

CHAPTER 8 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this element is to identify areas where intergovernmental cooperation could be enhanced and to facilitate coordination. A three-part planning process was undertaken in developing this element:

1. Inventory of existing conditions.
2. Assessment for future needs.
3. Articulation of a plan.

The inventory portion of this element describes the relationships that exist between the City of Griffin and other government entities, including Spalding County. This inventory also reviews the City's relationship to independent organizations that have a role to play in planning the county's future, such as the local School Board. It inventories their relationship to the City of Griffin and the Comprehensive Plan, and the current mechanisms for coordination.

The second part of this element is an assessment of current and future needs. It determines whether existing coordination mechanisms are adequate to serve the community's current and future needs, and if not, what might be done to improve the situation over the next twenty years.

The last part of this element includes an articulation of intergovernmental coordination goals. An associated implementation program to address those identified coordination needs can be found in the Implementation Plan. As this element points out, there are a wide variety of organizations besides City government that influence the future of Griffin. Only through active and meaningful coordination efforts with these many groups can the City government realize its vision for the future.

8.2. Existing Coordination Mechanisms

This inventory of existing conditions describes the relationships between the City of Griffin government and the following entities:

- Adjacent local governments
- School Boards
- Independent special districts
- Independent development authorities
- Constitutional officers
- Utility companies.

In particular, it focuses on the formal coordination mechanisms that are in place, such as intergovernmental agreements, special legislation, joint meetings or work groups for the purpose

of coordination. It also identifies the party(ies) or offices within the local government with primary responsibility for coordination.

8.2.1 Adjacent Local Governments

Griffin is adjacent only to Spalding County. Being the largest city in Spalding County, Griffin provides a variety of public services to the residents of the unincorporated areas. Other services are jointly or cooperatively provided while others are provided by the county. And as Griffin is entirely surrounded by Spalding County, many decisions the county makes affect City residents and their quality of life.

Spalding County

The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) between the City of Griffin and Spalding County documents the coordination and delivery of services within the City. The SDS was first approved in 1999, has been amended several times since then, and must be further amended by October 2004, in accordance with section 36-70-28 of the Service Delivery Strategy Law. This section summarizes the portions of that document relative to the planning process.

Recreation

Through a cooperative arrangement, the County Recreation Department maintains most of the City's recreational facilities and operates its programs. Griffin owns and operates the City Park, the public golf course, and two passive pocket parks within residential areas.

Airport

The City and County jointly own the airport. The City and County share funding of capital improvements.

Solid Waste

The county and City provide separate solid waste collection services due to different levels of service demands of their residents. The City provides curbside pickup of trash and yard debris while the county provides five collection stations throughout the county.

Planning, Zoning, Building Inspections and Code Enforcement

Both the City and county have separate planning staffs, zoning regulations, comprehensive plans and permitting processes. Both the City and county enforce statewide minimum construction codes and currently share services provided by the County Board of Health. While the comprehensive planning process is designed to induce consideration of adjacent jurisdictions, the SDS recommends establishing a joint City-County Planning and Zoning Commission. Rezoning and land use changes along the City-County border are examined for potential land use conflicts, and large developments of regional impact (DRIs) are reviewed by the regional government – McIntosh Trail and/or the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority – to minimize impacts across political lines.

Tax Billing and Collection

The Spalding County Tax Commissioner, through an intergovernmental agreement, is responsible for all billing and collection of taxes real and personal for properties located inside the City of Griffin. The City of Griffin Tax and Licensing Division collects occupational taxes for businesses and processes applications for alcoholic beverage licenses. The Spalding County Tax Commissioner bills and collects taxes owed the county. By law, the Commissioner also collects taxes for the school district.

Water and Wastewater

The City of Griffin Water and Wastewater Department supplies drinking water to the citizens of Griffin, Williamson, Zebulon and Spalding County. An intergovernmental agreement on sewer expansion into the unincorporated county has been under discussion since 1995. In 1998, the parties agreed to sewer service districts. Several key components, however, remain outstanding including:

- Formal recognition of the sewer districts;
- Establishing a method for funding sewer expansions; and
- Creation of a timetable for extensions into the respective service areas and compatibility with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Resolving these issues is vital for environmentally responsible growth and development in the City and unincorporated county.

Fire Departments

The City and county have separate fire departments with a mutual aid agreement. There has been discussion of consolidation and the SDS recommends a study to assess the feasibility and cost effectiveness.

Stormwater Management

Griffin began operation of a stormwater management utility in 1998. The county enforces a stormwater management ordinance in compliance with the minimum state requirements. The two governments have an agreement to work together on stormwater management where they share a common watershed. The Griffin Stormwater Management Plan and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) have identified both urban and rural stormwater as major polluters to several streams and rivers within the City of Griffin.

Roads and Bridges

The City and county separately maintain the roads and bridges within their jurisdictions.

Pike County

Pike County is the site for a multi-jurisdictional water supply reservoir. The City of Griffin is financing and constructing the reservoir along with a treatment facility. In turn, Spalding County has agreed to purchase all its water from Griffin under a cost-plus formula. In 1996, similar agreements were signed between Griffin and the cities of Williamson and Zebulon. Resolutions of participation were signed with the Meriwether County government, the Pike County government and the cities of Concord, Meansville and Molena. As a result, the service area for the proposed water supply project is all of Spalding County, all of Pike County and the eastern portion of Meriwether County.

Henry, Clayton and Fayette Counties

As discussed in the Community Facilities and Services element, mutual aid agreements for fire protection exist with all of the counties surrounding Spalding County and with the City of Griffin. However, automatic aid agreements exist with Fayette and Henry counties. Automatic aid is preferred over mutual aid because it means responses to calls are automatic as opposed to requested.

8.2.2 School Boards

The Griffin City Commission and the County Board of Education are currently working closely in the area of land use planning. The two governments are working together to improve consideration of land use impacts on school capacity and location, as well as provide greater opportunity for the planning of community centers and other government activities around school locations.

8.2.3 Development Authorities

A local constitutional amendment formed the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority. The Authority serves as a joint city/county development authority, whose mission is to attract industry and create employment opportunities in Spalding County. The City and county have an Intergovernmental Contract with the Authority to levy taxes to cover debt obligations on the Authority's Series 1991 bonds.

According to the Service Delivery Strategy, "The county alone should levy and pay over to the Authority up to 1.0 mil of county-wide ad valorem tax annually, pursuant to O.C.G.A. 48-5-220 (20), to fund its operations, including all repayment of any future debt obligations issued."

Another development authority is the City of Griffin Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The mission of the Griffin DDA is to promote commerce within the downtown area of Griffin.

8.2.4 Constitutional Officers

During the development of the SDS, it was recognized that certain duties performed by Constitutional County officers could not be changed in the SDS development process. Certain services are completed by the county on behalf of its cities that cannot be modified. The SDS

also states that several County services are provided by a number of County Officers/Departments and shall remain unchanged. These include:

- Tax Assessor
- Coroner
- Clerk of Court
- Probate Court
- District Attorney
- Superior Court
- State Court and Solicitor
- Adult and Juvenile Probation
- Health and Human Services
- Cooperative Extension
- Emergency Management
- Sheriff
- County Administration
- County Information Management Services
- County Janitorial Services
- Garage
- Board of Election and Voter Registration

8.2.5 Utility Companies

The City of Griffin Power is the predominant electric power supplier for Griffin and Spalding County. Griffin Power is a member of the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), which is a unique wholesale power supplier that co-owns four generating facilities and Georgia's Integrated Transmission System (ITS). According to the SDS, Griffin Power is not affected by the SDS process.

8.3 Needs Assessment

Better coordination on a number of issues between the City of Griffin and the county would benefit both parties and help to further the implementation of both their long range goals. In particular, the City and county need to address the following issues:

- Airport Future
- Establishment of a joint City-County Planning and Zoning Commission
- An intergovernmental agreement on sewer expansion into the unincorporated county
- Undertake a study to assess the feasibility and cost of consolidating fire service
- A stormwater management agreement to work together on management issues within common watersheds

8.4 Intergovernmental Coordination Goals

1. Work closely with other local governments to develop a shared vision for the community's future and to implement that vision through mutually beneficial agreements.
2. Follow the City Land Use Plan in making capital investment decisions.
3. Improve the efficiency of local services delivery through close coordination with Spalding County.

8.5 Implementation Program

Goal #1: Work closely with other local governments to develop a shared vision for the community's future and to implement that vision through mutually beneficial agreements

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Coordination with public schools – Explore ways to improve community services by cooperative efforts between school and city government.	City Manager's Office.	On-going
Work with the County and the Water and Sewer Authority on updating the Water Supply Study and the Wastewater Management Master Plan to be consistent with the new Land Use Plan	City of Griffin, Water and Sewer Authority, Spalding County Public Works Dept. and the County Manager's Office	2004

Goal #2: Follow the City Land Use Plan in making capital investment decisions.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
As part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, coordinate revisions to the City Budget with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan Map	City Planning and Development Department.	2004-2009

Goal #3: Improve the efficiency of local services delivery through close coordination with Spalding County.

Action Item	Responsible Party	Time Frame
Cooperative City-county agreements – Identify more opportunities for joint service and funding agreements between Spalding County and Griffin that will spread the cost and improve the efficiencies of public facilities and services such as garbage collection, parks and recreation, libraries, emergency services, and other facilities and services that are now funded and provided separately.	City Manager's Office.	On-going