

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
September 26, 2006, 1:00 P.M.

Indianapolis Westin

Caucus Room

50 S. Capitol Ave.

Indianapolis, Indiana

FOCUS GROUP NOTES

Focus Group Participants: Sue Beesley (Bingham McHale), Rusty Bodenhorn (City of Noblesville), Tom DeGiulio (Town of Munster), Dave McDimpsey (Bingham McHale), Lane Siekman (City of Rising Sun), and Jodie Woods (Indiana Association of Cities and Towns)

IACIR Members: Larry Breese and Bruce Hosier

IACIR Staff: John Krauss, Jamie Palmer, and Debbie Wyeth

For what types of services does your community use interlocal agreements?

- Parks
- Planning
- Fire/ambulance
- 911 Dispatch
- Fiber optics
- Snow plowing
- Road maintenance
- Intersections
- Police: drug task force and SWAT
- Road building
- Purchasing for utilities
- Animal control and shelter
- TIFs
- Tourism
- Construction of library
- Casino revenue sharing
- Trash collection
- Health insurance pool (considering)
- Purchasing police cars
- Other mechanisms for collaboration
 - Zoning, including township jointers and area plan commissions
 - Mutual aid for police, fire, and ambulance
 - Shared park board
 - Contracts with companies (example, contract to provide certified water and wastewater operators)
- Collaborative Partners
 - Local governments in neighboring state

- Counties
- For-profit entities

Are there additional services for which this tool was considered, that did not result in interlocal agreements?

- Yes, because of turf battles

What was the impetus for creating the agreements that your community has entered into? What have been the primary benefits?

- Local cooperation within communities sends a message of good government. It is good public relations.
- Local cooperation helps identify responsibilities.
- Economies of scale
- It is good to have a plan in advance of a problem. Local cooperation provides good back-up service.
- Save money
- Provide better services
- Good support for joint purchasing, but those are small savings

In cases when a local government has no agreements, an agreement was sought but not achieved, or an agreement was difficult to achieve, what were the impediments?

- Lack of vision
- Differing visions
- Politics in a city that doesn't understand they are part of a county.
- Gaining multiple approvals in county governments is onerous.
- Concerns about the cost of increased liability
- Emotions
- Turf battles that are legal, political, or logistical
- Fear that all may not pay attention to agreement verbiage
- Easier to agree on terms at staff level; department heads more difficult
- Fear of change
- Fear loss of identity

What activities might increase the use of interlocal agreements?

- A first success; the first one is the hardest
- Need for alternatives when annexation is not feasible
- Desire for economic development
- Tax controls
- Lack of available funds
- Provide education to smaller communities; educate communities of the benefits of interlocal agreements
- Storytelling/case studies may help smaller communities
- Add IACT workshop on interlocal agreements
- Expose benefits, especially road building agreements. They make things cheaper, move faster, and provide the unity that makes the difference.

- Finding a way to get started as getting ready is the most difficult part of the process; that is getting the stakeholders together
- Comprehensive manual with forms
- Database with contact information
- Remove impediments at SBOA

What types of incentives would be meaningful in encouraging the use of interlocal agreements?

- Require interlocal agreements for selected grant funding
- State match of savings
- Ensure that savings can be repurposed or put in rainy day fund
- Establish a grant program.
- Waive selected requirements
- Provide a comprehensive manual with interlocal agreement process instructions and forms.
- Offer those who have created interlocal agreements as resources.