

CHAPTER 4 Utilities and Community Facilities Element

66.1001(2)(d) Wis. Stat.:

Utilities and Community Facilities element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit, shall include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the local governmental unit that are related to such utilities and facilities.

Section 4.1 Public Utilities Inventory

Information within this Element/Chapter pertains to Portage County overall. Please consult the individual municipal Comprehensive Plans for more detailed information.

A. Sanitary Sewer Service / Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS)

Within Portage County, the City of Stevens Point and six villages (Plover, Whiting, Amherst, Junction City, Almond, and Rosholt) have municipal wastewater collection systems and treatment facilities. The Village of Park Ridge, adjacent to Stevens Point, is served by the Stevens Point collection system (see Map 4.1).

In response to State legislation, the Villages of Plover, Whiting and Park Ridge joined with the City of Stevens Point and surrounding Towns the early 1980's to draft the "Stevens Point Urban Area Sewer Service Plan" (SSP). The SSP, adopted in 1983, established a single future (2003) sewer service boundary for the three central Urban Area communities with wastewater treatment plants (Plover, Whiting and Stevens Point), as well as policies for regulating sewer service expansions within this boundary. The original SSP boundary contained approximately 15,270 acres. The 1983 plan document has never been comprehensively reviewed and over-hauled. Map 4.1 below illustrates the original service boundary, along with all of the changes that have been approved since 1983. The Stevens Point Urban Area Sewer Service Planning Committee will be working in 2006 to update the 1983 Sewer Service Plan.

The residential, commercial and other wastewater generated in the remaining incorporated and unincorporated areas of Portage County is handled through the use of private on-site wastewater disposal systems (POWTS), other wise known as private septic systems. POWTS are regulated through the Portage County Private Sewage System Ordinance and the Wisconsin Administrative Code Department of Commerce Chapter Comm 83 (COMM 83). The Portage County Planning and Zoning Department administers the permitting and management of POWTS County-wide. On July 1, 2000, a major revision to COMM 83 was implemented. COMM 83 does not dictate the selection of certain POWTS; instead it sets parameters, options, prohibitions, and limitations for their design. The new flexibility provided for in the revised COMM 83 allows for the use of new categories of POWTS. Unlike conventional systems that rely upon the soil to treat wastewater, the new systems utilize technologies that reduce organic material, and some that also reduce bacteria, from wastewater before it is released into the

ground. The new POWTS require a minimum of six inches of native or naturally occurring soil (in situ), rather than the 60 inches that were required back in the early 1970's. The main intent of the Portage County Private Sewage System Ordinance is to enforce existing State Statutes and Administrative Codes, along with additional standards that apply to Portage County. Portage County's role is to issue permits, after state approval and an inspection of the system by County staff. State approval is needed for all POWTS, and approval is based on set standards. Please see the COMM 83 text and the Portage County Ordinances for more information.

B. Municipal and Private Water Systems / Supply

The residents in the seventeen unincorporated Portage County Towns, along with the Villages of Park Ridge, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, Almond, and Rosholt rely on individual on-site private wells for their water supply. Please see Chapter 5 of this Plan as well as the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan for more detailed groundwater information.

The City of Stevens Point and Villages of Plover, Whiting, Amherst and Junction City have their own municipal water systems with distribution network. Several of these communities have a limited number of residential properties with an on-site drinking water source, in areas of the municipality where their water system does not extend.

1. Wellhead Protection Ordinance

Due to the location of the various municipal wells, their associated recharge areas extend beyond the individual community's corporate limits. The Villages of Whiting, Plover, Amherst and Junction City, and the City of Stevens Point wells are protected by wellhead protection ordinances that apply within their corporate boundaries. The Portage County Zoning Ordinance contains wellhead protection regulations that apply to the municipal well recharge areas located within the unincorporated areas. Wellhead protection zone A includes the primary portion of the municipal well recharge area to be protected, the Cones of Depression. Zone B consists of lands that lie within the five-year time of travel (TOT) (and the ten-year TOT for the Village of Plover), upgradient from the municipal wells. Zone C consists of the remainder of the recharge areas upgradient of zone B and includes surface water basins that may contribute to well recharge. Please see the Portage County Wellhead Protection Ordinance and appropriate municipal Comprehensive Plans for more detailed information. Map 4.2 illustrates the extent of the various well field protection zones.

C. Storm Water Drainage Facilities

Storm water management is split between Portage County and the local municipalities. Management in the rural area mainly consists of ditches along the road network. Portage County maintains the ditches along the County Roads, and local municipalities maintain the ditches along Town roads. Ditches along town roads vary in size, ranging in size up to the remaining width of the road right-of-way.

The Portage County Subdivision Ordinance requires that a storm water management plan be provided by the subdivider, at the determination of the Planning and Zoning Department. The subdivider or agent shall submit recommendations for storm water management, at the time of the submission of the sketch plat, in the case of a major subdivision, county plat, or minor subdivision. Storm water management plans shall be submitted over the signature and seal of a registered professional engineer, unless authorized otherwise by the Planning and Zoning Department.

Map 4.1: Utilities

Map 4.2: Drainage District Boundaries and Groundwater Protection Zones

A registered professional engineer or certified surveyor is generally required to oversee installation of all storm water management features shown on the approved plans. Certification shall be required over the seal of the registered professional, unless authorized otherwise by the Planning and Zoning Department that the “as built” conditions substantially conform to the approved plans. This certification shall not release the subdivider from the responsibility to construct in accordance with approved plans until “as built” conditions have been approved by the governing Town and County. The development is also required to meet all appropriate construction site and post-construction performance standards included in Wisconsin State Code Chapter NR 151, as well as any other applicable state or federal requirements. Any such requirements shall be incorporated into all storm water management plans submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department.

Concerns over ongoing drainage issues led in 2003 to the formation of a study group charged with drafting suggestions to address drainage problems across Portage County. The draft ordinance produced by this group was voted down by a number of Town Boards, and ultimately tabled. The purpose of the draft Portage County Groundwater and Stormwater Drainage Ordinance was to promote the public health, safety and general welfare by minimizing public and private losses due to stormwater and groundwater problems.

Portage County is also home to all or part of two drainage districts (Map 4.2).

1. Portage County Drainage District

The Portage County Drainage District was organized in 1903 to develop and maintain a series of drainage ditches that would make agriculture on and near the Buena Vista Marsh possible. Construction began in 1907 and was completed in 1915. Due to such adverse conditions as acid soil, fire, frost, and the high cost of re-dredging, farming became unprofitable and the district became inactive for a number of years. Increased interest in irrigated agriculture for mint, potatoes, hay and pasture led to the re-dredging of the ditches in the late 1960's. Currently, the Portage County Drainage District is the largest active district in the State. (Lake Wazeecha Watershed Inventory Report, 1993)

The Drainage District is approximately 87 square miles in size, and contains approximately 93 miles of District operated ditches, 41.5 miles of "private drains" and 5 miles of perennial streams. The construction and maintenance of District operated ditches is regulated by a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource "Maintenance Dredging Agreement" and ATCP 48 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code under DATCP. (Prototype Management Plan for the Portage County Drainage District, 1994).

The Portage County Drainage District oversees the maintenance of these ditches through statutory authority. A tax is levied against land in the district receiving benefits from the ditches. The taxes are used for maintenance of the ditches. In recent years, the ditches have realized a need for extensive dredging and all ditches require a permit from the Department of Natural Resources. Although some permits have been granted, there have been conflicts between the Drainage District and the DNR. This has led to a “Memorandum of Understanding” concerning authority and jurisdiction over the ditches. The presence and continued maintenance of ditches is necessary to sustain agricultural production in this area.

In 2004, the Portage County Drainage Board drafted regulations that would help to ensure proper management of the ditches within the District. The regulations include restricting residences and other structures within 100 feet of the drainage ditches to allow for routine maintenance of the ditches and to serve as a buffer for protecting water quality.

2. Adams County Drainage Board, Leola Drainage District

The Leola Drainage District was also created in the early 1900's, similar to when the Portage County Drainage District was created. Approximately 800 acres (1.25 square miles) of this district are located in the southern portion of the Town of Grant. This district is under the jurisdiction of the Adams County Drainage Board since the majority of the acreage of the district is located in Adams County. The Drainage Board levies taxes on lands within the district for projects such as ditch dredging and maintenance.

D. Solid Waste Disposal

The majority of Portage County unincorporated and incorporated communities are part of a consortium contracting through the Portage County Solid Waste Management Board for solid waste collection and disposal by private waste haulers. The solid waste is currently hauled to the Portage County Landfill (see Map 4.3). The Portage County Landfill is scheduled to close in 2006, after which the waste will be trucked to a landfill in Marathon County. Recyclables are taken to the Portage County Materials Recycling Facility in accordance with the State Recycling Law (Wisconsin Act 335). The following materials are recycled at the Portage County Materials Recovery Facility: glass, plastic, tin, aluminum containers, corrugated cardboard, container board, office paper, newspapers, magazines, phone books. Other recyclables (batteries, waste motor oil, etc) are handled and disposed of by private haulers.

E. Corporate Utilities (see Map 4.3; also see individual Comprehensive Plans for more information)

1. Natural Gas – Natural gas is available through the Wisconsin Public Service, and Alliant Energy. Gas is provided to Wisconsin Public Service via the ANR Pipeline Company; the Portage County Urban Area receives its gas supply from the Rosholt Gate (located in Custer) and North Point Gate (located I-39/Sentry golf course).

In areas of Portage County where natural gas service is not available, propane gas can be obtained through private providers.

2. Electric Power – The following corporations provided electric power within Portage County: Alliant Energy, Wisconsin Public Service, Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative, Consolidated Water Power Company, Wisconsin and Central Wisconsin Electric Co-op, and Wisconsin Rapids Water Works and Lighting Commission.

Transmission facilities include various electric transmission lines owned by American Transmission Company, as well as substations scattered across the County. There is one hydroelectric power plant on the Wisconsin River, it is owned and operated by Consolidated Water and Power and has the capacity of generating 7,200kW of electricity.

3. Telephone Service – The following corporations provide local telephone service across Portage County: TDS Telcom, Amherst Telephone Company, Ameritech, Wood County Telephone Company (WCTC), SBC, and Union Telephone Company.
4. Cable Television – The following corporations provide cable television in Portage County: Charter Communications, Tomorrow Valley Cable Television Company, HML Cable, Wood County Telephone Company.
5. Internet Service – is available to County residents through a variety of sources.

Map 4.3: Corporate Utilities

Section 4.2 Community Facilities Inventory

A. County Facilities and Services

1. County Government

Portage County Government offices are located primarily at the southern edge of downtown Stevens Point. The County Clerk, County Board Chair, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Corporation Counsel, Assessor, District Attorney, Circuit Courts, Clerk of Circuit Courts, Victim Witness Program, and Veterans Service offices are located in the County/City Building, 1516 Church Street. The County Executive office, along with the Planning & Zoning, Personnel, Purchasing, Data Processing, Finance and University Extension offices are located in the adjacent Court House Annex Building, 1462 Strongs Avenue. Also adjacent are the Sheriff Department and Emergency Management Department at 1500 Strongs Avenue and the Department of Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center at 1519 Water Street. Parks and Recreation offices were relocated from the Courthouse Annex to new facilities at Jordan Park, STH 66 and Cty Rd Y, in the spring of 2006.

Outlying offices include the County Health Care Center at 825 Whiting Avenue and Community Care of Portage County at 817 Whiting Avenue, both in Stevens Point; and the Solid Waste Department/Material Recovery Facility, 600 Moore Road, and Highway Department, 800 Plover Road, both in Plover.

2. Police Protection

The Portage County Sheriff's Department provides protective service to all unincorporated areas of Portage County, as well as the Villages of Whiting, Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, Almond, Rosholt, and Junction City. With its 44 sworn officers, the Portage County Sheriff's Department provides protective services through random patrols and on a "call-out" basis. Portage County is divided into 3 districts for patrol purposes. During the day shift, 1 officer is assigned to each district, plus an additional officer "floats" throughout the County. During the night shift, 2 officers are assigned to each district, plus 2 additional officers float throughout the County. Officers may drive through a municipality any number of times during each shift to check on businesses and residences.

The City of Stevens Point and the Village of Plover also have their own police departments; the City with 44 sworn officers, and Plover with 15 sworn officers. The Law Enforcement agencies have a countywide mutual aid agreement which allows them to assist each other.

3. Fire Protection and Emergency Services

Portage County is served by 18 fire districts, of which 12 districts operate fire stations located within the County. The City of Stevens Point has a full-time Chief, 3 Deputy Chiefs, a Bureau Chief of Training, an Administrative Secretary and 33 full-time professional fire fighters. The Village of Plover has a full-time Chief, a full-time Captain, and 42 paid-on-call firefighters. The Rudolph Fire Department, though geographically located in Wood County, covers the west side (west of the Wisconsin River) of Portage County along with the Village of Junction City Fire Department. Rudolph has a full time Fire Chief. The other remaining fire departments are served by paid-on-call and/or volunteer fire chiefs and firefighters, with a total of 397 volunteer/paid firefighters. Location of fire districts and fire stations are located on Map 4.4.

The Plover Fire Department operates a county-wide, level B Hazardous Materials Response Team (Haz-Mat) which is made up of 35 technicians and 14 operations level trained team members. The members of the Haz-Mat team are made up of a number of firefighters from surrounding fire departments and serve all areas of Portage County.

All Portage County Fire Departments participate in a countywide mutual aid agreement ensuring compatibility between responding agencies. A statewide fire network frequency and communication system with other fire departments has also been established. All fire departments check pre-fire response plans and perform inspections on a regular basis. Firefighters are trained using usual fire scenarios for local hazards on a regular basis.

During 2001, the Portage County Fire Chief's Association developed and implemented a MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System). This pre-planning system identifies resources needed in the event of a variety of mutual aid fire situations. The system utilizes resources in a method that does not deplete the assets of any one fire department while mobilizing resources of multiple departments and utilizing a "move-up" system. All emergency dispatchers have received training in the utilization of the MABAS system.

There are two ambulance service providers that operate within Portage County; the Portage County Ambulance Service, operated by the Stevens Point Fire Department, and Higgins Ambulance Service. All of Portage County is serviced by the Portage County Ambulance Service while a portion of the Town of Grant is served by both Higgins Ambulance Service and Portage County Ambulance. Portage County operates four fully equipped ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance vehicles and one BLS (Basic Life Support) vehicle; the BLS vehicle can be upgraded to ALS status when needed.

As part of the contract negotiations with the City of Stevens Point on the Ambulance Service for Portage County, a Rapid Response Unit was established as a pilot program for a one-year period, starting the beginning of January 2006. The Rapid Response Program is a mobile unit that travels Portage County (outside of the City of Stevens Point), with a 15-mile radius response from their present position. When a call comes in, if the Rapid Response person is within that 15-mile radius they will respond to that site. If a larger response outside of that 15-mile radius happens the Rapid Response person can also be called to that site.

Higgins Ambulance Service operates at an ALS level vehicle. Every municipality in Portage County supports and/or operates a medical First Responder program. The Village of Plover and the Village of Amherst have been trained one level higher; their first responders are trained to the EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) level. In addition to the above services, Portage County supports two Industrial First Responder groups that respond to situations within their own facilities.

To coordinate these services, Portage County has developed and maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan provides a general outline for county and municipal emergency response personnel during number of disasters. The document serves to coordinate the County and local units of government during times of response and recovery.

Collapse Rescue Regional Task Force

The Collapse Rescue Regional Task Force was started about a year ago, when the first of three Federal Homeland Security grants were received. The Task Force consists of five Fire Departments: the City of Stevens Point, Village of Whiting, Town of Hull, Amherst Fire District, and City of Marshfield. Other local fire departments can join as part of these five departments to participate in the Collapse Rescue Task Force.

Map 4.4 Portage County Fire Districts

Map 4.5 Portage County Library Facilities

The first grant of approximately \$200,000 was used to purchase the initial entry-level equipment and protective clothing. The second grant of \$400,000, delivered by Governor Jim Doyle in November 2005, was used to purchase 3 vehicles, a trailer to transport search and rescue equipment, and more protective clothing. It is anticipated that next year another grant will be received to purchase additional vehicle(s) and protective clothing. The Task Force team is designed to respond to anywhere in the state for collapse rescue. This will be one of several task forces throughout Wisconsin that have the capability to respond to a major building collapse. The Office of Justice Assistance requires each Task Force to be able to field 50 trained responders and to sustain this response for up to three days, making the team's total strength 150.

Fire Investigations Task Force

The Fire Investigations Task Force has been active in Portage County for about 20 years. The Task Force was established to support State Statute 165.55, which states that the Fire Chief of each district is responsible to determine the origin and cause of each fire. In response to this statute the task force was established. The task force members consist of mostly local fire fighters with some law enforcement officers, and insurance representatives. This task force is semi-autonomous, while they are not part of any fire department they get support from local fire departments through sustained membership dues and support from the County through the use of some vehicles and insurance. Currently the task force has about 22 members, which respond to a site by request from local law enforcement or the local fire department. Each investigation is at no charge to the departments.

B. Library Services (See Map 4.5)

The main branch of the Portage County Library System is located at 1001 Main Street in downtown Stevens Point. It contains over 100,000 books for adults and children, including large type books and audio books; a Genealogy Room; useful sources of business information, including Barron's, Thomas Register of American Manufacturers, Value Line and Morningstar; homebound service, where the library will send materials to those unable to use the library; newspapers from twenty Wisconsin cities and several national papers, as well as back issues of the Stevens Point Journal on microfilm; magazines covering many areas of interest; story times, Summer Library Program, Family Nights, and other programs for youth (at the White Library Building and branch libraries); personal computers with popular computer programs (Charles M. White Library Building and branch libraries by reservation); Public Internet access is available at all Portage County Public Library locations; interlibrary loan service; audiovisual (AV) equipment is available for use at the White Library Building - some may be borrowed for home and business use (a small service fee is charged for some equipment); outreach collections - library collections are maintained at ten senior citizen centers and housing units; programs for adults and young adults are offered throughout the year. Special interest and entertainment videos may be checked out, and compact discs, cassettes, audio books, cd roms may be borrowed from any location, or used in the White Library Building. Reference service and notary public service is available at the White Library Building. All library programs are free and open to the public.

The Plover Library is a branch of the Portage County Public Library. The Plover Library is located at 1103 Roosevelt Drive and is open 35 hours per week. Materials available for adults and young adults include fiction and non-fiction books, large print books, paperbacks, magazines and newspapers. Materials available for children include fiction and non-fiction books, board books, easy readers, picture books, cassette/book sets and toys.

In addition to print materials, video tapes, cassette tapes, books on tape and compact discs are available for check out.

Equipment available for use at the library includes computers for word processing and educational/entertainment activities, an interactive computer for use with a variety of C.D's, internet access, on line computer to access library holdings, a copy machine and a typewriter for public use.

The Village of Almond Public Library, located next to the Village Hall, is also a part of the Portage County public library system, and is currently considered adequate by the Village Board. The Almond school building also has a library and media center open to students, special requests may be granted to use these facilities by the general public on a case-by-case basis.

The Lettie W. Jensen Public Library, located at 278 North Main Street in the Village of Amherst, was constructed in 1988 with funds donated to the Village and is a member of the South Central Library System. The Library is funded by the Village Board, and run by an appointed Village library board. The library contains an estimated 18,000 volumes and is open hours: Monday 9 -12; 2-5, Tuesday 2-5, Wednesday 2-8, Thursday 2-5, and Saturday 9-1. The Library offers internet access, various computer programs, interlibrary loan, large-print books, audio books, videos, magazines, a local history room, a copy machine, Story time kits, a book discussion group, and a weekly preschool story hour.

The library resources of University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point are also available to Portage County residents.

C. School Facilities

Portage County has 10 school districts located within its borders (see Map 4.6). School facilities, programs and events are a major benefit to County residents and are a focal point of community pride and identity.

1. Stevens Point Area Public School District

The Stevens Point Area Public School District includes the City of Stevens Point, Villages of Whiting, Plover, Park Ridge, Amherst Junction, Junction City; Towns of Linwood, Hull, Eau Pleine, Dewey, Carson, Grant, Buena Vista, Plover, Sharon, and Stockton; as well as the Wood County Towns of Milladore and Sherry.

The Stevens Point School District is the 14th largest district in the State of Wisconsin and serves a population of approximately 50,000 and employs staff of over 900. The student enrollment for the 2003-2004 school year is approximately 7,400.

The Stevens Point School District consists of nine grade K-6 elementary schools, two grade 7-9 junior high schools, one grade 10-12 senior high school and an alternative school. Three charter schools lie within the secondary schools. Three of the elementary schools are charter schools and three additional elementary schools have applied for charter status. In addition, the 45-acre Boston School Forest and 40 acre Halladay School Forest are facilities used by students for environmental education programs throughout the school year.

The Stevens Point Area Public School District covers nearly 400 square miles, so transporting students is a significant activity and expenditure. During the 2002-2003 school year, the transportation department bused nearly 7,000 students to public and private schools with a fleet of 79 districted-operated and 1 contracted buses traveling 1.2 million miles.

Map 4.6: School Districts

Typically, the district's annual cost for busing is about two-thirds of the state average, with a district budget of \$2.6 million.

Ben Franklin Junior High School is located in Stevens Point, on 42 acres of land adjacent to the northern border of the Village of Whiting. The 140,440 sq.ft. building was constructed in 1968 and serves approximately 890 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students and employs 110 staff members (2003-04 school year). The 13,431 square foot Bliss Center school district administration office building was built in 1980 adjacent to Ben Franklin.

PJ Jacobs Junior High is located in the center of Stevens Point, at the intersection of Main Street and Michigan Avenue. This 3-story building, constructed in 1936, originally served as the district's high school. In 1995, classrooms and the commons were added. It became a junior high school in 1971, and currently serves approximately 970 students. The school is situated adjacent to the Goerke football stadium, K.B. Willett ice arena, municipal swimming pool, and the Stevens Point campus of Mid-State Technical College.

Stevens Point Area Senior High School (SPASH) is located on 45 acres of land in the northwest portion of Stevens Point. The 292,766 sq.ft. building was constructed in 1970, and the grounds include tennis courts, football, softball and baseball practice facilities as well as a ropes course. SPASH serves approximately 1,950 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, and is the largest 10-12 high school in the state.

The district also maintains an alternative school. The Charles F. Fernandez Center for Alternative Learning, opened its doors in 1988 to provide education for those students who were "falling through the cracks" in the large-school environment at SPASH. The goal of the Center is to avoid the harm to students, school system and community caused by educational floundering and premature dropouts. School administrators estimate that, without the programming available through the Fernandez Center, the district would experience a dropout rate of 15%. Since 1988, the staff of the Charles F. Fernandez Center for Alternative Learning has provided instruction and help to nearly 3,000 students. The program is currently housed in the Professional Building on Clark Street in downtown Stevens Point.

Since 1996 every school and district building has had additions and/or remodeling except PJ Jacobs and the Bliss Educational Service Center.

2. Tomorrow River School District

The Tomorrow River School District encompasses approximately 198 square miles of Portage County, and serves the entire Villages of Amherst, Nelsonville, and Amherst Junction, and portions of the Towns of Amherst, Buena Vista, Lanark, New Hope and Stockton. District facilities include an elementary, middle and high school. The entire student population (Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12) is educated on one site, within a 160,693 sq. ft. interconnected structure in Amherst, Wisconsin. The District serves an estimated population of 5,000 and employs 128 people. Enrollment for the 2003-04 school year was 868 students. The school is governed by a 5-member school board elected to three-year terms on a rotating basis.

The original high school building was constructed in 1895 on the Mill Pond, across the street from today's facilities. The high school moved to a new 11,000 square foot building on the west side of Main Street in 1922. Additional building projects since 1922 include: a 7,500 square foot shop building added during the 1940's; a new 14,300 square foot gym and 2,650 square foot band building in 1953; a 12,075 square foot elementary school in 1960; and a 13,440 square foot elementary school addition in 1970; a new 7,200 square foot shop

building in 1976; a 24,000 square foot high school addition in 1978; and a 16,000 square foot elementary school addition in 1988. The area between the high school and elementary buildings has gradually been utilized for expansion, so that both buildings are now under one roof. A total of 858 students were enrolled in 2004, including 404 elementary students (K-5), 191 middle school students (6-8) and 263 high school students (9-12).

School facilities are a major benefit to Village residents. The school playground and equipment and athletic fields provide a wide variety of recreational activities not available elsewhere in Amherst. The school's organized athletic programs play an important role in the community, as a major source of recreation and as a focal point of community pride and identity. The school's teams are called the "Falcons".

3. Almond-Bancroft School District

The Almond-Bancroft School District has schools located within the Village of Almond and the unincorporated community of Bancroft. The Bancroft elementary school has approximately 30 students in early childhood through kindergarten. The Village of Almond elementary school (1st – 5th grades) has approximately 200 students and the high school (6th – 12th grades) has approximately 300 students. Both the elementary and the high school grades are located in one building in the Village of Almond.

4. Tri-County School District

The Tri-County Area School District facilities are located in the Village of Plainfield, in Waushara County, approximately 5 miles from the Town of Almond. There is one K-12 building (last remodeled in December, 1996) which serves a 2003-04 enrollment of approximately 850 students and 61 full time teachers. School lunch is made available for all children of the district. A staff of food-service personnel is available to serve children hot lunch on all days children are at school. A salad bar is provided twice weekly. The food service program is electronically managed through the purchase of a lunch card.

All students living outside the Village of Plainfield limits are offered bus transportation. The District has contracts with two local bus contractors. Approximately 650 students are transported daily.

5. Auburndale School District

The Auburndale School District is located just west of the Village of Junction City. Residents of the Village and surrounding area currently have the opportunity to send their children to the Auburndale school district. There has been discussion in the past of closing the Kennedy Elementary school in Junction City and it is felt that if or when this would happen, more children would attend schools in Auburndale.

The Auburndale School District consists of one of each, elementary, junior high, and high school, located in the Village of Auburndale. The elementary school houses grades PreK-6 and has 34 teaching staff. The junior high houses grades 7-9 and has 26 teaching staff and the high school houses grades 10-12 and has 29 teaching staff. The district has 17 administrative staff.

6. Wisconsin Rapids School District

The Wisconsin Rapids Public School district facilities are located in the city of Wisconsin Rapids. The school district has a student population of approximately 6,000. Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools has nine K-6 elementary schools, two junior high schools (grades 7-

9), one senior high school (grades 10-12) and one Charter School for At-Risk Students (grades 9-12). The school system has a high student achievement and a low drop out rate. Staff members are continuously recognized by state organizations and agencies for their professionalism and expertise.

The Grant Elementary School, built in 1955 and located on Cty Rd WW in the Town of Grant, is the only school in Portage County that is part of the Wisconsin Rapids School District. They provide K-6 education, with 2 classes for each grade. There are 15 full-time teachers. School enrollment for the 2003-2004 school year was 347 students.

7. Rosholt School District

The Rosholt School District serves a student population of approximately 750 PreK-12 students in a single facility, located in the Village of Rosholt. The district is composed of three schools within this one facility: Rosholt Elementary – grades PreK-5, Rosholt Middle – grades 6-8, and Rosholt High – grades 9-12. This district consists of 56 teachers, 44 support staff and 3 administrators.

Recent building projects have included a \$5 million high school addition that added an auditorium, gymnasium, band room complex, lobby/commons, and 10 new classrooms; a \$2 million middle school addition; a \$600,000 high school library addition; the relocation of the bus garage; and the renovation of several other areas. The District is very proud of the quality of their facilities and the ongoing care and upgrades to the building that they provide.

The Rosholt Schools provide a comprehensive Pre-K-12 curriculum in art, computer literacy, environmental education, guidance and counseling, health, language arts, mathematics, technology literacy, music, physical education, science, and social studies. Technology education, agriculture, family and consumer education, business education, and foreign languages are also offered in grades 7-12. Students also have opportunities to participate in a wide range of high school courses offered through distance education classes on ERVING, Youth Options, and Advanced Placement Classes.

8. Iola-Scandinavia School District

The Iola-Scandinavia School District serves 820 K-12th grade students in two facilities located in Iola, Wisconsin. The elementary school, which houses the district administrator, serves K-6th grade and special needs students. The middle / high school serves 7th-12th graders. The staff of the school district is made up of 63 teachers and 110 regular employees.

9. Waupaca School District

The Waupaca School District is approximately 160 square miles in size, and includes the City of Waupaca and surrounding Towns, and parts of the Portage County Towns of Lanark and Belmont. There are four elementary schools, one middle school, one accelerated learning center, and one high school located within the district, serving approximately 2,925 students, grades K-12.

10. Wild Rose School District

The Wild Rose School District has three schools located within the Village of Wild Rose in northern Waushara County. The district's two elementary schools (grades PreK-5) and middle school/high school (grades 6-12) serves approximately 750 PreK-12 grade students. There are 62 staff and 3 administrators in this district.

11. Parochial School System

The Stevens Point Area Catholic Schools (SPACS) have been educating students in Portage County for the past 130 years. The schools are comprehensive with a strong emphasis on college preparation; 90% of students go on to attend post secondary school, most of which are four-year colleges and universities.

SPACS currently has six schools involved in the program: four elementary schools (Saint Stanislaus, grades K-2; Saint Stephen, grades 3-5; Saint Bronislava, grades preschool-5; and Saint Joseph early childhood, preschool and year-round childcare); St. Peter Middle School, grades 6-8; and Pacelli High School, grades 9-12. For the 2003-04 school year 940 students were enrolled in SPACS, preschool through 12th grade.

St. Paul Lutheran School serves 200 students in pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade with nine full time teachers, including a Principal and Assistant Principal who also have teaching duties. The early childhood program offers classes for 3-4 and 5-year-old children not yet enrolled in kindergarten. Northland Lutheran High School, located in Mosinee, serves the central Wisconsin region.

Two other private school options are available within the Portage County Urban Area. Branch Christian School, which is affiliated with the Seventh Day Adventist Church located within the Village of Whiting, accepts students in grades one through eight. The Stevens Point Christian Academy, located just west of the Stevens Point city limits on U.S. Hwy 10, offers instruction for grades K through twelve.

12. Home School

A final option for education of Portage County children is the Home-based Private Education Program, or “home schooling”. Under Wisconsin Statute 118.15(4), a parent or guardian has the right to select a home-based private educational program (HBPEP) for her or his child or children, in order to comply with the compulsory school attendance law. This option is commonly referred to as home-schooling. If the HBPEP option is chosen, the parent or guardian is required to complete form PI-1206 and submit it to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The statutes contain no express authority for any agency or school district to monitor home-based private educational programs or to verify hours of instruction of sequential curriculum. See the Wisconsin Department of Instruction website for more information: www.dpi.state.wi.us According to the DPI, during the 2004/05 school year there were 179 home-school students within the Stevens Point Area Public School District. The Rosholt School District had 22 during the same year.

13. Mid-State Technical College

Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) is one of 16 publicly supported colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Approximately 16,000 full- and part-time students enroll annually. MSTC offers technical training in nearly 50 careers by granting one- and two-year technical diplomas and two-year associate degrees in four areas: business, health, service technologies, and technical & industrial. In addition, MSTC also awards certificates for the successful completion of a single course or a combination of courses. The Mid-State Technical College District includes full-service campuses in Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids; a center in Adams; and several outreach sites.

Fox Valley Technical College also serves part of the Town of Lanark within Portage County.

14. University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Since 1894 when Stevens Point Normal School opened its doors to 300 students, the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point has grown to become a major comprehensive university, with about 8,700 students enrolled. Its academic programs offer 100 choices within 51 majors and 78 minors plus 16 graduate programs. UWSP is home to four colleges (fine arts and communication, letters and science, natural resources and professional studies), and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, the UWSP has initiated a variety of innovative, regionally, or nationally recognized programs, including the National Wellness Institute, the Center for the Small City, the Central Wisconsin Economic Research Bureau, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Environmental Education, the Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory, the American Suzuki Talent Education Center, and the UWSP International Programs.

The 400-acre main campus includes seven major buildings in addition to Old Main, UWSP's administrative building, the University Center and 13 residence halls housing approximately 3,000 students. North campus includes Schmeckle Reserve, a 225-acre nature area with a 24-acre lake, nature center and trails that are part of the 30+ mile Green Circle Trail.

The Stevens Point campus is part of the University of Wisconsin System that includes 13 four-year campuses, 13 two-year centers and the University of Wisconsin-Extension. The University of Wisconsin system represents one of the finest educational institutions in the world. Access to information and research on virtually any topic is available.

In 2004, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point placed among the top public universities in the Midwest. The publication U.S. News & World Report ranked UWSP number seven in the top tier of Midwestern public master's degree-granting institutions. This was the fifth consecutive year that the university placed in the top ten. U.S. News and World Report use several criteria in rating the campuses including academic reputation, retention, faculty, students, financial resources and alumni giving.

D. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

1. Parks

As of December 2005, Portage County had 25 County parks occupying over 2,100 acres of land (see Map 4.7). In addition to these parks, over 26,000 additional acres of land within the County are publicly owned/managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, including the Dewey Marsh (4,900+ acres), Fish Management lands (2,700+ ac.), Hartman Creek State Park (245 ac. out of 1,100), Mead Wildlife Area (6,900 ac. out of 20,600), and Prairie Chicken Management Lands (11,457). When the facilities provided within individual Towns, Villages and the City of Stevens Point are also considered, a substantial amount of park and recreational opportunities exist within Portage County (see municipal Comprehensive Plans for further details).

For over 30 years the Portage County Parks Department, along with the Portage County Planning staff, have worked together to develop comprehensive outdoor recreation planning. Since 1971, the Portage County Park Commission and Portage County Board of Supervisors have adopted a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) for the purpose of guiding recreational development and to qualify the County for Federal and State grant aid.

The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is short-range in scope, addressing a 5-year planning period. It is intended to serve as a policy document for the County Park Commission, the County Planning and Zoning Committee and the County Board of Supervisors. Included within the Plan is a detailed inventory of existing facilities and an analysis of how local conditions affect recreational needs throughout Portage County. Please consult the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for a full description of Portage County park and recreation facilities and programs.

Along with the Outdoor Recreation Plan, Portage County Parks Department has a 5-year capital improvements plan which is updated every year. This Plan allocates funds for projects identified in the Outdoor Plan and additional improvements that have come up since the adoption date of the Outdoor Plan.

The current recreation plan identifies the below needs as “long-term”.

- Expand the campground at Collins Park if additional land is acquired.
- To develop a trapshooting area in the Dewey Marsh Recreational Area/Shooting Range.
- Control stream bank erosion at Galecke Park.
- Construct pit toilets for the boat landing area and expand the campground along the south shore of the lake at Lake Emily Park.
- Plant a vegetative barrier along the west boundary of Lake Helen Park.
- Develop the Wisconsin River Recreation Area as a campground, picnic area and for fishing purposes.
- Continue development of the Ice Age Trail in Portage County.
- Add existing snowmobile club trails to the funded system, as monies become available.
- Continue development of the Green Circle Trail.

The primary impetus for the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is to maintain the County’s eligibility for various outdoor grant programs. That document, however, only minimally identifies long-term needs. It is necessary for the Park Commission and the County Board to address the longer-term park and recreational needs of Portage County.

2. Land Preservation Fund Committee (PCLPF)

The Land Preservation Fund Committee is a six-member body consisting of the Chair/President or designee each from the Finance Committee, Park Commission, and Planning and Zoning Committee along with three citizen members with a background and experience in finance, conservation, planning or agriculture. Each County Supervisor’s term is two years, while the citizen member’s term is three years. Each is selected by the Executive Operations Committee for appointment by the County Board. The Chair of the PCLPF Committee is to be a County Supervisor. One non-voting staff member each from the Finance Department, Parks Department and the Planning and Zoning Department also attends committee meetings as advisory staff. This County Committee was established in the fall of 2003 to identify and protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County. Land can be preserved through donations, conservation easements or land purchase. The PCLPF Committee reviews applications for funding on a regular basis and sends recommendations to the Portage County Parks Commission for final approval.

Map 4.7 County Parks, Recreation Lands and Trails

3. Land Legacy Fund of Portage County

The Land Legacy Fund was established in the fall of 2004 as a private fund within the Community Foundation of Portage County. The primary purpose of the fund is to supplement and complement the activities of Portage County's Land Preservation Fund to identify and protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County by acquiring land and/or conservation easements. The secondary purpose is to work with other organizations in or near Portage County to purchase land and conservation easements that protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in and near Portage County.

E. Other Community Facilities and Services

1. Portage County Health Care Center

The Portage County Health Care Center, located at 825 Whiting Avenue in Stevens Point, provides short and long-term health care for clients needing following-hospital care or are in need of a high degree of ongoing medical attention and/or supervision. The Health Care Center offers: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, activities and other services.

2. Senior Center.

The Lincoln Senior Citizen Center, located at 1519 Water Street in Stevens Point, is home to the Aging and Disability Resource Center, offices of the Department of Aging, the Adult Daycare Center, the Senior Center and the Holly Shoppe. The building was enlarged in 2003 at a cost of over \$3 million dollars, with the reconstruction doubling the floor space. The Aging and Disability Resource Center provides a one-stop resource that addresses the needs and interests of older adults and people with disabilities and their caregivers and families. A wide range of services are provided to assist people to live with dignity and security while maintaining maximum independence and preserving quality of life.

The nine-member Commission on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Center Board is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors and is responsible for Department governance. Program advisory councils assure that services are targeted to the expressed needs of the retired population.

Funding for services is provided through grants and allocations from federal, state and county governments, the United Way, underwriting by local businesses, private contributions, and participant fees and donations. Services through the Department on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Center include: education and recreation opportunities, health information and screenings, volunteer opportunities, employment program referrals, benefits counseling, consultation with families, personal needs assessment, nutrition services, transportation services, supportive home care referrals, housing options, caregiver services, along with many other programs.

The Plover Municipal Center activities room is also used as a meal site for the elderly, and is used for other senior-related activities.

3. The Jensen Community Center, Village of Amherst

The Lettie W. Jensen Community center is located on Main Street, just north of the Tomorrow River Schools. Constructed in 1988 with funds donated as a memorial to Lettie W. Jensen, a former resident of Amherst, and is privately owned and operated by the Amherst Area Foundation. Major facilities include a large community/meeting room, heat

and serve kitchen, recreation room that is home to the Boys and Girls Club; number of meeting rooms that are rented for multi-purpose activities and a 250 seat theater featuring state-of-the-art computer stage lighting and curtains available for theatrical/music performances, seminars and many other public gatherings. The Center is home to elderly meal site on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays; Yoga, Tai Chi, Weight Watchers, and other events are also frequently offered. The Jensen Center is a popular location for wedding receptions, anniversary parties, fund raisers, and baby and bridal showers. In March of 2003 the Jensen Center began publishing “Our Community Spirit” a community newspaper for the Villages of Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville and Towns of Amherst, Lanark, Stockton, and New Hope. The community newspaper has a circulation of over 2,500 residents.

4. Cemeteries

There are several public and private cemeteries located throughout Portage County. The locations of these can be found in municipal Comprehensive Plans.

5. Churches.

Portage County has many churches located throughout the County. For specific information on churches in a community please refer to that municipality’s Comprehensive Plan.

6. Health Care Facilities.

Portage County is home to a full spectrum of health care options. Saint Michael’s hospital, 900 Illinois Ave, Stevens Point is an acute-care facility with 181 licensed beds, offering a broad range of services and physician specialties. Nearly 200 doctors serve on Saint Michael's medical staff.

Rice Medical Center, located at 824 Illinois Ave, Stevens Point is part of the Ministry Health Care network. Rice Medical Center board-certified physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants offer expertise in 16 specialty areas, with satellite locations in Iola, Amherst, Waupaca, and Plover. The Rice Medical Center, 2401 Plover Road, offers family practice physicians, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and sports medicine.

The newly expanded Klasinski Ambulatory Center and newly constructed Aspirus Clinic, both located in Stevens Point, also provide a wide range of medical diagnostic and treatment services. The central Urban Area communities and several outlying municipalities are also home to an array of specialty health care providers including but not limited to dentists, eye care providers, chiropractic clinics, elderly services, and others.

7. Child Care Facilities.

There are 2 different categories of state licensed child care; they depend upon the number of children in care:

- Licensed **Family** Child Care Centers provide care for up to 8 children. This care is usually in the provider’s home, but it is not required to be located in a residence.
- Licensed **Group** Child Care Centers provide care for 9 or more children. These centers are usually located somewhere other than a residence and may be small or large in size.

There are currently several licensed Family Child Care centers and licensed Group Child Care centers within across Portage County. For a complete list, contact the Regional

Section 4.3 Rural Vision Statement for Utilities/Community Facilities

A. Rural Area Vision Statement Related to Utilities and Community Facilities

(Adopted 6-26-02 by the Rural Area Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee)

In 2025, Portage County residents enjoy a network of high quality, efficient public facilities. Through cooperation and collaboration, local units of government work together to provide services across municipal boundaries. Sewer and water services are provided within established and planned growth areas that effectively reduce the impacts of sprawl development into the rural portions of the County. An exceptional education system provides opportunities for lifelong learning. Portage County residents value their youth, families, seniors, and disadvantaged, and promote facilities and activities aimed at improving community vitality.

Key Vision Ideas for Public Facilities: Through community caring and involvement, we promote

- Compact, cost-efficient utilities that are available where they are appropriate.
- High quality education, while strengthening rural community schools.
- Full-County coverage for emergency services and first responders, with reasonable response times.
- Places and activities for the youth of the community
- Park systems in our County are well maintained, interconnected and opportunities for new parks are explored where possible.

Section 4.4 County-Wide Utilities and Communities Facility Issues and Conclusions

The following issues were derived with input from the local planning processes:

- A. How can local municipalities work with Portage County to ensure a safe and plentiful drinking water supply?
- *Work with the Portage County Groundwater Advisory Committee and the Portage County Water Quality specialist to achieve the goals and recommendations from the Portage County Groundwater Management Plan.*
- B. How can rural areas better manage storm water runoff?
- *The Storm Water Management Ordinance, which was drafted by the Rural Area Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, should be reconsidered as part of this Comprehensive Plan.*
- C. How can we improve police services across the County, reducing response times and increasing patrols/coverage?
- *The Emergency Management Committee addresses these issues and any action(s) would come as a recommendation from them. The EM Committee should continue to review this issue every few years.*
- D. How can we improve ambulance service County-wide?
- *The Emergency Management Committee addresses these issues and any action(s) would come as a recommendation from them. The EM Committee should continue to review this issue every few years.*

- E. How can sufficient public recreational places be provided?
- *The Portage County Parks Department and Portage County Park Commission must look at long-term County Park and Recreational needs and develop a long-term plan.*
- F. How can Portage County and local municipalities encourage EMT's to reside in rural communities?
- *The Emergency Management Committee needs to address this issue and any action(s) would come as a recommendation from them. The EM Committee should continue to review this issue every few years.*
- G. How can radio communication for emergency response be improved? How can the placements of communication towers be better coordinated?
- *The Emergency Management (EM) Committee should address these issues and any action(s) would come as a recommendation from them. The EM Committee should continue to review these issues every few years.*
- H. Who will be responsible to regulate and monitor different on-site wastewater treatment technologies?
- *Update and study the permit activities and regulations of Portage County as well as review Portage County regulations to safe guard long-term system safety and maintenance.*

Section 4.5 Guiding Principle and Preliminary Goals for Utilities/Community Facilities

A. Guiding Principle for Utilities and Community Facilities

Provide adequate infrastructure, utilities, and community facilities and services to meet existing and future community needs.

B. Preliminary Goals: *(adopted 10-23-02 by the Rural Area Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee)*

- Life long learning is an opportunity in our community.
- Places and activities for the youth of the community are provided.
- Create and protect public green space and water resources County-wide.
- Design standards are used to enhance urban and rural character.
- Provide criteria and direction for protecting and developing land.
- Share services across County or municipal borders whenever possible.
- Plan for the provision of infrastructure, utilities, and community facilities and services to efficiently meet community needs.