally funded program to: 1) provide more transit service and mobility to rural areas and 2) promote coordination between specialized and public transportation in rural areas. Operating funds are available for expansion of existing services as well as new starts.

In addition to federal and state programs aimed primarily at providing transportation services, various human-service funding programs can be used for transportation services. These programs include Medical Assistance, Community Care of Portage County (CCPC), and the Older Americans Act.

According to the provider survey information, there is an annual investment from all funding sources combined in human service and public transit of over \$1.6 million in Portage County. That equates to about \$23 spent each year on all of these services for each county resident.

Current Coordination Activities

There are ongoing activities to partner and coordinate between transportation providers in Portage County to provide better and broader coverage to customers. Examples of these activities include:

- A service agreement between DAV Transportation and ADRC to use ADRC vehicles to transport veterans when there is no additional capacity on DAV.
- A funding agreement between Portage County Veterans Service Office and ADRC exists to help pay for veterans trips to medical centers.
- Establishing a transfer point for customers moving from Plover Shared-Ride Taxi to Stevens Point Transit and vice versa.
- Financial arrangements between Stevens Point Transit and the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point to use student activity fees to reimburse Stevens Point Transit for University-oriented transportation services.
- Informal arrangements exist with surrounding counties to serve some localized human service transportation needs.

These are excellent examples of cross-program coordination already in place. The objective will be to look for additional opportunities like these to improve the overall effectiveness of the transportation resources.

Strategies to Meet Identified Needs

The following strategies are presented as a means for Portage County to meet a number of identified transportation needs in the County. They account for the preferred Needs Strategies identified during the public processes described in the first section of this report as well as strategies that are suggested based on an understanding of best practices employed elsewhere that would be applicable to the Portage County context.

Strategies are listed below in no particular order.

1. Consolidate ADRC and Portage County HHS (Ruth Gilfry) volunteer driver programs under one administrative program. This strategy can result in the following benefits:
 - a. Cross utilization of volunteers
 - b. Establish recognition programs
 - c. Develop standardized training

Although it is recognized that these programs serve very different clients, there should be some administrative benefits to organize all volunteers under one umbrella. The challenge will be to find means to maintain confidentiality where needed and yet streamline the recruitment, training and assignment of volunteers.

2. Purchase trip scheduling and dispatch software that can be used for all demand-responsive and volunteer driver programs, including ADRC, Portage County HHS, volunteer programs, and Point Plus.

Trip reservation software has advanced significantly in recent years and there are moderately-priced options available that allow agencies to essentially connect via the internet. The software can be hosted locally or provided directly by vendors.

One of the prime benefits of this system would be to better utilize resources to meet last-minute trip needs and to also streamline billing and reporting processes.

Implementation of this strategy might also consider establishing one county-wide call center with one telephone number / Web site address (e.g., 1-800-RIDE NOW) number to handle trip scheduling for multiple providers. This will result both in administrative benefits as well as greater customer recognition and ease of use.

3. Establish a consolidated call center, using a trip scheduling and dispatch software that would handle all County transportation services.

A centralized call center could handle trip reservations and dispatchers for multiple providers. As resource sharing ideas move forward, this concept begins to pay more dividends. Vehicles in service and with available seats can be used to pick up customers from other agency programs, provided that all travel conditions for the agency and customers are maintained. This can be an intimidating option for some human service providers who may believe their customer needs won't be met. But in many cases, the staff at the consolidated call center is a professional group who maintain the integrity of individual customer needs.

4. Expand ADRC route service and demand-responsive services to provide general public transportation services, becoming more of a county-wide public transportation provider and less of a specialized provider for the elderly and disabled. Some options to consider include:
 - a. Stevens Point Transit could take over more responsibilities for day programs activities and meal site travel within Stevens Point. Funding contributions for these services would need to be worked out.
 - b. Rural routes provided by ADRC could be opened to the general public.
 - c. Hours of ADRC service could be expanded.
 - d. Shift to more of a combination of route and on-demand services to provide broader county coverage.
 - e. Vouchers could be provided to persons who would otherwise use ADRC transportation services for free or reduced price rides on Stevens Point Transit.
 - f. Establish a “Senior Shuttle” service to connect with Lincoln Center. This service would be operated by Stevens Point Transit.

ADRC is a great resource in the county that has the capacity to do more if conditions and funding realities will permit. If some of the regular route and demand services that ADRC currently provides inside of Stevens Point can be shifted to Stevens Point Transit and funding adjustments can be worked out, then ADRC resources would be available for broader services. Shifting responsibilities for some of the meal site and day program activities will require careful consideration by the parties to ensure the core missions of the agencies are not compromised, but Stevens Point Transit is an excellent resource for subscription-type travel (recurring trips) and group travel to a common destination. Routes, schedules and route-deviation services can be configured to align with required destinations to maximize the effectiveness of public transit.

By shifting some of the easy-to-serve trips to Stevens Point Transit, ADRC will be positioned to take on broader public markets in the county-wide area. Hours of existing services could be expanded, availability to the general public would be provided if seats are available and broader outreach could be achieved by using a combination of routes and on-demand services.

5. Use Section 5316 (JARC) funds to establish subscription bus/van service for low-income customers throughout the county providing service to key destination for work trips (i.e., major employers).

By working with the major employers in the county, it will be possible to identify the strongest candidates for this type of service. This type of service is best suited to handle the diverse trip ends and wide-ranging shift times. If sufficient number of riders are identified, either a van pool can be arranged or even a subscription bus service could be provided with available resources or contracted out. The JARC funding program is an excellent source for trying out this type of service within the county. All 5316 projects need to be programmed through a coordinated local plan.

6. Use Section 5317 (New Freedom) funds to expand Point Plus to serve Plover.

Expanding ADA service beyond the fixed route service area is an eligible use of New Freedom funds. By expanding Point Plus to serve Plover, customers will receive a significant upgrade in services through provision of a one-seat ride and improved metro area accessibility. All 5317 projects need to be programmed through a coordinated local plan.

7. Use Section 5317 funds to fund a Mobility Manager / Transit Ambassador to take the lead efforts in implementing transportation services strategies and the marketing of existing transportation services and opportunities.

During the course of this study it became clear that there is a wide-range of transportation services available within the county for both human service and general public transportation. There are several resource guides available, however, the programs seem to operate pretty much independent of one another. For potential customers and agency staff, it can be a daunting task trying to learn of the many options.

In areas around the country, new transportation advisor positions are emerging that focus on finding the best fit service for customer needs. These positions, sometimes called Mobility Managers, look at all available services and match up customers with the best fit. They can be a one-stop resource, they can be advocates for change (including new services), they can promote coordination of human service and public transit, and they can be the principal marketing force for transportation options.

Another role that could be developed in the area is a Transit Ambassador program. This program would identify key people within the county that would help promote the use of public transit for a variety of needs and customers. They can help train seniors or disabled persons to use transit services, they can assist with transfers at key locations and they can promote transit use to governmental buildings, schools, libraries, shopping centers, employment centers, etc. Travel training has shown to have a very good payback in other areas as there can be an operational cost savings of \$2 – \$3 for every \$1 spent on training.

8. Establish park-and-pool lots for commuter transportation services.

Use of public transit can be promoted through many actions including establishing park-and-pool lots around the county. Areas can be established around major crossroads or at convenient business, government buildings or even church locations. It is best to look for low or no cost locations. The resulting message will be positive in that the city and county will be promoting ridesharing activities. These users will become good candidates to use public transit when in town and if the demand levels from particular areas get high enough, subscription services can be set up for even better service.

9. Expand service hours for the elderly and disabled and throughout the County using taxi services (reimbursed through Section 5317 and 85.21 funds). The county-wide services for these groups is fairly limited currently.

In a lot of areas, the services available to many customer groups can be expanded most efficiently by using available private sector resources. If desired, the service to specific

customer groups like the elderly, disabled and low income population groups, can be significantly expanded up to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week if needed by using subsidized taxi services. Controls can be put in place to limit the hours that service is available or distance users can travel per trip or per month and to set user fare levels so that total program costs are controlled.

10. Establish out-of-County route deviation service from Stevens Point on a rotating basis throughout the week serving 2 or 3 key stops in Stevens Point plus downtown, using other modes to “feed” this service. This service would operate from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. An example of a five-day route plan follows:
 - a. Monday to Wausau
 - b. Tuesday to Marshfield
 - c. Wednesday to Wisconsin Rapids
 - d. Thursday to Wausau
 - e. Friday to Marshfield

This type of service will focus on meeting some of the medical, personnel business, shopping or social needs of customers. It can be challenging to implement successfully as trip ends tend to be widely dispersed and coordinating appointments is quite difficult. The provider can be a public agency or provide sector contractor. A key place to start would be to focus on medical trips and shopping trips in the outlying cities.

11. Expand awareness of services through better marketing and communications strategies.
 - a. Expand outreach activities to spread the word on 211 and its value
 - b. Create electronic or physical billboards
 - c. Create/maintain provider directory for all County transportation services
 - d. Other communications strategies / outreach activities (transit fairs, etc.)

Since the percentage of new users for public transit is generally quite high, usually around 20 to 25 percent tend to indicate they’ve been riding less than 1 year, it is always a good idea to refresh all marketing activities at least once per year. Within Stevens Point, the college population poses a significant challenge for marketing. In addition, with the advent of the United Way 211 information system, there are expanding opportunities to broaden overall transportation services marketing and communications.

12. Consolidate ADRC and CIC demand-responsive services under one provider to serve all elderly and disabled communities. This could result in a better utilization of Section 5310 and 85.21 funds.

Since ADRC and CIC serve somewhat the same customer bases, there might be some economics of scale for the agencies to work more closely together. There would be

resource sharing for administration vehicle back-ups, maintenance, trip reservation and dispatch, trip pick-ups if extra capacity needed and other activities as opportunities present.

5310 funds can also be used for operations of services under a purchase of service contract. All 5310 expenditures do need to be programmed through a coordinated local plan. The county should take an active role in programming these projects.

13. Use Section 5317 (New Freedom) funds to provide vouchers for rides on ADRC buses when Point Plus has no capacity and must deny trip requests.

Stevens Point Transit could manage the program. All 5317 projects need to be programmed through a coordinated local plan.

14. Expand Stevens Point Transit to serve the broader metropolitan area with a seamless urban transit system.

Since the area has already grown together in many respects, it may be appropriate to look toward establishing one oversight transit agency to manage and perhaps operate all urban services. The customers don't understand the political jurisdiction lines as communities expand so the services need to be arranged to better meet potential customer needs.

15. Expand Stevens Point Transit services to provide later evening service (to 9:00 p.m.).

This will enhance the image and usefulness of transit as a core travel mode for most people. Perhaps some routes can be identified as start-up candidates to test the concept. If route service is not productive, perhaps subsidized taxi service or general public demand-responsive service might be evaluated. The idea is to provide more access opportunities for customers.

Recommendations for Implementation

Understanding that in a world of limited resources it is not possible to meet all needs all of the time, the full range of needs strategies, as discussed above, was evaluated to identify the best candidates for near-term implementation. Strategies were evaluated by likely initial costs that may be incurred (e.g., the purchase of new equipment or capital improvements) and by administrative requirements (e.g., the need to establish new partnership agreements or changes in existing agreements/contracts). These two criteria were then merged into one overall feasibility ranking that can be used to identify the most promising strategies for implementation in the short term.

The evaluation summary is presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Evaluation of Needs Strategies

Needs Strategy	Cost Requirements	Administrative Requirements	Overall Feasibility Ranking
1. Consolidate ADRC / HSS volunteer programs	Low	Low	High
2. Purchase trip reservation software for ADRC, HHS and Point Plus	Medium-High	Medium	Medium
3. Establish consolidated call center	High	High	Low
4. Establish ADRC county-wide routes for general public transportation	Low-Medium	Low	High
5. Establish subscription bus/van service for low-income populations	Medium	Medium	Medium
6. Expand Point Plus to serve Plover	Medium	Low	Medium
7. Establish Mobility Manager / Transit Ambassador	Low	Low	High
8. Establish park-and-pool locations	Low	Low	High
9. Expand services for elderly / disabled throughout County using taxi services	Medium	Low	High
10. Establish county-wide route service to Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids, Marshfield	High	Medium	Low
11. Expand awareness of services through better marketing	Medium	Low-Medium	High
12. Consolidate ADRC / CIC services under one provider	Low	Medium-High	Low
13. Use vouchers to provide services on ADRC if Point Plus must deny rides	Low	Low-Medium	High
14. Expand Stevens Point Transit to serve broader metro area	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low
15. Expand Stevens Point Transit to provide later evening service	Medium	Low	Medium

Those strategies with the highest feasibility rankings and best immediate payback are:

#1: Consolidate ADRC and HHS volunteer programs on an administrative level to streamline service delivery.

The direct cost to implement this strategy should be quite modest. The most challenging component will be to reach general agreement between the parties and then devise a mechanism to protect the integrity of individual clients.

The potential benefit is at a moderate level for the county but should streamline future recruitment of volunteers along with training, oversight and billing processes.

#4: Establish ADRC county-wide routes to better link the free standing communities to Stevens Point.

This strategy could vary in its implementation cost if new routes are engaged. If possible, resource reallocations across ADRC and Stevens Point Transit should be evaluated as a first option and adding operating funds from broader sources should be considered next. This action is an excellent candidate for funding through the STRAP program, 85.20 and 5311.

There are a number of sub-options that can be considered under this strategy. Those generally include shifting some of the highest use and most concentrated customer trips within Stevens Point from ADRC to Stevens Point Transit. The premise for these actions is that Stevens Point Transit will be a more cost-effective provider for subscription type service or shuttles than ADRC. ADRC would then begin to expand its focus to a broader county-wide perspective offering some degree of general public transit along with its core mission of service to the elderly and disabled.

The cost to implement may reach medium levels if new services are deployed. The administrative challenges should be relatively few.

The potential benefit is significant across the county as Stevens Point Transit will take on a broader in-town role and ADRC will become the face of county transportation. In this way, the county-wide communities will have greatly improved service levels.

#7: Establish Mobility Manager and Transit Ambassador programs to improve customer service and improve the efficiency of existing resources.

The cost to implement Mobility Manager and Transit Ambassador programs will be relatively modest for the expected payback. One full-time Mobility Manager could wear hats that include hands-on travel advisor for individuals, lead marketer, local contact for provider liaison, lead staff for development and updating of local coordination plans, lead over the 5310 award process, liaison with special needs groups including the elderly,

disabled, low income and youth, liaison between county and city concerns, liaison with major employers, liaison with adjoining counties, liaison with faith-based services, liaison with the medical and education communities.

The cost of the position could be paid in part with 5317 funds as long as the project is contained in the local coordination plan and the project meets all the other eligibility requirements.

Transit Ambassadors generally are volunteer positions with local, knowledgeable transit users filling the roles. Offering small tokens of appreciation such as free bus passes usually is reward enough for the ambassadors. If they are asked to perform broader duties such as accompanying users on a regular basis, then some modest payment may need to be provided.

The payback for these programs will be quite significant in the county. There is little if any risk in pursuing the ideas as long as the jurisdictions agree on the details of the job descriptions.

#8: Establish park and pool locations strategically around the county to promote transit use and improve relationships with employers.
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The first step to broaden the appeal of transit to potential customers is to offer services that relate to individual circumstances. Since there is a pretty high level of commuters coming from outlying communities into Stevens Point, the county has the opportunity to reach out to this group and indicate that there are some levels of transit activities that can work for them as well. Such a step would be to identify several locations around the county where people driving private transportation might get together to form a car or van pool to a common destination. In doing so, the county promotes ridesharing as a transportation mode that it wants to support and begins to lay the foundation for broader transit use by this user group.

These potential rideshare participants will become excellent candidates to use the local transit services for some trips while at their destination end. That expands the user base for general public transit. In addition, if at some point, the number of users from a particular location is quite high, different transit options including subscription bus or van service could be considered to radiate from the employment locations.

The cost to deploy this strategy is quite low as no capital elements need be included. Simply find a safe place for multiple vehicles to congregate and let the rest of the arrangements take place independent of any oversight. At some point if a mobility manager is in-place in the county, that person could begin outreach efforts to major employers to let them and their employees know that assistance in setting up ridesharing and park and pool areas is available.

The payback is modest but the investment is so low it should be a very positive step in the county to broaden transportation options.

#9: Expand services for the elderly, disabled and low income populations throughout the county by using subsidized taxi services to operate within the county during times when other services are done for the day or when additional capacity is needed.

The private sector is usually quite willing and generally able to provide additional transportation services. There appears to be operators that could provide service to ambulatory and non-ambulatory customers during hours when the regular human service providers do not operate. Programs can be initiated that allow for subsidization of a part of the cost of such service to any point in the county at any time as long as it meets the program intent. Trip subsidies can be negotiated with the providers on a bid basis. Amounts that users can incur can be limited on a per trip or per month basis. Users typically pay a fare higher than comparable public transit but within the intent of the oversight program.

There are costs to set up such a program, go through the bid process with providers and to manage the program monthly. Billing and payment are typically key processes to resolve and all transactions require validation and audit capability.

The county can limit its risk by setting specific monthly funding levels to test the concept. When funding maximums are reached during the month, the program would need to go on-hold or seek additional funds.

The payback can be quite significant for users as they will have much broader travel options for off-hours service.

#11 Expand awareness of services through better marketing.

Marketing of transportation services is essential to expanding opportunities for all. There are many low to moderate cost strategies that can be tried across the county. Promoting use of the excellent effort from the United Way and their 211 information program is a great first step. Transportation providers and agencies should be encouraged to “cross-promote” use of the 211 service and other providers. Public gathering spaces should always have information on how potential customers can access transportation resources. Agency mailings and websites should spread the word on available services. The county-wide directories on available services need to be kept current and should be widely distributed to agencies, employers and the media.

As resources permit, more direct marketing efforts can be engaged through printed and electronic media. Also, direct outreach programs to employers and at local events can be implemented.

#13 Use vouchers to pay for rides on ADRC if Point Plus needs to deny a trip because of insufficient capacity.

There are apparently some times when Point Plus is not able to meet the immediate needs of potential customers and thereby has to turn down a trip request. During these instances, the customers could be set up with other transportation providers such as ADRC that could handle the trip. The customer could receive service and the provider would work with Point Plus on reporting and payment processes.

This strategy would expand travel options for customers within the urban area. The cost is rather modest as the reimbursement level and program management fees for the providers are expected to be quite low. Point Plus can limit its risk by allocating a portion of its operating budget to cover the costs of such service and putting the program off if that limit is reached.

The cost of implementing most of these strategies is anticipated to be relatively modest at the onset. Before any strategies are implemented, a detailed planning assessment will be required to properly gauge the full costs of implementation. The expansion of ADRC route services can be done incrementally as resources permit. Establishing a Mobility Manager or Transit Ambassador could be done with contributions from participating agencies along with federal funds. The use of 5310, 5316 or 5317 funds requires projects to be programmed in a locally developed coordination plan. The current plan on record can be amended to incorporate these prospects.

Altogether, these strategies appear to be fairly straight forward and could certainly be implemented within a fairly short (1 – 3 years) time horizon. These strategies appear to fit nicely with the existing services within the county and if implemented would lead to the revised service picture as shown in Figure 6. By implementing these strategies, Portage County will make significant strides forward in coordinating and improving human service transportation and public transit in the county.

Those options with medium level feasibility ranking and yet have very good payback potential are:

- #2: Purchase trip reservation software for demand-responsive services.
- #5: Establish subscription commuter service for low-income populations.
- #6; Expand Point Plus to Plover.
- #15: Extend hours of service for Stevens Point Transit to later evening.

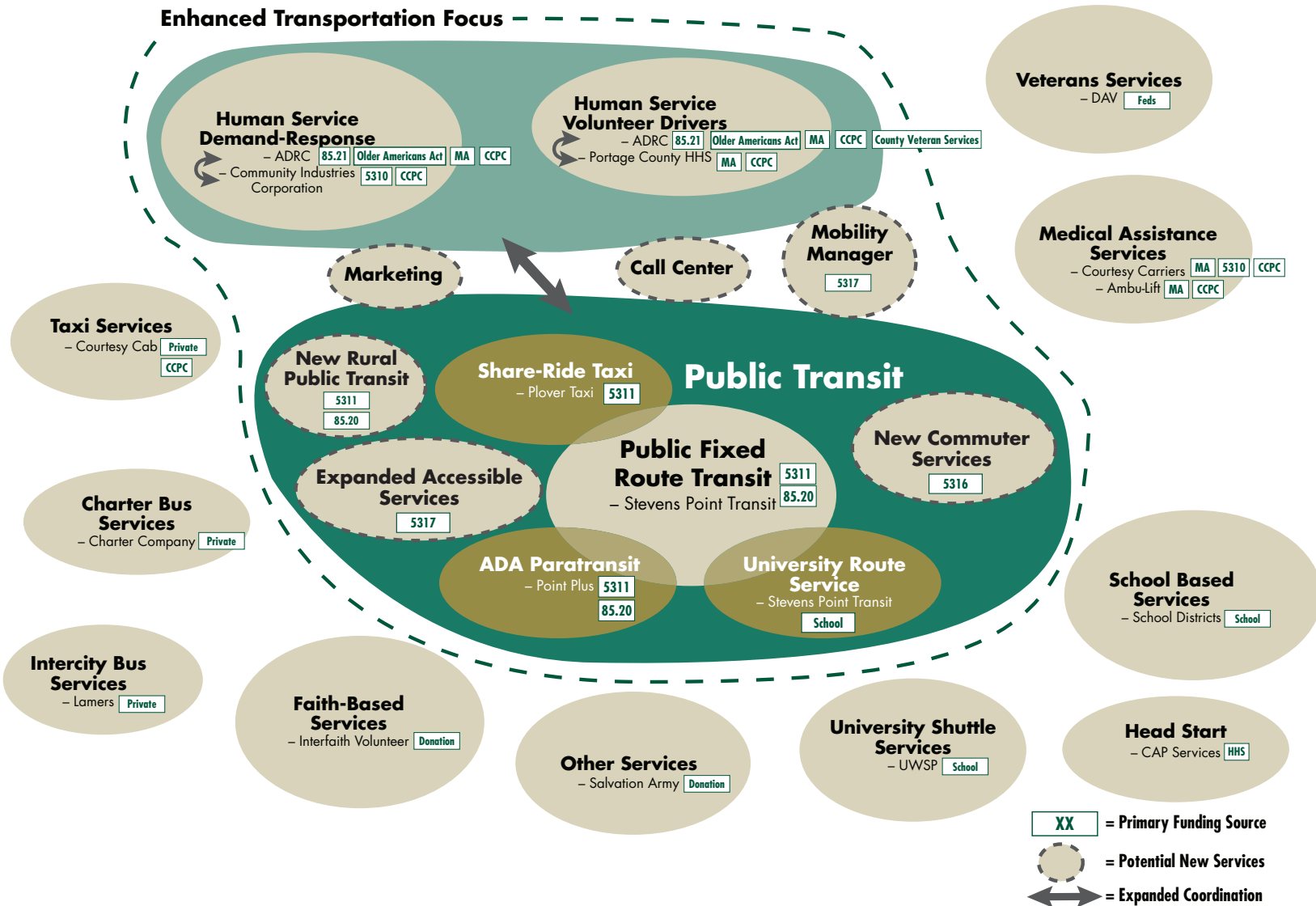
These options either require more funding to initiate or operate, or have some other complicating factors such as political jurisdiction issues or longer lead time to implement. They are very worthwhile strategies but may take a bit more effort to implement.

The remaining options are still viable to examine but generally will require significantly more effort to implement. If champions arise for any of the options, the priority to implement some of these options may accelerate.

Other Considerations

Stevens Point Transit and ADRC should work together to develop a new approach for service that can better serve the needs of the transit dependent population within the urban area. Figure 7 shows that the transit dependent population is widely dispersed throughout the communities. Although Stevens Point, Whiting and Plover account for over 75% of the county transit dependents, there are few concentrations strong enough to warrant significant modification of existing fixed routes. There may be some opportunities to expand the level of route deviations available within the communities but enhancing the service to this group will most likely involve demand-responsive services.

Potential Changes to Portage County Transportation Services

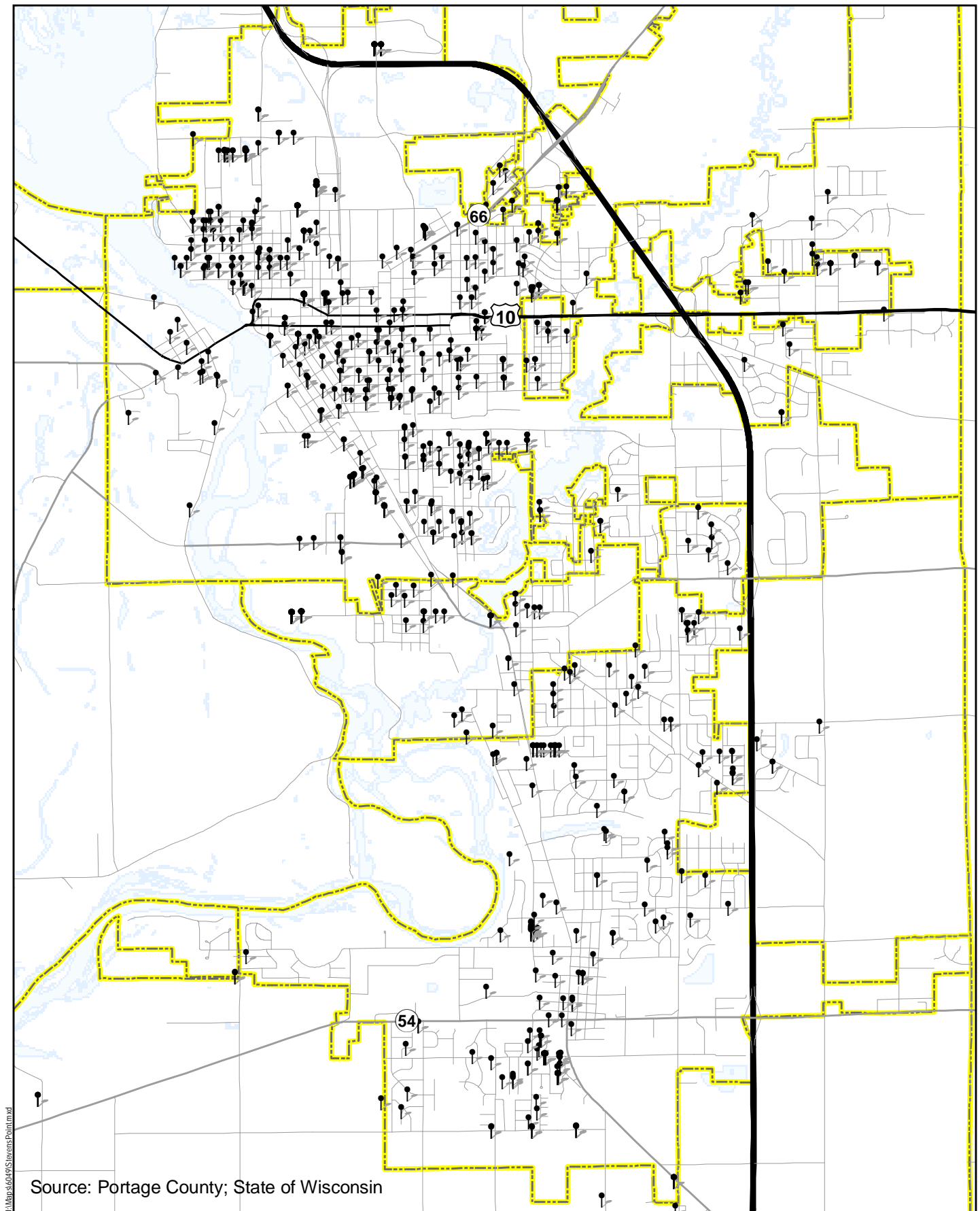


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IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS
 PORTAGE COUNTY RURAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
 Portage County

Figure 6



TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATION - STEVENS POINT, WHITING AND PLOVER

Figure 7

PORTAGE COUNTY RURAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Portage County

Contingency Plan

There is always a risk that once new services are started that the funding streams might be endangered. Most of the broader human service and public transit services operating in the county utilize multiple funding sources for their operations. That most likely will continue and there should be little worry that any of the funding programs will suffer total collapse.

However, in the event that funding streams become compromised, the county will have some tough choices as to which programs to continue to invest in. A good place to start such an assessment will be to look at the effectiveness of each of the programs and the extent each meets the policy goals of the county. By doing such an assessment, the county could identify which programs best fit with its core directions and then the funding allocations will be made accordingly.

Unfortunately, there are no magic funding sources laying in wait to help out in time of crisis. Those tough allocation decisions will need to be made locally in a collaborative manner by city and county officials.

Initial Steps

The review of transportation issues, needs and opportunities in Portage County has identified a number of potential changes that area stakeholders might consider. There are several strategies that offer good value for modest investment levels as an initial step toward broadening transportation opportunities within the county. In order to move forward with implementation, some potential first steps are identified.

Broadening coordination of existing transportation services and expanding strategies is generally most successful when there is a clear picture of which agency or staff person is leading the efforts. Establishing a clear focus to municipal or county efforts eliminates confusion as to who will lead the new initiatives.

Following identification of the lead staff or agency, the next steps would involve organizing an on-going local steering and management process to help guide the selection of new projects and evaluate the performance of on-going efforts. Multi-agency committees can be quite effective in that role and can help to prioritize investments as funds become available. This will also help keep the lines of communication open to involved parties so there are no surprises as new strategies roll out. Building on the success of the current STRAP team could be a good starting point.

Finally, it is recommended that implementation of any new transportation strategies for the area be done with an understanding that it may take some amount of time for new ideas to reach their full potential. Start with easy to implement ideas that have high potential benefits. Be willing to adapt the ideas to better meet changing conditions. Expand the lines of communication to get more people involved with making transportation service decisions. Remain flexible in how services are deployed in order to gain maximum benefit in the on-going investment of transportation services across Portage County.

APPENDICES

- A. STRAP Advisory Committee**
- B. Resource Guide**

Appendix A

STRAP Advisory Committee

THE STRAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kathy Hackel	CAP Services
Norm Myers Sr.	County Board Representative to the Special Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC)
Michael Clements	Veterans Service Officer
Richard Bishop	Village of Plover
Michael Juris	Village of Amherst
Heather Bauer	Midstate Independent Living Consultants
Hank Becker	Town of Linwood
Nancy Campbell-Kelz	Aspirus VNA Extended Care
Dan Sekerka	Town of Sharon
Hans Walther	Chairman-Stevens Point Transportation Commission
Jo Ellen Seiser	Citizen
Kathy Sankey	Plover Shared Ride Taxi/Courtesy Cab/Courtesy Carriers
Carrie Placeway	Aging & Disability Resource Center
Susan Lemke	Stevens Point Transit
Jim Riggerbach	Health and Human Services
Kathy Trachte	Saint Michael's Hospital
Kelley Steinke	Town of Grant
Carl Karcheski	Town of Linwood
Patrick Wanserski	Town of Sharon
Michael Bronk	Town of Stockton

Appendix B

Resource Guide

Specialized Transportation

Resource Guide

For

Portage County



Revised 1/2007

Lincoln Center
1519 Water Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 346-1401
1-800-586-5055
TTY: (715) 346-1632
www.co.portage.wi.us/adrc

Portage County Specialized Transportation Resource Guide

1. Ambu-Lift Transports

3822 Robert St.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 343-1804
Toll-Free: 1-866-343-1804
Fax: (715) 343-1367

Special Instructions: Please call to schedule a pickup time as soon as possible.

Service Details: We provide non-emergency medical short and/or long distance transportation for people who must travel by wheelchair or a medical cot, in Wisconsin or beyond. (Reclining wheelchair available for your comfort.)

Fees: Stevens Point, Whiting, Plover: \$17.00 base rate (\$32.00 round trip)
Competitively based rates and mileage charges for surrounding cities. Call for details.

Eligibility Information: Everyone is eligible. We accept Medical Assistance, Workers Compensation, Portage County Family Care, or private pay on a 30-day invoice (drivers collect no cash).

2. CAP Services, Inc. Head Start

5499 Hwy. 10 East, Suite B
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 343-7500

Cap Services, Inc. Head Start is a non-profit federally funded program whose philosophy utilizes a family systems approach, respectfully identifying and encouraging the strengths of families and children. Through partnerships with families and their communities, all Early Education Services staff assists family members in moving toward their goals of economic and emotional self-sufficiency.

CAP Services provides transportation services in Portage, Waupaca, Waushara, and Marquette counties. When possible, Head Start provides transportation to children enrolled in a part-day program when the family lives on the bus route.

3. Community Industries Corporation

41 Park Ridge Drive
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Main Office (715) 344-4563
Transit Office (715) 295-0909

A private non-profit rehabilitation organization that provides accessible transportation to persons with disabilities for Employment and Day Services programs.

Regular routes are operated Monday through Friday 5:30 am - 9:00 am and again from 2:00 pm - 5:15 pm
Between the hours of 9:00 am and 2:00 pm vehicles are assigned to Teams and used for Employment and Day Service Programs.

Please call our Transit Office for availability.

4. Courtesy Cab

5622 Hwy. B
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 342-8863

Hours: Monday – Wednesday 6:30 am – 10:00 pm
Thursday – Friday 6:30 am – Bar closing
Saturday - 8:00 am – Bar closing
Sunday - 7:30 am – 7:00 pm

Fees: Adult \$5.00 plus additional \$.50 each additional half mile (\$1.00/mile).
Senior, disabled, child, student \$4.00 plus additional \$.50 each half mile.
Long distance accepted anytime with 24 hour notice, i.e.; Central Wisconsin Airport.
Shuttle service connection with Greyhound – call for information.

5. Courtesy Carriers, Inc.

5622 Hwy. B
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 341-5599
Fax (715) 341-5598

Special Instructions: Passengers should call with their appointments as soon as possible to secure a pickup time. New passengers are screened through office personnel.

Hours: Office hours are Monday thru Friday 7:30 am to 3:00 pm. Drivers are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week with reasonable notice (at least 24 hours).
Service Details: Specialized service for people who are disabled and/or elderly. Targeted towards persons with either physical or mental disabilities. All vehicles are vans with wheelchair accessibility. All drivers have training in safety, sensitivity and are CPR and first aid certified. Capable of traveling anywhere (Marshfield, Wausau, Madison, Milwaukee, etc.)

Fees: \$17.00 first 5 miles; \$1.30 per mile after 5 miles.

Eligibility Information: Title 19 Medical Assistance is accepted after the passenger's doctor completes a transportation certification form. This form states that the passenger is unable to be transported by a common carrier (i.e. in a regular car or public transportation service). Private pay requests are always accepted.

6. Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Portage County

1100 Centerpoint Dr., Suite 301
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 342-4084

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Service Details: Transportation provided by volunteers for elderly, disabled persons, and families to complement care they are presently receiving and support those without other arrangements. Rides are provided once a week; **a three-day notice is required.** Interfaith provides transportation to local doctor appointments, grocery store, errands, beauty shop, or for other special circumstances. Volunteers are not trained to transfer clients. Passengers with care needs requiring residential care in a nursing home or CBRF must be accompanied by a staff member of the facility in which they reside.

Fees: None-Donations accepted

7. Plover Taxi

5622 County Trunk B
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 342-1313

Hours: Monday-Friday 6:30 am to 6:00 pm
Saturday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sunday 7:30 am – 12:30 pm (December – March)

Service Details: Shared-ride taxi program servicing any trips that end or originate in the Village of Plover. Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available. (With 24-hour notice)
Fees: \$2.00 Adult; \$1.00 Child, Senior, Disabled (within Village limits); \$1.00 per mile outside village limits. \$1.00 charge per Additional Passenger

8. POINTOURS, LLC

2521 Meadow Lane Box 558
Plover, WI 54467
Email: W9MFG@charter.net
Web Page: www.pointours.com
(715) 341-4927

Hours: Nearly anytime, depending upon scheduling availability.

Service Details: Two buses available, one that accommodates 25 passengers and a school bus that seats 42 adults. Licensed and insured to operate throughout Wisconsin. May be able to schedule on short notice.

Fees: Variable. \$60.00 per hour within the greater Stevens Point community; \$2.00 per mile for trips outside the community. The community identified as Stevens Point, Plover, Whiting, and Park Ridge.

9. Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County

1519 Water Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 346-1401

Hours: Monday thru Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm; evening hours on Tuesday 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Service Details: Provide rides for transit-dependent older adults and people with disabilities to Senior Dining Sites, medical appointments, Adult Day Center, grocery shopping, volunteer work or employment, essential personal business, and senior center services. This is done through a combination of wheelchair accessible buses, volunteer escort drivers and subsidized taxi. There is a fixed schedule, flexible route for agency buses. Bus rides should be reserved 24 hours in advance, volunteer escort and taxi rides at least 48 hours in advance. Medical escort rides may take place outside of Portage County. Restrictions may apply to number of rides a person is able to request per month for some services such as rides to medical appointments. Counseling regarding transportation options is available.

Fees: Passengers using buses and volunteer escort program are asked to make a donation towards the cost of the ride. Passengers using subsidized taxi services pay \$3.00 per one-way ride.

Eligibility Information: Passengers must be at least age sixty or have a disability.

10. Portage County Health and Human Services Department

817 Whiting Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 545481
(715) 345-5350

Special Instructions: Passenger must generally be referred by internal agency staff.

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Friday 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Evening hours on Monday until 6:00 pm and Tuesday until 8:00 pm

Service Details: Provide transportation to clients of Portage County Health and Human Services for health, employment and other needs. Other affordable means of transportation must not be available. Non-agency clients may be billed on an ability to pay basis. Third party sources may also be billed. Transportation is provided by Volunteer drivers, city buses and taxi.

Fees: Third party source or ability to pay

11. Stevens Point Public School District

3300 Water Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 345-5477

Special Instructions: Elderly have some access through a referral to the Portage County Department on Aging and on a space available basis.

Hours: 5:30 am to 5:00 pm during school days

Service Details: Provides home-to-school-to-home transportation to the 7,500 students in the school district who are eligible for busing. The service areas are the approximately 400 sq. miles of Portage and Wood Counties, which are in the school district.

Fees: None

Eligibility Information: K-12 residing within the district and more than 2 miles from school.

12. Stevens Point Transit “City Bus”

102 6th Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 341-4490 or (715) 341-2000
Fax number: (715) 345-5375
E-mail the Manager at: slemke@stevenspoint.com

Mailing Address: 1515 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Hours: Office hours are 7:00 am to 7:00 pm year round, 7:00 am to 9:00 pm while University is in session.

Service Details: Fixed Routes serve the City of Stevens Point and communities of Whiting, Park Ridge, and Crossroads Commons in Plover.

Fixed Route Bus Service: Monday thru Friday – 6:45 a.m. through 6:15 p.m. (Available year round)

The following routes are available while the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point is in session:

UWSP Campus Routes – Monday thru Friday – 7:15 a.m. thru 10:00 p.m.

UWSP Campus Shopping Route-Monday thru Friday – 6:30 p.m. thru 10:00 p.m.

UWSP Campus Shopping Saturday – 10:00 a.m. thru 6:00 p.m.

Fees for fixed route fares: Adult \$1.00; Seniors/Disabled \$.50; Youth/students (other than UWSP students), \$.65; Children under 5 ride free with fare paying adult – monthly and E-Z passes are available. UWSP Student fees have been pre-paid. Students wishing to ride any of the City Bus routes simply show the Bus Operator their student I.D.

Eligibility Information: Anyone can ride the fixed routes.

Stevens Point Transit “Point Plus” Service provides door to door service for individuals who qualify under ADA guidelines. Applications for the Point Plus service can be downloaded from our website at stevenspoint.com/transit. Point Plus fare is \$2.00 per ride.

Point Plus Weekday Service – Monday thru Friday – 6:45 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. (Available year round)

The following routes are available while the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point is in session:

Point Plus Evening Service – Monday thru Friday – 6:00 p.m. thru 9:30 p.m.

Point Plus Saturday Service – 10:15 a.m. thru 5:30 p.m.

13. Veterans Transportation

The DAV (Disabled American Veterans) provides van transportation for all Portage County Veterans who are in need of a ride to and from VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) hospitals and clinics for scheduled appointments.

Requests for transportation are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. The DAV van runs from Portage County to various VA Medical facilities Monday thru Friday, excluding federal holidays and weekends. There is no charge for this service.

Please call Mrs. Esther Sayas (DAV van transportation coordinator) at (715) 340-7460 Monday thru Friday to arrange your transportation. No phone calls will be accepted on weekends.

Veterans should inquire about using the DAV van as a primary resource for transportation to medical appointments. If the van is not available on the day transportation is needed, contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center at 346-1401.

Revised 01/2007 - Prices subject to change without notice, please call provider for current rates.