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## SECTION XI. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The Town of LaFayette cooperates with outside agencies to provide services to area residents in several ways. For example, the Town contracts with two fire departments, the LaFayette and Jamesville Fire Departments, to provide fire protection services for Town residents (See Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication). In addition, the Town does not have its own Police Department. Instead, the Onondaga County Sheriffs Office and New York State Police serve LaFayette. The State Police operate a station in the Town, just north of the Hamlet of LaFayette. The Town also works with the Onondaga County Water Authority to provide water to residents in the three public water districts near the Jamesville Reservoir. (See Section IX. Infrastructure and Telecommunication).

LaFayette also works with neighboring towns' Highway Departments to save money and provide more efficient services, and contracts with Onondaga County to provide snowplowing services on certain County roads. The Highway Department also coordinates equipment purchases with neighboring towns when the need arises. They recently purchased an excavator and have an agreement to share use of it with Otisco and Tully. They will also share manpower, for example, when an extra flagman is needed at a worksite, instead of hiring additional permanent employees. And finally, LaFayette extends plowing of certain roads into neighboring towns, and vice versa, when it is practical to do so.

Working with neighboring communities, the fire departments, school districts, and other layers of government to share services can save taxpayers money and provide more efficient services for residents. According to the NY State Comptroller, certain administrative and office functions have a high potential for savings and are often easier to implement than other shared services. Areas LaFayette could investigate sharing with neighboring municipalities include accounting functions (payroll processing, software), procurement of goods and services, tax collection and assessment, records management, IT maintenance and support, and IT security. In addition, sharing facilities, such as vehicle storage and a fuel depot can be an easy and convenient opportunity. The Town of LaFayette has considered sharing a fuel depot with the Towns of Otisco and Tully, and area school districts in the future. Creating a purchasing cooperative with neighboring municipalities can also be an effective way to save money. And finally, area school districts can also share services, such as payroll, technology, utility purchases, and food delivery.

The Town is already doing a good job in combining services where it makes sense. The Town should be challenging itself to insure that other services it provides are scrutinized to eliminate duplication or inefficient expenditures of time and money. LaFayette should consider certain factors, such as liability, contract term, personnel assignments, and property agreements, before it decides to share facilities or services with another municipality.





The Town has resources available when investigating shared service opportunities. The State Comptroller's Office can provide technical and legal assistance, as well as data for cost-benefit analyses to local governments. In addition, their Local Government Management Guide provides guidance for local officials on how to explore shared services. There are also General Efficiency Planning Grants and Efficiency Implementation Grants available through New York State. The Town should also take advantage of opportunities for shared services, for example, when new equipment needs to be purchased or a vacancy is about to be created in a certain position.

In addition to working across municipal lines, it is also important to work with varying levels of government, including Onondaga County. It may be hard at times to gain the attention of the County as they are also working with the City of Syracuse, 18 other towns, and 15 villages. In addition, the mostly rural Town of LaFayette has different needs than some of the more developed areas of the county. However, successful collaboration is built on trust between governments. It is important that the Town work to keep the lines of communication with the County government open and active. For example, each member of the Town Board could act as a liaison between LaFayette and specific County Departments. Or the Town could form a coalition with neighboring Towns that have similar interests, such as Tully, Otisco, Fabius, and Pompey, to provide a louder voice when advocating for their needs. This can occur at all levels, and for a variety of purposes, whether it is working with their Community Development office to rehabilitate homes, or with their Highway Department to plow roads. In addition, the current County Executive's Office has a Director of Intergovernmental Relations, whose goal is to reduce the overall cost of government to taxpayers through increased consolidation and shared services among County municipalities. This person can also act as a liaison between LaFayette and Onondaga County. This person can and should be used as a resource when appropriate.

## GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

**GOAL 41:** Work with neighboring municipalities, Onondaga County, the LaFayette School District, and Fire Departments to minimize costs and maximize services for area residents.

### IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- A) Create an inventory of potential areas of opportunity for sharing services with one or more local governments and research potential savings from implementing specific shared services.
- B) Develop formal methods and processes to create and maintain lines of communication between the Town government and neighboring municipalities, Onondaga County, and the LaFayette School District.
- C) Actively pursue grant opportunities (such as the NYS General Efficiency Planning Grants and Efficiency Implementation Grants) to more thoroughly study the



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potential savings from shared services; and to implement shared services projects and programs.

- D) Form a partnership with neighboring rural Towns to provide stronger representation for common needs when working with Onondaga County.