

## **CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element**

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, 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 of Intergovernmental Agreements**

Inventory and examination of existing municipal relations allows for the understanding of how municipalities currently work and how these relationships can be enhanced. As the Village of Amherst develops and redevelops over the next 20 years it is important for them to continue to work with surrounding municipalities.

#### **A. Neighboring Communities**

1. The Village and Town of Amherst have an understanding regarding the lighting at the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B intersection. There is no formal written agreement.
2. The Amherst Area Fire District and EMT's — The Village of Amherst is part of the Amherst Area Fire District, along with the Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville, and Town of Amherst, along with portions of Lanark and Stockton.

An agreement to create the Amherst Area 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 voting representative appointed by each of the founding municipalities, plus a fire chief, who serves as a non-voting member.

The Fire District, which was debt free in 2004, is basically supported by the communities of which it is comprised based on a formula that is part of the initial 1993 agreement.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. EMT's are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system and attempt to stabilize patients before ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local EMT's is kept at the Amherst Fire Station. The EMT program is supported financially by the municipalities involved in the Amherst Fire District.

3. The Village is currently working with Villages of Amherst Junction, Nelsonville and Town of Amherst on an Adult Entertainment Ordinance and Sign Ordinance. There is no formal written agreement.
4. The Village is also working collaboratively with Town of Amherst and Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst Junction regarding extraterritorial land use. There is no formal written agreement.
5. The Village of Amherst is a member of the Portage County Towns Association.

#### B. School Districts

The Village and Tomorrow River School District have good relations but no formal agreements.

#### C. Portage County

1. The Village of Amherst receives police and ambulance service from Portage County. There are no written agreements covering these items.
2. The Village was meeting with the Portage County Sheriff's Department on a regular basis to discuss public protection concerns and other related topics. Since the election of a new Sheriff in fall 2002, there has been only one meeting, and the Village would like to continue the previous relationship. There is no formal written agreement.
3. The Village participates in the solid waste agreement with Portage County for waste and recycling pick-up and disposal.
4. The Village has agreements with Portage County Highway Department regarding jurisdictional transfers of roadways, bridges, and railroad overpass for Cty Rds A, B and V.

#### D. State of Wisconsin

The Village has recently received grant funding from the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Commerce. The amount of \$350,000 was awarded from the Department of Commerce for the expansion of water and sewer utilities. The application of this grant was spurred by the expansion project of Blenker Companies whereby they were planning on expanding their business to a part of the Village that was previously out of the reach for water and sewer utilities. The \$350,000 matching grant provided the funding necessary to get the utilities to the new building with the Village's portion of the costs coming from TIF #1 tax increments. The Department of Transportation awarded a grant of \$168,000 for the construction of a rail spur to the Blenker Companies newly construction building. Because of the creation of new jobs, the Village qualified for the grant to help the Blenker's construct the rail spur. This matching grant will cover approximately 1/2 of the cost of the rail spur with the remaining

amount to be recovered through TIF increments over the life span of TIF #1. Both grants were received due to the increased number of employees Blenker guaranteed to employ.

### **Section 7.2 Analysis of Intergovernmental Agreements**

The agreements and relationships that the Village currently has with Town and surrounding communities are adequate. No new agreements are needed at this time. The Village of Amherst remains open for discussion as any areas of mutual interest or concern arise.

### **Section 7.3 Identification of Existing/Potential Conflicts with Other Governmental Units**

- Land use, both within Village boundaries and in the extraterritorial area
- Annexations and utilities extension
- Potential for a municipality to decide not to participate in the Amherst Area Fire Dept.

A process to resolve conflicts should be established to confront issues in a timely fashion and keep the lines of communication open. The biggest hurdle is communication and a lack of understanding of the issue; communication is the key to preventing or resolving conflict.

### **Section 7.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Issues/Conclusions**

- Recognizing the importance of keeping the lines of communication open, the local governments need to find a convenient forum for discussing issues on a regular basis.
- Future expansion of Village boundaries and land use within the extraterritorial area are important issues for the Amherst area. The Village of Amherst may explore the idea of boundary agreement(s).

### **Section 7.5 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **A. Goals**

1. Encourage cooperation between local units of government to ensure efficient delivery of services, and respond to issues of mutual concern.

#### **B. Objectives**

1. Develop efforts that result in the preservation and restoration of natural resources.
2. Share services across municipal borders whenever possible
3. Protect public green space and water resources.
4. Participate in an area-wide transportation planning approach.
5. Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related Issues.

#### **C. Policies**

1. Maintain existing intergovernmental cooperation with surrounding municipalities.
2. Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental and other agreement opportunities.