

Chapter 10:

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

The adage: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” speaks to the value of intergovernmental cooperation. Washburn is an integral part of a broader region (or community) that includes neighboring and overlapping governments. Many issues that affect Washburn also affect other governments in the region. By cooperating with each other, all units of government can benefit. Intergovernmental cooperation is a “win-win” proposition for all involved.

This chapter provides a plan for Washburn to strengthen its relationship with other units of government. It provides an analysis of existing areas of cooperation and potential conflicts between governments, and it describes strategies to resolve the conflicts. It also includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision-making that affect Washburn and the region.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

Description of Neighboring and Overlapping Governments

Neighboring governments include the Town of Bayview, the Town of Barksdale, and the Town of Washburn. The City of Bayfield and the City of Ashland, although they do not directly border Washburn, are also important neighbors. In addition, other towns and cities in the region, as well as the Red Cliff Reservation and the Bad River Reservation, provide opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation. Overlapping governments and governmental agencies include Bayfield County, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Washburn School District, and others.

The City of Washburn can also benefit by cooperating with various organizations including the Washburn Chamber of Commerce, the Alliance for Sustainability, the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical Center, Northland College, the Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation, the Bayfield County Extension Office, and others.

Existing Cooperation

The City of Washburn proactively cooperates with neighboring and overlapping governments on numerous issues. For example, the City of Washburn and Bayfield County have discussed

opportunities to relocate the Bayfield County Forestry Department building on Central Avenue, thereby freeing up land for potential redevelopment in the city. Also, the City, the Bayfield County Snowmobile Alliance, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have worked together to explore options for constructing a trail bridge over Thompson Creek in Washburn. Many other examples exist as well.

The City of Washburn invited representatives from all neighboring and overlapping governments to participate in four intergovernmental cooperation meetings that the City facilitated as part of this comprehensive planning process. Representatives from all neighboring and overlapping governments attended the meetings. The meetings provided an excellent forum for the various governments to discuss opportunities to work together. In addition to the intergovernmental cooperation meetings, the City of Washburn and surrounding and overlapping governments also cooperated in reviewing and commenting on each other's Comprehensive Plans or Land Use Plans. Strong cooperative relationships exist between the City of Washburn and neighboring and overlapping governments.

Existing Intergovernmental Agreements

Washburn has several agreements with other governments. For example, the City has agreements to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to neighboring communities, an agreement to provide drinking water to the Town of Barksdale, and agreements with the County and State for road maintenance and repair. In addition, the City and the Washburn School District cooperate on numerous issues.

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

The following summarizes key intergovernmental cooperation issues and opportunities that came out of the four intergovernmental cooperation meetings that the City facilitated as part of this comprehensive planning process. The following also describes potential conflicts that may arise between Washburn and neighboring and overlapping governments. Refer to corresponding chapters of the Comprehensive Plan for additional information.

Land Use

Land use issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Explore opportunities to work together on land use planning issues in the Chequamegon Bay watershed. Recognize that land use decisions throughout the watershed affect Chequamegon Bay and all communities within the watershed.
- Address land use practices that allow sprawling, poorly planned development in the rural areas of the region.
- Explore the possibility of working together to develop a regional or joint industrial park that would benefit the region, not just one community.
- Work together to preserve productive farmland in the region.
- Work together to address the long-term maintenance of closed landfills in the region.
- Continue to explore opportunities to move the Bayfield County Forestry Department and the Bayfield County Highway Department facilities located on Central Avenue in Washburn.

Although the City of Washburn and its neighbors respect each other's land use decisions. Potential conflicts could arise if any community unilaterally approves extensive or sprawling development in

rural areas without discussing the affects of the development on other communities and the region. Currently, the City does not anticipate the need to annex neighboring land before 2027.

Waterfront and Coastal Resources

Waterfront and coastal resource issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Recognize that Lake Superior is a regional resource that people throughout the area enjoy and depend on. Explore ways to ensure that all residents in the region have adequate access to Lake Superior.
- Work together to protect Chequamegon Bay's plants, animals, and water resources.
- Explore ways to use the waterfront in a manner that protects coastal resources, allows carefully planned sustainable economic uses, and provides for sensitive public and private use of waterfront property.

Although all governments in the region recognize the importance of the waterfront and coastal resources, potential conflicts could arise if a community were to allow development or land use practices that adversely affects coastal resources.

Transportation

Transportation issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Work together to enhance the Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system. Explore ways to encourage use of the public transportation system. Work to make the public transportation system more energy efficient and cost effective.
- Explore the creation of a bus and/or rail transportation hub that could serve residents in the region as well as visitors from other areas of the country including Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.
- Explore opportunities to provide public parking and park and ride facilities that benefit the region. Promote carpooling opportunities.
- Encourage additional bicycle and pedestrian trails that connect communities and key destinations throughout the region. Address street crossing and safety issues, especially those associated with Highway 13 (Bayfield Street).
- Enhance regional snowmobile and ATV trails and the connections between communities and key destinations including the Chequamegon National Forest. Address concerns relating to use of the trails.
- Work together to explore designating State Highway 13 as a scenic byway. Also, explore designating pertinent roads as rustic roads.

It is imperative that governments cooperate on transportation issues. Potential conflicts could arise if one community does not see the value of working together on regional trails, or if some communities do not contribute their fair share to addressing and supporting public transportation efforts.

Utilities and Community Facilities

Washburn has cooperated with neighboring and overlapping governments on many issues relating to utilities and community facilities. For example, Washburn has an agreement with the DuPont Company and the Town of Barksdale to provide drinking water to residents that have contaminated

wells. In addition, Washburn and the City of Bayfield have explored the possibility of working together to support the Bayfield Recreation Center. Yet with all the cooperation that exists, governments can do more. Issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Explore options to develop joint facilities for stockpiling road salt and sand, fuel stations, and other public works facilities.
- Explore opportunities to work together on parks and recreation facilities that benefit the region.
- Continue to share and operate police, fire, and emergency medical services in a manner that provides quality, cost effective service.
- Work together to address the concerns of area school districts regarding declining enrollment and the need to upgrade facilities. Coordinate with the Washburn School District to explore the possibility of replacing the Washburn Middle/High School with a new school. Consider integrating regional recreation facilities with the creation of a new school.
- Promote recycling, reduction, and reuse of materials.
- Promote energy conservation programs and explore opportunities to develop sustainable energy production in the region, including wind and solar energy.
- Identify opportunities to share or trade equipment and services

Potential conflicts could arise if communities do not contribute their fair share to supporting the area's community facilities. For example, if the population of a neighboring town grows significantly, but the neighboring town does not provide additional park or recreation opportunities for its residents, Washburn may see increased pressure on its parks and other community facilities without increased revenues to address the pressures. However, by working together, these types of issues can be successfully addressed.

Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources

Washburn can do its part to address issues relating to natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, yet the region as a whole must cooperate to ensure the protection and enhancement of these resources. Natural, cultural, and agricultural resources issues discussed among governments include the following:

- Recognize that the enhancement and protection of natural resources is strongly tied to the region's economy and its quality of life.
- Work to connect fragmented ecosystems.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen food production in the region, including aquaculture.
- Promote the region's historic and cultural resources.
- Continue to cooperate on regional events like Book Across the Bay and Superior Vistas Bike Tour.
- Work together to enhance and promote the creative professions in the region.

Potential conflicts between governments could arise if a jurisdiction allows insensitive land use practices that adversely affect the region's resources or another community. For example, a neighboring town that allows a major residential subdivision on prime agricultural land would conflict with the City's vision to reduce sprawl and preserve existing natural and agricultural resources.

Housing

Housing issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Recognize that economic development is tied to the region's ability to provide diverse housing options that meet the needs of the region.
- Promote quality, affordable rental options and provide transitional housing as needed.
- Address concerns over the proliferation of seasonal (second) homes in the region.
- Work to enhance property maintenance throughout the region.
- Work together as a region to discuss an appropriate balance of new housing between rural and urban areas.

Potential disagreements between governments could arise if, for example, a government promotes a high-density housing development in a rural area that cannot be adequately served by community facilities and services.

Economic

Washburn's economy and the regional economy are connected. Consequently, Washburn and its neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions must cooperate to ensure that the regional economy is healthy. Economic issues and opportunities discussed among governments include the following:

- Continue to promote tourism as a means to grow the economy, but also explore other options that produce higher paying jobs.
- Explore technological innovations that can grow the regional economy in a healthy and sustainable manner. For example, explore the possibility of producing wind and solar energy, biodiesel fuels, and telecommuting hubs.
- Explore opportunities to use the Ashland Agricultural Research Station in a manner that continues to benefit the region.
- Capitalize on the tremendous number of public sector jobs and services in the region by exploring potential spin-off opportunities that would provide synergistic relationships between the public and private sectors.
- Work together to promote value-added industries that incorporate regional resources.
- Continue to coordinate regional events and festivals that draw people from across the country.

Potential conflicts could arise between governments if a government chooses to allow economic development that adversely affects the region's natural and social resources.

PUBLIC INPUT

The results of the survey conducted as part of this planning process generally indicate that many residents do not have an opinion on whether Washburn cooperates and works well with other governments. However, 56.9% of respondents indicated that Washburn works well with Bayfield County and 55% indicated that Washburn works well with the Washburn School District.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The following goal is a broad statement that reflects the City's vision for intergovernmental cooperation. It represents the end that the City is striving to attain. The following objectives are specific, measurable, intermediate ends that are achievable and mark progress towards the goal. The following policies are key actions intended to accomplish the stated objectives.

Goal: The City of Washburn and all neighboring and overlapping governmental jurisdictions work proactively and cooperatively to ensure that the Chequamegon Bay region has a strong, sustainable economy; respects natural resources; and meets human needs fairly and efficiently.

Objective 10.1: Provide open communication and good working relationships between the City of Washburn and neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Policy 10.1.a: Lead efforts to organize intergovernmental workshops involving representatives from neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Policy 10.1.b: Encourage neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to review and comment on amendments and updates to Washburn's Comprehensive Plan and other pertinent plans in Washburn. Request that neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions allow the City of Washburn to review planning efforts that may affect the City of Washburn.

Policy 10.1.c: Openly share information that may be beneficial to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Policy 10.1.d: Coordinate education efforts that may be beneficial to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Policy 10.1.e: Collaborate with the Alliance for Sustainability.

Objective 10.2: Partner with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to provide efficient, cost effective, high-quality services, where practical or mutually beneficial.

Policy 10.2.a: Share services and facilities with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, where practical or mutually beneficial.

Policy 10.2.b: Support regional facilities and services that benefit Washburn and the region.

Policy 10.2.c: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to coordinate shared purchases of bulk items and special equipment, where practical or mutually beneficial.

Policy 10.2.d: Work with the Washburn School District and neighboring communities to coordinate efforts to provide quality recreation programs and facilities for area residents.

Objective 10.3: Work proactively and cooperatively on planning issues that affect neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Policy 10.3.a: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions on land use decisions that may affect the other jurisdictions.

Policy 10.3.b: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to ensure that Washburn and the surrounding area have a safe, efficient, well maintained, and connected multi-modal transportation system.

Policy 10.3.c: Work with the Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) system and neighboring and overlapping governments to promote the use of the public transportation system. Work to make the public transportation system more energy efficient and cost effective.

Policy 10.3.d: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to preserve and enhance natural, coastal, cultural, and agricultural resources in the region.

Policy 10.3.e: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to coordinate development and improvements of utilities and community facilities that meet the needs of area residents.

Policy 10.3.f: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to ensure that there is a full range of housing to meet the diverse needs of the area.

Policy 10.3.g: Work with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions on economic development issues and planning that will strengthen the economy of the region.

Policy 10.3.h: Partner with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to establish alternative energy programs that will provide sustainable, efficient, cost effective energy that is practical and mutually beneficial.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION PLAN

Key concepts of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan include the following:

- Periodically meet with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to identify issues and opportunities for cooperation.
- Openly share information that may be of interest to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions; for example, distribute planning reports to neighboring communities and invite others to attend City meetings and seminars when appropriate.
- Help organize joint planning committees to address regional issues.
- Share purchases of bulk items and special equipment.
- Continue to share services, such as fire protection and emergency medical services. Trade services where practical and beneficial.
- Continue to share facilities, equipment, and services where practical and mutually beneficial.
- Communicate and coordinate all components of Washburn's Comprehensive Plan with other jurisdictions.
- Explore opportunities for alternative energy programs.
- Work together to address the concerns of area school districts.
- Cooperate on developing and maintaining parks and recreation facilities that benefit the region.
- Work with Bayfield County to address the City of Washburn's concerns with the existing Bayfield County Forestry Department and Highway Department facilities.

Washburn will cooperate with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to ensure that the Chequamegon Bay region has a strong, sustainable economy; respects natural resources; and meets human needs fairly and efficiently.