

# Chapter 8

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

### Introduction

The Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter examines existing relationships that the Town of Wheaton has with adjacent communities, government agencies, and organizations and how these relationships can be used to implement recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

Intergovernmental cooperation can be formal or informal agreements between entities to share services, provide mutual aid, conduct natural resource protection, participate in joint planning, or participate in joint purchases. These relationships can be developed over time. This chapter also identifies existing and potential conflicts and provides a process to resolve conflicts and build cooperative relationships.

### Benefits of Intergovernmental Cooperation

There are many benefits to engaging in partnerships. The most common are:

- **Cost Savings:** Areas in which services can be shared can be identified and acted upon.
- **Consistency:** Plans and goals may be developed that are consistent with neighboring visions and reduce land use conflicts.
- **Understanding:** Understanding the goals of other governmental agencies lets you anticipate and address potential problems before they happen.
- **Trust and Respect:** Positive experiences lead to trust and respect between jurisdictions and make disagreements easier to work through.

Although limited in number, the Town of Wheaton is involved cooperative arrangements with surrounding communities and governmental agencies.

### Adjacent Communities

The Town of Wheaton generally maintains a cooperative relationship with its adjacent municipalities. There have been some disagreements with surrounding incorporated communities in terms of future growth and development. Incorporated communities that border Wheaton include the City of Chippewa Falls to the east, Village of Lake Hallie to the southeast, and City of Eau Claire directly to the south. Each of these communities exercises its extraterritorial plat review authority which extends into the Town (see Map 8-1). The Village of Lake Hallie has a 1.5-mile extraterritorial area extending beyond the Village limits. The Cities of Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire have 3-mile extraterritorial areas beyond their corporate limits. The boundaries automatically change when the Village or Cities annex or purchase land. These powers are often used for subdivision plat reviews. The Village of Elk Mound does not use its extraterritorial plat review authority.

The Town of Wheaton takes care of brush, mowing and signage on a short stretch of 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, beginning on 110<sup>th</sup> Street and going east to its terminus in the Town of Tilden.



On February 16, 2011, the Town of Wheaton and five Towns in Eau Claire County, entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Policies with the City of Eau Claire. The Intergovernmental Agreement grew out of a Settlement Agreement to resolve disputes between the Towns and the City and generally address land division policies and future development. The initial terms of the agreement expire on February 16, 2021 and will be automatically renewed for a second 10-year term unless one of the communities notifies the others at least 90 days prior to the expiration that it does not desire to renew the agreement.

## School Districts

Students in the Town of Wheaton attend public school in the Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, and Elk Mound School Districts (see Map 8-2). The Town's relationship with the school districts can be characterized as cooperative. The relationship with the school districts is important as development is coordinated with school capacity and the growing needs of Wheaton residents.

## County and Regional Agencies

The Town of Wheaton is located in Chippewa County. The County enforces zoning in the Town as well as on-site sanitary systems, and the maintenance and improvements of County Trunk Highways in the Town. The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to Wheaton residents. Continued cooperation and coordination with these entities will be important to maintain public safety in the Town.

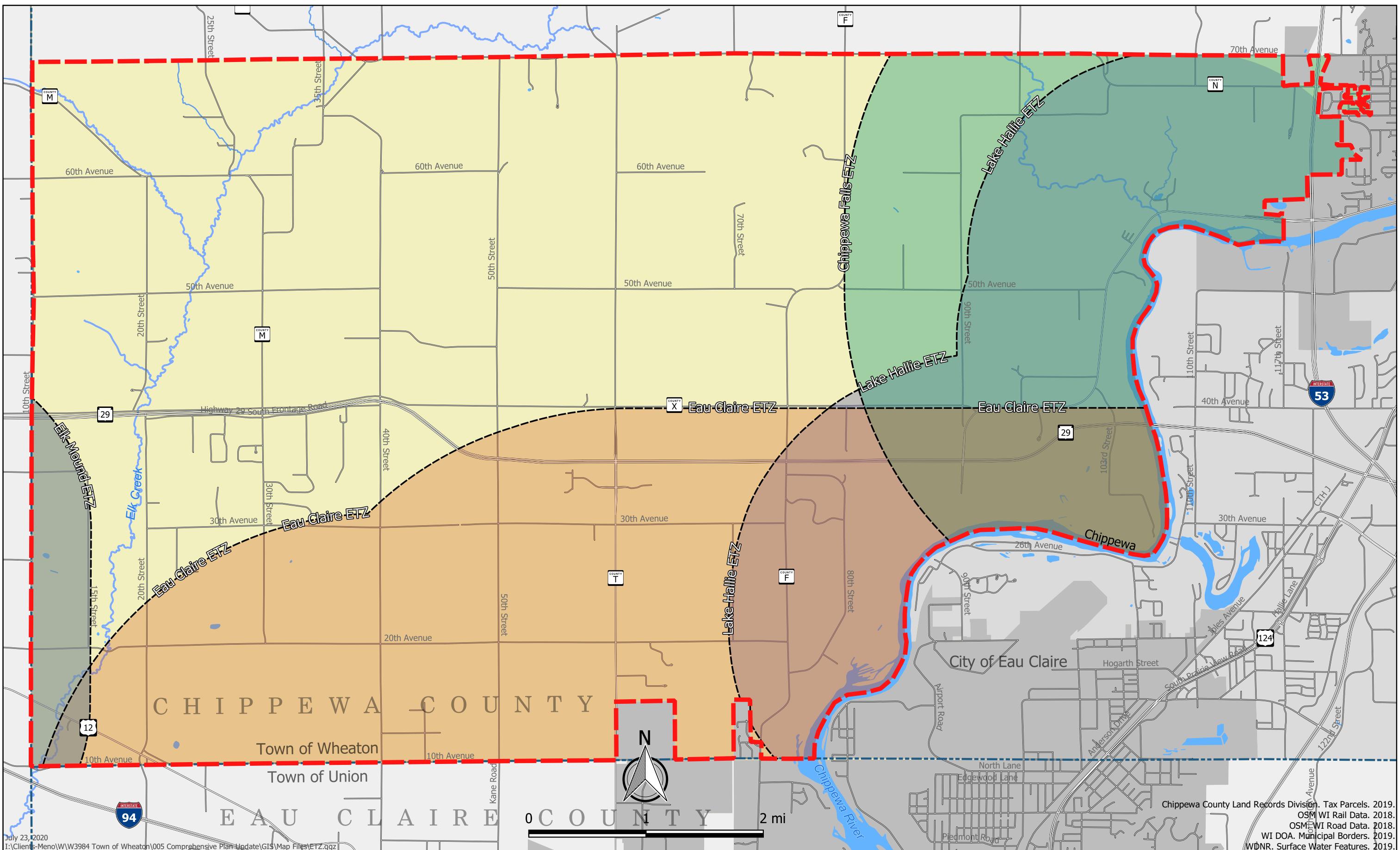
The relationship between the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County can be characterized as one of general cooperation. The Town would like to see continued communication and coordination with the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning Department as this relates to tools that can be used to realize the vision of the Plan.

The Town of Wheaton is served by the Chippewa Fire District but on January 1, 2021, Wheaton Fire and Rescue will come into existence and provide fire protection to Town residents and businesses and mutual aid to surrounding communities. The Town will explore contracting for EMS protection in specific areas of the community as well.

Chippewa County and the Town of Wheaton are part of the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). Regional planning commissions provide planning assistance, assist local interests in responding to state and federal programs, serve as a coordinating agency for programs, and provide other technical and advisory assistance to local governments.

The Town of Wheaton occasionally collaborates with the WCWRPC. Under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation, each regional planning commission must also develop a Comprehensive Plan. Under this law, regional planning commissions are responsible for developing a plan that takes on a regional aspect. In amendments to this regional plan, it is important that the Town be solicited for input as it related to the Town's Comprehensive Plan.



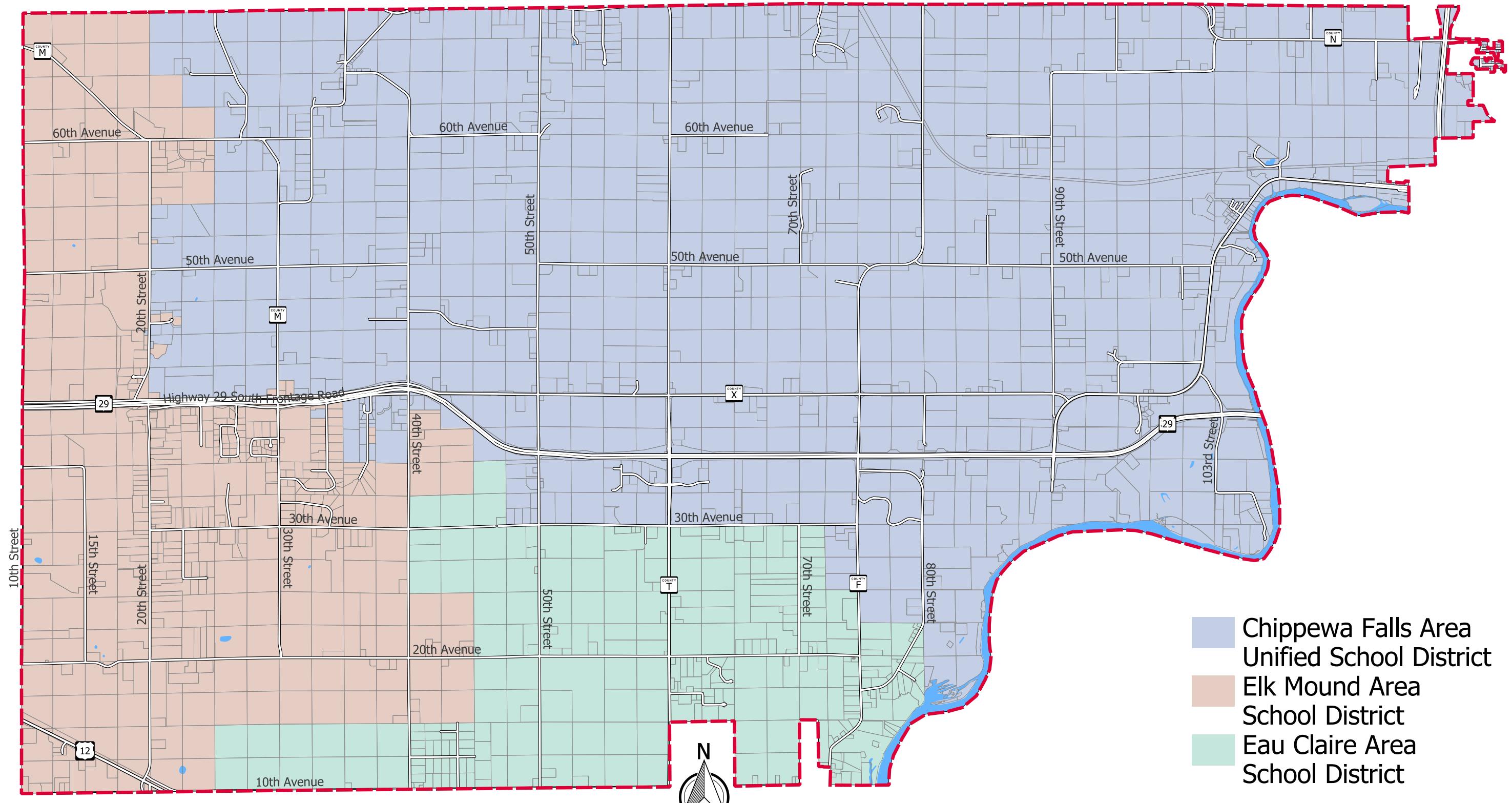


# Extraterritorial Plat Review Boundaries

Town of Wheaton  
Chippewa County, WI



Map 8-1  
ETZ Boundaries



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Chippewa County Land Records Division, Tax Parcels. 2019.

OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.

WI Department of Public Instruction. School District Boundaries. 2019.

WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.

WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

# School District Boundaries

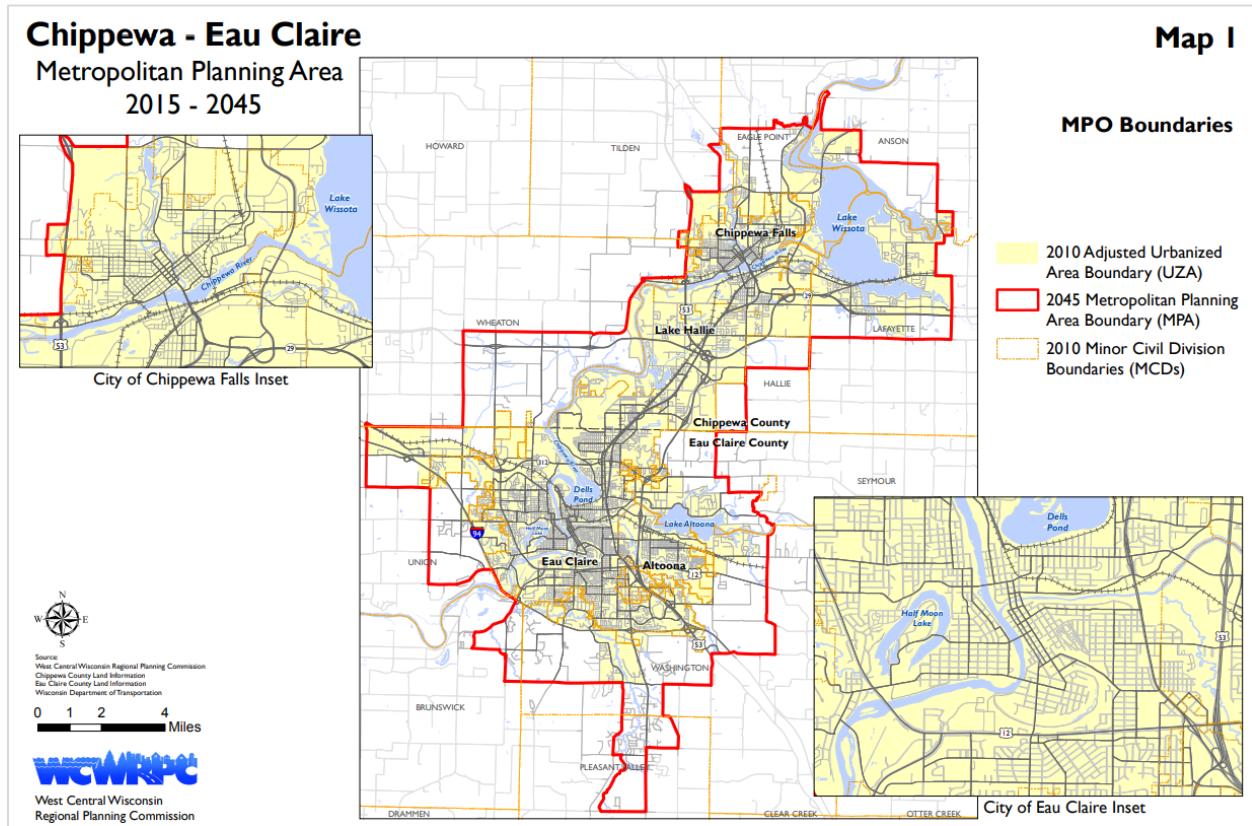
Town of Wheaton  
Chippewa County, WI



Map 8-2  
School District Boundaries

A portion of the Town of Wheaton lies within the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area (see Figure 8-1). The WCWRPC is the administrative organization for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO's purpose to provide a continual, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that results in the development of programs and plans that are consistent with the development of the Eau Claire Urbanized Area. Communication is important to ensure the Town's desired growth is reflected in the MPO's future plans.

**Figure 8-1: Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Area**



Source: West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

## State Agencies

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary state agencies the Town of Wheaton must coordinate with to achieve the goals and objectives of this Plan.

WDNR has a lead role in wildlife protection and the protection and sustained management of woodlands, wetlands, waterways and other natural wildlife habitat areas. The activities of the WDNR are discussed further in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this Plan. Additional information is also available on-line at [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us).

WisDOT is also a key player in the planning and development of transportation facilities in the Town of Wheaton. WisDOT is responsible for the maintenance of State Highway 29 and State



Highway 12. The Town will continue to coordinate with WisDOT with respect to decisions regarding all roadways under WisDOT jurisdiction. Additional information is also available online at [www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us).

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the Town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation.

In the future, it is hoped that an open and continuous dialogue between the Town, Chippewa County, and other governmental jurisdictions will result in cooperative and mutually beneficial efforts. These efforts are critical to the future planning and development of public and shared services and open communication. Without the coordination and cooperation of local governmental jurisdictions, decisions critical to preserving and enhancing local and regional characteristics, activities, and natural resources will be compromised.

As growth and land use changes continue in the area, development in the Town of Wheaton will likely be a contentious topic. The Town wishes to see increased development in certain areas, while remaining a rural community. In addition, the growth and development of neighboring incorporated communities should be considered and addressed to minimize conflicting land uses.

### **Conflict Resolution Procedures**

The Town recognizes the importance of coordinating with neighboring communities. If conflicts arise, initial attempts to resolve such conflicts could involve written or face-to-face communication between elected or appointed community officials. If these efforts do not result in a mutually satisfactory agreement, more formal conflict resolution methods should be explored, such as mediation or arbitration. Additional conflict resolution techniques are available in Wisconsin State Statutes 802.12.

### **Growth Trends and Planning Activities in Adjacent Communities**

The Town of Wheaton will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, and the school districts for mutual benefit. To ensure compatibility with the planning goals and objectives identified in the Town of Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan, the Town will share their plan with adjacent communities and agencies and would like to participate in future planning efforts with these entities as well.

### **Existing and/or Potential Conflicts**

The Town of Wheaton is located in a growing part in the State of Wisconsin adjacent to urban areas where notable growth has occurred in urban and rural areas alike. As Cities and Villages attract residents, businesses, and industries, the need to grow can sometimes not be avoided. The growth of any community often results in land being annexed from surrounding towns.

It is important to engage with neighboring communities to plan for land use, transportation, economic development, agriculture, and other needs so that they can develop in a coordinated



and efficient manner. Joint planning can lead to early identification of potential conflicts. At this time, there are no specific conflicts with neighboring communities, but the future growth and development of the area as a whole could lead to growth patterns that may not be compatible with the wishes of Wheaton residents.

## Potential Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

The Town of Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan identifies many recommendations the Town and its residents may take to implement the Comprehensive Plan and attain the vision contained within. Below is a list of several areas where Wheaton may benefit from forming partnerships with surrounding communities, government agencies, and organizations.

- Protecting and promoting natural resources
- Attracting desired business and industry
- Increasing the use and development of renewable energy resources
- Developing transportation options
- Preserving farmland for small market farms and local food production
- Land use planning

## Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

### **Goal 1:** The Town will encourage open dialogue with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

#### Objectives:

1. Increase communication and understanding between communities and agencies.

#### Recommendations:

1. Participate in regularly scheduled joint meetings with the neighboring communities and the school districts to coordinate future growth and development planning.
2. Explore equipment sharing agreements with surrounding communities in order to perform maintenance and other services without having to purchase equipment.
3. Continue to participate in group purchases of items such as salt to reduce the costs of providing services to residents.
4. Continue the good communication between the Town of Wheaton and the Chippewa County Planning and Zoning office.

### **Goal 2:** The Town will monitor public safety services and service providers to ensure that local needs are being met.

#### Objectives:

1. Improve emergency services and minimize the cost to residents.
2. Increase the number of collaborative efforts used in addressing local and regional emergency planning.



Recommendations:

1. Support continued mutual aid and other types of agreements that are used to provide emergency services to the area.
2. Explore the need for a Town Constable or similar position to enforce ordinances.

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