

October 1, 2004

RE: Urban Service Area Amendment Packet

The attached materials outline the processes for review of urban service area amendments. The processes of application and review of urban service area amendments through the Community Analysis and Planning Division (CAPD) are essentially the same as those under the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). However, because there is no longer a Commission, public hearings on amendments will be held by CAPD staff. When the hearing is complete, the application, staff analysis report and notes from the public hearing will be sent to the DNR for action.

As of the October 1, 2004 dissolution of the RPC, the staff of the RPC has transferred to Dane County and now forms the newly created CAPD. The CAPD was created by the County Board to ensure continuity of the urban service area amendment process and water quality planning as work continues on legislation to create a successor agency. The CAPD staff is located in the former RPC offices and contact phone numbers remain the same. Please feel free to call with questions or concerns.

Michael R. King  
Division Administrator

# Urban Service Area Amendment Process and Information Requirements

## Changes in Urban Service Area Amendment Process

In 1975, Governor Lucey designated the Dane County area as a Complex Water Quality Area and appointed the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) as the Water Quality Planning Agency. With the dissolution of the RPC on October 1, 2004, responsibility for water quality planning in Dane County reverted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Dane County Board agreed to temporarily attach the RPC staff with the Dane County Department of Planning and Development staff in the newly created **Community Analysis and Planning Division (CAPD)**. The DNR then contracted with Dane County to provide water quality management planning assistance through the CAPD.

Creating the CAPD, County Board Resolution 107, 04-05 specified “. . . *the staff from the RPC shall act in an objective manner in the technical analysis of sewer extensions and urban service area expansions, in conformance with criteria and methodology currently in use by the staff at the RPC.*” The resolution further provides that “. . . *neither the County Board nor the County Executive shall exercise supervisory power over the professional analyses of the former RPC staff.*”

With the RPC policy board no longer present, CAPD staff will make recommendations on Urban Service Area (USA) amendments directly to the DNR. The DNR retains the authority to approve USA amendments.

The attached information packet describes the USA amendment process and the information required from applicants.

- 1) **Procedures and Schedule for USA amendments:** This information sheet outlines the schedule for staff review and deadlines for notification. These guidelines will help applicants plan a timeline for submission of an amendment.
- 2) **USA Amendment Applicant Checklist:** This lists information generally needed to prepare a staff analysis report for a requested amendment. The checklist is a general guideline for submitting a complete application; any individual amendment may require additional information. Applicants are encouraged to contact staff with questions related to a specific amendment application.
- 3) **Excerpts from Dane County Land Use and Transportation Plan, Appendices:** These pages from the DCLU&TP, adopted June, 1997, outline the criteria for provision of urban services, the process for amending adopted plans, and planning submittal requirements for USA amendments. References to the RPC in the process description are no longer applicable. RPC staff responsibilities will be handled by the CAPD. The DNR has the authority to approve USA amendments. Public hearings will be held by the CAPD staff.
- 4) **Urban Service Area Fact Sheet:** The USA fact sheet, prepared by the Dane County RPC, explains the overall concept of how urban service areas are developed: how USAs are used and how USAs are changed or amended. Upon dissolution of the RPC, the staff responsibilities in the USA amendment process have been temporarily charged to the CAPD. The DNR has the authority to approve USA changes.
- 5) **Environmental Corridor Fact Sheet:** This fact sheet, prepared by the Dane County RPC, explains the purpose and designation of environmental corridors or open space corridors within USAs. Upon dissolution of the RPC, staff responsibilities related to environmental corridor delineation have been temporarily charged to the CAPD. The DNR has the authority to approve major or minor changes.
- 6) **Questions:** Please call Barbara Weber (266-9113 or [barbaraw@danecorp.org](mailto:barbaraw@danecorp.org)), if you have any questions or would like to set up a pre-application information meeting.

## **Community Analysis and Planning Division (CAPD) Procedures and Schedule for Urban Service Area Amendments (USAA)**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has the authority to approve amendments to existing sewer service areas in Dane County. The CAPD staff prepares a staff analysis report for each application. The CAPD will conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendment prior to transmittal of the USAA application, notes from the public hearing, and the staff analysis report and recommendations to the DNR. Scheduling of the public hearing will be arranged by agreement between the CAPD staff and the applicant community. Public notice of a USAA must be mailed 30 days prior to the public hearing.

The CAPD recommends that applications be submitted ten business days prior to the mailing date for the public hearing. Applications allowing less than ten full business days for review and revision are unlikely to be completed prior to the notification deadline. Earlier contact with staff, including pre-conferences, is welcomed.

If staff requests any additional information, the application must be submitted with all required information a minimum of five full business days prior to mailing of the public hearing notice. This allows proper preparation of notification materials.

### **Example:**

- Applicant would like the USAA request to go to public hearing on **Thursday, April 14, 2005**.
- Public notice of the amendment must be mailed no later than **Tuesday, March 15, 2005**. (30 days prior to meeting).
- The application must be available for staff review by **Tuesday, March 1, 2005** (ten business days prior to notice mailing). Prior contact with staff may be helpful.
- The application, as determined by staff to be complete, must be submitted by **Tuesday, March 8, 2005** (five business days prior to notice mailing).

Following the completion of the staff analysis report and the public hearing, the complete application package, staff analysis and report, and public comments will be forwarded to the DNR for review and action.

# Urban Service Area Amendment (USAA) Applicant Checklist

(The list is intended to assist communities in the preparation of complete USA amendments)

Please address the following elements for the USAA planning submittal:

## 1.0 Plan Consistency

- 1.1 Include a copy of the local community or neighborhood plan with the submittal.
- 1.2 Document a finding by the local plan commission that the proposal is consistent with its plan.

## 2.0 Intergovernmental Cooperation

- 2.1 Document notification of adjacent local governmental units.
- 2.2 Note any adjacent local governmental unit(s) objections or support of the proposal.

## 3.0 Land Use

- 3.1 Prepare Map 1 including the proposed USAA boundary and existing rights-of-way (ROW).
- 3.2 List on Table 1 the acreage of proposed land uses for the USAA only; list ROW separately.
- 3.3 List total area (in acres) of “Existing Development” in Table 1: street ROW and lots with improvements.
- 3.4 Show the land uses (existing and planned) surrounding the USAA on a map.
- 3.5 For proposals larger than 100 developable acres, show 10-year staging boundaries on a map.

## 4.0 Housing & Economic Development

- 4.1 Describe proposed housing and list the number of proposed units by type in Table 1.
- 4.2 Describe the affordability of proposed housing and whom it serves: families, seniors & persons with disabilities.
- 4.3 If the proposal would expand business and/or increase employment, describe.

## 5.0 Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

- 5.1 Show “Environmental Corridors” on Map 1 and list acreage in Table 1.
- 5.2 Identify wetlands, floodplains and drainage ways.
- 5.3 Include detailed wetland and floodplain mapping, stream navigability determination, and DNR concurrence.
- 5.4 Make sure that environmental corridor designations meet criteria as developed by the Dane County RPC.
- 5.5 Indicate whether the proposal surpasses minimum environmental corridors criteria requirements
- 5.5 Describe whether the proposal designates a permanent urban community separation area.
- 5.6 List any known historic structures or archaeological areas in the USAA.

**Table 1: USA Amendment Area Data**

Proposed Land Use	Number of Acres			Number of Housing Units
	Total Area	Existing Development	Environmental Corridor	
Single Family Residential				
Other Type Residential				
<b>Residential Total</b>				
Commercial				
Industrial				
Institutional				
Street R-O-W				
Parks				
Stormwater Management				
Other Open Space				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

**Fill in all applicable blanks above and also see sample below**

Show USA amendment acreage in the jurisdiction of applicant(s).

Show USA amendment acreage in the jurisdiction of other local units of government.

Over

# Urban Service Area Amendment (USAA) Applicant Checklist

(The list is intended to assist communities in the preparation of complete USA amendments)

**Table 1: Sample Urban Service Area Amendment Data**

Proposed Land Use	Number of Acres			Number of Housing Units
	Total Area	Existing Development	Environmental Corridor	
Single Family Residential	34.6	1.0		114
Other Type Residential	6.4			48
<b>Residential Total</b>	<b>41.0</b>			<b>162</b>
Commercial	8.0			
Industrial	0.0			
Institutional	3.0			
Street R-O-W	18.0	1.0		
Parks	8.0		8.0	
Stormwater Management	2.0		2.0	
Other Open Space	0.0			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	

A total of 60 acres in the Village of Sample

A total of 20 acres in the Town of Sample

## 6.0 Utilities and Stormwater Management

- 6.1 Describe the proposed USAA public sanitary sewerage system and provide schematics.
- 6.2 Describe the wastewater plant/interceptor capacity to serve the USAA.
- 6.3 Provide current average daily flow to the wastewater plant/interceptor.
- 6.4 Describe the proposed USAA public water supply/distribution system and provide schematics.
- 6.5 Describe the current capacity of the water system.
- 6.6 Describe the adequacy of the public water system to provide 2,000 gpm for 2.5 hours for fire fighting.
- 6.7 Provide current average daily and peak hourly water demand.
- 6.8 Explain how the stormwater facilities are to be managed or owned.
- 6.9 Specify the proposed stormwater management measures and standards.
- 6.10 Indicate plans for the installation of the stormwater ponds prior to land disturbing activities.

## 7.0 Transportation.

- 7.1 Describe the urban transportation system and proposed facilities.
- 7.2 Note sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities.
- 7.3 Note facilities for bicyclists.
- 7.4 Describe bus route, taxi, and/or carpooling measures.
- 7.5 Show or describe areas planned for transit or taxi service or park & ride facilities.

## 8.0 Community Facilities

- 8.1 Provide the number of full time equivalent local police officers.
- 8.2 Note the distance of the fire station to the USAA and response time.
- 8.3 Note the distance of the EMS station to the USAA.
- 8.4 List municipal services, including solid waste collection services, to be provided.
- 8.5 Describe the distance to parks and schools, which would serve the USAA.

## 9.0 Supplemental information

- 9.1 Provide one copy of detailed utilities and stormwater management maps for the USAA.
- 9.2 Supply a copy of any pertinent engineering reports.

## **Criteria for Provision of Urban Services** **(From the *Dane County Land Use & Transportation Plan*)**

One of the primary regional planning objectives of delineating urban service areas is to direct urban development to areas which can be provided with a full range of urban services. When creating or changing urban service areas, therefore, it is important to establish both the intent and capability of the responsible local governmental unit to provide a full range of urban services. (This is not the case for limited service areas, which are not intended for additional urban development or a full range of urban services.)

### **Definition of Urban Services**

Urban services are additional public services normally provided or needed in urban areas, including a public water supply and distribution system (including hydrants and storage for fire fighting); a public sanitary sewerage system; a public transportation system, including an urban street system (with urban standards and cross-sections, curb and gutter, sidewalks, street lighting, etc.); provisions for pedestrian and bicycle movement; urban mass transit and other urban transportation services such as paratransit, trip reduction programs (carpooling, park and ride lots, etc.); a publicly managed storm drainage system; higher levels of police and fire protection and emergency medical service than generally provided in rural areas; solid waste collection service; and neighborhood public facilities, including neighborhood and community parks, schools, etc.

### **Minimum Standards and Criteria for a Full Range of Urban Services**

The minimum standards and criteria for a full range of urban services to be ultimately provided are generally comparable to the present level of urban services provided by most villages and cities in Dane County (described in Table A-3). Minimum levels of fire protection appropriate for urban areas include a public water system with hydrants and water storage sufficient for fighting fires, and quick response time for needed fire fighting equipment. This is generally reflected by a Fire Insurance Rating of 1 to 6. Higher levels of police protection are reflected in local police patrol, or response from a station located within 2-3 miles (this is in addition to normal Sheriff's Dept. coverage and response). Neighborhood facilities, such as schools and parks, should be located no more than two miles away, with a desirable service radius of 1/4-1/2 mile walking distance from main residential areas.

Although the full range of urban services which should be ultimately provided includes most of the services listed in the definition, there are some circumstances where one or more urban services are not appropriate or needed. It is not necessary, for example, to provide neighborhood parks or schools in predominantly commercial or industrial areas. In addition, it is not usually feasible to provide public mass transit throughout all urban areas, although physical provision in street layout and facilities for traffic circulation should allow for this.

### **Minimum Criteria for Urban Services to be Initially Provided**

The minimum requirement for urban services which should be provided initially (as development is initiated and continues) include the physical infrastructure (facilities and land) needed to support the full range of services to be eventually provided.

These include public water, sewerage and storm drainage systems, urban transportation facilities and land needs (streets, facilities for pedestrian and bicycle movement, right-of-way, etc.), and land needs for neighborhood public facilities. Higher levels of police, fire and emergency medical services, neighborhood facilities, solid waste collection, public mass transit or other urban services not proposed to be initially provided should be addressed in a policy or statement that the community intends to provide these services to the area at a later date when the extent of development can support the services.

**Table A – 3**  
**(From the *Dane County Land Use & Transportation Plan*)**

**Urban Services Provided By Urban Service Area**

Urban Service Areas (USA)	1990 USA Pop	Urban Services Presently Provided*									
		SS	PW	PD	FD	PK	PS	SD	SW	US	OT
<b>Belleville</b>	1,408	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Black Earth</b>	1,301	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Blue Mounds</b>	446	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
<b>Brooklyn</b>	406	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
<b>Cambridge</b>	890	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Central**</b>	245,390	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>Cottage Grove</b>	1,131	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Cross Plains</b>	2,367	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Dane</b>	621	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Deerfield</b>	1,657	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>DeForest</b>	5,301	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Edgerton</b>	66	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Koshkonong</b>	598	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Marshall</b>	2,339	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Mazomanie</b>	1,421	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
<b>Morrisonville</b>	315	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
<b>Mount Horeb</b>	4,182	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Oregon</b>	4,528	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Rockdale</b>	235	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Roxbury</b>	217	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Stoughton</b>	9,265	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Sun Prairie</b>	15,481	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Verona</b>	5,395	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Waunakee</b>	5,899	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
<b>Windsor</b>	1,859	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N

\*Urban services provided:

- SS - Sanitary Sewer collection and treatment system
- PW - Public Water supply and distribution system
- PD - Police Department (station within 2 miles)
- FD - Fire District (with Fire Insurance Rating of 1 to 6 as adequate)
- PK - Parks (local parks within ½ mile of residential neighborhoods)
- PS - Public School (within 2 miles)
- SD - Urban Storm Drainage System
- SW - Solid Waste Collection provided by Municipality
- US - Urban Street Standards in New Development w/Curb, Gutter, Sidewalks and Bicycle provisions
- OT - Other Public Transportation (mass transit, paratransit, carpooling, etc.)

\*\*The Central Urban Service Area includes lands within several municipalities encompassing the Madison Urbanizing Area. Not all of these municipalities provide the full range of urban services within their jurisdiction.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Dane County Regional Planning Commission

**APPENDIX C**  
**(From the *Dane County Land Use & Transportation Plan*)**

**Process for Amending Adopted Regional Plans**

Each year the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) conducts an annual review and reaffirmation of all major adopted plans and considers possible changes or amendments at that time. It is also necessary to amend regional plans at other times. The following steps will be followed to assure a proper and timely process for plan amendments.

1. Requests for amendments to regional plans must be initiated or sponsored by a local unit of government or the RPC. Requests for plan changes from individuals should be channeled to the appropriate unit of government to receive their sponsorship. Many times the amendment proposal will reflect local plan updates prepared with RPC staff or consultant assistance. Holding a local public hearing and any notification of property owners are the responsibility of the sponsoring local unit of government.

All requests for creation or expansion of urban service areas or limited service areas must be accompanied by sufficient supporting information to allow evaluation of the impacts of the proposed change, and determine the intent and capability of providing the needed urban services. The specific information which must be submitted is described in the *Planning Submittal Requirements for Urban Service Area Amendments*, available from the RPC.

2. Staff will consult with affected governmental units to discuss details of the proposal and to determine if there are unresolved issues. There will be early consultation with affected units, where possible, before changes are adopted by the sponsoring unit. The sponsoring unit should initiate these consultations.
3. The RPC staff will prepare a report for the Commission that sets forth the pertinent factors, an analysis, and recommendation. The report will be presented to the Commission at the time of the scheduled public hearing.

The staff report will also include:

- a. An evaluation of consistency or conflict with major Land Use and Transportation Plan objectives and policies, particularly those related to regional development patterns (location, density), housing (range and mix, affordability), transportation, environmental protection, farmland preservation, and provision of public services.
- b. An evaluation of consistency or conflict of the amendment with other relevant adopted plans.
- c. A description of local measures or programs which will mitigate potential adverse impacts or support plan policies, such as measures to protect environmental corridors, promote compact development, etc.

4. A public hearing will be set for the next RPC meeting unless more time is needed to address issues. All affected local units and county board supervisors will be notified by letter at least thirty (30) days prior to the public hearing. The 30-day notification period may be waived if the sponsoring unit can demonstrate that other affected units of government have been consulted as provided in #2 above.
5. A resolution will be prepared for RPC consideration, to be acted on following the hearing or at a subsequent meeting. The resolution wording should specifically mention each affected plan (e.g., Land Use and Transportation Plan, Water Quality, Farmland Preservation, etc.). Note: RPC action is expected at a subsequent meeting if there are unresolved issues or questions; however, the RPC could act following the public hearing.
6. A letter to the county Zoning and Natural Resources committee will be prepared for RPC consideration if the Farmland Preservation Plan is affected. The letter will ask the county zoning committee to seek adoption of the amendment to the Farmland Preservation Plan by the county board.
7. After adoption, amendments will be filed in the Land Use and Transportation Plan amendment file, and the Farmland Preservation Plan file. Urban service area amendments will be filed in the urban service area file and the sewer service extension file. All amendments to the Water Quality Plan, including changes to urban service areas and environmental corridors, must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for approval following RPC adoption.
8. Each year plan amendments will be documented as part of the annual review, legal notice published and, after the annual plan review, a copy of the resolution reaffirming all regional plans will be filed in the Land Use and Transportation Plan amendment file for that year and other appropriate files, and also submitted to appropriate funding and approving agencies such as WISDOT, WISDNR, etc.

\*\* The Central Urban Service Area includes lands within several municipalities encompassing the Madison urbanizing area. Not all of these municipalities provide the full range of urban services within their jurisdiction.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Dane County Regional Planning Commission

## **Planning Submittal Requirements for Urban Service Area Amendments**

All urban service area or limited service area amendment requests must be sponsored by the principal local governmental unit (town, village, city, county), which will be responsible for land use control and providing services to urban development in the area to be added or deleted, or by the RPC.

All requests for urban service area additions must be accompanied by specific plans for development and provision of urban services to the proposed addition, which include the following elements:

- (A) a plan and description of proposed development, land use and major facilities in the area, which is specific enough in terms of type and densities of land use to enable the determination of urban service needs and impacts of development.
- (B) a description of the relationship of the proposed development with adjacent land uses and urban development, and consistency or conflict with any applicable adopted plans.
- (C) identification of environmental corridors and other environmentally sensitive areas, consistent with RPC and DNR criteria, which are to be protected from urban development, and a description of local policies, ordinances or other measures to protect such areas.
- (D) a specific plan for providing urban services to the area, including:
  - (1) a layout of the basic street and utility (water, sewer, storm drainage system) networks and facilities;
  - (2) a description of the urban services intended to be provided to the area, both initially and long-term. The description should, for each urban service, indicate whether, how, when and by whom each urban service is to be provided, for each of the following urban services (not all services may be required or needed in each case):
    - (a) the urban transportation system and facilities, including public street layout and standards, provisions for pedestrian and bicycle movement, and provisions for mass transit and paratransit and trip reduction measures (carpooling, park/ride lots);
    - (b) public sanitary sewerage system layout and facilities;
    - (c) public water supply and distribution system layout and facilities, for both potable water and fire protection;
    - (d) higher or urban levels of police and fire protection and emergency medical services than generally provided in rural areas;
    - (e) solid waste collection service;
    - (f) a publicly managed urban storm drainage system layout and standards; and
    - (g) neighborhood public facilities and sites, including neighborhood and community parks, schools, etc.

In addition to these basic planning submittal requirements for urban service area additions, all requests for large additions (involving more than 100 acres of developable land) must include 10-year staging boundaries, which will be adopted and used to guide extension of services and sewer extension reviews.

# Urban Service Areas

## What Are Urban Service Areas?

In order to avoid wasteful use of land and to most efficiently provide public services and facilities, the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) introduced the concept of urban service areas in the first Dane County Land Use Plan in 1973. Urban service areas are those areas in and around existing communities which are most suitable for urban development and capable of being provided with a full range of urban services. (Urban services are those additional public services normally provided or needed in urban areas, including public water supply and distribution systems, sanitary sewerage systems, higher levels of police and fire protection, solid waste collection, urban storm drainage systems, streets with curbs and gutters, street lighting, neighborhood facilities such as parks and schools, and urban transportation facilities such as sidewalks, taxi service and mass transit.)

The urban service area boundaries represent the outer limits of planned urban growth over the long-term planning period--at least 20 years--and include more than enough land to accommodate anticipated growth. Short-term staging boundaries are sometimes developed to indicate where urban development should occur and services be extended over the near-term future (up to 10 years), to assist in logical staging of growth and extension of services.

Regional plans also provide for Limited Service Areas--areas where only one or a few limited urban services, such as sanitary sewer service, is intended to be provided to special or unique areas (remote correctional facilities, sanitary landfills, etc.) or areas of existing development experiencing sewage disposal problems. These areas are not intended to receive a full range of urban services or additional urban development.

## How Are Urban Service Areas Developed?

The RPC works with the local community to develop an urban service area boundary which can be included in both local and regional plans. Twenty-five urban service areas and a number of limited service areas have been designated and adopted in Dane County. The approach involves:

- determining the amount of vacant land needed for urban development, consistent with population and growth forecasts and density standards. This information provides the basis for outlining an urban service area which contains enough vacant land to flexibly accommodate anticipated urban growth, yet is compact enough to result in orderly, staged development.
- locating potential urban service area boundaries, such as natural or constructed barriers to development, drainage area boundaries or other logical service boundaries
- protecting areas unsuitable for development, such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, etc.
- Short-term staging boundaries are encouraged to indicate where urban development should occur and services be extended over the near-term future (5-10 years), to assist in logical staging of growth and extension of services. Short-term staging boundaries are required for large (over 100 acres of developable land) expansions of urban service areas.
- A “flexibility margin” of up to 100% of the incremental growth area is allowed to provide greater flexibility for the smaller outer urban service areas.

## How Are Urban Service Areas Used?

Local municipalities and the RPC use urban service areas to plan the location of urban developments showing where urban services will be provided.

RPC and DNR approve sewer extensions and sewage treatment facilities based on USA boundaries.

USAs are included in areawide plans so that local, regional and state agency decisions can be consistent and achieve desired growth and development patterns.

## How Are Urban Service Areas Changed?

Urban service areas are changed in response to:

- (a) changes in population or land use forecasts
- (b) evidence of actual growth and development occurring much faster than forecast
- (c) adjustments or changes in the specific location or direction of growth and development
- (d) changes resulting from a community plan update or revision.

The process of change involves these steps:

- (1) the request for the proposed change must be sponsored by or initiated by the local governmental unit or the RPC (changes requested by individuals or private parties must be channeled through the local unit of government). The request must be accompanied by a plan or description of: (a) the specific land use or proposed development for the area; (b) any environmental corridor or other areas intended to be protected or excluded from development; and (c) a plan and statement of intent to provide the needed urban services to the area. The specific information which must be submitted is described in the Planning Submittal Requirement for Urban Service Area Amendments, available from the RPC.
- (2) the RPC staff consults with affected governmental units to obtain information related to the need and impacts of the proposed change, and to identify any unresolved issues or controversies
- (3) the RPC staff prepares an analysis of the proposed change
- (4) the Regional Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the proposed change
- (5) the Dane County Regional Planning Commission acts on the proposed change
- (6) the RPC action is forwarded to any other agency which needs to approve of changes for specific purposes (the County Board for Farmland Preservation Plan changes, DNR for Water Quality Plan changes, etc.)

In general, the proposed changes must be consistent with the process and criteria for delineation of urban service area boundaries:

- the change must be consistent with adopted forecasts and density standards and not exceed the maximum size allowed by these standards (a “trade” may be made to accommodate USA additions which would otherwise exceed the maximum size, by removing an equivalent amount of vacant developable land from the urban service area to compensate for the addition). Short-term staging boundaries are required for large urban service area changes.
- areas unsuitable for development (environmental corridors) must be identified and excluded from development (see the Environmental Corridors Fact Sheet, available from the RPC, for more information)
- the change should generally be consistent and supportive of adopted plan policies and objectives. Any important adverse impacts of the proposed change should be addressed and mitigated to the extent possible.

*For more specific questions or information, contact the CARPC office.*

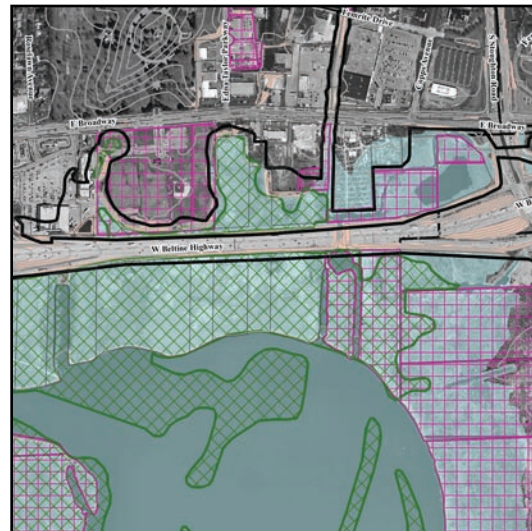


### Capital Area Regional Planning Commission

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# Fact Sheet Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space in urban and urbanizing areas, that include environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and lands needed for open space and recreational use. They are based mainly on drainage-ways and stream channels, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and other resource features, and are part of a countywide system of continuous open space corridors.



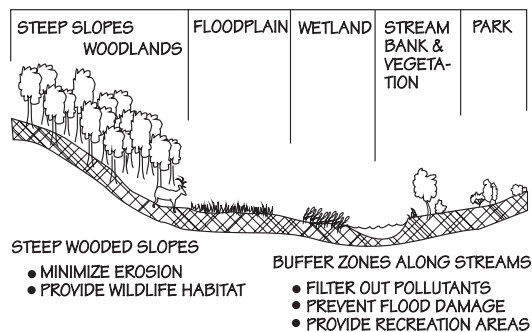
Function	Resource Features								
	Lakes, Ponds & Streams	Wetlands	Floodplains	Shoreland Buffer-Strip	Steep Slopes	Woodlands	Parks	Unique Vegetation or Geology	Problem Soils
Protect Water Resources, Drainage & Hydrologic Functions	▲	▲	▲	▲	△				△
Provide Pollution Control		▲	△	▲	▲	△	△		
Protect Public Health, Safety & Property	▲	△	▲		▲			▲	▲
Provide Outdoor Recreation & Education Opportunities	▲	△	△	△		△	▲	△	
Provide Wildlife Habitat	▲	▲	△	△		▲	△	△	
Enhance Scenic Beauty & Shape Urban Form	▲	▲	△	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	

▲ Primary Function      △ Secondary or Supplemental Function

## How Are Environmental Corridors Mapped and Used?

Environmental corridors have been mapped for all urban and limited service areas in the county. The RPC staff works with the local unit of government to delineate the corridors, based on available information and mapping of environmental resources and open space lands (water bodies and drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, areas of unique vegetation or geology, existing and proposed parks, etc.).

The objective is to delineate, in local and regional plans, those lands and resources which perform important environmental functions (see illustration) and need to be protected from development and urbanization. Including the corridors in community plans helps the local government to protect lands needed for drainage and recreation; avoid problems from development on steep slopes, poor soils or flood-prone areas; protect water resources and avoid pollution; and enhance scenic beauty and wildlife habitat.



The schematic diagram depicts the resource elements one finds in a typical environmental corridor. Often one or more elements are found in the same locality, such as woodlands and steep slopes.

Once delineated and adopted, the corridors are used by local governments, and by the RPC and state and federal agencies in making decisions on the location of urban development and major facilities.

The corridors are also used as a basis or starting point for open space and recreation planning and acquisition. An important use of the corridors is in RPC/DNR review of sewer extensions and sewer service areas, to direct urban development to areas outside the corridors.

## Making Changes to Corridors

Changes to the environmental corridors are classified into two categories: **a) major changes** to the corridors that require approval by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) before these changes would be effective for the purpose of reviewing sanitary sewer extensions; and **b) minor changes** that do not require prior approval by the RPC or the DNR.

Any change to an environmental corridor, whether major or minor, should be initiated or sponsored by the affected local units of government (city, village, town), or by the Regional Planning Commission in consultation with affected local units of government. It is expected that all changes, major or minor, would be initiated by formal action by the municipality—by resolution, or approval of a plat or development plan.

## Major Changes:

Major changes have the potential for significant impacts on water quality, and require RPC and DNR approval. The review and decision process for a proposed major corridor change requires a public hearing and generally takes a minimum of three months.

### Major changes include:

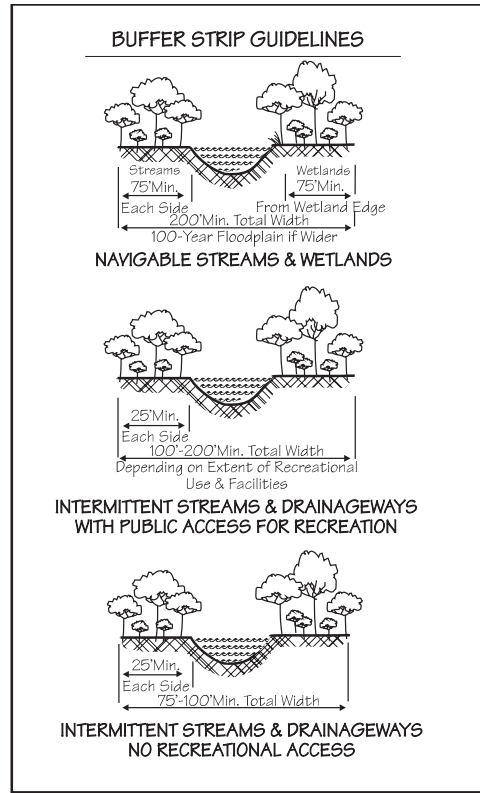
- 1) Removing any mapped wetland area unless exempted by state administrative rules or state-approved rezoning.
- 2) Any change that would remove any area below the ordinary high water mark of a stream, pond or lake.
- 3) Any change resulting in the elimination or interruption in the continuity of any corridor segment which includes floodplains, wetlands, shoreland buffer strips or steep slopes adjacent to water bodies (defined as slopes over 12% where the base of slope does not have at least 75 feet of vegetated buffer strip between the base of slope and the ordinary high water mark of perennial streams, ponds and lakes).
- 4) Any change reducing the width of vegetated shoreland buffer strips along streams, wetlands, and drainageways below minimum guidelines (see illustration).
- 5) Grading in a wetland vegetative buffer within 30 feet of the wetland edge, where the buffer has been delineated in environmental corridors, unless the grading is intended to re-establish natural grades or restore wetland habitat.

## Minor Changes:

Minor changes generally do not have the potential for significant impacts on water quality, and do not require RPC approval. The RPC should be notified of the official local action (resolution, plat or development plan approval, etc.) changing the corridors.

### Minor changes include:

- 1) Changes resulting from DNR-approved changes in floodplain or wetland delineations, or DNR-approved rezoning.
- 2) Relocation or shortening of a corridor based solely on intermittent streams and drainageways, or adjustment of the buffer strip width within the guidelines (see illustration).
- 3) Addition to or removal from the corridors of public or private lands which do not include water bodies, floodplains, wetlands, minimum buffer strips or steep slopes adjacent to water bodies.
- 4) Changes resulting from utility or roadway maintenance or construction which meet the criteria set forth in NR 117. (It is not the intent of the environmental corridors to prevent or obstruct necessary maintenance, expansion or construction of transportation or utility facilities intended to serve areas outside of the corridors, needed to maintain or improve continuity of those systems, or designed to serve compatible uses in the corridors, such as park shelters or facilities. Facilities intended to serve new sewer residential, commercial or industrial development in the corridors are not permitted.).



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For more information see the CARPC Policies and Criteria document on our website.  
[http://danedocs.countyofdane.com/webdocs/PDF/capd/USA\\_Policies\\_adoppted\\_2.28.08.pdf](http://danedocs.countyofdane.com/webdocs/PDF/capd/USA_Policies_adoppted_2.28.08.pdf)