

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Introduction

Cooperation with other levels of government is a key strategy of this plan and is mentioned throughout. Many issues in this plan can only be effectively addressed through cooperation with other governmental units. Cooperation with Sawyer County is crucial for Hunter in many areas, and cooperation with various State, Federal and Tribal agencies is also very important. Wisconsin Statute §66.0301, entitled “Intergovernmental Cooperation”, enables local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Typically, intergovernmental cooperation refers to the management and delivery of public services and facilities.

This section takes a closer look at intergovernmental cooperation between Hunter and adjacent local governmental units, school districts, the State of Wisconsin, Federal agencies. It also identifies existing and potential conflicts between the aforementioned units of government, and some probable solutions to resolve those conflicts.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies

The following are intergovernmental policies for the Town of Hunter.

➤ **Maintain established intergovernmental relationships.**

The Town of Hunter does share some services with other jurisdictions and this should continue as long as they are warranted.

➤ **Explore new opportunities to cooperate with other local units of government.**

As costs continue to rise for providing many facilities and services, the exploration of additional ways to cooperate may prove beneficial to contain costs.

➤ **Establish written intergovernmental cooperation agreements.**

Often times, intergovernmental cooperation agreements are established based on verbal, non-formal agreements. Changes in leadership can cause problems with agreements if the specifics have not been identified in writing. It may prove to be beneficial to have all intergovernmental agreements in writing to avoid and disputes or misunderstandings.

Intergovernmental Relationships

A good working relationship between neighbors is important. Good intergovernmental communication and cooperation can benefit everyone. A good working relationship with inter-jurisdictional County, Regional, and State entities can provide economical, environmental, and political advantages for Hunter. It also fosters and supports a sense of community and good fellowship. Table 7.1 shows Hunter’s rating of its intergovernmental relationships with various governmental units.

Table 7.1: Town of Hunter Intergovernmental Relationship Ratings

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | N/A |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|-----|
| Adjacent jurisdictions (Couderay, Hayward, Ojibwa, Radisson, Round Lake and Winter) | | X | | | |
| Lac Courte Oreilles | | X | | | |
| Wisconsin DNR | | X | | | |
| Wisconsin DOT | | X | | | |
| Wisconsin DOC | | | | | X |
| UW-Extension | | | | | X |
| Sawyer County (general) | X | | | | |
| Sawyer County (Highway Dept., Planning & Zoning) | | X | | | |
| Local School Districts (Hayward Community, LCO and Winter) | | | | | X |
| Northwest Regional Planning Commission | | X | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

Existing Areas of Cooperation

- With the Town of Winter to grade part of East Fork and Hemlock Haven Road.

Possible Future Cooperation Efforts

- While none are currently identified, opportunities will be explored as future efforts may be identified.

Agreements with Neighboring Jurisdictions

- LCO Fire Department and Round Lake Fire Department.

Wisconsin Statutes

- A review of agreements or plans pursuant to §66.0301, §66.0307, and §66.0309 found none applicable to these statutes.
 - §66.0301 – Intergovernmental cooperation.
 - §66.0307 – Boundary changes pursuant to approved cooperative plan.
 - §66.0309 – Creation, organization, powers and duties of regional planning commissions.

Existing/Potential Conflicts

Intergovernmental issues between municipalities sometimes surface over a number of different matters. The comprehensive planning process examined the existing and potential conflict situation(s) in the Town of Hunter.

Existing Conflicts

- None currently identified.
- While not necessarily a “conflict” the gerrymandering of county voting district lines crossing the town was noted as a possible correction during the county redistricting boundary after 2010.

Potential Conflicts

- None currently identified.

Conflict Resolution Process

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Town of Hunter identify a process to resolve conflicts. What follows is a discussion of formal and informal techniques for resolving conflicts. Each dispute and/or conflict resolution technique has a purpose. When considering how to resolve a conflict, the Town will need to determine whether the conflict can be settled out of court and which resolution process is the most appropriate for the type of conflict.

Mediation is a cooperative process involving two or more parties and a mediator. The mediator, a neutral third party with special skills and training in dispute resolution, helps the parties voluntarily reach a mutually agreeable settlement of the issue in dispute.

Binding arbitration is a process where a neutral person is given the authority to make a legally binding decision and is used only with the consent of all of the parties. The parties present evidence and examine witnesses and the arbitrator makes a determination based on evidence.

Non-binding arbitration is a technique in which a neutral person is given the authority to render a non-binding decision as a basis for subsequent negotiations between the parties after the party's present evidence and examine the witnesses.

Early neutral evaluation is a process in which a neutral person evaluates brief written and oral presentations early in the litigation process. The neutral person provides an initial appraisal of the merits of the case with suggestions for conducting discovery and obtaining a legal ruling to resolve the case as efficiently as possible.

A focus group can be used to resolve disputes by using a panel of citizens selected in a manner agreed upon by all of the parties. The citizens hear presentations from the parties and, after hearing the issues, the focus group deliberates and renders an advisory opinion.

A mini-trial consists of presentations by the parties to a panel of selected and authorized by all the parties to negotiate a settlement of the dispute that, after the presentations, considers the legal and factual issues and attempts to negotiate a settlement.

A moderated settlement conference is a process in which conferences are conducted by a neutral person, who hears brief presentations from the parties, in order to facilitate negotiations. The neutral person renders an advisory opinion in aid of negotiation.

A summary jury trial is a technique where attorneys make abbreviated presentations to a small jury selected from the regular jury list. The jury renders an advisory decision to help the parties assess their position to aid future negotiation.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives, Actions, Policies, and Programs

A set of recommended goals, objectives, and action steps have been recommended for the town to engage and work with adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions. Implementation of the action steps is a start to establishing cooperative relationships with adjacent and overlapping jurisdiction.

GOAL: Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with local, State, Federal and Tribal jurisdictions where it's appropriate.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Coordinating sharing community services where possible.
Regulation Action: Continue formal agreements for sharing law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and town services.
Monitoring Action: Inventory services and equipment shared by adjacent jurisdictions.
2. Identify actions and processes for resolving conflicts between governmental units.
Education Action: Establish a formal conflict resolution process.
Monitoring Action: Participate in planning and board meetings with adjacent governmental units.
3. Share with each adjoining jurisdiction a copy of the Town of Hunter Comprehensive Plan.
Education Action: Share a copy of the Comprehensive Plan with the Town of Radisson, Town of Couderay, Town of Round Lake, Town of Hayward, Town of Winter, Town of Ojibwa, and the LCO.
4. Enhance cooperative relationships with area educational institutions.
Monitoring Action: Participate in board and committee meetings of the local and technical college educational districts.
5. Keep abreast of developing State of Wisconsin regulations.
Education Action: Attend State and County Towns Association Meetings.