

CHAPTER 7 Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

66.1001 (2)(g) Wisconsin Statutes:

***Intergovernmental Cooperation Element.** A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. 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.*

Section 7.1 Introduction

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 7.2 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.

The Town has agreements with the surrounding Towns of Amherst, Belmont, Buena Vista, and Farmington for aid in snow removal and road maintenance on local roads that are located along the Town boundaries.

The Town is served by the Amherst Fire District and Waupaca Area Fire District. In 2012, the Town of Lanark signed the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Agreement to formally adopt MABAS as a mechanism to coordinate fire protection and emergency medical services across jurisdictional boundaries in the event of a large scale emergency, natural disaster, or man-made catastrophe. The agreement provides that in the event of an emergency, participating fire departments will assist one another to the extent necessary. Amherst Fire District is one of 10 fire departments within the Portage County MABAS Division 110 and Waupaca Area Fire

District is one of 13 fire departments participating within Waupaca County MABAS Division 142. Emergency personnel respond to an incident with a preplanned set of resources/vehicles appropriate for the situation, which are established on box alarm cards. The box alarm cards for the Town of Lanark can be viewed online at: <https://sites.google.com/view/cwmabas/home>.

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 busing for special education needs, and contracts with other 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 District disseminates information through the monthly published Tomorrow River Newspaper entitled, “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 Harter’s Disposal for handling solid waste and recycling materials. Solid waste is taken to the Portage County Transfer Facility, 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 Sheriff’s Office

The Town relies on the Portage County Sheriff’s Office to provide protective services through periodic patrols and an “on-call” basis.

4. Portage County Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Portage County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides ambulance and emergency medical responder (EMR) services in the Town of Lanark through contract with the Amherst Fire District. EMR’s, often referred to as First Responders, are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. See the Utilities and Community Facilities element of this Comprehensive Plan for detailed information.

5. Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

There are currently seven different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department; they include: Planning, Zoning, Land and Water Conservation, On-Site Waste, Water Resources, Geographic Information Systems, and Economic Development.

The Planning Section includes staff and resources to assist local communities in the preparation or amending of various plan documents including comprehensive plans.

The Zoning 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 and Water Conservation Section focuses on protection and improvement of the County's land and water resources by implementing a variety of county, state, and federal programs. Staff work with individuals to design and implement conservation practices, and enforce the County's Animal Waste Management Ordinance. Assistance may be given to Towns upon request.

The On-Site Waste Section is responsible for administering the County's Private Sewage System Ordinance and On-Site Sewage Program, including issuing sanitary permits for approved septic systems, and enforcement of County Ordinances and State Codes related to Private On-site Waste Treatment Systems (POWTS).

The Water Resources Section coordinates, organizes, and evaluates all Portage County water resource data for the Planning and Zoning Department, with a primary focus on groundwater. This includes providing information to communities, the public and elected officials on groundwater management, protection, groundwater issues and on methods to resolve water resource issues or problems in Portage County. This Section is responsible for administering the County's Well Abandonment Ordinance. This Section is also responsible for carrying out initiatives to implement the County's Groundwater Management Plan and associated programs. The Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee (GCAC) was created 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.

Staff of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Section develop and maintain the Planning and Zoning Department's GIS. This Section has daily interaction with residents, municipal officials throughout the County, State agencies, and other Portage County staff to provide information on parcels of land, and produce maps for individual requests and ongoing projects.

The Economic Development Section manages the Portage County Business Park. Staff maintains a strong relationship with the Portage County Economic Development Committee and City of Stevens Point Community Development and Engineering Departments in order to streamline projects.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Portage County Humane Society

Portage County offers municipalities in Portage County the opportunity to participate in a county-wide animal control program. The program is coordinated by Portage County, administered by the Sheriff's Office, and contracted through the Humane Society of Portage County (HSPC). The Town of Lanark participates in this program, and as such they receive a wide range of services offered by the HSPC and Sheriff's Office. This includes animal control, licensing, rabies clinics, abandoned animal surrender, stray animal control, quarantine facilities, free or reduced veterinary care, educational services, kennel & commercial facilities inspections, and County ordinance enforcement.

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 unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association.

E. State of Wisconsin

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

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

Section 7.3 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:

- How can communication with the Almond-Bancroft and Waupaca school districts be improved?
- Improved attendance of both County Board Supervisors representing Lanark at Town Board meetings on a more frequent basis to share current events.
- Continued communications with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department regarding surveys, splits, and zoning permits.
- How can follow up information regarding deed restrictions (such as use of open space design) be given to the Town?
- How can communication be improved between the WDNR and Town regarding hazardous materials spills?
- Some residents think that response time for Portage County Emergency Management and ambulance service needs to be improved.

Section 7.4 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 7.5 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

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

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

Policy 1: Invite school district representatives to attend Town meetings, as necessary, to share information regarding each district.

Objective 1.2: Protect natural resources within and across municipal boundaries.

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

Policy 2: Request the WDNR provide information about spills within the Town in a timely manner.

Objective 1.3: Share services whenever practicable.

Policy 1: Maintain written road agreements with surrounding Towns.

Policy 2: Meet with adjacent units of government as needed to discuss intergovernmental issues and opportunities.

Objective 1.4: Encourage continued participation in the Portage County unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association.