GOVERNMENT SERVICE COORDINATION

Chapter of the
Marquette County Comprehensive Plan

Adopted May 6, 2009 by the Marquette County Planning Commission
Approved June 2, 2009 by the Marquette Board of Commissioners

Prepared by:
Resource Management & Development Department
Planning, Community Development, Forestry, & Recreation Division
Marquette County, Michigan
MARQUETTE COUNTY, MICHIGAN
RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION
MARQUETTE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
GOVERNMENT SERVICE COORDINATION CHAPTER
of the
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission updated the Government Service Coordination Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and submitted the plan to the County Board for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2007 the Marquette County Board received and reviewed the proposed Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the proposed Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 7, 2009 to consider public comment on the proposed Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, and to further review and comment on the updated Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the updated Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the County;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Adoption of Government Service Coordination Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2009 Government Service Coordination Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, including all of the figures, maps, and tables contained therein.

2. Distribution to County Board and Notice Group. Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the County Board has not asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Government Service Coordination Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843 and therefore the plan is effective as of May 7, 2009. In addition, the Planning Commission approves distribution of the adopted amendments to the County Board and Notice Group.

3. Findings of Fact. The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing intergovernmental activities in the County, a review of the existing Comprehensive Plan provisions and maps, input received from the County Board and public hearing, and finds that the updated Government Service Coordination Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will accurately reflect and implement the County’s goals and strategies for the coordination of government services in Marquette County.

4. Effective Date. The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

The foregoing resolution offered by Planning Commissioner Salo. Second offered by Planning Commissioner Bergdahl. Upon roll call vote the following voted: "Aye": Commissioners Kaiser, Bergdahl, Kristola, Holmes, and Salo. "Nay": 0

The Chair declared the resolution adopted. 

Signed: __________________________

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**Introduction**

Local governments have worked together in Marquette County for many years. Fire departments long ago realized that some fires would be too big for one department to handle alone. Mutual aid agreements provided a legal framework for one department to help out another during an emergency. Adjacent jurisdictions have also cooperated on the purchase and maintenance of expensive capital projects like utility systems and roads. Since the “taxpayer revolt” of the late 1970s, however, more and more attention has been focused on making the operation of government cheaper and more efficient. Cooperation between governments is one way of accomplishing this goal.

Two factors have created an even greater interest in cooperative agreements among Michigan local governments in recent years. The first, a statewide trend, is declining revenues from state and federal sources. The second, more characteristic of the Upper Peninsula, has been a stable or declining population. These two factors are explored in more detail below.

Governor Granholm, in her 2007 State of the State address, put an even finer point on the imperative for local governments to work together:

> Tonight I am proposing a change to revenue-sharing payments to local governments. Cities and townships that want to see their revenue sharing increase this year will need to show us they are sharing services or consolidating with other units of government to save taxpayers money. It's simple. When they show us they're consolidating or sharing, we'll "show them the money."
Revenues

Local governments derive their income from three primary sources: (1) direct taxes paid by constituents, (2) user fees, and (3) transfer payments from the state and federal governments (Figure 1). As the federal budget deficit has increased, less money has been available for the federal government to share with states. State governments are also experiencing budget woes, and the State of Michigan is as hard hit as any, with its dependence on the struggling auto industry. In turn, the state has less money available to share with local units of government.

Figure 1: Sources of Revenue for Units of Government in Marquette County

Michigan’s current budget structure is unsustainable, according to analysis from the Citizens Research Council (CRC). In the CRC’s 2006 report, *Michigan’s Budget Crisis and the Prospects for the Future*, much of the problem is described as “self-inflicted.” A combination of reduced tax rates, exemption of certain activities from taxation, and federal cuts in state aid have combined for a $2 billion cut in revenues, nearly a quarter of the current tax base. In addition, recent downturns in the automotive industry have hurt Michigan’s economy, and therefore its tax base, especially hard.

Recent state budget deficits have been offset by reserve funds, but the reserves are running out. Local governments lose money as state revenue sharing funds disappear. Most local governments rely on state revenue sharing to help balance their budgets, particularly in light of the state-mandated services that they must provide. The state, however, is only part of the problem. Some of the state mandates are created by federal mandates. Block grants and other funds are provided to the states by the federal
government to help cover the cost of many, but not all of the federal mandates. Unfortunately, the federal government faces a gigantic budget deficit of its own, and has been cutting back on the amount of money going to states.

At the same time, limits are set on the ability of Michigan local governments to raise taxes to cover their expenses. In 1978, the Headlee Amendment was passed, limiting increases in tax rates assessed by local governments to a rate commensurate with inflation.

Proposal A, passed in 1994, changed the way that property taxes were assessed in Michigan. Parcels were divided into homestead and non-homestead categories, with homeowner residences and certain farms falling into the homestead class. These properties have lower tax rates than non-homestead properties. Their taxable value cannot increase by more than five percent per year, regardless of the change in market value. The five percent cap is lifted when a property is sold. Thus, communities with active real estate markets see increases in revenues faster than communities with few sales. Communities with new construction also see increases. Conversely, in areas with little or no growth, revenues are even more limited, as taxable value fails to keep up with assessed value.

The gap between the real value of property and its taxable value has been increasing steadily since the inception of Proposal A. While the gap has leveled off statewide, it continues to increase locally. In 2006, the gap between state equalized value (SEV, half of the assessed value) and taxable value (the value upon which property taxes are based) was roughly $574 million in Marquette County.
Taxable value varies considerably within Marquette County. Roughly one-third of all of the taxable value in Marquette County lies within the City of Marquette. The low taxable value in the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee helps to explain their higher tax rates—they must tax at a higher rate to raise the same amount of revenue as townships with lower taxes but higher per capita taxable value.
Figure 3: Millage rates by municipality/school district
Changes over time in taxable value reflect the varied fortunes of different parts of the county. When inflation is factored in, two townships, Richmond and Wells, lost value
during the last ten years (Figure 5). On the other hand, Forsyth, Powell, and Michigamme townships have increased their taxable value considerably over that time period.

Figure 5: Percent Change in Taxable Valuation, 1998-2008
**Tax Breaks**

Some categories of land are taxed differently than the rest of the county. A large portion of Marquette County consists of privately-held lands registered under the Commercial Forest Act (CFA). In exchange for opening lands to public hunting, trapping and fishing, private landowners can get a tax reduction until their lands are taken out of the program. The intent is to make commercial forestry economically viable while providing the public with recreational access. Landowners must submit a DNR-approved forest management plan in order to be eligible for the tax deferment. If the land is no longer used for forestry purposes, it must be withdrawn from the program. At that point, the landowner must pay taxes at the current millage rate using the average land value for cutover timber lands.

State-owned lands are considered tax-exempt. The State of Michigan makes a payment of “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” (PILT) instead of paying taxes. PILT payments are much smaller than the tax that would be paid on the property if it were taxed at the market rate. In addition, certain tax-reverted state lands qualify for the “swamp tax,” a state payment of $1.20 per acre. Again, this is much less than the tax that would be paid on the same land if it were privately-held. The federal government also makes PILT payments on National Forest lands within Marquette County.
Figure 6: Percentage of Lands in CFA Status, 2005
Finally, the iron mines are covered by a different kind of tax. Instead of a tax on acreage or land value, the iron mines are taxed based on the production of iron ore in any given year. This specific ore tax represents an important revenue source. It is paid on lands in
Ely, Tilden, and Richmond townships, and the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee. The tax rate is negotiated between Cleveland Cliffs and the State of Michigan. Marquette County is not represented at the negotiations.

A boom in construction of summer homes has helped boost tax revenue in several Marquette County townships. Five of them receive more than three-quarters of their assessed taxes from non-homestead properties, primarily seasonal homes. Will these communities be able to hold their value after baby-boom retirees are gone or too old to visit?

Figure 8: Progression of Marquette County maps: A. Marquette County; B. Marquette County, with tax-exempt areas whited out; C. Marquette County with tax-exempt, CFA, and specific ore areas whited out; D. Homeowner-occupied parcels in Marquette County.
Figure 9: % Non-Homestead
**Demographics**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Upper Peninsula was estimated to have a population of 314,685 in 2005. The region has been gaining population very slowly since 1950, and still has not regained its peak population of 332,556 in 1920 (Figure 10). Marquette County’s population hit a peak of 74,101 in 1980 and has since declined to its current level of about 64,000. An increase in enrollment at Northern Michigan University was more than offset by the closure of K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in 1995. Figure 11 shows that the loss of population occurred mainly in younger age cohorts, with the elderly making up an increasing percentage of our population.

![Upper Peninsula Population History](image)

*Figure 9: Marquette County and Upper Peninsula population history*
Changes in population have differed with age groups. Across the Upper Peninsula, the number of school-aged children has declined, while the number of seniors has increased. As the “baby boom” generation reaches retirement age, the number of seniors will increase sharply. Local governments and school districts will have to cope with the change in services demanded by an aging population. One issue that has already affected the Upper Peninsula has been the shortage of volunteers for fire departments. The average age of volunteer firefighters has been increasing. At one recent fire in Keweenaw County, all of the responders were over 60 years old. The fourteen-hour fight against the fire took an especially hard toll on the team.

Within Marquette County, there have been variations in the demographic pattern. Negaunee Township, for instance, has seen a recent influx in families with young children. In Chocolay Township, however, many families that moved there in previous decades have raised their children and now maintain “empty nest” households. In western Marquette County, the senior population is growing proportionately faster than in the rest of the county, through a combination of new retirees settling in the area and a population that is aging in place, with few young immigrants.
Figure 11: Trends in aging population (Mqt. Co. Population Aged 65 and Over, 1950-2020)

Population Distribution

Marquette County can be divided into two regions: 1) the US-41 urban services corridor, from West Ishpeming (Ishpeming Township) to Harvey (Chocolay Township), and 2) everything else (“Greater Marquette County”). Within the US-41 urban services corridor, populations are larger, population density is greater, and the need for and scope of services is greater. Outside the corridor, services are generally minimal. The Gwinn-Sawyer area is an outlier in this region, having some of the characteristics of the urban corridor, but farther from neighboring services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US-41 Urban Services Corridor</th>
<th>Greater Marquette County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Marquette</td>
<td>Champion Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Ishpeming</td>
<td>Ely Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Negaunee</td>
<td>Ewing Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolay Township</td>
<td>Forsyth Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishpeming Township</td>
<td>Humboldt Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquette Township</td>
<td>Michigamme Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negaunee Township</td>
<td>Powell Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic Township</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Township</td>
<td>2,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sands Township</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,557</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,286</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,714</td>
<td>1,138</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skandia Township</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilden Township</td>
<td>1,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turin Township</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Township</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Branch Township</td>
<td>1,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Greater Marquette County” is generally characterized by small populations and governments that offer minimal services. Many of these townships have already seen the need for cooperation and have formed joint fire departments. They also have arrangements in place for services like garbage collection where political boundaries cross communities. The exceptions are Wells and Powell townships, whose population centers are too far from neighboring townships to have many opportunities to offer cooperative services, and Forsyth Township, which offers a higher level of services than its neighbors.

The US-41 Urban Corridor, on the other hand, is characterized by relatively high population densities. Three of the governments in the corridor are incorporated cities, and offer an array of services not available in Greater Marquette County. In several cases, political boundaries cut through areas of population density, and cooperation would seem natural. Indeed, some cooperation has already occurred in providing expensive water and sewer services.

The bulk of people and services are in the US-41 Urban Services Corridor. This is the area where cooperation between units of government will be most effective, benefit the most people, and create the greatest savings. It is also an area where cooperation has met some resistance, in part because unlike in many of the more rural areas of Marquette County, the critical mass of resources is available to “go it alone.”

**Where does the money go?**

Governments are mandated to provide certain services. County government in Michigan, for instance, is required to run law enforcement and court systems. City governments are required to provide for “public peace and health.” Townships are required to provide election services.

In addition to constitutional requirements, the state legislature has created new regulations that must be enforced by local governments. Mandated services are a concern of local governments, because they often are unfunded by the state or federal governments that require them.

A 2004 survey by the Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers (MACAO), *County Financing of State Mandated Services in Michigan: Survey Results*
and Interpretation, found that mandated services accounted for 75.2 percent of the County of Marquette’s expenditures, higher than the 66.2 percent average for counties that responded to the survey. Only 52.2 percent of those expenditures were reimbursed, again higher than the 46.2 percent average for survey respondents. In general, counties with larger populations tended to devote a higher percentage of their expenditures to state-mandated services than counties with low populations. Among the counties surveyed, Marquette County was relatively high in the percentage of its budget devoted to mandated services. Roughly 36 per cent of these costs were not reimbursed, to the tune of $8.9 million.

In Marquette County, the county budget can be broken down into the following general areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Records</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marquette County Budget, 1996 vs. 2006

Figure 12: Marquette County Budget, 1996 vs. 2006.
**Authority to Create Agreements between Local Governments**

The Michigan Constitution of 1963 includes clauses that specifically allow local governments and agencies to make cooperative agreements. Article VII, Section 28, provides the authority for existing Michigan governments to make agreements with each other. Article III, Section 5, provides additional, but more limited, authority for Michigan local governments to create cooperative agreements with other governments in other states and in Canada.

![Local Government Expenditures per Capita](chart)

**Figure 13: Local government expenditures per capita**

Different units of government clearly have different spending priorities. These differences create an opportunity for cooperation. If Feelgood Township has developed an expertise in a particular service, it may be more economical for surrounding communities to tap Feelgood’s expertise, rather than separately developing similar resources. On a global scale, these differences in skills and experience are the fuel of international trade and diplomacy.

**Nature of Interlocal Agreements**

The agreement must be seen as mutually beneficial to continue, even if it has existed for a long time. Sometimes, a crisis will provoke a change either in favor or against a
cooperative agreement. In Marquette Township, fire protection was provided by the City of Marquette until 1976. The township created its own fire department after citizen concerns about response to a devastating fire at U.P. Kitchen Mart, on US-41. The fire was seen as evidence that the agreement with the City was no longer acceptable.

Several factors influence the success of any cooperative agreement:
- Cooperating units must feel that they have a say in the process.
- Everyone must feel that they are getting their money’s worth.
- Services provided to each agency should be commensurate with financial or time contributions.
- Agreements should start with things that are easy to agree on; trust must be built before the tougher issues can be tackled.
- The agreement should have support both from leadership (both administrative and legislative) and from the constituents.
- Customers should be satisfied with the level of service.
- Working together should cost less than working separately, unless a new service is created that would not have been available otherwise.

**Difficulties**

The political geography of Marquette County makes delivery of services by local units of government challenging. In a few places, such as the cities and western Chocolay Township, a relatively large and compact population base makes services relatively cheap to deliver. The rest of the county suffers from extreme dispersion of population, made worse by continuing conversion of isolated “camps” into permanent residences.

The shape of townships in Marquette County, particularly in the western part of the county, makes for awkward administrative units. West of Negaunee, the geographic orientation of townships is north-south, but transportation corridors and the settlement pattern run east-west. In addition, development is concentrated in the US-41 corridor, leaving large areas to the north and south that are relatively undeveloped. The exceptions to this pattern are the M-95 and County Road 581 corridors, and the Gwinn-Sawyer area.

South and east of Gwinn, much of the County is covered by swamp. The southern townships are large and sparsely populated. Service delivery is a challenge, particularly with a small population base to pay for services. Wells and Ewing townships are especially isolated, with better connections to Delta County than to the rest of Marquette County. A small portion of Wells Township is even in the Escanaba school district.

The net effect of these geographic barriers is that Marquette County’s population is concentrated in a few corridors. This situation should make intergovernmental cooperation easier. Services are more expensive to provide where population is widely dispersed. For many areas of the County, however, this is the case. Some population concentrations are far from other parts of the County. Northland and Arnold in Wells Township, and Big Bay in Powell Township, are good examples.
Political difficulties are the bane of intergovernmental cooperation everywhere. Townships resist annexation by cities, cities resent the diversion of resources to lower-tax, lower-service townships, and individuals are capable of derailing projects that have general support. The individualistic political culture typical of rural townships concentrates political power in the hands of township supervisors, who can single-handedly make or break cooperative ventures.

Types of Cooperation
In the state of Wisconsin, all comprehensive plans are required to include an intergovernmental cooperation component. The majority of plans do little more than detail existing cooperative arrangements between neighbors or between local governments and the state government. Wisconsin does, however, offer a detailed guide to the methods in which intergovernmental cooperation could be achieved. The following section outlines these methods and their existing or potential application in Marquette County.

Cooperating with services
The most common means of coordinating government activities is by cooperating with services. Rather than consolidating their government operations, two or more units will cooperate in the provision of specific services. This can take place in a number of forms.

1. **Voluntary assistance.** The most common form of voluntary assistance is a mutual aid agreement between fire departments. Marquette County has numerous mutual aid agreements in place.

2. **Trading services.** A township could provide fire service to a specific part of another township in exchange for use of a voting machine during certain elections.

3. **Renting equipment.** The County rents out its vactor truck (used for cleaning sanitary sewer systems) at K.I. Sawyer to other entities. This saves considerably over the cost of purchasing or leasing a truck for the renting agencies, and helps the County offset its costs.

4. **Contracting.** An entity can make its services available to another entity by contract. For instance, Marquette Township contracts with the Marquette County Sheriff for public safety services.

5. **Sharing municipal staff.** Neighboring governments could combine half-time positions to create one full-time job. For instance, two townships might hire a common zoning administrator. West Branch and Forsyth townships did this when they hired a coordinator for the Sawyer Operating Authority.

6. **Consolidation of services.** Two existing agencies could be combined into one common agency. For instance, Champion and Humboldt townships created the Champion-Humboldt Fire Department from their separate pre-existing fire departments.

7. **Joint use of a facility.** Two or more agencies could share a facility, even if they don’t own it. For instance, the Forsyth Township fire department and Skandia-
West Branch EMS share an emergency services building at K.I. Sawyer, provided by Marquette County.

8. **A new special purpose district could be created.** For instance, the Ishpeming-Negaunee Water Authority was created to tackle the problems of supplying drinking water to the cities of Negaunee and Ishpeming.

9. **Joint purchase and ownership of equipment.** Two or more agencies could jointly purchase and maintain equipment. This is especially useful when the equipment is specialized and expensive.

10. **Cooperative purchasing.** Governments can band together for cooperative purchasing. By buying together in bulk, they can often get discounts and achieve an economy of scale that would not be available to them if they purchased goods or services individually. The items purchased can range from office supplies to employee insurance plans. Marquette County is able to purchase computer equipment under a plan established by the State of Michigan. The state solicited bidders and chose the most cost-effective suppliers. Marquette County and other local governments are able to save the cost of bidding for computer supplies on their own, and also benefit from the discounts available to a major buyer like the state.

### Cooperating by Sharing Revenue

Local governments can choose to cooperate by sharing revenues. For instance, a city might supply water and sewer service to a township parcel in exchange for a portion of the taxes collected on that parcel. This kind of cooperative activity has great potential, but is used the least.

### Cooperating with Regulations

Adjacent local governments can make things easier for businesses and residents by adopting consistent standards in their ordinances. A good example of this process in Marquette County is the adoption of access management standards for the US-41/M-28 corridor between Harvey and Koski Corners. After meeting with MDOT and other concerned parties, several townships have adopted standard access management ordinances for the corridor. This reduces confusion and helps local governments manage growth along the corridor. Other options for cooperating with regulations include:

1. **Cooperative zoning.** Under the Zoning Enabling Act of 2006, two or more jurisdictions may create a common zoning board, with authority in the cooperating entities. This saves time and money, and can help create consistent land use between the cooperating entities.

2. **Providing notice and review when new ordinances are passed.** State law requires notification of neighboring jurisdictions when comprehensive plans are adopted or updated. This makes neighbors of new developments that may affect them.
3. Regular meetings. For example, the Marquette County Administrator meets regularly with counterparts from cities and townships in an “Idea Exchange” to discuss issues of common interest.

4. Consolidation of zoning offices. Two neighboring townships could elect to share a zoning administrator, even if they do not share a zoning ordinance.

5. Simultaneous development of ordinances. Neighboring jurisdictions could consult with each other during the creation of new ordinances, to help create consistency from one place to the next.

6. Common land division ordinances. Neighboring units of government could create a common land division ordinance, in order to reduce conflicts when new development takes place.

7. Common official maps, showing zoning districts or other regulatory boundaries.

**Cooperating with Boundaries**

Boundary changes tend to be controversial. Townships in Michigan have long resented annexation of their land by cities. Some boundary changes, however, can be cooperative ventures:

1. **425 agreements.** Under Public Act 425 of 1984 (Intergovernmental Conditional Transfer of Property by Contract), a unit of government may agree to transfer responsibility for specific areas to another local unit of government. The agreements may last for up to 50 years, and are renewable upon mutual agreement. In effect, they change political boundaries for a specified period of time. Sands and Forsyth townships came to such an agreement over K.I. Sawyer. Sands Township relinquished zoning, police, and tax collection authority to Forsyth Township for the business and industrial area of the former Air Force base. Sands and Marquette townships also made an agreement for an area near Marquette Mountain.

2. **Annexation.** Cities can annex neighboring township areas if city services are provided and residents of an area petition for annexation

3. **Detachment.** Under Public Act 279 of 1909 (Home Rule City Act), a portion of a city can be separated, or detached, from that city and added to another city. This can happen only through mutual agreement and where city water and sewer service is not being provided. Similar provisions are made for charter townships under Act 359 of 1947 (Charter Township Act).

4. **Incorporation.** An area within one or more townships could choose to incorporate, or create a new city. This pattern is typical of rapidly-growing townships in suburban Detroit that wish to protect themselves from annexation. Cities are not allowed to annex portions of neighboring cities.

5. **Consolidation.** Two or more cities are permitted to join together as one city. In Iron County, the City of Iron River consolidated with the neighboring cities of Stambaugh and Mineral Hills. Voters of the City of Caspian elected not to become part of the consolidation.
Services

Services can generally be divided into two categories, (1) those in which the service travels to the customer (e.g., fire protection, municipal water), and (2) those provided at a central point or points (e.g., voting). The first category is generally more expensive, because of the travel or distribution costs.

Services that are provided to many points across the jurisdiction include:
- Garbage pickup
- Road maintenance
- Police and fire services
- Water and sewer services (though these are sometimes provided in limited areas)
- Other public works
- Public transportation
- Code enforcement (building codes, environmental health)

Minimizing travel saves money in these services. The locations in which the services are provided are not always stable. For instance, while the locations for garbage pickup are predictable from week to week, the locations where fire or police services are needed will change.

Services provided at a central location or locations include:
- Voting
- Administrative services (e.g., zoning, fee collection, tax collection)
- Parks and recreation (in most cases)
- Libraries
- Solid waste disposal
- Courts
- Health clinics
- Corrections

Accessibility to the general population is essential in providing these services. Acceptable travel times to reach these services will vary, in part according to how often the service is used. People will be less willing to travel far to vote (at least once a year, on average) than to appear in court (almost never or never, with luck). Costs are more related to the level of service than to the location of the service. The cost of providing the service will influence the number of locations in which the service is offered.
Figure 14: Map showing routes to the nearest fire department.
Services to Many Points

Law Enforcement
Currently, law enforcement in Marquette County is provided by the Michigan State Police, the Marquette County Sheriff, three city police departments, three township police departments, Northern Michigan University Public Safety, and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. For Marquette County, law enforcement is the single largest expense, followed closely by the courts, a related activity.

Services could be consolidated between some or all of these services. In Saginaw County, a plan was proposed to give all police and fire departments in the county authority to respond to emergencies anywhere in the county, regardless of internal boundaries. The plan required a small tax increase, however, and was defeated by voters.

Jail overcrowding has been a problem for Marquette County and many surrounding counties. Discussions are underway regarding creation of a regional jail, in order to alleviate regional overcrowding. The 1996 Community Services and Facilities Plan proposed exactly this solution, and recommended geographic modeling to determine the most efficient site for a regional facility.

K.I. Sawyer has been an area of focus for many people in the area concerned about law enforcement. For a time, the Marquette County Sheriff maintained deputies at Sawyer under the COPS grant. When the grant ran out, however, the Sheriff was forced to withdraw the special assignments. In 2005, the Michigan State Police began a branch post at Sawyer to help with law enforcement there. This cooperative approach has helped both residents and police.

Fire Protection
Fire protection was probably the first service to which intergovernmental cooperation was applied in Marquette County. Excellent examples of intergovernmental cooperation in fire protection exist around the county in the form of mutual aid agreements. Every fire department in the county has a mutual aid agreement with at least one other fire department. Two townships, Ely and Tilden, contract with Ishpeming Township to provide fire protection.

A number of townships in the county have formed multi-jurisdictional fire departments, some crossing county lines. The Tri-Township Fire Department joins Turin and Ewing townships in Marquette County with Maple Ridge Township in Delta County. Michigamme Township and Spurr Township (Baraga County) have a joint fire department. Two pairs of Marquette County townships have also joined forces: Champion and Humboldt in the west, and Skandia and West Branch in the east. The Skandia-West Branch EMS joins with the Forsyth Township Fire Department to provide emergency services at K.I. Sawyer.
An example elsewhere in Michigan of intergovernmental cooperation in fire protection on a larger scale is the Chelsea Area Fire Authority in Washtenaw County. The Authority protects the City of Chelsea and four neighboring townships.

**Addressing**

Townships and cities are able to determine the address numbers within their jurisdictions. Often, neighboring communities have conflicting address numbers on roads with the same or similar names. Marquette County has already seen incidents in which the wrong fire department was dispatched because a caller was confused about location, using a post office box number as a street number. Consistent addressing would eliminate duplicate addresses within the county. A few units have already renumbered addresses within their boundaries. Republic Township completed an addressing project in 2004. Not only were new, more consistent number assigned, but most roads were renamed as well. A countywide project would require not only the cooperation of all local units of government, but also an extended campaign to make the public aware of the changes, their safety benefits, and the real impact on the owners of homes and businesses.

**Garbage Collection**

Townships and cities take a variety of approaches to garbage collection. All municipalities in the county participate in the Marquette County Solid Waste Plan, and send their waste exclusively to the Marquette County Landfill in Sands Township. The method of delivery, however, varies from community to community. All three cities and some townships provide garbage collection themselves. A few townships contract with a private hauler to gather refuse within their borders. Three townships (Forsyth, Skandia and West Branch) have transfer stations, but require residents to provide their own hauling (usually by private services).

Increased coordination in garbage collection could lead to better organization of routes and more efficient, less costly collection. Early in 2007, the City of Marquette and Marquette Township began discussions about consolidating garbage collection contracts. Both municipalities contracted out their solid waste disposal, to different private haulers. Similar discussions between other entities could also save money.

**Water Service**

Water systems can be expensive to maintain over time. In addition to water extraction and treatment, the mains require continual maintenance. Four systems cross political boundaries: The Marquette system (City of Marquette and Marquette Township), Ishpeming-Negaunee Water Authority (City of Ishpeming and City of Negaunee), K.I. Sawyer’s water system (Forsyth Township and West Branch Township) and the Skandia water authority (Skandia Township and West Branch Township).
Sanitary Sewer Service
Sanitary sewer service, like water service, is provided mainly in the urban corridor. It is even more expensive to maintain a sanitary sewer system than a water system, because while delivery costs (pipes) are similar, the treatment costs are much higher, particularly when secondary treatment is needed. Three systems cross political boundaries: the Marquette Area Wastewater Authority (City of Marquette, Marquette Township, and Chocolay Township), the Ishpeming (City of Ishpeming, Ishpeming Township) and K.I. Sawyer’s wastewater system (Forsyth Township and West Branch Township).

The City of Negaunee and Negaunee Township have been in negotiation to provide sanitary sewer service to the old Marquette County Airport site, soon to be a casino run by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. Talks have also been held between the City of Negaunee and the Ishpeming Area Wastewater Authority on sending Negaunee’s sewage to the newer Ishpeming plant, rather than spending money on expensive upgrades to the Negaunee plant.

Public Transportation
This is an area where intergovernmental cooperation already takes place. Countywide bus service is provided through MarqTran (Marquette County Transit Authority), which is funded by a countywide tax. The County also runs Sawyer International Airport, which serves a regional customer base. MarqTran serves the airport on its Gwinn/Sawyer route.

Attempts have been made to create a wider regional public bus system (“R-Tran”). The system failed for lack of ridership, but the effort shows that MarqTran and its sister agencies in neighboring counties take cooperation seriously.

Services Provided at Specific Locations

Zoning
Under the 2006 Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, municipalities are specifically allowed to coordinate zoning services, or to create a new authority to coordinate zoning between adjacent communities. Since 1993, when Marquette County turned over zoning authority to the townships (cities have always had their own authority), some townships have had very active planning commissions, while others have met only on a quarterly basis. Many townships are finding that they are coping with similar issues in neighboring areas, and have begun informal discussions about creating new, multi-jurisdictional zoning authorities. Not only would this move save money, but it would also better coordinate land uses on a larger scale.

Economic Development
Numerous organizations have their hand in economic development in Marquette County. In recent years, the Lake Superior Community Partnership (created from combining the
The Marquette Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ishpeming-Negaunee Chamber of Commerce has taken a leading role in encouraging economic development in the county. The County of Marquette has also been prominent, both through the Marquette County Economic Development Corporation and Sawyer International Airport.

Collective marketing of available resources and properties has been slow to start in the County. Many municipalities see each other as competitors for tax base, and thus are unwilling to share information. They may see the County itself as a competitor, with the redevelopment effort at K.I. Sawyer. Investors from outside the area, on the other hand, are more likely to put their money in an area where cooperation and regional integration is a theme. Development in one township or city often has spillover effects into neighboring communities.

**Tax Assessment and Collection**

A recent report to Governor Granholm by the Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability suggests that counties could relinquish their equalization function to the state, but that townships might also relinquish their tax assessment and collection powers to the counties. Such a move would consolidate functions that are currently taking place in nineteen townships. It would also probably shift political pressure from the township level, where supervisors are the nominal tax assessors, to the county level, and create one more arena of conflict between the County and its constituent townships.

**Recreation**

Recreation has not generally been provided in any coordinated way by various governments in the area. Indeed, many communities have submitted competing recreation plans in order to become eligible for recreation grants from the Michigan DNR. These grants have largely focused on the development of playgrounds, ball fields, and basketball courts, all uses designed for local use. An exception to this pattern is the joint development of a park by Skandia and West Branch townships.

A recent effort at intergovernmental cooperation has been the Marquette County Recreation Authority, incorporated under the provisions of Act No. 321, Public Acts of 2000 (the “Recreational Authorities Act”). The impetus for the Authority came from financial concerns. Chocolay Township was having trouble paying for recreational facilities and wanted to impose user fees for non-residents. The City of Marquette also wanted to impose user fees, because the City has regional facilities that are used by many people who live beyond the city limits. The two governments discussed creating a recreation authority to pay for all recreational facilities, and invited other local governments to join them. Differences between the participants eventually led to focus on a trail system, already a topic of discussion after creation of the Noquamenon Trail Network. This is a good example of communities focusing on the least common denominator, something in which everyone feels that they have a stake. Cooperation makes facilities with a regional economic impact possible. Some areas are even willing to help pay for neighbor’s portion of the trail, because without the connection, they have little or nothing. Basketball courts, pools, and ice arenas fit the model of customers...
traveling to a central point. Trails, on the other hand, travel at least some of the distance to the customer.

Another key to the cooperation on trails, rather than basketball facilities, is that people from outside the area will come to use them. That means that a successful project will have economic development implications. In addition, there are state and federal funds specifically designated for trail development. Cooperation enhances the chances of securing funds.

**Future Challenges**

- Development of Kennecott Mineral’s Eagle Project on the Yellow Dog Plains will likely spur new development in an area with very few services. The mine site in northern Michigamme Township is far from the settled part of the township, and over ten miles from the nearest county highway. The nearest services are in Powell Township, at Big Bay. In addition to impacts of running and servicing the mine itself, new impacts are likely to be felt as workers find places to live nearby.

- The evolving redevelopment of K.I. Sawyer has already resulted in some intergovernmental cooperation, most notably the Emergency Services Building for fire protection run jointly by Forsyth and West Branch townships and owned by Marquette County. Sands Township has turned over much of the former air base to Forsyth Township under the terms of an Act 425 agreement. New changes are likely to take place, particularly if new economic development results in a more settled local population. Water and sanitary sewer services are currently maintained by Marquette County, but these could be acquired by one of the townships, a cooperative agreement with the townships, or by an independent, incorporated K.I. Sawyer, if that were ever to occur.

- Tourism remains an important part of Marquette County’s economy. Recent focus has been on creating a regional trail network to attract visitors and tie together natural sites with historic sites in the iron mining region. Common interest in economic development has brought local governments together, but the interests of the various entities can vary. Attitudes toward snowmobilers, for instance, range from exclusion to incorporation into downtown development.

- Economic development is a challenge that requires greater intergovernmental cooperation. Interest in such cooperation has occurred in both the public and private sectors. More work is needed to convince leaders that economic development has regional impact; if one unit gains a business that it does not mean that other units have lost.
Recommendations

General

- **Existing cooperative relationships must be continued.** Much like interpersonal relationships, cooperative relationships between governments must be sustained to survive. They must be strong enough to survive a change in leadership and administration at any of the cooperating partner governments. Citizen involvement is essential to maintenance of agreements; after all, constituents should be the primarily beneficiaries of any cooperative agreement.

- Many County functions depend on the cooperation of local units of government. **The County should continue its efforts to foster cooperation with cities and townships.** The County Administrator’s Idea Exchange should be continued with more input from local units. Marquette County Emergency Management and Central Dispatch have also been active in seeking input from local units of government, and will continue to foster good working relationships with local officials.

- **Governments seeking to start a new cooperative venture should start small. Communities seeking to cooperate on an activity should start with a small, manageable project before tackling complex issues.** This will help people from the communities get to know one another, build teamwork. By starting out small, communities are more likely to see quick success in their efforts. Complex systems require painstaking attention to detail, and considerably longer timelines.

Law enforcement

- An ongoing problem for counties across Michigan is the shortage of jail space. Tougher sentencing guidelines on the state level have led to longer sentences for prisoners held in the county jail. In addition, the County sometimes holds prisoners for the U.S. District Court in Marquette, and guarantees ten spaces for federal prisoners at any time. **New cooperative solutions should be found to solve the problem of jail overcrowding.**

- Where appropriate, local governments should consider contract policing. Contract policing provided by the Michigan State Police at K.I. Sawyer has been a successful solution there.

- **Police departments with adjacent districts should take steps to explore economies of scale through cooperative activity.** The cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee have had discussions about the potential of combining police departments.

- **The local law enforcement community should continue its ongoing collaborative efforts.** Examples include the Marquette County Law Enforcement Administrators Association, Central Dispatch, and cooperative activities with Marquette County Emergency Management.
Fire protection

- Fire departments have led the way in intergovernmental cooperation in Marquette County. **Continued cooperation between fire departments should be encouraged.** The County Emergency Manager has held regular meetings with local fire chiefs and other emergency management officials to ensure that cooperative relationships be maintained. Recent distribution of funds for backup generators has been cooperative, with several townships initiating cooperative relationships to share the generators on their own.

Addressing

- Emergency responders depend on a consistent addressing system to reach victims quickly. Past efforts to coordinate addressing systems between the cities and townships of Marquette County have brought moderate success. **These efforts should be continued.**
- In the long term, a unified address system across the County should be considered.

Garbage collection

- Communities should continue to work together to either share garbage collection services, or collectively negotiate with private collectors.

Water service

- Where economies of scale make cooperation cheaper, adjacent water districts should discuss cooperative activities.

Sanitary sewer service

- Operators of adjacent systems should talk to each other about increased efficiency through working together. The City of Negaunee and the Ishpeming Area Wastewater Authority are currently discussing the diversion of Negaunee’s waste to Ishpeming’s newer plant. Negaunee officials believe that this will be cheaper than upgrading their existing plant, and Ishpeming would benefit from the efficiencies of increased flow and additional revenue.

Public transportation

- MarqTran should be encouraged to continue its longstanding efforts to coordinate with other transportation agencies.

Planning and Zoning

- Intergovernmental cooperation should be a consideration in all other chapters of the Marquette County Comprehensive Plan. This strategy is required by law for all comprehensive plans in the state of Wisconsin, and has been successfully implemented in Washtenaw and Wexford counties in Michigan.

- Neighboring municipalities should consider creating joint zoning authorities. Not only would they potentially save money by combining forces, but they would
also create a more consistent land use pattern. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act not only strongly encourages cooperation between neighboring units of government, but creates the legal means to do so.

- **Even if they do not create joint zoning or planning authorities, neighboring townships and cities should have joint meetings to discuss issues.** Joint meetings could be on any level, from township board or city council to planning commissions or other specialized bodies. The planning commissions in the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee have held several joint meetings in order to discuss issues of common concern. Not only do joint meetings help solve problems in the short term, but they also build long-term relationships between communities.

**Economic development**
- **A greater effort at regional marketing of Marquette County’s economic development opportunities is needed.** Cooperation in economic development will bring regional benefits to the area.

**Tax assessment and collection**
- Many townships already hire assessors who contract out their services to multiple governments. It would not be a stretch for townships to band together to hire an assessor. **Increased coordination in tax assessment and collection should be encouraged.**

**Recreation**
- **Cooperative planning efforts, such as the Iron Ore Heritage Trail effort, should be encouraged.** Regional recreational projects not only improve the quality of life in our area, but also bolster economic development by promoting tourism.
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