OPTIMIZING INVESTMENTS WITHIN THE SAWYER COUNTY/LAC COURTE OREILLES TRANSIT SYSTEM

Project 02-03
September 2008

Midwest Regional University Transportation Center
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Executive Summary

Project Summary

The purpose of the Optimizing Transportation Investments within the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) / Sawyer County (SC) Transit System project is to assess the Lac Courte Oreilles and Sawyer County community’s transportation research needs, strengthen collaboration between Sawyer County and the Lac Courte Oreilles community and will determine issues and opportunities for optimizing local and regional transportation investments. Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) faculty and students will work in consultation with various transportation agencies to assess community transportation needs, compile accurate demographic and economic profiles for the LCO and SC community, assess transit models with other tribal communities, and identify benefits of a formal collaboration between Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles. Optimizing transportation investments may reduce costs, increase accessibility, and decrease the environmental impacts of the system.

Background

The Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation is located near Hayward, Wisconsin, which is approximately 150 miles northeast of Minneapolis and 80 miles southeast of Duluth. Transportation barriers are a huge obstacle for many tribal members. Many people do not have transportation for employment, daycare, healthcare appointments, court appointments, or grocery shopping. This problem has been a topic of discussion for years both within the tribal community as well as the larger community of Sawyer County. In fact, the “LCO Rural Transportation Needs Feasibility Study” was conducted
in 1981 to address the same issues that we struggle with today. In a rural area, it is almost impossible to retain employment with no or unreliable transportation.

Utilizing Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Casino revenue, the LCO Transit Committee has worked with Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) students and other community partners/ volunteers to implement a joint mass transit system in conjunction with the surrounding Sawyer County Transit (SCT). The Sawyer County Transit system has now been in operation for 9 months and serves over 1200 community members per month. To date the LCO Transit side has been completely funded by Casino revenue and managed/operated by a group of volunteers, no formal analysis of the system has occurred. In an effort to sustain and improve the current successful system, the LCO/SC Transit committee is exploring federal and state aid in order to improve the efficiency of operation by expanding collaboration between LCO and SC. More efficient ways to manage its assets and integrate this mode into local and regional transportation plans is needed. LCOOCC faculty and students will work in consultation with various transportation agencies to assess community transportation needs, compile accurate demographic and economic profiles for the LCO and SC community, assess transit modes within other tribal communities, and identify the benefits of a formal collaboration between Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles.

**Process**

The research process included collaborations among many local and Tribal entities involved with the SC Transit and the LCO Transit Committee.
Two teams of people were assembled to serve as an advisory group to the project.

Contributions to and advice on the project varied amongst a group of staff from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, LCO Consolidated Family Services, LCO Planning Department, and Sawyer County Health and Human Services.

This first group was difficult to assemble and the staff members from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Northwest Regional Planning Commission were later unable to allocate time to the project. Contributions made by the other staff were significant. Unanticipated contributions to the project were also made by Don Chattfield of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Martin Forbes of Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and staff of WisDOT’s 5321 Program.

A more formal advisory group was assembled, comprised of professors from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, and staff from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Midwest Regional University Transportation Center (MRUTC). MRUTC staff members helped to assemble this advisory group.

Advisory Board meetings were held twice during the project and contributions were made in the form of comments during the initial phase of the project, within which several suggestions were made with respect to process and methods. Advisory board
members also provided input into the survey instruments and preliminary socioeconomic
data that was compiled by the research project assistant.

The informal advisory team did not meet formally under this effort. Instead these
members contributed to the project during regular Transit and Transportation Committee
meetings, which occurred at least once each month throughout the entire project.
Several strategic planning meetings occurred in addition to these larger group meetings
to accomplish more focused analysis of ridership data, route review, transit system driver
input sessions, cooperative agreement discussions, economic planning sessions and other
more informal data gathering efforts. Research project staff became intertwined in other
on-going efforts to streamline and improve transit system operations. They worked in
conjunction with the Transit System’s coordinator, drivers, dispatcher very closely
throughout the project. Meetings between the grant program administrator, the LCO
Tribal Governing Board, the LCO Tribe’s attorney and the LCO Casino’s general
manager also became vital to completing this project.

Data collected for the project involved a survey of other area tribal transit system
managers as well as one non-tribal transit system manager. These surveys were
completed either in face-to-face interviews, by email, or telephone. To conduct a
community transportation needs assessment a community survey was formulated to find
out how often the public was using the transit services, what were barriers to riding if
any, best marketing practices, as well as top reasons for needing transportation. The
locations from which the survey was given out were the LCO College, the LCO
Findings and Conclusions

LCO and Sawyer County have successfully collaborated on making joint applications to the 5311, the 5321 and subsequent WETAP grant programs. Formal Cooperative Agreement and Financial Agreements are in place and are working well as a mechanism for leveraging resources from each cooperating party. A formal joint government Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles Transit Commission (see Charter in Appendix I) has been employed and this body meets regularly and is facilitated by the System’s Mobility Manager. The Commission is comprised of three Sawyer County Board and Community members and three Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board and Community members. The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College has had very limited interaction with this Commission and the Transit System staff since the end of this research project.

This research project served to augment and provide detailed information needed within the developing framework of a jointly operated county-wide system. Research project staff continues to work on transportation-related projects in conjunction with undergraduate students at Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College. It is anticipated that updates to transit system routes will be formalized over time by making changes to the final route schedules and maps delivered at the end of the research project. The allocation of the data and programs needed for making these updates could occur between project staff and the Transit System office.
**Recommendations for Actions**

Beginning steps were taken to compile and develop a comprehensive map of the trail systems within Sawyer County. Due to a limited amount of staff time available beyond what was already being done within the project, it is suggested that the anticipated mobility manager take time to closely review existing trail systems, parking lot locations and opportunities for linkages between transit system routes.

At the close of the project, there was still no consensus amongst the partners as to which data entry form could work best, but it was anticipated that a more integrated system managed by a centralized “mobility manager” was desirable and feasible under the future planned vision of the program.

Project staff decided to leave opportunities for collaboration and inter-regional linkages between the SC/LCO System and both the BART and the RUSK County systems up to the proposed “mobility manager” and Transit System Board.

Identifying more ways to collaborate between Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles may leverage the capital costs and decrease the operating costs of the system.

**Demographic Information for Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles**

According to the Lac Courte Oreilles Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan, developed by the Lac Courte Oreilles Land Use Committee in conjunction with Northwest Regional Planning Commission, commented on by the Lac Courte Oreilles Community and
approved by the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board in October of 2006, the following demographic data is available for this research report.

Population is an important contributing factor to the pattern of settlement and development of an area. Significant increases or decreases in the number of inhabitants, along with the population characteristics of income, education, and age, all impact the area’s housing, economic development, land use, utility, community, transportation, and recreational needs. Examining past changes and present population characteristics enhances the ability to prepare for future needs.

In addition to knowing how many people live in Lac Courte Oreilles, it is important to know the key characteristics, such as race, age, and sex of the population. Table 1.4 provides the race of the population as a percentage of the total as well as the actual number for LCO.

| Table 1.4: LCO Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land Population by Race 2000 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                 | White         | Black or       | American        | Native Hawaiian| Some Other    | Two or More    |
|                                 |               | African        | Indian and      | Hawaiian and   | Race           | Races          |
|                                 |               | American       | Alaska Native   | Other Pacific  |                |                |
| Percent                         | 24.4%         | 0.1%           | 74.1%           | 0.0%           | 0.0%           | 0.2%           | 1.1%           |
| Number                          | 708           | 2              | 2,150           | 1              | 0              | 6              | 33             |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau SF 1

Figure 1.1 examines the age distribution for Lac Courte Oreilles residents in 1990 and 2000. In the years from 1990 to 2000, the age groups for LCO residents remained relatively stable except for three age groups that had percentage increases over 50 percent. There was approximately a 51 percent (145 persons) increase in the 35-44 age
group, a 64 percent (9 persons) increase in the over 85 age group, and a 76 percent (142 persons) increase in the 45-54 age group. Two age categories experienced a decrease, the under 5 and 25-34 age groups.

Shifts in the age structure of a community can affect a variety of services and needs within the community including schools, housing, transportation, and elderly care. Table 1.5 displays the distribution of the population for LCO by age categories for 1990 and 2000. State and national trends point to an aging population that will require more services. The under 5 age category showed the only numeric decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 9</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The median age of a Lac Courte Oreilles resident in 2000 was 31.5 years compared to 42.1 years for Sawyer County and 36.0 years for the State of Wisconsin (Table 1.6). All areas showed an increase from the 1990 median age. According to the Census Bureau, the increase in the median age reflects the aging of the baby boomers. The 76 percent jump in the population 45-54 years old (Figure 1.1) was due to the entry into this age group of the first of the “baby boom” generation.

The population pyramid in Figure 1.2 represents a visual depiction of the age distribution in 2000 for LCO. As shown in the chart, the age groups are fairly evenly divided among males and females.
More than any other type of data, income data indicates how an area is doing economically. Personal income has three sources – net earnings; income from dividends, interest, and rent; and receipts from transfer payments (such as Social Security, pensions, and welfare). Income data, which are by place of residence, can tell how much regional income is generated in aggregate, per capita (aggregate income divided by population), and per household (aggregated income divided by households). Income is measured several ways and this section explains and compares some of those statistics.

Per capita personal income (PCPI) is widely used and accepted as an indicator of economic well being of residents of an area. It provides a description of a region’s overall level of income. It is reported by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. PCPI is the income received from all sources and should not be confused with per capita money income (PCI), which is reported by the U.S Census Bureau. PCI involves generally traceable money from wages, interest, dividends, welfare program payments, etc. It does
not take into account money received from sale of property, money borrowed, exchange of money between relatives in same households, tax refunds, gifts, and insurance payments, etc. Thus, PCPI figures are always higher than PCI figures. Per capita personal income is only available on a county basis; therefore, PCI statistics are used to compare income levels between minor civil divisions, cities, villages, and other census places.

Table 1.8 displays several income level measurements for Lac Courte Oreilles, Sawyer County, and Wisconsin. All income levels for LCO residents are lower than the County levels and much lower than the State levels. This disparity is mainly due to the fact that net earnings from jobs, self-employment and proprietorships are lower in non-metropolitan areas and Sawyer County is entirely a rural, or non-metro, county. Overall, net earnings from jobs, self-employment and proprietorships, which make up the greatest share of total personal income, are lower in rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LCO</th>
<th>% of State</th>
<th>Sawyer County</th>
<th>% of State</th>
<th>Wisconsin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Capita Income</strong></td>
<td>$11,746</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>$17,634</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>$21,271</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>$25,764</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>$32,287</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>$43,791</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Median Family Income</strong></td>
<td>$26,759</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>$38,843</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
<td>$52,911</td>
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<td><strong>Percent of individuals below poverty level</strong></td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 SF 3; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Comparisons of several different measures of income levels are shown in Table 1.9 for Lac Courte Oreilles and surrounding communities. LCO has the lowest per capita and median family income but is second lowest in the median household income measurement comparison.
Table 1.9 Income Levels for Lac Courte Oreilles and Surrounding Communities

<table>
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<th>Per Capita Income</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Median Family Income</th>
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<td>Lac Courte Oreilles</td>
<td>$11,746</td>
<td>$25,764</td>
<td>$26,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Bass Lake</td>
<td>$15,026</td>
<td>$31,274</td>
<td>$32,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Hayward</td>
<td>$17,382</td>
<td>$36,895</td>
<td>$43,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Hayward</td>
<td>$16,658</td>
<td>$28,421</td>
<td>$36,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Couderay</td>
<td>$12,916</td>
<td>$24,861</td>
<td>$32,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Sand Lake</td>
<td>$18,322</td>
<td>$32,266</td>
<td>$37,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Hunter</td>
<td>$16,309</td>
<td>$30,208</td>
<td>$29,702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF 3

Per capita personal income is often used as a comparative income measure and population is a key component of that figure. PCPI is calculated by dividing total personal income by total population. Most income is earned by residents over 18 years old, but the younger population is included in the formula as well as the older population, which has a much lower earning capacity. Although Sawyer County’s PCPI is considerably lower than the PCPI in Wisconsin or the United States, it has been increasing at a faster rate. See Table 1.10 for PCPI figures for the years 1998 to 2002. The Sawyer County PCPI ranks 46th out of 72 counties in Wisconsin.

Table 1.10 Per Capita Personal Income

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<td>Sawyer County</td>
<td>$19,566</td>
<td>$20,730</td>
<td>$22,200</td>
<td>$23,168</td>
<td>$24,288</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
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<td>Non-metropolitan WI</td>
<td>$22,195</td>
<td>$22,900</td>
<td>$24,059</td>
<td>$24,833</td>
<td>$25,484</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>$26,175</td>
<td>$27,135</td>
<td>$28,573</td>
<td>$29,361</td>
<td>$30,050</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>$26,883</td>
<td>$27,939</td>
<td>$29,847</td>
<td>$30,527</td>
<td>$30,906</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis
Net earnings from jobs, self-employment, and proprietorships comprise the greatest share of total personal income in Sawyer County. However, net earnings in the County comprise only 54 percent of total income, which is less than both the state and national share of 68 percent. The reason for the difference is that the share of dividends, interest and rent and transfer payments, which include social security, is higher in Sawyer County. The higher share of transfer payments, plus an annual average wage that is much lower than in the State, contribute to a lower per capita personal income in the County.

**Lac Courte Oreilles Transportation Needs**

There have been a number of efforts aimed at developing a transit system for the Lac Courte Oreilles Community over the past 25 years. Little has been written to describe the history of this evolving history of documented transportation needs, opportunities and constraints.


A 1984 report prepared by Peter Schauer Associates describes a needs assessment process and outcomes on improving and coordinating transportation activities within the Lac Courte Oreilles Community.

In the early 1990’s, LCO Tribal Governing Board members and project directors worked with the LCO Casino staff to develop a shuttle service in conjunction with the
transportation services provided by the LCO Casino. This system served the entire reservation area using an on-demand mechanism, run by the LCO Casino receptionist.

Beginning in 2000, several LCO staff members, whom were concerned with the transportation needs of their respective clients, the current transportation services offered by Sawyer County, and the services provided by the LCO Casino shuttle. Upon review of the services provided by Sawyer County, it became apparent that the majority of those systems’ routes and service areas were outside of the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation. The systems’ were in essence missing large population areas within the LCO reservation boundaries. The group noted the need to discuss Sawyer County transportation service constraints and the need for a more comprehensive transit system; thus the formation of the LCO Transit Committee occurred in May of 2000. In late June of 2000 the LCO Transit Committee invited Sawyer County representatives to a meeting to discuss the coordination of public transportation efforts. A joint committee was established between the LCO Casino shuttles and Sawyer County shuttles. The joint committee met periodically to review transit system operations. By mid July the Sawyer County Transit shuttle re-routed through the LCO reservation making a stop at the LCO Commercial Center. Discussions continued with Sawyer County regarding converting the LCO Casino Shuttle into a new 2 route system that could be coordinated with Sawyer County shuttles to provide access to Hayward. In September a 3-month trial period began for coordinating the route system. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed for operation of the transit system between LCO and Sawyer County. As ridership data steadily increased over time it was decided in November by the joint committee that the
trial period would be extended through winter months until February. In February, the LCO Transit Committee met with Casino staff and the LCO Tribal Governing Board to discuss continuation of the transit. The Tribal Governing Board authorized continuation of the transit until other funding could be secured. The Sawyer County representative also submitted a Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program Grant (WETAP) and secured funding; the representative did not contact LCO Tribal Governing Board prior to submittal, but did agree verbally to transfer $5,000 - $8,000 worth of funding to LCO Casino to assist with transfer of all dispatching services. Sawyer County also negotiated a contract with Motorola for new radio service for transit system shuttles.

In June of 2001 members from Sawyer County, LCO, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Northwest Regional Planning Commission and other representatives met for information on federal and state transit funding programs and application processes.

In July of 2001 the Joint Transportation Committee met to review driver’s meeting comments and to further discuss the application process for the 5311 Program.

**Background Information on Other Tribal Transit Systems**

The efforts envisioned in the original scope of this project included interviewing four different transit systems in place within Wisconsin. During the course of this project efforts were made to set up meetings with the transit systems in operation at the Menominee, Oneida, Bad River Tribe’s and with Rusk County communities. Refer to map 20-1 for locations for the above referenced transit systems. Interviews were conducted at Oneida and Menominee and limited phone conversations were held with Bad River and Rusk County.
Research staff took the advice of the formal advisory board members and contacted Menomonie, Oneida, and Bad River transit system contacts. Information was also received from the Red Lake Transit System via the Minnesota Department of Transportation. In addition to contacting staff associated with tribal-based systems, attempts were made to contact staff at the Rusk County Transit System.

Map 20-1: Proposed Transit System Study Sites
These systems all receive 5311 funds and operate significantly different types of systems. Funding is blended in different ways and it was desired to understand the differences in services offered and coverage.

Mid-way through the project, contact with the Minnesota Department of Transportation yielded a report on the Red Cliff Community’s transit system. This system provides a very limited amount of service between the main population centers.

In an effort to systematically collect data from each of the systems, staff developed a series of survey questions (Appendix A) that could lead the way into the matrix of social, political and economic issues pertinent to the operation of transit systems.

**BART SYSTEM (Bad River)** - Staff within the BART System were contacted numerous times within the study period for information and in an attempt to schedule a face-to-face meeting to administer the system survey, and to discuss potential future regional linkages between BART and the LCO/Sawyer County systems. Several contacts were made with transportation staff at the Bad River Community and at the BART office, but both efforts produced little results. During the timeframe of this study, the system appeared to be in transition in a number of ways. First, the system manager left his position and there was no staff person with the institutional memory to complete the survey. Due to the political situation, transportation staff at Bad River was also unable to respond to the survey and to phone interview questions.

**ONEIDA Transit System** – The Transit System survey tool was sent to staff at the Oneida Transit System. Staff was extremely helpful in completing written comments based on the survey questions in addition to allocating time for the meeting.
MENOMONIE Transit System – The Transit System survey tool was provided to staff at the Menominee Transit System prior to the face-to-face meeting. The meeting with Shawn Clemens allowed for enough time to discuss some of the questions on the survey form; however, Mr. Clemens was interrupted during the meeting by a transit matter and needed to postpone the meeting to a follow-up phone call. Upon calling and emailing him several times, it appeared to be less and less likely that the interview would be completed.

RUSK County Transit – The timing of the survey and face-to-face meeting was very bad in the case of Rusk County. During the same timeframe, Ladysmith was hit by a tornado which made it impossible to connect with the staff necessary for the project. The Transit System survey tool was finally faxed to their transit system office and supposedly passed along to their Mobility Manager, but the timing was off and it became impossible to fit the survey and follow-up meeting within the timeframe of this study.

Evaluation of Survey Findings

Project staff talked with advisory committee members about how to assess the needs of the Sawyer County and the Lac Courte Oreilles Community further. A decision was made to administer a community survey (Appendix B) to augment other data that would be compiled due to the existing Sawyer County WETAP Project. A more integrated plan for future WETAP applications was devised throughout this project due to the Tribe’s and Sawyer County’s growing interest in merging and leveraging existing resources, equipment, and services. This research project filled a need for quantifying and analyzing ridership data, accessibility and safety data, as well as some assistance w(review of cost-savings by changing fuel purchases from LCO Quick Stop to Sawyer
County Highway Department. Some work was done in terms of attempting to develop a fuel contract w/Lac Courte Oreilles. Due to a lack of leadership and expertise in economic analysis, the Transportation Committee, led by Pete Sanders of Sawyer County suggested switching to Sawyer County Highway Department.

As part of the requirements of the WETAP grant, Sawyer County Health and Human Services was responsible for administering a ridership survey during the same general timeframe of this research project. In an effort to avoid confusion between the survey efforts, the community survey was postponed until well after the WETAP survey was completed. Since the WETAP survey targeted transit system riders, this project’s survey was designed for all segments of the SC and LCO Community.

**Lac Courte Oreilles Community Transportation Needs Survey**

**Design Community Survey Tool**

Research staff reviewed the WETAP survey instrument and considered analysis needs and unknown pieces of information prior to developing draft survey questions. Following its completion, it was disseminated amongst the formal and informal advisory groups. Comments on the survey were received from Sawyer County Extension staff, LCO Family Services staff, and from members of the formal advisory committee. These changes were incorporated into the final survey (see Appendix B) prior to administration.

In addition to the community survey, a survey template was developed for use with advisory committee members and others within the Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles community. This survey would be administered in a more informal person-to-person interview/meeting. This survey was not reviewed by either the informal or formal
advisory groups, but served to keep project staff organized as they attempted to gather additional input to satisfy the need for the local advisory group.

Conduct Community Survey to Determine Existing and Future Transportation Needs

As noted in the work plan for this project, the community survey was to be conducted by the undergraduate student worker employed by this project. Due to personal reasons, the undergraduate student worker hired under the project was unable to complete her job and resigned just one day prior to the first scheduled time for administering the survey. Due to further complications imposed by LCOOCC administration and College policy, the timing of the survey and the methods envisioned were unable to be met. Instead of keeping with standard surveying procedures, having one person tasked with administering the survey tool, project staff and other community volunteers pitched in to administer the survey in public places that guaranteed some participation within the limited timeframe of this project. The locations from which the survey was given out were the LCO College, the LCO Commercial Center, and the LCO Tribal Government Building on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation, Marketplace Foods and Wal-Mart in Hayward. A total of 66 community surveys were completed by community members. It is a recognized fact, that standard consistency and sampling methods were not followed in this case; however, the results are reported here and may serve to augment this study in several ways.
Community Survey Results

First on the survey, respondents were asked, “Do you ride the Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles (SC/LCO) Transit System Regularly?” By regularly meaning either: daily; weekly; monthly; or not at all. Of the 66 respondents, 71% stated they do not ride the transit system at all; 15% ride the transit on a weekly basis; 6% ride the transit on a monthly basis; 2% of respondents ride the transit on a daily basis. See chart 25-1 depicting ridership of the Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System.

Chart 25-1: Ridership of the Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System

Respondents were also asked how many vehicles your household has. Chart 26-1 depicts how many vehicles per household each respondent has. Forty-five percent of respondents stated their household has 2 vehicles; 26% of households have 3 or more vehicles; 24% of households have 1 vehicle; while 5% of household did not have a vehicle.
Chart 26-1: Number of Vehicles per Household

Chart 26-2 depicts which mode of transportation the respondent usually uses. Seventy-nine percent usually use their personal automobile; 12% ride in an automobile belonging to a friend or relative; 4% state they walk; and 4% responded that they ride the Sawyer County/LCO bus/van.

Chart 26-2: Mode of Transportation Used
When asked if you have ever used the door-step service that the SC/LCO Transit System provides 90% stated they have never used the service; 8% have used the door-stop service; and 2% did not respond. Chart 27-1 depicts the number of respondents who have used the door-stop service.

Chart 27-1: Number of Respondents Who Have Used the Door-Stop Service

The next question asked respondents what is the best way for you to get information about the SC/LCO Transit System. Many of the respondents listed more than 1 answer. The top 3 preferred way to receive information was stated as being from brochures/posters which tallied 29% of responses; 24% stated the newspaper was the preferred way to receive information; and 15% stated the preferred way was through mailings. Other choices included: phone, internet, radio, public kiosk, and other; refer to
chart 28-1 for a pie chart depicting all the preferred ways to receive information about the LCO/SC Transit.

**Chart 28-1: Preferred Way to Receive Information about the SC/LCO Transit System**

When surveyed as to the top five reasons for needing transportation respondents stated for employment as the number one reason with 19% of responses; followed closely by medical appointments with 18% - the other highest responses included: shopping, entertainment, and school. Chart 29-1 depicts the top five needs for transportation by the Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles Community.
Seventy-four percent of respondents stated they do not have a need for public transportation outside of Sawyer County. Twenty-three percent of those surveyed did see a need for services outside of Sawyer County. Three percent of those surveys did not respond either way. Of the respondents who did say there was a need for public transportation outside of Sawyer County, the routes or locations that they saw the biggest need to commute between were to, Duluth, Minneapolis, Rice Lake, or other. Chart 30-1 depicts the survey responses for the need for public transportation services outside of Sawyer County and where the destination need is.
Chart 30-1: Need for Public Transportation Outside of Sawyer County

- Yes: 23%
- No: 74%
- Not Stated: 3%

Chart 30-2: Barriers to Riding the SC/LCO Transit System

Barriers to Riding the SC/LCO Transit System

- Not in My Area: 16%
- Not During My Time of Need: 19%
- I have Special Needs: 3%
- Trip takes too Long: 10%
- Don't Understand Schedule: 3%
- Other: 3%

Reported Barriers: 39%
Reported No Barriers: 56%
Did Not Respond: 5%
Chart 30-2 depicts whether or not respondents answered the question related to whether or not there are barriers that prevent them from accessing the Transit System; if they had answered yes there were barriers, which 39% of respondents did, the chart then lists what those barriers were. The number one stated barrier was that the service is not available during their times of need, which 49% of those respondents who said there were barriers responded. Other barriers stated included: the trip takes too long, not in my area, do not understand the schedule, and other.

**Comprehensive Transit Needs Assessment for Sawyer County and the Lac Courte Oreilles Community**

Transit ridership data was compiled to assess the need for improving the data collection method. Research project staff in conjunction with transit drivers, managers and committee members met together to review the data collection forms used by Sawyer County for the WETAP Program, LCO Casino for the LCO Shuttle (see Appendix H). Staff discovered there was many missing pieces of information and spent an unanticipated number of hours on this unplanned task.

Sawyer County collects ridership data based on the purpose of the trip. This is apparently necessary for them to analyze whether they are serving a specific target population required by their funding source. They also collect total time of service and total miles. The data that is collected in reported monthly. This data can be utilized to analyze the system’s efficiency by comparing ridership numbers with driver hours and miles traveled; if other costs of running the system: gasoline, maintenance, repair, insurance, and cost of the vehicle are collected and analyzed.
LCO collects ridership numbers based on where the riders get off the system. They are collected by community/stop for the purpose of analyzing the need for service in those areas (i.e.: if there is lack of ridership for an area, the bus may change that area from a scheduled route to on-call). The data are recorded daily by route and run.

At the close of the project, there was still no consensus amongst the partners as to which form could work best, but it was anticipated that a more integrated system managed by a centralized “mobility manager” was desirable and feasible under the future planned vision of the program.

Graph 33-1 depicts SC/LCO Transit ridership data for 2001. Total ridership numbers between the LCO North shuttle, LCO South shuttle, and Sawyer County was 3,248 riders in January of 2001. The total ridership stayed consistently over 3,000 riders every month and for the last five months of 2001 stayed above 4,000 riders; with peak ridership occurring in October of 2001 with 4,287 riders. Graph 34-1 shows a comparison of
ridership data between the LCO North and LCO South shuttles from the same monthly
time periods between 2000 and 2001. Data was not available for either shuttle in
November of 2000. Ridership numbers for the LCO North shuttle went from 84 in
2000 to 940 in 2001 in September; ridership numbers consistently doubled or even tripled
between the same time frame from 2000 to 2001.
Identification of Transit Model at Lac Courte Oreilles

The identification of adapting a transit model for implementation at LCO or further developing the LCO/SC into a new model was reviewed. Based on the limited data gathered during this phase of the project and the political climate and intentions of both the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe and Sawyer County Government, much progress was made during the research timeline associated with this project, in terms of modifications to routes, improvements in technology, and efficiency of operations. It is impossible to completely separate out the progress and accomplishments made within just this study and that which was made collectively by the Sawyer County Transportation Committee, the active local Research Advisory Team (RAT) members, the LCOOCC staff involved in this project, and the employees of the Transit System itself. For the most part, all parties worked long and hard to make improvements to the system. Some were made due to the synergistic efforts made within this research project. Others were made by non-project staff, but are reported here within this final report.
Although project staff had very limited ability and results in the area of other model analysis, it became very apparent that the Lac Courte Oreilles and Sawyer County Transit System was a very unique and progressive model in the making. It appeared that no other Tribe had cooperated to the extent that was happening within this project. The Oneida and Menominee systems were entities operated separately beyond a few linkage points. The BART system seemed to be in great flux at the time of this project. Although no formal interviews and no survey were completed, it was apparent there were political issues and constraints there which made collaboration and leveraging resources very difficult in this case. The RUSK County system focuses mostly on the Ladysmith area. Project staff decided to leave opportunities for collaboration and inter-regional linkages between the SC/LCO System and both the BART and the RUSK County systems up to the proposed “mobility manager” and Transit System Board.

**Opportunities for Optimizing Transportation Investments**

Research staff members spent many hours determining optimal routes, pick-up/drop-off locations within each community, and preferred hours of service. The optimal pick-up/drop-off sites were determined to include sites that are a natural central location in a community, area that is safe for riders to wait for the bus, and in areas that are safe for riders to load and unload from the bus/ shuttle. (See Appendix E for optimal locations) This is another case where the research project dovetailed with the immediate needs and desires of those tasked with managing and operating the system. It became routine procedure for staff in conjunction with other LCOOCC GIS Lab staff, along with the transit drivers and dispatcher to compile and update monthly ridership data, develop
tables for the Transportation Committee, and follow up by considering other transit and rider comments necessary for modifying the system to provide for optimal routes, pick-up/drop-off locations and preferred hours of service. A specific example of how this data was used within the timeframe of the project can be seen on the map in 36-1. This map shows ridership by community for the LCO north route of the Transit System.

Map 36-1: LCO Transit Ridership March 2001
A map of original, intermediate, and final transit system routes (see Appendix C, D, F, and G) was also developed and is helpful in understanding how decisions, made by the Transportation Committee and based, in part, on some of the outcomes of this research project, were made and impacted by this project.

**Increase Accessibility, Improve Safety and Reduce Environmental Impacts of the System**

All programs and funding supporting the system were analyzed for specifications in terms of vehicle type, accessibility, safety, fuel efficiency, and general environmental pollution/inefficiency potential. Due to the constraints imposed by the 5321 Program, the vehicle type available to the System was limited to the Dodge vehicle.

All three routes were analyzed and it was determined that the LCO North Route had the highest ridership and that the feasibility of re-distributing vehicles could improve the gas mileage. More specifically, it was suggested that the Sawyer County Bus be used for the LCO North Route since it holds the highest ridership level.

The constraints imposed by the 5321-mandated Dodge van vehicles were described and demonstrated by several drivers and community members. It is evident that persons with larger body types may have difficulty fitting into the front seats of the vehicle and that it is virtually impossible for them to make it into the back seats of the vehicle. This is especially problematic if there is any type of disability or physical impairment of any sort.
Based on the information received by staff during an interview with the manager of Sawyer County’s Aging Unit Transportation Program, it appears there might be some racial tensions and potential discrimination in terms of range of services provided, limitations and restrictions imposed in terms of pick-up locations and general access to the system. According to the interview, services are provided to the elderly and disadvantaged within Sawyer County as long as they reside within a 5-mile radius of Hayward (see map 38-1). Drivers are given specific instructions not to service the LCO Casino and this appears to be a restriction imposed by the manager of the Aging Unit transportation director. Staff involved in this research project relayed information from the interview to the Sawyer County Transportation Committee which includes several staff members from Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Entities.

Map 38-1: Sawyer County Aging Unit Service Area Map
Inquiries were made with Wisconsin Department of Transportation regarding alternate fuels and vehicles. Due to the rural area and the lack of availability of fuels, this didn’t appear to be feasible. There was on-going interest in reducing the cost of fuel during every meeting of the Committee. Towards the end of this research project, plans were being made to develop an agreement between Sawyer County and the LCO Tribe to purchase fuel through the Sawyer County Highway Department rather than through the LCO QuickStop. Prices were significantly lower and an agreement was feasible through the County due to the assistance of staff from Sawyer County Health and Human Services.

**Multi-Modal and Intra-Regional Linkages within the Greater Regional Transportation System**

Throughout the project, the meetings of the Transit Committee and then the Sawyer County Transportation Committee reflected a desire to link the Sawyer County-Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System to other regional systems. Several good linkage points were noted due to the preliminary analysis conducted within this study. Within Hayward, the Chamber of Commerce Visitor’s Center is a central location within the city limits to serve as a hub for inter-regional linkages. Linkages between Sawyer County and the BART system and Rusk County were explored but deemed not feasible at this time. In the future it may be possible to explore options with Bad River as they plan to split off and create their own system (see Map 40-1 for Potential Inter-Regional Linkages of Northern Wisconsin Rural Transportation Systems).
Conclusion

Since the end of this project, LCO and Sawyer County have successfully collaborated on making joint applications to the 5311, the 5321 and subsequent WETAP grant programs. Formal Cooperative Agreement and Financial Agreements are in place and are working well as a mechanism for leveraging resources from each cooperating party. A formal
joint government Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles Transit Commission (see Charter in Appendix I) has been employed and this body meets regularly and is facilitated by the System’s Mobility Manager. The Commission is comprised of three Sawyer County Board and Community members and three Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board and Community members. The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College has had very limited interaction with this Commission and the Transit System staff since the end of this research project.

This research project served to augment and provide detailed information needed within the developing framework of a jointly operated county-wide system. Research project staff continues to work on transportation-related projects in conjunction with undergraduate students at Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College. It is anticipated that updates to transit system routes will be formalized over time by making changes to the final route schedules and maps delivered at the end of the research project. The allocation of the data and programs needed for making these updates could occur between project staff and the Transit System office.

**Recommendations**

Beginning steps were taken to compile and develop a comprehensive map of the trail systems within Sawyer County. Due to a limited amount of staff time available beyond what was already being done within the project, it is suggested that the anticipated mobility manager take time to closely review existing trail systems, parking lot locations and opportunities for linkages between transit system routes.
At the close of the project, there was still no consensus amongst the partners as to which data entry form could work best, but it was anticipated that a more integrated system managed by a centralized “mobility manager” was desirable and feasible under the future planned vision of the program.

Project staff decided to leave opportunities for collaboration and inter-regional linkages between the SC/LCO System and both the BART and the RUSK County systems up to the proposed “mobility manager” and Transit System Board.

Identifying more ways to collaborate between Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles may leverage the capital costs and decrease the operating costs of the system.
APPENDIX A

“Optimizing Investments Within the Sawyer County/Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System”

Regional Transit System Survey
(Personal Interview)

1) How long has your system been in operation and how did it start?

2) What are the sources of funding for your system – local, state, federal, private (ask for copies of grant reports and/or applications) Has this changed over time? Do you anticipate significant changes in your funding structure over the next 2-3 years? If so, please describe..

3) Please describe your system’s capital and operating expenses – will elaborate more on this by phone/in person.

4) What are the responsibilities of your system coordinator/mobility manager position?

5) Please describe the salary ranges for transit system employees.

6) Describe the structure/make-up of your transportation board/commission. Does this board/commission oversee all transportation services provided in your county?

7) How do you collect rider ship data (ask for copy of tally sheet/form)?

8) What is your fee schedule (ask for copy of brochure/PR materials)?

9) Please describe any safety issues/concerns related to your system.

10) Please describe (request copies) all policies related to your system.

11) Where do you purchase gasoline for your vehicles? Please describe any purchase agreements you have in place.

12) Have you ever considered moving towards the use of alternative fuels?

13) In what other ways have you/could you reduce (d) the environmental impacts of your system?

14) Please describe your PR efforts.
15) Is your system information available on a web site?

16) Do you utilize Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/automated mapping to manage any part of your system?

17) Please describe how your system operates (request copies) – route schedules, passes, information hotlines.

18) What kind of assessment process do you use for your system – surveys required for funding programs, etc. (request copies of surveys)

19) Who prepares your brochures, passes, etc.

20) How does your system relate to other modes of transportation in your region?

21) Please describe other transportation options within your region. Do you have plans to collaborate with the other transportation providers?

22) Please describe intergovernmental arrangements related to your system (ask for copies of intergov’t agreements).

23) Does your system operate in cooperation with any private transportation services?

24) Do you currently work with the regional/urban planning organization in your region – and if so, how?

25) Does your community have an overall transportation plan? Is the transit system a major/minor component within this plan? Who prepares this plan and how do you interact with them?

26) What social, political, and/or economic opportunities and barriers have you encountered within your system’s development and operation?

27) How have you dealt with/overcome the barriers?

28) Does your community need more transportation services -

25) Do you feel the funding sources available for transit systems are sufficient?

26) Do you have suggestions for how these programs could be improved?
APPENDIX B

“Optimizing Investments Within the Sawyer County/Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System”
Community Survey

We are administering this survey as part of the LCO Ojibwa Community College’s Transit Research Project.

1) Do you ride the Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles (SC/LCO) Transit System Regularly?
   By regularly meaning: Daily? ____ Weekly? ____ Monthly? ____ Not at all

   Do you live in Sawyer County? _____ Yes _____ No

   If yes, in which part of Sawyer County/LCO do you live:

   _____ One of the LCO Communities – Please name
   ________________________________
   _____ NW portion of Sawyer County
   _____ NE portion of Sawyer County
   _____ SW portion of Sawyer County
   _____ SE portion of Sawyer County
   _____ Do not live in Sawyer County

2) How many vehicles do you have in your household?

   _____ 0
   _____ 1
   _____ 2
   _____ 3 or more

3) Which mode of transportation do you usually use?

   _____ Walking  _____ Biking  _____ Automobile
   _____ Taxicab  _____ SC/LCO Bus/Van
   _____ Special Program Van/Bus, please name
   ________________________________
   _____ Other, please describe
   ________________________________

4) Which mode of transportation would you prefer to use?

   _____ Walking  _____ Biking  _____ Automobile
   _____ Taxicab  _____ SC/LCO Bus/Van
5) Have you ever utilized a public transit system in another community?

- Yes, If so please name the community (ies)
- No

6) How did you first hear about the SC/LCO Transit System?

- Sawyer Co. Record
- Community members
- System brochures
- Casino
- Van/Bus on the road
- Other, Please describe

7) Have you used the door-step service that the SC/LCO Transit System provides?

- Yes  
- No

If yes, how have you used it?

8) Are you aware of all of the transportation services provided in Sawyer County (please check all that you are aware of)?

- Sawyer County/Lac Courte Oreilles Transit System
- Sawyer County Aging Unit Bus
- Senior Resource Center Escort Service
- North Wisconsin Travel (NWT) Shuttle – Charter & Rental
- Cindy’s Taxi Service
- AMBU-Vans Transportation Specialists
- Handi-Lift
9) What is the best way for you to get information about the SC/LCO Transit System?

- [ ] Brochures/Posters
- [ ] Phone
- [ ] Mailings
- [ ] Newspaper
- [ ] Internet
- [ ] Public Kiosk (i.e.: Computer terminal at Chamber of Commerce, Sawyer County Courthouse, LCO Tribal Office, or other public locations)
- [ ] Other, please describe

10) Please check your top five reasons for needing transportation:

- [ ] Job
- [ ] School
- [ ] Shopping
- [ ] Medical appointments
- [ ] Legal appointments
- [ ] Social Services
- [ ] Entertainment
- [ ] Casino
- [ ] Gov’t/Agency meetings
- [ ] Other, please describe

11) Do you have a need for public transportation to travel outside of Sawyer County?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes please list the places that you need to go

12) Does the cost (currently 25 cents) of riding the Transit System prevent you from riding?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

13) Are there other barriers that prevent you from accessing the Transit System?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, please check the barriers you face in accessing the system:

- [ ] Service is not available to my area. Please describe the area:
- [ ] Service is not available during my times of need.
____ I have special needs which cannot be met by the current transit system,
    Please list your special needs:
    ________________________________________________________________

____ It takes too long to get where I want to go or to get back home.
____ I don’t understand the schedules.
____ Other, Please describe ________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to help us with this survey.
APPENDIX C

Map of Transit Routes with Initial Collaboration between Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles
APPENDIX D

Map of Early Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles Transit Routes
APPENDIX E

Map of Optimal Pick-up/Drop-off Sites for the Lac Courte Oreilles/ Sawyer County Transit System

Optimal Stop sites include:

* areas that are a natural central location in a community,

* areas that are safe for riders to wait for the bus, or

* areas that are safe for riders to load and unload from the bus.
APPENDIX F

Map of Current Sawyer County/Lac Courte Oreilles Transit Routes

Sawyer County/Lac Courte Oreilles Transit

SC/LCO Transit Routes
- All Routes
- LCO North Route
- LCO South Route
- SC Shuttle Route
- SC Van Route

LCO Communities
Lac Courte Oreilles

N

52
APPENDIX G

Comparison Map between Early and Current Sawyer County/ Lac Courte Oreilles Transit Routes

Black = Early Route
Red Dotted Line = Current Route
**SC/LCO Ridership Data Collection Form Comparison**

### Sawyer County Data Collection:

#### Purpose = TANF Eligible

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<th>Total Time</th>
<th>Total Miles</th>
<th>TSI</th>
<th>Aging</th>
<th>Gen Public</th>
<th>Med Asst</th>
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- Monthly Avg.
- Weekly Avg.
- Daily Avg.

### LCO Data Collection:

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<td><strong>Total/Route/Day:</strong></td>
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</table>

- Note: Items in Red are not part of the actual form, but can be inferred from the data collected.
APPENDIX I

CHARTER

SAWYER/ LCO TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The parties to this Charter agree to and do hereby create a commission to be known as the “Sawyer/LCO Transportation Commission”.

ARTICLE I

CREATION, NAME, PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

Section 1 - Authority: This Commission is created under, by virtue of and pursuant to the provisions of Sec. 66.0301, Wis. Stats. as amended.

Section 2 - Name: The Commission shall be known as the “Sawyer/LCO Transportation Commission” hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”.

Section 3 - Purpose: To provide, preserve, promote, protect, plan, assist, finance, acquire, operate, maintain and enhance existing and future transportation systems in Sawyer County, Wisconsin and on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation.

Section 4 - Definitions: For the purpose of this agreement:
1. “Transportation System” means any public or private passenger or freight transportation facility or operation including, but not limited to motorbuses or any other systems of public transportation utilized by, or for the benefit of the citizens of Wisconsin. The term “transportation system” will be broadly construed to include auxiliary facilities such as but not limited to depots, maintenance facilities, and motor vehicle parking areas.
2. “Governing body” means (1) the common council of a city; (2) the board of trustees or board of supervisors of a village or town; (3) the board or supervisors of a county; (4) the tribal council of a federally recognized Indian tribe or Band; or (5) the Board of Commissioners or trustees of a mass transit commission, district or authority.
3. “Commission” means the Board of Commissioners of the Sawyer County/LCO Transportation Commission.
4. “Member” means a municipality or a Tribe, which is a member of the Commission under the terms of Article II of this Charter.
5. “Commissioner” means a person designated by a Member or by the Board pursuant to ARTICLE II, Sec. 10 to serve on the Board of the Commission.
7. “LCO Tribe” means the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Creators: The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, and Sawyer County are the creating members of this Commission.

Section 2 - Member Eligibility and Procedure: Other municipalities within Sawyer County that are recipients of urban Federal Section 5311 Transportation Assistance Funds are eligible for membership upon ordinance of their governing bodies accepting this Charter, filing a certified copy of such ordinance with Commission, and approval by a majority vote of the Board. The municipality shall designate the name of their representatives to the Board. These municipalities shall be members of the Commission subject to compliance with Wis. Statutes with rights and responsibilities as specified in the by-laws.

Section 3 - Financial Contributions: Any member that fails to comply with Article VI, Section 5 (payment of allocated cost) shall, upon resolution of the Commission, cease to be a member in good standing, and its representatives on the Commission shall be ineligible to vote until payment is made.

Section 4 - Withdrawal: Any member may withdraw from the Commission upon a majority vote of its governing body.

Section 5 - Number of Commissioners Per Member: The number of Commissioners representing each member shall, as closely as possible, be equal to that member’s proportionate share of the cost of operating the transit system with each member having at least one Commissioner. Original membership Commissioners shall consist of:

    Lac Courte Oreilles - 3
    Sawyer County        - 3

Each representative shall have 1 vote.
Section 6 - Term: The Commissioners shall serve for a period of two (2) years, two (one from each member) to be appointed each year so as to provide a staggering of terms.

Section 7 - Compensation: Commissioners shall not be paid by the Commission but shall be compensated for authorized travel and other expenses.

Section 8 - Removal: A commissioner may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Commission or by a majority of the governing body of the appointing member for misconduct, malfeasance or neglect of duty in office. Any vacancy so created shall be filled as provided in Section 10.

Section 9 - Succession: A commissioner shall hold office until his or her successor has been appointed, except in the case of removal pursuant to Art. 11, Sec. 8.

Section 10 - Vacancies: Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by the appointing member within sixty (60) days after occurrence of the vacancy; or by the Commission within thirty (30) days thereafter if not made within said 60 day period by the appointing member.

Section 11 - Indemnification: The Commission agrees to hold harmless or indemnify its directors, officers, commissioners, employees and agents against any claims or judgements arising out of, or in connection with, their work under the provisions of this Charter. The Commission shall seek appropriate counsel to defend any claims filed against these individuals concerning work done under the Charter, and shall pay for such legal services.

Section 12 - Liquidization: In the event of liquidization, the assets shall be used for payment of the obligations and debts of the Commission, and the remaining assets, if any, shall be distributed to the members in ratio to past capital contributions by those remaining members.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - Officers: The Commission shall at its first official meeting elect one of its members as Chairman, one as Vice-Chairman, one Secretary and one Treasurer. The posts of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by one member, at the discretion of the Commissioners. The Commission shall thereafter elect officers at its May meeting.

Section 2 - Quorum: The presence of a simple majority of the commissioners of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for Commission action. Any number of Commissioners may adjourn a meeting to a later date.

Section 3 - Majority: All resolutions, ordinances and by-laws must be approved by a majority of the Commissioners present, unless otherwise specified in this Charter.

Section 4 - By-laws: The Chairman shall have the power to designate a by-laws committee. By-laws shall contain the committee structure, the rights and responsibilities of Commissioners and general operating procedures of the Commission.

ARTICLE IV

POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

Section 1 - The Commission under this Charter may exercise the power granted by law from time to time to its members. If these members have varying powers of duties under the law, each may act under the Charter to the extent of its lawful powers and duties. Thus, the Commission has the status of a municipality as defined in Sec. 66.30 Wis. Stat. This section shall supersede any conflicting Charter provisions, and shall be liberally construed. The Commission especially possesses all the powers of the members relating to the promotion and operation of transportation systems, which further the purposes of the Commission as expressed in Article I, Section 3 of this Charter. The Commission’s power includes, but is not limited to the following:

(a) To purchase, lease, use, sell, subsidize, contract for, own, operate or
provide for the operation of any transportation system or any part thereof or any property
or franchise necessary or desirable for the purpose of the Commission, with or from any
governmental or private body, including the right to contract for management or any other services;

(b) To conduct or contract for transportation studies and planning, and to coordinate these plans with any other political subdivision or public agency, including Wisconsin State agencies;

(c) To employ a Transit Manager and such other employees as it deems desirable to accomplish its purposes;

(d) To make, amend and repeal all by-laws, rules and regulations not inconsistent with the purposes of this agreement as deemed necessary to the discharge of the powers, duties and functions of the Commission;

(e) To establish and alter rates, fares, and other charges for services and facilities;

(f) To establish and alter schedules and routes;

(g) To apply for and/or accept gifts or grants of money or other property;

(h) To promulgate policies which may affect the operational efficiencies of the transportation system;

(i) To adopt, use and alter at will a corporate seal;

(j) To do all acts and things necessary or convenient for the conduct of its business and the general welfare of the Commission in order to carry out the powers granted to it by this Charter or any other law.

Section 2 - Board of Commissioners: All actions of the Sawyer County/LCO Transportation Commission shall be exercised under the control and direction of the Commission.

Section 3 - Financing: The Commission, upon approval of the members, may under Section 66.30 (3m), Wis. Stats. finance the acquisition, development, remodeling, construction of buildings and facilities for purposes of the Commission under Sec. 66.066, Wis. Stats. Members may jointly or separately finance such projects, or an agreed share of the cost thereof, under Chapter 67, Wis. Stats. The Commission may exercise any power of any of its members to borrow funds in the furtherance of the Commission’s contractual functions.
ARTICLE V

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Section 1 - Intergovernmental Agreements: This Commission may enter into agreements under
Sec. 66.0301, Wis. Stats. and any future amendments to this section, with any municipality, as defined in Sec. 66.0301, Wis. Stats. or with any private entity or Tribe.

ARTICLE VI

FINANCING

Section 1 - Budget Preparation: The Transit Manager or any other person as directed by the Commission shall, annually, before the 15th day of September, prepare the operating budget, and shall present it to the Commission for consideration and approval. Approval of the budget shall be accomplished prior to expenditure of funds in the following fiscal year beginning on January first.

Section 2 - Budget Review: The Commission shall have full authority to amend in any manner the proposed budget, and before final action on the budget, shall send copies of it to the members for review and approval.

Section 3 - Budget Hearing: The Commission shall establish a date and place for public hearing and review of the proposed budget before final approval is made thereon.

Section 4 - Final Approval: Final approval of the budget shall be made by the Commission. Upon final approval of the budget, the Commission shall certify it to each member together with a statement of the member’s share thereof, which shall be determined as follows:

1. The cost of transit service shall be divided proportionately among the members.

2. Cash contributions from members can be reduced by the provision of “in kind”
service or “soft” federal or state match items.

Section 5 - Capital Expenditures: Each member shall pay a proportionate share of Capital costs.

Section 6 - Payment: Each member shall pay its allocated cost within thirty (30) days after the start of the new fiscal year. Allocated cost shall be determined by the financial agreement. Budget allocations as provided for in Section 4 hereof, approved by members and included in such respective budgets, shall be a legal debt for which the Commission may bring legal action.

ARTICLE VII

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Section 1 - Notification: The Commission shall notify its official newspaper and each member of the Commission of regularly scheduled and special meetings, submitting with such notice the time and place of such meeting and copies of the proposed agenda.

Section 2 - Rules: The meetings shall be open to the public, and the Commission may establish reasonable regulations to enable members of the public to be heard on any matter coming before the meeting.

Section 3 - Records: All minutes and budget records of the Commission shall be deemed public records and shall be made available to the public under reasonable rules and regulations, including charges for copies, which the Commission shall establish, except for those documents and records used in negotiations or legal actions or proceedings to which the Commission is a party.

ARTICLE VIII

ACCOUNTING & BUDGETARY PROCEDURES

Section 1 - Procedures: The Commission shall establish appropriate accounting and budgetary procedures in its by-laws.

Section 2 - Annual Audit: An annual audit shall be performed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation or by an independent certified public accountant hired by the
Commission to audit the accounting and budgetary records of the Commission. This shall be completed within five (5) months after the close of each fiscal year. Certified copies of annual audits shall be filed with the governing body of each member.

**Section 3 - Financial Report:** The Commission shall publish a certified annual statement which shall be furnished to the governing bodies of each member and released to the public.

**ARTICLE IX**

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

**Section 1 - Effective Date:** This Charter shall become effective upon ratification and execution by its members.

**ARTICLE X**

**AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1 - Procedure:** This Charter may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commission and upon ratification by a majority vote of the governing bodies of the members.

**Section 2 - Effective Date:** Upon ratification, amendments shall become effective when copies of said amendments have been delivered by certified mail to each member.

**ARTICLE XI**

**SEVERABILITY**

If any article, section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this Charter is held invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the remainder of this Charter shall not be affected.

In witness whereof, the following parties executed this Charter on the respective dates shown: