

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 for the Town of Belmont.

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 Belmont 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 Belmont shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Almond and Lanark; the Waupaca County Town of Dayton; and the Waushara County Towns of Rose and Springwater.

The Town of Belmont has agreements with these 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 Almond and Lanark, and the Wild Rose Area 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 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 Almond and Wild Rose Fire Stations.

The First Responder program is supported financially by the municipalities involved in the Almond and Wild Rose Fire Districts.

The Town is included in Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding Portage County fire districts, along with the Waupaca Fire Department and Wild Rose Fire District.

The Town also has a contract with Stoney Acres Kennels based in the Village of King to provide service for lost, abandoned, or stray dogs.

B. School Districts

The Town of Belmont is served by three school districts: Almond-Bancroft School District, Wild Rose School District, and Waupaca School District. The primary forms of interaction with these entities is through the payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts; and having a Town representative serve on each of the school boards. The Town has little participation with the districts in issues pertaining to administration or siting of new facilities.

C. Portage County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town of Belmont contracts with Wittenberg Disposal Services for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Waste is taken to the Portage County Landfill, 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 maintains and plows 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. Town residents feel that the County Highway Department should improve the level of maintenance on County Roads within the Town.

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, 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 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 Belmont 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. 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 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.
- County Zoning enforcement could be improved, especially in the area of cleaning up of junked vehicles.
- They would like to see the ambulance response time improved.
- Road maintenance on County Roads could be improved.

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: Strive to maintain or improve relationships with other units of government.

Objectives:

1.1: Continue shared agreements with adjacent units of government.

1.2: Units of government work together to maintain appropriate public access to natural resources.

1.3: Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related issues.

Policies:

1.3(a): Continue to meet with other government units as needed.

1.3(b): Continue participation in the Portage County Towns Association.

1.3(c): Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental agreements.