

The History of the Town of Brooklyn and the City of Green Lake

Ad Hoc Committee – Cooperative Boundary Reviews

Even though everyone living around Big Green proudly identifies as a Green Laker, our beautiful lake is bordered by more than just the City of Green Lake. Five municipalities touch its shoreline, including the Town of Brooklyn, Town of Green Lake, Town of Marquette and Town of Princeton. Even though you may reside in one of these municipalities, you may be supporting a different school district. Look up your address on the [Geographic Information System](#) map to see your tax bill.



Many homes in the Town of Brooklyn share the 54941 ZIP code with the City of Green Lake, but only residents inside the City's limits can vote in City elections and referendums. Still, the two communities are closely connected, sharing the Green Lake School District, Fire and EMT services, the Caestecker Public Library, and several roads.

Recognizing their overlapping responsibilities, City Mayor Radis and Town of Brooklyn Chairman Mike Wuest met this past August and agreed to form a joint Ad Hoc Committee. The committee's charge is to investigate a **cooperative boundary agreement** and identify opportunities to reduce inefficiencies and eliminate duplications in services such as snowplowing, street repair, landscaping, and garbage removal.

Committee members include:

- **City of Green Lake:** Chairman Cole Markee, Chris Foos, John Meiborg, Jason Carley
- **Town of Brooklyn:** Chairman Tom Penfield, Mark Lundquist, Mike Jankowski, Alternating members Glen Schapfel and Susan McConnell
- **Advisor:** Adam Ruechel of Baird

This cooperative work brings into focus the **long and interconnected history** of these two municipalities, whose stories have been entwined since the earliest settlement of the Green Lake area.

The Formation of Green Lake County

In the mid-1800s, the land surrounding Big Green Lake was part of neighboring Marquette County. As more settlers arrived, the communities around the lake grew rapidly, most notably Dartford (later renamed the City of Green Lake), Princeton, and Berlin. To better serve these growing populations, the Wisconsin Legislature created **Green Lake County on March 5, 1858**, carving it from the western portion of Marquette County. Appropriately, it was named after the largest natural inland lake in the state.

When the county was first established, Dartford was chosen as the county seat. However, the decision soon sparked a dispute. Berlin, then a larger and more commercially active community, pressed its case to serve as the county's administrative center. For several years the county seat shifted, but in **1862 the matter was settled**, and the county seat was permanently returned to Green Lake, where it remains today.

The Formation of the Town of Brooklyn

In August 1843, William H. Dakin became the first settler in what would later be the Town of Brooklyn. He welcomed and supported newcomers, including Anson Dart, and is remembered as the Town's first resident leader.

In January 1849, the township government was formally organized. Originally named "Lexington," the community soon changed to "Arcade" and, in the winter of 1850, adopted its lasting name: the Town of Brooklyn.

The Formation of the City of Green Lake

The land that would later become the City of Green Lake was originally part of the Town of Brooklyn. A small settlement formed around two mills established at the lake's outlet near today's Playground Park. In 1845, Anson Dart built the first dam and sawmill, raising the water level of Green Lake and creating both the Mill Pond and Dartford Bay. Five years later, John Sherwood expanded the area's businesses by opening a new outlet from the pond with a mill race and constructing a four-story grist mill. With the establishment of a U.S. post office in 1847, the growing settlement came to be known as Dartford. As the community expanded with shops, hotels, churches, and school, Dartford incorporated as a village on March 20, 1871, formally separating from the Town of Brooklyn. In 1907, the name was changed from the Village of Dartford to the Village of Green Lake. Fifty-five years later, in 1962, it achieved city status and became the City of Green Lake establishing its first city council and mayor William L. "Len" Burling.

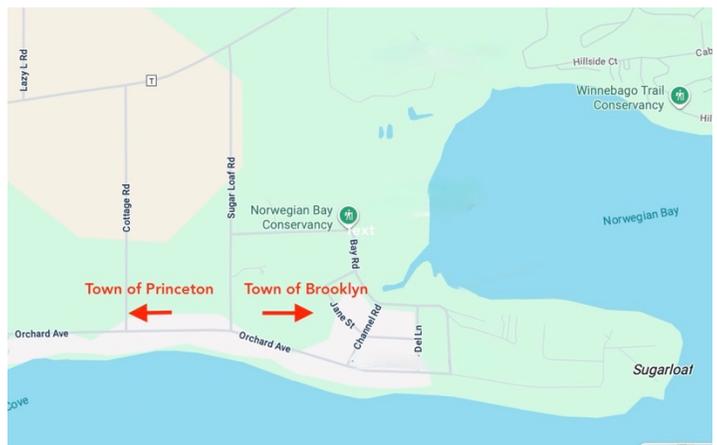
Do You Live in Town of Brooklyn or the City of Green Lake?



If your home has an address road sign marked "Brooklyn," you are in the Town of Brooklyn. The City of Green Lake has no such signs, only numbered house addresses.

As you head down Illinois Avenue from downtown Green Lake, you'll pass the Heidel House and cross into the Town of Brooklyn. Traveling

along Sugar Loaf Road from County T to Orchard Avenue, a right turn leads into the Town of Princeton, while a left turn takes you into the Town of Brooklyn.



From Town to Village to City: How Communities Grow in Wisconsin

Every community in Wisconsin begins as part of a **township** (or “town”). Towns provide basic services like road maintenance, elections, and zoning for rural areas. But as population centers grow, residents often want more services and more control over local decisions. That’s when a community may choose to incorporate as a **village** or later as a **city**.

Towns

- Cover rural, unincorporated areas.
- Governed by a town board and annual town meeting.
- Provide basic services: local roads, zoning, elections.

Villages

- Created when a settlement becomes more densely populated.
- Governed by a village board and president.
- Provide expanded services: water and sewer systems, police/fire protection, community facilities.
- Have greater “home rule” powers than towns.

Cities

- Typically larger, more urbanized communities.
- Governed by a mayor and city council.
- Provide full services: utilities, planning, professional public safety, and more.
- Enjoy the broadest local control under Wisconsin law.