

INTRODUCTION

Regional coordination is a mechanism used to break down and work across boundaries that exist between communities, while maintaining separate community identities, in order to provide a more cost-effective, efficient system of operations to residents. In order to ensure that coordinating efforts are effective and efficient, consideration needs to be given to putting in place structures and procedures (formal and informal) for coordination - both on regional and local levels. In order for regional coordination to be successful, creativity and imagination (thinking outside of the box) with how resources and services are prioritized, organized and delivered is necessary.

The Town of Brownville has been participating in many regional coordination efforts. The change in leadership in the Governor's office has brought increased desire for municipalities throughout the State of Maine to work together in more formal ways to provide services to citizens. For this reason, the Town has spent a great deal of energy identifying and evaluating additional opportunities for coordinating efforts with other communities in the region to provide services to citizens while maintaining local control and identity.

Several sections within this plan contain policy and implementation strategies which identify the need for regional cooperation.

THE THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY

The Three Rivers Community is a group of towns in central Maine including Atkinson, Brownville, LaGrange, Lake View, Medford, Milo, and Sebec, with a total population of about 5,000 people. The goal of the Three Rivers Community is to link the communities, businesses, schools, and organizations together for better social and economic benefits. Milo is the largest town in the Three Rivers Community, and the second largest town in Piscataquis County. It is known as the "Town of Three Rivers," hence the name Three Rivers Community. The three rivers are the Piscataquis, Sebec, and Pleasant Rivers.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Town of Brownville has many historic resources that are of interest not only to its residents, but also to its neighboring communities' residents. The Town will cooperate with adjacent communities to ensure that shared historic and archaeological resources and/or resources of a regional interest are preserved and protected. The Planning Board and/or Board of Selectmen will inform neighboring communities of the regulatory and non-regulatory measures the Town adopts to preserve and protect historical and archaeological resources.

ECONOMY

The Town of Brownville actively participates in regional efforts to retain and/or attract appropriate economic development in the area. The Town's Board of Selectmen and Town Manager will continue to cooperate, communicate, and participate in joint initiatives with adjacent communities and regional committees in order to efficiently address regional economic issues.

There are several multi-community and/or regional initiatives, in which Brownville actively participates, currently underway. Several of these initiatives and/or projects are the result of the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council. The Piscataquis County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) is a group of community and business leaders from Greenville, Dover-Foxcroft, Milo and Brownville devoted to the long-term economic stability of the area focusing on business expansion and retention, increasing the capacity of the County to respond to economic change and identifying and targeting specific industrial sectors for business attraction.

The PCEDC is working on a speculative building project design for the Towns of Brownville and Milo, funded by a smart growth grant from the State Planning Office. Efforts are currently underway to assist the Town of Greenville to attract new businesses into the industrial park, expanding Pleasant River Lumber in Dover-Foxcroft, and actively marketing available commercial space in the multi-community area. The group also working toward obtaining scenic byway status for Route 11; however, with all of the economic development resources being focused on the devastating impact of Great Northern Paper's closing, the Towns of Millinocket and Brownville have agreed to hold off pursuing the project for a little while.

The Town of Brownville is also represented and participates in the Piscataquis Properties Corporation (PPC). The PPC was first established to develop a multi-municipal mechanism for regional economic development in Piscataquis County. Eleven of the seventeen organized towns and Piscataquis County, representing the unorganized territories, joined the PPC and have been working to create the groundwork needed to fund a more regional approach to job creation for the entire county. It has most recently become clear to the PPC that the bankruptcy/significant workforce scale back at the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad and more recent bankruptcy filing/closing of the Great Northern Paper mills in Millinocket and East Millinocket have created an economic climate across Piscataquis County that cannot support the costs associated with regional development on a local scale. In response to the unanimous agreement of PPC directors, emergency legislation will be introduced that would give the Piscataquis County Commissioners the authority, after referendum and budget process, to borrow or appropriate funds to be used in regional economic development projects. This will allow the costs associated with regional development projects to be incorporated in the annual county tax assessment – thus, all members of Piscataquis County would bear the burden of economic development expenses.

The Brownville/Milo Economic Development Grant Committee has been convened to implement a site feasibility study for joint municipal development of a site for future economic growth in the region. While the need for this study was identified during the development of the county-wide speculative building program, it is not a part of the Picataquis Properties Corporation project.

HOUSING

The Town of Brownville has and will continue to coordinate and work jointly with existing authorities to provide affordable housing for residents. The Town's Board of Selectmen and Planning Board will coordinate with neighboring communities to work toward similar goals and priorities for providing affordable housing in order to ensure that no one community bears a disproportionate share of the obligation.

The Town of Brownville most recently coordinated affordable housing efforts with the towns of Milo and Orneville in applying jointly for a Community Development Block Grant for housing rehabilitation. If the application is funded, up to \$400,000 will be available to homeowners for housing improvements. Anticipated types of improvements include wells, septic systems, heating, roofing, siding, windows, doors or other health and safety or energy efficiency repairs.

TRANSPORTATION

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager will explore regional shared maintenance agreements with adjacent communities for cooperation in the optimum use, construction, maintenance, and repair of shared roads. Some of these efforts will be accomplished through the efforts of PCEDC, such as the efforts to designate Route 11 with Scenic Byway status.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Town of Brownville has taken a regional or multi-community approach to meet some of its current infrastructure needs. The Town's Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Town Manager realize, and is in the process of exploring, the need and potential of regionalizing additional public services.

The Town will, through Municipal Review Committee (MRC) Membership and representation on the Penquis Solid Waste Corporation (PSWC), continue to participate in cost-effective regional solid waste management solutions. The Town has entered into an interlocal agreement with the Town of Milo, County of Piscataquis and Lake View Plantation to contract and organize a public waste disposal corporation referred to as The Penquis Solid Waste Corporation (PSWC), to operate a solid waste management facility. The Corporation is managed by a Board of Directors appointed by the municipal officers of each member municipality. The Recycling Committee continues to evaluate the

feasibility of implementing a recycling program for the PSWC communities. The group will soon be addressing the problem of commercial waste/demo debris generated by non-PSWC members being disposed of at the facility.

Brownville, along with the towns of Atkinson, Lagrange, Milo and Lake View Plantation, is part of the Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) #41. As of June 2003, Lake View Plantation will no longer be part of MSAD #41 and will rather pay tuition per student. This will affect the funding structure of the MSAD, since Lake View Plantation's valuation should not be included in the formula for the District's general purpose aid to education for the 2003-2004 school year. In addition, the Town of Atkinson petitioned in February 2003 to withdraw from MSAD #41 and have asked MSAD #68, which consists of the towns of Dover-Foxcroft, Monson, Charleston and Sebec, to consider allowing them into the District. The MSAD #41 School Board has set a meeting with representatives from the Department of Education (DOE) regarding MSAD #41's future secondary education needs. While there have been no formal discussions, there has been some discussion about evaluating the ideas of sending Penquis students to Foxcroft Academy or forming a consolidated high school with SAD #46 (Dexter) and SAD #4 (Guilford). MSAD #41 has been recently given "Priority School Status" as a result of the 8th graders math scores on the MEA test. The new "Priority" status provides more resources, both monetary and in terms of access to experts, for the school to use to meet this already identified goal.

When Brownville's Police Chief resigned in August 2002, the Town Manager was appointed as interim part-time Chief and Constable and the Milo police chief was contracted with to provide service to Brownville on a part-time basis. This has provided an opportunity to realize significant savings in the Police Department while increasing patrol time in the community through collaboration with the Town of Milo. At the March 2003 Town Meeting, voters approved continuing this arrangement.

The Town of Brownville will continue to participate in mutual aid agreements for fire protection services with neighboring communities and receive ambulance service from Three Rivers Ambulance Service out of Milo.

The Town of Brownville currently contracts with Lake View Plantation and Katahdin Iron Works to pick up residential garbage. The Town is committed to examining the possibility of working together with Milo to provide regional curbside garbage pick-up.

RECREATION

Many recreation programs are offered to Brownville residents in conjunction with the Milo Recreation Department. These combined efforts provide great program resources and allow more kids to participate.

The Town of Brownville will continue to participate in and support regional recreational initiatives and programs. The Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Town Manager will also work with neighboring communities to ensure that all shared recreational resources are properly cared for and maintained.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Brownville will participate in regional natural resource protection initiatives and programs. The Planning Board will work with neighboring communities to plan for the mutual protection of natural resources. The Planning Board will also provide adjacent communities with copies of its land use ordinances that regulate shared natural resources.

The Planning Board will send a letter to the planning boards of neighboring towns expressing the willingness to consider joint efforts toward protection of shared surface and ground water resources.

LAND USE ACTIVITIES

It is the principle of the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the importance of regional cooperation. The land uses of neighboring communities can impact Brownville, particularly when that land use is located near the boundaries of the Town. The Town will attempt to develop compatible land use activities and patterns by meeting regularly with the neighboring communities and coordinating districts, as well as zone designations.