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## Introduction

Intergovernmental cooperation involves working with neighboring communities and agencies to understand how their future planning activities will impact the Town of Empire. At a minimum, this involves sharing information about Empire’s plan with neighboring communities and agencies and vice versa. However, Empire believes intergovernmental cooperation should not end with the sharing of plans. Instead, this process should be the beginning for joint planning and decision-making, conflict resolution, and other strategies to promote regional coordination.



Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning Law includes 14 goals for local comprehensive planning. The goals listed below specifically relate to planning for intergovernmental cooperation:

- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
- Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the Town of Empire coordinate with:

- Town of Taycheedah
- Town of Forest
- Town of Eden
- Town of Fond du Lac
- City of Fond du Lac
- Fond du Lac County
- Campbellsport School District
- Fond du Lac School District
- East Central Wisconsin RPC
- WDOA
- WDNR
- WisDOT

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Vision**

**By 2025, intergovernmental cooperation efforts have allowed Empire to establish partnerships with neighboring communities, state agencies, the County, and the School Districts to provide coordinated, cost-effective services.**

## **Existing Intergovernmental Activities and Partners**

Many intergovernmental programs already in effect impact the Town of Empire. This section highlights programs that are currently in place.

### **ADJACENT/NEARBY GOVERNMENTAL UNITS**

- Towns of Eden, Fond du Lac, Forest, and Taycheedah
- City of Fond du Lac

Empire's relationship with neighboring Towns can be characterized as one of mutual respect and compatibility from a land use and political standpoint. These Towns share a common character with Empire. Since Towns cannot annex land from one another, boundary disputes are non-existent. Public services such as road maintenance and construction are conducted individually by each community. However, as mutually beneficial opportunities for shared services arise, the Town of Empire is open to considering shared services options (i.e. the Town already achieves lower refuse pick-up rates by teaming with Taycheedah).

The Town of Empire shares a portion of its western boundary with the City of Fond du Lac, a destination point for residents. Empire residents enjoy access to nearby parks, library and business areas. Fond du Lac is the community with the greatest potential for future conflict over land use with the Town of Empire, particularly as it relates to possible annexation. The Town of Empire is committed to providing quality development choices within its boundaries and believes that, with proper planning, its soil conditions and water resources make this possible without municipal water or sewer systems. The Town will coordinate its development in ways consistent with the development plans of the City of Fond du Lac.

Currently, the Town is part of an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Fond du Lac and Towns of Fond du Lac, Taycheedah and Friendship, as well as various town sanitary districts. The agreement sets forth the procedures, terms and conditions by which the parties wish to achieve the following mutual goals:

- Orderly, planned growth for the City and the Towns and the provision of appropriate, cost-effective municipal services for such development;
- Orderly boundaries between the City and the Towns, promoting cost-effective provision of services and more efficient operation of all units of government;
- Continual City growth to provide the City with an ever-renewing and expanding tax base and a pool of citizen leadership;
- Continual development for the Towns to replace tax base lost due to City growth, so that the Towns may also have an ever-renewing and expanding tax base and a pool of citizen leadership;
- Promotion of diversity and balanced development in the City and the Towns;
- Prevention of unplanned development leading to urban sprawl, and protection of the area's natural resources, including its lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands; and,
- Promotion of quality development in the City and the Towns.

### **SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

The Town's relationship with the Campbellsport and Fond du Lac School Districts can be characterized as cooperative. The Town appreciates the quality service provided by the school

districts and the fact that the schools are a draw to the area for new residents. Regular and open communication is critical to ensure that this cooperative relationship will continue and be strengthened as growth continues.

With respect to intergovernmental cooperation, some opportunities were identified during the planning effort to strengthen relations between the Town of Empire and the School Districts. Specific goals and objectives to help realize several of these opportunities are listed in the Implementation Chapter.

## FOND DU LAC COUNTY

The Town of Empire is located in Fond du Lac County. The County provides many programs, services, and facilities (i.e., parks) that are available to Empire residents. Fond du Lac County programs that most directly impact Empire include:

- County highway maintenance and improvement programs;
- Library funding support (to help cover the costs of county residents who use the library);
- Social services; and,
- Town road maintenance and rating assistance.

In those areas where Fond du Lac County has jurisdiction, the County attempts to get input from the Town before making decisions affecting the Town. During the planning process, additional communication with the County was identified as a priority, particularly with respect to County road improvement projects. Future communication will also be especially important as it relates to:

- Stormwater management
- Coordination with the Fond du Lac County Comprehensive Plan
- Public safety

## STATE AGENCIES

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Wisconsin State Historical Society

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

WDNR takes a lead role in wildlife protection and the sustainable management of woodlands, stormwater regulations, wetlands and other natural wildlife habitat areas.

WisDOT is a key player in the planning and development of highways and pedestrian/cycling facilities in the Town and region. Empire has a good relationship with WisDOT, and will continue to communicate with the agency about the land use and transportation decisions made locally.

Periodically during the planning process, particular draft chapters were forwarded to the WDNR and WisDOT for comment (i.e. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources and Transportation chapters).

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



For additional information about WisDOT activities in the Town of Empire, refer to the *Transportation Chapter* of this plan. Additional information is also available on-line at: [www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us)

## **Intergovernmental Comprehensive Planning Process**

To facilitate a planning environment open to intergovernmental cooperation, Empire sent all of its intergovernmental partners an invitation to participate in the planning program at the onset of its effort. The letter included direction to the project web page and an open invitation to review materials and provide feedback. All plan documents, including text and maps, were available throughout the plan program on the project web site for review and comment to ensure the widest range of public participation and input from overlapping and neighboring jurisdictions as well as any other interested entity or individual.

Throughout the plan development process, the Town also coordinated with Fond du Lac County and ECWRPC to obtain mapping resources as well as information from existing plan documents.

More than 30 days prior to the public hearing, all intergovernmental agencies/communities were provided a copy of the recommended plan and asked to provide comments, as is required by state statutes. Comments received were addressed at the public hearing and in the final adopted plan.

## **Existing and Proposed Plans**

### **ADJACENT/NEARBY GOVERNMENTAL UNITS**

Of the communities surrounding Empire, only North Fond du Lac has adopted a Comprehensive Plan. The Towns of Fond du Lac and Taycheedah have Comprehensive Plans in progress.

In addition to the efforts identified above, the Fond du Lac Metropolitan Planning Organization has completed the Long Range Transportation/Land Use plan for the communities within the MPO.

Empire should consider working with its neighbors to ensure plans are consistent with one another by reviewing draft plans and offering feedback. Communication between communities is important to the success of Comprehensive Planning efforts.

The ECWRPC regional comprehensive plan was completed in 2005. In preparing the Empire transportation and land use planning materials available from ECWRPC were used as a tool for understanding regional development plans. In order to improve communication with ECWRPC and to avoid inconsistency in plan development and implementation, a series of activities and programs are identified in the Intergovernmental Cooperation section of the Implementation Chapter.

To ensure compatibility with the goals and objectives of this plan, Empire would be willing to participate in the planning efforts of its neighboring communities, counties, and ECWRPC as opportunities arise.

### **CAMPBELLSPORT AND FOND DU LAC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

At this time, no school district has plans to construct new facilities within the Town of Empire. In order to facilitate future school district planning efforts, the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter of this plan recommends the Town continue to work with the schools districts on future facilities and studies.

The two school districts serving the Town have a long history of planning for improvements and expansion in response to population growth rates. The districts' facilities can accommodate a significant number of new students. Since school district boundaries extend well beyond the Town, it is likely that new schools, if constructed, will be located outside of Empire. To further facilitate school district planning, this plan has been made available to those districts as a tool to predict future school enrollments from the Town of Empire.

## **STATE AGENCIES**

The WDNR is a major agency involved in the acquisition and development of recreational/pedestrian trails – an important 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. These priorities are reflected in the natural resource goals, objectives and policies outlined in the Implementation Chapter.

The WisDOT has completed a series of statewide planning documents for use in the development of local comprehensive plans. These documents include plans for the state highway corridors, bicycle corridors, rail corridors, and air transportation. The plans were used as a starting point when preparing the Transportation Chapter of this plan.

## **Infrastructure to Support Town Success**

Historically, Empire has been able to function very well with no hired staff. However, as the Town's population continues to grow, staff may be needed to meet the demands of a growing community. The addition of any staff should be carefully considered as part of a larger organization structure designed to meet resident, economic, and intergovernmental challenges.

The provision of adequate space for government to function is also an issue that will impact the Town's ability to coordinate well with neighboring communities and provide needed services for residents. This issue is addressed in the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter as it relates to the Town Hall and park facilities.

## **Relationship to Other Required Plan Chapters**

Intergovernmental Cooperation weaves its ways into every chapter of this plan. Regional housing demand and supplies determine the market for housing in the Town of Empire. Transportation improvements made to Fond du Lac County and State highways have the potential to affect land use and development patterns in the Town. Likewise, the Town's ability to expand economically depends on quality services being provided, not only by the Town, but also its intergovernmental partners (i.e. schools, police, fire, etc.). Moreover, the Town's ability to support development opportunities at its perimeter must be coordinated with neighboring communities to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses.

