

Section G: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Village of Ridgeway 2018 Comprehensive Plan

SUMMARY:

Intergovernmental cooperation may take many forms, and is done for a variety of reason, such as lowering costs, increase efficiency, etc. Two or more municipalities may have agreements to share equipment, schools, economic development, and so on. This section, per *Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(g)*, reviews what the Village of Ridgeway is currently doing, and what can be done in the future to help improve the our community and lower operational costs by working with our neighbors.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION POLICIES:

The following are the intergovernmental cooperation policies for the Village of Ridgeway.

- **Maintain Established Intergovernmental Relationships**

The Village of Ridgeway shares some services with other jurisdictions and this should be continued as long as they are beneficial.

- **Explore New Opportunities to Cooperate With Other Local Units of Government**

As costs continue to rise for providing many facilities and services, the Village will explore opportunities with other jurisdictions that could lead to reduced costs and other benefits to both parties.

- **Establish Written Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreements**

Intergovernmental cooperation agreements are often established based on verbal agreements. Because of the changes in leadership typical of our way of governance, problems can arise with agreements if the specifics have not been identified in writing. Currently, the village's intermunicipal agreements are all recorded in written contracts.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS:

A good working relationship with neighboring governmental entities is important, as it can lead to economic, environmental, and political advantages for a jurisdiction. Below is a table listing the village’s intergovernmental relationship ratings.

Entity	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Town of Ridgeway			X		
Wisconsin DNR		X			
Wisconsin DOT					X
Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce					X
UW Extension		X			
Iowa County			X		
Local School District				X	
Barneveld Ambulance Service			X		

EXISTING AREAS OF COOPERATION:

- **Fire & Rescue**

The village shares fire services with the Town of Ridgeway and ambulance services with Barneveld.

- **Police Protection**

Police protection is shared between the Village of Ridgeway and Iowa County.

- **Schools**

The Village of Ridgeway shares school services with Dodgeville.

- **Municipal Court**
- **Farm Bureau**
- **Soil Conservation Service**
- **Department of Natural Resources**
- **Roadways**
- **Bike Trail & Recreational**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS:

None identified.

OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONCERNS:

None identified.

POSSIBLE FUTURE COOPERATION EFFORTS:

As noted above, the Village of Ridgeway is already cooperating with other jurisdictions for services and facilities. The list below identifies possible areas of cooperation in the future.

- **Policing**
- **Fire Protection**
- **Park Maintenance**

COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBORS:

The Village of Ridgeway has regular communication with its neighboring jurisdictions via a Fire Board.

FORMAL AGREEMENTS WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS:

The Village of Ridgeway has a formal Fire Protection agreement with the Town of Ridgeway. The previous planning & development committee didn't know when that agreement first started; the agreement was also not scheduled for review. The Village also shares Municipal Court services with Barneveld and Blue Mounds, a 4-year renewable agreement that was last reviewed in May 2003.

ADVANTAGES OF LOCAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:

Intergovernmental cooperation has many advantages associated with it, including the following:

Efficiency & Reduction of Costs

Although not the only reasons to cooperate, the most common reason governments seek to cooperate is to lower the cost of services per person/unit.

Limited Government Restructuring

Cooperation between governments often avoids time-consuming, costly, and politically sensitive issues of government restructuring. Cooperation also helps avoid the creation of special districts that take power and resources away from existing governments.

Coordination & Planning

Through cooperation, governments can develop policies for the area and work on common problems. Such coordination helps communities minimize conflicts when levels of services and enforcement are different among neighboring communities. Cooperation can also lead to joint planning for future services and the resources needed to provide them.

Expanded Services

Cooperation may provide a local unit of government with services it would otherwise be without. Cooperation can make those services financially and logistically possible.

DISADVANTAGES OF LOCAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:

The following are a list of disadvantages that may arise when governments cooperate:

Reaching & Maintaining an Agreement

In general, reaching a consensus in cases in which politics and community sentiments differ can be difficult. While one community may be easily persuaded, another may not be, making progress on a number of issues rather difficult.

Unequal Partners

If one party to an agreement is more powerful, it may influence the agreement's conditions. With service agreements, the more powerful party, or the party providing the service, may have little to lose if the agreement breaks down, it may already service itself at a reasonable rate. The weaker participants may not have other options and are open to possible exploitation. This can be most clearly seen with the Ridgeway Elementary School and the Dodgeville School District's constant threat of shutting it down.

Local Self-Preservation & Control

Some jurisdictions may feel their identity and independence will be threatened by intergovernmental cooperation. The pride of residents and officials may be bruised if, after decades of providing their own police or fire protection, they must contract with a neighboring jurisdiction (and possible old rival) for the service. In addition, and possibly more importantly, a jurisdiction may lose some control over what takes place within their boundaries. And although government officials may lose control, they are still held responsible for the delivery of services to their electorates.

STEPS TO BEGINNING SUCCESSFUL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:

Intergovernmental cooperation should be reviewed, especially by small rural communities given the economic reality we currently live in. Below are some ideas worth considering:

- **Identify other local governments that may share a common problem or may stand to benefit from cooperation**
- **Identify whether the county is cooperating with other jurisdictions on a similar service. What type of arrangement do they have? Are the participating jurisdictions satisfied with the quality and quantity of the service?**
- **Although cooperation on several services may be desired, analyze each one separately. Initially, it may seem logical to lump services. However, it is best to first understand from a cost and non-cost perspective what cooperation in each service area entails.**
- **Look at the potential cost savings of each option. This should be done on a per resident or per unit-of service-provided basis, e.g. will the cost of fire protection per person decrease if the jurisdictions cooperate?**
- **Consider the costs associated with each form of cooperation. What type of administrative or insurance costs might be necessary with each option?**

- How would residents respond to the change in the level of services they receive? And how would taxpayers respond to additional government expenses? Would they reject it?
- Are the residents willing to give up some control over a particular service? This may take considerable polling to determine and will likely vary depending on the type of service in question. For example, it may be all right to share snow removal and street repair equipment, but residents might not be willing to give up their own police department and the security they feel it provides.
- **Keep the public and local officials informed throughout the entire process.** Present the options and invite public comment. If residents and officials feel they have played a role in the effort, or at least been given the opportunity to provide their input, they will be more likely to support the initiative. Plus, some creative ideas may be generated.
- **Patience is important.** The more governments involved in the negotiations, the longer it will take to develop an agreement and reach a consensus. In addition, negotiators may have to go back to their city councils, town, or county boards several times for directions or approval.

ADDITIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IDEAS:

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Element Guide published by the Wisconsin Department of Administration provides several ideas for cooperation including the following listed below. These are only ideas to consider. (The following were taken from the *Intergovernmental Cooperation Guide*: https://doa.wi.gov/DIR/Comp_Planning_Intergovernmental-Cooperation.pdf)

Voluntary Assistance

Communities could voluntarily agree to provide a service to neighbors because doing so makes economic sense and improves service levels.

Trading Services

Communities could agree to exchange services, e.g. exchange the use of different pieces of equipment, equipment for labor, or labor for labor.

Renting Equipment

Your community could rent equipment to, or from, neighboring communities and other governmental units. Renting equipment can make sense for both communities – the community renting gets the use of equipment without having to buy it, and the community renting out the equipment earns income from the equipment rather than having it sit idle.

Contracting

Your community could contract with another community or jurisdiction to provide a service. For example, you could contract with an adjacent town or village to provide police and fire protection, or you could contract with the county for a service in addition to that already routinely provided by the county sheriff's department.

Routine County Services

Some services are already paid for through taxes and fees. Examples are police protection services from the county sheriff's department, county zoning, county public health services, and county parks. Your Intergovernmental Cooperation Element could identify areas where improvements are needed and could recommend ways to cooperatively address them.

Sharing Municipal Staff

Your community could share staff with neighboring communities and other jurisdictions – both municipal employees and independently contracted professionals. You could share a building inspector, assessor, planner, engineer, zoning administrator, clerk, etc.

Consolidating Services

Your community could agree with one or more other communities or governmental units to provide a service together.

Joint Use of a Facility

Your community could use a public facility along with other jurisdictions. The facility could be jointly owned or one jurisdiction could rent space from another.

Special Purpose Districts

Special purpose districts are created to provide a particular service, unlike municipalities that provide many different types of services. Like municipalities, special purpose districts are separate and legally independent entities.

Joint Purchase & Ownership of Equipment

Your community could agree with other jurisdictions to jointly purchase and own equipment such as pothole patching machines, mowers, rollers, snowplows, street sweepers, etc.

Cooperative Purchasing

Cooperative purchasing, or procurement, is where jurisdictions purchase supplies and equipment together to gain more favorable prices.

TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS FOR MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY COOPERATION:

Annexation

Annexation is the process of transferring parcels of land from unincorporated areas to adjacent cities or villages. More information can be found in *Wisconsin State Statute Sections 66.0217-66.0223*.

Detachment

Detachment is the process by which territory is detached from one jurisdiction and transferred to another. More information can be seen in *Wisconsin State Statute Sections 66.0227 and 62.075*.

Incorporation

Incorporation is the process of creating a new village or city from unincorporated territory. For more information, see *Wisconsin State Statute Sections 66.0201-66.0215*.

Consolidation

Consolidation is the process by which a town, village, or city joins together with another town, village, or city to form one jurisdiction. For more information, see *Wisconsin State Statute Section 66.0229*.

Intergovernmental Agreements

There are two types of intergovernmental agreements that can be formed, including cooperative boundary agreements and stipulations and orders. More detailed information on intergovernmental agreements is available in *Wisconsin State Statute 66.0307* (Cooperative Boundary Agreements) and *66.0225* (Stipulations and Orders).

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS—MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
REVIEW:

This department regulates the transition of unincorporated areas to city or village status.

State of Wisconsin Department of Administration

Municipal Boundary Review

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<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/MunicipalBoundaryReview.aspx>