

11.0 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Introduction

The Town of Oshkosh's relationship with neighboring municipalities, school districts, sanitary districts, state agencies and Winnebago County can significantly impact town residents in terms of the provision of services, and the siting of public facilities. An examination of these relationships and the identification of potential conflicts will help the town address these situations in a productive manner.



Intergovernmental Cooperation Vision

In twenty years, the City and Town of Oshkosh work cooperatively to provide residents with a wide variety of cost-efficient, non-duplicative services for the betterment of both communities. Annexation is planned, based on service demands, and coordinated in a fashion to ensure that both communities have preserved their community identities, while providing a unique blend of desired commercial, industrial and residential development.

School district development is coordinated with the town to ensure that the location, size, and nature of school facilities will not result in additional pressure for annexation, residential development, or the provision of costly services.

Town leaders keep residents informed on all matters pertinent to town operations and land development issues and pursue opportunities to provide coordinated, cost-effective services with neighboring governments.

Governmental Units and Relationships to the Town of Oshkosh

The Town of Oshkosh shares borders with the Town of Vinland and the City of Oshkosh. In addition, the town must also coordinate with:

- Island View Sanitary District
- Sunset Point Sanitary District
- Edgewood-Shangri-La Sanitary District
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Butte des Morts Consolidated Sanitary District
- Oshkosh School District
- Winneconne School District

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

- Town of Vinland
- City of Oshkosh

The town’s relationship with the **Town of Vinland** can be characterized as one of mutual respect and compatibility from a land use and political standpoint. Towns cannot annex land from one another. Therefore, the borders between the Town of Oshkosh and the Town of Vinland are fixed and boundary disputes are non-existent. The towns share a common rural character. Each town has its own public service programs (i.e. road maintenance and construction, etc.). However, as mutually beneficial opportunities for shared service contracts arise, the Town of Oshkosh and Vinland (as well as other nearby communities) are open to considering options.

The **City of Oshkosh**, having the ability to accept annexation proposals, sometimes creates a strain on intergovernmental relations. This was particularly true during more aggressive annexation campaigns of the past. To ensure that residents are fully informed about the impacts of annexation, this plan calls for the town to educate residents about annexation and study the reasons why annexations occur.

Regardless of annexation disputes, the town and city consider intergovernmental cooperation and coordination important. Evidence of this can be seen in the coordination efforts between the City and Town of Oshkosh during the development of this plan.

The town’s proximity to the City of Oshkosh does provide several advantages. Specifically, many high quality services, such as health care, recreation facilities, senior housing, and library services are available to town residents due to their proximity to the City of Oshkosh.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Oshkosh Area School District
- Winneconne School District

As discussed in *Utilities and Community Facilities Element Chapter*, the Town of Oshkosh is served by two school districts. The town’s relationship with the local school districts can be characterized as cooperative. While from time to time the districts may propose new facilities and improvement the town does not support, the town does appreciate the quality service provided by the school districts. Regular and open communication is critical to ensure that this cooperative relationship will continue and be strengthened as growth occurs.

SANITARY DISTRICTS

- Island View Sanitary District
- Sunset Point Sanitary District
- Edgewood Shangri-La Sanitary District
- Butte des Morts Consolidated Sanitary District
- Oshkosh Sanitary District

There are (5) sanitary districts serving portions of the Town of Oshkosh. The town enjoys a positive relationship with the local sanitary districts. The (4) Town Districts purchase from the City of Oshkosh treatment of waste water per an agreement to limit the expansion of said districts. No major expansion of the treatment facilities is anticipated in the near future. While the Town of Oshkosh does not believe that future residential development must connect to municipal sanitary service, continued cooperation between the town and the four sanitary districts is important.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

- Winnebago County
- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)

The Town of Oshkosh is located in **Winnebago County**. The county has some jurisdiction within the town. In particular, Winnebago County has jurisdiction over land divisions, on-site sanitary systems, and zoning (including shoreland-wetland and floodplain areas). Winnebago County also maintains many county roads.

In those areas where Winnebago County has jurisdiction in the town, the county attempts to get input from the town before making decisions affecting the town. Likewise, the town has attempted to maintain communication with Winnebago County by providing recommendations. The county's jurisdiction has at times created conflict with the town. Future cooperation will be especially important as it relates to:

- Zoning as a tool to implement this plan
- Stormwater management
- Coordination with the Winnebago County Comprehensive Plan

With respect to **zoning**, this plan highlights several strategies the Town of Oshkosh is interested in pursuing to improve the effectiveness of zoning regulations in the town. Specifically, in the *Future Land Use Chapter*, a discussion is provided with respect to the potential for developing a rural overlay zone.

The town expects that the county will fully consider recommendations provided by the town in this plan. Likewise, the town expects the county to understand that the *Future Land Use Maps* provide a general pattern for development. If for example, a single-family home is requested in the Rural Development Area, this action is considered consistent with the *Future Land Use Maps* and does not require an amendment to the plan or maps.

For additional information about town recommendations and use of this Comprehensive Plan, refer to the *Future Land Use Chapter* and *Implementation Element Chapter*.

Furthermore, the town would like to coordinate with the City of Oshkosh and Winnebago County to consider special zoning requirements to provide **greater consistency between the City and County Zoning Ordinances** for the isolated town properties located south of Snell Road. During the intergovernmental process, the City of Oshkosh expressed some concern that the Winnebago County and City of Oshkosh Zoning Ordinances are significantly different with respect to setback, landscaping, lighting and signage. For these town properties, nearly, if not completely, surrounded by the City of Oshkosh, development can look very different from neighboring city parcels. To provide a more consistent pattern on the landscape, it is desirable to consider special zoning requirements for these parcels.

Similarly, the City of Oshkosh, through the intergovernmental process, expressed some concern about the density of residential development proposed on the *DRAFT Future Land Use Maps*. Specifically, the city was concerned that lower density residential development permitted in the town (under county zoning) in areas adjacent to the city, will hamper the city's growth efforts. To address this concern, the Town of Oshkosh Planning Advisory Committee decided to review the development pattern and density proposed on the *DRAFT Future Land Use Maps*. The maps provided in the Future Land Use Chapter reflect the result of that review effort.

With respect to subdivision development, the Town of Oshkosh is interested in providing, as an option for landowners, a **conservation subdivision ordinance**. The town believes this tool will provide additional opportunities for preservation of woodlands, wetlands, shorelands, wildlife habitat areas and farmland that are important to the town's rural character. Likewise, by encouraging conservation development options at the town's northern boundaries, the effect is the establishment of a **regional buffer** between the urban development in the City of Oshkosh and rural towns to the north and west.

For additional information about **conservation subdivisions** refer to the *Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Element Chapter* and the *Future Land Use Chapter*.

Winnebago County and the Town of Oshkosh are part of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC). The Town of Oshkosh has little direct and regular interaction with the ECWRPC. Most interaction occurs through the sanitary districts. The town acquired mapping data, demographic statistics, and policy information for this comprehensive planning effort from Winnebago County and the ECWRPC.



STATE AGENCIES

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WDNR, WisDOT, and DATCP are the primary state agencies the Town of Oshkosh must coordinate with to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.

WDNR is a major agency involved in the acquisition and development of recreational/pedestrian trails - a major component of this plan. Furthermore, the WDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and the sustainable management of woodlands, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas.

The activities of the WDNR and DATCP are discussed further in the *Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element* of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at:
www.datcp.state.wi.us
and www.dnr.state.wi.us.

The mission of the **DATCP** is to serve the citizens of Wisconsin by assuring:

- The safety and quality of food
- Fair business practices for the buyer and seller
- Efficient use of agricultural resources in a quality environment
- Consumer protection
- Healthy animals and plants
- The vitality of Wisconsin agriculture and commerce

Given the importance of agriculture in the Town of Oshkosh, DATCP plays an important role in the town. DATCP policies, programs and directives impact local agricultural operations.

WisDOT is also a key player in the planning and development of highways and pedestrian/cycling facilities. In addition, WisDOT is responsible for the maintenance of the USH 41, USH 45 and STH 110 corridors. A major expansion of the USH 41 corridor is planned in the foreseeable future. Thus, it will be important for the Town of Oshkosh to continue to coordinate with WisDOT with respect to this roadway. This coordination should be similar to the level of participation and communication between the Town of Oshkosh and WisDOT during the USH 45 realignment.



For additional information about WisDOT activities in the Town of Oshkosh, refer to the *Transportation Element* of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at:
www.dot.state.wi.us

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process

To facilitate a planning environment open to intergovernmental coordination, the Town of Oshkosh sent all adjacent municipalities, school districts, sanitary districts, Winnebago

County and the ECWRPC a letter during the on-set of the planning effort. This letter was intended to notify these agencies and communities of the Town of Oshkosh planning process. Likewise, this letter extended an open invitation for participation in the development of this plan.

On an element-by-element basis, the town (through its consultant) contacted adjacent Winnebago County officials, local school districts, the sanitary districts and state agencies again to complete inventories of available services, facilities and programs. For example, during the development of the *Transportation Element*, WisDOT was contacted to obtain information available related to transportation facilities and programs in the Town of Oshkosh. Likewise, WisDOT was provided a preliminary copy of the *Transportation Element* to review and comment upon. This same courtesy was extended to the WDNR during development of the *Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element*. Similarly, the school districts and sanitary districts were important resources during development of the *Utilities and Community Facilities Element*.

Throughout the plan development process, the town worked closely with Winnebago and the ECWRPC to coordinate plan-mapping resources and obtain detailed information related to zoning, agricultural preservation, quarry operations and general demographic data.

On **January 16, 2003** as the draft comprehensive plan was nearing completion, the Town of Oshkosh hosted the first of two intergovernmental meetings. The purpose of this first meeting was to discuss the plans of other local agencies and governments and attempt to coordinate the *Town of Oshkosh Comprehensive Plan* with the goals and objectives of other local plans. The participants were also given the opportunity to view and comment on the *Draft Future Land Use Map*. This collective “meeting of the minds” provided a unique opportunity to discuss area growth, development, transportation, education, and other concerns.

A follow-up intergovernmental meeting was held on **February 20, 2003**. The purpose of this meeting was to expand on the conversations started in the previous meeting. Also, a draft copy of this chapter was presented and discussed in detail.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs

Many intergovernmental programs are already in effect that impact the Town of Oshkosh. For example, the Winnebago County Sheriff’s Department provides police protection to the town. Mutual aid agreements for fire protection exist between the town and its neighbors.

As growth and change continues in the area, land use will remain a controversial topic. The City of Oshkosh and surrounding towns (through the United Towns Association) have spent many years discussing the potential for a **boundary agreement**, under State Statutes 66.023 and 66.30. If boundary agreements were completed, the City and Town of Oshkosh could work together to make rational decisions about where growth will

occur, including the setting or changing of boundaries, and how public services (including sewer and water) could be provided. Other intergovernmental agreements, such as **shared tax revenue, wetland preservation, stormwater management, and zoning** of town land use “islands” for consistency with surrounding development (i.e. overlay zoning) may also be pursued.

It is important that the town work with Winnebago County to assure that the county understands the town’s plan and works together, as a partner with the town on zoning issues.

Existing and Proposed Plans

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Currently, no adjacent town has an adopted comprehensive “Smart Growth” plan. However, the City of Oshkosh is working to develop its plan. To ensure compatibility with planning goals and objectives of this plan, the Town will continue to participate in the planning efforts of its neighboring communities.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Oshkosh and Winneconne School Districts boundaries extend beyond the Town of Oshkosh. As such, development in neighboring communities may have an impact on the districts need to expand. The City and Town of Oshkosh and Village of Winneconne wish to remain involved in the siting of future schools to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan can be met. This will become more important as the area grows, bringing additional residents (and students) to the area.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Winnebago County has not adopted a comprehensive plan in accordance with 1999 Wisconsin Act 9. However, the county has been working toward the development of such a plan for some time. Throughout the Town of Oshkosh Planning effort, town representatives have participated in the county planning efforts and reported back to the Town’s Planning Advisory Committee. Likewise, completed documents, including the *Winnebago County Transportation Element*, were used as resources during the development of this plan.

The ECWRPC has not yet adopted a comprehensive plan. It will be important for the town to participate in regional planning efforts when the ECWRPC begins its planning process. It will be especially important for the town to work with the ECWRPC in the planning of the sanitary district boundaries.

STATE AGENCIES

The Town of Oshkosh's relationship with the State of Wisconsin primarily occurs through coordination with the WDNR with respect to wetland preservation and stormwater regulations. Coordination with the state also occurs with respect to state aids for local roads and the administering of various state mandates. Furthermore, coordination with WisDOT will continue to be important with respect to any changes to USH 41, USH 45 and STH 110.

Intergovernmental Goals, Objectives and Policies

The goals, objectives and policy provided in this section generally seek to enhance the lines of communication between area governments. This approach will help to create an environment where coordination is possible and conflicts are minimized.

GOALS

1. Improve communication with neighboring communities, school districts, sanitary districts, the ECWRPC and state agencies.
2. Resolve annexation and boundary disputes in a mutually beneficial manner.
3. Continue to seek new ways to coordinate and share community facilities and services with neighboring communities and Winnebago County whenever efficient.

OBJECTIVES

1. Host a biennial summit to discuss concerns, plans, exchange ideas and report implementation achievements.
2. Continue to actively participate in the "Smart Growth" planning activities of neighboring communities, Winnebago County, and the ECWRPC.
3. Coordinate with Winnebago County to develop:
 - a. A rural overlay zone as described in the *Future Land Use Chapter* of this plan.
 - b. A conservation subdivision ordinance to protect rural character and maintain a regional buffer.
 - c. Requirements for properties south of Snell Road that are surrounded by the City of Oshkosh.
4. Ensure that local school districts are notified about proposed residential developments and rezonings so the district may plan accordingly for additional school children. Encourage the school district to provide input into these decisions.
5. Ensure that WisDOT is notified of proposed development projects and rezonings near USH 41, USH 45 and STH 110 so WisDOT may plan accordingly for needed improvements.
6. Coordinate with WisDOT, WDNR and DATCP to ensure transportation facilities are safe and natural features and farmland are protected.
7. As desirable, pursue the development of a boundary agreement with the City of Oshkosh to establish expansion areas for a minimum of 10 years. This effort may be coordinated with other communities adjacent to the City of Oshkosh.
8. Expand and continue to explore the potential for mutual services with neighboring towns (including road development and maintenance, garbage collection, etc.).

POLICY

The Town of Oshkosh will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, sanitary districts and school districts for mutual benefit.