

# Cooperative Boundary Plan Factsheet

Cooperative boundary plans are authorized under [s. 66.0307, Wis.Stats.](#), and are the most thorough and complete method for developing boundary plans in Wisconsin. They are a valuable tool for local communities and a welcome alternative to protracted conflicts and litigation over municipal boundary and land use issues.

## Cooperative Boundary Plans feature:

- ▶ Broad notice to area residents and jurisdictions.
- ▶ A public hearing and comment period.
- ▶ Possible referendum. Residents may petition for an advisory referendum on the plan.
- ▶ A jointly developed cooperative plan for the territory that is consistent with each community's comprehensive plan and that may address future streets, sidewalks and trails, layout of neighborhoods, design standards, zoning, and public facilities such as parks, municipal buildings, stormwater management, and utilities.
- ▶ Review by the Department of Administration. The Department may approve, deny, or recommend changes. The Department also defends the plan against appeal.

**TIP:** For more information, see the Department of Administration's Cooperative Boundary Plan website at:

<http://doa.wi.gov/MunicipalBoundaryReview>



## Benefits to Cooperative Boundary Plans:

**Cooperative** – while annexation and incorporation tend to pit neighboring communities against one another, boundary plans provide a chance to focus on shared values, points of agreement, and solutions that can benefit everyone.

**Proactive** – while annexation and incorporation put area communities in a reactive mode, cooperative boundary plans enable communities to proactively guide their future.

**Flexibility** – while statutory boundary change mechanisms such as annexation are rigid in their scope and process, cooperative boundary plans provide communities with tremendous flexibility. Communities may determine the issues to be resolved, the size of plan area, whether municipal boundaries will change or not change over time, the duration of the plan, what services will be provided and by whom, the timing and financing of capital improvements, and how the area will be regulated and by whom. Communities have the discretion to creatively craft their own solutions to their issues.

**Certainty** – while annexations, consolidations, and incorporations are unpredictable, cooperative boundary plans put communities in charge of their future. This certainty also benefits landowners, developers, businesses, and other community stakeholders.

**Broad participation** – the public notice, public hearing, public comment, and advisory referendum features of the cooperative boundary plan process ensure that a wide range of affected residents and stakeholder groups participates in developing the plan. Because they helped create it, these participants are more likely to support the plan's adoption and implementation.

**Save money \$\$\$** – a cooperative boundary plan can save money by avoiding costly litigation. Also, the plan can identify service sharing opportunities and avoid costly duplication of services and capital facilities. Finally, towns with an adopted cooperative boundary plan are authorized to utilize TIF districts.

**Long term** – cooperative boundary plans must be a minimum of 10 years' duration, but are usually considerably longer. They allow for a much longer duration than the 10 year maximum permitted by boundary agreements entered into under [s. 66.0301 Wis. Stats.](#) – Wisconsin's general intergovernmental agreement statute.

**Enforceable** – cooperative boundary plans safeguard community and landowner interests by providing a written contract that is approved by the state. The state is also responsible for defending the plan against appeal.

**State & regional issues are addressed up front** – state agencies, regional planning commissions, and counties are required to review and comment on proposed cooperative boundary plans. This provides a great opportunity to coordinate state and regional plans, projects, and programs with local community activities and desires. For example, it helps to ensure that the state and regional permits and approvals necessary for development will be available when needed.

