

Intergovernmental Policy Analysis

For the Cities of Long Prairie, Little Falls, Walker, Brainerd, and Wadena

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Region Five Photos at <http://s1184.photobucket.com/home/mnregionfive>

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Introduction

The following document analyzes Long Prairie, Little Falls, Walker, Brainerd, and Wadena city policies relating to Intergovernmental Coordination. This document is one piece of a larger analysis that addresses the five cities' policies regarding topics of land use, transportation, housing, economic development, parks, trails, open space, and recreation, water and natural resources, intergovernmental coordination, and healthcare. To ensure clarity, each topic is analyzed separately in its own document. Research and analysis was undertaken to provide the Region Five Development Consortium with a clearer understanding of how current policies relate and differ from each other across the cities. The following analysis will be helpful for workgroups to develop regional policies and recommendations, which will be adopted by the full consortium to guide the future growth and development of Region Five in a sustainable manner.

Methodology

The following policies were taken from the most recent comprehensive plans from the cities of Long Prairie, Little Falls, Walker, Brainerd, and Wadena. This document addresses the similarities, differences, and potential conflicts between city policies regarding intergovernmental coordination. Due to the uniqueness of each plan, not all cities addressed similar issues around the topic at hand. For this reason, policies were only included if at least two of the five cities addressed the issue. Additionally, each city's policies are written at a different level of specificity making it difficult to compare/contrast a detailed policy with a vague policy. For the purpose of this analysis, policies were considered similar to each other even when they differ on the level of detail.

For this analysis, sub-topics were created to guide the reader throughout the document. For example, this document contains sub-topics of regional coordination, land use coordination, housing coordination and so forth. Under each sub-topic, similarities, differences, and conflicts between city policies on an issue were analyzed and grouped into categories. Categories are listed as follows: Very Similar, Similar, Somewhat Similar, Unique/Potentially Conflicting, and Unique. Policies in the Very Similar category are ones that relate to each other at a clear level of specificity; policies under the Similar category are ones that relate in vision but not in detail; policies under the Somewhat Similar category relate to each other more similarly than uniquely; policies under Unique/Potentially Conflicting category are in potential disagreement with other policies pertaining to the same issue; and policies that are considered unique have some relationship to the issue at hand but are not similar to each other. Due to policies relating to more than one sub-topic, it is possible that the same policy will be included across sub-topics and categories. It is also possible that not all categories were used in this document, depending on how city policies relate to each other.

To make it clear to understand, each policy has been assigned a color that corresponds with a city. The county color code can be seen in the footer of each page. Additionally, text that is

bolded and highlighted signifies the relationship between policies under a category. Furthermore, a sources list is included below in this methodology section to provide readers with links to each city's most updated comprehensive plan.

Sources

1) Long Prairie 1999 Comprehensive Plan:

<https://r5dcscrp.basecamphq.com/projects/7032816/file/100569548/Long%20Prairie%20Comprehensive%20Plan.pdf>

2) Little Falls Comprehensive Plan 2006-2020

<https://r5dcscrp.basecamphq.com/projects/7032816/file/101701381/Little%20Falls%20Comp%20Plan0001.pdf>

3) Walker Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2010)

http://www.communitygrowth.com/asset/ldkjz5/Walker-Plan_Final_050310.pdf

4) Brainerd Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2004)

<http://www.ci.brainerd.mn.us/planning/docs/compplan.pdf>

5) City of Wadena Comprehensive Plan (adopted 1986)

<https://r5dcscrp.basecamphq.com/projects/7032816/file/101701382/Wadena%20Comp%20Plan.pdf>

It should be noted that the following policy analysis includes goals and strategies from the Northern Minnesota Tribal Economic Development Commission (NMTEDC) Strategic Plan. The Economic Development Policy Analysis and the Intergovernmental Coordination Policy Analysis are the only two to include these goals and policies. Policies from these documents have their own designation in the color code. These policies are included to assist the Region Five Development Consortium with an opportunity to view and understand the economic development goals of the three tribes, as they may relate to the policies outlined in the comprehensive plans of the five cities.

Findings

I. Regional Coordination

Long Prairie, Little Falls, Walker, and Brainerd all address coordination among various local and regional governments. With the exception of those categorized as unique, these policies are largely general. Long Prairie and Brainerd include very similar policies seeking to participate in the legislative processes of the state, their respective counties, and the surrounding townships in matters important to the cities. Similarly, Long Prairie incorporates additional policies encouraging ongoing relationships and collaborative efforts with the Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, and other communities in all matters relating to planning, the provision of public services, and meeting community needs. Little Falls seeks to build a relationship with townships, Morrison County, and other agencies, and Walker wants to coordinate the efforts of area governments in the interest of property owners and residents. Uniquely, Long Prairie promotes coordination with Todd County in the recycling of hazardous waste while Walker wants to strengthen the relationship between the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and residents and assist the local school district (School District 113) by making its location as advantageous as possible.

II. Land Use Coordination

Intergovernmental coordination is not discussed as extensively in the comprehensive plans for the cities and is divided into two sub-topics: adjacent governments and nongovernment agencies. Long Prairie and Brainerd are the only two plans which address any form of intergovernmental coordination in the land use goals and policies portion.

Long Prairie and Brainerd include somewhat similar policies addressing the need to work with adjacent units of government. Long Prairie seeks to recognize common issues and work with Long Prairie Township to develop orderly annexation agreements, as well as joint planning and other cooperative measures. Brainerd also seeks to develop orderly annexation plans through coordination with adjacent governments for areas that may become urban in character.

The similarities end there, however, as the remaining intergovernmental coordination policies are unique. Long Prairie seeks to continue to work with Todd County and Long Prairie Township to identify prime agricultural areas (Long Prairie is the only plan of the five which mentions agriculture in the land use goals and policy portion). Additionally, Long Prairie will also pursue annexation in cooperation with Long Prairie Township when a plan is presented and commercial/industrial needs cannot be met within city limits. Brainerd seeks to work with various other townships, the neighboring community of Baxter, and the County to identify growth areas. Brainerd will also work with townships and the County to maintain low residential densities in growth areas and efficiently extend public utilities.

Long Prairie is the only plan to address coordination with nongovernment agencies, seeking to work with “appropriate agencies” to develop the best strategy to encourage the construction of new residential subdivisions.

III. Transportation Coordination

Intergovernmental coordination does not appear to be addressed as in-depth within the city plans as it is in the county plans, however there are several policies addressing the topic.

Both Long Prairie and Brainerd have somewhat similar goals and policies relating to coordination with county, township, state, and federal agencies. Long Prairie specifically mentions continued coordination with its respective county (Todd County) and its respective township (Long Prairie Township) as well as other agencies to provide the most effective transportation system. Brainerd's goal is not so specific, seeking to continue coordination with surrounding jurisdictions, state, and federal agencies. The policy is repeated in the next sub-topic, as Long Prairie is the only plan to specifically address the topic of coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation within the portions of the comprehensive plan analyzed.

Finally, an additional sub-topic not included in the policy analysis of county plans is coordination in providing multi-modal transportation. This sub-topic was included to include a series of goals outlined within the Brainerd comprehensive plan. These goals are unique and focus on coordination specifically relating to multi-modal transportation, including working with the Brainerd and Crow Wing County transit system, continuing coordination with the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport, working with appropriate agencies if and when rail is discussed, and promoting connectivity of multi-modal transportation to community and recreational facilities. Each of these policies uniquely address intergovernmental coordination, but all relate to promoting multi-modal transportation in the Brainerd area.

IV. Housing Coordination

Long Prairie, Little Falls, and Brainerd all mention coordination with developers and government agencies. Both Little Falls and Brainerd promote working with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), though their motivations are unique. Little Falls seeks to use leveraging and Revolving Funds (specifically mentioning the HRA) to serve as a catalyst for rehabilitation of structures. Brainerd wants to strengthen and maintain a diverse retail base by cooperating with the HRA, among other agencies.

Long Prairie includes a broad policy seeking to work with federal, state, county, and local agencies to achieve its housing goals. Brainerd includes two additional policies seeking to work with adjacent townships to maintain low residential densities in growth areas and develop orderly annexation plans to promote orderly growth and development.

V. Economic Development Coordination

Long Prairie, Brainerd, and the Tribal Plan include somewhat similar policies encouraging coordination with local, state, and federal governments and agencies. Long Prairie encourages and on-going cooperative effort among the City, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, other cities, state agencies in pursuing a wide range of economic opportunities. Additionally, Long Prairie mentions endorsing efforts by the "public sector" in developing meaningful economic incentives for new and existing business expansion. Brainerd mentions encouraging quality commercial and industrial development through support and cooperation of the City Council (other agencies are mentioned in this policy, but are categorized in a different sub-topic). The policies included in the Tribal Plan are slightly broader, stating that a focus of the Northern Minnesota Tribal Economic Development Commission is to develop cooperative economic development efforts on behalf of the three Tribal Nations Investors and to act as a liaison to state,

regional, national, and international organizations. Brainerd includes a unique policy focusing on the use of federal, state, local, and other financial resources to fund redevelopment downtown.

Long Prairie, Little Falls, and Brainerd include somewhat similar policies relating to coordination with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). Long Prairie seeks to promote an ongoing cooperative effort among the EDA and HRA, as well as other government and nongovernment agencies. Little Falls' policy focuses more on the utilization of the Revolving Funds, specifically the EDA and HRA, to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment. Brainerd includes two policies, encouraging quality commercial and industrial development in cooperation with the EDA and other agencies and also strengthening and maintaining a diverse retail base through cooperation with the EDA and HRA.

VI. Water and Natural Resources Coordination

Long Prairie includes three unique intergovernmental coordination policies relating to water and natural resources. The policies include working with County and State officials to improve groundwater quality, maintaining an open dialogue with state agencies that have an effect on local environmental features (including the MPCA, EPA, and DNR), and supporting the Tree Board to encourage the planting of trees within the city.

VII. Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Coordination

The topic of intergovernmental coordination is dominated primarily by policies from Long Prairie and Little Falls. All policies were categorized as unique. The topic of coordination with schools is addressed somewhat extensively in the Little Falls plan, as the community will coordinate and cooperate with the park-school concept when a neighborhood school is needed, promote links between neighborhoods, schools, and parks, and promote linking public school sites with parks and open space. Long Prairie's coordination with schools refers to a specific policy which seeks to promote a year-round indoor recreational facility in conjunction with the Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District.

Long Prairie includes policies which mention working with state and county officials to develop a regional trail, as well as working with the Park Board to ensure there is a balance of active and passive park areas. Little Falls' intergovernmental coordination is addressed through a policy which seeks to share facilities and costs with other public agencies. Brainerd also includes a unique policy which states that the community will work with the county to better utilize the Crow Wing County Fair Grounds.

VIII. Citizen/Community Based Participation

Both Long Prairie and Brainerd include very similar policies promoting unity and participation within their communities. Both cities seek to encourage volunteerism, participation in community activities and decision-making, and interaction between the community, businesses,

and residents. Somewhat similarly, Walker will look for ways to involve residents from the broader area in decisions that directly impact them.

Policy Analysis

I. Regional Coordination

A. Coordination with Area Governments

1. Very Similar

- a) **Participate in the state legislative, Todd County, and Long Prairie Township governmental processes regarding issues important to the City**
- b) **Participate in the state legislative, Crow Wing County, and surrounding townships' governmental processes regarding issues important to the city**

2. Similar to Above (IA1)

- a) **Promote an ongoing relationship among all local units of government – City, Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, and other communities – in all matters related to planning and the provision of public services**
- b) **Pursue collaborative efforts with the Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, and other cities and townships to efficiently address community needs as they arise**
- c) **Continue to build relationships with the townships, Morrison County and other agencies**
- d) **Coordinate the efforts of area governments with the interests of all Walker Area property owners and residents in mind**

3. Unique

- a) **Continue to work with Todd County to promote the recycling of hazardous waste in a cost effective manner**
- b) **Always look to strengthen the relationship between the residents of Walker and the members of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**
- c) **Assist School District 113 in making its location in the City of Walker as advantageous as possible**

II. Land Use Coordination

A. Adjacent Governments

1. Similar

- a) **Recognize common issues by working and cooperating with Long Prairie Township through the use of orderly annexation agreements, joint planning, and other cooperative measures**
- b) **Work with adjacent units of government to develop orderly annexation plans for areas that are urban or are about to become urban in character located within the city's planned growth areas, as services can be provided to those properties. Work cooperatively with the adjacent townships, the county, and property owners to encourage orderly growth and development**

2. Unique

- a) **Work closely with Todd County and Long Prairie Township to identify prime agricultural areas and develop effective strategies to ensure their preservation and viability.** These prime agricultural areas may be designated in the officially adopted Land Use Plan
- b) **Promote an ongoing relationship among all local units of government—City, Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, and other communities—in all matters related to planning and the provision of public services**
- c) **Encourage the best possible use of existing sites within the City. When a plan is presented and commercial and industrial needs cannot be met within the City limits, the City shall contact Long Prairie Township to cooperatively pursue annexation**
- d) **Work with Baxter, Crow Wing Township, Long Lake Township, Oak Lawn Township, Unorganized Territory and the County to identify growth areas**
- e) **Work with the County and adjacent townships to maintain low residential densities in planned growth areas to promote the efficient extension of public utilities**
- f) **Recognize the legitimate issues and concerns regarding jurisdictional issues by working and cooperating with surrounding communities through this planning process and outside this process**

B. Nongovernment Agencies

1. Unique

- a) **Work with residential developers and appropriate agencies to develop the best strategy to encourage the construction of new residential subdivisions**

III. Transportation Coordination

A. General Coordination with County, Township, State and Federal Agencies

1. Somewhat Similar

- a) **Continue to cooperate with Todd County, Long Prairie Township, MnDOT, and other agencies involved in transportation planning, to provide the most effective transportation system for Long Prairie.**
- b) **Continue to work with surrounding jurisdictions, state and federal agencies to ensure an integrated regional transportation system.**

B. Coordination with Minnesota Department of Transportation

1. Unique

- a) **Continue to cooperate with Todd County, Long Prairie Township, MnDOT, and other agencies involved in transportation planning, to provide the most effective transportation system for Long Prairie.**

C. Coordination in Providing Multi-Modal Transportation

1. Unique

- a) **Continue to work with the Brainerd and Crow Wing County transit system to provide safe, efficient public transit.**
- b) **Continue to work with the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport to provide air travel services.**
- c) **Work with the appropriate agencies if and when commuter rail is discussed.**
- d) **Promote the connectivity of alternative transportation systems and have such transportation systems connect efficiently to community and recreational facilities.**

IV. Housing Coordination

A. Coordination with Housing and Redevelopment Authority

1. Unique

- a) **Continue to use leveraging and the Revolving Funds** (Economic Development Association, **Housing and Redevelopment Authority**, Downtown Special Service District, Historic Development Committee) **to serve as a catalyst for rehabilitation of structures and for redevelopment**
- b) **Strengthen and maintain a diverse retail base through the cooperation of the** Brainerd Economic Development Authority, (EDA), **Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)**, BLADC, business organizations and community leaders

B. Coordination with Townships, County, State, and Federal Agencies

1. Unique

- a) **Work closely with federal, state, county, and local agencies and organizations that can help the City achieve its housing goals**
- b) **Work with the County and adjacent townships to maintain low residential densities in planned growth areas** to promote the efficient extension of public utilities
- c) **Work with adjacent units of government to develop orderly annexation plans** for areas that are urban or are about to become urban in character located within the city's planned growth areas, as services can be provided to those properties. **Work cooperatively with the adjacent townships, the county, and property owners to encourage orderly growth and development**

V. Economic Development Coordination

A. Coordination Among Local, State, and Federal Governments/Agencies

1. Somewhat Similar

- a) **Promote an on-going cooperative effort among the City, EDA, HRA, Long Prairie Enterprises, Chamber of Commerce, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, area cities, state agencies,** local builders, business owners, and residents to pursue a wide range of economic development opportunities
- b) **Endorse the efforts of the private and public sectors in the development of meaningful economic incentives for existing or new business expansion**

- c) **Promote and encourage quality commercial and industrial development in the city through the support and cooperation of the City Council, EDA, the Brainerd Lakes Development Corporation (BLADC), business organizations and community leaders**
- d) **One of the key strategic focuses of the NMTDEC will be to develop cooperative economic development efforts and other mutually beneficial projects on behalf of the three Tribal Nations Investors**
- e) **One of the key roles the NMTEDC can play for its members is to act as a liaison to the state, region, national, and international organizations**

2. Unique

- a) In addition to private investment, **encourage the use of federal, state, local, and other financial resources to promote reinvestment and the rehabilitation of Downtown**

B. Economic Development Authority and Housing and Redevelopment Authority

1. Somewhat Similar

- a) **Promote an on-going cooperative effort among the City, EDA, HRA, Long Prairie Enterprises, Chamber of Commerce, Todd County, Long Prairie Township, area cities, state agencies, local builders, business owners, and residents to pursue a wide range of economic development opportunities**
- b) **Continue to use leveraging and the Revolving Funds (Economic Development Authority, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Downtown Special Service District, Historic Development Committee) to serve as a catalyst for rehabilitation of structures and for redevelopment**
- c) **Promote and encourage quality commercial and industrial development in the city through the support and cooperation of the City Council, EDA, the Brainerd Lakes Development Corporation (BLADC), business organizations and community leaders**
- d) **Strengthen and maintain a diverse retail base through the cooperation of the Brainerd Economic Development Authority, (EDA), Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), BLADC, business organizations and community leaders**

VI. Water and Natural Resources Coordination

A. Intergovernmental Coordination

1. Unique

- a) **Work with County and State officials to improve the groundwater in the Long Prairie area.** This may include standards on the discharge of stormwater runoff, additional ponding requirements in newly developed areas and buffering of wetland areas
- b) **Continue to maintain an open dialogue with state agencies that have an impact on Long Prairie's environmental features including the MPCA, EPA, DNR**
- c) **Support the Tree Board and tree planting programs** and encourage private interests to plant trees within the community

VII. Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Coordination

A. Coordination with Schools

1. Unique

- a) **Promote, in conjunction with the Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District, a year-round indoor community recreational facility for all area residents**
- b) **Coordination and cooperation associated with the park-school concept when a neighborhood school is needed**
- c) **Promote establishment of links between neighborhoods, schools and parks**
- d) **Promote linking public school sites with the public park and open space system**

B. Coordination with Other Agencies

1. Unique

- a) **Work with state and Todd County officials to develop, maintain, and promote a regional trail**
- b) **Ensure that there is a balance of active and passive park areas to serve the community by working with the Park Board and evaluating the need to develop and implement a Parks and Open Space Master Plan**
- c) **Consider sharing facilities and costs for the park and open space system and programs with other public agencies**

- d) **Continue to work with the County to better utilize the Crow Wing County Fair Grounds**

VIII. Citizen/Community Based Participation

A. Promoting Unity and Participation

1. Very Similar

- a) **Promote community unity and spirit and enhance character and identity**
 - i. **Encourage volunteerism, participation in community activities, and acceptance of community leadership positions**
 - ii. **Actively encourage and utilize resident participation in local decision-making processes**
 - iii. **Improve and enhance communication among the City, residents, businesses, civic groups, and public agencies. This can be done through the use of the local newspaper, “open mike” on the local radio station, cable access, and the internet**
 - iv. **Support quality lifelong learning opportunities for community residents of all ages**
- b) **Promote community spirit and unity and enhance Brainerd’s character and identity**
 - i. **Encourage volunteerism, participation in community activities and acceptance of community leadership positions**
 - ii. Seek partnerships with coalitions and interest groups to share resources and energies in order to address community problems and opportunities
 - iii. **Actively encourage and utilize resident participation in the local decision-making process and encourage active neighborhood associations**
 - iv. **Encourage increased interaction and communication between citizens of all ages, cultural heritages and incomes**

- v. **Continue to improve and enhance communication among the city, residents, businesses, civic groups and public agencies utilizing various media such as a city newsletter, cable access and a community web page**
- vi. **Continue to improve connections between the city, and its business community through active participation in** the local Chamber and **civic groups**

2. Somewhat Similar to Above (VIII A1)

- a) **Look for ways to involve residents from the broader area in decisions that directly impact them**