

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Wascott’s large geographic area and being the southern most township in Douglas County have represented its challenges. Too often, it has been the opinion of many town representatives and citizens that the elected representatives at the county level have not had an open mind to the needs and desires of Wascott citizens and property owners. In the future, it is hoped that an open and continuous dialog between the town, Douglas County, and other governmental jurisdictions will result in cooperative and mutually beneficial efforts. These efforts are critical to the future planning and development of public and shared services and open communications. Without the coordination and cooperation of local governmental jurisdictions, decisions critical to preserving and enhancing local and regional economic activities, community pride, and natural resources will be compromised.

This element analyzes the relationship of the Town of Wascott in terms of planning and decision making to adjacent local governments; regional, state, and federal agencies; and other organizations.

7.2 GOVERNMENTAL UNITS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO THE TOWN OF WASCOTT

The Town of Wascott shares a common border with the Counties of Bayfield and Washburn, the Towns of Gordon and Dairyland, Douglas County; Town of Barnes, Bayfield County; and the Towns of Minong and Frog Creek, Washburn County. Other indirect relationships exist between the Northwood School District, State of Wisconsin, and National Park Service. These relationships are at varied levels. Enhancing the relationship of the town with all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions can and will advance dialog and actions necessary to move the town forward.

Adjacent Jurisdictions

The Town of Wascott generally maintains a cooperative relationship with all adjoining towns. Due to limited population and land use activities along the borders with Dairyland and Barnes, the town has not had issues with these communities. A more open dialog is represented between Gordon and Minong as a greater percentage of the population lies near these communities and shopping and employment opportunities are more available in these areas.

Overall there are no major conflicts between the adjoining towns. Existing and future land use activities and community facility developments are not anticipated to impact the town or its residents or property owners. As the need to provide services to an increasing population and housing density, cooperative ventures between towns must be explored. These cooperative ventures could result in shared services where the overall cost to a town providing the services alone could be significantly higher than with other towns partnering together.

Schools

Students in the Town of Wascott attend the Northwood School District located just south of the Douglas County line in the Town of Minong. The Town of Wascott maintains a cooperative relationship with the school district but does not directly participate in administration, facility siting, or improvement issues. The town and school district do not have any existing conflicts.

The district relocated its facility from the Village of Minong to its present location in the Town of Minong in 1995. The relocation brought the facility closer to the town's student population and resulted in a more modern facility. Although there are no plans for major facility upgrades or expansions, in the future as the need for improvements are warranted, it is encouraged that the school district engage the public and local governments in discussions that seek multi-purpose use of the school facilities in an effort to maximize community use.

County and Regional Agencies

Douglas County has some jurisdiction within the town, particularly, as it pertains to zoning (both shoreland and non-shoreland), as Wascott has adopted the Douglas County Zoning Ordinance. In areas where Douglas County has jurisdiction, the county seeks input from the town before making decisions affecting the town. Likewise, the town has attempted to maintain that link of communication with Douglas County by providing recommendations. The county's jurisdiction has at times created conflict within the town. Future cooperation will be especially important as it relates to:

- coordination with the development of a future Douglas County Comprehensive Plan,
- enforcement of zoning and shoreland regulations, and
- revisions and updates to the county zoning ordinance and official map.

The town expects that the county will fully consider recommendations provided by Wascott's comprehensive plan. Likewise, the town expects the county to understand that the future land use map provides a general pattern for development that promotes economic development, protects the environment, and maintains the rural northwoods character.

Washburn County borders the Town of Wascott to the south, while the Bayfield County line forms the eastern boundary of the town. This close proximity requires the town to communicate on a multi-government level. Future enhancement to existing communication levels will help minimize or mitigate potential problems that may arise on road maintenance or sharing other services and facilities. Continued interaction is encouraged, especially relating to future land use decisions and potential development projects.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) was formed under Section 60.0309 of Wisconsin State Statutes to provide a range of services to local units of government within each respective boundary. Regional planning commissions provide planning assistance, assist local interests in responding to state and federal programs, serve as a coordinating agency for programs, and provide other technical and advisory assistance to local governments. Douglas County and the Town of Wascott are within the boundary of the NWRPC.

Under Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, each regional planning commission must also develop a comprehensive plan. Under this law, regional planning commissions will be

responsible for developing a plan that takes on a regional aspect. In development of this regional plan, it is important the town be solicited for input as it relates to the town comprehensive plan.

State Agencies

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Although there are several departments and bureaus located within the State of Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary agencies the town corresponds with regarding development activities. Several of the goals, objectives, and actions will require continued cooperation with these agencies to fully achieve the desires of the town.

The WDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and the sustainable management of woodlands, wetlands, and other natural wildlife habitat areas while the WisDOT is responsible for planning and development of state highways and other multi-modal transportation systems. Open communication and participation in land use, natural resources, and transportation decisions, which may impact the town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Federal Agencies

The National Park Service manages the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (St. Croix River). Designation of the river as a scenic riverway has resulted in the development of a management plan intended to preserve the river from future development and to protect the unique wildlife and aquatic species along this route. The portion of the scenic riverway in the town is contained wholly within Douglas County forest lands and is identified as a near-primitive northwoods area. There are no conflicts between the park service and the town.

7.3 AGREEMENTS WITH ADJACENT JURISDICTIONS

The Town of Wascott is engaged in several agreements that may qualify as processes under Chapter 66 of the Wisconsin State Statute or as memorandums of understanding (MOU). These agreements or MOU’s include the following.

Ambulance: Wascott and the Town of Gordon share in the responsibilities for maintaining a local ambulance service. A contract with Gold Cross Ambulance is also in place that allows the two towns to request services when necessary.

Fire: The Wascott Volunteer Fire Department protects Wascott. Volunteer staff providing fire protection throughout the town represents the department. The department also provides services to the adjoining towns. Agreements between the fire department and other area fire departments are also in place to provide backup assistance if necessary.

Gordon/Wascott Transfer Station: The Town of Wascott entered into a 20-year contract with the Town of Gordon for this transfer station.

Roadway Maintenance: Wascott has verbal agreements with surrounding towns to provide maintenance on select roads of other towns.

7.4 EXISTING/POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

The Town of Wascott must identify existing and potential conflicts that may arise between Wascott and other governmental units over the 20-year planning period.

Existing Conflicts

1. Lack of maintenance efforts by the Town of Minong on Eagle Point Road.
2. Lack of road maintenance on the county trunk highway system.
3. Library taxes paid by the town are high with limited availability.
4. Geographic location seems to limit county services.
5. Only one county supervisor representing three southern towns.
6. Issues surrounding the existing transfer station.

Potential Conflicts

1. Inequities between taxes paid and services provided.
2. Status of county zoning, adoption ordinance, and official map.

7.5 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

As part of the planning process existing or potential land use or other development conflicts were reviewed. To provide the framework for resolving planning related conflicts that may arise between the town and adjoining or overlapping jurisdictions, a conflict resolution process (Intergovernmental Cooperation Planning Agreement) was developed to provide a low-cost, flexible approach to resolving land use disputes between governmental entities. This process should not supersede local processes established for conflict resolution and is not intended to be used by parties dissatisfied with the appropriate application of local rules and regulations within their jurisdiction.

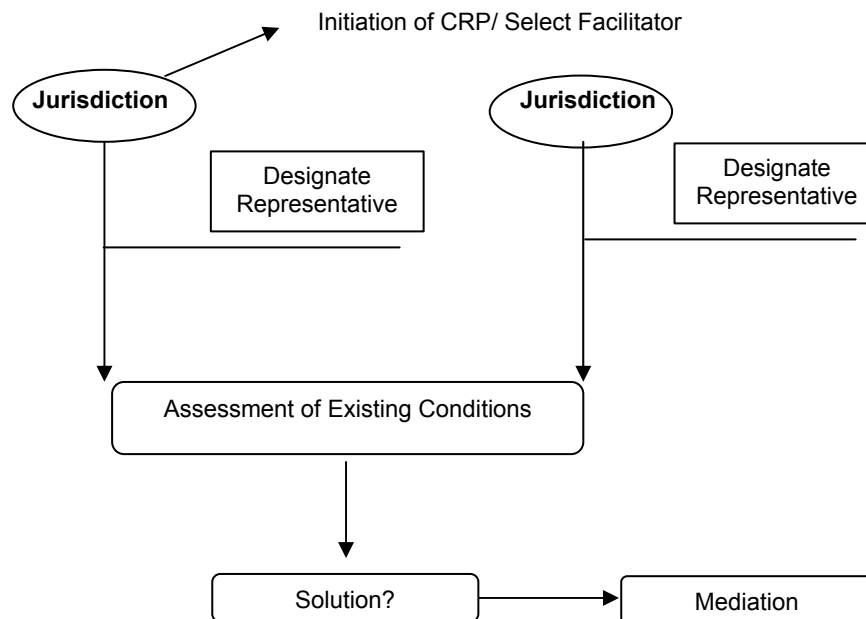
The conflict resolution process (CRP) should involve an *authorized representative* (selected by local governing authority on 2/3 majority) of the involved jurisdictions. The designated representative shall have the authority to act on behalf of the jurisdiction and will be responsible for maintaining communications with the jurisdiction throughout the conflict resolution process. The process should accommodate public participation and comment pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 19.81(2).

SECTION I Initiation of the CRP. The CRP may be initiated by a local jurisdiction or any other parties named in the *Intergovernmental Cooperation Planning Agreement*. Requests to initiate CRP should be submitted to an outside facilitator and to affected jurisdictions and shall clearly and concisely identify the land use issue, the jurisdictions involved, and the affected

jurisdiction's authorized representatives. Upon receipt of CRP notification and unless otherwise requested by the jurisdictions involved, the facilitator would proceed with the issues assessment process.

SECTION II Assessment of existing conditions. An assessment of existing conditions shall be conducted by the *outside facilitator* named under Section I. The assessment should consist of examination of pertinent documents, maps, ordinances, or other materials and/or public meetings to gather input from affected jurisdictions (representatives). Meetings should allow equal time for jurisdictions to comment on the issue and to propose suitable alternatives.

SECTION III Mediation. All land use disputes should be mediated by a neutral party who understands land use planning and growth issues in the Wascott area. A mutually acceptable mediator is to be selected from those groups or individuals listed in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement.



An informal agreement was developed in order to provide the framework for a coordinated planning process and to define a procedure for conflict resolution throughout the planning process. It is the intention of this agreement to outline the coordination actions necessary to ensure consistency in planning related matters and to facilitate communication between all units of government. A formal agreement addressing intergovernmental cooperation and the conflict resolution process should be developed and implemented following the completion of the comprehensive planning process. This agreement could include the following:

- 1) Agree to openly cooperate and share information pertinent to the planning process.
- 2) Agree to coordinate planning activities with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions, including school districts.

- 3) Agree to work to ensure orderly transitions or buffers in areas of joint concern between different communities.
- 4) Recognize that policy, land use, or development decisions by one party affect other jurisdictions. The parties further recognize the need to involve the property owners and residents of the area in the land use planning and priority-setting process.
- 5) Agree to examine the potential for inter-local agreements addressing extra-jurisdictional services when increased efficiency and effectiveness will be achieved.
- 6) Agree to review comprehensive plans and plan amendments of adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions and plans of state and regional agencies for consistency with local planning.
- 7) Agree to utilize the informal conflict resolution process to resolve planning-related conflicts between adjacent and overlapping units of government where appropriate.
- 8) Agree to resolve inconsistencies, which may arise between adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions, through use of formal or informal negotiations or through use of the conflict resolution process.
- 9) Agree to work cooperatively with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions to develop and implement a formalized intergovernmental cooperation agreement as a component of the Intergovernmental Cooperation element of the comprehensive planning process. This agreement should coordinate with other comprehensive plans of local governments and regional and state agencies. The formal agreement should outline the process for continued coordination and cooperation and define the mechanisms for conflict resolution.
- 10) Acknowledge that this Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement is not intended to and does not create legally binding obligations on any of the parties to act in accordance with its provisions. Rather, it constitutes a good faith statement of the intent of the parties to cooperate in a manner designed to meet the mutual objectives of all the parties involved in an efficient, equitable, and responsible manner.

7.6 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 and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions.

Goal: Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions.

Objective: Coordinate the sharing of community facilities/equipment/services.

- A. Identify and analyze existing agreements for cost effectiveness and efficiency.
- B. Make recommendations for possible future changes as needed.
- C. Review agreements on an annual basis.
- D. Negotiate agreements with minimal terms required to be cost effective.

Objective: Take a pro-active role to improve communications with other jurisdictions and governmental bodies.

- A. Implement productive and routine communication.
- B. Share the Wascott Comprehensive Plan with other jurisdictions and organizations.
- C. Meet on a biannual basis with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions.

Objective: Develop a good working relationship with surrounding towns and other governmental entities.

- A. Meet on a regular basis.
- B. Identify potential conflicts and concerns.
- C. Use a process to resolve potential conflicts.