

# 8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter emphasizes the vital role of collaboration and partnership between the City of Berlin and other government entities. By fostering relationships with neighboring municipalities, county agencies, and state authorities, the City aims to maximize efficient use of resources, coordinate planning efforts, and pursue shared goals.

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- **School District:** The Berlin Area School District serves several counties and is in significant need of additional staff. It will be important to continue collaboration between the City and School District to plan for additional land and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.
- **ThedaCare Medical Center:** This is a critical access hospital for the region that provides primary, emergency, and specialty care to residents in Berlin and the surrounding communities.
- **Communication and Community Trust:** It is vital for successful growth to maintain transparency with nearby towns and promote cooperative development efforts.
- **Economic Support:** City businesses rely on customers from neighboring communities.
- **Outdoor Recreation:** Amenities including the Mascoutin Valley State Trail extend beyond the City into surrounding townships and are maintained by the Wisconsin DNR.

### VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Residents highlighted opportunities for cooperation between City departments and key local entities to address shared challenges in housing, workforce development, and economic growth.

Participants in the visioning workshop expressed a need for better coordination with neighboring municipalities, especially around transportation infrastructure, recreational trail connections, and shared services.

There is interest in exploring grants and cooperative funding opportunities—particularly for infrastructure upgrades, public facilities, and community programming—that could be pursued through intergovernmental collaboration.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTIONS

### GOAL 1

**Collaborate with neighboring communities and other government entities to achieve sustainable growth patterns in the Berlin area.**

### STRATEGIES

1. Protect natural systems and the City's ability to grow by exercising plat approval authority within the City's 1.5-mile jurisdiction and consider adopting extraterritorial zoning.
2. Work closely with the Berlin Area School District to foster communication, relationships and knowledge about planning and growth activities.
3. Openly communicate and involve non-governmental organizations that have a mutual interest in land use planning.
4. Promote the continued development of non-motorized trail networks between Berlin and surrounding communities.
5. Openly communicate and work closely with surrounding local government entities to:
  - a. Manage land use/zoning, environmental/stormwater, and extraterritorial boundary issues
  - b. Identify and resolve conflicts and inconsistencies between local plans and resolve key countywide issues affecting the City.
  - c. Coordinate efforts during outdoor recreation planning to identify complementary recreation investments where service areas overlap and work to avoid duplication of unique amenities.
  - d. Educate the residents of both the City and the towns about available community activities and facilities in the area.

### ACTIONS

- A. Meet annually with representatives from neighboring municipalities, Green Lake County, and Waushara County to discuss common issues related to planning, zoning, and land use
- B. Work with the Town of Berlin to develop an intergovernmental agreement that protects future growth areas and utilities extensions routes for the City, protects stormwater/environmental corridors, and defines the jurisdiction and maintenance of certain roads that serve both jurisdictions.
- C. Distribute development plans to contiguous local governments and the Berlin Area School District when there is mutual interest.
- D. Consider working with the town to develop extraterritorial zoning to manage growth, smooth transitions, and prevent conflicting land uses.



*School Grounds, Source: Berlin Area School District*

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

## GOAL 2

Enhance the efficiency and quality of public services by collaborating with other governmental entities in the region.

### STRATEGIES

6. Work cooperatively with other units of government and seek intergovernmental agreements that can provide cost-effective and/or higher-quality public facilities and services.

### ACTIONS

- E. Meet annually with the Berlin Area School District involving elected officials and key City/district staff to discuss opportunities for collaboration and issues of concern.
- F. Review existing intergovernmental agreements at least every five years and amend the agreement as needed.
- G. Explore opportunities for state and federal grants to develop joint services with contiguous municipalities to reduce costs and improve services.

**Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)** are public agencies formed by executive order of the Governor. Wisconsin state statutes specify that regional planning commissions are to provide intergovernmental planning and coordination for the physical, social, and economic development of the Region. Their mandate includes conducting research, developing comprehensive plans, and providing advisory services to local governments.

RPCs aim to enhance regional collaboration, promote sustainable development, and address issues such as land use, transportation, and environmental protection, ensuring that growth aligns with community needs and resources.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

### JURISDICTIONS

#### Local Jurisdictions

- Town of Berlin (Population 1,264)
- Town of Aurora (Population 958 people) - Waushara County
- Town of Seneca (Population 377)

#### County Jurisdictions

- Green Lake County
- Waushara County

#### School District

- Berlin Area School District

#### Regional Jurisdiction

- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)

#### State Authorities

- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (*WisDOT*)
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (*DNR*)

## COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

### Cooperative Agreements

- Berlin Police Department share services with the County Sheriff's Department
- Shared fire protection services with Towns of Berlin, Seneca, and St. Marie in Green Lake County, the Towns of Aurora and Warren in Waushara County, and the Town of Nepeuskun in Winnebago County



*ECWRPC Building in Menasha, WI, Source: ECWRPC*



*Berlin Police Department*



*Berlin Fire Department, Source: Berlin Fire Department*