

Intergovernmental Cooperation

In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address, identify, and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communicating and sharing information, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue. It can even involve consolidating services, jurisdictions, or transferring territory.

Many issues cross jurisdictional boundaries, affecting more than one community. For example, air, water, and wildlife pass over the landscape regardless of boundaries so that one jurisdiction's activities with regard to air, water, and wildlife impact other jurisdictions downwind and/or downstream.

Today, increased communication technologies and personal mobility mean that people, money, and resources also move across jurisdictions, as quickly and freely as air and water. Persons traveling along roadways use a network of transportation routes, moving between jurisdictions without even realizing it. Frequently, the action of one governmental unit impacts others. Increasingly, we have come to the realization that many vital issues are regional in nature. Watersheds, economic conditions, commuter patterns, housing, media markets, and effects from growth and change are all issues that spill over municipal boundaries and impact the region as a whole.

This element will contain information regarding existing plans or agreements, opportunities for the future, existing and potential conflicts, benefits to cooperation and identify goals, objectives, policies, recommendations, and programs for intergovernmental cooperation.

Town of Round Lake Intergovernmental Relationships Analysis

The Town of Round Lake shares municipal borders with six towns, one county (**Map 7.1-Governmental Jurisdictions**) and has relations with a number of state, federal and regional agencies. The following information details Round Lake's relationship with these different adjacent and overlapping governmental units.

- Town of Chippewa (Ashland County)
- Town of Hayward
- Town of Hunter
- Town of Lenroot
- Town of Spider Lake
- Town of Winter
- Ashland County
- Sawyer County
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Hayward School District
- Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indian
- Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- U.S. Forest Service (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest)
- U. S. Department of Agriculture

Relationship to Town of Chippewa (Ashland County)

The eastern boundary of Round Lake borders the Town of Chippewa in Ashland County. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Chippewa.

Relationship to Town of Hayward

The western boundary of Round Lake borders the Town of Hayward. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Hayward.

Relationship to Town of Hunter

Round Lake shares most of its southern border with the Town of Hunter. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Hunter.

Relationship to Town of Lenroot

The northwestern corner of Round Lake borders the Town of Lenroot. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Lenroot.

Relationship to Town of Spider Lake

Round Lake shares most of its northern border with Spider Lake. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Spider Lake.

Relationship to Town of Winter

The southeastern portion of Round Lake is adjacent to the Town of Winter. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Town of Winter.

Relationship to Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO)

Parcels of LCO tribal land border the Town of Round Lake. The Town of Round Lake has a limited and respectful relationship with LCO. It has a working relationship with LCO through the county wide mutual aid fire department agreement. LCO provides no services to the Town of Round Lake.

Relationship to Sawyer County

Sawyer County has some jurisdiction within the town. In particular, Sawyer County has jurisdiction over land divisions, on-site sanitary sewer systems, and zoning (including shoreland, wetland, and floodplain areas) in the Town of Round Lake. Sawyer County also owns and maintains County Trunk Highways and the Sawyer County Forest. The development of the future land use map is intended to help direct Town officials, Sawyer County Zoning Committee, and Sawyer County Board of Supervisors with a better understanding of development trends and future land use patterns. In areas where the county has jurisdiction in the Town, the county attempts to gain input from the Town before making decisions affecting Town land use. Likewise, the Town has attempted to maintain open lines of communication with Sawyer County. At the time the Town is developing its comprehensive plan, Sawyer County is also in the process of completing a countywide comprehensive plan. It is imperative that Sawyer County work with the Town and the Town with Sawyer County so that any inconsistencies can be worked out.

The Town of Round Lake has a good working relationship with Sawyer County, especially with the Highway Department. Services provided to the Town by Sawyer County include, but are not limited to the following:

- Highway Department: Help with road projects/bridge aid
- Zoning
- Public Health
- Emergency Government
- Ambulance
- Soil & Water Conservation assistance
- Transit
- Police/Sheriff protection

Relationship to Ashland County

The Ashland County line forms the eastern boundary of the town. This close proximity requires the Town of Round Lake to communicate with Ashland County from time to time. This helps to minimize or mitigate potential problems that may arise on road maintenance (reciprocity agreements) or the sharing of other services. The Town of Round Lake has a good relationship with the Ashland County.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The Town of Round Lake is within the boundaries of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC). Technical and professional services from NWRPC are available and have been utilized by Round Lake and other governmental bodies in Sawyer County. The Town of Round Lake and NWRPC share mutual respect and work together, exemplified in their relationship in developing a *Land Use Plan* and to develop this *Comprehensive Plan*. It is important when Northwest Regional Planning Commission starts to develop a regional comprehensive plan that the Town of Round Lake is solicited for input relating to the overall future land use efforts already completed for the Town.

Hayward Community School District

Currently, the Hayward School District does not have any facilities located within the Town of Round Lake and does not have a plan to construct any new facilities in the town at this time. All of the schools (high school, middle school, intermediate school, and elementary school) and the district offices are located in the City of Hayward. The Town has no formal relationship with the Hayward Community School District other than collection of levied tax monies.

State Agencies

The Town has many different levels of interaction with state level agencies.

- **Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)** - Through the DOR shared revenue program, the State of Wisconsin distributes tax revenues to units of government for law enforcement, road maintenance, fire protection, and general government administration.

- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)** - Many land use issues concerning natural resources throughout the town call on the WDNR for assistance and guidance. The DNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection, the long term management of the State Public Trust Waters, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas, and the sustainable management of storm water regulations.
- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)** – The WisDOT, among other things, dictates how much General Transportation Aids (GTA) the Town receives annually. In 2009 Round Lake received \$185,526.60 in GTA for the upkeep and maintenance of town roads. When WisDOT plans to improve the STH 77 corridor, it will have significant impact on the town. Therefore, open communication and participation in land use decisions, which may impact the town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

The Town has no specific agreements with any state agency. The Town does receive state funds including: State shared revenues, General Transportation Aids, Recycling grants, Voter grants etc. The state agencies the town works directly with on a regular basis are the Department of Natural Resources through the following: the permitting processes required for ongoing road/ and or bridge construction projects, assistance/ review of certain ordinances (examples; Lake no-wake zone, ATV route, Snowmobile access), grants; recycling, ATV/ Snowmobile trail bridge wing, and lake water monitoring equipment. The second state agency the Town of Round Lake works directly with is the State Elections Board through the state wide election and voter registration system (SVRS).

Federal Agencies

The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for the management of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, which takes up a sizable portion of the town. The Town of Round Lake has a limited but good relationship with the federal government relative to national forest lands and forest roads located within the Town. The Town plows forest service roads as requested. Forest Service tries to provide the Town with gravel for maintenance of forest service roads when possible at a reduced cost.

Siting and Building Public Facilities

A community's public facilities and infrastructure is a major community asset that is not only a major financial commitment, but an influence on overall community design, land uses, and attractiveness to residents and businesses. In many cases a community requires facilities to meet the needs of its own residents. There are opportunities however in which facilities have excess capacity or could be more cost effectively utilized or constructed if shared with other communities. Facilities where this may occur include wastewater treatment facilities, parks, libraries, municipal buildings, and water storage to name a few. The Town of Round Lake does not currently share any public facilities with other governmental units. There are currently no plans to jointly site any public facility with another governmental unit.

Sharing Public Services and Equipment

Similar to public infrastructure and facilities, public services and equipment can be shared to increase cost effectiveness or efficiency. For example, a community may have an administrative or public works employee who is employed full time, but cannot be fully utilized and kept busy full-time. The excess capacity of that position could be contracted via an intergovernmental agreement or other mechanism to be used by a neighboring community who may not be able to employ a similar position full-time. A similar strategy could also be applied to equipment owned by a community. Finding these opportunities requires communication between neighboring communities and a commitment to finding unique solutions. Currently Round Lake shares...

Town of Round Lake Agreements

Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2) (g) indicates that this element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the Town of Round Lake is a party under §66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309. These include any plans or agreements relating to intergovernmental cooperation, boundary agreements and regional planning commissions. The following is a list (A) of all known agreements between Round Lake and other adjacent or overlapping units of government and (B) a list of all known plans which may have an impact on the town.

(A) Agreements

- 1) The Town of Round Lake has informal agreements with Spider Lake and Ashland County on boarder roads. Where roads cross County borders, whichever municipality finds it most convenient will plow the road. Also where roads transverse multiple municipalities, paving of entire road surface will often be done at the same time cooperatively, versus one municipality doing one section and the other doing another section at a different time. The Town of Round Lake fire department provides fire and EMS service to the Town of Hunter by an annual paid contract.

(B) Plans

- 1) Sawyer County Outdoor Recreation Plan (2001-2006)
- 2) Sawyer County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (2003-2008)
- 3) A Plan for the Resources of Sawyer County Soil & Water Conservation District (1981)
- 4) Sawyer County Solid Waste Management Plan (July 1983)
- 5) Sawyer County Farmland Preservation Plan (May 1981)
- 6) Sawyer County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1995-2005)
- 7) Sawyer County Highway Improvement Plan
- 8) Wisconsin State Highway Improvement Plan
- 9) The 2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan
- 10) The Travel Management Project-Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Access Plan

Intergovernmental Cooperation Conflicts

The following identify existing and potential conflicts between Round Lake and other governmental units (adjacent and overlapping) and describe a process to resolve such conflicts.

Potential problems exist with overlapping jurisdiction relative to zoning and development issues. The town has multiple lakes that are located within several jurisdictions. Each municipality may have different criteria for judging how, or to what level development should occur on a given body of water. Further potential conflict may arise over the use of forest trails and/or roads traversing several jurisdictions. Different municipalities may want to focus on and promote different and often conflicting uses; for example, biking and skiing vs. snowmobiling and ATV riding.

Additional areas of conflict have and may continue to occur as a result of the Town of Round Lake being covered under Sawyer County Zoning. The Town and County do not always agree on rezoning and conditional use permits.

Conflict Resolution

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Town of Round Lake's Intergovernmental Cooperation Element identify processes to resolve conflicts and disputes between Round Lake and other units of government. What follows is a discussion of formal and informal techniques for resolving conflicts. Each dispute and/or conflict resolution technique has a purpose. When considering how to resolve a conflict, the town will need to determine whether the conflict can be settled out of court and which resolution process is the most appropriate for the type of conflict.

- **Mediation** is a cooperative process involving two or more parties and a mediator. The mediator, a neutral third party with special skills and training in dispute resolution, helps the parties voluntarily reach a mutually agreeable settlement of the issue in dispute.
- **Binding arbitration** is a process where a neutral person is given the authority to make a legally binding decision and is used only with the consent of all of the parties. The parties present evidence and examine witnesses and the arbitrator makes a determination based on evidence.
- **Non-binding arbitration** is a technique in which a neutral person is given the authority to render a non-binding decision as a basis for subsequent negotiations between the parties after the parties' present evidence and examine the witnesses.
- **Early neutral evaluation** is a process in which a neutral person evaluates brief written and oral presentations early in the litigation process. The neutral person provides an initial appraisal of the merits of the case with suggestions for conducting discovery and obtaining a legal ruling to resolve the case as efficiently as possible.
- **A focus group** can be used to resolve disputes by using a panel of citizens selected in a manner agreed upon by all of the parties. The citizens hear presentations from the parties and, after hearing the issues, the focus group deliberates and renders an advisory opinion.

- **A mini-trial** consists of presentations by the parties to a panel of selected and authorized by all the parties to negotiate a settlement of the dispute that, after the presentations, considers the legal and factual issues and attempts to negotiate a settlement.
- **A moderated settlement conference** is a process in which conferences are conducted by a neutral person, who hears brief presentations from the parties, in order to facilitate negotiations. The neutral person renders an advisory opinion in aid of negotiation.
- **A summary jury trial** is a technique where attorneys make abbreviated presentations to a small jury selected from the regular jury list. The jury renders an advisory decision to help the parties assess their position to aid future negotiation.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Benefits

There are many reasons intergovernmental cooperation makes sense. The following are some examples:

- **Cost savings** – Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can enable some communities to provide their residents with services that would otherwise be too costly.
- **Address regional issues** – By communicating and coordinating their actions, and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues which are regional in nature.
- **Early identification of issues** – Cooperation enables jurisdictions to identify and resolve potential conflicts at an early stage, before affected interests have established rigid positions, before the political stakes have been raised, and before issues have become conflicts or crises.
- **Reduced litigation** – Communities that cooperate are able to resolve issues before they become mired in litigation. Reducing the possibility of costly litigation can save money, as well as the disappointment and frustration of unwanted outcomes.
- **Consistency** – Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities and other jurisdictions.
- **Predictability** – Jurisdictions that cooperate provide greater predictability to residents, developers, businesses, and others. Lack of predictability can result in lost time, money, and opportunity.

- **Understanding** – As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another’s needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them.
- **Trust** – Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions.
- **History of success** – When jurisdictions cooperate successfully in one area, the success creates positive feelings and an expectation that other intergovernmental issues can be resolved as well.
- **Service to citizens** – The biggest beneficiaries of intergovernmental cooperation are citizens for whom government was created in the first place. They may not understand, or even care about, the intricacies of a particular intergovernmental issue, but all Wisconsin residents can appreciate their benefits, such as costs savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

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

Developing relationships with adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions that encourage open communication is critical to the effectiveness of the comprehensive plan. Communication with adjoining towns, counties, state, and federal agencies represent important opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation. This element captures the current and future needs for cooperation amongst partners as the town entertains projects and plans.

The Plan Commission with input from town property owners developed goals, objectives and action steps to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with the identified partners.

Goal 1: Establish mutually beneficial relations with County and adjoining governmental jurisdictions.

Objective 1: Establish and maintain positive communication with other units of government.

- Action 1: Provide a copy of the Comprehensive Plan and any proposed Plan updates or amendments to governmental units within the Town, Public Library, neighboring governmental units, and Sawyer County.
Primary responsible party - Plan Commission
When – Ongoing

Action 2: Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When – Ongoing

Action 3: Improve working relationships with neighboring communities and governmental units to provide efficient and cost effective emergency services, road maintenance, and other services when appropriate.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

When – Ongoing

Action 4: Improve communication with the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors regarding local issues, concerns, long range planning and land use controls.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When – Ongoing

Action 5: Maintain timely and effective correspondence with Sawyer County, the U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Town’s Association, area schools, and other groups and agencies.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

When – Ongoing

Action 6: Maintain constructive relationships with the various levels of government, non-governmental organizations and private organizations that have a vested interest in the protection and conservation of land and water resources.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When - Ongoing

Goal 2: Coordinate and communicate planning activities with other communities and non-governmental units in the county to address regional issues that cross political and watershed boundaries and jurisdictions, to ensure efficient use and management

of resources, and to provide for increased certainty between all levels of government, developers and landowners.

Objective 1: Foster effective intergovernmental working relationships that exhibit mutual trust and respect.

Action 1: Participate in a joint meeting schedule, as needed, between local government units to encourage discussion and action on area issues, long-range planning and land use controls.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When – Ongoing

Action 2: Create opportunities to jointly hold public forums and workshops to exchange information and increase public understanding and acceptance of innovative planning tools, programs, and regulatory procedures.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When – Ongoing

Action 3: Maintain constructive and working relationships with the various levels of government, non-governmental organizations and private organizations that have a vested interest in the protection and conservation of known environmentally sensitive areas, environmental corridors, agricultural and forested lands, and significant rural conservation or natural resource areas from premature development.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When – Ongoing

Action 4: Encourage local government agencies to provide timely notifications to the Town of Round Lake about proposed developments, land subdivisions, rezoning, and public improvements from that town which is closest to our border.

Primary responsible party - Town Board

Responsible party - Plan Commission

When - Ongoing

- Action 5: Provide timely notifications regarding proposed rezoning or conditional use permits in the Town of Round Lake to the clerk of nearest bordering town.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
Responsible party - Plan Commission
When – Ongoing
- Action 6: Support the efforts of Sawyer County to adopt and implement county Comprehensive plans encompassing the principles of Smart Growth and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
Responsible party - Plan Commission
When – Ongoing
- Action 7: Improve communication with the public regarding the announcement of meetings, activities, development projects, programs, and solutions.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When - Ongoing

Goal 3: Seek opportunities to enhance the provision of coordinated public services and facilities such as police, fire, emergency rescue, waste management, transportation systems (e.g. roads, bike/pedestrian routes, transit, etc...), parks and recreation with other units of government.

Objective 1: Share community facilities wherever possible.

- Action 1: Utilize the use of bulk purchasing arrangements with neighboring local governments for the purchase of such things as road salt, fuel, road work supplies and machinery to lower the unit cost of materials and supplies.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When – Ongoing
- Action 2: Pursue opportunities with local units of government to package bid proposals for services such as garbage and recycling services.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When – Ongoing

- Action 3: Share information, equipment, resources, facilities, technology and services that have cross-jurisdictional applications.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When - Ongoing
- Action 4: Identify opportunities to jointly provide expanded or new services such as additional recreational programs, transit programs, bicycle trail and park facilities with neighboring communities.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
Responsible party - Plan Commission
When – Ongoing
- Action 5: Pursue joint purchasing or use of equipment, facilities or services.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When – Ongoing
- Action 6: Before the purchase of new town facilities or equipment or the reinstatement of service agreements, the town shall pursue options for trading, renting, sharing, or contraction such items from neighboring jurisdictions.
Primary responsible party - Town Board
When - Ongoing

Coordination with Other Plan Elements

Intergovernmental Cooperation weaves its way into every element of this Comprehensive Plan.

HOUSING

Coordination with surrounding towns will allow all communities to better address housing development pressures. This approach will help the Town to protect forest, agricultural land, and natural resources by preventing sprawling development patterns that can jeopardize and threaten natural resources.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation improvements made to the County and State highways have the potential to affect land use and development patterns in the town. Successful coordination with WisDOT will ensure the state highways function well over the long-term.

Cooperate with local governments and organizations on building and maintaining local snowmobile, ATV, bicycle, hiking and walking trails.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Coordination with surrounding towns will allow all communities to better address services and facility availability. Cooperating with neighboring communities may reduce Town service, operating, and equipment costs. Coordinate with neighboring communities the need for parks and recreation facilities. Continue to share and operate police, fire, and emergency medical services to provide quality, cost effective service.

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cooperation with the WDNR, US Forest Service, governmental and non-governmental agencies can help the Town to better protect its natural and particularly sensitive areas. Coordinate with surrounding towns and governments to develop mapping of natural corridors for the protection of wildlife and endangered species.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town's ability to expand economically depends on quality services being provided, not only by the Town but also by its intergovernmental partners. The Town's ability to support development opportunities on its border must be coordinated with neighboring communities to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses. Cooperating with neighboring communities may also help the area realize economic development goals, including job growth.

LAND USE

Coordination with surrounding towns will allow all communities to better address housing development pressures to protect forest, agricultural land, and natural resources by preventing sprawling development patterns. Coordinate with Sawyer County the development of parcel level data for the Town of Round Lake. Cooperate with neighboring towns and governments to protect and conserve environmental corridors. Continue to encourage neighboring towns to notify the Town of Round Lake regarding proposed rezone or conditional use permits in their respective town when it affects any border.