

Introduction

The Town of Buffalo's relationship with neighboring municipalities, school districts, state agencies and Marquette County can significantly impact planning, the provision of services, and the siting of public facilities. An examination of these relationships and the identification of potential conflicts will help the town address these situations in a productive manner.



Intergovernmental Cooperation Vision

The Town of Buffalo works cooperatively, through shared service agreements, with neighboring towns, the City of Montello, Marquette County and State agencies to provide Town residents with needed cost-efficient, non-duplicative services. Town leaders keep residents informed on all matters pertinent to Town operations and land development issues. The Town continues to pursue opportunities to provide coordinated, cost-effective services with neighboring communities and the county.

Governmental Units and Relationships to the Town of Buffalo

The Town of Buffalo shares borders with five municipalities. In addition, the town must also coordinate with local school districts, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the ECWRPC, Marquette County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency.

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

- Town of Montello
- Town of Kingston (*Green Lake County*)
- Town of Marcellon (*Columbia County*)
- Town of Moundville
- Town of Packwaukee
- Town of Fort Winnebago (*Columbia County*)

The Town of Buffalo's relationship with the six adjacent towns can be characterized as one of mutual respect and compatibility from a land use and political standpoint. Towns cannot annex land from one another. Therefore, the borders between the Town of Buffalo and the adjacent towns are fixed and boundary disputes are non-existent. Public services (i.e. road maintenance and construction, etc.) are conducted individually by each

town, but opportunities for shared services to reduce costs by improving efficiencies will be considered.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Montello School District
- Markesan School District
- Pardeeville Area School District

The Town of Buffalo is served by **three school districts**, but there are no actual school buildings located in the town. Almost the entire town is in the Montello School District. Two properties are in the Markesan School District and one property is in the Pardeeville Area School District.

The town's relationship with the school districts can be characterized as limited, but cooperative. The town has little direct interaction with the school district. Given that there are no school buildings in the town and no plans to establish any in the future, this situation is unlikely to change.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

- Marquette County
- Columbia County
- Green Lake County
- East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC)



The Town of Buffalo is located in the southeast corner of Marquette County. As such, it shares boundaries with Columbia (to the south) and Green Lake counties (to the east). The town has little direct interaction with these neighboring county governments. However, in the future, when these counties prepare their Smart Growth Comprehensive Plans, the town expects to participate in the Intergovernmental Element.

Marquette County has some jurisdiction within the town. In particular, Marquette County has jurisdiction over land divisions, on-site sanitary systems, and shoreland-wetland zoning of the town. Marquette County also maintains many county roads in the Town of Buffalo.

The relationship between the Town of Buffalo and Marquette County can be characterized as one of general agreement and respect. In those areas where the county has jurisdiction in the town, the county attempts to get input from the town before making decisions affecting the town. Likewise, Buffalo has attempted to maintain open communication with Marquette County. Continued cooperation will be especially important as it relates to zoning as a tool to implement this plan.

Marquette County and the Town of Buffalo are part of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC). However, in 2001, Marquette County formally pulled out of the East Central Wisconsin Regional



Plan Commission. This situation made planning for the Town of Buffalo extremely difficult, as the mapping resources scheduled to be completed by East Central for the county were postponed.

Historically, the Town of Buffalo has little direct interaction with the ECWRPC. This situation will not likely change, even if the county rejoins the ECWRPC.

STATE AGENCIES

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WDNR and WisDOT are the primary state agencies the Town of Buffalo must coordinate with to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.

WDNR is a major agency involved in the acquisition and development of recreational/pedestrian trails - a major component of this plan. Furthermore, the WDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and the protection and sustained management of woodlands, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas. Additionally, as a significant local landowner, the town and DNR interact regularly with respect to property management issues.

The activities of the WDNR are discussed further in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element (Chapter 7) of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at:
www.dnr.state.wi.us

WisDOT is also a key player in the planning and development of the town. WisDOT is responsible for the maintenance and access to the STH 22 corridor. It will be important for the Town of Buffalo to continue to coordinate with WisDOT with respect to this roadway.

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions, which may impact the town, is an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.



For additional information about WisDOT activities in the Town of Buffalo, refer to the Transportation Element (Chapter 5) of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at:
www.dot.state.wi.us

FEDERAL AGENCIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services has a significant number of land holdings in the Town of Buffalo. As such, it is important that the town coordinate with this agency with respect to future planning and adjacent land development/preservation issues.

Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process

To facilitate intergovernmental coordination, the Town of Buffalo sent all adjacent municipalities, school districts, Marquette County and the ECWRPC a letter at the on-set of the planning effort. This letter was intended to notify these agencies and communities of the Town of Buffalo planning process. Likewise, this letter extended an open invitation for participation in the development of this plan.

On an element-by-element basis, the Town of Buffalo contacted adjacent local government units, school districts, and state agencies again to complete inventories of available services, facilities, and programs. For example, during the development of the Transportation Element, WisDOT was contacted to obtain information available related to transportation facilities and programs in the Town of Buffalo. Likewise, WisDOT was provided a preliminary copy of the Transportation Element to review and comment upon. This same courtesy was extended to the WDNR during development of the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.

Throughout the plan development process, the Town of Buffalo worked closely with Marquette County to coordinate plan-mapping resources.

On September 16, 2003, as the draft comprehensive plan was nearing completion, the Town of Buffalo hosted an intergovernmental meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the plans of other local agencies and governments and attempt to coordinate the *Town of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan* with the goals and objectives of these other local plans. Participants were also given the opportunity to view and comment on the *Draft Future Land Use Map*. This collective “meeting of the minds” provided a unique opportunity to discuss area growth, development, transportation, education, and other concerns. Prior to this meeting, a copy of the Draft Intergovernmental Element was available on the Internet for review and comment.

During much of the Town of Buffalo Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning process, representatives from the Town also participated in the Marquette County Planning Committee. This advisory committee consists of representatives from all communities and the county. They were responsible for organizing the county comprehensive planning effort. The Town of Buffalo participated in this process to share with the committee progress with the Town’s planning program. In addition, the Town signed on as a participant to receive grant funding for the conclusion of the planning program, as well as, implementation activities completed prior to plan adoption.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs

At this time, the only intergovernmental program the Town of Buffalo participates in is the Montello Joint Fire District. Many opportunities exist to establish other intergovernmental programs with neighboring communities to improve efficiencies and save money. Specifically, the town could pursue joint contracts with neighboring towns and private companies for road maintenance, garbage collection, and other services

needed by neighboring communities. The idea would be by entering into a larger contract a cost savings could be gained.

Existing and Proposed Plans

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

No adjacent government has adopted a Smart Growth Plan. The Town of Packwaukee, Moundville and Montello are participating in the Marquette planning process and will complete plans in the next couple of years.

To ensure compatibility with planning goals and objectives of the *Town of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan*, the town would like to participate in the planning efforts of all neighboring communities to ensure the goals, objectives and visions of this plan are communicated. Likewise, impacts from surrounding plans on the Town of Buffalo need to be addressed.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The three school districts serving the town extend into neighboring communities. As such, development in neighboring communities may have an impact on the districts need to expand. The Town of Buffalo wishes to remain involved in the siting of future schools to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan can be met. This will become more important as Buffalo and neighboring communities continue to grow, bringing additional residents (and students) to the area. At this time, the school districts have no plan to construct any new facilities in the town.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Marquette County has not adopted a comprehensive plan in accordance with 1999 Wisconsin Act 9. However, the county has been working toward the start of such a plan for some time. The Town of Buffalo has participated in the county planning effort to provide information about the town plan, including local goals, objectives, and visions for the future.

The **ECWRPC** has not yet adopted a comprehensive plan. ECWRPC has completed the first of three milestone reports. Planning information is available on-line at www.eastcentralrpc.org. It will be important for the town to participate in regional planning efforts as the ECWRPC continues its planning process.

STATE AGENCIES

The Town of Buffalo's relationship with the state of Wisconsin mainly involves state aids for local roads and the administering of various state mandates to towns. Coordination with WisDOT will continue to be important with respect to the future of STH 22.

Moreover, there is a significant amount of forested land in the town that is either owned by the state, or privately owned, but managed through the WDNR Managed Forest Program.

Intergovernmental Policy

The Town of Buffalo will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, the county, state agencies, and school districts for mutual benefit.

Intergovernmental Goals

1. Improve lines of intergovernmental communication.
2. Continue to seek new ways to coordinate and share community facilities and services with neighboring communities and Marquette County whenever efficient.

Intergovernmental Objectives

1. Host a bi-annual summit to discuss concerns, plans, exchange ideas and report implementation achievements.
2. Participate in the “Smart Growth” planning activities of neighboring communities, Marquette County, Columbia County, Green Lake County and the ECWRPC.
3. Notify the appropriate school district about proposed residential developments so the districts may plan for additional school children.
4. Notify WisDOT of proposed development projects near STH 22 so WisDOT may plan accordingly for access and required improvements (i.e. acceleration lanes, turn lanes, shared driveways, etc.).
5. Coordinate with WisDOT and WDNR to ensure transportation facilities are safe and natural features are protected.
6. Expand and continue to explore the potential for mutual services with neighboring towns (including road development and maintenance, garbage collection, etc.).