

CHAPTER 7: Intergovernmental Cooperation

66.1001 (2)(g) Wis. Stat.:

Intergovernmental Cooperation element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for sighting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts and adjacent local governmental units and to the region, the state, and other governmental units. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter identifies opportunities for establishing or maintaining cooperation between local units of government. Cooperation improves lines of communication between different units of government, and aids in the recognition and possible resolution of conflicts between jurisdictions, and allows for the identification of mutual service needs and improvements.

The intent of this chapter is to identify, inventory and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships.

Section 7.1 Analysis and Inventory Intergovernmental Agreements

Inventory and examination of existing municipal relations allows for the understanding of how municipalities currently work and how any of these relationships can be enhanced. The Village of Amherst Junction began in spring of 2004 to work cooperatively with the Town of Amherst and the Villages of Amherst and Nelsonville to draft joint regulations regarding signage along the USH 10 corridor, and adult entertainment facilities. This work was not completed at time of Comprehensive Plan adoption.

A. Village of Amherst

1. Jensen Center

The Village of Amherst Junction makes a voluntarily monetary contribution to the Village of Amherst's Lettie W. Jensen Community Center. Amherst Junction currently has a representative on the Jensen Board.

2. Amherst Area Fire Department

The Village of Amherst Junction is part of the Amherst Fire District, along with the Villages of Amherst, Nelsonville, Town of Amherst and portions of Lanark and Stockton.

An agreement to create the Amherst Fire District was signed January 1, 1993 by representatives of the Villages of Amherst, Nelsonville, Amherst Junction, and the Town of Amherst. In addition to serving those areas, the Fire District contracts to supply fire protection to several other adjacent municipalities or parts thereof.

All equipment is owned and maintained by the Fire District. Title to all property is vested in the Fire District and is housed at the fire station located in the Town of Amherst at the corner of Packer Ave. and Fairgrounds Rd. The affairs of the Fire District are handled by a committee consisting of a representative appointed by each of the founding municipalities plus a fifth member appointed by the fire chief.

The Fire District, which in 2003 was debt free, is basically supported by the communities of which it is comprised based on a formula that is part of the initial 1993 agreement.

The Fire Department participates in the mutual aid program with surrounding municipalities and is dispatched through the Portage County 911 system. The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) is the system used to implement this program. MABAS is a system through which the Amherst Area Fire Department can request assistance from participating area fire departments in the form of additional equipment and fire fighters. Requests are made according to predetermined lists, called "Box cards"; each box covers a specific set of needs and equipment. Currently there are five boxes (1-5) that can be utilized at any time. These "boxes" allow fire departments to quickly request additional help when needed.

First Responders are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. First Responders are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system, respond in their personal vehicles and attempt to stabilize patients before EMTs and/or Ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local First Responders is kept at the Amherst Fire Station. The First Responder program is supported financially by the municipalities involved in the Amherst Fire District.

3. Village of Amherst Library

The Village of Amherst Junction residents utilize the Lettie Jensen Public Library in the Village of Amherst; currently there are no agreements between the two Villages regarding the Library.

B. Village of Nelsonville

There are no intergovernmental agreements specifically with the Village of Nelsonville.

C. Town of Amherst

There are no intergovernmental agreements specifically with the Town of Amherst.

D. School Districts

There are no intergovernmental agreements specifically with the Tomorrow River Area Public School District.

E. Portage County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Village resident's contract out solid waste and recycling per individual households, those contractors may use the Portage County landfill. No formal agreement has been made between the Village and Portage County regarding solid waste.

2. Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County maintains the Village of Amherst Junction roads upon their request. Currently there is no formal agreement between the two entities.

3. Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Village relies on the Portage County Sheriffs Department and ambulance service to provide protective services through periodic patrols and on a “on-call” basis. See Utilities and Communities Chapter for detailed information.

F. State

There are no intergovernmental agreements specifically with the State of Wisconsin.

Section 7.2 Analysis of Intergovernmental Agreements

The Village is comfortable with the state of its current intergovernmental agreements.

Section 7.3 Identification of Existing-Potential Conflicts with Other Governmental Units

The potential exists for conflict with the WisDOT over disagreements regarding possible planned road improvements (1/2 diamond interchange) and the cost of these improvements (cost-sharing arrangements).

Section 7.4 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations

The Village is comfortable with the state of its current intergovernmental agreements.

Section 7.5 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. Goal: Encourage cooperation between Village of Amherst Junction and other units of government where appropriate to ensure efficient availability of services and facilities.

B. Objectives

1. Amherst Junction and local units of government work together to develop creative ways to plan for and share the benefits of growth across municipal boundaries, where appropriate.
2. Share services across county or municipal borders whenever possible.

C. Policies

1. Establish communication with surrounding municipalities for discussion on land use and other related issues
2. Maintain existing intergovernmental relations and cooperation with surrounding municipalities.
3. Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation and beneficial agreements.
4. Local units of government work together to maintain appropriate public access to natural resources.