CHAPTER 7   Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

66.1001(2)(g) Wis. Statutes

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 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 Sharon 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 Sharon shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Alban, New Hope, Stockton, Hull, Dewey, and the Town of Bevent in Marathon County.

Adjacent Communities

The Town of Sharon shares in a Fire District with the Village of Rosholt and the Town of Alban for provision of fire and rescue services. The fire station is located in the Town of Alban ¼ mile west of CTH I on the south side of STH 66. Additionally, several towns provide mutual aid as a second response to a fire in the Town of Sharon if needed (via the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System). The decision as to which town or village will assist depends on the severity and the location assistance is needed. First Responder Service is provided to its residents by the Town of Sharon. First Responders are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. They are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system, respond in their personal vehicles, and attempt to stabilize patients before Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) and/or Ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local First Responders are kept at the District Fire Station. The Town of Sharon financially supports the First Responder Program via the fire district budget.

The Town has other Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding communities. The Town of Sharon shares road maintenance with the Towns of Alban, Stockton and Bevent; examples include snowplowing on South Collins Lake Lane is maintained by the Town of Alban. Road maintenance on the north 1 and ¼ mile of Woodland Road is shared between the Towns of Alban and Sharon; however, the Town of Sharon is responsible for snow removal on Woodland Road. On County Line Road and Birch Road (west of Bentley Road), the Town of Bevent blacktops and the Town of Sharon is responsible for snow removal. There is also a mutual agreement with the Town of Stockton for maintenance and snowplowing on 10th Street because the boundary line for Stockton and Sharon is the center of that road.

B. School Districts

The Town of Sharon is served by the Rosholt and Stevens Point Area School Districts. The primary form of interaction with these entities is through the payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts. The Town has little participation with either district in issues pertaining to administration or sites of new facilities. Additionally, the Sacred Heart School with Grades 1-6 is located in the Town of Sharon next to the Sacred Heart Church of Polonia for residents choosing private schooling. Bus service is provided for the students.

C. County

1. Portage County Solid Waste

The Town of Sharon contracts with Portage County Solid Waste Disposal Department through Harter Brothers, out of Wittenberg, WI for solid waste disposal and collection of recyclables. Solid waste is collected on a weekly basis and taken to the Portage County Transfer Facility in Plover where it is then hauled to a nearby landfill. Recyclables are also picked up on a bi-weekly basis and taken to the Portage County Material Recovery Facility on Moore Road in the Village of Plover.

2. Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County maintains and plows County Highways 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 three different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department; the Planning and Groundwater Management Section, the Code Administration Section, and the Land Conservation Section.

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 Sharon participates in the Portage County Zoning program.

The Land Conservation Section staff works with individuals to design and implement conservation practices. Assistance is given to Towns upon request.

5. Portage County Parks Department

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

6. State of Wisconsin

The two primary State agencies that the Town of Sharon interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT). The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, and law enforcement. The DOT 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 7.3   Identification of Existing, Potential Conflicts with Other Governmental Units

The following issues or conflicts were identified that need further attention:

- The need to encourage cooperation between adjacent units of government to ensure efficient delivery of services
- The need to discuss potential conflicts with neighboring townships, i.e. lot sizes on boundaries.
- The need to have input on city/urban/municipal issues that affect rural areas

Concerns:

- Will there be enough volunteer First Responders and Fire support with increased development?
- Will there be an increase for safety issue needs with increased development?
- There will be a need for more "on-site" inspections and maintenance for roads, fire, buses, etc. with increased growth. Who will pay for this?

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   Goals, Objectives and Policies for Intergovernmental Relations

Goal 1: Share services with other units of government whenever possible.

Objectives:
- Continue shared agreements with adjacent units of government.
- Collaborate with local units of government to work together to identify, manage, preserve and protect natural resources throughout Portage County.
- Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related issues.
- Support a central economic development organization that actively maintains the growth and informational resources in the community.

- Support and protect productive agricultural areas countywide.
- Create and protect public green space and water resources countywide.

Policies:
- Continue to meet with other government units as needed.
- Continue participation with the Wisconsin Towns Association.
- Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental agreements.
- Support commerce and tourism throughout the county.
- Develop partnership efforts that result in the preservation and restoration of natural resources.
- Develop a process where the general public shares in the cost of protecting agriculture.
- Maintain good communication with all units of government in order to achieve our goals.
- Encourage local units of government to work together to develop creative ways to plan for and share the benefits of growth across municipal boundaries.
- Meet with adjacent units of government to discuss intergovernmental issues.