

# **CHAPTER 10**

## ***Intergovernmental Cooperation***

### **Introduction**

For many rural communities, it is a challenge to provide a wide range of services to residents. Towns often contract with other governments or agencies to provide services such as road maintenance, code enforcement, or fire protection in order to reduce the cost of these services to residents. In many cases, other services or facilities are provided by neighboring communities.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter will examine existing agreements and identify potential areas where future cooperation should be considered.

### **Existing Agreements**

The Town of Erin Prairie has several agreements with neighboring governments and agencies. The agreements are listed below:

- The Town has adopted St. Croix County Zoning and utilizes the County for information on zoning changes, variances, and enforcement.
- The Town of Erin Prairie works with St. Croix County to plan and complete road maintenance.
- Residents can take their recyclables to the Town of Richmond Recycling Center.
- St. Croix County Emergency Management works with communities to coordinate ambulance service, medical helicopter service, local emergency planning, and 9-1-1 system.
- Fire protection is provided by the New Richmond Fire Department and United Fire & Rescue.
- Emergency Medical Services are contracted through the New Richmond Area Ambulance and Rescue Service and Baldwin Area EMS.
- St. Croix County Sheriff's Department provides police protection to Town residents.

### **Existing or Potential Conflicts**

Existing conflicts identified in Erin Prairie are primarily zoning related. A majority of the Town is zoned exclusive ag which was implemented to preserve prime farmland. The Town has developed this comprehensive plan to incorporate property owner rights while protecting agricultural land.

Potential conflicts may arise related to the future growth of the City of New Richmond. Needs for land for residential, commercial, or industrial growth usually are met through annexing adjacent Town land at the request of the landowner and approval by the City Council. For cities, villages, and developers, undeveloped land, typically farmland, is the most desirable for development. At the same time, annexed land results in a reduction of the tax base for the Town and potential conflicts between urbanized and rural areas. The City of New Richmond has extraterritorial plat review authority in the northern and

western portions of Erin Prairie. Plats in this area must gain approval from the City, which requires developments have, or the potential to have higher density/smaller lots.

## **Future Areas for Intergovernmental Cooperation**

Existing and future intergovernmental cooperation can help Erin Prairie implement the Town's comprehensive plan. Many issues, such as natural resource protection, extend beyond political borders. Listed below are potential areas for cooperation the Town of Erin Prairie may wish to pursue:

- Work with St. Croix County and the City of New Richmond to allow growth and development that addresses their long-range goals and the Town's.
- Work with the WDNR, neighboring towns, and residents to protect the areas water resources.
- Continue to explore ways to improve police, fire, and emergency services.
- Work with St. Croix County and neighboring Towns when considering walking, biking, or other trail systems.
- Coordinate with the St. Croix County Historical Society to document and preserve the Town's history.
- Continue to use the UW-Extension, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and St. Croix County as information resources.
- Explore a cooperative boundary agreement with the City of New Richmond that addresses future growth in the area.

## **Conflict Resolution**

When conflicts arise, it is important to address them in a manner that produces mutual understanding of the issues and creates an atmosphere under which the conflicts can be resolved successfully. The Town should hold joint meetings with neighboring governments and agencies to resolve future conflicts.

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

**Goal 1:** Support intergovernmental cooperation with neighboring towns and government agencies to promote mutual understanding and problem solving.

### **Objectives**

1. Work with government agencies on resource management and protection.
2. Provide quality police, fire, and emergency medical services to the Town's residents.
3. Reduce costs for services to taxpayers.

### **Policies, Programs, and Actions**

1. Coordinate with the WDNR on natural resource management and protection issues.
2. Provide copies of the Town of Erin Prairie Comprehensive Plan to surrounding Towns, St. Croix County, City of New Richmond, and West Central Wisconsin

- Regional Planning Commission to communicate the Town's overall vision for its future.
3. Establish Joint Committees to focus on specific/common issues and potential conflicts as needed.
  4. Actively promote cooperation to achieve goals and objectives set forth in this Comprehensive Plan and maximize the Town's human and financial resources.
  5. Explore the possibility of a cooperative boundary agreement with the City of New Richmond that addresses future growth in the area.