

## **CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element**

The intergovernmental cooperation chapter identifies opportunities for establishing or maintaining cooperation 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.

### **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 Grant 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 Grant shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Buena Vista, Pine Grove, and Plover, Adams County Town of Leola, and the Wood County Towns of Grand Rapids and Saratoga.

##### **1. Adjacent Communities**

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

The Town is served by the Grand Rapids and Plainfield Fire Departments. The Town of Grant is also part of a mutual aid agreement with all fire departments within Portage County for fire protection assistance. Currently there are nine first responders located in the Town of Grant. 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 are kept at the Town Hall. The First Responder program is supported financially by the Town of Grant. Grant also participates in the Higgins Ambulance District with the Wood County municipalities of Village of Rudolph and Towns of Rudolph Grand Rapids, Seneca, and Segal.

#### **B. School Districts**

The Town of Grant is served by three school districts: Stevens Point Area School District, Tri-County Area, and Wisconsin Rapids School District. 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.

The Stevens Point Area School District has their own buses for student transportation with the exception of one contracted bus; 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 Wisconsin Rapids School District offers bus service to students through two private contractors.

## C. County

### 1. Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County maintains and plows County Roads in the Town of Grant. This Department also administers the application process for funds for local road projects as part of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Local Roads Improvement Program. The Highway Department also is retained to perform bridge inspections within the Town.

### 2. Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Town relies on the Portage County Sheriffs 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 Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter for more detailed information.

### 3. Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

There are currently three different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department; the Planning and Groundwater Management Section, the Code Administration Section, and the Land Conservation section.

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

## D. State of Wisconsin

The three primary State agencies that the Town of Grant interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), 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. 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. DATCP regulates management of the Portage County Drainage District.

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

The Town Plan Commission did not identify any specific conflicts with other governmental units; however, it did identify some issues that they felt needed further attention. Commissioners stated that:

- They would like to see the current level of sheriff patrols maintained or increased.
- They would like to see the ambulance response time improved.

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 7.3 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations**

- The Town of Grant should investigate the creation of written agreements with surrounding communities (i.e. road maintenance and plowing).
- The Town would like to continue its intergovernmental agreements with surrounding communities and meet with them on a periodic basis to review how relationships and services can be improved.

### **Section 7.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies**

A. Goal: Share services with other units of government whenever possible.

B. Objectives:

1. Continue shared agreements with adjacent units of government.
2. Local units of government work together to maintain appropriate public access to natural resources.
3. Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related issues.
4. Meet with adjacent towns to develop a formal agreement regarding maintenance of Town Line Road.

C. Policies:

1. Continue to meet with other government units as needed.
2. Continue participation with the Portage County Towns Association.
3. Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental agreements.
4. Formalize an agreement with affected townships regarding maintenance of Town Line Road.