

# **LINCOLN COUNTY**

## **LOCALLY DEVELOPED, COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**JULY 2008**



**FACILITATED BY:**

**NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**LINCOLN COUNTY  
LOCALLY DEVELOPED, COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

prepared for:

Lincoln County

and

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

by:

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

**July 30, 2008**

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This plan was prepared for Lincoln County at the request and under the direction of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). For more information, contact:

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## **OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

The federal transportation bill known as SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), passed in 2005, requires the preparation of coordination plans for entities that will access FTA (Federal Transit Authority) funds. SAFETEA-LU states that projects funded from the following three programs must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The stated goal is to maximize the three programs' coverage by minimizing the duplication of similar, overlapping services. SAFETEA-LU also stipulates that the plan be developed through a process that includes representation of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and participation by the public. The three FTA funding programs include:

1. **FTA Section 5310 - Transportation for Individuals who are Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities.** This program provides formula funding to states for capital projects to assist in meeting the transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities. This funding, available to public entities and private non-profit entities involved in transporting seniors and persons with disabilities, has historically been used for capital expenditures, typically for accessible vehicles.
2. **FTA Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC).** The JARC program provides formula funding for projects that assist individuals with low incomes and other individuals with transportation services to access jobs and employment-related activities. This program is combined with other funding sources and known as WETAP in Wisconsin.
3. **FTA Section 5317 - New Freedom Program.** The New Freedom Program (NF) provides formula funding for new public transportation services and service alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The New Freedom program aims to provide additional tools for persons with disabilities seeking to overcome existing barriers integrating into the workforce and participating fully in society.

## **Federal Requirements**

FTA guidelines, effective May 1, 2007, provide guidance for the 5310, 5316 and 5317 programs. These guidelines require a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan that consists of, at a minimum:

- an assessment that identifies public, private, and non-profit entities that currently provide transportation services to persons with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, and the availability of those services;

- an assessment of transportation needs for persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low incomes, and gaps in service; this assessment may be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts;
- strategies activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- relative priorities for implementation based on resources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.

Recipients of 5310, 5316, and 5317 funding must certify annually that projects selected for funding were derived from a coordinated plan and the plan was developed through a process that included members of the public, including persons with disabilities.

### **Application to Wisconsin**

The objective of the 2008 WisDOT coordination planning process is to develop new plans and include projects to be funded by the WETAP program and/or Federal sections 5317 and 5310. Coordination plans must have the following elements:

#### **1. Assessment of Transportation Services Available to Target Populations:**

*Objective: Inventory services available to members of target populations (older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low incomes).*

##### **Must include:**

- Listing of agencies that provide or purchase transportation, inclusive of agencies that receive federal and/or state funds.
- Specific information on each transportation service provided includes:
  - Service eligibility criteria (who can use the service and for what purposes)
  - Geographic coverage (where trips can go)
  - Temporal coverage (times service is available)
  - Types and number of vehicles (lift-equipped or not)

#### **2. Identification of Service Needs, Gaps and Redundancies:**

*Objective: Document transportation needs of target populations.*

##### **Must include:**

- Transportation needs assessment, comprised of:
  - Compare/contrast transportation needs with existing services by population

- Populations and areas not well served or that need more services and/or are served by multiple agencies
- Background information on area demographics, including description of changing demographics
- Map size and location of target populations

### **3. List of Strategies to address needs, gaps and redundancies with priorities for implementation:**

*Objective: Consider range of potential strategies to improve services and evaluate to create a list that best fits local needs.*

Must include:

- Local prioritization of identified list of strategies and actions

The purpose of this plan document is to achieve the above objectives by satisfying WisDOT minimum reporting-requirements as identified in the 2008 Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plans Toolkit published online by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The Toolkit can be reviewed at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/transit/toolkit.htm>.

## **OUTLINE OF COORDINATION PLANNING PROCESS**

Based on preliminary guidance from WisDOT and its experience with development of 2006 coordination plans and 2007 updates, the NCWRPC developed a planning process for the 2008 transportation coordination plans as outlined below:

### **I. Plan for Planning**

- A. WisDOT - RPC Teleconferences
- B. WisDOT - RPC Meetings
- C. WisDOT 2008 Locally Developed Transportation Coordination Plans Toolkit
- D. NCWRPC Planning Process Established

### **II. County Contact**

- A. WisDOT Letter to Key County Officials
- B. NCWRPC Contact with County "Aging" Directors or Mobility Managers
  - 1. Determine County or Sub-region Level for Plan
  - 2. Date, Time and Location Established

### **III. Meeting Participant Invitation List Development**

- A. NCWRPC Preliminary Stakeholder List
  - 1. Base Update of 2006 List
  - 2. Expansion Using Toolkit Resources
- B. County Review and Update/Expansion of Stakeholder List
  - 1. Stress Broader Participation

## 2. County to Identify/Invite Users and Provide Transportation

### IV Notification of Planning Meeting

- A. Invitations Distributed to Stakeholder List
- B. Flyer Provided to County for Posting and Distribution
- C. Newspaper Public/Legal Notice at County Option

### V Planning Meeting

- A. Welcome and Introductions
- B. Review Background and Purpose of Meeting
  - 1. SAFETEA-LU Requirements
  - 2. Review of Grant Programs
  - 3. Review of Recent County Grant Awards
  - 4. Review Progress / Additional Planning Since 2006
- C. Identify Needs and Gaps
  - 1. Review Inventory of Services
  - 2. Review Target Population Demographics
  - 3. Brainstorm Needs and Gaps
- D. Identify Strategies and Actions to Address Needs and Gaps
- F. Prioritize Strategies and Actions
- G. Determine Keeper-of-the-Plan
- H. Wrap-up and Evaluation

### VI. Report Drafting

- A. NCWRPC Draft Report
- B. County Review
- C. Submission of Final to WisDOT

## **OVERVIEW OF PLANNING MEETING TO DEVELOP COORDINATION PLAN**

### **Meeting Format**

On July 30, 2008, Lincoln County transportation stakeholders met at the Lincoln County Human Services Building to build their locally developed coordination plan. Approximately 11 transportation stakeholders attended this meeting, including representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and users. Participants were asked to sign-in and given handouts including an agenda, meeting evaluation form, copies of a SAFETEA-LU and transportation grant programs presentation, county transportation services inventory, county demographic information, and coordination strategies handbook: summary of strategies. Lincoln County provided refreshments.

The NCWRPC facilitated this session, presenting background material and guiding the group through the agenda. Highlights of the background provided by the NCWRPC include an overview of the locally developed plan requirements and grant funding



program including match sources such as use of 85.21 to match federal dollars. The Internet link to WisDOT's Coordination Plans Toolkit was provided to give participants additional information and resources on transportation coordination planning.

The format of the meeting centered around informal discussion and general consensus. The group brainstormed transportation service needs and gaps and strategies and actions to address the identified needs or gaps. The group decided to prioritize the final list of strategies by group consensus rather than weighted voting. Refer to the sections titled *Service Gaps and Needs* and *Strategies to Address Transportation Needs and Gaps in Lincoln County*, below, for the outcomes of this session.

### **Meeting Invitation and Participant Lists**

The stakeholder invitation list for the July 30 meeting included 30 individuals, see APPENDIX A. Approximately 11 people attended the planning meeting as follows:

<u>Lincoln County 2008 Coordinated Transportation Plan Participant List</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Role</u>
Monica Stimers		Transportation Service User
Scott Karler	Div. of Vocational Rehab.	Client Services
Rick Wolf	Lincoln Co. Veteran's Office	Veteran's Services
Jerry Stevens	Geri-Vans	Private Service Provider
Jeffrey Stevens	Geri-Vans / Adv.Computer Ent.	Private Service Provider
Everett Lange	Lange Enterprises Inc.	Private Service Provider
Jean Curtis	Pine Crest Nursing Home	Patient Services
Dee Kimmons		Transportation Service User
Rich Grenfell	Merrill Transit	Public Service Provider
Donna Winker	Lincoln Co. Commission on Aging	Service Provider
Terry Schmidt	Lincoln Co. Social Services / ARC	Client Services

It is believed that one to two attendees may not have signed in.

### **Keeper of the Plan**

The Lincoln County Commission on Aging will be the designated keeper of the plan. Donna Winker, the Coordinator of the Lincoln County Commission on Aging will be the primary staff contact.

### **Summary of Participant Review**

The plan meeting participants were given the opportunity to complete an evaluation form rating the process, meeting(s), and implementation strategies. Most responses indicate a positive agreement regarding the process and the County's status. Refer to APPENDIX B for copies of the completed participant evaluation forms.

## **ANALYSIS OF SERVICE GAPS AND NEEDS**

### **Assessment of Existing Service**

An inventory of what transportation services are currently available in Lincoln County was compiled in Table 1, below. There are several transportation services available, however, geographic and eligibility restrictions limit this service. A general assessment of the inventory data indicates the following:

- Evening and weekend services are limited,
- Employment needs are underserved, and
- More rural, inter-city and across-county services are needed.

### **Demographic Information**

The NCWRPC provided demographic information and countywide maps for target populations including elderly, disabled and low income, refer to APPENDIX C. This information is useful in assisting with defining gaps and needs.

### **Identification of Gaps and Needs**

Based on their experience and perceptions, meeting participants identified the following gaps and needs in the current transportation system within Lincoln County:

- Evening and weekend service is lacking.
- Operational costs, increasing fuel costs, etc. versus local tax caps, diversion of gas tax funds away from transportation, etc.
- Rider demand increasing while funding not keeping pace.
- Rural services lacking.
- Cross-county / inter-city trips with return (hours of operation not meeting needs) for educational purposes (i.e. NTC & Nicolet Technical Colleges), work, medical, etc.

**TABLE 1 LINCOLN COUNTY PROVIDER INVENTORY**

Service Name or Sponsor Name	Service Type	Passenger Eligibility	Service Description	Hours of Service	Fleet Information	Use of Federal/State Funds
<b>Lincoln County</b>						
Lincoln County A.R.C. (Lang Enterprises)	Specialized	Mentally disabled	Demand response (door-to-door) in rural Merrill area and both rural and in-city routes in the Tomahawk area.	Mon.-Fri. 6 – 9:30 a.m. & 2 – 5:30 p.m.	Three mini-busses and three 16-passenger vans.	85.21
Lincoln County A.R.C. (Merrill-Go-Round)	Specialized	Mentally disabled	Demand response (door-to-door). All City of Merrill transportation provided through a purchase-of-service agreement	Mon.-Fri. 7 am - 5 pm	Five 27-passenger busses. Each bus holds 24 seated and two wheelchair bound passengers.	85.21
Pine Crest Nursing Home	Flexible route	Elderly	Flexible route. Pre-determined destinations in Merrill area. Reservations are made 1-month in advance for Pine Crest residents.		Pine Crest has a 1-passenger van with wheelchair ramp; Lincoln Industries has a 7-person van with lift, and a 16-person van with lift; bus company has a 24-person bus with lift; and Geri-van has a van with lift.	85.21
Lincoln County Counseling Services	Volunteer-escort	Elderly and people with disabilities	Demand response (door-to-door) by volunteer driver escort, serving all of County	24 hours a day, 7 days a week if a driver is available	Private vehicles owned by volunteer drivers.	85.21
Lincoln County Commission on Aging (Merrill-Go-Round)	Public Transit	Elderly and people with disabilities	Demand response (door-to-door) in City of Merrill.	Mon.-Fri. 7am – 5pm	Five 27-passenger busses. Each bus holds 24 seated and two wheelchair bound passengers.	85.21
Lincoln County Commission on Aging (Medical Escort)	Specialized	Elderly and people with disabilities	Demand response (door-to-door) by volunteer driver escort, serving all Lincoln County residents for medical appointments within Wisconsin.	24 hours a day, 7 days a week if a driver is available	Private vehicles owned by volunteer drivers.	85.21
Tomahawk Senior Shuttle	Specialized	Elderly and people with disabilities	Supported by local bank.	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri. - Call reservations	1 van w/ lift	

## **STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED GAPS AND NEEDS**

The following strategies establish the framework for a five-year work program from 2008 through 2012. The listed strategies and actions were identified to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery.

The strategies are ranked by consensus of the participants at the stakeholder meeting based on resources from multiple program sources, time, and feasibility for implementing the strategies or actions identified.

Some of the strategies listed here ultimately may be not be implemented within the five-year time timeframe due to changing conditions (political, fiscal, etc.). Uncompleted strategies and actions should be rolled over to the next five-year plan as appropriate.

### **Lincoln County 5-year Transportation Coordination Strategies, 2008 - 2012**

#### **Priority Rank**

1. Identify sources of funding to cover costs of evening and weekend service.

#### Actions:

- Develop applications for 5310, New Freedom, and/or WETAP grants as appropriate.

2. Work to increase collaborative efforts.

#### Actions:

- Work with Division of Vocational Rehab to address mutual concerns/needs.
- Look at information sharing / use across departments and agencies.
- Expand role of TCC.

3. Maintain existing services through upkeep and scheduled replacement of vehicle fleet.

#### Actions:

- Apply for 5310 Capital Grants.

4. Look at connections between cities for linking to jobs.

5. Develop rideshare program.

6. Look at multi-county plan models and work toward future coordination partnerships with adjacent counties such as Marathon and Oneida.

## **UPDATING / AMENDING THE COORDINATION PLAN**

The coordination plan establishes the framework for a five-year work program. However, should a strategy or project be identified that was not foreseen at the time of plan development, the plan can be amended through some form of stakeholder consensus process. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated if major changes in any provisions of the plan are identified. At a minimum the plan is required to be updated every five years.

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MEETING INVITATION LIST

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LINCOLN COUNTY 2008 COORDINATION PLAN 7/30/08 MEETING INVITATION LIST

Lincoln Co. Commission on Aging  
Donna Winker, Director  
607 N. Sales St.  
Merrill, WI 54452

Lincoln Co. Social Services  
Terry Schmidt, Director  
607 N. Sales Street  
Merrill, WI 54452

**Robert Lussow, Co. Brd Chair**  
**ELECTED OFFICIAL**  
**W6275 Camp Rice Point Rd**  
**Tomahawk, WI 54487**

John Mulder  
Lincoln County Administrator  
1110 E. Main Street  
Merrill, WI 54452

Lincoln Co. Veterans Service  
Richard Wolf  
801 N. Sales St., Ste 104  
Merrill, WI 54452-1100

Terry L. Schmidt  
Lincoln County ARC, Inc.  
P.O. Box 143  
Merrill, WI 54452

Ron Schnyder  
North Central CAP  
P.O. Box 1141  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

Geri Vans  
W4599 Pope Rd  
Merrill, WI 54452

Handi Van of Tomahawk, LLC  
1001 DeerPark Road  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Sally Cutler, Executive Director  
North Central Wisconsin WDA  
1121 W. Grand Avenue  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

Linda Larson-Schlitz  
DWD-Disability Navigator  
364 Grand Avenue  
Wausau, WI 54403

Midstate Independent Living  
Consultants, Inc.  
P.O. Box 369  
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Richard Grenfell  
Merrill-Go-Round Transit System  
1004 East First Street  
Merrill, WI 54452

Pinecrest Nursing Home  
2100 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merrill, WI 54452

Ralph Peterson Bus Service  
W4550 Co. Rd. G  
Merrill, WI 54452

Tomahawk Bus Service, Inc.  
1801 Kaphaem Road  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Bell Towers Residence  
1500 O'Day Street  
Merrill, WI 54452

**Monica Stimmers**  
**TRANSPORTATION CONSUMER**  
**711 E. 1st St**  
**Merrill, WI 54452**

Golden Age Nursing Home  
720 East Kings Road  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Lange Enterprises  
612 South Roosevelt  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Lincoln County 51.437 Services  
P.O. Box 710  
Merrill, WI 54452

Riverview Rehab. & Care Center  
428 North Sixth Street  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Wendorf Bus Service  
N760 County Highway W  
Merrill, WI 54452

Marathon County Job Center  
364 Grand Ave  
Wausau, WI 54403

Div. of Vocational Rehab.  
364 Grand Ave  
Wausau, WI 54403

Abby Vans  
W5621 Todd Rd  
Neillsville, WI 54456

Richard Sicchio, Exec. Dir.  
N. Area Agency on Aging  
PO Box 1028  
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Patrick Cork, Area Admin.  
DHFS/DES N. Reg'l Office  
2187 N. Stevens St. Ste C  
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Lincoln Industries  
912 Memorial Dr  
Merrill, WI 54452

**Dee Kimmons**  
**TRANSPORTATION CONSUMER**  
**604 Johnson St**  
**Merrill, WI 54452**

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MEETING EVALUATION FORMS

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## Meeting Evaluation Form

<b>County/Region:</b>	Lincoln
<b>Date:</b>	7/30/08
<b>Facilitator(s):</b>	Darryl London

**Instructions:** For each item below, please circle the number/response that best expresses your opinion.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>General Meeting Questions</b>				
1. The information covered in the group discussions, examples and explanations was understandable.	1	(2)	3	4
2. The meeting provided a good forum for communication about public/human services transportation coordination.	(1)	2	3	4
3. Participants at the meeting were from a broad stakeholder group.	1	(2)	3	4
4. The county/region's prioritized action plan is comprehensive and realistic.	1	(2)	3	4
5. The county/region has a working coordination team.	1	(2)	3	4
6. The 2006 Coordination plan has been implemented.	1	2	(3)	4
7. Developing the prioritized action plan was meaningful and valuable.	1	(2)	3	4
8. I feel the coordination process in the county/region will be improved based on the assessment, action plan and implementation strategies.	(1)	2	3	4
<b>Facilitator Questions</b>				
9. Facilitator was knowledgeable about the meeting process.	(1)	2	3	4
10. The information was presented in a clear, logical format.	(1)	2	3	4

10. The time allotted for the meeting was:                      too much                      (about right)                      not enough

11. List three key points/issues presented during the meeting that were the most valuable or useful.

12. List any information or meeting content you felt was omitted or needed further clarification.

13. Are you interested in participating on the team that will implement the coordination plan strategies? If yes, indicate your availability.

14. Other comments.

## Meeting Evaluation Form

<b>County/Region:</b>	Lincoln
<b>Date:</b>	7-30-08
<b>Facilitator(s):</b>	Darryl Landeau

**Instructions:** For each item below, please circle the number/response that best expresses your opinion.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<b>General Meeting Questions</b>				
1. The information covered in the group discussions, examples and explanations was understandable.	1	2	3	4
2. The meeting provided a good forum for communication about public/human services transportation coordination.	1	2	3	4
3. Participants at the meeting were from a broad stakeholder group.	1	2	3	4
4. The county/region's prioritized action plan is comprehensive and realistic.	1	2	3	4
5. The county/region has a working coordination team.	1	2	3	4
6. The 2006 Coordination plan has been implemented.	1	2	3	4
7. Developing the prioritized action plan was meaningful and valuable.	1	2	3	4
8. I feel the coordination process in the county/region will be improved based on the assessment, action plan and implementation strategies.	1	2	3	4
<b>Facilitator Questions</b>				
9. Facilitator was knowledgeable about the meeting process.	1	2	3	4
10. The information was presented in a clear, logical format.	1	2	3	4

10. The time allotted for the meeting was:                      too much                      about right                      not enough

11. List three key points/issues presented during the meeting that were the most valuable or useful.

12. List any information or meeting content you felt was omitted or needed further clarification.

13. Are you interested in participating on the team that will implement the coordination plan strategies? If yes, indicate your availability.

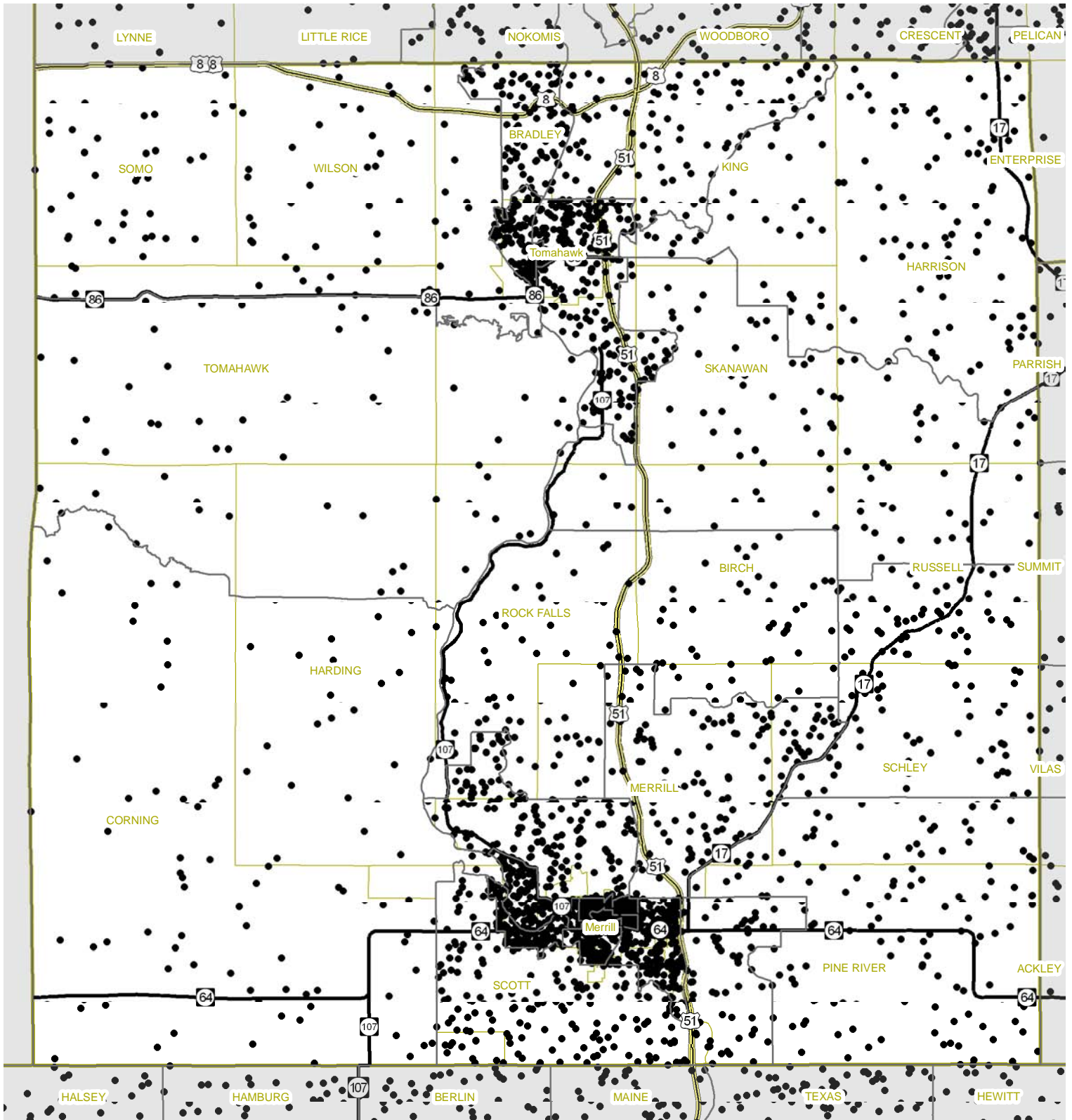
14. Other comments.



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# 2000 - Census Population Density / By Block Group Lincoln County, Wisconsin



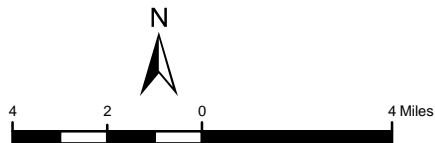
• 1 Dot = 10 Persons

— US Highway

— State Highways

— Minor Civil Divisions

— County Boundaries



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, US Census

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

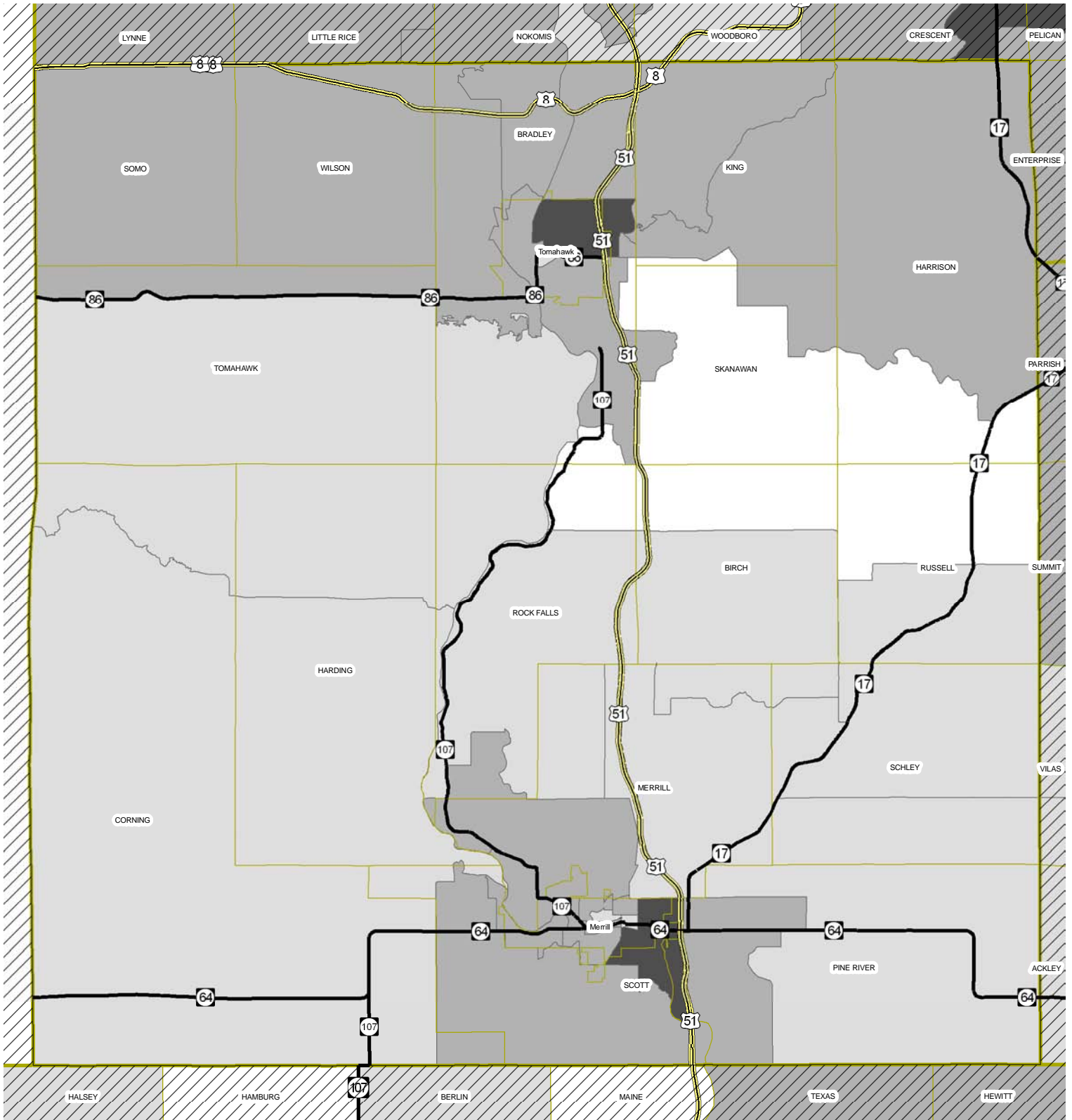


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715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

# 2000 - Census Population Density 65 and Older / By Block Group Lincoln County, Wisconsin

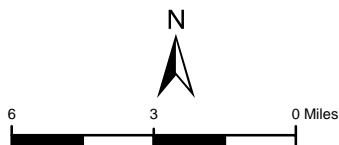


## Legend

### Population 65 >



< 100  
101 - 150  
151 - 250  
251 - 325  
> 325



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, US Census

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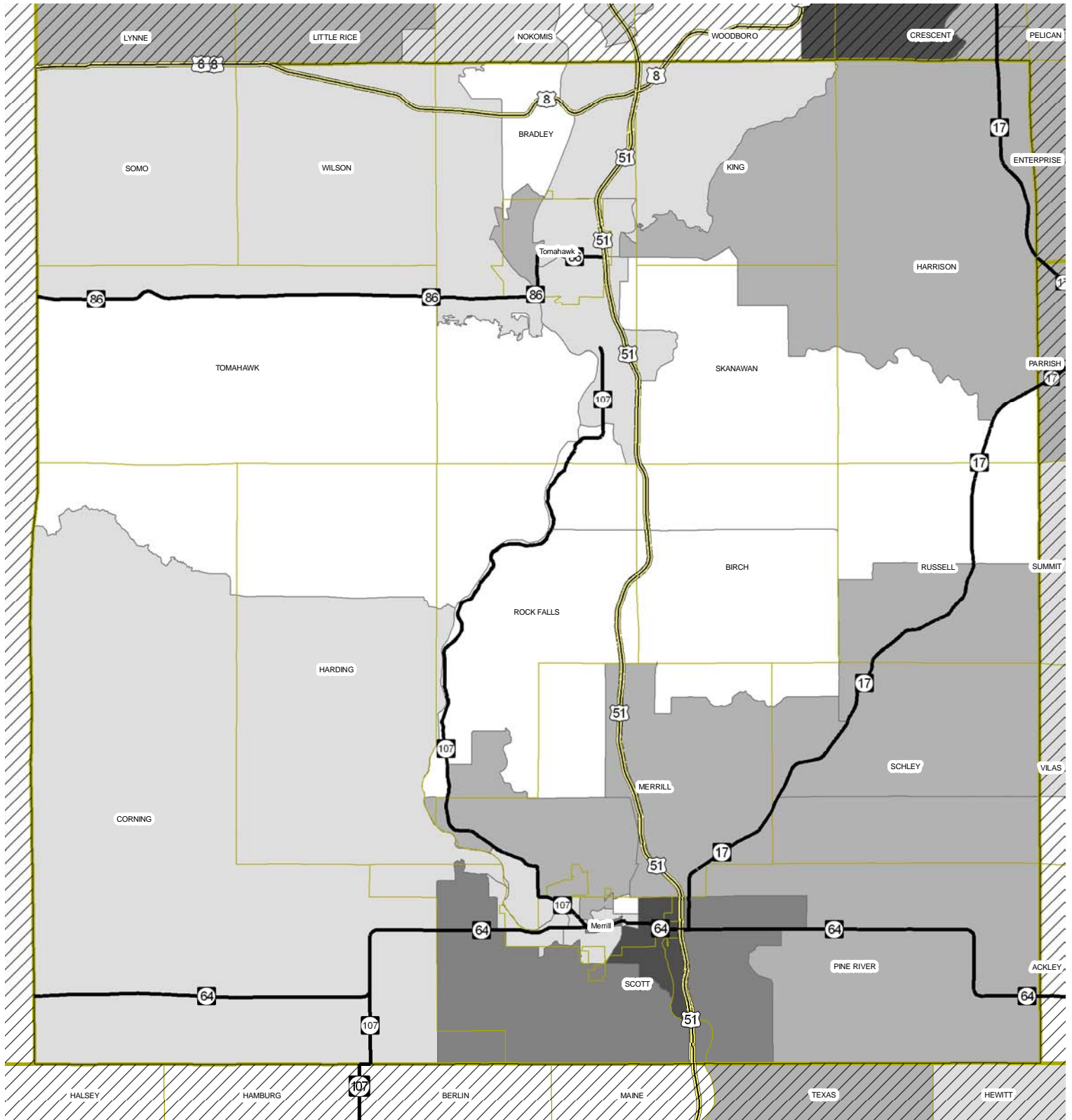


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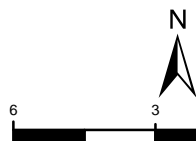
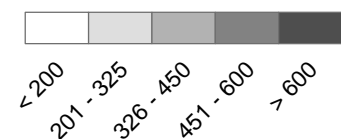
210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403  
715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

# 2000 - Census Population Density of Persons with Disabilities / By Block Group Lincoln County, Wisconsin



## Legend

### Persons With Disabilities



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, US Census

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Prepared By:

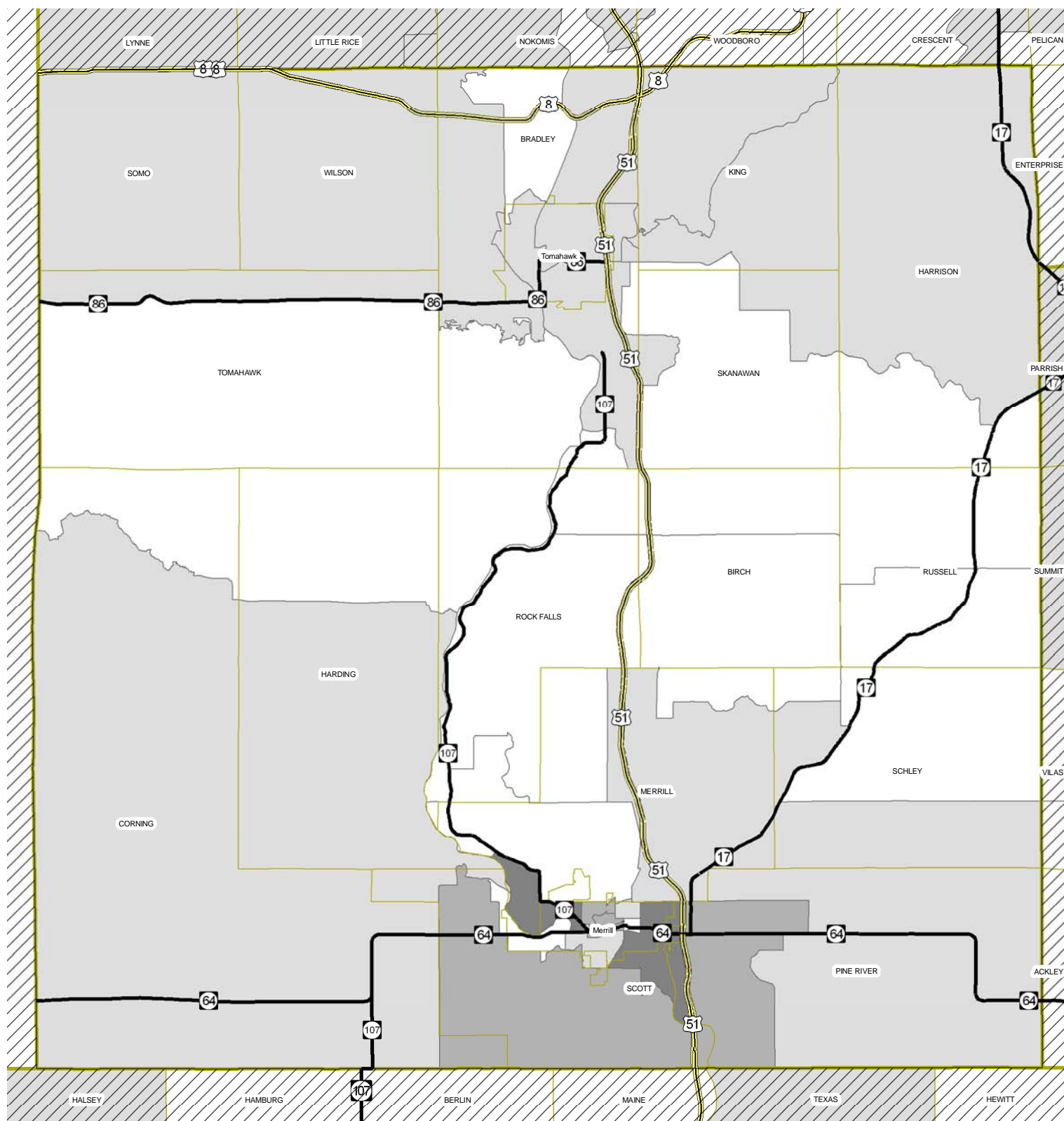
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# 2000 - Census Population Density of Persons with Low Income / By Block Group

## Lincoln County, Wisconsin



### Legend

#### Persons With Low Income



< 50  
51 - 100  
101 - 150  
151 - 275  
> 275



6 3 0 Miles

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, US Census

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