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# Forces affecting prospects for joint land use planning services in Boone County, Iowa

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Forces affecting prospects for joint land use planning services in Boone County, Iowa

by

Luke Paul Nelson

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of  
MASTER OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### ***The need for research***

Boone County is facing a basic financial challenge; an expectation to provide an increased level of service at a lower cost. The service level demands of citizens continue to outpace revenue. Local municipalities within Boone County and the County Government itself struggle to meet the demands of citizens.

Local governments are continually being expected to do “more with less” in response to tax cutbacks and struggling economies (Leland & Thurmaier, 2004, pg. 3). Thurmaier and Leland performed in-depth research of city-county consolidation using comparative case study methodology. Their results help us understand “exactly which factors determine whether a consolidation attempt will be successful” (Leland & Thurmaier, 2004, pg. 3). Although their research includes full city-county consolidation, the findings detail various departments and reasons for full consolidation success or failure. Joint city-county land use planning ventures have been little studied.

Communities just can't afford to go it alone anymore. If communities stand alone to weather the storm of competition for growth and economic development, failure is the result (Friedman, 2000). Thomas Friedman notes, in his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, “To all those who say that this era of globalization is no different from the previous one, I would simply ask: Was your great-grandmother playing bridge with a Frenchmen on the Internet in 1900? I don't think so” (2000, pg.15). Friedman argues that globalization is moving rapidly and unless communities grasp the concept they will be left behind. However, the “Olive

Tree” of the book represents the concept of roots and a need to understand our relationships (Friedman, 2000). The idea of globalization is reflective of joint services in government.

This research will begin to explore the potential for joint services. At present, the use of joint services in Boone County is limited. These joint efforts include, but are not limited to the following: a 28E agreement for joint road maintenance, the Boone County League (joint meetings for general information and education), and a joint dispatch center. This research will explore some of the past joint ventures, seek new input from government officials, and explore the existing literature to help answer the question – what are the driving and restraining forces of a joint planning department in Boone County?

The purpose of this research is to explore the driving forces for and restraining forces against the creation of a joint planning department in Boone County. Simply put, I will explore how and why joint services may or may not work in Boone County, specifically a joint planning department. The purpose of a joint planning department would be to improve services and achieve land use policy goals that otherwise may be unattainable. Also, the study is intended to serve as a resource for those interested in rural land use planning, especially in terms of consolidation, governance, and collaboration.

### ***Boone County***

Is there something unusual about Boone County when compared to other counties? Will research of Boone County provide valuable data above and beyond the research of any other county in Iowa? A joint planning department is not unusual government. Joint services exist all over the world which is reflective of Regionalism as a complete theory.

The term “joint” does not contain any profound ideas; however, the method by which joint actions take place is a critical component.

Boone County is in a unique situation both geographically and politically. Boone is influenced by its location relative to two other metropolitan areas: Ames and Des Moines. The status of zoning and the degree of land use planning near Des Moines are factors that affect Boone uniquely. Boone County, with its relatively new Planning Department and unique proximity to two major metro areas provides a sound base for research. Finally, growth pressures from the metro areas are drawing critical attention to land use planning.

This thesis seeks to understand what restraining forces and driving forces exist and how they will help or hinder the development of a joint planning department. Qualitative methodology will be the foundation. Personal interviews, literature review, observations, paper media records and data from programs such as the Olive Tree Project will be used as the foundation for this study.

### ***Research problem***

This study is an in-depth look at the socio-political structural components affecting joint planning services in Boone County. The outcome is an understanding of the driving forces and restraining forces affecting the establishment of a joint planning agency for Boone County. Many of the success stories described in case-study analysis have been results of single-occasion occurrences that can not be replicated elsewhere (Amin and Thrift, 1994). As in the development of regional governance in Europe in the 1990s, “there has been no one way, no one model” (Murray 1991, 6). A case study of Boone County would aid the creation of joint planning in Boone County. While the solution for Boone may not be directly replicable, it may provide useful lessons for other rural areas.

Leland and Thurmaier performed an in-depth research of thirteen cases of city-county consolidations. The comparative case analysis performed by Leland and Thurmaier ultimately argues that there is a justified prescriptive answer to consolidation.

*“In short, our analysis of these thirteen cases suggests that the C3 model must be respecified to account for an elite agenda that is independent of the essential elements in the R&K model (i.e., crisis climate, power deflation, and an accelerator event). The essential elements of a successful consolidation are found instead in the civic elites who are able to define the economic development vision for the community, determine that the existing political structure is inadequate to supporting and implementing that vision, and then successfully convince the average voter that consolidation is the solution to the economic development that will benefit the whole community, not just the elites” (Leland and Thurmaier, 2004, pg. 294).*

There is good potential to analyze numerous factions to establish a theory of success. Unlike Leland and Thurmaier (2004), my aim in this study is not to establish a prescriptive model. Instead, the purpose here is provide a prescriptive approach for ongoing research that can aid other researchers seeking to achieve that final theory of successfully establishing joint planning departments in rural settings. Furthermore, the research contained here may provide grounds for joint services of any type in both rural and metropolitan entities.

### ***Objectives of the study***

The goal of this research is to identify the driving forces and restraining forces of a joint planning department in Boone County. To achieve the goals of this study the following objectives are addressed.

1. Determine the population group capable of providing adequate information needed to create theory;

2. effectively extract data from that population and other secondary sources for use in establishing a grounded theory;
3. originate an initial grounded theory from primary data;
4. refine grounded theory through secondary data research;
5. establish recommendations for a successful joint planning department in Boone County;
6. explain findings of the research.

### ***Summary***

In summary, research is needed to provide insight to those rural communities that recognize the inability to achieve land use policy goals through fragmented planning and local government structure. Understanding what drives joint services can provide planning professionals and public administrators with tools to establish and support collaborative services. Understanding what prevents joint planning ventures may provide a means for change.

## **Chapter 2 Background and Literature Review**

My interest in joint land use planning developed during my employment as the Director of Planning and Development for Boone County and continues as I transition into the role of City Administrator for the City of Boone. In my career I began to face repeated interactions with local city governments in and around Boone County. My assigned tasks and duties as a County Official has drawn me toward administrative projects where further recognition of efficiency, effectiveness, and professionalism become of greater importance. The scope of work as a planner is typically associated with development proposals, rezonings, and subdivision review. The administration of a planning department at the county level goes far beyond those basic planner duties. The administrative role in a governmental setting ventures into process and procedures while casting a watchful eye on politics and the citizenry. Day-to-day activities involve more than just reviewing plans and regulations. Local elected officials want to understand the laws and the affects on citizens. Citizens also want to understand how plans affect their property and their lives. Citizens sometimes don't realize why corporate limits affect the laws that bind them. Elected officials sometimes don't understand how decisions affect corporate limits. Sometimes, appointed officials such as planners don't understand how corporate limits affect plans. My chosen field of study at Iowa State University is a union of these topics above. The academic disciplines of public administration and community planning both address regional issues and the importance of understanding how one jurisdiction affects another. The disciplines of public administration and regional planning both offer frameworks through which to investigate the possibility of joint land use planning in Boone County.

As a professional in the field of county government and a student of public administration/planning I will seek to use practitioner and academic sources to demonstrate the justification for the initial research questions and methods contained in this body of

research (questions and protocol in Appendix A). This is done through review of the Olive Tree Project, action research, and field theory. Action research and field theory aid in the development of concepts and questions used to formulate grounded theory contained in Chapter 5. Furthermore, this chapter establishes the framework behind driving and restraining forces for joint land use planning in Boone County. Let this chapter serve as a guide to theory development.

### ***Rural Collaboration and Governance***

Rural collaboration and governance is a topic with little excitement. Relationships among local, state, and federal governments are hardly the deciding factor in a presidential election and rarely even a discussion point even at local elections. However, “while American political leaders conduct their debates around specific policy issues (such as welfare, education, or rural development), they are constantly grappling with broader dimensions of the institutional roles of federal, state or local governments” (Radin, 1996, p. 12). The underpinning of many policy issues are, in fact, directly tied to relationships of governmental entities.

Rural collaboration, governance, intergovernmental cooperation, collaboration and intergovernmental relations are extensively referred to in the study of public administration and regional planning. While the terms are shared generously the meanings and theory behind those terms vary greatly. Full scale consolidation of a city and county or two school districts merging is not the only mode of collaboration. Entwistle and Martin point out that communication alone can be categorized as a component of intergovernmental collaboration. Two elected officials sharing thoughts and ideas about how to address similar problems can, in some form, be collaboration (2005). The spectrum of collaboration is infinite.

Intergovernmental cooperation, for the purposes of this body of research, shall be defined as the actions of two or more local government units resulting in combined

resources, combined services, or collaborative communication. Intergovernmental cooperation can be categorized as sharing resources (i.e. a county government providing use of a road grader to a city government), sharing service delivery (i.e. a city building official conducting electrical inspections in an unincorporated area), combining financial resources to achieve economies of scale (i.e. city and county merging a bid proposal for vehicle volume purchasing to achieve a lower cost per unit), or maintaining membership in a local organization (i.e. code enforcement officer as a member of a regional code enforcement consortium). These examples provide a broad range of types of cooperative efforts two or more governmental units can explore. The structure of such cooperative efforts will require additional clarification.

Intergovernmental cooperation can be established through a variety of methods. This body of research establishes a typology of forms into which intergovernmental cooperation can mold; social networks, voluntary regional councils, and extraterritorial jurisdictions. The various methods of intergovernmental cooperation carry distinct factors and elements which can promote or encumber a path to success. Below is an outline of the concepts noted above and a detail of the factors that affect outcomes.

### **Social Networks**

Just a number of years ago (2002) a new theory of intergovernmental cooperation emerged as Thurmaier and Wood utilized the theory of Social Networks to analyze how and why cooperation works. The authors identified that previous research is descriptive but lacks a systematic approach. Cooperative efforts, according to past descriptions, are established due to economies of scale, fiscal stress or other economic benefits. There are also references to the prevalence of collaboration in populous jurisdictions and metropolitan areas having administrative leadership capable of creating such agreements. Thurmaier and Wood provide a revised approach by considering the social networks that surround collaborative efforts.

The increasing complexity of local issues creates a new standard of transjurisdictional solutions. Local governmental boundaries are becoming blurred as local management finds themselves without the necessary tools to tackle public policy alone. In an effort to manage the new problems of today local government managers are becoming “connected and engaged with their counterparts in other jurisdictions” (2002, pg. 52). This form of leadership bridges the regional gap to provide a means of intergovernmental cooperation. Both professional leadership and the complexity of issues become important factors for collaboration.

Collaboration may also embody a less formal definition through the involvement of government staff in associations and organizations. Two neighboring jurisdictions may hold no formal agreements for services or even a memorandum of understanding (MOU); however, these two jurisdictions may have staff that are members of the same organization or association comprised of peers of a similar profession. Within the State of Iowa there is an organization called Iowa County Zoning Officials (CoZo). Members of CoZo are part of governmental units that share boundaries with other jurisdictions having members in the same CoZo organization. During an annual conference two neighboring members may discuss policy that impacts both organizations. Both members may pursue similar policy with their own respective entity without ever establishing a formal intergovernmental agreement.

The new research brought forth by Thurmaier and Wood demonstrates that money may not be at the root of collaboration. Instead, the network of relationships existing between two governmental units becomes the basis for collaboration.

### **Voluntary Regional Councils**

Voluntary regional councils are another method of establishing intergovernmental cooperation. This method is deeply planted in the new regionalism movement. James Visser

describes the effectiveness of voluntary regional councils while considering a number of factors in which efforts can be either motivated or stifled. The new regionalism, if implemented according to its theoretical foundation, drives effective intergovernmental cooperation. However, when localism surfaces among the players positive results begin to disappear (2004).

The new regionalism promotes shared infrastructure (both social and physical), equal distribution of financial resources, and the removal of intergovernmental barriers of access to social and economic opportunity. The new regionalism also promotes actions across jurisdictional boundaries via governance, which is defined as “the use of intraorganizational collaboration rather than hierarchical regional government to resolve area-wide public problems” (Visser, 2004, pg. 52). Localism is the rebuttal to such efforts. Localism protects community autonomy and actually resists the efforts to establish social and economic inequalities. Localism resists regional government. Localism is a formidable foe, yet Visser points out four additional factors impacting the establishment of intergovernmental cooperation; “intraorganizational capacity,” “civic infrastructure,” “interorganizational networks,” and “idiosyncratic history.”

When establishing voluntary regional councils a high degree of diversity is important. Visser refers to this diversity as “intraorganizational capacity.” Diversity results in broad representation from extended groups associated with the regional council. “However, the need to retain member support through consensus building may constrain councils from making hard policy decisions. Diversity also steers policy collaboration toward politically safe system maintenance issues” (Visser, 2004, pg. 52). Politically safe decisions may not help as “public agencies work to plug holes in statutory mandates and tackle wicked issues through joined up governance.” (Entwistle and Martin, 2005, pg. 236).

The second factor noted by Visser is “Civic Infrastructure – a supportive civic infrastructure of citizens, community leaders, and public officials” (2004, pg. 52). The civic

infrastructure is needed to provide support for the difficult issues facing public policy makers. Visser does not define a negative association with civic infrastructure, but rather notes the importance of a presence of this infrastructure for the success of regionalism. Again, it is the absence of such civic infrastructure which hinders the regionalism approach.

The third factor is “interorganizational networks, in which regional councils may coordinate cross-sector regional policy networks... thereby leveraging the councils’ problem-solving capacities” (2004, pg. 52). In a true new regionalism rollout interorganizational networks become a driving force in a regional policy approach. Conversely, where localism emerges and the regional council finds itself competing for functional authority and public resources, opportunities are missed. Furthermore, regional council effectiveness is dependant upon a buy-in of regional goals and the voluntary action to implement appropriate policies at the local level (Visser, 2004). Interorganizational networks are important for success of the regional council.

Finally, a factor capable of creating both positive and negative influence – “idiosyncratic history.” Idiosyncratic history is the general tone cast by groups, individuals, or politicians in any given region. This tone is established over time based on actions or political ramifications of scattered events. Demonstration of successful collaborative efforts creates a positive atmosphere for future events. Visser notes that interjurisdictional experiences of success builds a climate of trust in a region. Trust becomes a historical tendency which then promotes further collaborative efforts. In contrast, historical events can also cause a region prolonged pain and mistrust. A study in Michigan identified the prolonged effects of mistrust. “The township of Wyoming incorporated as a municipality in 1959 to prevent the City of Grand Rapids from annexing a major industrial area within its borders. The resulting mistrust led to Wyoming’s decision in the late 1980s to build an independent water line to Lake Michigan rather than a joint pipeline with Grand Rapids”

(Visser, 2004, pg. 56). This historic decision lingered for over 20 years and impacted a serious decision of joint efforts.

### **Extraterritorial Jurisdictions**

The final typology of collaboration is extraterritorial jurisdictions. This final typology will lead us into a discussion of the legislative foundations for collaboration either existing or lacking within the state of Iowa.

Extraterritorial jurisdictions, in Iowa, are typically not suited to follow a typology of the other forms of governance noted earlier. Within the state of Iowa cities have the ability to adopt an ordinance which empowers a city to extend subdivision and zoning authority beyond corporate limits to a distance of two miles. However, if a county jurisdiction adopts zoning a city may only exercise subdivision approval authority. The regulation (Iowa Code 354.9) provides guidelines for review and approval by the governing bodies. This section of the state code refers to the use of 28E agreements to establish joint regulations; however, establishing formal agreements is not required. Conceivably, a city and county could use two separate sets of guidelines for review. Regardless of the regulations used, the approval must be granted by both parties. The state of North Carolina has a different approach. The deliberation of a North Carolina case study aids in understanding a different view of extraterritorial control.

North Carolina requires a municipal board to contain representation of the extraterritorial area when considering land use decisions within the area beyond corporate limits. This key difference is crucial in the collaborative sense. In North Carolina, extraterritorial jurisdiction is actually a preferred alternative to regional agencies given the political difficulty of establishing a regional agency (Owens, 2006). In essence, the legislative action of granting police powers to multiple jurisdictions is a method of forcing joint services. North Carolina has enacted legislation that has resulted in collaborative

efforts. One could argue that forced joint boards are not a form of collaboration but rather an organized confrontation of ideals. The answer to this argument is the required establishment of representative extraterritorial municipal boards.

The use of representative extraterritorial municipal boards requires an element of legislative action. Social relationships are not necessary in this setting, only the proper procedures of enacting extraterritorial jurisdiction, which in North Carolina entails a request to and action by the state legislature. The effectiveness of the extraterritorial jurisdictions in North Carolina is difficult to quantify. Instead, the research shows a proliferation of extraterritorial jurisdictions. Within the state of North Carolina, 85 percent of those with populations over 10,000 participate in extraterritorial control (Owens, 2006). Overall, 62 percent of cities in North Carolina have extraterritorial jurisdiction. Of the 548 municipalities only 68 have a population in excess of 10,000. Approximately 50 percent of the cities have a population under 1,000. Previous studies indicate that the small communities (under 1,000) are far less likely to have their own land use regulations or any extraterritorial jurisdiction (Owens, 2006).

The establishment of extraterritorial jurisdictions is intended to provide a community with supervision of development and growth patterns beyond corporate limits. Communities having this supervisory control can reduce implications caused by unmanaged growth. When development occurs beyond corporate limits, without review by the city, the development assumes its own organization and infrastructure. A lack of review by a city means that city growth will ultimately reach the boundaries of such developments and be confronted to consuming the development into corporate limits although limited by the infrastructure installed. Imagine a development with 20 homes 250-feet from corporate limits. Each home is installed with its own sewage treatment system and the entire development is served by a joint water line connected via a three inch main. As the city expands in years to come the development is incorporated into the city. It is at this time that the city must find a way to

rebuild infrastructure in a manner that not only serves the immediate development but also provides throughput to new development geographically further out from the city center. Existing homeowners now face an intense construction project and potential assessments for infrastructure improvements past their front doors. The three inch water line is not nearly of capacity to accommodate fire protection or further growth, but a six-inch line can. The private sewage treatment systems now cause an environmental concern as the systems become outdated. New sanitary sewer exists at the front of the property yet this does not match the original design of the development. Upon considering all of these factors one can see a clear outcome of extraterritorial jurisdiction is reduced fiscal strain on the municipality and property owners.

### **How can these different forms of intergovernmental cooperation be implemented within the State of Iowa?**

Local governments have been working together for many years. One of the more mature collaborative tools is the interlocal agreement (IA). These agreements have many shapes, ranging from an informal “handshake” to an elaborate contract structured to meet legislative requirements. IAs “exist between cities, counties, a city and a county, between cities and school districts, between school districts, and in many other combinations” (Thurmaier and Chen, 2005, pg. 2). IAs range from simple two-party agreements to complex arrangements among a variety of local governments and private sector entities. The simple two-party agreement could be as simple as a city and county informally sharing responsibility for clearing snow from a road that carries a jurisdictional boundary down its centerline. The complex arrangement could be described by a 28E agreement (associated with the Iowa Code chapter 28E) for economic development services shared by multiple cities, the county, the local chamber, convention and visitors bureau, and an additional economic development agency. To better understand how the typology of intergovernmental

cooperation can be physically implemented within the state of Iowa, we will consider the range of IAs below.

Three types of IAs will be categorized; informal agreements, memorandums of understanding, and formalized agreements (28E). Each type will be summarized based on their respective benefits and risks. Finally, a suggestion of potential changes that may increase the effectiveness of the IAs.

### **Informal Agreements**

An informal agreement is the simplest form of cooperation among separate jurisdictions. The informal agreement takes place daily in the world of government. Within a world of lawsuit happy citizens and disclaimer laden e-mails, a handshake still means something among governmental officials.

Within a matter of a week one single government employee could provide numerous examples of informal agreements. The local chamber director calls the city manager and requests a link to the chamber be placed on the city website. The DNR supervisor contacts the city public works director and requests a report of action for sewer management. The city manager dedicates one morning per month to address the county supervisors with a general update of city activities. The informal agreement actually signifies the existence of a healthy social network. As described earlier, this social network can impart further trust to promote ongoing collaboration.

The risks associated with informal agreements surround communication. The game “telephone” is a good example of the risks of an informal agreement. When an informal agreement is established there is little chance that documentation is tied to the agreement. Thus the collaborating partners must depend upon verbal communication and memory to guide actions. It is possible that mis-communication occurs and leads to pitfalls in the relationship. The worst-case scenario is an individual purposefully taking advantage of the

collaborating partner by intentionally not abiding by the informal agreement. With no formal agreement and no documentation it is “his word against mine.” This is a match that can’t be won, only dealt with.

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

The MOU is the next step up the ladder of formality in the realm of intergovernmental cooperation and would appear to fill the holes left open by an informal agreement. While still informal, the MOU entails documentation of an agreement. The MOU is a step closer to a formalized legal agreement yet still based upon a firm handshake.

A MOU could be an arrangement to provide data to another jurisdiction on a regular basis. When a city planner has a new subdivision recorded she may follow an MOU that provides procedures for updating the county GIS coordinator with new street names and addresses so that the local E911 dispatch center can be informed of each new address within the area. MOUs are more likely to be used when an informal agreement requires some additional level of detail. While the city manager can easily have a link added to the city website, it is much more difficult to remember that the GIS coordinator needs more than just a street name for a new road. He also needs the address ranges, length of the street, pavement type, and the classification of the street.

The MOU also has its downside. A MOU is an agreement, to some extent, in writing. The risk here is that a MOU is not an official document. Generally a MOU is not recorded nor is it acted upon by resolution or ordinance. Without the formality of a legal document the MOU may provide a false sense of security for those parties involved.

### **Formalized Agreements (28E)**

The final agreement available within the state of Iowa is the most formalized intergovernmental agreement - the 28E agreement. The label “28E” actually references Chapter 28E of the Iowa Code titled Joint Exercise of Governmental Powers.

*“28E.1 PURPOSE.*

*The purpose of this chapter is to permit state and local governments in Iowa to make efficient use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities with other agencies and to co-operate in other ways of mutual advantage. This chapter shall be liberally construed to that end” (Iowa Code 2007).*

State law requires formal submission of an agreement made pursuant to Chapter 28E to be filed, in an electronic format, with the secretary of state in a manner specified by the secretary of state. The secretary of state then formally records the agreement whereby the agreement becomes effective and binding.

A recent study outlined the primary driving forces behind the establishment of 28E agreements within Iowa. “The most important reasons for creating 28Es are to improve effectiveness and efficiency of local government services. There is a high correlation (0.907) between those who create 28Es for efficiency and those who create them for effectiveness reasons. Similarly, there is a high correlation (0.711) between those who create agreements due to the general economic condition of community or the fiscal strain on the local government” (Thurmaier and Chen, 2005, pg. 10). Thurmaier and Chen go on to explain that “The analysis supports the proposition that underlying social networks with regular communication foster successful IAs (28Es)” (2005, pg. 14).

Risk is no structure defined by law. In the case of extraterritorial jurisdiction, there are no guidelines suggesting equal representation. In fact, Chapter 28E provides no requirements for representation. Does this mean that a city government could establish a 28E agreement and give full pothole filling authority to the county? Absolutely. Does this mean that city officials can turn over authority of other normal city activities too, such as emergency services? Yes. Chapter 28E does require that certain public safety commissions be “composed of elected officials from public agencies party to the agreement” (Iowa Code

2007). This is a very limited representation requirement. While the public safety commission must have at least one elected official from each jurisdiction, there are no additional requirements for representation. It is not based on population or service costs. Simply, the law states that elected officials must serve on the commission.

Chapter 28E provides only a minor amount of guidance for 28E structure and operations. A majority of the detailed requirements are specific to public safety and emergency service commissions. The remaining 28Es have no specific guidelines for representation or diversity. The regulations of Chapter 28E generally focus on the process for adoption and implementation of the 28E. The study performed by Thurmaier and Chen shows that over 10,800 28Es exist in Iowa. Of those 28E agreements 35 percent are tied to some form emergency service delivery. This is the largest segment of 28Es.

Overall, the 28E is the best method for establishing joint services within the state of Iowa. Chapter 28E could gain some insight from North Carolina's laws for extraterritorial jurisdiction. The Iowa 28E could benefit from representation requirements in an effort to require some definitive level of involvement by the smaller counterparts of an agreement that may have a stronger desire to "give up" authority. On the other hand, with over 10,800 agreements in effect, one might argue that the law is working just as planned. Without an outcry from bereaved citizens there may be no need to modify legislation. In fact, considering the success of existing 28E agreements could be a testament to the current legislation. Respondents of the Statewide Survey of Interlocal Agreements "overwhelmingly believe their 28E agreements are successful. About 77 percent believe their agreement has achieved its objectives well or very well. Similar proportions believe that their 28E agreement has increased service effectiveness and efficiency (71 percent and 67 percent, respectively) well or very well" (Thurmaier and Chen, 2005, pg. 12).

In order for Boone County, or any other rural county, to remain stable both financially and effectively proper use of collaboration is necessary. This may not mean a holistic approach of governmental merge, but instead the use of relationships at some level (28E as an example). In some cases full local government mergers may be necessary while in other locations a simple update meeting may be enough. From full consolidation to status quo there is an almost endless array of possibilities. To understand just one of those rural entities, the Olive Tree Project was established.

The Olive Tree Project is an example of the willingness of Boone County to explore opportunities of collaboration. Action research methodology was used in the Olive Tree Project to explore the potential for greater collaboration in Boone County public administration. Action research methodology used in the Olive Tree Project is intended to provide a means of action or change and some level of research at the same time (Dick, 1999). Below is an outline of the Olive Tree Project concluding with results of the project and how those results are prompting the need for this research.

### **Background of the Olive Tree Project**

During the summer of 2004 I approached Rick Morse, Ph.d, regarding a desire to explore joint services in Boone County. As a graduate student of the Iowa State University dual Master's program of Community and Regional Planning and Public Administration I had come to the realization that rural governments have a need to explore collaboration when providing services. The realization came as a result of coursework and involvement in numerous city/county projects and observations. Some of those projects included the clean-up of College Creek in Ames that consisted of intergovernmental cooperation of enforcement to eliminate pollution of College Creek. In this venture the City of Ames led the project and demonstrated the ability to be successful through collaboration with Story County and Boone County planning/health departments. The result of that project was the transformation of

failing water quality tests into compliant tests of College Creek. Another successful project includes the county-wide geographic information system (GIS) purchased with county-wide tax dollars and supplied to all incorporated places within Boone County. The project provided technologically-capable communities with the ability to reference a powerful mapping system for use in policy creation and plan management. To this day the county uses its professional capacities to supply GIS maps and other data to smaller communities and other governmental agencies.

With these two projects as discussion points Rick Morse, along with myself and other University and governmental officials, proceeded with an application for grant funds through the Iowa Innovations Fund. In September of 2004 Boone County and ISU were awarded \$63,850 to pursue the Olive Tree Project.

### **The Olive Tree Project**

The project involved two pilot counties: Boone and Poweshiek. The project sought to foster discussion from citizens and local officials about potential collaborative efforts of local government. Hundreds of individuals and community officials participated in the venture. Community forums were used to “stimulate discussions around two principle questions. First, ‘what are the critical sources of your community’s identity?’ The discussion of community identity then became the backdrop of the group work designed to identify [the second question that referred to] potential areas for intercommunity collaboration” (Morse, 2005, p. 20). The outline of the project is described below:

1. County-wide stakeholder committee formed (government, school, community, business, etc.)
2. Stakeholder committee created a survey and the overall design of the project.
3. Surveys distributed
4. Community forums to establish critical sources of community identity

5. Second round of community forums to identify areas of potential collaboration
6. Stakeholder committee reconvened to review findings
7. Stakeholder committee reconvened a second time to identify best opportunities for collaboration (based on community forum input) and prioritize the opportunities
8. Stakeholder group identified top priorities and the next steps.

The top priorities included opportunities for developing a river trail connecting recreational assets throughout the county, investigating possibilities for regional economic development, and working toward county-wide planning and zoning.

The results of the Olive Tree Project warrant the need for further research of joint planning services. This thesis provides the research necessary to supply Boone County with the tools and direction necessary to take the next step in achieving joint services in the arena of land use planning. But, how can the topic of joint planning be addressed? Is it necessary to revisit the same questions? How can the Olive Tree Project guide this research?

The Olive Tree Project included goals to “stimulate intercommunity collaboration ‘from the bottom up’ while at the same time learning about what matters most to citizens in terms of community identity and what possibilities exist for collaboration” (Morse, 2005 - June, p. 1). Wondolleck and Yaffee point out the process of collaboration begins with citizen and elected officials becoming aware of the prospects of working together (2000). Once the acknowledgement of opportunities becomes evident “the concern shifts to whether the opportunities are politically and otherwise viable” (Morse, 2005, p. 17). Field theory is the means by which this study seeks to understand the forces associated with joint service viability. Researcher Kurt Lewin developed the concept of field theory (Lewin, 1939).

*Lewin argued that the motivated behavior of an individual can be understood in terms of a sociopsychological field, much like an electric or*

*gravitational field, in which various forces, including needs and desires, work to pull the individual in different directions. Motivated behavior is the net outcome of these opposing forces, forces arising from both the person and the environment in which the person is embedded (Tompkins, 2005, p. 273).*

The use of field theory will help shape the research in a manner that will provide understanding of the practicality of joint land use planning in Boone County. The goal is to identify the driving forces and restraining forces pushing Boone County away from or closer to the collaborative effort of joint land use planning.

Results from the Olive Tree Project survey established that “over 70% of respondents reported being ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ informed when it comes to local government. About half of the respondents reporting trusting local government to do the right thing ‘most of the time’ or ‘almost always.’ 77% of Boone County respondents rated overall public services as ‘good’ and ‘very good’” (Morse, 2005, p. 22). These results support current governmental structure; however, joint land use planning was still identified as an area worthy of exploring collaborative efforts. If the business, civic, and government officials respond as noted above, what type of research is needed to understand driving forces and restraining forces? Is it necessary to explore personal relationships? Is it politics or is it simply bringing people to the table? Perhaps it is necessary to understand the very basic personal opinion of entities with potential involvement in a collaborative venture.

### ***Summary of Literature Review***

Rural governance emphasizes the importance of collaboration while providing few specifics for joint land use planning. The deficiency of research provides the qualified need for the body of research contained in this thesis. Previous action research from the Olive Tree Project, regarding Boone County, suggests that my interest in investigating joint land use planning is a plausible purpose. The identification of driving and restraining forces is a

useful tool in research contexts that are real sociopolitical settings. Outcomes from the Olive Tree Project survey data, stakeholder meetings, and community discussions are a sound base for establishing qualitative research questions.

### ***Background and Context***

#### **Land use planning in Boone County**

Boone County is comprised of nine incorporated towns. The City of Boone is the largest community with a population of 12,803. The City of Ogden and Madrid both have a population of approximately 2,000. The total population of the remaining communities combined is less than 1,000. The total population in unincorporated Boone County is 8,296 (2000 Census).

Only four of the ten governmental entities in Boone County perform some level of land use control; Boone County, the City of Boone, the City of Madrid, and the City of Ogden. The level and intensity of land use control is in the same order with Boone County holding the most extensive land use oversight followed by the City of Boone. Madrid and Ogden do not have planning staff; however, other city officials handle land use issues.

Boone County adopted zoning in 1999, which makes its program the newest in the county. This may be considered a shortcoming as the experience of elected officials and appointed officials is minimal. However, Boone County is the only entity that does ongoing training for the Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment.

#### **Joint services in Boone County**

Existing joint services in Boone County are somewhat limited. The most recent joint venture was the consolidation of Emergency Service Dispatch. The consolidation of dispatch service took place in 2002. The venture has been positive with few problems or complaints since its inception (personal interview, 2006).

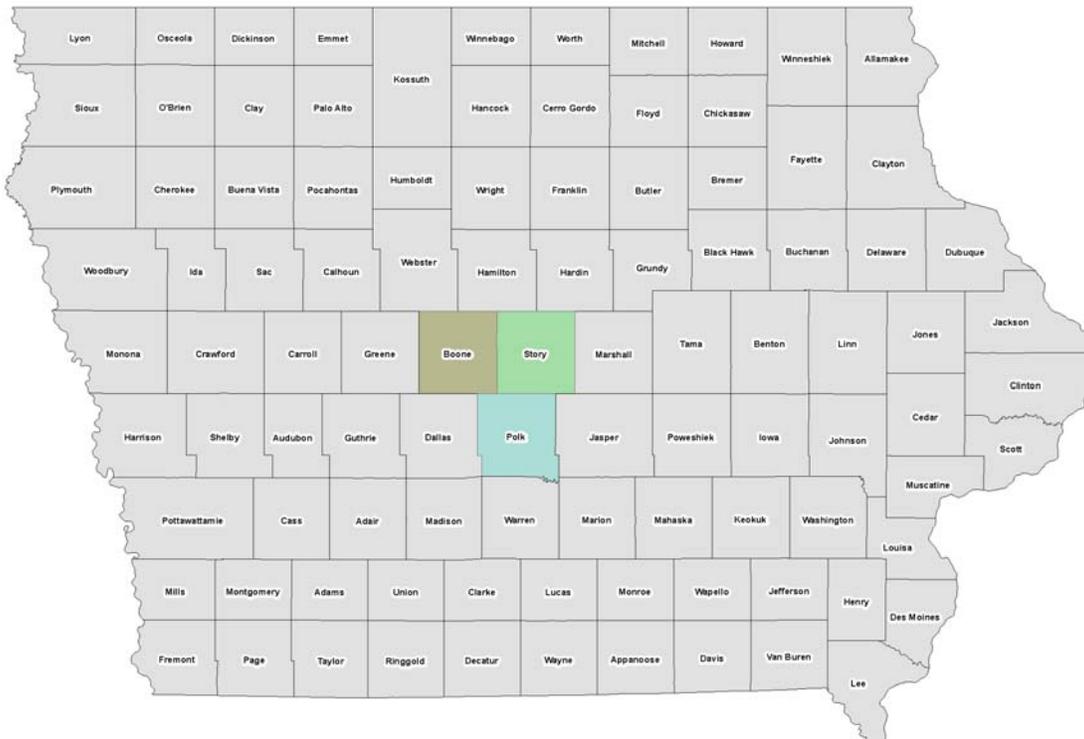
Other joint services primarily include the sharing of equipment or 28E agreements for providing law enforcement, road maintenance, and drainage district oversight. Those services have been shared for many years. One particular 28E agreement recently dissolved due to financial tribulations. Boone County shared mental health services with Dallas County but due to concerns over funding the relationship came to a close and the two entities pursued separate mental health services.

## *Geography*

### **Physical geography**

Boone County is located in the center of the State of Iowa. Boone County is bordered by the Ames Metropolitan Area (in Story County) to the east and the Des Moines Metropolitan Area (in Polk County) to the south. The City of Fort Dodge is located north of

**Figure 1 - State of Iowa**



Boone County.

Boone County is dissected by the Des Moines River which runs through the central part of the county. Three watersheds cover the county; central – Des Moines River

Watershed, west –

Beaver Creek

Watershed, and east

– Squaw Creek

Watershed. With exception of the Des Moines River

Valley, much of

Boone County is made up of prime agricultural land.

**Figure 2 - Boone County Area**



**Social geography**

Of the 26,000 population,

98.5 percent is white. The second largest race is Hispanic which is 0.8 percent of the total population. The average age is 39 compared to 38, which is the average age of the Iowa population. Boone County is 49 percent male and 51 percent female. The population per square mile is 46 compared to 52 people per square mile for the state of Iowa. The median household income in \$40,763 compared to the national average of \$41,994 (Census 2000).

The social makeup of Boone County in the political arena is much different than the citizenry makeup of Boone County. With nine incorporated places all representing a different general community attitude, the social design is across the spectrum. Boone County

is a predominantly blue-collar area with a heavy emphasis on agriculture. A large portion of the county commutes for work, services, and goods. While an economic analysis shows more outward flow of funds, the citizens of Boone have high demands of their local government.

## *Participants*

### **Elected Officials**

Of the participants involved in this study 20 were elected officials. The history of the elected officials ranged from one year of service to twenty years of service. The average experience as an elected official is six years. Five of the twenty elected officials were female and fifteen were male. Most of the elected officials had either lived in Boone County most of their lives or were originally from Boone County.

### **Appointed Officials**

Of the 30 participants involved in the study, ten are appointed officials. The appointed officials ranged in experience from 16 years on the job down to four years. However, experience in a governmental setting was much higher for all appointed officials. The lowest amount of experience was eight years and the highest was over 20 years of service in a governmental setting. Only two of the ten appointed officials were women. The remaining eight were male.

### **Chapter 3 Methodology**

This chapter establishes the framework and details of the methodology used for the study. To begin, problems associated with the study and the specific needs for the research are discussed. Then, the rationale for the methodology is given followed by the research questions and structure. Finally, the procedures used to collect and analyze the data to develop a theory of understanding the driving forces and restraining forces of joint planning services in Boone County.

#### ***The thesis***

Boone County is an entity within 30 miles of two metropolitan areas, The City of Ames and Des Moines. These two metropolitan areas have created growth pressures for Boone County and the cities within. Growth pressures and the threat of Ames zoning control prompted the adoption of county zoning in 1999. Since that time Boone County has had numerous interactions with incorporated places within Boone County concerning planning and zoning. The topics range from flooding and storm water to transportation and water supply. The level of planning varies greatly when comparing the governmental entities. No jurisdiction, with the exception of the County, has a full time professional land use planner on staff.

The issues plaguing each community are often handled through a comprehensive plan and the ability to enforce that plan. “Those who consider themselves comprehensive planners typically claim that their most important functions are: (1) to create a master plan which can guide the deliberations of specialist planners; (2) to evaluate the proposals of specialist planners in the light of the master plan, and (3) to coordinate the planning of specialist agencies so as to ensure that their proposals reinforce each other to further the public interest” (Altshuler, 1973, p. 193). Furthering public interest does not stop at

corporate limits. Impacts at the periphery of a city are as crucial as those issues occurring downtown (Owens, 2006).

The focus of this study is to address the driving forces and restraining forces of a joint planning department in Boone County. The goal is to understand what can hinder or provide aid in creation of a joint planning department. The result is a means to provide direction towards joint services to address land use planning deficiencies in rural Boone County and its incorporated places.

### ***Grounded Theory***

For this thesis, a grounded theory methodology is used. Grounded theory is expected to produce or discover a theory. The researcher is expected to release preconceived ideas or theories and allow a substantive theory to emerge. The theory is obtained via interviews, observations, and literature review. Data analysis occurs at the outset of research unlike other methodologies that require data collection to conclude prior to analysis. Grounded theory takes a constant comparison approach for all data as it is gathered. Ongoing research and data collection is guided by emerging concepts. Concepts are found through constant comparison of new data. Data collection can end when saturation of a concept emerges. The resulting theory is reported in discussion format or as a set of propositions. Either format is generally done in narrative format (Creswell, 1998).

The original works of grounded theory became known in 1967 when Glaser and Strauss authored the book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. However, this text was written almost four decades ago. Since that time numerous criticisms and versions of grounded theory have emerged. This thesis recognizes numerous references associated with grounded theory while primarily focusing on the “Classic Grounded Theory” (Glaser, 2004, p. 2). Barney G. Glaser himself has re-established “Classic Grounded Theory” by explaining how the “mixing of qualitative data analysis and grounded theory methodologies has the

effect of downgrading and eroding the grounded theory goal of conceptual theory” (Glaser, 2004, p. 2). This thesis is written to achieve the original goals of grounded theory.

### ***Problems associated with research***

Since the inception of grounded theory (GT) there have been criticisms as is the case with many sociological-psychological theories. The criticisms often occur when GT is not used as originally intended by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The criticisms become evident as some researchers attempt to force GT into a prescriptive qualitative data analysis (QDA) methodology. When GT data and observations are forced to merge with QDA, into a preconceived idea or existing theory with the attempt of gaining some unattainable level of accuracy, GT loses its power (Lowe, 1997). “When GT procedures are laced with the exhaustive, abundant requirements of QDA methodology, GT becomes distorted, wasting large amounts of precious research time and derailing the knowledge – hence grounding – of GT as to what is really going on” (Glaser, 2004, p.4). Dr. Kathryn May critiques GT by stating, “Despite current perceptions and student’s prayers, theory does not magically emerge from data. Nor is it true that, if only one is patient enough, insight wondrously enlightens the researcher. [QDA] is the process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious, of recognizing the significant from the insignificant... of fitting categories one with another... it is a creative process of organizing data so that the analytic scheme will appear obvious” (May, 1994, p. 10). The criticisms by May are simply untrue when considering true classic GT. In classic GT, “the conceptual hypotheses of GT do not entail the problems of accuracy that plague QDA methods” (Glaser, 2004, p. 4). As a means to defend the use of GT for this research it must be explained that “classic GT is simply a set of integrated conceptual hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area” (Glaser, 2004, p. 2). Again, as a means to defend the use of GT for this research it must be explained that GT provides the means to

establishing theory about a specific real-life setting through observation. This process provides a detailed approach to studying specific social settings by those immediately involved, which brings on another potential criticism.

A potential criticism that may become the primary argument of this specific thesis research subject is the primary researchers association with the study group. At the outset of this research I was employed with the county agency for which the study is examining. Since that time I have transitioned into the city administrator role for the City of Boone. On one hand the immediate response is that respondents won't be honest and will provide conflicting data based on trust issues explicit to the researcher. One may argue that research can't work when the researcher is so intensely involved with the subject. However, the format of this research can be justified. "Researchers can use grounded theory methods to further their knowledge of subjective experience and to expand its representation while neither remaining external from it nor accepting objectivist assumptions and procedures...grounded theory fosters the development of qualitative traditions through the study of experience from the standpoint of those who live it" (Denzine & Lincoln, 2000, pg. 521). Grounded theory can be performed by those who are directly involved with the subject matter. In fact, grounded theory may prove more effective in such circumstances. In addition, the very council included in this research voted unanimously to appoint me as the new city administrator. Trust issues would appear to be minimal given this choice of appointment.

### ***The rationale for the methodology***

This study takes on only a portion or single component of government. Specifically the focus is driving forces and restraining forces of a joint planning department. Grounded theorists do not attempt to study an entire community with all of its social intricacies.

Instead, grounded theorists "tend to look at slices of social life" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000,

pg. 522). While this study considers a “slice of social life” the grounded theory methodology “generates conceptual hypotheses that get applied to any relevant time, place, and people with emergent fit and then is modified by constant comparison with new data as it explains what behavior obtains in a substantive area” (Glaser, 2002, pg. 6). This study is intended to provide base data for ongoing research in the field of land use planning as it becomes involved with joining services. The grounded theory methodology and subsequent theory is “abstract of time, place, and people” (Glaser, 2002, pg. 6). The structure of this thesis will provide a somewhat prescriptive approach to future researchers with similar desires of understanding consolidation of governmental services. In fact, this thesis will provide a detail of the means of data analysis and measures for others to continue the research in other geographic locations. As quoted by Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, “Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men.” The idea of this thesis as the foundation for ongoing research is a lofty idea; however, if one were to continue the research to other places and times, we may ultimately have a better understanding of how our governments operate and the necessary means to change.

### ***The research structure***

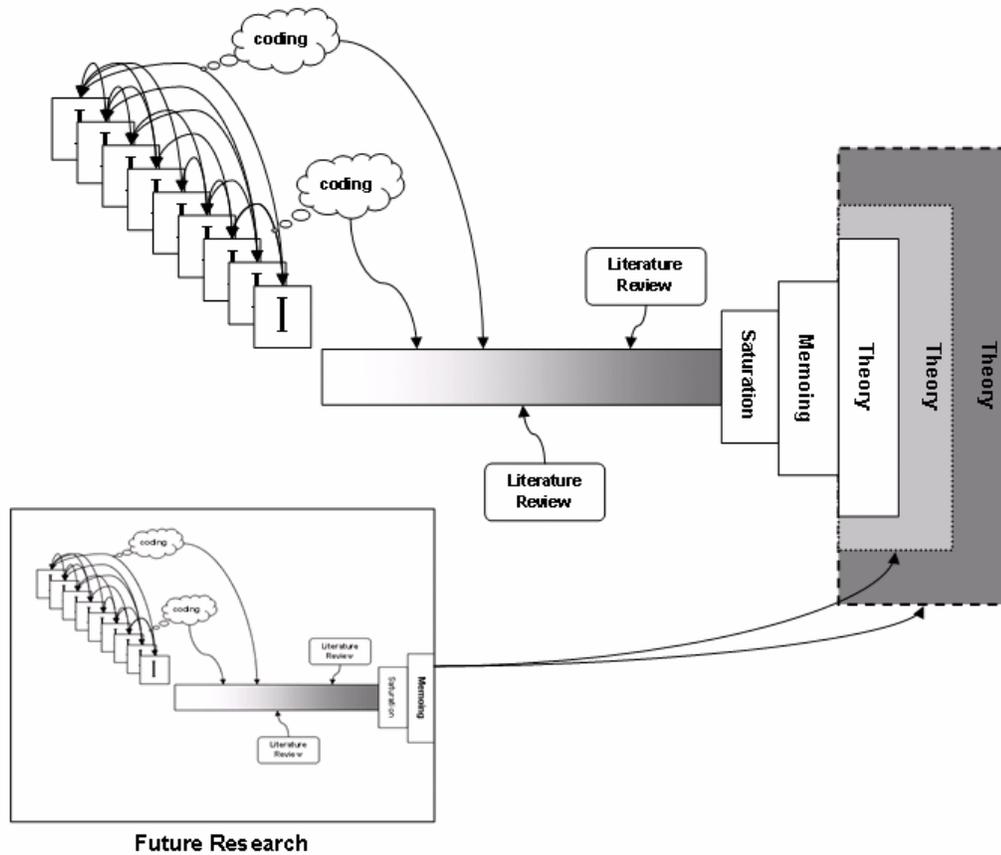
As noted above, one goal of this study is to provide a detailed method for ongoing research for the subject of joint planning services. This section of the thesis shall serve as that instrument.

The early text for development of grounded theory establishes criteria for evaluating a grounded theory. Glaser (1978) identifies four criteria: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability. Comparative analysis must create categories that fit the data. The categories

must explain the data from which they were created. The information must flow forward and backward. This prevents the typical qualitative data analysis trap of forcing data into preconceived concepts. The grounded theory must work by explaining the phenomena that is shown by the data. The theory is relevant if actual problems can be identified and shown to relate to the data collected. The grounded theory is sturdy if it can bend to allow modification based on new data sources and additional emergent categories. Ongoing study in the arena of joint planning services must address the criteria above. For this study fit, work, relevance, and modifiability have been considered and are reflected in the text and theory.

To further explain the research structure a figure is shown below. The diagram identifies how comparison of interviews followed by coding and literature review lead to saturation of categories. After saturation, memoing is done as a written form of conceptualization. The conceptualized social patterns are then used to create grounded theory. The additional “theory” items at the far right of the diagram signify clarified theory from future research.

Figure 3 - Methodology



This figure should be used by future researchers as a means to add clarification and new conceptualizations to the theory within this thesis.

### *Data needs*

To understand data needs, one must understand the concept of grounded theory. Beyond the identification of the site to be studied, further identification of sampling cannot be done prior to some level of emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). “Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find

them, in order to develop his [/her] theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory...” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.45). For the study of joint planning in Boone County, the data selection process was quickly discovered after interviewing the first few key elected officials. It was during initial interviews that other data sources were identified. These additional sources included not only other elected officials, but appointed public officials as well (see Table 1 - Individuals Interviewed/Observed). The purpose of the study is to understand driving forces and restraining forces of establishing a joint planning department in Boone County. The data needed was established as interviews and observations of local governmental entities practicing some level of land use planning. Those entities include the City of Boone, the City of Ogden, the City of Madrid, and Boone County. The observations include the researcher’s attendance at meetings and employment with Boone County.

As data was collected and analyzed literature references were explored to provide saturation of categories. The purpose of ongoing comparison that leads to saturation is the goal of conceptualization. In GT, conceptualization is “the naming of an emergent social pattern grounded in research data” (Glaser, 2004, p. 4). Conceptualization is the foundation of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Conceptualization does not stop until saturation takes place. The point of saturation provides an endpoint for comparison and analysis. Once the emergent idea is found, it can then be discussed, or written, as part of the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For this study, data collection ended once saturation occurred. Saturation was found after the literature review of topics identified through comparison of interview data.

### ***Data collection***

Data collection began as a list of questions intended to stir discussion during interviews. The questions were short and aimed directly at the issue of joint planning. Those

questions can be found in the Appendix. The questions in the Appendix are separated by “initial questions” and “modified questions.” This separation stems from the researcher’s recognition of the need to adapt questions based on the comparisons of initial interview responses so that interview sessions could be more focused.

According to Glaser and Strauss, at the outset of inquiry the varied methods of collecting data were likely unfocused. Through initial comparison of data it is likely that data collection methods will become more structured to focus on specific ideas generated during the foundation of the research (1967). During the initial stage of interviewing each session (one-on-one) became a general conversation where unrelated discussions would carry both the researcher and respondent further from the topic. While the initial interviews were somewhat scattered, careful comparison and analysis prompted categories that help guide the “modified” research questions. An example of this modification is the change made for the questions, “Do you believe that entity (X) makes wise land use decisions?” and “Do you like entity (X)?” These questions, along with a few other initial questions, produced lengthy conversations about positive and negative aspects of corresponding governmental entities. The modification of the question became, “Speaking in terms of joint services; what is the number one positive aspect of entity (X)?” and “Speaking in terms of joint services; what is the worst aspect of entity (X)?” The modification helped focus discussion as reflected by initial respondents. The results allowed the researcher to quickly hone the interviews to produce social thoughts immediately helping or hindering joint service establishment.

Of those interviewed, the respondents were primarily elected officials and appointed officials that were elected by or appointed by a community that practiced some level of land use planning. The table below identifies the respondents for the study. The table indicates the amount, status, and location of the individuals interviewed.

**Table 1 - Individuals Interviewed/Observed**

	<b>City of Boone</b>	<b>City of Madrid</b>	<b>City of Ogden</b>	<b>Boone County</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Elected Official</b>	8	4	4	5	<b>20</b>
<b>Administrator</b>	2	1	-	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Building Official</b>	2	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
<b>Planner</b>	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Clerk</b>	1	1	1	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>

Additional data research came from the Olive Tree Project, general observation of elected officials and appointed officials, newspaper archives, and literature review.

### *Analysis*

Upon completion of each interview data was reviewed several times. Upon completion of interview review the previous interviews were used to compare the new information. The comparison of interview data is identified as “coding: conceptualizing data by constant comparison of incident with incident, and incident with concept to emerge more categories and their properties” (Glaser, 1992, p. 38). As concepts emerged notations were made to delineate properties and categories. After all interviews were complete repeated comparisons were done to further analyze the existence of concepts. The results gathered produced an initial grounded theory.

Following the completion of the **initial grounded theory** secondary data was used to “reconcile differences, show similarities in concepts and patterns, and imbue the work with the data and concepts in the literature” (Glaser, 1992, p. 33). The initial theory is firm yet able to be modified by “fitting ideas from the literature” (Glaser, 1992, p. 33). The process

entailed abundant note-taking and tabbing books and articles for further analysis and comparison. Once the literature review was complete the tabs and notes were read over repeatedly. The repetition produced further emergence of theory classified as **theory refined through literature**. Again, the theory was written and discussed.

The completion of the grounded theory is identified as **resulting theory**. The resulting theory is an identification of the final theory where modifications of the initial theory are identified. This is the resulting grounded theory used to complete findings and recommendations of the research.

## **Chapter 4 Findings and Theory**

In many communities it has been demonstrated that joint services can work. Across the country there are examples of how joint services allow multiple communities to merge services and capitalize on economies of scale to provide better services at a lower cost. The evidence for these successful ventures can be found in Hesselbein and Whitehead (2000), Kickert (1993), Lawless and Moore (1989), Linden (2002), Lowndes (1997), Manuel et. al. (2000), and Sullivan and Skelcher (2003); however, the means by which collaboration takes place often plagues the well intentioned. Good intentions provide the impetus to start research. Understanding what drives a community towards collaboration is what makes it all happen.

Below is a theoretical perspective of what causal factors drive a community towards collaboration within the realm of joint land use planning. The theory that emerged from the research, as shown below, is an example of how individuals engaging in conversation can steer a community towards change. The interviews of more than 30 different appointed and elected officials shows the similarities of thoughts and opinions; these thoughts and opinions provide a road map for a joint planning department in Boone County. The ideas are divided among driving forces and restraining forces. Combinations of these driving forces advance the establishment of combining services. The driving forces are established in three categories that isolate the context in which consideration is given; fact, person, and institution. While the following sections of this research identify driving forces, subsequent sections identify what restraining forces prevent the establishment of combining services.

### ***Driving Forces and Restraining Forces***

#### **Perceptions of Cost**

Finance deserves the foremost attention in the arena of governmental collaboration. It is the financing of government services that cause a community to seek out other methods

of providing services. When finances run short, creativity must run strong which then leads to a host of new ideas. One not so new idea is the concept of joint services. To save money, the discussion begins.

Evidence is provided throughout this body of research to justify why joining services becomes a topic of discussion as municipalities endure budget constraints. Whether it is a general theory of economies of scale or the countless examples of 28E agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) within the state of Iowa, it is generally understood that joint services provide some level of financial relief.

During the research respondents dedicated a large portion of time discussing financial factors associated with joint services. *When a governmental entity is constrained by finances, joint services will be pursued as a means to provide services at lower costs. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

Numerous respondents indicated that proof of financial savings could be used to bring taxpayers and elected officials on-board with the idea of a joint planning department. “It is hard for us to do things on our own. We don’t have the resources. Joint services give us a lot more with minimal inputs.” To a greater degree, a respondent identifies that joining services are not an option for those communities in need of financial relief. “I am a firm believer that government, regardless of the level of stratification they appear to enjoy, is going to be faced with the necessity, if not requirement, to look at service consolidation on a multitude of levels.” This same respondent also commented on the inability of providing services at the same level as past years due to repeated state and federal mandates. “The State of Iowa is constantly changing the laws to cap tax levies while demanding additional reporting and providing a means for new services to the public. While the changes are generally well founded it makes our jobs difficult as city leaders. If we don’t find ways to join together we will ultimately find ourselves in a state of disrepair.” Another respondent states, “citizens are often less concerned with the cost of services compared to the benefits

they see. In other words, the viewpoint is, we don't care what it costs, just provide the service. But when taxes go up, the citizens are upset. The potential problem with joint services is that some people don't like to share. If we can overcome that then we could make it work. And we may be forced to." This respondent supports the necessity of joint services, although in a slightly negative perspective. Using the term "forced" indicates an unwanted course of action. This still supports the financial need for pursuing joint services.

The previous statements came from respondents that were adamant in their response. Other supporting statements came with less enthusiasm and commitment in the body language and delivery by the respondent. An example is the following statement made by a local council person, "City and County has to consider cost savings." Considering the question of joint planning as a means to save money, the respondent is identifying that the communities do not have a choice. This is general but still reflects comments noted earlier such as "forced" and "necessity." The respondents are repeatedly explaining that joint services are a critical means of reducing costs.

Other generalized statements are noted in the following quotes by respondents, "Large groups have more resources." "Money is an issue, if we can save money it is a benefit for everyone." "The benefits always outweigh the negatives." Consistency among respondents is strong in the category of finance and joint services as an effective cost saving measure. Along with cost savings of joint services, the level of service provided is another topic of discussion.

### **Level of service**

*When a governmental entity desires to increase the level of services to a community without the benefit of added revenue, joint services become a means of achieving this goal. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

Service level closely follows finance as a general truth among benefits associated with combining services. The theory "economies of scale" is one half finance and one half

service levels. Officials in the Boone County area understood as citizen demands grow government must continue to find ways to keep pace. An official in Entity Ci3 states, “A positive is that [Entity X] has more resources. Combining resources means better services.” The repetition of these types of comments is where support is found. “With a limited budget we can only accomplish small tasks without the aid of outside consultants or contractors. If I could utilize the resources of both [Entity X] and [Entity Y] then I could get more things done. [Entity X] has always had a bigger budget to get the equipment I can’t afford.” Sometimes getting more done with less is impossible. Getting more done with more is possible.

A reduction of duplicated efforts by combining services will provide more with less. One respondent put this in context of the entire state of Iowa, “Iowa is notorious for duplication. We have 99 counties with 99 court systems and 99 county courthouses with 99 sanitarians and 99 engineers and 99 assessors and on and on.” What stemmed from that was specific discussion related to economic development within Boone County. “An economic development director for the full county could aid other joint ventures such as development of jobs and tourism.” The connection was made well beyond just joining planning services within the county. The individual thinks regionally and recognizes the value of joint services.

### **Fear of the Unknown**

*This subject is less of a “fact” and more of a “lack of facts.” To begin the discussion of joint services one must first have a background of factual data. When background data is not evident a joint program is less likely to occur.*

While there are numerous politicians that will tout their willingness to work together the facts still remain. Any good politician or government leader will base decisions on facts. When facts are not present this puts the local leader in a precarious position. This was apparent as the research was conducted. During interviews it appeared evident that while

there is support for joint services, the lack of facts causes concern. “I’m not sure how it will work. Who will pay for it? ...everyone else will expect us to pay a bulk of the costs.”

During the interview the respondent explained that numerous bodies of fact based research support the premise that joint services will save money. The respondent still did not “buy in” as he explained that “there are too many unknowns. I can see that our community will pick up a bulk of the tab because everyone thinks we have more money...but our finances are not good.”

Another respondent focused on the future of any joint service agreement. “How would we define what percentage to use? What if one community is growing more than another? Will they have to pay more? Those questions will cause lots of problems.” Even facts may not suffice in this circumstance as the respondent was an elected official that commented, “even if we figure it out today, within the next couple years there could be a whole new council at the table. We can’t guarantee what their decisions will be.”

Facts or no-facts there are some individuals that felt greed would override any positive impacts of joint services. “[Entity X] is too greedy. This is my community and I see that greed locally.” This respondent explained how there is a lacking team mentality in their own community. Regardless of the benefits to be shared, this individual believed that instead of giving and receiving a fair share this community would take actions that would be contrary to a true joint cooperative effort. Further support came from a local official that has worked with many different local businesses. “All communities within the county are too selfish. Even the citizens seem to have an attitude that it isn’t just about filling our pockets, it is the goal to fill them until they are overflowing.”

## **Trust**

### **Past experience**

*Past experiences that have produced positive results tend to strengthen the ability to pursue other avenues of similar design. In this case, past successful experiences in joint services will likely aid in the development of other new joint ventures. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

The experience of a successful venture is important when determining if the same path can be taken once again to achieve similar successful results. It is generally easier to find your way back home when you have a trail of breadcrumbs. In this County there exists a previous successful joint venture. Boone County has one overwhelming testament of joint services – joint dispatch. Only several years ago (2003) each law enforcement agency together pursued the creation of a Joint Dispatch Center. The Dispatch Center has been a successful example of collaboration.

Some of the respondents are very familiar with the Joint Dispatch Center. Those who spoke of the dispatch center consolidation described the venture as a success. One respondent specifically described the dispatch center as an example that could move other joint ventures forward, “We have the benefit of a successful merge of the Dispatch Center. The people that helped to make that a success are still in government. These are the people capable of making things happen. They have trust and respect from their fellow departments.” Another respondent states, “It took a long time to get people on board with the idea of a joint dispatch center. After everyone understood the benefits the project moved forward.” “We can now look back and see the cost savings. Actually, cost savings are great but the professionalism of our new Dispatch Center is even better. Now that we have a central location we can concentrate dollars and train staff appropriately. The result is better service at a lower cost.”

## **Leadership**

*Strong leaders or “champions” will provide a conduit of action for the development of joint services. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

An increased probability of collaboration exists when strong leaders exist. One respondent commented, “The mayor of X is a good smart man that could make this happen in his community. He can look beyond the end of his nose.” This individual had faith in that mayor and the ability of that person to carry forward such a venture. Another statement was made that reflected a less comforting opinion but also demonstrated the ability to get past negative issues with the aid of communication to strengthen relationships, “Trust is an issue, but it is getting better with an increased level of communication that has come more recent. But I’m not sure why. Sometimes I think that just simply talking and getting to know someone helps you trust them.” “It does not have to be a friendship, it can be a business relationship, and we just need to work together.”

Generalized opinions of government are often evident with people. Individuals can often place judgment on an entire group based on only a few individual interactions. These judgments can be positive or negative. Statements made during interviews reinforced the benefits individuals can provide on the overall opinion of an organization. “I only like two people with [Entity X], if they are not involved it won’t work. [Individual names X and X] have always been helpful whenever I call or ask questions. They tend to view our individual efforts as a group effort as if we are all in it together. They are the ones that can help make joint business work.” “[Individual X] does not have as much of an ego as other government workers in power. With him we know that he will look out for the best interest of all of us even though he works for [Entity X]” On a more personal note, “I like to do motorcycle awareness rides and talk to other Mayors. It makes me feel better about getting involved with them. Mayor [X] comes to some of our rides and is always open to discussions about new ideas.”

***Leadership that is not representative or skewed by special interest will tend to prevent joint dialogue.***

Leadership is integral to most projects in government. Even the largest citizen action group has a dedicated leader. The pursuit of joint services in government is not different. To bring a project together a champion or trusted leader is necessary. Without a leader capable of instilling trust and dependability joint ventures simply will not get off the ground.

Interviews produced many comments and concerns about leadership. Some of the respondents touted the absence of leadership. “Smaller communities lack leadership.” “The only leader in [Entity X] is a person that doesn’t care to listen to anyone else and that isn’t a leader.” Another viewpoint is the method by which perceived leaders are controlled. “Elected officials in [Entity X] are controlled by elite farmers.” Here the perception indicates that elected officials are merely a conduit for control by those not in government. Another more common perception was also addressed, “The good-ole-boy network is still alive and well in town. Until we get past that good leadership will not be there.” While this particular statement was not mentioned by numerous respondents, one can make the connection from early quotes. An example is the statement made indicating that “elite farmers” control decisions. In some regards this is similar to the “good-ole-boy network.”

The identification of improper authority is implied above; however, there were comments made with absolutes. “The [official] from [Entity X] does not understand the facts and he often blames us for his mistakes.” Here community leaders were outright blamed for improper actions or, in the next quote, a clear distrust of leadership. “I don’t trust the [Entity X] Mayor.”

Finally, there are those that truly understand their community and the direction in which they navigate the political process to achieve results. This individual felt concern about the lack of understanding in other jurisdictions. “Good leadership is reflective of those that can see the future of the community and then actually make decisions that support that.

Usually at [Entity X] we just see [Elected Officials] make decisions on a whim with no regard for the plans.” During this interview the perception gathered from the respondent indicated that this lack of “regard for the plans” would be a substantial block to establishing joint services. This demonstrates how the most well informed and those who can champion an effort could be easily stopped by those that do not regard the proper way of planning for regional growth.

## **Social Networks**

This category is a focus on an individual and the relationships associated with that individual. In some cases it combines small groups but not to the extent of a full institution, which comes later. Here it is demonstrated how person-to-person interaction and relationships can promote joint service ventures. Within this category numerous focal points, from friendship to power, guide the discussion.

### **Relationships**

*Interactions and communication among neighboring jurisdictions, when present, have a tendency to create the necessary dialogue to begin research of joint services. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

Friendship, companionship, and trust are just a few devices by which individuals describe one another. In this section the focus is on positive perspectives and how they drive collaboration. If we know how to analyze relationships among friends and peers the analysis can be used to further cultivate positive relationships and grow a collaborative approach. A good example is the Boone County League, which is the primary method by which all county-wide jurisdictions come together. There is no individual ownership of this league; instead it is a choice of participation and involvement.

The Boone County League is made up of Boone County and nine incorporated places within the county. The League meets on a quarterly basis in a rotational format. The hosting

entity organizes the meeting and holds the event locally (e.g., If the City of Pilot Mound is hosting, the program is held at the local diner in Pilot Mound). Each meeting includes a meal and program. The program is designed to educate attendees about some aspect of government. Among those programs there have been presentations ranging from a state official talking about annexation laws to a county official talking about the latest comprehensive plan update. Of all members (including appointed and elected officials) there is typically a 50 percent attendance record.

The Boone County League was often referred by respondents as “a good idea,” “a chance to meet other mayors,” and “an example of working together.” The League is a clear example of a driving force in collaborative efforts. “The league demonstrates how we can meet, talk, and work together to solve problems.” “The league is the best place to start new ideas affecting more than one government within our county. It takes just a few sentences to start new ideas.” Those few sentences can begin important discussions that lead to complete mind shifts.

The birth of dialogue on the subject matter of joint services can occur easily if the right conditions exist. A dialogue among strangers is not likely to produce much interest. Dialogue among familiar colleagues moves a project forward. Where friendship and familiarity exist cooperation is likely to occur. Interview statements provide evidence of this, such as, “I have always felt that it is easy to talk to X.” “If I am going to be involved in a project I want to know the guy.” “I can easily determine if I trust someone after only a few minutes. The league helps me learn about other government employees and who they really are.” “One positive [of starting a joint venture] is that I know the City Clerk from X through times other than city stuff.” “I have a level of friendship with [individual X]. I think that friendship could help us get along better as a joint team.”

Honesty and the affiliated support granted through relationships is highlighted by the group associated comments. “The county is open and honest about projects. The county

always displays their thoughts and opinions and doesn't appear to be secretive. Some of our cities don't share opinions and ideas and tend to keep things more secret. Honesty will only help us." To some extent this individual is referring to government transparency, which is usually associated with the general public's view of government. However, in the comment above this is a government employee of one municipality referring to the transparency, or lack thereof, of a neighboring community.

***When negative relationships between neighboring cities (and within) exist there is a strong tendency to evade partnerships. The following summary of interviews supports this point.***

While relationships were described in a positive manner earlier, here we see a contrast. Here one can see how a negative relationship can severely impact the abilities of two entities to come together to find a joint venture worth pursuing. The first example shows one of the most extreme examples of a negative relationship. The strength of these feelings noted below greatly supports the limits associated with joint ventures between two jurisdictions where negative relationships exist. "[Entity X] views our community as the bastard child of the family. Thus, this is to me, their greatest failing... [Entity X] does not tolerate individual thought and they do not like dissention. I have very little regard for most [Entity X] officials." This respondent has had numerous negative interactions with neighboring communities. During the interviews he spoke of many instances where his community felt slighted by another. His references were not with one community only but rather various examples. The explanations often ended with fingers pointing with little attention being drawn internally. "[Entity X] doesn't help us out when they know things are their fault. Every time I call them they are almost rude." This local official made it very clear that joint services would not work with the current people in power at the other local governments. He goes on to state, "I believe most officials in [Entity X] are stuck-up, pompous, lazy and worthless people who wouldn't last two weeks in the private sector."

Other respondents had similar negative viewpoints. “[Entity X] is too political. It is hard to trust [Individual] because he is always fake.” “Structuring joint boards with all entities represented will show that personalities are selfish, controlling, and an overall attitude that ‘MY’ issues are more important.”

These thoughts and opinions were developed over years of experience with neighboring communities. Regardless of what the true causes might be, a negative relationship(s) exist. Regardless of whose fault it might be, if other city officials share this opinion the likelihood of joint services being explored with this community is limited.

A negative relationship is a problem, the lack of a relationship entirely is also a hindering factor. A theme developed among many respondent statements. “I don’t know anyone from [Entity X] and that is a bad thing.” While this is a quote from one individual, it is what many others stated in other general terms.

“I don’t know [X].”

“I don’t know that much about [X].”

“I’m not involved with [X] that much.”

“Not much contact with [X].”

“We won’t get the same attention as the larger cities or the county.”

“I don’t even know their names.”

“The League helps, but I usually don’t sit with others.”

This demonstration of lacking relationships is a hurdle to be overcome in the effort to establish joint services. In fact, the lack of relationships is a hurdle to be overcome to initiate dialogue to even open the door of discussion about joint services.

### **Location**

*Geography impacts the services provided by a local government. Geography tends to deter the establishment of joint services as distance between two entities increase.*

*Location and geography also affects growth which can cause a sense of competition*

*among neighboring jurisdictions. This too tends to deter the establishment of joint planning services. The following summary of interviews supports this point.*

Boone County covers almost 600 square miles. Boone County is not unique among Iowa counties, which allows one to paint with a broad stroke when discussing geography and its impacts on joint services. In Boone County a roundtrip from the County Courthouse to Madrid City Hall takes almost one hour. A roundtrip from Ogden City Hall to Boone City Hall takes about a half hour. These two demonstrate the breadth of travel associated with a joint venture.

Factors that originally guided the location of a county courthouse are based upon such factors as the time it took a horse drawn carriage to travel to and from a specific location. “If we use travel time, such as horse and buggy, then we could now say that anyone within the state of Iowa could travel to Des Moines and back home within eight hours. However, people would not stand for that.” Citizens are now accustomed to the distance they travel for business and pleasure. “People will travel 30 miles for groceries but complain about driving ten miles to vote.” While some may call this an opinion, when it is stated by the Elections Officer, it has validity. The Elections Officer spoke of the difficulty one would confront attempting to create a centralized department. “Citizens are angered by the fact that they have to drive 20 minutes to get a drivers license when they have a local government in their own town. This is something that has not changed in a long time and they still get mad. I can’t imagine how difficult it would be if people had to drive 20 minutes to get a building permit for their new garage.” Time alone was not the only item associated with geography and location, “Even if there are cost benefits to joining we still have to accommodate for the local people to get permits and that kind of stuff. We might save money on staff, but that could be eaten up by other needs of driving across the county to serve the smaller towns.”

A different perspective on distance is the “association factor.” Who does each community associate as their neighbor or how do they define their community boundaries.

“It seems that if we were to join services that we would just get the left-overs.” This local official displayed feelings of being “left out” of the county. In a different interview a county official agrees, “[Entity X] takes more identity from our neighboring county due to their proximity to that jurisdiction.” This statement actually became verified when an appointed official from [Entity X] stated, “Most of our citizens work and shop in [another city].” This community believes their growth is not determined by Boone county. They believe their growth pressures are caused by other communities. “The County does not understand what it is like for us.” While one could provide evidence that joint services work, this community may not buy-in due to the players at the table, based on geography.

“There is a perception about residential development or development in general. People in [Entity X] are jealous because they want the stuff in their town instead. There is a negative view because they don’t understand the reasons for development location. They only see it as money for their own community.” This addresses “location” in a different manner, it provides a different perspective of how location and geography affects joint planning services. Here the respondent is insinuating that growth should be based on the proper place for growth as opposed to a tax grab.

### ***Summary***

The idea of joint services in Boone County (specifically joint land use planning) has a good base number of supporters and certain support at some level. However, overall it would appear that the restraining forces have the edge. Upon full review of the interviews it became evident that every comment and quote could be either categorized as a positive comment or a negative comment. Positive comments are those that would support the efforts of joint services and negative comments to the contrary. The numbers lean towards restraining force with 166 total statements describing restraining forces while 114 total statements defined driving forces.

One particular quote helps to define the overall sentiment, “I just can’t see it happening.” The individual that made this statement is probably one of the oldest members of the political structure within Boone County. He appears to have a firm grasp on the political climate. When will that political climate change? Two key quotes may answer that question,

*“Bottom line, if citizens want it bad enough it will change.”*

*“Joint services will only be taxpayer driven.”*

### ***Findings***

The grounded theory methodology is an effective means of looking at real life from a participant’s vantage point. The methodology is not main-stream but is valuable in producing an indication of the key topics associated with joint planning services in Boone County. From this research one can not predict the future outcome of joint planning in another jurisdiction nor can it be determined that certain causal factors applied to any rural county will produce a given result. The theory established here, however, can provide helpful information to those individuals or organizations that seek to understand what factors effect the establishment of joint services. A focus on perceptions of cost, trust, and social networks are of key importance. It is also important to consider the typology of joint services. The typology organized here includes social networks, voluntary regional councils, and extraterritorial jurisdictions.

Below is a summary of findings from the interview data:

- ***When negative relationships between neighboring cities (and within) exist there is a strong tendency to evade partnerships.***
- ***Geography impacts the services provided by a local government. Geography tends to deter the establishment of joint services as distance between two entities increase.***

- *Location and geography affects growth which can cause a sense of competition among neighboring jurisdictions. This tends to deter the establishment of joint planning services.*
- *Interactions and communication among neighboring jurisdictions, when present, have a tendency to create the necessary dialogue to begin research of joint services.*
- *Leadership that is not representative or skewed by special interest will tend to prevent joint dialogue.*
- *Strong leaders or “champions” will provide a conduit of action for the development of joint services.*
- *Past experiences that have produced positive results tend to strengthen the ability to pursue other avenues of similar design.*
- *When background data is not evident to support joint services a joint program is less likely to occur.*
- *When a governmental entity desires to increase the level of services to a community without the benefit of added revenue, joint services become a means of achieving this goal.*
- *When a governmental entity is constrained by finances, joint services will be pursued as a means to provide services at lower costs.*

This list can be used to build a pattern for future research. While the list may not be suitable to predict the future of Boone County or any other community, it will be beneficial for others to model investigation methods. It can be considered a spring-board for the ultimate development of further refined theory beneficial for more local governments in Iowa and across the United States.

### ***Importance of findings for Public Administration and Regional Planning***

The grounded theory methodology used in this study provides a format for ongoing research. Public administration and regional planning both face reinvention initiatives on a regular basis. The grounded theory methodology is “abstract of time, place, and people” (Glaser, 2002, pg. 6). This abstraction allows these findings to be added to ongoing research or the ongoing research of this study.

As public administrators and planners find themselves together facing new and unique challenges, these findings may provide conversation starting point. Sometimes it is simply getting the right people to the table that becomes the biggest task. This research can break the ice for that group and present a direction for action.

The drawback of this research surrounds the limited scope. This study utilized one county and the entities within that practiced land use planning of some degree. The number of respondents is also relatively small when compared to other qualitative studies. Furthermore, the respondents involved may have lacking knowledge of planning and land use. That lack of knowledge may have prevented better responses or surpassed preconceived notions about joint services. It is recognized that additional research is needed.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In general, it appears that overwhelming support exists for joint services. In part, this statement stems from the general perception given by the respondents in this study; however, both local sources and literature solidifies that idea. So, why do the joint efforts die or even fail to be brought to the agenda? Just like my Mother advised before my sister and I climbed the apple tree, “green apples will make you sick. If you wait for them to ripen and turn red they will be a good snack.”

When joint planning becomes “ripe” the venture should be harvested. How does the issue become ripe? Much like an apple tree, it takes time, energy, and some other process better found in a horticulture dissertation. This analogy can be better described by suggested actions in the following paragraphs.

Currently, Boone County is not “ripe.” Boone County is not ready for a joint planning department now. If, on the other hand, they so desired to move the issue forward here are actions that may aid the process of ripening joint services in Boone County by encouraging increased levels of trust, more social networks, and justified cost savings. In general these actions may open the door to many different types of joint ventures including a joint planning department.

### ***Suggested actions***

Trust comes in various levels. To provide an atmosphere of trust it will be necessary to fix mistrust and further strengthen existing trust levels. A number of different methods can be utilized to achieve increased trust both personally and organization-wide.

First, it is important to maintain a positive attitude towards all jurisdictions. Negative attitudes are infectious and can lead to harsh words resulting in mistrust. To some extent this might be an entire value-shift for a local organization. This paradigm shift must happen from the top-down and must be carried out with consistency. Second, explain trust and distrust in

open meetings. A lack of trust can be viewed as a positive component of service sharing. Healthy oversight is often viewed as a lack of trust. This misconception must be on the table and explained to the entire county community membership. Finally, warm up to your neighbors. Building a joint planning department is not the best place to start in an effort to develop trust. Instead, start small by involving various entities in non-wicked issues to provide a means for positive interaction. This is where we transition into the aspect of social networks.

Social networks are the fertile soil for growing relationships which lead to increased levels of trust. Boone County has an advantage over many other counties with its established Boone County League. The Boone County League can be a platform for business and personal interactions. Presentations at the League meetings should be directed towards a general positive topic to bring the County and cities together. The updates can be as simple as identifying what individual government officials are doing in their employment capacity and how they are learning from others around them. It would also be helpful to include a portion of the meeting directly aimed at encouraging discussion among neighboring communities. This can be as complex as a structured program for all entities to communicate during the meeting or as simple as a seating assignment to mix up attendees. Attendees should be encouraged to discuss topics that everyone shares such as budgeting or law changes affecting local governments. Readily share spending habits and budget activities. This will provide background for future research of cost savings or the lack thereof.

Education levels of land use planning and the impacts on finances must become a topic in each entity. Each community should take time to review the impacts of land use decisions and how it affects their budget. Both the operations of a planning department and the benefits of growing smart can heavily affect local government coffers.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the data gathered for this research, both literature and qualitative data analysis, it is recommended that Boone County and those entities now practicing some level of land use planning NOT become involved in a joint planning department. Instead, the idea must remain latent until the action mentioned above has been carried out. After social networks are grown, trust is strong, and finances are solid the exploration of a joint planning department can begin. This research can aid in carrying out actions. The results of those actions will ultimately provide the means by which a joint planning department is created and the benefits of shared resources provide Boone County and all Cities within a competitive advantage for an increased quality of life for citizens.

### ***Additional research needed***

This research prompts the need for additional exploration of joint planning services. This study included a single county for research. Additional studies of other rural counties near metropolitan areas are necessary to further substantiate findings. Other counties within Iowa or across the Midwest may provide valuable insight.

Land use planning is a topic that is still referenced as a new concept for many governmental units. Even those entities that have practiced land use planning may not have utilized professional planners. Planning is a profession that requires its members to continue ongoing education. Education and knowledge of planning is important for this study yet Boone County has only one professional planner among all entities practicing land use planning. Future research should include locals where planning professionals are more abundant.

A topic not found in this research is the ability to join planning services. The question includes legal issues, financial issues, taxing issues, structural issues, and even state

law regulations. Each of the issues mentioned identify an entire angle of study that should be done prior to exploration of a joint planning department.

### *Summary*

This study should be identified as “phase one” of joint planning services. The future of local government in Iowa, or across the United States, is changing. The demands of services are becoming more intense and more specialized. The need for ongoing research on the topic of joint services is necessary. Planners must recognize the need to keep an educational advantage over the pressures associated with land use policy and the related crisis of unplanned growth.

Additional phases of this study ought to provide answers to address the topics of knowledge, finance, trust and identity. To what extent must we educate our governmental officials so that joint ventures can be explored? What type of financial proof is needed to support joint planning departments? How can trust be nurtured to achieve that happy-medium where decisions about joint services can begin? And finally, how can we join together and still remain autonomous with definitive identity?

Boone County is not ready for joint planning services; however, if the above questions can be answered and the answers implemented, perhaps Boone County could establish a joint planning department.

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## **Appendix**

### ***Interview Protocol:***

#### **Introduction to the project-**

Each entity involved in this study was introduced to the project in a similar manner. Prior to conducting interviews a presentation was given at a public meeting. The presentation consisted of the following information:

*I am here as a graduate student of Iowa State University. Some of you may already know me as the Director of Planning and Development of Boone County. However, keep in mind that my capacity in this particular project is not associated with my job with Boone County.*

*The purpose of my presentation is to inform you of the research project I am conducting for the purposes of fulfilling requirements as part of a Masters of Community and Regional Planning and a Masters of Public Administration. The research involves all of you (\*indicating the elected officials and appointed officials present). The basic premise of the research is to learn about joint planning services in Boone County. I am attempting to understand if it is possible. Regardless of the possibilities, I would like to understand why or why not.*

*To gather data I am proposing to contact each of you to conduct personal interviews. The interviews will consist of a handful of questions. Your responses will be used to determine the driving forces and restraining forces of joint planning services in Boone County.*

*I am willing to answer any questions that you may have.*

*If there are no other questions I am now going to ask for your permission to contact everyone via phone to setup a personal interview or interview via phone.*

All entities; Boone County, City of Boone, Madrid, and Ogden, were all very willing to participate. Shortly after each meeting the clerk of each entity provided me with a list of phone numbers for each council person or supervisor.

Each entity appeared both relaxed and pleased to be a part of the study.

### **The interview –**

Approximately half of the interviews were conducted via phone call while the remainder was conducted in a personal interview setting. Both data gathering techniques provided sound data from respondents. Below is a list of questions used during the interviews. The initial questions were replaced by the modified questions as a means to focus discussion. The need for focused discussion stemmed from the results of repeated topic shifts caused by some of the initial questions.

### ***Initial questions***

*Entity (X) represents the same question asked about each governmental entity studied.*

*Entity (X) = City of Boone*

*Entity (X) = City of Madrid*

*Entity (X) = City of Ogden*

*Entity (X) = Boone County*

What is your age?

How many years have you been in politics?

What is your status in the governmental structure? (appointed/elected)

Do you believe that entity (X) would make decisions directly in line with your own thoughts and opinions regarding land use planning?

Do you believe that entity (X) makes wise land use decisions?

Are you friends with people from entity (X)?

Do you think that entity (X) likes you?

Do you like entity (X)?

How much contact do you have with entity (X)?

***Modified questions***

What is your age?

How many years have you been in politics?

What is your status in the governmental structure? (appointed/elected)

Do you feel that entity (X) could join planning services? Why or why not?

Speaking in terms of joint services; what is the number one positive aspect of entity (X)?

Speaking in terms of joint services; what is the worst aspect of entity (X)?