

CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

The intergovernmental cooperation chapter examines 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 exploration of mutual service needs and improvements. As the Town of Buena Vista develops over the next 20 years, it is important for them to continue to work with surrounding municipalities, school districts, and other governmental units. The intent of this chapter is to identify, inventory and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships.

Section 7.1 Inventory and Analysis of Intergovernmental Agreements

A. Adjacent Units of Government

The Town of Buena Vista shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Amherst, Plover, Stockton, Grant, Almond, Pine Grove, and Lanark.

Buena Vista has written agreements for snow removal and road maintenance on boundary roads with the surrounding Towns of Stockton, Plover, Almond, Pine Grove, and Lanark. In the future (exact date unknown), the Town will also have a snow removal and road maintenance agreement with the Towns of Amherst and Grant.

Other agreements include fire, rescue, and First Responder services provided by the Village of Plover Fire Department and the Almond Fire Department/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. The First Responder program is supported financially by the municipalities involved in the Almond and Plover Fire Departments.

1. Extra Territorial Jurisdiction

Recognizing that land uses in town territory may affect neighboring cities and villages that may need to grow beyond their borders, state laws have long provided these municipalities with certain “extraterritorial” authority over adjacent town lands and have provided methods for them to expand their borders through annexation. This city and village extraterritorial authority may, subject to the applicable laws, apply to planning, land division approvals, zoning and coverage of the city or village official map. The extra territorial jurisdiction for a city with a population of 10,000 or more is three miles from its corporate boundary, while the extra territorial jurisdiction for a city whose population is under 10,000 and for villages is one and one half miles from their corporate boundaries.

The Village of Plover’s extraterritorial boundary extends into the northwestern portion of Buena Vista near Highway 54 (Future Land Use Map 8.2).

B. School Districts

The Town of Buena Vista is located in the Tomorrow River, Tri-County, Almond-Bancroft, and the Stevens Point School Districts. There are no educational facilities located in Buena Vista, so all school children must be transported. Most of the Town is in the Almond-Bancroft district, with only a small portion in the Tomorrow River, Tri-County, and Stevens Point districts. The

Town has very little interaction with the school districts besides giving money to the school districts through taxes and lottery credits.

C. Portage County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town of Buena Vista contracts with Wittenberg Disposal for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Waste is taken to the Portage County landfill, while recyclables are taken to the Portage County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF).

2. Portage County Highway Department

The Portage County Highway Department maintains, plows, and clears brush along State 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 (LRIP).

3. Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Town 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 of this Comprehensive Plan 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 Buena Vista has been under the jurisdiction of County Zoning since 1968.

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

1. Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

The Wisconsin DOT is one of the three main agencies that the Town deals with. 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). Buena Vista receives an annual payment from WisDOT for road maintenance.

2. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR)

The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, and law enforcement. They interact with Buena Vista with regards to their ownership of all the prairie chicken land in the Town, as well as overseeing the navigable waters of the drainage district.

3. Wisconsin Department of Agriculture

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture provides assistance to farmers regarding matters relating to animals, raising crops, and land and water resources. Other information regarding counseling services, farm transfers, financial, legal, and vocational assistance and can be obtained by contacting the Wisconsin Farm Center at 1-800-942-2474.

Section 7.2 Identification of Existing/Potential Conflicts with Other Governmental Units

A. Existing Conflicts

- The Department of Natural Resources – Buena Vista receives minimal tax money for the prairie chicken land in the Town. There is no benefit for the Township of having this land in their community. Retain the Town’s tax base through either having the DNR pay more for land or change it to farmland.

B. Potential Conflicts

- Current and future residents living along Highway 54 may have conflicts with the Wisconsin DOT due to potential road expansion.
- Potential conflicts between farm and non-farm uses; unrealistic expectations of ‘urban dwellers’ moving into an active agricultural area.

C. Possible Methods for 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 7.3 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. Goals

1. Share services across county or municipal borders whenever possible.
2. Local units of government work together to develop creative ways to plan for and share the benefits of growth across municipal boundaries.

B. Objectives

1. Continue shared agreements with surrounding units of government.
2. Encourage Town officials to become more involved in Portage County Drainage District matters.
3. Continue to participate in the Portage County Drainage District.

C. Policies

1. Communicate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regarding preserving the natural prairie chicken environment in Buena Vista, with the Town receiving some benefit from the land in their community.
2. Meet with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation or other appropriate agencies regarding the dispersion of road aid to the Town and the possibility of receiving a higher payment of funds per mile of roadway for the Town.
3. Continue working with surrounding governmental units as needed.