



Intergovernmental Cooperation – 2007 Update

There are numerous examples of how Kent County interacts and works with local units of government within its boundaries, including its largest city, Grand Rapids, as well as other local and regional partners.

Regional Efforts

1. *Children's Assessment Center:* A facility/program providing multi-disciplinary response to allegations of child sexual abuse. The Center is located at 901 Michigan NE and provides office space for two Sheriff deputies, three Grand Rapids police officers, four DHS protective service workers, counselors and doctors/nurses. The County and cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Grandville, and Walker have provided financial support for operations of the Center.
2. *Community Probation:* Five local communities have pooled Juvenile Accountability Block Grant dollars, required local funding and other resources into a Juvenile Community Probation Program offered by the 7th Judicial Circuit Court Family Division. Juvenile Probation officers and Surveillance Officers team up with Community Policing Officers in the communities to provide greater coordination and closer monitoring of juvenile offenders.
3. *County 911 Dispatch:* The County has been working with local units of government since 2001 to develop a consolidated 911 dispatch system. While this has been in the discussion stage for the past decade, over the past several years a significant amount of work has been done. A report was developed as a result of this work that provides a recommendation for a system and options for funding. The County, along with the cities of Wyoming, Walker, and Grandville, formed a dispatch authority. The interim policy board met regularly and developed a formal recommendation, which was presented to the Board of Commissioners in June 2006 to extend the existing Dispatch agreement to include the City of Grand Rapids. The extension of the agreement was executed in early 2007, and later that year amended again to include a representative of the Emergency Medical System (EMS). In July 2007, the Authority completed a Strategic Plan for the purpose of creating countywide enhancements to 911 emergency services. The Plan will reduce the number of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Kent County from five to two. These call-centers will answer all wireless and land line 911 calls in Kent County, and will reduce the number of times a call is transferred compared to the existing 911 system. Implementation of the Plan is on hold pending legislative changes which impact its funding mechanism.
4. *Drain Plan Updates:* For a number of years the Drain Commission has been working with local units to update their drain master plans, with the County paying one-half the cost of the updates. To date, the following communities have had their master plans updated through this program: The Townships of Algoma, Alpine, Byron, Cascade, Gaines, Grand Rapids, and Plainfield, and the City of Walker. Caledonia and Cannon Townships are scheduled to have their plans completed in 2007.

5. *Fire Commission:* Numerous local units participate with the County on joint purchasing of insurance, fire equipment, and fire/emergency vehicles, taking advantage of cost savings realized with the “bulk” purchase of goods and services.
6. *Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC):* In 1990, the County became one of thirteen original (charter) members of the State’s first, and only, Metropolitan Council (Grand Valley Metro Council). The Metro Council is now comprised of 35 units of government from the Grand Rapids area. GVMC has developed competencies in regional land use planning, transportation planning (MPO), cooperative purchasing and GIS (see #16 below).
7. *Hazard Mitigation Plan:* As a result of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, local units of government were required to prepare a hazard mitigation plan by November 2004. While the County is mandated by state law to provide for countywide emergency management through a designated coordinator, as well as administering a planning committee to conduct activities relating to the clean up and disposal of hazardous material spills, Kent County has gone above and beyond these functions by joining forces (and resources) with the City of Grand Rapids and Ottawa County to prepare a regional hazard mitigation plan.
8. *Information Technology Collaboration:* In early 2006, the Kent County Information Technology Department (IT) was instrumental in developing and co-hosting an inaugural school system / local government IT collaboration. Such a meeting had never before been held. While there is potential to explore a number of collaborative opportunities, no projects have been specifically identified, and the project has been put on hold.
9. *Investment Pool:* The County Treasurer has implemented a pooled investment program whereby local units of government can participate and have funds invested with the County’s funds to obtain the best possible rate of return. Approximately 20 local units within the County, as well as several authorities, participate.
10. *Joint Committee on NPDES Phase II Stormwater Permitting:* To date, 25 local units of government within Kent County have adopted a stormwater control ordinance using the Model Stormwater Ordinance developed by the teams which worked under the umbrella of the County Drain Commissioner. A number of other counties have requested a copy of the model ordinance to use as a basis for a model ordinance in their county. In addition to the stormwater ordinances, by the end of 2007 Kent County will have participated in one-half of the cost incurred by 10 local units of government in the development of their Master Stormwater Plan.
11. *Law Enforcement:* The County has entered into agreements with several townships to provide enhanced patrol services. The County also worked with Gaines Charter Township to lease a portion of its township hall for the Sheriff’s Department South Substation, which serves the southern tier of townships in the County. The County also has an intergovernmental agreement with the Townships of Ada, Cascade and Grand Rapids for an East Precinct, with enhanced law enforcement services. These townships pay 100 percent of personnel costs and 75percent of facility costs. In addition, the Sheriff Department provides dispatch services for several local units of government.
12. *Local Units Law Enforcement In-Service Training System:* The Sheriff’s Department, along with the police and fire departments of Grand Rapids, East Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming, and Grandville now have the ability to login and view the schedule of all in-service training sessions Countywide. At a glance, the user is able to sort the schedule by title, category, location or date/time, and determine if a class is open to registration. The user is able to view the class description, hours, cost, training location, prerequisites, and

what materials, equipment and uniform to bring to the class. Training coordinators are able to register staff members electronically, with email reminders and other notifications sent automatically to class participants. The system allows each training coordinator to store their staff's training history by person and run year-end reports. Each department can view training opportunities available and whether that training is open for all police departments (interdepartmental) or exclusive to the particular police department sponsoring the training.

13. *Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS)*: The County has joined with city administrators from Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood, and administrators from the three major medical facilities (Spectrum, St. Mary's and Metropolitan Hospital) within the County on an Executive Committee to plan for the medical and hospital response to bio-terrorism or other similar emergencies.
14. *Millennium Park*: Kent County is in the process of acquiring and developing a 1,500 acre park along the Grand River located within the cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, Walker, and Grandville. This \$25 million-plus park is the crown jewel of parks in Kent County and one of the largest urban parks in the country.
15. *Plainfield/Grand Rapids Townships Corridor Improvement District*: The County recently worked with the Charter Townships of Plainfield and Grand Rapids on an intergovernmental agreement to participate in a Corridor Improvement District on Plainfield Avenue. This is the first such agreement reached based upon the County's Economic Development Policy.
16. *Regional Geographic Information System (REGIS)*: Twenty local units, along with Kent County, worked together to develop a regional GIS system that went on-line in December 2001. REGIS is recognized as one of the largest collaborative GIS efforts in the country. In addition, the County contributed the majority of costs toward a \$1 million orthophotography project to update maps made available to local units in 2004 and is coordinating activities related to the 2008 orthophotography update.
17. *Regional Publication (County Detail)*: An update on County activities in which local units may be interested is mailed (and emailed) to local units on a bi-monthly basis.
18. *Transporting Inmates*: The Sheriff's Department transports inmates from the correctional facility to and from all district courts in the County. This service started in July 2006.
19. *Urban Mayors & Managers*: In August 2005 the Board Chair and County Administrator started meeting on a monthly basis with the Mayor and Managers of the six core cities (East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Wyoming, and Walker) to dialogue about further opportunities to partner and increase efficiencies. This meeting now takes place on a quarterly basis.
20. *West Michigan Strategic Alliance*: The County has been an active partner with the WMSA, which has taken a unique approach to defining the future of the urban 'triplex' composed of the areas centered on the cities of Holland, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids. The approach focuses first on the region's economic competitiveness in the world economy and second, builds consensus on strategies from that perspective.

City of Grand Rapids

21. *Area Community Services, Employment and Training (ACSET) Council*: In 1985, the City of Grand Rapids and the County partnered, via an Urban Cooperation Act, to establish ACSET. The Council was established to administer state, federal and local funds to provide job training, foster self-sufficiency, and to advocate for a reduction in the causes of poverty.

During the past several years the City and County have increased their participation through investment in the various buildings owned by the City, County, and ACSET.

22. *Assessing:* The County and City of Grand Rapids entered into two agreements (July 2006) to provide appraisal services for commercial/industrial properties and to provide lot split administration.
23. *City-County Building Authority:* Many years ago, the City and County created a City-County Building Authority as a financing mechanism for many public improvement projects, including a parking structure at the former Grand Center, the Van Andel Public Museum facility, and most recently, the DeVos Place Convention Center.
24. *Community Archives and Research Center:* In 1999 the County committed to participation in the construction of a community archives and research center to be located on the site of the old public museum in Grand Rapids. This is a joint venture with the City of Grand Rapids and the Public Museum of Grand Rapids. Its vision is to bring together under one roof the off-exhibit collections of the museum, the archives of the City, and the public records of the County so that researchers, students, and the general public may access all of them in a “one-stop shopping” setting. The County has contributed \$3.5 million to the project along with significant staff time. Maintenance of the facility was assumed by the City Facilities Management Department in July 2006, and the County and City work together on facility maintenance/operational programs.
25. *Convention/Arena Authority:* The County, along with the City of Grand Rapids, State of Michigan, and the private sector joined forces through the creation of a convention/arena authority to own and operate the Van Andel Arena and DeVos Place Convention Center. The County is the major funding unit for the Convention Center (\$95 million), along with the State (\$65 million), private sector (\$33 million), and City of Grand Rapids DDA (\$10 million).
26. *Courthouse:* The City of Grand Rapids and the County worked to finance jointly the construction of a \$60 million Courthouse, which houses the County’s judiciary and some ancillary services as well as the City’s 61st District Court. Once bonds are retired, the County and City will be co-owners of the facility (County - 70%; City - 30%).
27. *Emergency Management:* The County and City of Grand Rapids cooperate on many significant levels, including the sharing of grant resources, cooperative planning and joint support through a series of teams that include medical professionals, city and county staff, public health officials, EMS providers, and others.
28. *Grand Rapids Smart Zone with the City of Grand Rapids, Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), and regional partners:* A Smart Zone has been established with medical, university and governmental partners to focus on medical research and biotech development. It is centered on Michigan Hill where the Smart Zone funds a wet laboratory incubator in the GVSU Health Sciences Building and also includes the Monroe North District. A second Smart Zone area has been added to facilitate retention of Siemens Grand Rapids campus.
29. *Human Services Complex:* Since 1974 the County has leased the 415 Franklin facility to the State of Michigan’s Department of Human Services for the cost of operations and maintenance. After multiple attempts to find a new location, in 2005 the County, the City and the State began discussing the possible relocation of the DHS to a new, County-owned facility. Land was acquired, in cooperation with the City and the Grand Rapids Public Schools to develop a new human services complex on the site of an building housing

County (Health Clinic) and ACSET services, located on Sheldon Street in Grand Rapids. In early 2007, the County and the State signed a lease agreement to construct a new \$27 million consolidated facility, which will include the State DHS, ACSET and a County Health Clinic. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2008 and completion will occur in mid 2009. During construction, many local contractors will be employed on the 137,000 square foot project. Upon completion, DHS staff currently located at a regional office will be relocated to the new complex.

30. *Joint Maintenance Agreement:* The City and County share the same lobby and parking structure for the City Hall and County Administration Building. The City is responsible for maintenance of both facilities, and a joint maintenance agreement has been in effect for a number of years, and was most recently reviewed and updated in 2006.
31. *Paul I. Phillips Recreation Center:* The County has leased the Paul I. Phillips Recreation Center to the City since 1974 for \$1 annually. The City staffs and organizes a recreation program for youth and adults at the Center. The most recent lease extended this arrangement until June 30, 2009 and included a provision for the City to contribute 50 percent of the facility's operating budget.
32. *Sixty-first District Court Information Technology Services:* The County and the City of Grand Rapids' 61st District Court entered into an agreement (July 2006) for the County to provide certain information technology services to the District Court. Transition of the information technology services took place in mid-August 2006.
33. *Waste-to-Energy Facility:* Kent County created this partnership with the City of Grand Rapids and surrounding cities to finance and operate the Waste-to-Energy incinerator. Refuse from the communities is burned to produce steam for the Grand Rapids central business district and electricity for sale to Consumers Energy.

The County and Others

34. *Continuum of Care:* For a number of years, the County—through the Unmet Needs fund of the Department of Human Services—has partnered with the City of Grand Rapids and Salvation Army to fund a Housing Continuum of Care Coordinator position to provide increased support for the vision to end homelessness. The “Vision to End Homelessness” strategy was adopted in 2006 to ensure a permanent residence for every citizen by 2014.
35. *Countywide Cooperative Law Enforcement Programs:* The Sheriff's Office collaborates with local units of government and local police departments to share the cost and use of various enforcement, investigative, and crime prevention programs. In June 2006, area law enforcement officials, elected officials, administrators, and managers announced the formation of Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area Law Enforcement Partnership. This partnership formally established several cooperative teams including: Metropolitan Area Cold Case Team, Metropolitan Area Major Case Task Force, Metropolitan Fraud and Identity Theft Team, Metropolitan Crime Analysis Project Team, Metropolitan Major Case Accident Investigation, and the Metropolitan Policy/Procedure Development Committee. In addition, the Sheriff's department provides a variety of services to local communities as a part of mutual aid which could include the K-9 unit and other investigative/enforcement services. The Sheriff's Department also participates in the numerous other local and regional initiatives recognizing that crime is not restricted to the boundary of any city, village, or township.

36. *Elections*: The County Clerk works with local unit Clerks to coordinate bulk purchasing of election supplies. They also work together to plan elections.
37. *Emergency Needs Task Force (ENTF)*: Since 1982, the County, City of Grand Rapids, other governmental agencies, the United Way, along with 100 non-profit and faith-based organizations have worked collaboratively to address basic food, shelter, utility, and transportation needs within the community.
38. *Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau(CVB)*: The County is the single largest contributing partner in the Convention & Visitor's Bureau through the Lodging Excise (Hotel/Motel) Tax and participates in CVB affairs. The CVB is the marketing arm of the Convention/Arena Authority and has had significant success marketing convention dates at DeVos Place.
39. *Kent School Services Network (KSSN)*: After two years of research and discussion, the Kent School Services Network was launched in September 2006 with leadership from the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council (CFCCC) and the County Administrator's Office. The Network serves eight schools in three districts with the purpose of providing responsive, and effective, seamless, integrated service delivery to families and students through Kent County public schools by all service providers (nonprofit, state, and county) to ensure that all kids are healthy and learning. The Network coordinates these services, which are provided by all relevant agencies (non-profit, state, and county). The Network is a partnership among Comstock Park Public Schools, Godfrey Lee Public Schools, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kent County and its Health Department, Kent Intermediate School District, Kent Department of Human Services, network180, and Spectrum Health. Funding is provided by the above entities and the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Doug & Maria DeVos Foundation, United Way, Keller Foundation, and the Institute for Systematic Change.
40. *Kent Trails*: In 1992, Kent County and the communities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Wyoming, Walker and Byron Township entered into an agreement to develop and maintain Kent Trails. A unique component of the agreement resulted in the communities collectively depositing \$12,500 annually into a fund to ensure that sufficient funds would be available when the time came to rebuild or do significant repairs to the trail. The amount each community contributed was based on a formula worked out when the trail was established. Now, 15 years later, the time has come for that maintenance and the Parks Department will be seeking MDOT Enhancement Funds to rebuild a significant portion of the trails. The nearly \$200,000 needed as the local match for the MDOT grant is available in the fund.
41. *Kentwood Recycling Drop-Off Center*: The County collaborates with the City of Kentwood and a private company to provide a drop off center for recycling. The City provides the land, the private company and the County's Department of Public Works (DPW) have provided funding, and the DPW operates the facility.
42. *Legal Assistance Center*: Located on the fifth floor in the Courthouse, this non-profit agency works with community partners to provide assistance to the public in the resolution of legal problems. The center provides this service to persons appearing before the Circuit Court and the Grand Rapids 61st District Court. Financial assistance in support of Center programs is provided by Kent County, the City of Grand Rapids, the Bar Association, all local law firms and other private contributors. The County provides the office space and currently contributes funding toward operations (\$40,000 in 2007; \$60,000 proposed in 2008).

43. *Parking Structure:* The County is part of a condominium association (with Ellis Parking) that owns a parking structure on Lyon Street. The County “owns” approximately 100 parking spaces used by employees who work at the Courthouse.
44. *Parks Department Collaborations:* Kent County Parks regularly seeks and develops collaborations with outside organizations and units of government. Many local units of government are strong partners in park projects within their borders. Also, the Department plays a significant role in the development of major non-motorized off-road trails in the community which invite collaboration due to their multi-jurisdictional nature. Over the past year, the Department has enjoyed many successful partnerships, including: Working with Courtland Township to make significant improvements to Myers Lake Park; securing \$100,000 in financial support from Caledonia Township to acquire 90 acres of new county parkland at the confluence of the Coldwater River and the Thornapple River; collaborating with Caledonia Township to develop a parking area and nature trail on land donated with the assistance of the Township several years ago. The Township is contributing nearly \$65,000 toward this development project which will be completed in the spring of 2008; and developing a new trail in the M-6 corridor along with Gaines and Byron Townships, the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, and the Kent County Road Commission.
45. *Partnership for a Racism Free Community (formerly the Racial Justice Institute):* The County has been a funding contributor to the annual Summit on Racism for the past six years (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007) and has been involved in the ongoing work of the Government Team through active staff participation.
46. *Preliminary Examination Subpoenas:* As a result of collaboration between the County Prosecutor and the various district courts, a new process has been implemented whereby only the investigating detective and victim are subpoenaed for the preliminary examination since most of these hearings are waived and testimony is not needed. There are some exceptions, depending on the charges. The benefits are significant: civilian and police witnesses are not brought into court unnecessarily and the county and courts save on witness and parking fees. In addition, police agencies, including the Kent County Sheriff’s Department, benefit by 1) not having to pay off-duty officers for up to three hours of overtime for a court appearance, and 2) freeing on-duty officers to remain “on the job” in lieu of having to sit in a courtroom.
47. *The Right Place, Inc.:* The County serves on the Board of Directors of The Right Place, Inc., and contributes \$80,000 annually toward this regional economic development effort for West Michigan.
48. *State of Michigan IT Connections:* The County is working with the State of Michigan to consolidate multiple leased line connections onto a single connection with higher bandwidth. Since the State of Michigan's building and the County's downtown data center are next to each other, it is a relatively easy and low cost matter to connect to the high-speed leased line the State uses from Grand Rapids to Lansing. This will eliminate separate connections currently used to support activities such as Friend of the Court and hook-up to LEIN. Since the County is also connected to the City of Grand Rapids, the potential to route the City’s state connectivity through this mechanism is being explored as well, with the State possibly benefit by having a connection to the Secretary of State's office located at 1 Division Avenue. That office is currently served by a separate leased line to Lansing.
49. *West Michigan Sports Commission:* This is a private-public cooperative venture to provide for a variety of sports activities and venues in the Kent County and West Michigan area. Its express purpose is to bring visitors into the area. The County provided initial staff work for

50. almost one year of research to establish a sports commission and is contributing \$200,000 annually (2007-2011). Other funding partners include the Convention & Arena Authority (CAA), Convention & Visitor's Bureau (CVB), and the private sector.