



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

---



***“Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds.”***

***– Alexander Graham Bell***

---





# VISION FOR SUCCESS

This plan envisions the City engaging in meaningful intergovernmental and intragovernmental dialog resulting in committed action to strengthen the city and the region.

The vision of success for intergovernmental cooperation includes:

## **Regional Planning**

Regional planning at all levels will be coordinated to re-evaluate changing land use and economic development conditions, and to minimize urban sprawl and create a more sustainable and integrated pattern of development.

## **Strong Communication**

The City and its partners will engage in ongoing, open and meaningful discussions to ensure a cohesive approach to decision-making and problem-solving for the region.

## **Shared Benefits & Costs**

The City will continue to work with regional partners to ensure that benefits and costs are shared equitably throughout the region and that we collectively invest in this region's best assets, consider potential for generation of wealth, as well as considering the region's best resources – it's people.

## OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Milwaukee is Wisconsin's largest city, and the only first class city in the state, with a population over 600,000 in an area of 96 square miles. Milwaukee County, which consists of 19 cities and villages, has a population over 950,000. The Milwaukee metropolitan area includes Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties, which are comprised of 93 towns, villages and cities with a total population over 1.5 million. 27% of the state's total population lives in this metropolitan region.

Trends in the Milwaukee area impact the City's intergovernmental relations and the residents' quality of life. For example:

- For decades, both jobs and population have moved outward from Milwaukee, resulting in sprawl. Recently, census data indicates an increase of residents in Milwaukee following a long decline. The outward migration has left behind a concentration of urban challenges such as unemployment, declining educational attainment, health care challenges, and crime.
- The decentralization of population, or sprawl, has also resulted in auto-centric commuting patterns in the region, as well as public transit systems that are financially strained. The region lacks an entity with both the authority and funding to resolve current public transit challenges, and is rapidly falling behind other metropolitan regions that have this governance in place.
- Clean, fresh water is gaining recognition as a scarce and valuable resource, though it appears abundant in the Milwaukee area. The Great Lakes Compact and Milwaukee's designation as a United Nations Global Compact Cities Program (UNGCCP) for fresh water technology and science brings even greater attention to this precious resource. How Milwaukee addresses water resource issues for itself and neighboring communities will become increasingly critical in the years to come.
- Financial challenges are abundant and significant at all levels of government, and funding shortfalls may result in negative impacts on the quality of life for the entire Milwaukee area.



All of the topics covered in the Citywide Policy Plan require intergovernmental cooperation. For example the chapters on Transportation, Utilities, Community Facilities, Cultural Resources, and Housing and Neighborhoods contain strategies requiring intergovernmental cooperation. Refer to these chapters for additional topic-specific information.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN ACTION**

There are numerous examples of intergovernmental cooperation.

- The state’s busiest freeways and freeway interchanges are in Milwaukee, requiring close cooperation with State DOT.
- Delegations from Milwaukee routinely travel to foreign

countries to recruit businesses, typically in partnership with state administrators.

- Milwaukee relies on state and federal assistance to clean up polluted brownfields and return them to productive use.
- Public transit is provided by the County.
- The federal government provides Milwaukee with significant funds to address foreclosure problems.
- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) creates regional plans and studies for the Milwaukee area.
- State legislature and state departments make key decisions affecting land use, property tax exemptions, and revenue sharing formulas.

- Public education is currently the responsibility of the Milwaukee Public Schools.
- Recently, Milwaukee and the City of Wauwatosa worked together to transform a former landfill into a park with residential opportunities at Hartung Quarry. This joint effort results in environmental, recreational and tax revenue benefits, and is a great example of intergovernmental cooperation, with local and state governments involved.

The City of Milwaukee entered into intergovernmental agreements with a number of entities in a variety of areas. These agreements may be categorized to include:



**Utilities & Public Works** – The City of Milwaukee and neighboring municipalities have agreements with a variety of utilities to provide services and infrastructure. These agreements include public works services, such as recycling.

**Emergency Services** – The City of Milwaukee has Mutual Aid Agreements with neighboring communities regarding fire services. The City provides hazardous material (HAZMAT) and biological threat abatement services for the region. The City also has a deep tunnel rescue agreement with Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD).

**Purchasing** – The City of Milwaukee participates in the State Vendor Net program which provides purchasing discounts, on certain items. City fleet purchases fuel with Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties for discounts.

**Education & Learning** – The City and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) have several agreements including crossing guards, health services, and financing of MPS capital projects. Milwaukee Public Library participates in the Milwaukee County Federated Library Service.

**Land Use** – Land use agreements exist between the City and a number of entities. The City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County and the state have agreements related to land sales in the Park East redevelopment area. The City has agreements with Milwaukee County and the Forest County Potawatomi Community for land use and zoning in the Menomonee Valley. The City works with MPS regarding surplus schools.

Intergovernmental cooperation may result in occasional disagreement and it is important to have a means

to resolve conflict. The City of Milwaukee has dedicated staff and a full-time lobbyist for intergovernmental relations. City staff balances the need for intergovernmental cooperation, while maintaining the local control and authority of the City. The Milwaukee County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council provides a means for all 19 cities and villages in the county to discuss and resolve contentious issues.

The City of Milwaukee prefers direct discussions with entities involved in conflict. For example, the City had concerns about the State DOT plans for the Hoan Bridge. To resolve the concerns, the City, along with other affected municipalities, held discussions directly with DOT to establish a more acceptable approach to the problem.



## OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Milwaukee has several established intergovernmental relationships.

The City of Milwaukee cooperates with MMSD, Milwaukee 7, SEWRPC, Regional Workforce Alliance, Milwaukee County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, Milwaukee County Federated Library System, Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission, and the National League of Cities. The City of Milwaukee has positive relationships with surrounding municipalities, Milwaukee County, and the State of Wisconsin.

Federal agencies provide the City of Milwaukee with significant funding for a variety of programs and projects. The city has received federal funding to assist with foreclosures and federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support Milwaukee community organizations helping youth, seniors, homeless people and the unemployed. Federal funds also help with transportation, infrastructure and the environment. In some cases, federal funds are first directed to state agencies for redistribution, which may also benefit the City of Milwaukee.

### 2. The Milwaukee area is gaining a broader understanding of the need for regional cooperation.

Public transit, parks, sewer, and water are critical topics for the region. Municipalities realize the growing importance of cooperation on these issues to move the region forward, especially with limited funding available for major projects.

As technology continues to advance, the process of sharing information, maps, vital statistics, and more becomes even easier which enhances decision-making.

### 3. The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides opportunity for greater cooperation to foster public transit in the region.

The RTA consists of City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Racine County, Kenosha County, and SEWRPC, with State and Federal assistance. The RTA has taxing authority and is charged with the responsibility to oversee public transit in a three county region.





## CHALLENGES

1. **Jobs, residents and regional wealth have been migrating away from central Milwaukee for decades. As a result, there is a mismatch between jobs, people and transportation.**

The outward migration has left behind a concentration of urban social challenges such as unemployment, declining educational attainment, healthcare and crime, without the corresponding tax base or wealth needed to properly address these social challenges.

2. **The city's physical growth outward is limited, which impacts the ability to expand the tax base and create jobs.**

The city must rely on infill and redevelopment. Some sites are polluted and must be remediated first, which makes redevelopment even more costly, but not impossible.

The City's strong relationships with State and Federal entities facilitate redevelopment.

3. **The City's infrastructure is aging and appropriate replacement cycles are not always met.**

Parts of the City's infrastructure are deteriorating as evidenced by street failures and leaking pipes. Milwaukee is the area's economic and cultural hub, which means residents and non-residents are users of streets and infrastructure, but only residents pay towards resolving aging infrastructure problems. Financing to resolve infrastructure problems is limited and the City must continue to work closely with State and Federal entities to secure sufficient funding .

4. **Resources are limited at all levels of government.**

Governments, at all levels, face increased funding challenges to meet the needs of residents and businesses with fewer resources. As a result, it becomes increasingly important for governments to work together to secure funding and reduce duplication of efforts.

5. **While the need for regional cooperation is rising, resistance regionalism continues.**

Even in light of the benefits of regional cooperation, issues such as public transit, affordable housing, and economic development continue to cause resistance to regional cooperation. The challenge is to effectively communicate the value of shared economic benefits.



## POLICIES

### I. FOSTER EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE AND ALL OF ITS GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

- A. Seek opportunities for cooperation with other jurisdictions on issues that can best be addressed regionally such as transportation, affordable housing, water quality and supply, and air quality
- B. Initiate meetings among staff and elected officials of appropriate government entities when opportunities exist for cross jurisdictional collaboration
- C. Ensure the City of Milwaukee maintains appropriate local control and authority, commensurate with its population and central position within the region, while advancing intergovernmental cooperation
- D. Use technology and outreach to stimulate citizen input and dialog on regional issues

### II. PROMOTE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND COORDINATED METROPOLITAN APPROACH TO PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- A. Encourage the state to become more active in supporting and rewarding regional planning efforts
- B. Continue to support efforts such as those of the Milwaukee 7 to market and promote the region for economic development and job creation
- C. Collaborate with SEWRPC to ensure urban concerns are addressed in regional plans and ensure SEWRPC's governing body is representative of Milwaukee's population





### III. COOPERATE WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS AND STATE GOVERNMENT ON REVENUE STREAMS AND EFFICIENCIES

- A. Consider alternatives or modifications to the state revenue sharing formula that better serve Milwaukee
- B. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and partners to identify and secure additional federal funding, such as New Starts funds for public transit
- C. Evaluate the possibility of shifting a portion of local jurisdictions tax burden to alternative revenue mechanisms to encourage better land use decisions. For example, fund RTA using sales tax instead of funding public transit with a property tax
- D. Continue to identify opportunities to work with other government entities to share services, and to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of efforts
  - 1. Encourage staff to work with other jurisdictions and reward efforts to identify and eliminate inefficiencies and duplication
  - 2. Continue to promote reciprocal agreements such as those for libraries, schools, emergency services
  - 3. Promote better representation of Milwaukee on SEWRPC's board in regard to its population, economic position in the region, and geographic area