

Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities Draft 2 9/25/2025

Background

This chapter reviews utilities and community facilities in the City, which include solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, childcare facilities, the public water supply, and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools, and other government facilities. These facilities support a community's overall well-being and prosperity, as well as contribution towards economic development efforts.

Previous Planning Efforts

American Transmission Company (ATC) 10 Year Transmission System Assessment 2024. ATC manages transmission projects that improve flexibility, reliability, economic factors, connectivity, and performance, including the Rocky Run Transformer Replacement near the City of Stevens Point scheduled for 2027.

Portage County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020. This document is required for local governments to be eligible for certain disaster mitigation programs. The report looks at general conditions in Portage County, including population, transportation, land use and economics. An inventory of utilities, community facilities and emergency services form the background for understanding how the County might respond to a disaster. Hazards that are assessed in the plan include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, drought, fire, and hazardous materials accidents. The plan is being updated in 2025.

Portage County Broadband Plan 2024. This assessment involved surveying Portage County residents and their current internet speeds followed by strategies to improve speeds and coverage countywide. Generally, there is support to expand broadband throughout the County and use it as an economic development tool.

Portage County Health Department Plans. The Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identify critical health needs through data collection and analysis, and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is created to address concerns reflected in the two assessments.

Portage County Comprehensive Plan 2024. Issues identified in this plan are countywide access to broadband, an aging population, childcare availability and affordability, emergency services staffing difficulties, a need for a new county jail, groundwater protection, renewable energy, and the opportunity to expand natural, agricultural, and cultural tourism.

Portage County LIFE Report 2023. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Portage County LIFE Report identifies several areas for improvement regarding behavioral health, early childhood care, education, housing, shelter, and more.

Portage County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2029. Goals of this plan are 1. Protect, restore, and enhance Portage County's natural resources for outdoor recreation, 2. Continue developing Portage County as a bicycle friendly community and destination, and 3. Continue improving outdoor recreation facilities throughout Portage County. This plan is updated every five years to allow the County to receive grant funding.

Stevens Point Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2028. This robust plan includes the following goals: efficiency, accessibility, sustainable maintenance, community partnership and cooperation, and capital improvements. It includes detailed park-specific upgrades and their associated costs, as well as a series of existing site plans and renderings, particularly for a bicycle-pedestrian bridge crossing over the Plover River near I-39, an upgraded waterfront plaza at Bukolt Park, upgraded equipment at Emerson/Seramur Park, and a master plan for John S Groholski Park.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2025-2030. This WDNR plan assists with local planning efforts and is updated every 5 years. It analyzes trends in outdoor recreation and identifies barriers that prevent more Wisconsinites from enjoying outdoor recreation. Issues include changing demands on recreational resources, how new

recreational activities compete for the same resources as traditional ones, the effect of surrounding land uses on recreational areas, the socioeconomic characteristics that influence access to outdoor recreation, and climate change impacts to temperature and precipitation. According to a statewide survey, almost seventy percent of respondents indicated that walking, hiking, or running was their most common recreational activity. Swimming and wildlife viewing/photographing were the next two popular activities. These results emphasize the importance of public lands.

Stevens Point Area Sewer Service Plan 2040 Update 2023. This Plan was approved by the DNR in 2025, and it includes the City of Stevens Point, Villages of Park Ridge, Plover, and Whiting, and surrounding Towns of Linwood, Hull, Plover, and Stockton. Sewer currently serves the City and Villages, and the plan accommodates potential growth into the Towns, which are currently not served. This Plan identifies the sewer service area's boundary between now and 2040, and it manages the extension of sewer services over time as growth occurs. It considers environmental impact and cost effectiveness, minimizing long-term conflicts.

Inventory and Trends

City Government

The City of Stevens Point government offices are located primarily in City Hall at 1515 Strongs Avenue, where several County departments are also held. Departments include the Administration, Central Transportation, City Clerk, Community Development, Comptroller/Treasurer, Information Technology, Legal, Personnel (Human Resources), Public Utilities, the Stevens Point Municipal Airport, and Public Works. The Streets Division of Public Works has a facility at 100 Sixth Avenue described later in this chapter. The City's Community Media and Police Departments are based at 933 Michigan Ave, and the facility includes space where many public meetings are held. This building is attached to 2442 Sims Avenue where the City's Parks, Recreation, & Forestry department is based. Finally, the Fire and EMS Department Headquarters are based at 1701 Franklin Street, the City's Transit Station is based at 2700 Week Street, and the Public Utilities campus is located in the 300 block of Bliss Avenue.

Water-related Facilities

The sewer and water systems of the City of Stevens Point are governed under the direction of the Board of Water and Sewerage Commissioners, with the Common Council having final authority. The Board is composed of five commissioners who advise the Common Council on the management and operation of the City's Water Department and sewage treatment department. Appointments are made for staggered terms and are made by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council. Below are detailed descriptions of each type of facility.

Drinking water

The City of Stevens Point has its own municipal water system with distribution networks, which rely solely on groundwater. Some properties in the Village of Park Ridge have access to the City of Stevens Point's water system. Some properties within the City's limits are not yet served by public water where utilities have not yet been extended. Others are served by public water but also have a separate well for irrigation. The City has a wellhead protection ordinance, which restricts uses that could contaminate groundwater from being located within a certain distance of public wells as described in more detail in Chapter 7 of this Plan.

Consumer Confidence Reports are released annually to summarize water quality data to ensure drinking water meets state and federal regulations. In 2024, the Stevens Point Chemical Analysis of Drinking Water indicated that the nitrate concentration was 2.8 ppm in 2024, the same level as 2007, with levels fluctuating between 1.7 ppm and 4.1 ppm from year to year since 2007. Though nitrates continue to be a concern in Portage County, this indicates that there is no upward or downward trend in the City's public drinking water supply at this time, and recent levels are below the maximum of 10 ppm.

In 2024, average daily water usage was 6.7 million gallons, up from 6.6 million gallons in 2007. There are seven wells (6 through 12) with former wells 1 through 5 being decommissioned. These wells are primarily located in the Plover River corridor between Iverson Park and Stevens Point Municipal Airport. The distribution system contains 805,585 feet or 152.6 miles of mains. Of this, 91% are metallic and 97.5% are 6 inches or larger. Static pressures in the system range from 55 to 68 psi, and two water towers built in 1956 and 2004 hold up to 1.75 million gallons of water to provide pressure and fire protection capacity even during power outages. The City also has two bulk water filling stations that utilize large water tanks. The water utility has no known lead services and removed all known lead fittings prior to the end of 2023. See WDNR for more info on public and private water systems.

Wastewater

The City of Stevens Point is served by a public wastewater collection system and a wastewater treatment plant located at 301 Bliss Avenue. This system also serves the Village of Park Ridge. Altogether, there are 141 miles of 8” to 48” sewer pipe and has 14 lift stations. Public sewer system planning and service areas are regulated by the Wisconsin DNR to “assess the condition of a sewerage system, establish a need for improvement, evaluate options to address system needs and to identify the cost-effective alternative.”

The current Stevens Point Urban Area Sewer Service Area Plan was approved in 2025, and it establishes a 20-year growth boundary for these systems. It notes that the City’s wastewater treatment plant has an average Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) that is about 52 percent of its design rating, and a Total Suspended Solids (TSS) average that is about 64 percent of its design rating. There are concerns over the sewage collection system’s fair condition as well as inflow and infiltration during wet conditions.

The current overall capacity of the wastewater treatment plant is about 50 percent of its design rating, meaning there is capacity to meet anticipated future growth. Development proposals must be reviewed with these capacities in mind, especially if a major user (especially industrial) is proposing to require considerable wastewater needs. The Sewer Service Area Plan includes additional statistics and design descriptions regarding the City’s wastewater collection and treatment systems. See WDNR’s website for more statistics regarding public wastewater facilities.

Where utilities do not yet extend, private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) serve a property’s wastewater needs. County and state regulations control the installation and maintenance of privately owned wastewater disposal systems (POWTS). Traditionally, onsite disposal systems have relied on drain-fields or mounds that spread effluent over a large area allowing waste to be dispersed without adversely affecting groundwater quality. The success of these systems is dependent on the depth and permeability of the soils in which they are installed.

In 2023, the City of Stevens Point was recognized for its new liquid-to-dried biosolids conversion process. The wastewater treatment plant was expanded in an existing garage space to accommodate a new paddle dryer, which runs on excess methane from the City’s biogas digester, saving \$300,000 in energy costs a year. Using this process reduced the City’s need for three million gallons of liquid storage tanks, which were repurposed for multiple other utility-related uses. Equipment from the former garage was relocated to a new garage that uses geothermal heating and cooling along with a rooftop solar array, generating 150 percent of the power utilized by the new garage and offsetting heating needs. The result is lower operations and capital expenses and smoother overall wastewater plant operations.

Stormwater

Stormwater management systems convey and mitigate heavy rainfall and prevent flooding and erosion, especially in urban areas with extensive impervious surfaces like roofs and pavement. According to WDNR, the Village of Plover, City of Stevens Point, and UWSP are all MS-4 permitted communities, which means they have separate storm and wastewater sewers. Private and public property throughout the City may also have ponds and other structures to control runoff. The county maintains the ditches along county roads, and local municipalities maintain the ditches along municipal roads

that control runoff. Municipal and County ordinances require stormwater plans with new development. Some property owners are eligible for stormwater credits on their utility bill if they reduce runoff beyond what ordinances require. Additional local, state, and federal regulations may apply for erosion control and discharging runoff into waterways. See the WDNR's website for more information.

Dams

According to the 2020-2024 Portage County Hazard Mitigation Plan, there are 13 large dams in the County with an average age of 140 years. The Stevens Point Dam in the City and the Dubay Dam upstream of the City are owned by Consolidated Water Power Company, generating power, and they are considered high hazard dams. The Westfahl Dam, located in the Village of Whiting, is privately owned and forms McDill Pond on the Plover River within the City. This dam is considered to have significant hazard potential. Upstream of McDill Pond and outside the City limits is the Jordan Dam, which is County-owned and has low hazard potential. Altogether, there are 80 dams in Portage County according to the WDNR. Dams provide flood control, outdoor recreation, and hydroelectric power for County residents. See Map 4-1: Utilities and Community Facilities for locations.

High-Capacity Wells

High-capacity wells are discussed in detail in Chapter 2: Natural Resources, and they are defined as wells with a capacity of at least 100,000 gallons per day. Most of these wells are owned and operated privately, but some are also operated by municipalities to provide drinking water for municipal water systems. See the WDNR's Water Use Viewer map or high capacity well search on the agency's website for up-to-date information about the number, location, and ownership of these wells, as well as other details.

Energy and Telecommunications

Natural Gas

Natural Gas Service is provided by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, and high-capacity gas lines are available on the east and north sides of the City for potential industrial users. The Koch Refining Company operates an LP gas pipeline and an "other petroleum products" pipeline, which meet at a terminal in the City of Stevens Point (Flint Hills Resources).

Electric

The Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) Corporation, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative, and Wisconsin Power & Light provide service within and near the City. The American Transmission Company (ATC) operates several high-voltage lines that traverse Portage County, with many of them intersecting along the Wisconsin River near Stevens Point. All transmission lines are single-circuit, and they range from 69 kV to 345 kV. As of 2024, WPS's energy sources are derived from a mix of coal (38.9 percent), natural gas (44.5 percent), hydroelectric (8.1 percent), wind (4.4 percent), solar (3.6 percent), and biofuels (0.5 percent). **Four substations are found within the City's limits.**

The Stevens Point Dam is the only power generating facility in the City, with a capacity of 4.8 Megawatts. It is owned by the Consolidated Water Power Company. Currently, there are no known long-term plans for building any power generating facilities in the City's limits, but there is an opportunity to explore small-scale renewable energy that benefits home and business owners without consuming large tracts of land.

Utility-scale solar energy production has grown rapidly in Wood and Portage Counties, raising concerns over land use when considering the area's agricultural and ecological legacy. Wisconsin's Public Service Commission approves all solar projects that generate 100 Megawatts or greater, meaning that approvals do not happen at the local level. This can cause conflicts if a solar array is proposed in one of the City's future growth areas. As of 2025, two large solar projects have been approved in Portage County: Vista Sands Solar Farm (1.3 Gigawatts over 5,000 acres) and Portage Solar Project (250 Megawatts over 1,800 acres).

The Vista Sands Solar Project, approved in 2024, was proposed next to the nearby Buena Vista Wildlife Area, which is one of the largest remaining prairies east of the Mississippi and home to the greater prairie-chicken and other rare grassland birds, raising significant concerns. The solar developer reached a settlement with local organizations by setting aside a 750-acre buffer for prairie chicken habitat along with a \$1 million contribution to the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation for habitat restoration and land acquisition. The developer also pledged another \$2.1 million to WDNR for the agency's prairie chicken management plan. The developer also identified an additional 350 acres to develop that were located away from areas that greater prairie-chickens use. The solar project is expected to be operational in 2028, generating enough power for 230,000.

Small-scale solar, on the other hand, allows individuals to generate their own power without the widespread aesthetic and land use impacts that make large solar projects challenging. Central Wisconsin has significant smaller scale solar installations due in part to long-term work by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, Mid-State Technical College and multiple local solar installers. Mid-State Technical College also has several programs that train solar designers, installers, and maintainers. Overall, renewable energy, especially solar, provides opportunities and challenges.

Telecommunications

Internet service continues to expand as an economic development necessity, and access to internet service varies greatly throughout the County. Landline and cellular phone service are also essential for communications. Topographic features limit where lines can be buried or where cellular signals can reach. Future expansion of broadband is expected following the completion of the County's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Plan. This involves a separate fiber network that connects municipal facilities in the City of Stevens Point and the Village of Plover but is not intended for individual consumer use. This system may be considered an asset for institutions that have multiple facility locations within the City and neighboring villages.

Landline phone service providers in Stevens Point include AT&T, Spectrum, and TDS. Cable TV lines provide digital signals known as wireline access, and other providers use satellite or wireless technology. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the City are HughesNet, Spectrum, T-Mobile, TDS, Verizon, and Viasat, Inc. DirectTV and Dish are also available for satellite TV. Mobile internet and Cellular coverage is available from AT&T, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon, and other providers may get signal in the County where roaming agreements exist.

Industrial Park Infrastructure

Chapter 6: Economic Development describes the various needs that industrial users have regarding utilities and sites, along with a brief overview of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) Certified Sites program and Request for Information (RFI) process that Centergy, Inc. assists with. In general, infrastructure needs to be planned and installed ahead of time for industrial sites, and exact descriptions of the available utilities need to be communicated when working to assist expanding or relocating businesses on these sites.

Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities

The City's Public Works department is responsible for curbside garbage collection. Most Portage County municipalities are part of a consortium contracting through the Portage County Solid Waste Department for solid waste collection and disposal by private waste haulers. In addition to household and commercial trash and recycling, the department offers a variety of other programs for residents including electronic, appliance, and tire recycling, waste oil and anti-freeze recycling, and household hazardous waste disposal services. Solid waste and recycling services are located at 600 Moore Road in the Village of Plover, where solid waste is transferred out of the County since the Portage County Landfill's closure in 2009.

Public Works

The Public Works Department's main office and engineering division are located at City Hall at 1515 Strongs Avenue, while its Streets Division is located at 100 Sixth Avenue in Stevens Point, where there are garages for the storage of equipment for road maintenance and shops for maintaining the City's fleet of vehicles and equipment. The Sixth Avenue site includes yard waste drop off and salt storage as well as free mulch for City residents. This facility may need expansion or replacement in the coming years. The Common Council has indicated a preference to relocate the facility, which will require a large site (approximately 30 acres) that is more centrally located to the City's future growth areas to best serve the community.



Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The Stevens Point Police Department is located at 933 Michigan Avenue. The Wisconsin State Patrol, the Portage County Sheriff's Office, and UWSP University Police and Security Services also operate within the City's limit, and the Village of Plover also has its own police department. The State Patrol has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads but operates mainly on State and U.S. numbered highways. The County Sheriff provides general law enforcement services throughout the County, and it operates both the County Jail and Juvenile Detention Facility, along with the County's 911 Dispatch Center, Emergency Management, and the County's Emergency Medical Services program. The City of Stevens Point and Village of Plover Police Department patrol their respective communities.

Fire

The Stevens Point Fire Department is headquartered at 1701 Franklin Street, with a second station at 4401 Industrial Park Road. The Department also has a training facility at 3100 Whiting Avenue. There is potential to add a third fire station on the City's east side. All Portage County Fire Departments participate in a countywide mutual aid agreement ensuring compatibility between responding agencies. The City uses an automatic aid agreement the Plover, Hull, and Rudolph (Wood County) Fire Departments. The Insurance Services Office issues ISO ratings for fire departments. ISO ratings are determined on a scale of one to ten, with one being the highest rating. The ratings are based on aspects like staffing, apparatus, equipment, and the fire hydrant water supply systems to reflect how easily a fire department can respond to fires. This impacts property insurance rates as communities with better ISO ratings tend to have lower insurance premiums. The Stevens Point Fire Department currently holds an ISO rating of 2.

Jails

The County Sheriff's Office operates a County Jail and Juvenile Detention Center in Downtown Stevens Point. In 2023, the Portage County Board voted on the location of a proposed new County Justice Center which will consist of a \$180-million first phase that would relocate County jail facilities out of downtown Stevens Point to a site on the eastern edge of the City, but funding and a timeline for this project have not yet been approved. Additionally, the County will renovate and expand the existing Courthouse, utilizing space vacated by the City of Stevens Point. This includes upgrading safety and security systems, adding a secure entrance with sally ports, creating a single point of entry, and adding a fourth courtroom to accommodate future needs.

Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

The Stevens Point Fire Department provides contracted paramedic ambulance service to the City as well as several surrounding Towns. Station 1 covers the western and central portions of the City as well as Towns to the west and north of the City in partnership with Rudolph, Dewey, and Hull Emergency Medical Responders, and Station 2 covers the eastern portion of the City along with Towns to the east, northeast, and southeast in partnership with Stockton, Hull, Sharon, and Rosholt Emergency Medical Responders.

Emergency Management

The City has an integrated emergency management program housed within its Fire Department. The Emergency Management Coordinator works with local, county, state, and federal partners to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the impacts of natural and human-caused disasters. Utilizing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and guided by the Wisconsin Emergency Management framework, the City maintains an all-hazards approach to planning and response. This includes ongoing hazard identification, community education and outreach, and development of incident action plans for public events. Investments in infrastructure resilience, warning systems, and interagency training further enhance the City's ability to protect life, property, and the environment during times of crisis.

Healthcare

Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital (824-900 Illinois Ave) and Marshfield Medical Center – Stevens Point Campus (4100 State Highway 66) are the two major hospitals in the City, with the Aspirus Plover Hospital (5409 Vern Holmes Drive) also being located within the City's limits on its southern border, despite being named after the Village. Additional Aspirus clinics, treatment centers, and outpatient services are also found on their hospital campuses as well as at 201-209 Prentice Street North, 3398 East Maria Drive, 122 Willshire Boulevard North, and 3500 Hoover Road, along with an additional clinic at 2401 Plover Road in the neighboring Village of Plover. Additionally, in 2025, Noble Community Clinic opened a location at 2501 Main Street, and several other small clinics are scattered throughout the City.

Several nursing homes with varying degrees of care can be found throughout the City, and it is expected that there will be an ongoing need for additional nursing home, memory care, and/or assisted living facilities as the County's population ages. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) maintains up-to-date directories of both institutional and residential-based facilities like adult family homes (AFHs), Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs), Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCACs), and Nursing Homes.

Public Health

The Portage County Health and Human Services Department's Division of Public Health is responsible for a variety of public health initiatives. The department has a coalition known as Healthy People Portage County (HPPC), which includes several County employees as well as representatives from local schools, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations. HPPC leads the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Process and Plan (CHIPP) projects every five years.

The 2024-2028 CHA includes data from the United Way LIFE (Local Indicators for Excellence) Report as well as the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) from both Aspirus and Marshfield Clinic to identify concerning health trends, and the CHIPP provides a roadmap to address those concerns. Behavioral health, early childhood education, and housing/shelter were ranked as the top three needs in Portage County in the CHA, and several other categories had concerning trends: preventative care, income, employment, and transportation.

The CHIPP includes a series of objectives in three categories: equity, mental health and social wellbeing, and building a safe and thriving community. Objectives include reducing barriers to healthcare access, expanding preventative health, increasing the use of public spaces by community members, improving collaboration between existing programs,

increasing knowledge and awareness of community-based services, increasing access to mental health services, advocating for a greater presence of health in all policies, increase child health and well-being, collaborate with community partners to enhance housing, and improve ability of older adults to live independently.

Libraries

The Portage County Public Library is located at 1001 Main Street in Stevens Point. UWSP and MSTC also house libraries on their respective campuses. Libraries in Portage County are part of the South-Central Library System along with Adams, Wood, Sauk, Columbia, Dane, and Green Counties, allowing the libraries to access resources across the system.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries serve as unique and tangible links to our past. There are 13 cemeteries located throughout the City. Many of the existing cemeteries have existing capacity and there are many undeveloped areas on the edges of the City suitable for new cemeteries, though they are prohibited in wellhead recharge areas. See Map 4-1: Utilities & Community Facilities.

Parks, Trails, & Natural Areas

The City of Stevens Point operates the following parks: Atwell Park, Bukolt Park, Conifer Park and Trails, East Oak Park, Goerke Park, Groholski Park, Hall Nature Preserve, Hein Park, Iverson Park, KASH (Kids Are Special Here), Koziczowski Park, McDill Disc Golf Course, McLaughlin Park, Mead Park, Morton Park, Parkdale Park, Parkwood Park, Pfiffner Pioneer Park, Plover Hills Park, Plover River Park, Riverwoods Park, Slomann Park, Stevens Point Dog Park, Stevens Point Sculpture Park, Texas Park, Veteran's Memorial Park, Yulga Park, and Zenoff Park. The City also operates the K.B. Willett Ice Arena and the Donald Copps Municipal Pool with a waterslide in Goerke Park. The Plover River Crossing, which will provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection between the STH 10 corridor with the Plover River Trail segment of the Green Circle, is in progress as of this Plan's creation.

Schmeeckle Reserve and Green Circle State Trail are two significant recreational amenities that are not operated by the City, but are located within the City, with the 27-mile-long Green Circle forming a "greenbelt" through the City. The Green Circle features a connection along Hoover Avenue to the 29-mile-long Tomorrow River State Trail (WDNR). The Wisconsin and Plover Rivers, along with McDill Pond, provide public access to surface water recreation. There are additional county parks and state natural areas outside the City's limits, as well as the nearby Ice Age National Trail. Overall, these facilities contribute to the County's overall health and quality of life while serving as a draw for tourists.



Museums

Museums and other cultural destinations include the following:

- Beth Israel Synagogue Museum
- Historic Firehouse # 2 Museum
- Riverfront Arts Center/Cultural Commons
- Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center
- Smith Scarabocchio Art Museum
- Stevens Point Sculpture Park
- UWSP Carlsten Art Gallery
- UWSP Museum of Natural History

Cultural resources are explained in more detail in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

Childcare

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) maintains an up-to-date list of licensed daycare providers along with a search tool. According to the search tool, there are approximately 29 licensed facilities within a five-mile radius of the center of Stevens Point. There are also likely unlicensed options as well, such as informal in-home childcare. More resources are listed in the Economic Development chapter of this plan.

Schools

The City is served by the **Stevens Point Area School District** which includes Bannach, Jefferson, Kennedy, Madison, McDill, McKinley, Plover-Whiting, Roosevelt, and Washington Elementary Schools, Ben Franklin and P.J. Jacobs Junior High Schools, Stevens Point Area Senior High (SPASH), Charles F. Hernandez Alternative High School, and Point of Discovery Charter Middle/High School. **In recent years, the school district's total enrollment has been just over 7,000 students. Private schools** in the City include Pacelli and Sacred Heart Catholic Schools, St. Paul Lutheran School, and Stevens Point Christian Academy. Pacelli and Stevens Point Christian include high school grades. Finally, Central Sands Community High School is a tuition-free, Waldorf-style education option located between Stevens Point and Amherst.

Colleges and Universities

The **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point** campus, located in the City of Stevens Point, was established in 1894. When combined with its satellite campuses in Marshfield and Wausau, total enrollment is 8,125. **According to UWSP, 93 percent of students are considered traditional (under age 25), with 88 percent of students being from Wisconsin and 33 percent being from the immediate area.** The campus offers 80 baccalaureate degrees, 17 graduate programs, and 90 minors, and is known for its robust fine arts and natural resources programs. Recent expansions have enhanced UWSP's Sentry School of Business and the college's Health Science and Wellness Program.

Mid-State Technical College also has a Stevens Point Campus that offers associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates. The college offers over 85 programs across its four campuses. In 2024, MSTC opened the Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering Technology, and Apprenticeship (AMETA) Center, which accommodates training in newer industries like precision machining and inspection, robotic machine tending, lights-out manufacturing, automated manufacturing, and process control automation.

Resources for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Portage County Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) provides resources for seniors and those with disabilities. The ADRC manages the Lincoln Center, which is a senior center that offers a diverse selection of educational, health, fitness, creative arts and recreational classes and activities. Various nonprofits, such as Midstate Independent Living Choices, Opportunity Development Centers, and Door2Dreams provide resources for seniors and those with disabilities.

Summary

Providing an array of utilities and community facilities that meet the community's needs ensures that the City can continue strategically growing jobs that pay a living wage along with resources and amenities that make the City a desirable place to live. Educational and workforce development opportunities strengthen the local workforce while supporting individual prosperity. Chapter 6: Economic Development expands on this chapter by discussing the importance of understanding the capacity of existing utilities and facilities when marketing various redevelopment or business park sites to companies interested in relocating or expanding their operations.

The City currently has water, wastewater, telecommunication, and power capacities that either meet current demand or will support growth. Monitoring community-wide capacities ensures that upgrades can be planned ahead of expected growth. Information regarding climate change from Chapter 2 of this plan may suggest increased attention toward certain utility capacities and design standards, such as stormwater management structures. Finally, multiple community facilities are needed in the near future in the City, and a detailed strategy to construct these facilities will be necessary to ensure the facilities meet the City's needs while minimizing financial impact.



Issues

Access to Broadband

Though Stevens Point generally has better access to broadband than rural areas, financial or other barriers may exist. Continued expansion of broadband access is necessary as businesses and schools depend on it.

Aging Population

Portage County's increasing aging population impacts local infrastructure, especially healthcare facilities, nursing homes, and emergency services. There are services and aging-in-place retrofits that can keep seniors in their homes longer while avoiding expensive institutional care. Accessible public spaces, sidewalks, and transportation is essential for seniors and those with disabilities to navigate the community. Social support networks and nutrition programs also benefits these populations.

Childcare

There is concern over a lack of childcare as working parents may be unable to fill open jobs when they can't find available childcare or can't afford it. In 2024, only 6.2 percent of survey respondents living in the City indicated they were satisfied with childcare availability in Portage County (see Appendix E).

City and County Facilities

Currently, the Portage County Jail is at capacity and needs new or upgraded facilities. However, as of this Plan's adoption, funding has not been approved to address this issue as property tax burden is a concern. Additionally, Portage County plans to renovate the shared City Hall/County Courthouse Complex at 1515 Strongs Avenue, requiring City Government to relocate to a new site. As of this Chapter's writing, the City plans to build a new City Hall on the block next to the Portage County Annex bound by Water Street, Ellis Street, and Arlington Place, replacing the former CREATE Portage County building. The City is also anticipating the need to upgrade or enhance its public works garage. The expansion or maintenance of these numerous public facilities may need to be strategically implemented, perhaps in partnership with other institutions wherever possible, to minimize the financial impact on residents.

Emergency Services

The survey administered during the 2024 County Comprehensive Plan project asked respondents to rank their satisfaction with existing services. Fire protection (80 percent), ambulance service (76 percent), and police protection (73 percent) were rated as the most satisfactory services out of all the services listed, but retirements and a shrinking workforce mean new strategies may be needed to recruit employees and maintain these services. Additionally, several sites on the City's east side have been recommended for a future fire station to provide efficient response times. Construction of this facility will also need to be planned for.

Groundwater Protection

Groundwater is discussed extensively in Chapter 2 of this plan, and public drinking water is discussed earlier in this Chapter. Ultimately, the groundwater quality and quantity impact the type of public facilities needed, such as wells, and treatment plants. Privately-operated wells and septic facilities also impact groundwater, especially as existing systems age and new systems are constructed. According to the survey administered during the 2024 Portage County Comprehensive Plan's creation, over 90 percent of survey respondents indicated a desire to protect groundwater resources, and this will continue to be a concern affected by both developed and undeveloped land uses.

Renewable Energy

Large-scale solar arrays have an increasing presence in Central Wisconsin due to their location near large transmission lines with large parcels that are relatively flat and undeveloped, and without high levels of air pollution that would reduce electricity production. Two large solar projects have been approved by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in Portage County; Portage Solar and Vista Sands Solar. Two other large solar projects are proposed. The survey administered during the 2023-2024 Comprehensive Plan process revealed that almost 74 percent of City residents agree or strongly agree that renewable energy production is important to the future of Portage County (see Attachment E). Additionally, Data Centers and Electric Vehicles (EVs) could increase demand for electricity and charging stations. There are concerns over the location of these facilities, and the potential to embracing smaller-scale renewable energy opportunities that directly benefit energy customers.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Provide cost-effective and high-quality utilities, community facilities, and services that serve the needs of new development and redevelopment.

- **Objective 1:** Identify areas of future growth and redevelopment and only extend infrastructure, utilities, and services when the density and tax base can support it.
 - **Policy 1:** Work with neighboring parcels on annexation and sewer service requests as well and septic systems age and the City's utilities approach these areas.
 - **Policy 2:** Respect property owners who do not currently wish to connect to City utilities as infrastructure is being extended.
 - **Policy 3:** Review development fees to ensure new development pays for the infrastructure, utilities, and services it receives.
 - **Policy 4:** Utilize the existing capacity of services and facilities to be used before new services and facilities are provided.
 - **Policy 5:** Promote residential development at densities that can support water and sewer service (3 or more units per acre for residential, for example) to distribute the cost of utility infrastructure.
 - **Policy 6:** Use cost-effective processes for burying utility lines with road construction projects.
- **Objective 2:** Maintain a high standard for drinking water quality for residents of the City and neighboring municipalities.
 - **Policy 1:** Along with enforcing land use and zoning patterns that minimize impacts to surface water and groundwater, explore rehabilitation of water resources, educational opportunities, and water treatment techniques that protect and enhance drinking water quality and safety.
 - **Policy 2:** Monitor emerging water contaminants and programs that help address them.
 - **Policy 3:** Protect safe drinking water by ensuring the wellhead protection ordinance does not allow potentially contaminating land uses in areas that recharge municipal wells. Reflect these wellhead protection standards in the future land use map.
- **Objective 3:** Support cost-effective water management strategies that minimize demand on stormwater systems.
 - **Policy 1:** Reserve natural drainageways and stream corridors for nonmotorized transportation and stormwater infrastructure.
 - **Policy 2:** Utilize landscaping in the public right-of-way that minimizes maintenance and assists with water management.
 - **Policy 3:** Promote programs that make utilities more affordable, such as PACE financing and stormwater credits.
 - **Policy 4:** Continue to implement stormwater management with new development and redevelopment.

Goal 2: Support the infrastructure, public services, and facilities needed for community and economic development.

- **Objective 1:** Ensure that planned utilities are sized appropriately and have capacity for the type and intensity of new development.
 - **Policy 1:** Maintain an up-to-date sewer service area (SSA) plan that identifies how utilities will expand as development occurs.
 - **Policy 2:** Plan for increasing energy demand from new development, data centers, and electric vehicles; communicate new development frequently with utility providers to ensure capacity is available from substations and transmission infrastructure.
- **Objective 2:** Provide high quality public and healthcare services for the community.

- **Policy 1:** Support the City's healthcare providers to expand healthcare options for an aging population with varying needs.
- **Policy 2:** Support public health initiatives in the City, like those found in the Portage County Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plans.
- **Policy 3:** Provide adequate police, fire, emergency services, and government services as efficiently as possible to maximize the City's financial resources.
- **Policy 4:** Explore reviving discontinued brush pickup and local composting programs.

○ **Objective 3:** Ensure public facilities are strategically planned for, constructed, and maintained.

- **Policy 1:** Perform and update a City-wide facility condition report and needs analysis every ten years or less to prioritize facility construction, maintenance, and management.
- **Policy 2:** Continue to identify opportunities to collocate City services, reduce land needed to provide City services, and provide adequate service coverage to the entire City.

Goal 3: Support infrastructure and services that ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.

- **Objective 1:** Ensure that the City's parks are sized and located evenly throughout the City with a variety of playgrounds and recreational facilities that are high quality and accessible for all.
 - **Policy 1:** Maintain an up-to-date Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to ensure residents high quality parks and recreational opportunities while qualifying the City for possible programs to help pay for park infrastructure.
 - **Policy 2:** Plan for new parks in future development areas, especially on the City's east and northeast sides.
 - **Policy 3:** Investigate opportunities for more indoor and community spaces that support year-round recreational and social uses.
- **Objective 2:** Preserve existing outdoor recreation resources and plan for future park and conservancy land demand. Acquire needed acreage as development occurs.
 - **Policy 1:** Utilize sensitive landscapes as conservancy areas that protect wildlife habitat, absorb rainfall and runoff, and provide passive recreational opportunities with minimal development.
 - **Policy 2:** Continue to support the rehabilitation and management of lakes, streams, and shorelands such as the Wisconsin River, Plover River, McDill Pond, and associated waterways.
- **Objective 3:** Work with and support the City's educational and job training institutions.
 - **Policy 1:** Enhance education and workforce readiness pipelines, ensuring residents have the education and skills needed to reach their full potential.
 - **Policy 2:** Connect residents with institutions that provide education, training, mentorship, and apprenticeship opportunities.
 - **Policy 3:** Support local school districts, universities, medical colleges, and technical schools to ensure a skilled workforce as younger generations comprise a smaller share of the overall population.
- **Objective 4:** Ensure access to utility services necessary to participate in high-growth and emerging industries.
 - **Policy 1:** Provide quality Broadband options while improving download/upload speeds.
 - **Policy 2:** Support alternative or public pathways to internet services, such as co-working locations (libraries and other institutions) and public internet.

Goal 4: Explore the expansion of renewable energy in the City in a way that does not interfere with future growth areas and enhance energy conservation.

- **Objective 1:** Support small-scale renewable energy projects that benefit businesses and residents.

- **Policy 1:** Maintain the City's Solsmart designation to stay informed of opportunities to create and expand small-scale solar energy facilities.
- **Policy 2:** Investigate opportunities for small-scale, onsite renewable energy production at public facilities.
- **Objective 2:** Support energy efficiency upgrades that reduce energy costs.
 - **Policy 1:** Partner with local organizations and State programs such as the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and Focus on Energy to distribute energy efficiency information and resources (see Chapter 3 for more housing-specific resources).