

Urban Growth Boundaries

Packet Synopsis

Urban growth boundaries are essentially a concept and planning tool useful to communities that are experiencing or anticipating significant growth. Via carefully considered and established growth boundaries, growth and development can be directed to fit growth into the community's natural environment and protect important natural, social and cultural resources. Further, growth boundaries can aid the community to more efficiently and cost effectively provide a public and community infrastructure to support future growth and development.

The contents of this packet have been selected on the basis of clarity and germaneness to the topic. They are as follows:

Urban Growth Area. - A handout, preparer unknown, for public discussion purposes. It gives a brief definition of **urban growth**, objectives to be served by boundaries and questions that should be answered when creating **urban growth boundaries**.

Municipal Infrastructure Planning. – A handout, preparer unknown, for the identified goal, “To proactively prepare for future growth and maximize the existing system potential”. It identifies the key components of a municipality's infrastructure and outlines the proper steps to be taken in the infrastructure planning process. The community capital improvement budget and plan is an essential factor in establishing its practical urban growth boundaries.

Factsheet: Urban Growth Boundaries, Greenbelt Alliance, San Francisco, January 1999. – Gives brief answers to such questions as: what are **urban growth boundaries**, why bother with an **urban growth boundary**, advantages and etc. Includes a useful glossary of land use terms.

Using Urban Growth Boundaries to Preserve Undeveloped Land, *Effects of Urban Growth*, Open Space Foundation, Orinda, CA – A brief but thorough essay on **urban growth boundaries**. Its last paragraph makes a good case for **urban growth boundaries**. Cautionary note: an “advocacy” group authored it.

Chapter 6, Urban Containment, *Growth Management Principles and Practices*, Arthur C. Nelson, James B. Duncan, et.al., PLANNERS PRESS, Chicago. - Is a scholarly text but well worth reading. It describes, with case examples, such urban containment techniques as **urban growth boundaries**, urban service areas, urban development reserves, shadow platting and various zoning tools and approaches. All of these techniques can be applied, depending on the complexities of the urban growth potentials being faced.

Zoning Fallout: The Implications of Urban Growth Designations, *Zoning News*, March 1999. – States its purpose as not presenting the pros and cons of urban area and boundary designations but to show how **urban growth boundaries** may affect zoning and land

use. It gives good explanations of the differences between **urban growth boundaries** and urban service areas and how they work. It also illustrates how “upzoning” and “downzoning” can best be used.

Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character, Randall Arendt, et. al., *Planners Press*, Chicago, 1994. - Makes the case that **urban growth boundaries** may also be useful for communities who are not under significant growth pressure but wish to retain and enhance their character. It presents an understandable discussion of using “minimum” and “maximum” lot size zoning for controlling and directing growth.

Sample Model Ordinance. – An example for an orderly and voluntary annexation agreement prepared by Minnesota Planning.

Memorandum of Understanding: An Urban Growth Management Agreement, City of Lacey, City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington. – An excellent example of establishing growth management boundaries via a Joint Power Agreement approach, which is permitted under Minnesota Statutes § 471.59 – Joint Exercise of Powers. It also contains an annexation agreement. Although not a Minnesota example, it can be readily adapted to meet particular Minnesota circumstances.

An Ordinance Adopting a Timed Growth Controls Program, Township of West Windsor. – An example of establishing **urban growth boundaries** via ordinance. In this particular case, **urban growth boundaries** are established via zoning district “overlays” in a timed sequence, an interesting approach.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS MATERIALS

The following on **urban growth boundaries** can be borrowed via MnLINK.

- Staying Inside the Lines: Urban Growth Boundaries, Gail Easley, American Planning Association, Chicago, IL 1992, 30 pages.
- Performance Standards for Growth Management, Douglas R. Porter, American Planning Association, Chicago, IL 1996, 45 pages.

LEGAL NOTES

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 462 Section 462.352 Subd. 18. defines “urban growth area” as “the identified area around an urban area within which there is a sufficient supply of developable land for at least a prospective 20- year period based on demographic forecasts and the time reasonably required to effectively provide municipal services to the identified area.”

MS § 462.3535 subd. 4 requires that the community-based comprehensive plan of statutory and home-rule cities and their implementing official controls must address any

urban growth areas identified in a county plan, provide for staged delivery of municipal services and a staged process for boundary adjustments.

Subd. 5. (a), (b) and (c) establishes the boundary adjustment process to be followed in annexing territory.

MS § 414.0325 stipulates the procedures to be followed in orderly annexation agreements between cities and townships.

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 572A, PLANNING DISPUTE RESOLUTION; MEDIATION; ARBITRATION stipulates the procedures and processes that must be followed when land annexations by municipalities are contested.

Minnesota Statutes § 471.59 – Joint Exercise of Powers, as cited above, authorizes Minnesota governmental jurisdictions to jointly exercise the legal powers possessed by one jurisdiction in the joint powers territory on the behalf of the other(s) upon mutual agreement.

The **Local Planning Assistance Center at the Department of Administration** helps local governments with planning efforts, including comprehensive planning, zoning, hazard mitigation planning, GIS applications and development issues.

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