

XII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND CONSOLIDATION

Municipal leaders are continually challenged by shrinking financial resources, complicated by high expectations for government services. Intermunicipal cooperation and consolidation are two strategies whereby communities can provide quality services in a cost effective manner.



This tub grinder was purchased with grant funds and local dollars by the City, Town of Cortlandville, and the Village of Homer under an intermunicipal agreement.

The City of Cortland is the sole city in Cortland County. This Comprehensive Plan has identified the many areas in which the City cooperates with its neighbors, including but not limited to, being first responders for fire and other emergencies; treating wastewater from the Villages of Homer and McGraw and the Town of Cortlandville; providing water services for parts of the Town of Cortlandville; providing recreational facilities and services for the Town of Cortlandville and Village of Homer; sharing equipment between the County Sheriff and the City Police Department; and sharing a municipal Records Center with Cortland County, to name just a few.

Future intermunicipal cooperation will be steered by the following conditions:

Economies of Scale – Buying power is often greater when done in terms of quantity. A larger municipality may be able to purchase a system, materials, and supplies, and offer these services to smaller municipalities which may not be able to justify the cost with their own limited resources.

Convenience – One government may be in a better position to provide a particular service than another.

Unequal Distribution of Natural Resources – Natural resources may be more readily available in one community and may be shared with another municipality. Contracting for water service is a typical example.

Surplus Facilities - Population shifts may result in the shifting of local priorities. Physical facilities may not be utilized as much compared to the past, and it may be more advantageous for facilities such as office space, for example, to be shared.



Duplication of Services – Municipalities should be challenging themselves to insure that the services it provides are scrutinized to eliminate duplication which results in inefficient expenditures of time and money.

The City of Cortland realizes that to achieve its intergovernmental cooperation goals, political bipartisanship must be at the core and turf issues must be set aside. In addition, the City must weigh certain factors such as liability, contract term, personnel assignments, and property agreements, to name just a few, before it decides to share facilities or services with another municipality.

Intergovernmental cooperation allows the City of Cortland to continue to cost share the use of its staff, equipment, facilities, infrastructure, etc., in a manner which benefits the average City resident and business through reduced taxes and/or better services. This cooperation facilitates a feeling of good will, and inspires even further cooperation on the County, regional, and State level. The community should continue this effort.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL 57: Work with surrounding and nearby municipalities, the City School District, and County government to minimize costs and maximize services.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Continue policies and efforts to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and services to maximize the benefit to Cortland City taxpayers.
- B) Consolidate services/departments, share equipment purchases, and share facilities where it makes sense, saves costs, and/or enhances services.
- C) Continue to execute reciprocal agreements regarding shared costs, e.g., paid fire staff being first responders under mutual aid agreements.
- D) Continue to investigate the benefits, drawbacks, and feasibility of local government reorganization, including consolidation, annexation, and/or dissolution.

