

**SAFETEA-LU Pepin County  
Coordinated  
Public Transit-Human Services  
Transportation Plan  
2008-2013**



**Prepared by the Mississippi River Regional  
Planning Commission**

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Transportation Plan 2008-2013**

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## **Introduction**

In August of 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), reauthorizing the surface transportation act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (5310) were required to meet certain planning requirements in order to receive funding. Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the various programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public. In 2006, counties prepared plans meeting the federal requirements. It is now required that the 2006 plans be updated and the purpose of this document is to serve as the 2008 updated plan.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in collaboration with a workgroup of Regional Planning Commission planners developed a new transportation coordination planning process for the 2008 update based on the final guidance on coordination from the Federal Law SAFETEA-LU. The Pepin County transportation coordination plan includes assessments of available services, gaps in service and service needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. From the assessment data, a transportation coordination plan with implementation strategies has been developed.

## **Coordination Planning Process**

The 2008 coordination planning process was conducted in Pepin County by Peter Fletcher, the Transportation Planner, for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. To formally meet the requirements of the SAFETEA-LU locally Developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Planning Process a public meeting was conducted in Pepin County on August 28, 2008.

## **Public Meeting**

On August 28, 2008 the Pepin County Human Services Transportation Coordination meeting was held in Durand, Wisconsin. The meeting notice was published in the local newspaper and 20 invitations (list of meeting invitees, participants and meeting notice is attached as Appendix A) were sent out to transportation providers, agencies and advocates. Four people attended the meeting and participated in the planning process. A review of the coordination process was provided to participants as well as information on the County’s demographics. At the beginning of the meeting it was determined that the Aging Unit and ADRC Unit (Pepin County is in the process of reorganizing departments) would be the plan champions and responsible for plan implementation activities. After identifying the plan champion the group had a discussion on service gaps and needs in the region. The second part of the meeting involved the group identifying transportation coordination strategies and actions. The meeting record which summarizes the meeting activities is attached as Appendix B. At the conclusion of the meeting participants were given meeting evaluation forms in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting and planning process. In general the evaluations were positive and participants felt the meeting was productive. Appendix C attached contains the individual meeting evaluation forms.

## **Demographic Information**

An important component of the planning process is the analysis of the Pepin County’s demographics and associated trends. Table one illustrates the regions Age 65+ population and projects the future population out to the year 2030. As the information demonstrates, the county’s Age 65+ population will increase by more than 71% by the year 2030. Such an increase will significantly increase the demand for public transportation and demonstrates the need to plan in advance for such increases. Pepin County’s rural landscape will also factor into how future transportations services will meet the increasing demands.

County	65+ 2000	65+ 2005	65+ 2010	65+ 2015	65+ 2020	65+ 2025	65+ 2030	% Increase 65+ 2000-2010	% Increase 65+ 2010-2020	% Increase 65+ 2020-2030	% Increase 65+ 2000-2030
Pepin	1,215	1,249	1,307	1,490	1,685	1,932	2,054	7.6	28.9	23.7	71.5

*Source: WI DOA Final Pop. Proj. for Wisconsin Counties by Age: 2000-2030*

Table 2 illustrates the County’s median household income and poverty rate. As illustrated Pepin County’s median household income is less than the State, yet the County’s poverty rate is lower than the State of Wisconsin’s. Based on the input at the transportation coordination meeting, it is believed that the poverty rate in Pepin County has increased. This belief is based on County agency interaction with local residents and their demand for additional assistance.

County	Median Household Income 2004	Persons Below Poverty 2004 (%)
Pepin	\$42,562	9.4%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>\$46,142</b>	<b>10.9%</b>

*Source: US Census Quickfacts for Wisconsin 2004*

Table 3 shows a breakdown of percent of disabled persons in the County by two age categories and the number of disabled persons ages 21-64. In the Pepin County there are over 469 disabled persons between the ages of 21-64. The percent of disabled persons age 65+ in the region is 37.9. If we utilize the projection of the Age 65+ population for the Pepin County from Table 1 and multiply that by the County’s current rate of disabled persons ages 65+ it can be projected that by the year 2030 the County will have close to 785 residents that will be Age 65+ and disabled.

County	Number of Disabled Persons Ages 21-64	% of Disabled Persons Ages 21-64	% of Disabled Employed	% of Disabled Persons Ages 65+
Pepin	469	7.0%	60.1%	38.2%

*Source: 2000 US Census*

Table 4 on the following page illustrates the commuting patterns of Pepin County workers. As the information demonstrates approximately 54% of County residents work in Pepin County while 46% travel out of the County for employment. The data substantiates the need and importance of regional transportation coordination as a large percentage of employees are leaving the County for work.

<b>Table 4 Worker Commuting Patterns of Pepin County Residents</b>	
<b>Work In:</b>	<b># Workers</b>
Pepin Co. WI	1,900
Eau Claire Co. WI	401
Dunn Co. WI	287
Pierce Co. WI	216
Buffalo Co. WI	195
St. Croix Co. WI	43
Chippewa Co. WI	21
Trempealeau Co. WI	18
Minnesota Counties	422
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,531</b>
<i>Source: 2000 Census</i>	

### **Assessment of Available Services**

In order to conduct an assessment of available services, when public meeting invitations were sent out a request for provider information was also included. The provider information was requested in a format that has been utilized regionally in an effort to coordinate data collection. A total of 3 provider response forms detailing the service provided were returned. Provider response forms are attached as Appendix E.

Pepin County is a small county in terms of size and population and as earlier discussed the main transportation provider in the County is the Aging Unit. Service that is provided include meal/nutrition site transportation, medical transportation, and some social/recreational transportation. The services are provided through a volunteer driver program and a mini-bus/van program. In assessing the available services, the challenge that continually faces Pepin County is the geography of the county. The County for the most part is very rural and providing transportation services to a rural area is not only challenging but expensive. In assessing the available services two issues arose, first the existing vans that are utilized will need to be replaced in the near future. It is apparent that replacing them with vehicles equipped to accommodate multiple wheelchairs would increase their use and services to the population. Secondly, based on meeting input transportation for low income employed/unemployed individuals is needed and current services are unable to meet this ever increasing demand.

### **Identification and Analysis of Service Gaps and Service Needs**

At the transportation coordination meeting a general discussion among meeting participant's focused on identifying service gaps and needs. The gaps and needs identified were derived from the experiences of the meeting participants and from a review of demographic data for Pepin County. The information collected is listed below.

#### *Needs:*

- Need updated vehicles able to accommodate more than one wheel chair
- Continued funding
- Ride scheduling software and training
- Overall coordination and improve on interagency coordination

#### *Gaps:*

- Transportation to dialysis
- Low income residents and their ability to get to work with high gas prices
- People that don't or can't drive yet not old enough to receive Aging Unit services

-Rural area, geography affecting home delivered meals and all transportation needs

In general, Pepin County does an adequate job of meeting the needs of the County's population. However, as illustrated there are service gaps and needed services in the County. The items listed are challenging and the size (population/geography) produce some rigid barriers. However, based on meeting input it is believed that improved coordination of local services and becoming involved with regional coordination efforts will go a long way in addressing the unmet and increased needs of the County. The next section of the plan "Strategies and Actions" lays out in general how the service gaps and service needs can begin to be addressed.

### Strategies and Actions

The following five year action plan was developed based on input and experiences of attendees at the transportation coordination meeting. It is important to point out that roadblocks to implementation of the strategies have been identified. For the strategies to be successful the roadblocks will have to be overcome. In numerous cases the roadblocks are not locally controlled, meaning that in order for local and regional coordination to be truly successful rules, policies, and requirements of numerous non-regional entities will have to be modified or changed.

Strategies <sup>1</sup>	Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible <sup>2</sup>	Timeline By When?	Roadblocks to Implementation <sup>3</sup>
<b>Improve transportation services in Pepin County to meet the needs of all residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inform and educate the public about transportation needs and available services</li> <li>● Improve interagency coordination (within county and outside the county)</li> <li>● Outreach to medical facilities regarding transportation challenges</li> <li>● Update and improve vehicles</li> </ul>	Aging and ADRC Units	Initiate in years 1 and 2 then ongoing throughout the planning period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding</li> <li>● Geography</li> <li>● Differing perception/expectations of transportation needs and services</li> </ul>
<b>Pursue future funding for transportation services that are consistent with the locally developed coordinated public transit human services transportation plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apply for grant funding when available (5310, New Freedom, etc.)</li> <li>● Maintain/increase local funding support</li> </ul>	Aging and ADRC Units	Initiate in years 1 and 2 then ongoing throughout the planning period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Economy</li> <li>● Limited local, state, and federal dollars</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluate transportation technology applications as a means to increase efficiency of services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite software companies to present products</li> <li>● Evaluate existing transportation technologies that are in place in Counties</li> <li>● Evaluate and utilize locally developed transportation tracking excel/access programs (low cost)</li> </ul>	Aging and ADRC Units	Initiate in years 1 and 2 then ongoing throughout the planning period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding</li> <li>● Training for employees</li> <li>● Geography of area and available software</li> </ul>
<b>Participate in regional transportation coordination activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to implement New Freedom Grant with Buffalo and Trempealeau Counties</li> <li>● Explore shared marketing</li> <li>● Explore regional training opportunities</li> <li>● Explore shared technology</li> <li>● Coordinate transportation services</li> </ul>	Aging and ADRC Units	Initiate in years 1 and 2 then ongoing throughout the planning period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The challenge of coordinating multiple agencies and counties</li> <li>● Geography</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Strategies: The purpose of identifying strategies is to remedy the needs and gaps.

<sup>2</sup> Person(s) Responsible: Identify all potential partners and specific names.

<sup>3</sup> Roadblocks to Implementation: Examples include lack of community support, financial constraints, political climate, etc.

**Conclusion**

Pepin County does an excellent job in providing transportation services and options for its residents. However, the County recognizes that improvements can be made and by implementing the ideas illustrated in this plan will assist the County in improving transportation services, thus further meeting the needs of the County's residents.