

## CHAPTER 9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

### INTRODUCTION

This element includes a brief summary of existing conditions, a list of issues and opportunities that were identified during the planning process, a vision statement and a series of goals, objectives and recommendations to meet the current and future needs in the City of Neenah.

Issues and opportunities identified in this element were determined through the public participation process, collection of background data and through a review of the following documents:

- *Neenah Comprehensive Plan 2020*, adopted in 1999;
- *Intergovernmental Agreement Among the City of Neenah,, the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #1-1 and the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #2 to Provide Orderly Growth and Development Within Agreed Upon Municipal Boundaries.*

### SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The relationship a municipality has with school districts, neighboring communities, county, state, federal government and Regional Planning Commission can impact residents in terms of taxation, planning, service provision, and siting of public facilities. An examination of these relationships and the identification of existing and potential conflicts can help a municipality address these situations in a productive manner.

Below is a summary of the key intergovernmental cooperation conditions. For a complete listing, please see *City of Neenah Comprehensive Plan Update 2040, Volume Two: Existing Conditions Report*.

#### Adjacent Communities

- The City of Neenah shares its borders with the City of Menasha, Village of Fox Crossing and the towns of Neenah and Vinland in Winnebago County.

#### School Districts

- The City of Neenah is served by the Neenah Joint School District (NJSD), which maintains eleven school facilities within the City.
- While a formal written intergovernmental agreement does not exist between the NJSD and the City of Neenah, the City and school district do work together to provide programming and facilities for area youth and adults.

#### Public Safety

- The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue (NMFR) department was created on January 1, 2003 by the consolidation of the City of Neenah Fire Department and the City of

Menasha Fire Department. NMFR has an auto aid agreement with the Appleton Fire Department.

- The Neenah Police Department is located at 2111 Marathon Avenue in the City of Neenah. The Neenah Police Department has mutual aid agreements with most other Fox Cities communities.
- The cities of Neenah and Menasha have shared a municipal court since 2002.

## Library

- Winnefox Library System (WLS) is one of 17 library systems in the state and is a federation of 30 public libraries in Winnebago, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara counties.

## Utilities

- The Neenah/Menasha Sewerage Commission was jointly created by the municipalities and sanitary districts within the sewer service area.

## County

- The City works with county departments to coordinate road construction and maintenance; solid waste and recycling; police, fire and emergency services and dispatch; and election and planning assistance.

## Regional

- ECWRPC provides planning and technical assistance to counties, communities, businesses, interest groups and individuals within its region.
- Winnebago, Outagamie and Brown counties entered into a 25 year intergovernmental agreement in 2001 to handle the disposal of solid waste and recycling within their respective counties.
- Fox Comm is a regional partnership for public safety communications within Winnebago County, Calumet and Outagamie County.

## Intergovernmental Agreement

- Intergovernmental Agreement Among the City of Neenah, the Town of Neenah, the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #1-1 and the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #2 to Provide Orderly Growth and Development Within Agreed Upon Municipal Boundaries. The agreement delineates City Growth Areas, Town Growth Area, City Service Areas, Non-Annexed City Service Areas, Town Service Areas and Parks/Environmentally Sensitive Areas. [This agreement was created in 2003 and amended in 2022.](#)

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A number of issues and opportunities were identified through the public participation process, collection of background data and through a review of other documents. A list of issues and opportunities are described below:

### Economic Development

Many local, regional and statewide economic development organizations and groups are working to promote economic development. Since the City of Neenah's economy is dependent on the economy of the Fox Cities and the state, the City can benefit from the efforts of others.

Private investment in the community can create jobs, housing and amenities. Public investment is needed for infrastructure (roads, sewer and water, police and fire protection, etc.). Working together, the assets and benefits of both sectors (private and public) can be used to enhance the community and create jobs and housing.

The history of the City is tied to its location along the Fox River system (Little Lake Buttes des Morts and Lake Winnebago). The City's proximity to the water provides opportunities for water related recreation. The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway is working to improve and promote the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Water Trail. The City will benefit and should be part of these efforts.

Issues and opportunities:

- Multiple economic development organizations and groups are working to promote economic development and these efforts can impact and benefit the City's economy.
- Private and public partnerships can enhance the local economy.
- The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway is working to improve and promote the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Water Trail. This work can enhance City efforts to promote / provide historical and recreational tourism opportunities.
- There is a regional competition of communities in the Fox Cities for people, businesses, and new development.

### Communication

Community partners are a valuable resource that can provide volunteer hours and funding for City projects. However, it is important to ensure that these resources are being directed to meet the City's needs.

Communication between utilities, schools, neighboring communities, public safety, county highway, WisDot and others is important so that everyone is informed about upcoming improvements and other issues that might arise. An established method of communication not only keeps everyone apprised of upcoming improvements, but it also provides a forum for issues to be discussed.

The City's website is a valuable resource that is used to provide information to current and prospective residents, business owners, developers, and visitors. Not only may it be used to provide information about municipal services, facilities, meetings and ordinances but it is also used to promote upcoming events and local amenities.

Issues and opportunities:

- Ensure that volunteer hours and funding from community partners (civic organizations, churches, youth groups, schools and other) are being used to meet City needs.
- The City should keep informed of upcoming construction projects, improvements and other issues that come up so that the City is able to coordinate and collaborate with others.
- Utilize the City's website to inform current and prospective residents, business owners, developers and visitors. Continue to explore new technologies and ways that the website and other resources can be utilized.

Cost Efficiencies

Mutual aid agreements enhance the level of service provided to City residents. Public safety utilizes mutual aid agreements to decrease the amount of time it takes to respond, enhance specialized skills such as water rescues, drug response teams, victim crises response, etc.

Since 2003, the cities of Neenah and Menasha have shared a fire and rescue department. The consolidation of the two fire departments has allowed the communities to share administrative staff, equipment and other staff. In the future, it may be possible to partner with other communities for fire protection.

The City currently uses Neenah School District facilities for recreational needs. This has made it possible for the City Park and Recreation Department to provide programming without the need to build additional gym, pool, classroom and other recreational facilities.

Issues and opportunities:

- Utilize mutual aid agreements to enhance the level of service.
- Explore opportunities to partner with others for fire protection.
- Increase opportunities to share facilities with others.

Intergovernmental agreements

The City of Neenah currently has an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Neenah, the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #1-1 and the Town of Neenah Sanitary District #2 to provide orderly growth and development. This agreement was adopted in ~~2003~~[2003 and amended in 2022](#), ~~and is for a period of 30 years~~[The agreement is in-effect until 2040](#). It delineates city and town growth areas; city, town and non-annexed city service areas; and parks/environmentally sensitive areas. In 2016, the Town of Menasha incorporated into what is now the Village of Fox Crossing. At the end of 2016, the Village of Fox Crossing annexed the remaining areas remaining in the town following its incorporation.

As a result, the Village of Fox Crossing shares a common border with the City of Neenah. This may affect the City's ability to annex additional land.

Even though the City has an intergovernmental agreement with the towns of Neenah and Vinland, issues may arise as to service or use of a specific area. The City should keep apprised of annexations made by other communities. To keep informed about and have an avenue to openly discuss planning related issues, the City should establish an intergovernmental committee.

Issues and opportunities:

- Establish an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Fox Crossing.
- Establish an intergovernmental committee to enhance communication and cooperation between the City and its neighbors.

## **VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Vision Statement: Through an open and transparent process with clear lines of communication, Neenah and its surrounding municipalities, school district, and other governmental organizations create a strong partnership to reduce costs to residents, provide more efficient services, and ultimately improve the region.*

**Goal IC 1: Continue to improve relations with neighboring municipalities and others government agencies in the Fox Cities, Winnebago County, and state and federal agencies.**

Objective IC 1.1: Strengthen existing partnerships and build new relationships to promote economic development in the City and region.

- Recommendation IC 1.1.1: Support and participate in cooperative regional marketing efforts for the recruitment of new business prospects from outside the region and / or state. (Recommendation ED 1.8.1)
- Recommendation IC 1.1.2: Participate in the Fox Cities Regional Partnership and encourage full municipal participation from others in the region. (Recommendation ED 1.8.3)
- Recommendation IC 1.1.3: Promote the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and inform private development partners of these goals and objectives to improve the local economy. (Recommendation ED 1.8.2)
- Recommendation IC 1.1.4: Identify creative methods to collaborate with Future Neenah and the Downtown BID to identify and market available commercial properties in Downtown Neenah. (Recommendation ED 1.7.4)

- Recommendation IC 1.1.5: Support the development of a regional transit route to increase accessibility and marketability to areas of Neenah. (Recommendation ED 2.5.2, T 2.2.3)
- Recommendation IC 1.1.6: Coordinate with the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, the Fox Cities Convention and Visitor Bureau and Future Neenah to better promote amenities and to identify new events and enhance existing events which have a positive economic impact to the City of Neenah.
- Recommendation IC 1.1.7: Promote the heritage of the City and historical and recreational tourism related to the Fox River system with regional and local organizations.
- Recommendation IC 1.1.8: Create a system which identifies local workforce training needs and connects businesses to local and regional training centers. (Recommendation ED 3.3.1)
- Recommendation IC 1.1.9: Leverage tourism and local economic development funds, grants, and resources from local, regional and state sources to improve Neenah's local economy.
- Recommendation IC 1.1.10: Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a sports facility or attracting sporting events such as a regional or national tournament in Neenah and work with the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau to identify funding sources.

Objective IC 1.2: Improve communication within the City and between the City departments and with local and regional municipal partners, governmental agencies, and other community organizations.

- Recommendation IC 1.2.1: Establish annual meetings with community partners (civic organizations, churches, youth groups, the Neenah Joint School District and others) to discuss community needs. (Recommendation CF 1.1.4, H 2.1.3)
- Recommendation IC 1.2.2: Develop a City communication strategy with the goal of improving communication between neighboring municipalities and other governmental agencies.
- Recommendation IC 1.2.3: Continue to utilize the City's website and other new technology to update residents on upcoming events, municipal services, quality of life, history, etc.

Objective IC 1.3: Explore cost efficiencies through shared services.

- Recommendation IC 1.3.1: Cooperate with neighboring municipalities and Winnebago County in the delivery of essential municipal services.

- Recommendation IC 1.3.2: Explore opportunities to expand fire protection to other communities.
- Recommendation IC 1.3.3: Develop a study which identifies potential cost-savings which result from partnering with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department and other neighboring communities police departments.
- Recommendation IC 1.3.4: Partner with the Neenah Joint School District for the use of facilities, including recreational facilities and explore new collaborative efforts. (Recommendation CF 4.1.2, CF 1.1.2)
- Recommendation IC 1.3.5: Encourage Winnebago County to provide delivery of county services in the City which would have the greatest impact to City residents.
- Recommendation IC 1.3.6: Research and identify complementary and redundant municipal services and resources that could benefit from agreements for shared services.
- Recommendation IC 1.3.7: Ensure adequate emergency response for City residents through partnerships with local and regional hospitals and ambulatory services.

Objective IC 1.4: Establish and maintain effective intergovernmental land use policies and cooperative agreements with adjoining municipalities to address service and boundary issues.

- Recommendation IC 1.4.1: Develop an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Fox Crossing and the City of Oshkosh.
- Recommendation IC 1.4.2: Participate in cooperative planning efforts with local governmental units and service providers. (See recommendation LU 1.11.1)
- Recommendation IC 1.4.3: Develop an intergovernmental cooperative to foster, maintain and enhance communication and cooperation with the towns of Neenah, Clayton, and Vinland, the City of Menasha, City of Oshkosh and the Village of Fox Crossing. (See recommendation LU 1.11.2)
- Recommendation IC 1.4.4: Review the City's existing boundary agreement with the Town of Neenah and study the positive and negative aspects of the agreement.
- Recommendation IC 1.4.5: Explore the potential efficiencies with combining services, sharing costs, and eliminating redundant services between the City of Neenah and City of Menasha libraries.



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