



chapter **3**

TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Cuming County's road system and supporting facilities are the most visible service provided by the county. The road system is also one of the largest budgetary items for the county. This section addresses county service systems necessary to support the concepts and policy recommendations of the land use plan.

TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Transportation

A county's transportation network is analogous to the system of veins and arteries that circulate blood through the body. Much as in the body's circulation system, the transportation system is composed of channels of various capacities, which enable the essential elements - in this case, people, raw materials, goods, and services - to be transported and put to use sustaining the county's population and economy.

Road Network

Cuming County has an extensive and extremely legible network of roads. For the most part, the road network is laid out on the original surveyor's grid, with roads spaced at mile intervals. Roads on the grid are then named with letters for east-west routes, and numbers for roads that run north-south. Exceptions to this system are made for natural impediments and barriers like floodplains and topographical challenges.

For the purposes of system design and planning, US highways and roads are grouped by federal classification.

- **Principal Arterials.** These roads serve as long-distance connections between significant cities in the nation, region, or state. US Highway 275 is the sole example of this type of road in Cuming County. It connects West Point, Wisner, and Beemer to other regional destinations including Norfolk and Fremont.
- **Minor Arterials.** These roads typically connect smaller cities within a region, state, or county. State Highways 9, 15, 16, 32, and 51 are the examples of this type of roadway in Cuming County. They create direct routes between cities not connected by US Highway 275.
- **Major Collectors.** Major collector roads typically feed traffic into cities and connect with arterial roads. These roads, though not designated as state highways, provide important connections between rural areas and nearby communities.
- **Minor Collectors.** Minor collector roads frequently aggregate traffic from less densely populated areas and route it toward centers of activity and circulation.

- **County and Township Roads.** County and township roads provide local access to individual properties and sites in the county. They typically experience the lowest volume of traffic.

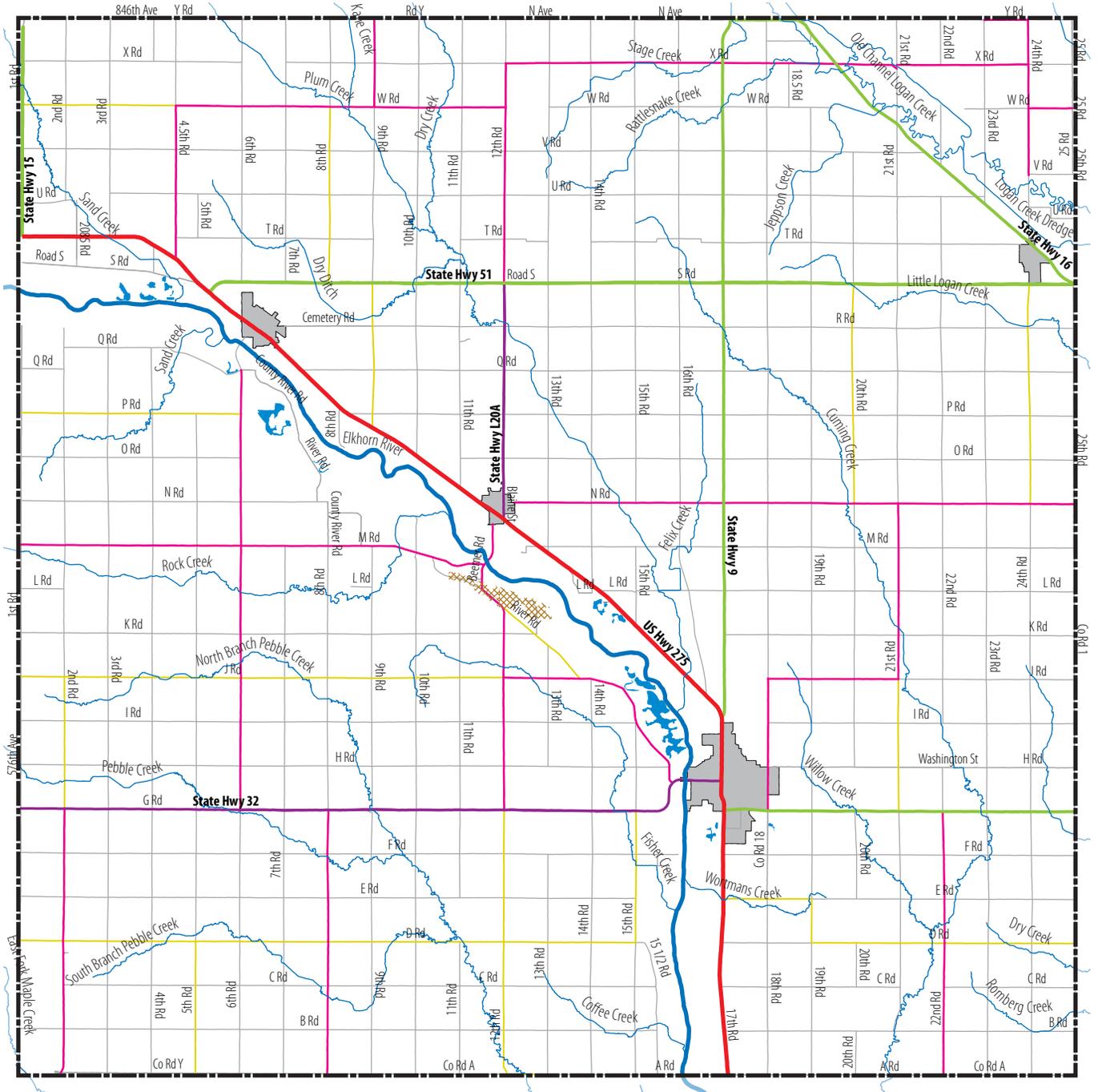
The road system of Cuming County is generally in good condition and serves the volumes of traffic well. Although Cuming County's road network is robust, it will require ongoing maintenance and improvement to continue providing the public the current level of service.

Of special note is the potential for upgrades to US Highway 275. The improvement of US 275 through Cuming County to a 4-lane, limited access highway is listed as a future project in NDOR planning documents. However, this project is not funded in the current 10-year capital improvement plan. Furthermore, ongoing changes in state infrastructure funding and priorities, local needs, and the floodplain construction requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers suggest that this project will require significant design negotiation between a wide range of stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels should it ever move forward.

Rail Transportation

There is not an active rail line that currently serves Cuming County. The nearest rail facilities to the county are a line which terminates in Norfolk, owned by the Nebraska Central Railroad Company, and one which passes through Burt County, owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

Map 3.1: Current Transportation System



Transportation [Federal Classification]

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | County Boundary | | Other Rural Principal Arterials |
| | Elkhorn River | | Rural Minor Arterials |
| | Creeks | | Rural Major Collectors [state] |
| | Major Lakes | | Rural Major Collectors [county] |
| | City Boundaries | | Rural Minor Collectors |
| | Bluffs Zone | | County & Township Roads |



Cuming County Comprehensive Plan

Bike and Pedestrian Network

There are sufficient shoulders on many county highways and roads such that they can be safely used for bicycling. Beyond the shoulders of roads, there are limited, if any, bike and pedestrian facilities outside of the county’s cities and villages. While many of the county roads experience extremely low traffic volumes, the fact that most remain unpaved make biking conditions challenging.

Travel Time to Work

Table 3.01 addresses the average travel time to work for Cuming County, its communities, and Nebraska as a whole.

This is an interesting metric to consider, in that travel time can be used as a rough proxy for the distance between home and work for an employee. As energy prices continue to increase, transportation expenses play an increasingly significant role in a household’s cost of living. Travel time to and from work can have an impact on overall quality of life. Time spent in transit is time that is not available for either economically productive activity or recreation and relaxation. A difference of five minutes in travel time each way (to and from work) equates to 50 minutes each week, or 41.6 hours a year.

Mode of Transportation to Work

There is a relationship between the distance covered (and hence time used) for employees to travel to work and modes of transportation they’re most likely to select for those trips. The breakdown of different modes of transportation used in Cuming County and their relative prominence is provided in Table 3.02.



Figure 3.01: Travel Time to Work, Cuming County and Comparable Counties

	Minutes
Cuming County	19.4
West Point	19.3
Wisner	17.0
Beemer	20.0
Bancroft	21.5
Nebraska	20.2
Cuming County	19.4

Source: US Census

Figure 3.02: Mode of Transportation to Work, Cuming County and Comparable Counties

	Cuming County	West Point	Wisner	Beemer	Bancroft	Nebraska
Drove Alone	72.3%	69.7%	74.5%	77.4%	73.8%	80.9%
Car Pooled	12.6%	15.0%	15.0%	10.0%	11.4%	9.9%
Public Transportation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Walked	8.3%	10.1%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%	2.9%
Bicycle	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Other Means	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.8%
Worked at Home	6.5%	4.9%	4.9%	7.1%	9.7%	4.4%

Source: US Census



Public Facilities and Infrastructure

County Courthouse

Location: 200 S. Lincoln Street, West Point

Essentially all of the administrative and judicial functions of the Cuming County government are housed in the Cuming County Courthouse in West Point. This four-story structure was built in the 1950s and has approximately 29,500 square feet of interior space. Although the building is well over a half-century old, it continues to serve the county's needs well. Ongoing improvements to electrical, mechanical, and data systems have helped keep the building on par with contemporary expectations and demands.

Public Schools and Education

Cuming County is served by three public school systems: West Point-Beemer, Bancroft-Rosalie, and Wisner-Pilger. Each of these schools serves grades Kindergarten through 12th. West Point-Beemer also supports a K-8 grade school in Beemer. Additionally, there are three private schools serving students in the county.

Northeast Community College operates a satellite education center in West Point. At this location, students can earn Associate of Arts degrees in a number of areas, receive job training, and take adult education classes.

County Parks/Fairgrounds

While some of its cities and villages have local public parks, the county itself does not operate any parks. The County Fairgrounds are owned and maintained by the Ag Society, which funds improvements to and ongoing maintenance of the facility through the proceeds of the annual fair as well as a small tax levy. There is a public recreation area near Bancroft that provides a canoe launch on the Logan Creek.

Drinking Water

Drinking water in the county is supplied by the Cuming County Rural Water District as well as a number of individual wells. Within each of the communities drinking water is provided by a city utility. The expansion of urban services to adjacent areas of these communities should guide future urban development. Cuming County is fortunate to have a wealth of easily accessible water. That said, conservation measures should still be implemented in both residential and agricultural use to protect this important resource.

Wastewater Disposal

The county should continue to monitor the operation of wastewater systems in rural residential developments.

In future rural residential neighborhood developments the county should encourage the use of community wastewater systems, as opposed to individual septic systems. Use of these community systems can be incentivized via expedited permitting or, potentially, the facilitation of grants or low-interest loans.

The county could also encourage the use of environmentally sensitive methods of wastewater treatment and disposal. The conservation concept and maintaining common open space, provides greater opportunities for development of these systems. Techniques such as spray irrigation and land treatment are becoming more applicable and should be considered for projects when feasible. This may represent cooperative efforts among several developments. With these methods, wastewater is aerated in deep lagoons and applied to the land surface at rates consistent with the absorption capacity of the soil.

Developments using individual septic systems should design lots that are not less than three acres, and are able to provide efficient septic fields. Thus, lots that are more nearly square or have a smaller ratio of depth to width are more effective than deep narrow lots that have a high ratio of depth to width.



Cuming County Comprehensive Plan

Wastewater generated by confined animal feeding operations is regulated by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. The county should continue to support and reinforce these regulations, with an eye toward limiting the adverse impacts of intensive agriculture on other land uses.

Garbage and Solid Waste Disposal

The county has an inter-local agreement with West Point, Beemer, and Wisner to provide rural residents access to the local transfer stations. The county pays the tipping fees at the landfill in Jackson, Nebraska, which is located about an hour north of Cuming County, near South Sioux City.

County Sheriff

The county sheriff employs four deputies and one office assistant, and uses a fleet of five patrol vehicles. There is not a long term county jail in Cuming County. Prisoners are transported to Thurston or Madison counties for boarding.

Rural Fire Department and EMS

Fire and EMS protection is provided by rural fire districts, of which there are four: West Point, Beemer, Bancroft, and Wisner. In the interest of optimizing response time, some outlying areas of the county are provided fire protection by the fire districts of adjacent counties.

Emergency Dispatch

The Cuming County Dispatch Center answers calls for and dispatches for Bancroft, Beemer, West Point and Wisner Police Departments, Fire Departments and Rescue Squads. They also dispatch for the Cuming County Sheriff's Office and answer their phone after hours. The dispatch center employs four full-time and two part-time dispatchers.

The Dispatch Center is separate from all of these departments. There is a Head Dispatcher who meets with the 911 Advisory Board once a month to keep them apprised of the operations of the E911 Dispatch Center. This Board consists of representatives from Bancroft, Beemer, West Point, Wisner and a County Supervisor. The County Supervisor sits on the board as a liaison between the E911 Advisory Board and the County Board of Supervisors.

County Roads/Public Works Department

Roads are, by far, the dominant means of transportation within the county. Cuming County is fortunate to have a well-functioning and maintained network of highways and roads.

Cuming County's roads department is overseen by a superintendent. He, along with a full-time administrator, seven full-time employees and one part-time employee, ensure the ongoing improvement and maintenance of the county's road network. Each community in the county is home to a county-operated roads maintenance facility.

The county is also served by 16 townships, each of which is 36 square miles in size. These townships are responsible for road maintenance within their area, with the county being responsible for all bridge replacement and repairs, as well as the roads designated as county roads.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue pursuing energy efficiency upgrades at the County Courthouse building and all other county facilities.
- Review capital improvement plan to ensure parity between maintenance and improvement needs.
- As county-owned fleet vehicles become due for replacement, seek to purchase fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicles.
- Work with local agricultural operations to continue to reduce their ecological footprint through smarter use of energy, water, and handling/treatment of waste products.
- Collaborate with local municipalities, property owners, and developers to ensure that newly developed land is served by infrastructure that has the least environmental impact and is economically feasible.
- Work to expand partnerships with other jurisdictions and units of government on projects of mutual interest.
 - An example of this might be reconsidering the lake project previously proposed by the NRD in 2000.
 - The county should take the position of pursuing opportunities that create the most good for the most county residents. This may include additional recreational canoe and kayak launches.
- Continue collaboration between townships and the county to provide for road maintenance.
- Examine the potential to expand paved surfaces in select areas to facilitate new development, specifically in priority areas identified in the land use concept.
 - One example may be the three miles of River Road to connect to the blacktop past Indian Trails Country Club.
 - When considering areas for new paving, roads that carry heavy traffic, have existing businesses, and potential to connect to other existed paved surfaces should be given some priority status.

