

CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

The intergovernmental cooperation chapter identifies opportunities for establishing or maintaining cooperative efforts between units of government. Cooperation improves lines of communication between different units of government, 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 for the Town of Pine Grove.

Section 7.1 Inventory and Analysis of Intergovernmental Relationships

Inventory and examination of existing municipal relations allows for the understanding of how municipalities currently work together and how these relationships can be enhanced. As the Town of Pine Grove develops over the next 20 years it is important for them to continue to work with surrounding municipalities, school districts, and other governmental units.

A. Adjacent Units of Government

The Town of Pine Grove shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Grant to the west, Buena Vista to the north, and Almond to the east, as well as the Waushara County Town of Plainfield to the south.

1. Adjacent Communities

The Town of Pine Grove has informal agreements with surrounding communities for aid in snow removal and road maintenance on local roads that are located along the Town boundaries.

Other agreements include First Responder services shared with the Towns of Buena Vista and Belmont. 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. In addition, the Town of Pine Grove has its own First Responders vehicle that is kept at the fire station in Bancroft.

The Town also has Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding Portage County fire districts and the Plainfield Fire Department. A portion of the Town is also served by the Grand Rapids Volunteer Fire Department.

B. School Districts

The Town of Pine Grove is served by two school districts; Almond-Bancroft School District and Tri-County Area School District (see the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan). The primary form of interaction with these entities is through the payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts. The Town has little participation with either district in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities, however, the Town does maintain communication with the Almond-Bancroft District regarding the status of Bancroft Elementary School, located in the Pine Grove settlement of Bancroft. Snow removal is currently provided to the Bancroft School; the school district pays the Town for this service.

The Tri-County School District contracts with two local providers to offer bus service to students living outside the Village of Plainfield limits, while the Almond-Bancroft District offers bus service to students through one private contractor.

C. Portage County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town contracts with Wittenberg Disposal Services for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Waste is taken to the Portage County Landfill in the Town of Stockton (through 2006), while recyclables are taken to the County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in the Village of Plover.

2. Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County is responsible for plowing, sanding, and salting of I-39 and County Roads within the Town. This Department also administers the application process for local road projects as part of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Local Roads Improvement Program.

3. Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Town of Pine Grove relies on the Portage County Sheriff's Department to provide protective services through periodic patrols and an "on-call" basis. The Stevens Point Fire Department operates the Ambulance Service for Portage County. See the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter for detailed information.

4. Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

There are currently seven different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department; they include Planning, Zoning and Code Administration, Land Conservation, On-Site Waste, Groundwater Management, Justice, and Economic and Business Park Development.

The Planning and Groundwater Management Section includes staff and resources to assist local communities in the preparation or amending of various plan documents, including a comprehensive plan. Staff can also assist in water quality testing associated with siting new developments.

The Code Administration Section staff is responsible for administering the County's Zoning, Wellhead Protection, Tower, Subdivision, Floodplain Zoning, Shoreland Zoning, Non-metallic Mining Reclamation, and Private Sewage System Ordinances. The Town of Pine Grove currently does not participate in the Portage County Zoning program, but is subject to County Subdivision, Shoreland, and private sewage system regulations.

The Land Conservation Section staff works with individuals to design and implement conservation practices. Assistance may be given to Towns upon request.

D. State of Wisconsin

The two primary State agencies that the Town of Pine Grove interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, and law enforcement. This includes administering the State's Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. More information about this program appears in the Natural Resources section of this plan (Chapter 5), or can be obtained by contacting the Wisconsin DNR.

WisDOT is responsible for the planning and development of road networks and associated infrastructure and is the lead agency for the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP). Town road improvement projects must be submitted as part of a two year improvement plan.

Section 7.2 Identification of Existing or Potential Issues and Conflicts with Other Governmental Units

The only conflict with another governmental unit identified during the planning process was an issue relating to road maintenance along Cty Rd W in the Bancroft area. According to Plan Commissioners, the Portage County Highway Department claims it is only responsible for maintaining 24 feet of the right-of-way, and that the Town is responsible for the remaining 42 feet. The Highway Department, however, claims road aid on the entire 66' right-of-way on Cty Rd W from I-39 through the Bancroft settlement. The Town would like to see a more equitable split of road aids or maintenance by the Highway Department regarding Cty Rd W.

Section 7.3 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations and Possible Methods of Conflict Resolution

The Town felt that intergovernmental relations were, for the most part, satisfactory. General methods of conflict resolution that the Town may explore include negotiation, compromise, or third-party mediation. At this point, Town officials think that the best method of resolution is to maintain communication with other units of government and various agencies to address particular issues before they escalate into a conflict.

Section 7.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain and foster good relationships with surrounding units of government.

Objective 1 - Continue to communicate with government units and agencies regarding issues of mutual interest.

Policies:

1. Invite and encourage County representatives to attend local government meetings.
2. Encourage the re-introduction of the community policing program by the Portage County Sheriff's Department.
3. Maintain communication with the County Highway Department and appropriate committees to strive toward an equitable distribution of road aid and/or maintenance along Cty Rd W.