



To: Long Range Planning Committee
CC:
FROM: Larry Bierke, County Administrator
RE: County Growth Needs / Department
DATE: 05.01.23

At the Long Range Planning Committee meeting on March 13, 2023, the Committee asked the County Administrator to review the existing Master Facilities Plan and draft a memo reflecting the changes on a Department level from the Master Plan to current times.

Our Iowa County Facilities 2030 Master Plan was completed in 2005 by Russell Knetzer, Architecture Network, Inc, and Venture Architects. Robert Regan was the Iowa County Board Chair at the time. Attached is a brief summary of the plan. The planning binder includes the summaries of many previous plans, both for the County of Iowa and the City of Dodgeville. Many projects have happened since this facilities plan was adopted by the Iowa County Board on October 17, 2006.

The Iowa County Facilities 2005 Master Plan:

1. Considered potential redevelopment of the Masonic Temple, former Walmart store, reuse of the Courthouse Parking Lot, and the residential block between Courthouse and HHS Center.
2. The Plan considered four criteria needed in master plan options:
 - a. County functions that belong near each other should be grouped together.
 - b. Short term relief from crowding should not unduly delay, nor distort, long term needed outcomes such as adjacencies at the grouped locations.
 - c. County Departments, now crowded for space shall receive first relief: Health, IT, Jail, Sheriff, and Social Services were top departments selected.
 - d. Cost of meeting needs should pass two tests: comparative 1) capital costs & 2) operating costs.

Transitions & Changes:

- A. Some departments have shrunk in the number of staff since 2005. The greatest changes include the reduction of Highway Department with 10 fewer positions and Social Services with 5 fewer positions.
- B. Iowa County has built the Health and Human Services Center and the Law Enforcement Center since 2005.
- C. Iowa County has closed and sold the Nursing Home, reducing staffing by 131 positions and no longer supports the maintenance costs of the large facility.
- D. Total staffing in Iowa County has dropped from 301.3 to 175 since 2005.
- E. County Tax Base has increased, operational costs have increased, and state funding mechanisms have changed.
- F. The State of Wisconsin has implemented the strictest levy limits in the country and county governments have been asked to absorb insurance and wage growth costs for over a decade.

Department Head Survey:

Iowa County has 19 different appointed and elected department heads. The County Administrator surveyed all of them via email with the following questions and received 15 responses:

1. Do you see a need for additional space in your department for equipment or personnel in the next
 - a. 5 years?
 - b. 10 years?
 - c. 15 years?
 - d. 20 years?
2. Do you have the potential to do more office sharing or telecommuting given the services provided by your department?
3. As technology improves and staffing gets more expensive, do you see a possibility that your department will have fewer staff members in 10 years?
4. Will your space needs decrease within the next 10 years?
5. When considering the services your department provides is there an opportunity for the use of less space if portions of your department were merged with another County or contracted out? If so what services?
6. If you were on the committee, what changes to our organization would you consider implementing over the next 10 years? Any suggestions or things you want to make sure the Committee considers when doing long term planning?

QUESTION ONE. Do you see a need for additional space in your department for equipment or personnel in the next a. 5 years? b. 10 years? c. 15 years? d. 20 years?

Four respondents answered “no” to items 1a,b,c,and d. Five respondents answered question 1 without breaking down their answer to a,b,c,d. Those general responses are as follows:

UW Extension Director: Extension does not currently foresee the need for additional space or equipment beyond regular updates of computers, and in 10 – 20 years hard to know what our technology needs may be? We may add a state specialist or additional FoodWise Educator in the next few years, but we have options available in our current space that could accommodate potential changes.

Land Conservation Director: It’s hard to say what may happen in 15-20 years as so much depends on State or Federal funding; I don’t see needing more space for staff in the next 5-10 years because we have an extra cube currently and a smaller desk that would work for an intern. Equipment storage isn’t adequate right now; the white shed is pretty tight after the Sheriff Dept began using it. I could see us adding equipment in the next 5-10 years (either for dam maintenance/field work or for farmer use) that would require more space than we have now.

District Attorney: Much of the space and personnel needs over the next 5-20 years will be largely dependent on what happens during that time with the possibility of a second Judge in Iowa County and the continued growth of county offices, and county/municipal law enforcement. However, I anticipate the biggest need will be another Assistant District Attorney.

In August of 2019, the State determined that we had enough cases in Iowa County to have a full time Assistant District Attorney. This was pre COVID and put us at a staffing level as determined by the State Prosecutor’s Office at right around 100%. This meant that, in 2019 as far as attorneys are concerned, the Iowa County District Attorney’s office was fully staffed.

Fast forward three years to 2022, and according to a report by the State Prosecutors Office released in August, as far as attorney staffing level according to case load we were only 70% staffed. This means that from 2020-2022 our case load grew at least 30%.

That number is eye opening considering that was during COVID when there were struggles with staffing by county and municipal law enforcement, and the Iowa County District Attorney's Office made policy changes such as limiting the prosecutions of worthless checks and retail thefts. The DA's office has also gone paperless to streamline workload avoid costs related to paper-based files as much as possible. Such policy changes, and staffing limitations, one would have thought would have reduced the workload. It did not.

As we near the midway point of 2023, there is talk of getting a second judge in Iowa County, and for the first time in a long-time county and municipal law enforcement are near fully staffed. Caseload will increase more than it already has, and this will serve to only accelerate the need for another Assistant District Attorney. If we get another Assistant District Attorney, we will need office space. Most all the other costs, such as salary and benefits would be covered by the State. There would also be an increase to budget considerations such as office supplies and training budgets.

Another consideration within the next five years would be a part time investigator for the District Attorneys Office. As outlined above, it seems law enforcement has never been busier, and neither has this office. One place I detect a growing need is an investigator that works out the office that has the freedom to follow up with potential witnesses to cases, ensure bond compliance for troublesome defendants, and ensure compliance with diversion agreements through things like testing. Moreover, an investigator could respond quickly to case follow-up and investigations that happen unexpectedly.

Right now, in the Iowa County DA's office we are limited in our ability to meet with victims, particularly in domestic violence cases, because when victims disclose new information to the District Attorney's Office during a meeting, we must stop the interview and either ask for a law enforcement officer to respond, or have the victim schedule a time with law enforcement. It's not efficient for anybody and can create a lot of unnecessary barriers between victims of crimes and the Iowa County District Attorney's Office. Not to mention a victim may decide to change their mind while waiting for law enforcement and then the information is lost. Costs would include a wage, benefits etc. We would also need office space.

Please note, as to office space right now we have two conference rooms that are not always occupied by staff. However, per statute we must always have one available for victims. The conference room designated for that is off a common area in the office. Our other conference room is only accessible by going through someone else's office which doesn't make it ideal to turn into an office.

Beyond five years I think it is just too hard to tell what we will need. Much of it will depend on what happens other areas of the county in the future.

County Treasurer: not space but personnel yes

Planning and Zoning Director: We do have space for one additional person at the main door. A privacy wall may be warranted. If the current workload trajectory holds, I see the need for an additional code enforcement position and possible GIS. We used to have 6 positions.

1A) 5 Year Time Horizon

Environmental Services Director: Maintenance Shop, Additional heated storage space. Car charging parking lot spaces at each location, Office and shop space for a maintenance person at LEC, Vehicle and trailer storage facility for EM, Environmental Services, ADRC vans, sheriff's vehicles, etc..

Highway Commissioner: At Airport - Yes new hangars are a priority, we have had a 100% occupancy rate for greater than 8 years; with 5 continually on the wait list.

Highway Commissioner: yes – new shop in Hollandale due to aging salt storage facility and lack of room on site for an adequately sized new building. Upon completion of this facility we can relinquish ourselves of the King Street Dodgeville Ag services easement area salt building.

Health Department: Yes Potentially

Emergency Management: Garage for equipment and trailers

Finance Director: No – unless we were to become more centralized in the finance area similar to Columbia County

1B) 10 Year Time Horizon

Clerk of Courts: With the recent addition of Ct 2, no, I do not see that need, however, my answer could change based on what staffing increase I may need.

Environmental Services Director: Electric utility vehicle space for maintenance Educational space out at the farm (research, youth education, public activity space, etc..)

Highway Commissioner: yes – our fuel farm underground storage tanks have a 30 year insurability life. The tanks were installed circa 2003. So circa 2033 they will no longer be insurable, and should be considered for replacement. Some consideration should be given to that \$750K expense versus development of a new Dodgeville facility.

1C) 15 Year Time Horizon

Highway Commissioner: Highway – Yes New Dodgeville shop location? The existing main shop facility was built originally in 1932-36 with additional main buildings in 1946, 1954, and 1970.

1D) 20 Year Time Horizon

QUESTION TWO: Do you have the potential to do more office sharing or telecommuting given the services provided by your department?

There were six respondents that said “no” and one respondent that said “yes”. Here are the additional responses to question 2:

Environmental Services Director: I don't see office sharing happening unless a centralized shop and office spaces were created. Telecommuting may work for a person that monitors all building controls. I can see a person doing this in 15 or 20 years down the road. Could be a combined service with other Counties?

Highway Commissioner: Limited with current facilities. No to telecommuting with work tasks and types.

UW Extension Director: Extension Educators, Regional Educators, and Specialist have strict guidelines regarding telecommuting, limited to no more than 2 days per week. Regional and State Specialist are able to share office space as needed.

Land Conservation Director: We could potentially add more telecommuting time, but I don't see a position being entirely telecommute-based since we still have walk-ins and field work.

The technician position has fewer drop-in clients as she needs to meet them on site usually, so she could possibly telecommute more, but then would often need to keep a work truck at her house to conduct field visits (it's not efficient to drive to the office to pick up a truck if the site is the opposite direction). Sharing space may be possible, especially while we have a spare desk (although I hope to find grants to use that eventually), but then noise becomes an issue so we might need to add walls or something between the desks.

District Attorney: Since the Iowa County District Attorney's office has gone paperless, almost everything we would need is contained on a State maintained database. This gives the office a lot of flexibility on telecommuting and as it is two of the six people in the office share common office space. Moreover, one of the few barriers we have to telecommuting completely is 1) someone needs to be here to staff our window in case the public comes during an unscheduled time 2) the lack of automated phone directory which means someone has to answer the phone. I will say this though, even if we could eliminate both barriers listed above, I would not want to go full telecommute for the county employees because I believe it would eliminate a lot of the comradery that exists in the office.

Finance Director: Yes, more telecommuting (if I allow for it). Currently, staff are only allowed to ad hoc.

Veterans Service Officer: Office sharing would not be feasible, more telecommuting is possible though I feel it would decrease service levels to clients some.

Planning and Development Director: The GIS work is more conducive to teleworking. I don't see office sharing as a viable option currently.

QUESTION THREE: As technology improves and staffing gets more expensive, do you see a possibility that your department will have fewer staff members in 10 years?

There were seven respondents that replied to the question with a "No" and the additional responses were:

Child Support Director: No – no one can predict that

Environmental Services Director: I don't currently unless staffing as a whole significantly decreases in-house and building footprints decrease as well. Also depends on philosophy. Do we outsource more, or do we try to do on our own? Do we merge services with other Counties?

Highway Commissioner: No with increased regulations and legal mandates related to safety, environment and other changes; anticipate additional staff will be required.

UW Extension Director: We do not anticipate fewer Educator staff. We currently have one county funded department assistant that serves the entire department. This position may evolve over the future years depending on technology but believe the position is extremely valuable in making certain we are always able to provide excellent customer service.

Land Conservation Director: No; much of our work is field-related and can't be automated.

Technology may help us be more efficient in the future with communications and annual FPP self-certifications, but that would not be significant enough to reduce staff members.

Emergency Management Director: The same number of staff but a Deputy as the second staff member rather than Dept. Asst.

District Attorney: 3. If 1) the State maintained database continues to improve and 2) We continue to employ experienced employees, then perhaps there could be a potential staff reduction. HOWEVER, given the current trend in caseload going upward it is also realistic that another position needs to be added to handle the additional work. When compared to Grant County (a county that has an ADA and DA like Iowa County and two judges) they have either

four legal secretaries or three legal secretaries and a department assistant. One more than Iowa County does now.

Planning and Development Director: No. We have employed technology to go from 6 staff to the current 3. We have no staff to lose. I predict we will eventually invest in electronic permitting and sanitary maintenance tracking, but the efficiencies gained will only marginally decrease current workload.

QUESTION FOUR: Will your space needs decrease within the next 10 years?

This question had nine respondents respond with a “no” and a few generated a few other responses:

Clerk of Court: I cannot rule it out completely but I would highly doubt less space needed.

Environmental Services Director: Again, depends on other department needs.

Highway Commissioner: No, currently are undersized for the operations. At any given time we have about 20 pieces of equipment/machinery which are stored outside 24/7/365 – not under roof.

Land Conservation Director: I don't think so

District Attorney: As outlined in number 1, I see space needs increasing by one or two offices. If caseloads continue to rise and we add another Assistant District Attorney there would need to be another office. If we are fortunate enough to get a District Attorney Investigator in some capacity, they would need an office as well. Unfortunately, no amount of work from home would negate that, because an attorney and/or investigator needs to be present in the office to handle the unexpected.

Planning and Development Director: Only if there are 100% teleworking opportunities.

QUESTION FIVE: When considering the services your department provides is there an opportunity for the use of less space if portions of your department were merged with another County or contracted out? If so what services?

Four respondents to this question replied with a “no” and it generated the following comments:

Clerk of Court: No, I cannot see that being feasible.

Environmental Services Director: If we looked at tradesman, project managers for large projects at different County facilities, Maybe. Plumbers, Electricians, Refrigeration experts, and HVAC technicians come to mind. Industry is struggling to keep these positions staffed now. How are they going to fill them in the future?

Register of Deeds: No. State statutes prohibit any merging or contracting out for the ROD office.

Highway Commissioner: Yes could compartmentalize or regionalize with other counties – Lafayette-Grant-Iowa to share costs/burdens. The largest impact is probably related to operation and use of our asphalt plant. Could be some economies of scale savings as well related to staffing and completion of tasks; although that may not be feasible due to the increase I coverage area. We already assist neighboring counties thru sharing of equipment and project based trucking.

UW Extension Director: The Extension department currently merges some services with other county extension offices via the regional model (Agriculture). Our services are unique to extension education and do not see or anticipate being able to merge or contract out service with other county departments.

Land Conservation Director: The field work again prevents merging with another County; possibly some of the Nutrient Management Plan reviews and farmer training could be done on a multi-County basis, but that would not be enough time-saving to free up a desk.

Health Director: No, I don't think so.

Emergency Management Director: N/A

District Attorney: 5. Constitutionally this office was created to serve Iowa County and Iowa County only (at least for the most part, we do help out our neighboring counties from time to time), so I don't see much room for contracting out. However, I am certainly open for suggestions.

Veterans Service Officer: Merging services is not feasible per statute.

Planning and Development Director: The most common merger is with LCD. However, I don't see such a merger necessarily reducing staffing or space needs due to the uniqueness of positions. Some facets of GIS could be contracted out. However, being the division of the office most adaptable to teleworking, contracting would not save work space.

QUESTION SIX: If you were on the committee, what changes to our organization would you consider implementing over the next 10 years? Any suggestions or things you want to make sure the Committee considers when doing long term planning?

There were four respondents that did not reply to this question. Here are the additional responses:

Environmental Services Director:

A. I would let all of those that can work for home, work from home. Why? If we reduce the number of staff within our facilities, we reduce footprint space, reduced space reduces energy costs, reduced costs equal lower taxes. If we have the software to monitor working from home, why not? Along with this we could then look at a goal of being an energy neutral County. Add additional energy reducing measures like wind, solar, geothermal, etc.... Energy costs are only rising, need to find ways to keep pace.

B. I would look at combining services so that we would have multiple departments operate out of a specific space. We currently work in silos, and I'd like to see those removed. I would combine the SUN program with the LEC facility. No reason we aren't using the same space, now that we have the LEC kitchen. I would also move our County Court system (DA's office, Child Support, and all Court Services) to the LEC

C. Instead of County facilities at multiple locations, I would look at a County campus if all possible. Multiple shared services (shared utilities, shared HVAC, parking lots, security services, Security lighting, etc....

D. I would install drive through windows at our facilities. Our County residents want to get more done with the limited time they have each day. Make it easier for them to drop off paperwork, or to get simple question answered without even leaving their car.

E. Do more online? Can services be done online or by zoom or facetime? If staff are working from home, we need to be able to do more online (online signatures, document transfers via fax and email instead of in person, etc..).

F. Goal: Reduce facilities from three down to two. HHS, Courthouse, and LEC Most logical move is to remove services from Courthouse to LEC. If A, B, D, and E are implemented above, I don't see why this couldn't happen. C would improve because of the rest happening.

In addition to what I've stated above, let's look at maybe combining services with townships, villages, and cities. Why have a salt shed from the County right next to a

salt shed from the village? We aren't looking at the resident's best interests at times. The County wants to give roads to the townships? Wither I'm paying taxes to my township vs. the County, it doesn't matter. What if we considered the opposite? Not trying to pick on the Highway Department. I think these are just examples. Merging departments with the same departments in other Counties should be considered as well (at least looked at).

Has there ever been a strategic plan done for the County as a whole? Large task but would like to see how community goals match each other and the Counties goals. I think the County could be more of a leader in helping communities change and grow. Just an idea.

Register of Deeds: None at this time.

Highway Commissioner: Facilities planning should look at opportunities to combine or streamline delivery of government services through consolidation. Highway should either continue down the path of returning low volume roads to other entities (towns) or consider regionalization of the county wide network thru County-town agreements to share burdens of equipment/machinery and manpower costs. Are some opportunities for regionalization of services - asphalt plant for example - if other counties are interested. Some legislative changes (vendor service agreements) within the LRIP program could make that option more effective at putting funds to the roads as well.

Work towards a goal of the airport being self-funded through user fees.

UW Extension Director: I believe technology may significantly change how we interact daily with our customers. Hard to know for sure how or what this would look like, however even technology will not replace the need for personal/social interaction, especially in the field of Education.

We believe sustainability/renewable energy practices will continue to be a high and important need for additional infrastructure to serve both customers and next generation staff.

Land Conservation Director: While we should keep up with technology and have more options for online services (if they are easy for the public to find & use), don't forget that we still have many clients who don't have access to that technology or the ability/willingness to use it, and sometimes those are the ones who need us the most. I think in-person customer service will always be important. I also don't think we currently have a culture in Iowa Co that would support any more telecommuting than we already do.

Emergency Management Director: Consolidate storage shed with Highway Dept., Facility Services, Sheriff, and EM if possible.

Work on a plan that would close the current courthouse and HHS building and construct a new facility adjacent to the LEC creating an all-inclusive government center with the exception of the Highway Dept. Completion of this project is likely 25-30 yrs out.

District Attorney: The only suggestion I have is to be mindful of how changes to one department or office can affect another. For instance, The District Attorney's Office has operated at between 1.5 to 2 lawyers and 2 legal secretaries, 1 department assistant and 1 victim witness coordinator for the last 23 years at least. (I believe during that time a part time investigator position was eliminated, so in fact staffing used to be higher.) In that time, the county offices that refer cases such as the Sheriff's Office, Health and Human Services, and Child Support have grown and, in some cases, grown quite robustly. That says nothing of the staffs of other county municipalities the District Attorney's Office works with. This has lead to an increased workload for the District Attorney's office.

The ability of the District Attorney's Office to innovate and use the experience of its long tenured staff, has meant that so far we've been able to mitigate the effects of an increasing workload and keep it manageable. However, as progress continues to march forward, as it always must, and positions are added elsewhere, such as another judge or more law

enforcement positions, or HHS positions, the District Attorney's Office may need to change as well just to keep up.

Finance Director: No changes necessary.

Veterans Service Officer: Maintaining the high level of service the various departments currently provide to Iowa County.

County Treasurer: Lines of communication need to be completely open and any and all proposed changes are made clear to dept heads.

Planning and Development Director: There will need to be an investment in staffing in the not so distant future just to adequately meet current workload. Looking beyond, it is unlikely my replacement will be only one person.

I feel the county is currently staffed pretty lean overall and has been for some time. The committee should be planning to invest in staffing or cutting services where able in order to attract and retain people. In my world, new hires statewide are staying 1-3 years with most leaving due to too much workload for the compensation. (I am on two statewide workgroups addressing these issues)

I also feel the committee should embrace the trend of teleworking by allowing certain positions to do so 100% or nearly so. Providing services online vs in person will increase as accessibility to adequate internet increases and the client demographic becomes younger.

I'd like to suggest the topic of preparing for future staffing and operations be something DHs discuss at monthly meetings. I'd like to hear from colleagues the trends and challenges they are seeing.

Condition of Iowa County as of 2023:

- I. Department staffing levels are shrinking overall, as technologies improve. The County needs to look to mergers and cutting back on non-mandatory services if the state of Wisconsin is going to continue to restrict our taxing authority. We will not be able to provide all the services we once could.
- II. Departments have been surveyed and the Health Department, Emergency Management, Airport, Highway Department, and District Attorney's Office, all feel that they will outgrow their space over the next five years.
- III. Regionally, County Board Chairs are meeting to talk about sharing of services and the County Board has directed that the County Administrator "work with surrounding counties on collaboration of services".

Two Major Building Projects to Consider:

1. LEC Addition: I like the idea of adding on to the Law Enforcement Center. We could utilize this to solve several problems.
 - A. Move all Courthouse and HHS staff to the new building. This eliminates the HHS heating system as a \$2.2 Million problem.
 - B. Updates a large portion of our physical spaces and cuts down on the number of properties being maintained by Iowa County.
 - C. Could use transition to merge departments and organize "hot seat" offices.
 - D. Would likely cost \$20 million+, so planning now would set us up to build when interest rates drop. We could set a plan to have rough draft 35% design done and space planned out by 2025.
 - E. As time goes on, our equalized value will continue to increase, our debt levels will drop, and ability to borrow more will increase, all pulling the feasibility of building nearer and nearer...
 - F. How will multi-county merger opportunities suffer?

- G. What offices should the state be paying for if we build new and how do we get that to happen?
- 2. Build a new Highway shop with storage in a rural location. My preferred site is the gravel pit just outside of Dodgeville, however if we look to merge operations with another county, a more central location would be preferable.
 - a. Do before the \$750,000 fuel dispense system replacement becomes necessary in 2033.
 - b. Replace salt shed on new site instead of building in existing location.
 - c. Should we organize a meeting of area Counties to discuss this further?

Other Impacts worth discussing:

- i. The Law Enforcement Center debt is paid off in 2040.
- ii. LEC Construction was at 2.7% interest for debt. Will we be ready to build if interest rates get that low again?
- iii. Will telecommuting be a long-term space needs solution?
- iv. Will virtual assistants and internet based services impact future space needs?
- v. Would it be appropriate to have drive-thru lanes included in future buildings?
- vi. County Administrator should consider a 5 year staffing outlook for position changes.