

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/ Wilson Street intersection. There is no formal written agreement.
2. The Village of Amherst is part of the Amherst Fire District, along with the Villages of Amherst Junction and Nelsonville, and Town of Amherst. The Fire District provides First Responder, Ambulance, and Fire/Rescue services to these municipalities. The Town of Lanark contracts fire protection service with the Amherst Fire District for only a portion of their Town, while the Town of New Hope contracts for First Responder services.

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.

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 the Amherst Fire and Safety Commission, consisting of a voting representative appointed by each of the founding municipalities, plus a fire chief, who serves as a non-voting member.

3. The Village would like to work collaboratively with Town of Amherst and Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst Junction regarding extraterritorial land use. There is no formal written agreement.
4. The Village of Amherst is a member of the Portage County Towns Association.

B. School Districts

The Village and Tomorrow River School District has regular communication but no formal agreements.

C. Portage County

1. The Village of Amherst receives protective service from Portage County Sheriff's Office. There is no written agreement.
2. The Village has an agreement with the Portage County Sheriff's Office, which allows sheriff deputies to use the Village Hall as a substation.
3. The Village participates in the solid waste agreement with Portage County for waste and recycling pick-up and disposal.

D. State of Wisconsin

In 2005, the Village 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 constructed building. Because of the creation of new jobs, the Village qualified for the grant to help Blenker 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.

In 2015, the Village received a Municipal Dam grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Up to \$400,000 in funding was awarded for the reconstruction of the Mill Pond dam and spillway. Modifications, which included placing a 6-by-8-foot gate in the wall of the dam and adding an additional concrete apron beneath the gate, were necessary to bring the dam up to state standards for withstanding a 500-year flood event. The DNR grant was used to offset the cost of the project, which was initially estimated at \$1.2 million dollars.

Section 7.2 Analysis of Intergovernmental Agreements

The agreements and relationships that the Village currently has with Town and surrounding communities are adequate. 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

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) to promote cohesive planning and appropriate land use.

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.