

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 and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships, and set goals and policies to foster cooperation with surrounding communities and other governmental agencies.

Section 7.1 Inventory and Analysis 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 Lanark 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 Lanark shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Belmont, Buena Vista, Amherst, and the Waupaca County Town of Farmington. The City of Waupaca is located five miles to the east and the Village of Amherst is one mile to the north of Lanark.

1. Adjacent Communities

The Town has agreements with the surrounding communities of Buena Vista, and Farmington for aid in snow removal and road maintenance on local roads that are located along the Town boundaries. Lanark is also working on intergovernmental agreements with the Towns of Belmont and Amherst regarding snowplowing, and cutting grass and brush along roadways.

Other agreements include First Responders and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) under the Amherst Fire District. First Responders are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. First Responders and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system, respond in their personal vehicles and attempt to stabilize patients before ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local First Responders are kept at the Town of Lanark garage and the Amherst Fire Department in the village of Amherst. The First Responder and EMT program is supported financially by the municipalities within the Amherst Fire District.

The Town also has Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding Portage County communities and the Waupaca Area Fire District.

B. School Districts

The Town of Lanark is served by the Tomorrow River, Almond-Bancroft, and the Waupaca School Districts, with the majority of residents being served by the Tomorrow River district. Since there are no educational facilities located in Lanark, all school children must be transported outside the Town. The Almond-Bancroft District offers bus service to students through one private contractor, the Waupaca School District provides its own bus service for students located within the boundaries of the district, and the Tomorrow-River School District provides its own school bus for special education needs, and contracts with seven private transportation providers to offer service for K-12 students.

The primary form of interaction with the school districts is through the payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts. The Town has little participation with any of the districts in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities. The Tomorrow River and Almond-Bancroft Districts use newsletters to inform people of district related events. The Tomorrow River District disseminates information through the monthly published Tomorrow River Newspaper entitled, "Our Community Spirit."

C. County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town's contract with Portage County Solid Waste Department includes fees and terms specific to the Town of Lanark. This contract is in addition to a separate contract with Wittenberg Disposal for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Solid waste is taken to the Portage County Landfill, while recyclables are taken to the County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF).

2. Portage County Highway Department

The highway department of Portage County maintains and plows state highways and County Roads in the Town. This Department also administers the dispersal of funds 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 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 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, Groundwater Management, Zoning and Code Administration, Land Conservation, On-Site Waste, 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 comprehensive plans. County staff can also assist in water quality testing associated with siting new developments.

To assist in the identification of public concerns and the resolution of problems, the County's Groundwater Council created the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees. The Technical Advisory Committee disbanded following the adoption of the 1988 Groundwater Management Plan, while the continuing task of the Citizens Advisory Committee (GCAC) is to advise the County Planning and Zoning Committee on ways to implement the recommendations of the County's Groundwater Management Plan. The Town participates by sending a representative to the GCAC meetings.

The Zoning and 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 work with individuals to: design and implement conservation practices, enforce the County's Animal Waste Management Ordinance, provide information on soil and water conservation practices and issues, provide technical support and cost sharing for Best Management Practices, and implement state programs related to soil and water conservation, farmland preservation and enforcement actions. Assistance may be given to Towns upon request.

The On-Site Waste Section is responsible for assuring the proper siting, design, installation, inspection and management of approved private sewage systems or POWTS.

5. Portage County Parks Department

The Portage County Parks, including Stedman Wayside, are open all year; however, they are maintained by the Department from May 1st to October 31st. The Town interacts with the Parks Department on an as needed basis.

6. Portage County Parks Commission

In 2003, the Land Preservation Fund Committee was created by the County Board to help protect open spaces within the County that have natural, cultural, historic, or agricultural value. The Committee gives recommendations to the County Park Commission for land preservation projects based on applications submitted by local municipalities and other organizations. The funding for preservation projects comes from unexpended county funds from the previous fiscal year; to date the amount has been \$100,000 per year.

D. Regional Governmental Units

The Town is also within the ten-county region that makes up the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), located in Wausau. The NWRPC is solely an advisory body that provides information regarding a variety of economic development and land use planning issues.

The Town of Lanark is an active member in the Portage County Towns Association. Continued participation in the Portage County and Wisconsin Towns Association is strongly encouraged.

E. State of Wisconsin

The three primary State agencies that the Town of Lanark interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and the Department of Revenue (DOR).

The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, law enforcement, and managing lands under the Managed Forest Law (MFL), Hartman Creek State Park and other DNR owned lands. 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. The Town interacts with the DOR through the submittal of annual reports regarding assessment, taxation, and shared revenue.

F. Other

The Town also has contracts with other organizations for animal control, assessing services, and some road maintenance. Fire wardens are present in the Town to issue burning permits.

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

The Town Plan Commission identified the following issues or conflicts that needed further attention:

- The Tomorrow River School districts does not have enough information on Board discussions, and business administration. Administrators should be more public and come to Town Board meetings on occasion. How can communication with the school districts be improved?
- The Town would like feedback from the DNR regarding activities that are allowed on the property that they own in the Town.
- The Town has an issue with the DNR forester not responding to land owner needs in a timely manner.
- County Board Supervisor representing Lanark does not attend Town Board meetings on a regular basis to share current events.
- Surveys/splits/zoning permits: These processes need to include closer communication with the Town. The Town would like to know these projects are taking place earlier in the process. Could this all start with requiring an address for new properties before they are created? An individual is supposed to get a fire number before getting a zoning permit. The Town isn't given information regarding temporary permits. How can this information get to the Town?
- Tomorrow Waupaca Priority Watershed: Better communication needed. Is this project over?
- How can follow up information regarding deed restrictions (i.e. use of open space design) be given to the Town?
- How can communication be improved between the State and Town regarding hazardous materials spills?

A. Existing Conflicts

- Some residents think that response time for Portage County Emergency Management and ambulance service needs to be improved.
- City of Waupaca parks programs cost too much for participation by local children.

B. Potential Conflicts

- Solid waste price differentials between existing and future contracts for landfill tipping fees.
- Expansion from adjacent communities of Amherst and Waupaca may lead to potential land use conflicts over time.

C. Possible Methods for Conflict Resolution

- Increase communication with other governmental units and agencies.
- Suggest the use of a mediator or third party for conflict resolution.

Section 7.3 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations

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

Goal 1: Maintain or improve intergovernmental relationships with various agencies and units of government.

Objective 1.1: Improve interaction between School Board members, our County Board Supervisor, and Town officials.

Policy 1: Work with School Districts to re-establish Town hall forums.

Policy 2: Maintain current list of school board members and administration for all three school districts and continue to invite district representatives to attend Town meetings to share information regarding each district.

Objective 1.2: Protect natural resources that cross municipal boundaries.

Policy 1: Request the DNR to provide a list of sites where land spreading has been permitted.

Policy 2: Work with Portage County to create a second tier Conservancy Zoning District.

Objective 1.3: Share services whenever practicable.

Policy 1: Maintain written road agreements with surrounding Towns.

Policy 2: Meet with adjacent units of government on an annual basis to discuss intergovernmental issues.