

## 8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

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This chapter of the plan will address the intergovernmental cooperation of Crawford County with federal and state agencies, neighboring counties, municipal jurisdictions, and/or agencies. Intergovernmental cooperation is continually recognized as a very important component to future planning and meeting future needs. Cooperative relationships with local units of government and neighboring jurisdictions and agencies may be able to reduce the cost of providing needed services to residents and help reduce County budget demands. In addition, this chapter addresses goals and strategies relating to intergovernmental cooperation.

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

Crawford County is bordered on the north by Vernon County, on the south by the Grant County, on the east by Richland County, and on the west by the Mississippi River and the State of Iowa. There are eleven incorporated Cities and Villages within the boundaries of the Crawford County. There also eleven unincorporated towns within the boundaries of the Crawford County. The public school districts of Desoto, Kickapoo, Riverdale, North Crawford, Boscobel, Seneca, Prairie Du Chien, and Wauzeka-Stueben serve the residents of the Crawford County.

**Crawford County historically has maintained positive relationships with its municipal jurisdictions, neighboring counties, and state and federal agencies.**

#### State and Federal Agencies

##### *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)*

Crawford County has limited contact with the WDNR. The WDNR does have jurisdiction over the waterways in Crawford County and maintains floodplain and shoreland regulations that are enforced through the County Zoning Office. The WDNR regulates fishing and hunting and does have ownership and/or management authority over several properties in Crawford County (these properties are listed in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element). No intergovernmental conflicts were identified in the planning process.

##### *Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT)*

Crawford County does participate in the WDOT Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program. The WISLR program maintains a complete listing of public roads in the Crawford County by jurisdiction, classification and number of miles. This program assists in the facilitation of state funding for town road maintenance.

##### *United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*

Crawford County maintains contact with the USDA primarily pertaining to programs offered for landowners through the Crawford County Land Conservation Department. In addition, Crawford County and/or the local units of government in the County pursue funding for projects/programs through the USDA Rural Development program.

##### *U.S. Army Corp of Engineers*

Crawford County has limited interaction with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Areas of interaction involve issues with the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge over which the Corp of Engineers has jurisdiction. In addition, wetlands located throughout the County that are less than five acres in sized are regulated and under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

##### *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*

In the event of a natural disaster (flooding, tornado, etc.) FEMA is the federal agency to assist in relief efforts. The county recognizes this and has participated in the development of the Crawford County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

### **Regional Planning Commission**

Crawford County is located in the jurisdiction of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The MRRPC was formed under provision contained in 66.0309 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. The MRRPC represents nine counties in western Wisconsin: Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon. The MRRPC maintains the regions eligibility as an Economic Development District and eligible for Economic Development Administration funding.

In order to maintain membership in the MRRPC and receive planning services, counties in the MRRPC region provide annual funding to the MRRPC based on their equalized valuation. Services provided to member counties and municipalities include comprehensive planning assistance, economic development assistance, geographic information services, and general technical assistance.



**A shared wastewater treatment plant demonstrating intergovernmental cooperation**

### **Towns and Municipalities**

Crawford County has maintained strong intergovernmental relationships with local units of government.

**In general throughout the County local units of government have maintained good relationships. These relationships are demonstrated by cooperation by various highway departments, joint fire departments, police protection, joint dispatch center, etc.**

These are excellent examples of intergovernmental cooperation to provide needed services. This type of cooperation has also assisted in minimizing any intergovernmental conflicts.

### **Educational Facilities**

#### *K-12 School Districts*

As previously discussed, Crawford County is served by eight public school districts De Soto, Kickapoo, Riverdale, North Crawford, Seneca, Boscobel, Prairie Du Chien, and Wauzeka-Stueben. The Prairie Du Chien School District is the largest district in the County based on enrollment. During the planning process no intergovernmental conflicts were identified with the school districts.



**North Crawford School District Facilities**

#### *Southwest Wisconsin Technical College*

Crawford County lies entirely in the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College district. Southwest Wisconsin Technical College became operational on July 1, 1967 pursuant to Chapter 292, Laws of Wisconsin 1965. The campus is located in Fennimore. Southwest Wisconsin Technical College features operational curriculum and has a two-year associate degree and one and two-year technical diplomas.

Crawford County residents also utilize higher learning educational facilities located in Richland Center (UW-Richland) and Viroqua (Western Technical College).

### **Adjacent Counties**

Crawford County is bordered by Richland, Grant and Vernon Counties and by the Mississippi River on its west side. A description of the adjoining counties is provided below.

*Richland*

Richland County is located to the east of Crawford County. As of the 2000 Census the County was home to 17, 924 residents and has a land area of over 586 square miles. As far as county interaction, the Crawford County Highway Department and Richland County Highway Department coordinate activities and equipment regarding signage and painting.

In the Spring of 2004, Richland County received a comprehensive planning grant from the Wisconsin Department of Administration to complete a comprehensive plan for the County and individual comprehensive plans for each of the 20 local units of government. The Richland County Comprehensive Plan was adopted on July 17, 2007. The only jurisdictions that did not participate in the multi-jurisdictional grant were the Towns of Forest, Ithaca, and Marshall. No known planning conflicts with Richland County have been identified to date.

*Vernon*

Vernon County is located to the north of Crawford County. As of the 2000 Census the County was home to 28, 056 residents and has a land area of over 794 square miles. As far as county interaction, the Crawford County Highway Department and Vernon County Highway Department coordinate activities and equipment regarding signage and painting.

Vernon County initiated its Comprehensive Planning process in 2008. The Vernon County Board appointed a planning committee to oversee the planning process. The plan is being prepared by committee members and County staff. It is anticipated that the plan will be completed by 2010. No known planning conflicts with Vernon County have been identified to date.

*Grant*

Grant County is located to the south of Crawford County. As of the 2000 Census the county was home to 49, 597 residents and has a land area of over 1,147 square miles. There has been limited interaction between Grant County and Crawford County.

Grant County has not developed a comprehensive plan nor is the county in the process of completing a plan. Thirty-six individual local units of government in Grant County are at different stages of completing comprehensive plans. No known planning conflicts with Grant County have been identified to date.

**Comprehensive Planning in Crawford County**

**Comprehensive planning is at various stages in Crawford County's local units of government. It is vital to the success of all comprehensive plans that communication takes place between local units of government during the planning process.**

The following local units of government in the County have completed comprehensive plans; Town of Wauzeka, Town of Haney, Town of Seneca, Village of Wauzeka, City of Prairie Du Chien, Village of Bell Center, and the Village of DeSoto. The following local units of government in the County are in the process of preparing comprehensive plans; Town of Bridgeport, Town of Clayton, Town of Eastman, Town of Freeman, Town of Prairie Du Chien, Town of Scott, Town of Utica, Village of Eastman, Village of Ferryville, Village of Gays Mills, and the Village of Soldiers Grove. The following local units of government in the County are not preparing comprehensive plans; Town of Marietta, Village of Lynxville, Village of Mt. Sterling, and the Village of Stueben.

**Intergovernmental Plans or Agreements**

Crawford County has not entered into any intergovernmental plans, nor agreements nor are any such plans/agreements pending.

**Addressing Existing/Potential Conflicts with other Governmental Units**

An important part of the planning process is identifying potential conflicts between various government jurisdictions and providing ways to address them. Previously in the plan, existing and potential land use conflicts were identified in the Land Use Element along with a method to address the conflicts. No additional intergovernmental conflicts were identified during the planning process. Crawford County will continue to monitor actions of neighboring or overlapping governmental jurisdictions during the planning period (such as neighboring counties and school districts). If any such conflicts are identified the Crawford County Board of Supervisors will request to meet with the neighboring or overlapping jurisdiction to address and resolve any potential conflict.

## GOALS, STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

### Intergovernmental Cooperation Element Goals

Crawford County developed goals based on public input from surveys, public meeting participation, and committee and resident knowledge. As previously described, in the context of this plan goals are broad statements that the Crawford County desires to achieve. Following each goal are definitions, policies, programs/actions, etc. that are recommended to address each goal. In addition, after selected programs/actions an implementation time period has been designated and these items have been included in the plan implementation schedule located in Chapter 9. Items that do not have a designated implementation period represent general policies or programs and are recommended to be utilized when making policy decisions.

#### **Goal A ► Cooperate with local units of governments, state and federal agencies to provide efficient and coordinated services to county residents.**

1. Maintain cooperative protective services countywide (Sheriff's Department, State Patrol, and local police departments).  
*Implementation throughout the planning period*
2. Maintain joint fire departments/emergency response units and mutual aid agreements throughout the county.  
*Implementation throughout the planning period*
3. Work with local and state elected representative to restore local government control and decision making power. A trend in state government over the past 10-20 years has been to minimize or eliminate local government (Town, City/Village, County) control over issues facing local units of government. Examples being the Wisconsin Ag Siting Law, Non-metallic Mining Reclamation requirements, and the potential Wind Energy regulations being considered by the state legislature. These regulations put state requirements in place and local units of governments are forbidden from adopting stricter requirements/standards to address a local need. This has been done in the name of state uniformity. This was not always the case in the State of Wisconsin. The state used to adopt minimum standards (examples include floodplain, wetland, and shoreland regulations) then would allow local units of government to adopt stricter local standards as local input and needs arose.  
*Implementation throughout the planning period*
4. Continue to evaluate and enhance shared services between local units of government and agencies (police protection, fire protection, emergency response, etc).
5. Work with local units of government to explore the feasibility of providing state required building inspection services throughout Crawford County. In 2003, the State of Wisconsin required that all units of government enforce the State of Wisconsin One and Two Family Building Code by providing housing inspections during construction. Currently each local unit of government provides the service through contracted building inspection services. A uniform single service provider might be more efficient and cost effective for landowners.

**Goal B** ► **Enhance communication with governmental units and agencies and identify collaboration opportunities.**

1. Explore shared staffing between local units of government. Often local units of government have the same needs for services, but because of their size and budget constraints the needed services go unmet. This often leads to missed opportunities (grants, knowledge/awareness, specific skills, etc.) that could improve the local community and/or County. Sharing of staff between local units of government could help in providing needed services throughout the County.  
*Implementation 2010-2020*
2. Explore collaboration between governmental units to provide services based on service area versus traditional political boundaries. Political boundaries are necessary for governance but can lead to inefficient provision of services. For example Crawford County is nearly 600 square miles in size and the County Seat is located in Prairie Du Chien in the southwestern corner of the County. However, residents in northern Crawford County generally gravitate to Viroqua or La Crosse for services, while residents in eastern Crawford County generally utilize Richland Center or Viroqua for services. When government services are needed residents may be required to make a trip to Prairie Du Chien or the service providers must travel long distances. By exploring collaboration opportunities with neighboring counties more efficient service provision methods might be discovered.  
*Implementation 2010-2020*
3. Consider regional marketing opportunities with other governmental/non-governmental units. Tourism is identified throughout this plan as an important component of the local and regional economy. There are numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations that promote the area and specific events/attractions. If local resources were combined into a regional marketing strategy (sensitive to all the various events/attractions) more value for the dollars spent may be realized by local organizations.  
*Implementation throughout the planning period*
4. Explore partnerships with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (oversee the Great River Road National Scenic Byway – Highway 35) and the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board (Highway 60 State Scenic Byway) to enhance tourism opportunities associated with the scenic highways.
5. As discussed in Chapter 6 and consistent with the Working Lands Initiative, explore the development of a regional purchase of development rights program in order to leverage additional state and federal funding.

**Consistency with Local Comprehensive Planning Goals as described in s. 16.965(4) Wis. Stats.**

Listed below is the Comprehensive Planning Goal described in State Statute that is related to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element. Following the goal is a discussion how it was addressed during the planning process.

- *Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.*

The goals of this element are consistent with the state planning goals identified in State Statute as they encourage communication and coordination to identify efficient ways to provide services and explore opportunities to share resources.