CHAPTER FIVE: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Background
The purpose of the Utilities & Community Facilities Element is to identify the need for expansion, construction, or rehabilitation of utilities and County facilities. Provided in this element is a list of the existing public utility and community facilities in Barron County and where necessary, the need for expansion, construction, or rehabilitation has been identified. The list provides information for those items that the County is directly responsible for and, when applicable, states that it is the responsibility of the local governmental unit.

Also included in this element are: an Inventory and Needs Assessment of County owned facilities, goals and objectives related to Utilities and Community Facilities; and the County’s policies and recommendations related to Utilities and Community Facilities.

Inventory of Public Utilities and Community Facilities

Below are summaries of existing public utilities and facilities infrastructure in Barron County, including some discussion of critical issues related to each.

1. Needs Assessment / Inventory of County Owned Facilities

A detailed inventory of Barron County buildings and facilities that the County owns and manages is provided in the appendices. Not included are park shelters and restrooms, or buildings related to road maintenance such as salt and sand storage, and road construction operation. The County estimates the life of a building, facility, or building component to be 40 years; since the timeline for this plan projects to the year 2030 those buildings, facilities, or components built or replaced prior to 1990 will fall into that timeframe.

Improvements, upgrades and remodeling projects are projected for a 15-20 year period and as emergency needs arise. Consideration is given to allocating money for a specific capital project years before the project becomes a reality in order to reduce the bonded amount. Some remodeling improvements, maintenance equipment, and vehicle and technology upgrades are included in the annual budget and or 5-year Capital Improvement/Capital Outlay Program. Two projected capital project needs include the Heating, Venting, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) upgrades at the Government Center and a replacement of the 1940’s era Highway Garage and related buildings. For a complete listing of County owned buildings and facilities and a needs assessment for each see the appendices.

As department and staff consolidations have led to increased efficiencies and fewer staff, Barron County has been downsizing office areas and reducing the need for space. The Barron County Board
is anticipating no new bonding for capital projects until the pay-off of the two Justice Center debt issuances in 2021-2022.

2. **Sanitary Sewer Service and On-Site Wastewater Treatment Technology**

All sanitary sewer services are conducted within the local municipalities. Ten Barron County communities have municipal wastewater systems and treatment facilities, they are the villages of: Almena, Dallas, Haugen, Prairie Farm and Turtle Lake; and the city of: Chetek, Cumberland and Rice Lake. The city of Barron and the village of Cameron share a facility. In addition to these municipal systems there are two sanitary districts, one in the town of Crystal Lake, and the other in the town of Lakeland.

In 2005, the Zoning Office began issuing Notice and Pumping/Inspection Reports every three years to property owners that utilize all sewage systems except for holding tanks. The notice is part of the State Private Sewage System Maintenance and Management Program which requires septic tanks to be inspected and pumped every 36 months, or when sludge reaches one third of the liquid capacity of the tank. Holding tanks are pumped as needed throughout the year. The pumpers submit a report annually to the Zoning Office indicating what property was pumped, the total gallons pumped, and where the sewage was disposed of.

3. **On-site Septic Systems**

Residents who live in the unincorporated areas of the County utilize on-site septic systems to treat wastewater. All areas of Barron County that utilize these systems are under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Sanitary Code, referred to as COMM 83. The County Zoning Office enforces this code through the Barron County Sanitary Ordinance by reviewing and filing soil tests, issuing State and County Sanitary Permits, and inspecting the systems during installation.

4. **Water Supply**

All water used in Barron County for domestic, industrial or agricultural use, is sourced from groundwater. With the exception of the Municipal and Community Water Systems listed in the Barron County Conditions and Trends Report, the remaining residents depend on individual private wells for their water supply needs. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regulates private wells and issues licenses to well drillers. Wells are inventoried and the driller’s work is monitored. It is up to the licensed driller to know the code and the minimum separation distance for each well.
5. **Storm Water Management**

Stormwater management facilities and services are generally provided by local municipalities and or utilities. Most governmental units in the County that have completed a Comprehensive Plan state that managing storm water to reduce or eliminate direct discharge to surface waters is one of the most important steps that can be taken to protect surface water quality in the future and that they intend to work cooperatively with Barron County, WI DNR and other agencies and organizations. This element includes a goal to improve storm water management throughout the County along with objectives that make more specific recommendations.

6. **Dams**

Barron County owns and maintains 8 dams. The 5-year Capital Improvement Plan includes an annual appropriation for completion of a Dam Failure Analysis for all County-owned dams. Additional funding is set aside for upgrades and maintenance required as part of the analysis. No County owned dam is currently used for electric generation, however, the feasibility of electric generation has been, and continues to be studied through the Energy Policy Work Group.

7. **Solid Waste Disposal**

Solid waste collection services are contracted between local property owners and private waste haulers, except where it is provided by city. There has been a Flow Control Ordinance in effect in the entire County except for city of Rice Lake since June 16, 2008. The Ordinance states that combustion of waste, at a waste to energy facility, is in the best public interest of all citizens of the County. Therefore the Barron County Incinerator and Recycling Center, a Waste to Energy Facility (WTE) in the town of Turtle Lake, was chosen as the primary designation for the disposal of solid waste in the County.

The Ordinance further states that it is unlawful to burn or incinerate solid waste other than leaves or yard waste for anyone other than those licensed to dispose of industrial, hazardous, or biomedical wastes. Even though the Ordinance states that burning leaves and yard waste is permissible in unincorporated areas, the County promotes backyard composting of leaves and other yard waste.

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**Electrical Generation at the Waste to Energy Facility**

The Waste to Energy Facility powers itself using steam generated during the combustion process, and also sells steam energy directly to the Saputo Cheese Factory located near the facility. Excess steam is sold under contract to Xcel Energy.

At the time of compiling this plan efforts to fund a 2.5 million dollar upgrade to condense steam for additional electric generation were underway.
8. Recycling Facility

Since November 3, 1993 there has been a Recycling Ordinance that applies to all single and multi-family residences and all commercial and industrial facilities in Barron County except for the city and town of Rice Lake. The Ordinance requires that residents must not dispose of glass, aluminum and tin or steel containers with their trash, those items must be kept separate and brought to one of the many Recycling Drop Boxes located throughout the County. From there the recyclables are brought to the Barron County Incinerator and Recycling Center, sorted by type, and distributed to other facilities for recycling.

The town and the city of Rice Lake operate a joint recycling facility that is located next to the town Hall. Residents are provided with a curb-side recycling receptacle that is emptied bi-weekly along with the trash.


Barron County has adopted ordinances regulating the siting and placement of cell towers. It is the responsibility of the utility company to get easements from property owners for transmission lines.

Telephone, wireless, fiber optic, internet services, and cable television are provided through: Centurylink, Mosaic, and Charter Communications.

There are seven electric companies in the County: Barron Electric Co-op, Barron Light and Water, Cumberland Municipal Utility, Dairyland Power Co., Rice Lake Utilities, Jump River Electric Cooperative and Xcel Energy.

Access to Natural Gas is limited in the County, where there are transmission lines, it is provided by We Energies.
10. Parks

Barron County owns and maintains several park and recreational facilities which include picnic shelters, storage buildings and restrooms. Three campgrounds provide overnight camping facilities. (See appendices for outdoor recreational map).

Park and recreation facilities have not had adequate funding in recent years. Other counties in the region have provided more recent investments in their campgrounds and other recreation facilities and Barron County has lost a competitive edge in comparison. In May, 2009 the County Board established a Recreation Work Group to develop a 5-10 year plan for upgrading the park and recreation facilities, and identify additional recreational opportunities in the County.

11. Health Care Facilities

The health care industry in Barron County is strong and growing stronger. There is a Health Care cluster developing, as well as collaborative efforts between the health care institutions and local schools to train their current and future workforce. Most planning and operations related to medical facilities are undertaken by the private hospital or clinic, and includes little involvement of the local community.

12. Nursing Homes, & Aging and Disability Programs

As of May 2009, the County’s role in managing long-term-care community based services for low income elderly and disabled changed considerably with the inception of Northern Bridges. Northern Bridges is an eleven County managed care organization that manages and delivers the state’s ‘Family Care’ benefits. Now, under ‘Family Care’, the managed care organizations will employ care-management teams that may directly provide or contract for services. This is expected to result in better management of funds and to reduce the number of recipients entering a nursing home just to get their basic daily needs met.

Prior to Northern Bridges, ‘Family Care’ was managed by care managers in the Long Term Support Unit of the Barron County Department of Health and Human Services. Through the years, in Barron County and throughout the state, a waiting list began to develop to receive ‘Family Care’ benefits. Those on the waiting list had to purchase services privately, go without needed services, or accept nursing home placement through Medicaid, regardless of the level of care they needed. When the new system is fully implemented, waiting lists for community care is expected to be eliminated.

To what degree the services provided through Northern Bridges will reduce the need for additional nursing home facilities is not yet known. After the waiting list to receive benefits has been eliminated it would be useful to conduct a study to determine the future needs for nursing homes in the County.
13. Assisted Living

Barron County has a need for affordable assisted living facilities that offer support services as needed to elderly, such as meals, housekeeping, transportation, and medication management. Many people who are not financially eligible for Medicaid still cannot afford to pay for care in a typical Wisconsin residential care facility. (A list of existing facilities is provided in the Barron County Conditions and Trends Report).

14. Adult Day Care

These facilities provide service for part of the day in a group setting to adults who need assistance with daily living activities, supervision or protection. Adult day care services are limited in Barron County. Daybreak, an adult day care facility with locations in the city of Barron and Rice Lake, has limited hours and is only available for persons with dementia. General adult day care, with similar hours to a child care facility, is needed to allow the adult’s care taker to continue in the workforce if they so choose. As the elderly population in the County increases there will be a greater need for more of these types of facilities.

15. Disability – Related Services

In Barron County there are two non-profit agencies that provide vocational day service programs for the developmentally disabled population, they are Ventures in Rice Lake and Barron County Development Disability Services in Barron. They are state funded including transportation for their clients.

16. Child Care Facilities

Licenses are administered through the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. (A list of licensed facilities as of July 2008 is provided in the Barron County Conditions and Trends Report).

17. Police, Sheriff

Most planning and operations related to law enforcement occurs at the local municipal level. The County Sheriff’s Department provides law enforcement and investigation services at the County level, manages the County Jail, the 911 Communications Center, and the Sheriff’s Patrol. Offices for the Sheriff’s Department, the Circuit Court, County Jail, and Emergency Services are housed in the Justice Center located in the city of Barron. Since the completion of the Justice Center/Jail in 2004, the County has remodeled existing facilities and relocated personnel to reduce the number of buildings they own and maintain. A multi-year $2.7 million emergency communications upgrade including towers, related buildings and infrastructure will be completed in 2010.
18. Barron County Government Center

The business of the County is conducted in the Government Center located in the city of Barron. Heating Venting and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems are from the 1960’s and will need replacement, however, the addition of new system controls have improved the HVAC operations and a complete system replacement can be delayed.

19. Other Government Facilities

The replacement of the 1940’s era highway shop is anticipated in the next 10-15 years and a work group has been formed to review location options. Several buildings used for road maintenance are scattered throughout the County including salt and sand storage, and road construction operations. Other buildings owned and maintained by the County are listed in the county-owned facilities needs assessment.

20. Emergency Management

Emergency Management specializes in Hazard Mitigation, Warning & Communications, Emergency Police Services, Emergency Fire Services, Disaster Response & Recovery, Hazardous Materials, the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, and Exercise & Training for Barron County. Emergency Management plans for and coordinates emergency response utilizing an all-hazards planning approach which includes mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Training and exercises emphasizing the National Incident Management Systems’ standardized procedures for managing personnel, communication, facilities, and resources are held annually. Many exercises include personnel from multi-agencies and multi-jurisdictions.

Barron County prepared a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2005. It is a multi-jurisdictional plan using Federal guidelines that was prepared by the Barron County Local Emergency Planning Committee with assistance from West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The primary focus of the plan is to evaluate the community’s potential exposure to natural disasters and identify appropriate mitigation strategies. The plan is due to be updated in 2010 using a Planning Grant in the amount of $29,976.00 through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program for Barron County.

Related Elements: The Intergovernmental Cooperation Element provides additional information related to emergency management.

21. Fire, Rescue, and First Responders

Most planning and operations related to Fire, Rescue and First Responders services are conducted at the local municipal level. The DNR is responsible for the suppression of forest fires for those towns that have petitioned for State protection. They are: Bear Lake, Cedar Lake, Doyle, and Sumner; the unincorporated areas of Dovre and Lakeland; all of Maple Plain except for south of Hwy 48; and the...
unincorporated areas of Chetek, Stanley and Prairie Lake towns east of Hwy SS. None of the other towns in the County have petitioned for State protection. The DNR also provides fire protection for most of the County forest lands. The 2005 Barron County Hazard Mitigation Plan stated that the hazard risks from forest and wild fires upon Barron County were considered low overall; and a full risk and vulnerability assessment was not warranted.

22. Libraries

The planning and operations of the public libraries within the County are provided at the local or facility level. As of March 2009 the Barron County Library Service was dissolved, and support services provided through the Indianhead Federated Library System out of Eau Claire.

23. Schools

Required planning and operations for schools within the County are provided by the educational system itself. The County owns the land and buildings of the UW-Barron County campus and leases land to WITC campus. County owned buildings on the UW-Barron County campus are inventoried in the county-owned facilities needs assessment provided in the appendices.

24. Cemeteries

Numerous cemeteries throughout the County are privately and municipally owned and maintained.

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**Supporting Data**

- *The Barron County Conditions and Trends Report* provides background information and a basic inventory of the utilities and community facilities discussed in this element along with relevant maps.
- *The Inventory of Plans, Programs, and Land Use Policies* provides information about Wellhead Protection Programs and Stormwater Management Plans and Utilities.
- The individual Comprehensive Plans of the Towns, Villages and city that completed one, have a detailed inventory of their utilities and facilities and statements as to their future needs.
Goals

1. Improve Storm Water Management throughout the County.

2. Ensure that utilities are effective, efficient, safe, and well-planned.

3. Promote efficient, effective, and responsible disposal of solid and hazardous waste, and recycling options that protect public health, the environment, and appearance of the County.

4. Promote energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy technologies.

5. Encourage the continued use, enhancement, and expansion of mutual aid agreements for police, fire, and emergency services in meeting the needs of existing and future development.

6. Promote the viability of public schools and their efforts to increase community education, and to plan appropriate facilities.

7. Maintain and enhance the current County park, forest and recreation areas.

Objectives

1. Plan, operate and maintain County facilities using cost-effective and energy efficient practices.

2. Promote the prevention of pollutants from entering the County’s water resources via storm water runoff. [Also see the Natural Resources Goals and Objectives].

3. Support programs and practices that reduce non-point pollution from entering sewer systems and surface water. [Also see the Natural Resources Goals and Objectives].

4. Cooperate in the planning and coordination of utilities with other agencies and units of government.

5. Encourage new utility transmission and distribution lines to locate and co-locate along existing public rights-of-way where possible and coordinate with land use, transportation, and natural resource plans and policies when establishing new locations.
6. Guide the location of telecommunication, wind energy, or other utility towers and structures, in a manner that balances desired service levels with limiting impacts to the environment, community character, and planned growth areas.

7. Promote provisions for the disposal of solid waste, hazardous waste and recycling options for greater safety, cooperation, and cost effectiveness.

8. Encourage opportunities for the proper recycling and disposal of electronic waste.

Policies and Programs
1. Support the State of Wisconsin's goals for energy independence.

2. Actively pursue agreements, contracts, and financing to improve energy efficiency in County operations.

3. Explore opportunities for energy conservation and renewable energy production in Barron County.

4. Work with all municipalities, emergency response agencies and government bodies to assure that all municipalities, emergency responders, and County agencies are trained to National Incident Management System guidelines.

5. Provide consistent emergency operations plans for all municipalities and maintain unified radio operability.

6. Enforce the Barron County Chapter 22 Health and Sanitation Ordinance: to protect the public health, safety and general welfare and to maintain and protect the environment for the people and communities of Barron County.

7. Explore opportunities to use existing steam capacity at the Waste to Energy Facility.

8. Under the Barron County Recycling Ordinance residents must not dispose of glass, aluminum and tin or steel containers with their trash. Those items must

Recommendations
1. The Waste to Energy Facility should continue to partner with local municipalities on programs to aid in the recycling or collecting of waste.

2. Coordinate an annual Household/Agriculture Clean Sweep. Currently there is one held every 2-3 years.

3. Develop a system to dispose of pharmaceutical waste from health care facilities on a year-round basis.

4. Provide signage at recycling drop boxes that discourages hazardous waste dumping.

5. Create a system to recycling monitor drop boxes to assure adequate pick-up and to add drop boxes as needed.

6. Complete current efforts to create a County-wide program for the safe disposal and recycling of electronic waste.
be kept separated and brought to Recycling Drop Boxes.

9. Under the Flow Control Ordinance all solid waste generated within the County, except within the city of Rice Lake must be taken to the Waste to Energy Facility in the town of Turtle Lake. The Ordinance differentiates between acceptable and non-acceptable waste.

10. Through the Mercury Reduction Plan, Barron County will attempt to minimize the amount of mercury entering the environment from wastes disposed of at the Waste to Energy incinerator and in landfills.

11. The Barron County Recycling program for glass, tin, steel, aluminum, and plastic.

12. Maintain and expand where appropriate the Household/Agriculture Clean Sweep Program

13. Capital Improvement/Capital Outlay Program for County owned facilities

14. Wellhead Protection Programs are in place in Almena, Barron, Cameron, Cumberland, Rice Lake, and Turtle Lake

15. Barron County Health and Human Services provides related to: communicable disease, environmental health, emergency management and public health preparedness and other community health issues. They provide environmental health information, testing services and referrals on a variety of topics including housing, air quality, hazardous materials, food safety, and animal control.

16. The 2006 Barron County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan provides an assessment of hazardous conditions, current mitigation activities, and mitigation goals and strategies. It also identifies strategic partners and, through the Hazard Mitigation Toolbox, identifies natural hazards and the strategies and activities to address them.

Recommendations
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7. Encourage taverns, gas stations, and other outlets to improve recycling efforts.

8. Encourage recycling in county-owned buildings.

9. Monitor county-owned facilities for their ability to manage storm water run-off and make improvements where necessary.


11. Reduce the amount of debris that leaves the Waste to Energy Facility grounds.

12. Continue to implement the solid waste flow control agreement.

13. Coordinate a uniform communication system through the County.

14. Strategically locate ambulance service coverage.

15. Complete outdoor recreation plan.