

Element 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.



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Element 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the various governmental units and functions that occur in Wood County. Agreements, either formal or more casual, will be explained. Existing and potential conflicts are identified, with possible solutions to reduce or eliminate those conflicts.

Why Intergovernmental Cooperation?

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires communities that prepare a comprehensive plan to consider their relationships with neighboring governmental units, identify potential conflicts, and develop methods to resolve those conflicts. The law does not, however, require that governmental units undertake specific activities together.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation element of the comprehensive plan creates an opportunity for the county to coordinate with other communities, counties and the state to provide services and programs and to promote consistency between comprehensive plans. A good deal of intergovernmental cooperation already exists in Wood County. Several of those cooperative arrangements are explained below. Intergovernmental cooperation can be as simple as communicating and sharing information, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue. It can even involve consolidating services, jurisdictions or transferring territory.

It is important that governmental units give serious consideration to how they work with other jurisdictions because so many issues cross jurisdictional boundaries. Think of your parcel of land. It lies within the federal jurisdiction, a certain zip code, the State and its many regional districts (DNR, Transportation, etc.), Wood County, a vocational school district, CESA 7 (Cooperative Educational Service Agency), a public school district, a watershed protection district, possibly a municipal sanitary sewer extension district, and many more. Actions taken in one jurisdiction can have an impact on one or more other units of government. Watersheds are one obvious example. Another not so obvious example is the impact on school bussing costs and safety that can be created when a municipal board approves a certain street configuration in a new residential development. The two should communicate proposed plans and their concerns before allowing the development to go ahead.

Finally, governmental units that cooperate with each other can realize benefits. The most obvious, and probably most interesting to decision makers, are impacts on local budgets. Cooperative services and programs can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Some smaller communities may also be able to provide services to their residents that would be too costly to provide if they try to go it alone. Another benefit is the early identification and resolution of potential conflicts that might otherwise arise between neighboring communities or overlapping jurisdictions. Still another benefit is the resultant understanding between communities of each other's needs and priorities. The main benefit of intergovernmental cooperation is probably the increased or improved services to Wood County residents.

Intergovernmental Issues

Intergovernmental relationships at the county level will differ somewhat from those at the municipality level because of the different

services and programs provided by the county. Towns, villages and cities may actually have more intergovernmental issues than are evident at the county level. Some issues facing the county government in Wood County are:

Overlapping Jurisdictions

It seems that every governmental agency has different jurisdictional boundaries. That may not always be the case, but there are enough overlapping jurisdictions to cause problems for each taxing authority and the public. One example is the overlap between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U. S. Department of Army Corps of Engineers, and Wood County with regard to floodplain, shoreland and wetland management. While each has a function in this area, it is confusing to the public and, sometimes to the agencies themselves, as to which agency is responsible for what and who issues permits for which activities. Another overlap is between school districts and county lines. There are seven public school districts serving Wood County. All but one of the districts crosses county lines, causing issues and, possibly, inefficiencies in serving their various constituencies. When county supervisory district boundaries do not coincide with school district and municipal boundaries, it results in increased costs associated with election ballots. This is especially true when there may be elections for municipal officials, school boards and the county board at the same time. Yet another example is that of regional agencies. The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), the Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund, Inc. (CWED), and other recently organizations have been formed to consolidate certain activities or programs from what had been county functions to new multi-county functions. The ADRC, for example, was formed by a consolidation of Wood and Marathon County Departments on Aging. CWED was formed by consolidating revolving loan funds from Wood, Marathon, Portage and Adams counties. And, of course, there is the intergovernmental agreement for maintenance and snow plowing of boundary

roads between counties, and between the county and cities or villages that have a county road within them. Finally, another common overlap in jurisdictions is regarding protective service agencies, namely local police departments, the county sheriff's department and the state highway patrol. It is common for all three police services to operate within the same community, although most have some agreements about the level of service that the higher level agencies provide to those of the smaller jurisdiction. This leads to the next intergovernmental issue, shared services.

Shared Services

In most cases, overlapping jurisdictions provide an opportunity for sharing services and programs. Creative sharing is usually done to improve efficiencies in program costs or utilization of personnel and other resources. Wood County has joined forces with other counties, such as the ADRC and CWED, described above. They also participate with other counties and the WisDOT to coordinate highway projects. One police agency will assist the others when needed, as will the many local fire departments. Other agencies assist one another like those mentioned, but formal "shared services" and not as common as "assistance." Some municipalities also purchase services from another community, such as fire protection. There have been discussions between some communities (i.e., Grand Rapids and Biron) about entering more cooperative ventures to increase efficiencies.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

Comprehensive planning in Wood County has been done in a somewhat fractured manner. The Wood County Comprehensive Plan is a product of the Wood County Planning and Zoning Office. Eleven of the twenty-two towns have zoning and are required to develop a comprehensive plan. Some towns have hired consultants. Others have contracted with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Still others have acquired the

services of the Wood County Planning and Zoning Office. Finally, some towns have taken the development of the plan upon themselves. Planning activities in the cities and villages has followed a similar path. Although each community has notified others of their planning activity, as required by state law, few of the neighboring communities have paid much attention to how their neighbors' plans have developed or, more importantly, how their neighbors' plans may affect them. Needless to say, there has been little coordination of the comprehensive plans. The resultant lack of consistency from one community to the next may cause new issues or exacerbate old issues down the road, especially where differences occur on common boundaries.

Wisconsin Statutes for Intergovernmental Cooperation

There are several statutes that encourage or allow intergovernmental cooperation in Wisconsin. For counties, these statutes appear in Chapter 66, Subchapter III, Intergovernmental Cooperation. The following is a summary list of several of those statutes.

Intergovernmental Agreements (Wis. Stat. 66.0301)

This statute authorizes the most common form of agreement between various units of government in Wisconsin. Under 66.0301 municipalities and recognized Indian tribes and bands may contract with one another "for the receipt or furnishing of services or the joint exercise of any power or duty required or authorized by law." These intergovernmental agreements have been used for sharing of public services such as police and fire. They can also be used to establish revenue sharing, to determine future land use within a certain area, etc. There are, however, no requirements that the agreements must take into consideration goals and objectives of comprehensive plans. Accordingly, conflicts

may arise and must be resolved through negotiation and compromise.

Revenue Sharing (Wis. Stat. 66.0305)

Under Wisconsin law, cities, villages and towns may enter into agreements to share all or special parts of revenues from taxes and special charges. The agreements may address matters that include any agreement with respect to services or agreements with respect to municipal boundaries. The municipality must be contiguous to at least one other municipality that is party to the agreement. Agreements must be for at least 10 years and must specify the boundaries of the area within which the revenues are to be shared.

Boundary Change Pursuant to Approved Cooperative Plan (Wis. Stat. 66.0307)

Under this statute, "any combination of municipalities may determine the boundary lines between themselves under a cooperative plan that is approved by [the Wisconsin Department of Administration]." The purpose of a cooperative plan is to establish development goals and guidelines to achieve those goals. It is a micro future land use plan for an area that is expected to experience development pressures in the near future. It is driven by a mutual desire by two or more communities to promote efficiency and economy in the process of development. A cooperative plan, more commonly referred to as a boundary agreement, includes a comprehensive analysis of the area, including environmental impacts and housing needs. The cooperative plan must be for a period of 10 years or more.

Regional Planning Commissions (Wis. Stat. 66.0309)

Wisconsin's intergovernmental cooperation laws include provisions for the creation, organization, powers and duties of regional planning commissions. Wood County is in the boundary

of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), which includes ten counties stretching from Adams and Juneau counties, north to Lake Superior. Wood County is not a member of the NCWRPC, but has a good working relationship on planning and economic development projects. Wood County has hired the NCWRPC for some projects and has collaborated on others. Wood County and NCWRPC staff members participate together on regional boards of directors for economic development and planning. Statutes allow any town, village, city or county to join a regional planning commission. The functions of the regional planning commission are advisory only to local units of government and include comprehensive planning, consistent with Chapter 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

Cooperation in financing and undertaking housing projects (Wis. Stat. 66.0311)

Any municipality may, by statute, cooperate with other municipalities to issue bonds or obtain other types of financing to further their statutory purposes. For example, Wood County and the Village of Biron have cooperated on the Wood County Business Park in Biron. The county has agreed to help with financing this facility if the income from the Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) fall short of what is needed for infrastructure development. That agreement calls for short-term borrowing from the County to cover costs until the TIF income is sufficient to repay the County.

This same statute allows municipalities to plan, own, construct, operate and contract with respect to housing projects. The law allows municipalities to work with other municipalities and housing authorities to accomplish their housing programs and goals.

Local Health Departments; mutual assistance (Wis. Stat. 66.0312)

Upon the request of a local health department, the personnel of any other local health

department may assist the requesting health department within that health department's jurisdiction.

Law Enforcement; mutual assistance (Wis. Stat. 66.0313)

Another of the mutual assistance laws, if a law enforcement agency, including the County Sheriff's Department, needs assistance from another law enforcement agency, they may request assistance.

Annexation (Wis. Stat. 66.0217)

Wisconsin statutes provide three petition methods by which annexation may occur. The first is direct annexation by unanimous approval. Using this method, a petition is signed by all the electors who reside in the territory to be annexed and the owners of all of the real property included within the petition.

The second method is a direct petition for annexation. This method requires a petition to be signed by a number of qualified electors residing in the territory equal to at least the majority of votes cast for governor in the territory at the last gubernatorial election and either the owners of one-half of the land in area in the territory or the owners of one-half of the real property in assessed value within the territory. If no electors live in the territory, the petition must be signed by the owners of one-half of the land in area within the territory or the owners of one-half of the real property in assessed value within the territory.

The third method is annexation by referendum. Under this method, a petition requesting a referendum election on the question of annexation may be filed with the city or village when signed by at least twenty percent of the electors in the territory.

A fourth method of annexation is provided in Wisconsin Statutes, but has not been used in Wood County. Chapter 66.0219 allows annexation by referendum initiated by a city or

village. Following specified procedures, a city or village can adopt a resolution by a two-thirds vote of total members to declare its intention to apply to the circuit court for an order for an annexation referendum. There are also provisions in this statute for electors of the territory to protest the annexation petition. In addition, annexation under Chapter 66.0219 requires the city or village to pay to the town an amount equal to the amount of property taxes that the town levied on the annexed territory for a period of five years.

Incorporation (Wis. Stat. 66.0201)

This chapter of the statutes, with subsequent sections, establishes policies and standards to allow development of territory from town to incorporated status as a new village or city. Hewitt is Wood County's newest incorporated community having become a village in 1973. Since that time, Grand Rapids has considered incorporation on at least two occasions. Incorporation begins with a petition to the circuit court. During the process, the court must determine that the territory meets certain formal and signature requirements. It must also be shown that the territory can meet other essential criteria, including a) the territory must be reasonably homogeneous and compact with a reasonably developed community center; b) the territory must meet minimum density and assessed valuation standards; c) present and potential sources of tax revenue are shown to be sufficient to defray the anticipated cost of governmental services; d) the level of services desired or needed by residents of the territory are compared to services that can be provided by neighboring villages or cities, and e) the impact on the remainder of the unincorporated town, financially or otherwise, are analyzed.

Extraterritorial Plat Review (Wis. Stat. 236.10)

Wisconsin's platting statutes recognize the need for cities and villages to be able to participate in the review of subdivision plats to coordinate and plan for their future expansion. Cities of 10,000

or more can exercise extraterritorial plat review within three miles of their borders. Cities and villages with populations of less than 10,000 are allowed to review plats within one and one-half miles of their borders. Where the review areas overlap between two municipalities, the difference is split between the two pursuant to s. 66.0105. To participate in the extraterritorial review of subdivision plats, the city or village must first have enacted a subdivision ordinance or adopted an official map under s. 62.23. In Wood County, the cities of Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids and the Village of Port Edwards participate in extraterritorial plat review. The other cities and village do not. Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids each exercise their extraterritorial plat review authority within three miles of their borders. Port Edwards' extraterritorial plat review authority extends one and a half miles from its borders.

Extraterritorial Zoning (Wis. Stat. 62.23 (7a))

Extraterritorial zoning allows a city with a population of 10,000 or more to adopt zoning in town territory, three miles beyond the city's corporate limits. A city or village with a population of less than 10,000 may adopt extraterritorial zoning one and a half miles beyond its corporate limits. Where the extraterritorial limits of two or more communities overlap, they are to split the difference pursuant to s. 66.0105. Where extraterritorial zoning is proposed to be used, the communities must establish a joint extraterritorial zoning committee consisting of three members from the city or village and three members from the town. Extraterritorial zoning is not used in Wood County at the present time.

Comprehensive Planning (Wis. Stat. 66.1001)

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law (s. 66.1001) provides standards that must be met for those communities that are required to adopt comprehensive plans by January 1, 2010. The land use element requires the community to

project future needs for land uses and the housing element does the same for housing. Chapter 62.23 authorizes cities to prepare master plans for their physical development, “including areas outside of its boundaries that... bear relation to the development of the city...” It would seem that these two planning laws require coordination and cooperation between cities and adjoining towns with respect to their comprehensive planning programs. Working together to create an area comprehensive plan is in the best interest of municipalities, especially where several communities with a substantial population base and many common interests abut one another.

In Wood County, 11 of 22 towns and all four cities and eight villages have zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, or official maps. Therefore, they are required to develop and adopt comprehensive plans. As of April, 2009, seven of the zoned towns completed their plans, with the others scheduled for completion prior to the deadline. One other town that does not fall under the comprehensive planning requirements has also completed a plan. That town, the Town of Milladore, recognized the need for planning with the relocation of State Highway 10 through the Town, expansion of state-owned lands, and the desire to preserve agricultural lands. The Town considered enacting a zoning ordinance, but work on that document has not started.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs in Wood County

Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee

This five member committee of the Wood County Board of Supervisors is the oversight committee for the County’s Land Conservation, U.W. Extension, Planning and Zoning, and County Surveyor’s offices. These departments have some overlap in tasks and work closely with one another on various projects. The Planning & Zoning Office has tasks in the areas

of planning, land records modernization (GIS), economic development, and code enforcement. The Land Conservation Department recommends and designs the best management practices for soil conservation and water quality protection to be installed by individual land owners. Among other educational tasks, the U.W. Extension office provides educational assistance to agricultural producers; horticultural education to homeowners; and natural resource, local government and economic development education to residents and local governmental bodies throughout the County.

Wood County, Local Jurisdictions and Surrounding Counties

Wood County’s two largest urban areas are located immediately adjacent to neighboring counties. As was discussed in the Economic Development chapter, there is considerable commuting between Wood County and all of its neighboring counties for employment purposes. The City of Marshfield’s boundaries extend across the Wood and Marathon County borders. Wood County has cooperated with Marathon County and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on the City’s 208 water quality management plan for sanitary sewer extensions and a boundary agreement between the City and the Town of Cameron. The Village of Milladore boundary extends across the Wood and Portage County borders. Both counties have interest in working together on village issues. The unincorporated village of Kellner also extends across the Wood and Portage County borders giving those jurisdictions another reason to work together. Wood and Adams counties have an interest in the fact that the Adams County Town of Rome is very closely associated with Nekoosa, being in the Nekoosa public school district and in the greater Wisconsin Rapids area service area.

Wood County has a history of cooperating with neighboring counties. In the 1990s, a joint jail planning committee was created with members from Wood and Portage counties. Although the study did not result in a jointly owned and/or

operated county jail, a relationship was formed that has resulted in the two counties cooperating on other ventures.

Wood and Marathon counties merged their respective Divisions on Aging departments into the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin. Employees of Wood County, at the time of the merger, became employees of Marathon County. The ADRC is headquartered in Wausau and has offices in Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids. That agency is expanding into Langlade County in 2010 and is planning future expansions into Lincoln County.

The counties of Wood, Adams, Marathon and Portage have recently consolidated their individual revolving loan funds into one central source. The new Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund is administered by the Marathon County Economic Development Corporation (McDevco) in Wausau. Loan applications that are more than \$200,000 are reviewed by a regional committee, while loan applications for lesser amounts are still reviewed by local committees.

Wood County is also an active participant in the regional economic development corporation known as Centergy. Centergy is a non-profit corporation made up of government and private business representatives from Wood, Marathon and Portage counties. As a group, Centergy provides a point of contact for businesses that are interested in locating in our area. The group also presents issues and needs to state legislators and the Governor, with a concentrated effort during a two-day event; "Central Wisconsin Days in Madison."

The Wood County Highway Department also cooperates with each of the surrounding counties. County Roads N, S and U are border highways that lie on the Wood and Portage County line. Each county is responsible for maintenance of portions of those highways. The Highway Department also works with other communities where County roads are located.

Most County departments offer services to municipalities who don't or can't offer particular services on a regular basis.

State of Wisconsin

Wood County maintains relationships with literally dozens of state departments and agencies. Many of the relationships are regulatory in nature, with Wood County acting as an arm of the state. As such, Wood County offices enforce state regulations by issuing permits, monitoring compliance and reporting back to the state agency or department.

Other relationships between the county and state are related to program implementation. Many county departments implement state programs with a goal of improving the area's economy, quality of life, safety, environment, education, and culture. Interaction between the county and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce; Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Transportation; Department of Children and Families; Department of Justice; Department of Tourism; Department of Emergency Management; and University of Wisconsin System are a few examples.

Federal Government

Federal agencies have also played an important role in Wood County. County departments access federal programs for funding local programs and projects, often with a local match in the way of money or in-kind contributions. Sometimes federal programs contribute to local programs and projects by channeling money through the state agencies discussed in the preceding paragraph. On other occasions, the county has worked directly with the federal agency that is involved. Still other times, our U. S. congressmen and senators have intervened on the County's behalf to obtain funding for projects, programs or relief efforts.

Most recently, Congressman Dave Obey has been instrumental in earmarking nearly \$2.5 million to be used for infrastructure development for business parks in Nekoosa and Biron. Earlier, he obtained federal funding to assist with infrastructure development for Wisconsin Rapids' East Side Commerce Center. Congressman Obey has also advocated for other economic development funds for Wood County communities. Sometimes the funding comes through the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is another agency that has a need for coordination with Wood County. The ability to obtain flood insurance for property in the many acres of floodplain is dependent on Wood County adopting the federal floodplain maps and an ordinance to regulate activity in floodplains. Amendments to the floodplain maps are requested in marginal areas and, when it is shown that an area is actually not in the floodplain, Wood County coordinates correspondence with FEMA to have areas removed and maps amended.

The military's Hardwood bombing range borders on Wood County. Much of southern Wood County is in the flight track for the military operations. Wood County has participated in recent meetings to learn about a proposed joint land use study (JLUS) that would protect the bombing range from encroachment and protect nearby properties from military operations. The Department of Defense has approached county and local officials to discuss this cooperative effort. Future meetings are planned.

Other county departments find it necessary to communicate and coordinate with a variety of federal agencies to assure that Wood County is in compliance with federal laws. Examples include compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards.

Potential Conflicts and Opportunities to Resolve Them

Conflicts between governmental units occur continually. Those conflicts may be the result of statutory authority or responsibility, they may be the result of differing political ideologies, or they may be the result of something else. Conflicts will change over time with changing socio-economic conditions or new or amended regulations from the State or federal government. Some of the current conflicts or potential conflicts and possible means to resolve them are listed below.

1. Incompatible land uses along municipal boundaries, perceived or real, tend to cause tension between neighboring governmental units. Means to resolve this issue include having a neutral third party, such as the Wood County Planning & Zoning Office or the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) mediate discussion sessions to determine how boundary land uses should develop. Coordination of each municipality's comprehensive plan can help to assure a seamless future land use plan across municipal boundaries. A more formal approach is to create a joint planning commission to develop a boundary agreement or cooperative plan (see explanation in paragraph C. 3. above).

2. Inconsistencies between land use ordinances and official maps will create frustrations between municipalities and for developers. To resolve conflicts in ordinances and official maps, municipalities should invite participation on planning commissions as standards and regulations are being prepared. Even as an ex-officio member, valuable information can be provided to help the commission know and understand their neighbor's ordinance and their reasons behind their regulations. In many cases, a new standard can be developed and adopted by both communities that will meet the needs and goals of each. The Wood County Planning and Zoning Office or NCWRPC would be a good option to assist with this effort.

Another inconsistency issue relates to those things that may be better regulated on a county-wide basis. A few examples include regulation of billboards, telecommunications towers and, more recently, windmills. Having different standards from town-to-town is confusing and frustrating to owners of those structures as they try to determine who to contact and then has difficulty making contact with part-time local officials who may not be available during regular business hours. Also, administration of ordinances that regulate these structures at the county level would provide more consistency and, in many cases, better administration and monitoring.

3. Conflicts arise over land use and development in the extraterritorial review areas of cities and villages. When the city or village comments on or, at the extreme, denies a land split based on their future plans or city or village standards that differ from the town's standards, frustrations and ill feelings will surface. Towns take offence at the thought that the cities or villages are telling them what to do or dictating how town land can or can not develop. Cities and villages, on the other hand, take issue with the town's lack of understanding of why streets need to be aligned and the need to avoid conflicting land uses. When extraterritorial land use disagreements arise, the Wood County Planning & Zoning staff can be consulted to help resolve the differences. The regional planning commission can also act as a neutral third party to offer insights and information toward resolution of the issues.

4. Concerns may arise occasionally that local control in land use issues is subject to too much intervention by the county or state. Some communities who are required to adopt a comprehensive plan, for example, believe that the county and/or state have review and approval authority over what the local unit has developed for their future. Also, because Wood County has a zoning ordinance on record from the 1930's, the County Board has statutory review and approval authority over town zoning ordinances. Some communities feel this is an

infringement on their right to make decisions for their communities. Many of the concerns that local land use control is being infringed upon by the county or state can be averted or resolved with good communications and education. Ensuring ample opportunity for public involvement during land use planning and ordinance development is one means to resolving concerns. Wood County has an adopted public participation plan that provides for the public to be involved in the planning process from beginning to end. Documents are posted on the County's website with the public encouraged to comment on draft documents. They can also access the final, adopted plans and ordinances on the website. Maintaining communications and transparency in the planning and zoning process is easy in today's world and will continue to be the policy in Wood County.

Trends in Intergovernmental Cooperation

The economy has been instrumental in driving Wood County municipalities to work together more than in the past. Table 9-1 summarizes a few of the recent trends in intergovernmental cooperation in Wood County.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations with other units of government.

Objectives.

1. Encourage communities to create intergovernmental cooperative agreements for governmental services wherever appropriate and provide technical assistance in drafting those agreements.

2. Encourage boundary agreements between incorporated municipalities and towns where annexation and development issues have caused or are causing conflicts.

**Table 9-1
Trends in Intergovernmental Cooperation**

*** Boundary agreements have resulted in cooperative land use planning**
The City of Marshfield has entered cooperative boundary agreements with adjoining towns, including the Town of Cameron in Wood County. The joint planning commission meets to discuss land use changes that will result from the relocation and widening of U. S. Highway 10.

*** Regional meetings are being held to work toward solutions to area-wide issues**
Several towns, villages and cities in the southeast portion of Wood County meet monthly and have entered agreements for various studies as equal partners.

In some cases, two neighboring communities work together on boundary issues.

*** Regional recycling efforts have reduced the pressure on the area landfill**
At least four regional recycling efforts exist in Wood County, collecting many tons of plastics, paper, oil and other items.

3. Encourage school districts to educate students about the importance of participating in their local governments and teach them how to get involved.

4. Work with municipalities who are developing or updating comprehensive plans to
5. achieve consistency and seamless transitions from one community to the next.

Goal. Improve coordination and communication regarding planning activities between Wood County, each of the local units of government in Wood County, and regional, state and federal agencies.

Objectives.

1. Bring county planning issues to the attention of local units of government, school districts and the public, soliciting opinions, ideas and input early in the process, continuing to completion.

2. Offer Wood County Planning & Zoning staff and UW–Extension staff to local units to act as facilitators and educators to assist local municipalities with plan and ordinance development and administration.

3. Cooperate with the planning staff in Wisconsin Rapids and Marshfield on projects

and plans that impact boundary areas to achieve consistency between municipalities and to provide cost-effective development.

4. Cooperate with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission as they work on projects with Wood County municipalities or projects in neighboring counties that have potential impacts on Wood County or any municipalities therein.

5. Ask for participation from state and federal agencies when necessary to ensure Wood County’s compliance with state and federally required programs.

6. Encourage cities, villages and towns to meet on a regular basis to discuss area issues and develop methods by which they can share in resolving those issues. This may be best achieved through regional meetings in different areas of Wood County.

Goal. Seek opportunities to improve the provision of shared public services and facilities such as emergency services, outdoor recreation, and transportation.

Objectives.

1. Where it can be shown that benefits exceed costs, encourage cooperative efforts in

the provision of police, fire and emergency rescue facilities and services.

2. Encourage municipalities to continue to use the services of the County Highway Department for local road maintenance.

3. Prior to purchasing new facilities or equipment, examine the possibilities of trading, renting, sharing or contracting with neighboring jurisdictions.

4. Work with private, municipal, county and state agencies to coordinate the provision of park and recreation facilities and activities in Wood County. While some facilities are more efficiently provided by the State or County, others are better provided by local units or by private ventures. A proper mix will enhance the quality of life for all Wood County residents and visitors.

5. Coordinate transportation projects between the State, County and local jurisdictions to assure that such projects are included in and consistent with this comprehensive plan.

6. Maintain open communications with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regarding the thousands of acres of land owned and maintained in by the State in Wood County to ensure maximum value of those lands and facilities to the public.

7. Cooperate with the U. S. Department of Defense to develop and maintain a joint land use study (JLUS) for areas around the Hardwood Bombing Range with the goal on safety and protection of property values for land owners who are affected by the bombing range and low fly zones.