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## Chapter IX: Intergovernmental Cooperation

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- Pursue an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Beloit, related to boundary adjustments, utility services, development design standards, joint redevelopment, and road and trail improvements.
- Implement the 1999 Cooperative Boundary Plan with the Town of Turtle and limit premature rural development within that Town in areas that are more appropriate for long-term urban growth.
- Work in collaboration with the Beloit School District, Blackhawk Technical College, and Beloit College on joint educational initiatives to enhance community learning and well-being.
- Collaborate with local economic development groups and other Beloit-area communities, Rock County, Janesville, and Rockford on regional economic growth.
- Work with the Beloit Area MPO and participating local communities, WisDOT, and IDOT on transportation projects that will benefit the City.



In a state with over 2,500 units of government, in an era of diminished local government resources, and for a community located along a state line, it is critical to coordinate decisions that affect neighboring communities and to seek intergovernmental cooperation and regionalization to provide services more efficiently.

This chapter includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision making; incorporates by reference all plans and agreements to which the City of Beloit is a party under §66.0225, §66.0301, §66.0307, and §66.0309, Wisconsin Statutes; and identifies known existing or potential conflicts between this *Comprehensive Plan* and the plans of adjacent cities and towns, counties, states, and school districts.

## **A. Existing Local Governmental Framework**

The Beloit area has an understandably complex array of government agencies, including two cities, two towns, three school districts, a metropolitan planning organization, and various agencies covering two states. All play an important part in the area's future. Map 1 shows the boundaries of the Beloit area's neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

Relationships among the various political jurisdictions were analyzed to identify future opportunities and potential planning conflicts. The following is a summary of this analysis, including an analysis of potential conflicts between plans and policies of adjoining and overlapping governments and those of the City of Beloit. Where conflicts are apparent or may occur, processes to resolve them are proposed later in this chapter.

### **1. Town of Beloit**

The Town of Beloit is located to the west and north of the City of Beloit. The Town's 1997 Master Plan proposes rural residential and agricultural land uses in the western portion of the Town and commercial and higher density residential uses adjacent to and surrounding the City of Beloit, mainly east of the Rock River. In updating its plan, the Town is taking an approach of looking at different parts of the Town on a district-by-district basis. At the time of writing, the Town was preparing a neighborhood development plan for an area between Afton Road and the Rock River, north of Big Hill Park. The Town was also commencing a park and open space system plan.

The Town provides a variety of services to its residents including law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical services. Portions of the Town are also serviced the Town's sanitary sewer district and wastewater treatment plant. The Town also has its own zoning and subdivision regulations. The Town has investigated the possibility of incorporation, but has not yet commenced the required formal incorporation process under Wisconsin Statutes. That process necessitates boundary agreements with all neighboring communities.

At the time of writing, the City of Town of Beloit had, in fact, been engaged in discussions regarding a potential agreement regarding boundary rationalization and utility services, particularly west of the Rock River.

At present, there are no known conflicts between the *City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan* and the plans and policies of the Town. The Future Land Use map (Map 10) of this *Comprehensive Plan* does not yet acknowledge future development in the Town to the north of Big Hill Park, west of the river. This is mainly because the Town was engaged in a neighborhood development planning process at the time of writing. Further, there exist many opportunities for the enhancement of both communities through joint redevelopment and other initiatives.

### **2. Town of Turtle**

The Town of Turtle is located to the east and northeast of the City of Beloit. The Town adopted its most recent Land Use Plan in 2004. That plan proposes exclusive agricultural or general agricultural uses in the majority of the Town. However, the future land use map identifies rural residential and commercial land uses near the City of Beloit and along major transportation corridors. These include planned residential

development areas west of the Interstate and planned commercial development near the interchange of Interstate 39/90 and Shopiere Road. At the time of writing, the Town was working with Rock County to prepare a complete nine-element comprehensive plan to meet state planning requirements.

The Town administers its own zoning ordinance. Subdivision regulations in the Town are administered by Rock County. There are no public sewer and water utilities within Turtle.

The City of Beloit and the Town of Turtle completed a Cooperative Boundary Plan in 1999, in effect until December 31, 2020. The Cooperative Boundary Plan—essentially an intergovernmental agreement which is endorsed by the State—establishes procedures and timelines for municipal boundary changes (annexation) and compensation obligations from the City to the Town for certain boundary changes. The Future Land Use map in this *Comprehensive Plan* shows “Boundary Adjustment Areas,” where boundary changes may occur through 2020 via future annexations (technically called “attachments”). The main Boundary Adjustment Area is between the current Gateway Business Park and the state line—essentially no development may occur in this area prior to attachment. Other noteworthy provisions of the Cooperative Boundary Plan are as follows:

- Before December 31, 2020, no lands outside the Boundary Adjustment Area may be attached to the City except by mutual consent of the Town and City.
- Within the Boundary Adjustment Area, the land use plan that is in effect in the Boundary Adjustment Area is the City’s 1998 Comprehensive Plan/Gateway Master Plan, with any adjustments to those plans for the Boundary Adjustment Area subject to agreement from both the City and Town.
- The Cooperative Boundary Plan indicates that “it is the Town’s intent to keep the land outside of the Boundary Adjustment Area in its current use,” which is predominately agriculture. The Town’s 1998 Land Use Plan map, which is included in the Cooperative Boundary Plan, identifies very little land for additional non-farm development, with the exception of additional commercial development near the Interstate 39/90-Shopiere Road interchange.

Since 1999, the City and Town have had some discussions about amending the Cooperative Boundary Plan. However, to date no amendments have been approved.

This *City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan* was prepared to be in full compliance with the 1999 Cooperative Boundary Plan. The Future Land Use map in this *Comprehensive Plan* does show more business park/industrial development in the Gateway area than was represented in the City’s 1998 plans, in some areas that were formerly planned for residential development. Also, outside of the Boundary Adjustment Area, this *Comprehensive Plan’s* Future Land Use map identifies certain areas as “Long Range Urban Growth Areas,” where City policies advise very limited development in advance of future urban development on public sewer and water service. Because such urban development may occur beyond 2020, and the Town’s stated intent was to keep lands outside the Boundary Adjustment Area in their current use over that period, this approach is not inconsistent with the Cooperative Boundary Plan. However, it could lead to some disagreement between the City and Town, as the Town’s 2004 Land Use Plan shows significant parts of this City “Long Range Urban Growth Area” for rural residential and commercial development.

### **3. City of South Beloit**

The City of South Beloit is located south of the City of Beloit, in Illinois. Highway 75 is South Beloit’s main commercial corridor, and also a key entryway for the City of Beloit. South Beloit recently adopted a land use plan map. That map identifies significant commercial development along Highway 75 (Gardner Road) and, to a lesser extent, near Shirland Avenue west of the Rock River.

The *City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan*—particularly the Future Land Use map—attempts to reflect the current and emerging plans of South Beloit. Achieving high-quality development and signage design along Highway 75 and joint economic development through the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation are key initiatives that the two communities can pursue over the planning period.

#### **4. City of Janesville**

Janesville is the largest city in Rock County, with an estimated 2005 population of 62,130. The downtowns of Beloit and Janesville are about 11 miles apart, and municipal boundaries are even closer. The Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport was incorporated into the City in 2007. The extraterritorial jurisdictions of the two cities now adjoin one another (see Map 1).

Janesville is currently in the process of updating its comprehensive plan, downtown plan, park and open space plan, and other small area plans. Janesville and the City of Beloit have engaged in partnerships over years, including joint economic development in collaboration with Rock County and bus service between the two cities. There are no known conflicts between the plans of Beloit and Janesville; in fact, there may be growing opportunities for collaboration in the areas of economic positioning, grant writing, and road and trail connections.

#### **5. Rock County**

At the time of writing, Rock County was in the process of preparing a comprehensive plan meeting the State's comprehensive planning legislation. The primary purposes of the plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern and to devise strategies and recommendations the County can follow to achieve its desired development pattern. County staff is also assisting in preparing nine Town comprehensive plans, including the Town of Turtle. There are no known conflicts between this City *Plan* and the County's planning efforts. However, the City intends to advocate for full inclusion of the City's *Plan* in the County comprehensive plan and collaborate on other initiatives.

#### **6. Winnebago County and the City of Rockford**

The future of Winnebago County and the City of Rockford, to Beloit's south, are connected to the health of the region that includes Beloit. Rockford's 2000 population of 150,115 makes it the largest City between Chicago and Madison. While the plans and policies of these two governments were not extensively analyzed during this planning process, there exist opportunities for joint economic and transportation initiatives over the planning period.

### **B. Important Regional and State Agency Jurisdictions**

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#### **1. State Agencies**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Southwest Region office in Madison serves Beloit and all of Rock County. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides service to the Beloit area primarily out of its regional office in Fitchburg. Parallel agencies operate in Illinois, just south of Beloit. The plans and policies of WisDOT and IDOT are described in the Transportation chapter, while the plans and policies of WisDNR as they affect Beloit are included in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources chapter. There are no known conflicts between the City's plans and those of state agencies operating in the Beloit Area.

#### **2. Stateline Area Transportation Study (Beloit Area MPO)**

The Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the Beloit area. Its jurisdiction covers the City plus five other local communities in the Beloit area, both north and south of the state line. SLATS' main policies and directions are articulated in its Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvements Program, described more fully in the Transportation chapter. There are no conflicts between the City's plans and those of SLATS.

#### **3. Regional Planning Jurisdictions**

The City of Beloit is not located within the jurisdiction of any regional planning commission or council of governments.

#### 4. Public Educational Districts

For K-12 public education, most of the City of Beloit lies within the School District of Beloit. At the time of writing, the School District of Beloit was beginning to prepare a facilities study. Small parts of the City—mainly near its fringe—are within the separate Beloit-Turner School District. For technical education beyond the high school level, the City is within the Blackhawk Technical College District. These educational districts are described more fully in the Utilities, Community Facilities, and Civic Organizations chapter. There are no conflicts between the City’s plans and those of these districts.

### C. Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Policies

#### 1. Goal


- a. Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relations with adjacent and overlapping governments.

#### 2. Objectives

- a. Continue to work with SLATS and neighboring communities to encourage an orderly, efficient land use pattern and transportation network in and around the City.
- b. Work collaboratively to strengthen the Beloit School District and education in general.
- c. Continue to develop and maintain mechanisms for ongoing communication between Beloit and surrounding and overlapping units of government.
- d. Grow relationships with nearby communities and counties for an enhanced regional economic presence.


#### 3. Policies

- a. Provide a copy of this *Plan* to all surrounding local governments and districts, and continue to involve and update them on future changes to the *Plan*.
- b. Work to resolve differences between the *City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan* and the plans, policies, and ordinances of adjacent communities.
- c. Actively monitor, participate in, and review and comment on pending and future comprehensive plans and municipal incorporation proposals from nearby communities.
- d. Continue to cooperate with other units of government on issues related to land use, natural resources, places of recreation, transportation facilities, economic development, and other systems that are under shared authority or that cross governmental boundaries.
- e. Pursue new and amended boundary agreements with adjacent Towns as mechanisms to create a more predicible future near the City’s edges and reduce the need for the City to exercise its extraterritorial abilities and avoid costly future conflict.
- f. Continue to consider regionalization of public services and facilities where consolidating, coordinating, or sharing services or facilities will result in better services, cost savings, or both.
- g. Share capital improvement plans with adjoining communities to identify the potential for coordinating projects (e.g. parks), then coordinate bidding and construction of major infrastructure projects for improved efficiencies.



Open communication, intergovernmental agreements and shared services increase efficiency, reduce costly conflicts, and result in a more predicible and compact growth pattern.

- h. Partner with educational institutions in the Beloit area to improve educational achievement, help grow the economy through worker and entrepreneur training, pursue recreational programming, and enhance the economic health of the City and surrounding area (see also Utilities, Community Facilities, and Civic Organizations chapter).
- i. Continue and grow partnerships with public-private organizations and with Janesville, Rockford, Rock County, and Winnebago County on regional economic initiatives that capture the area's future potential given its unique assets and position (see also Economic Development chapter).
- j. Work with SLATS to advance regional transportation improvements, such as new arterial roads and trails (see also Transportation chapter).
- k. Continue to support regional organizations that enhance quality of life and sustainability in the area, such as the Downtown Beloit Association and Friends of Riverside Park.



Regional partnerships for education, transportation, and economic development will increase the City's economic sustainability and allow greater personal success of its residents.

## D. Intergovernmental Cooperation Recommendations and Programs

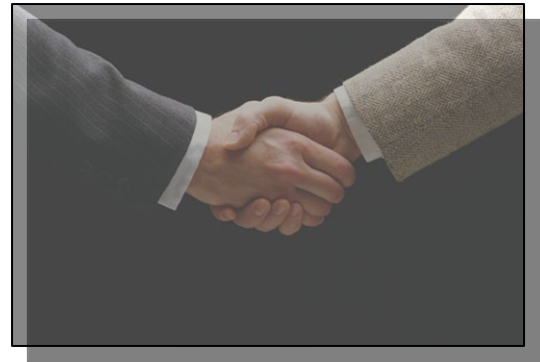
Intergovernmental communication, coordination, and cooperation are critical in implementing many of the recommendations in this *Plan*. This section builds off some of the key policies listed above, setting forth recommendations for enhanced relations with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions. It focuses in particular in areas and relationships that are not described extensively in other chapters of this *Plan*, and where potential future conflicts may be the greatest without concerted future action.

### 1. With Town of Beloit

The Town of Beloit is rather unique among Wisconsin towns in that it has a sizable population base and provides a variety of urban services. The future success of the City and Town of Beloit are closely linked. Discussions on an intergovernmental agreement were ongoing at the time of writing of this *Comprehensive Plan*. Such discussions were focused on boundary rationalization, land use, and utility provision, particularly west of the Rock River in the Afton Road corridor.

To achieve the full potential of both communities and to protect the City's interests, the City intends to pursue an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Beloit. Either the agreement discussions taking place at the time of writing may be expanded, or a follow-up agreement may be pursued, to cover the topics listed below. The form of the agreement has yet to be decided; the sidebar on the following page identifies the two main options under Wisconsin law:

- Municipal boundary adjustments: Particularly in the Afton and Cranston Road/railroad areas, the Town-City boundaries are illogical and can lead to inefficient service delivery, disinvestment, and confusion. The agreement should seek greater rationalization of boundaries in these areas. Additionally, west of the Rock River particularly in the Nye School and Creedy Road corridors, the agreement would ideally identify which lands are logically future City growth areas and which lands are logically future Town growth areas. The boundaries of the "Long Range Urban Growth Areas," as shown on Map 10, may be possible long-term City-Town boundaries.



- **Coordination on future land use patterns:** This City Comprehensive Plan attempted to coordinate future land use recommendations with adopted Town of Beloit plans. However, there are probably some differences between the future land use recommendations on Map 10 and the Town’s intent for future land use, particularly in the area between Afton Road and the River, north of Big Hill Park. The future land use maps of both communities could be coordinated as part of an intergovernmental agreement process. Once general future patterns are agreed upon, using a common set of future land use categories for maps helps ensure clear communication between plans.
- **Utility service provision:** The City and Town operate separate utility districts and sewage treatment plants, and each has their own Sewer Service Area for long-range utility planning. The City is the only water supplier in the Beloit area, north of the state line. The intergovernmental agreement will likely address water and sewer service provision. The agreement may also specify how and where future expansions to the respective Sewer Service Areas will occur, in conjunction with utility capacity, future land use desired, and municipal boundaries.
- **Public safety services:** The City and Town could build on existing mutual aid agreements for greater linkage of safety services such as fire protection and emergency medical services.
- **Collaborative redevelopment planning and implementation:** Through this *Plan*, the City has identified several future redevelopment opportunity areas beyond the downtown and riverfront. These are described more fully in the Land Use and Economic Development chapters. In particular, the proposed “Prairie Avenue Mixed Use District” and “Cranston Road Mixed Use District” include lands both within the City and the Town. Without concerted action by both governments—particularly in the Cranston Road area—revitalization of these areas according to the concept plans will be extremely challenging. The intergovernmental agreement can establish processes and priorities for the joint redevelopment of these areas.

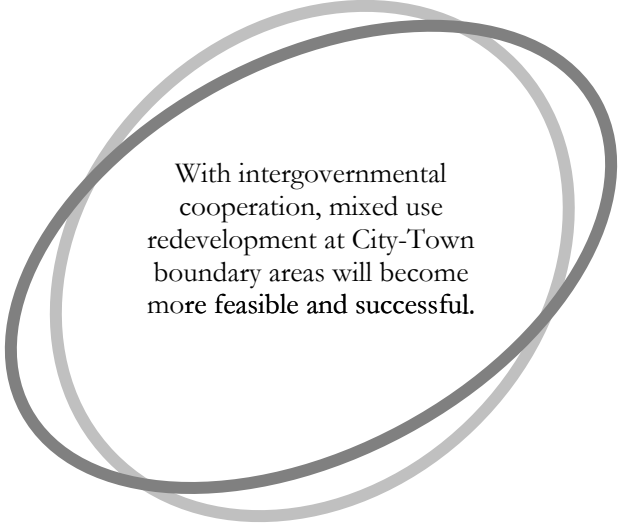
**Intergovernmental Agreements  
Under Wisconsin Law**

There are two main formats for inter-governmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes.

The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more communities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a “66.0301” agreement is limited by the restriction that the municipalities must be able to exercise co-equal powers. So, for example, attorneys sometimes do not recommend this agreement format when future municipal boundary changes are involved, because cities and towns do not have co-equal powers with respect to annexation.

Another format for an intergovernmental agreement is a “cooperative (boundary) plan” under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but the “66.0307” approach does not have some of the limitations of the “66.0301” agreement format.

An increasingly common approach is for communities to first enter into a “66.0301” intergovernmental agreement, which in part directs the communities to then prepare a “66.0307” cooperative plan covering issues such as boundary changes.





- Comparable and coordinated development design standards: Through an intergovernmental agreement, the two communities may agree to minimum design standards that all or certain types of new development projects would have to follow, regardless of in which community the development occurs. More unified design standards will enhance the aesthetic quality and property values throughout the Beloit area. These might include standards for signs, landscaping, lighting, setbacks, or building design. The recommendations for the “Prairie Avenue Mixed Use District” include adopting corridor-wide design standards across the City and Town boundaries based on prairie-style architecture and landscape themes.
- Transportation planning: Through this Comprehensive Plan, the City is advocating new roads like the Inman/Freeman Parkway extension and the West Bypass. Both of these projects also affect the Town of Beloit. Public transit services could also potentially be extended into the Town. Agreements on alignment, design, and levels of support for these and possibly other transportation facilities could be covered in an intergovernmental agreement.
- Joint park, open space, trail and recreational system planning: The City has recently completed an updated 5-year park and open space system plan; at the time of writing, the Town was commencing a similar process for its park facilities. In addition, the Stateline Area Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan advises trails that cross City-Town boundaries. Greater coordination regarding park and trail system planning could be another outcome of an intergovernmental agreement.

## 2. With Town of Turtle

According to Turtle’s adopted land use planning goals and the Beloit-Turtle Cooperative Boundary Plan, the Town of Turtle desires to be a community focused on agriculture and modest land use changes. The Town provides a rural level of community services—including no public sewer or water—consistent with that pattern. Still, there is obviously some tension between these rural goals and service levels and Turtle’s regional position. It is bisected by two interstates and includes two interchanges. That tension may have led to recent land use recommendations from the Town that are not always consistent with agricultural preservation goals. The Town’s 2004 land use plan includes recommendations for planned commercial development near both interchanges and significant rural residential development planned in parts of the Town west of Interstate 39/90.

It is not in the City’s best long term interests to support or allow rural commercial or residential development in many of the areas in which the 2004 Town Land Use Plan envisions it. To do so may compromise the City’s plans and image, and would impede orderly, sequential urban growth in the long term. Through this *Comprehensive Plan*, the City envisions most of these same lands—and others within the same drainage basin—as more appropriate to reserve as “Long Range Urban Growth Areas.” These areas should be developed when there is both property owner and market interest and when a full range of urban services, including municipal sewer and water, can be provided.

The City supports re-opening discussions with the Town to amend the 1999 Cooperative Boundary Plan to address these issues, other desired comprehensive plan changes by both communities to bring the plans in closer alignment, and municipal boundary issues. The City will formally invite the Town to reengage in these discussions following adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan*.



In the mean time, the City intends to amend its subdivision and official map ordinances to fully and clearly implement the recommendations underlying the “Long Range Urban Growth Areas” and “Agricultural” future land use categories. These recommendations are described in the Land Use chapter, with the affected areas shown on Map 10. In short, rural development in these areas should not exceed a maximum development density of one home or lot per 35 acres of land. This would inhibit subdivision development or large-scale commercial development. Adopting such ordinance amendments would be in full accordance with the 1999 Cooperative Boundary Plan, and is intended to protect the City’s interests under that Cooperative Boundary Plan and this *Comprehensive Plan*.