

SEWRPC COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FACT SHEET

Land-Use Related Extraterritorial Authorities

Cities and villages in Wisconsin have several types of extraterritorial authority that may affect land development in adjacent towns. Under the *Wisconsin Statutes*, cities and villages have authority to exercise extraterritorial planning, platting (subdivision review), and official mapping by right. In order to exercise extraterritorial zoning, cities and villages must work cooperatively with the adjoining town to develop an extraterritorial zoning ordinance and map. Cities and villages also have extraterritorial authority over offensive industries and smoke emissions. Cities, villages, and towns have limited extraterritorial authority over navigational aids and uses surrounding airports owned by the city, village, or town. Each of these extraterritorial authorities is summarized in the following sections.

Extraterritorial Planning

Under Section 62.23 (2) of the *Statutes*, the plan commission of a city has “the function and duty” to “make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the city, including any areas outside of its boundaries that in the commission’s judgment bear relation to the development of the city.” Section 61.35 grants this same authority to village plan commissions. The *Statutes* do not specify the distance outside the city or village boundaries that may be included in the city or village master plan.

Because the comprehensive planning law (Section 66.1001 of the *Statutes*) defines a city or village comprehensive plan as a plan developed in accordance with Section 62.23 (2) or (3), a city or village comprehensive plan presumably could also include areas outside the city or village corporate limits, including any areas outside the city or village boundaries that in the plan commission’s judgment bear relation to the development of the city or village.

The comprehensive planning law defines a county comprehensive plan as a plan developed under Section 59.69 (2) or (3) of the *Statutes*. Section 59.69 (3) sets forth the requirements for preparing and adopting a county development plan. Section 59.69 (3) (b) requires that a County development plan shall include, without change, the master plan of a city or village adopted under Section 62.23 (2) or (3).¹ It is unclear, however, if a county development plan must include a city or village plan for areas outside the limits of a city or village. Regardless of whether the recommendations of a city or village plan for areas outside its corporate limits are incorporated into a county development or comprehensive plan, Section 59.69 (3) (e) of the *Statutes* states that “a master plan adopted under Section 62.23 (2) and (3) and an official map that is established under Section 62.23 (6) shall control in unincorporated territory in a county affected thereby, whether or not such action occurs before the adoption of a development plan.”

The language in Section 59.69 (3) (e) of the *Statutes* appears to mean that, as of 2010, county actions and programs affecting land use in unincorporated areas included in a city or village master (or comprehensive) plan or official map must be consistent with the city or village plan or official map. It is unclear how this requirement would be applied in situations where a city or village plan recommendation

¹ *Town plans in counties with a population of at least 485,000 residents (Dane and Milwaukee Counties) must also be included in the county comprehensive plan, in accordance with Section 59.69(3)(b) of the Statutes. There are no towns in Milwaukee County, so this requirement applies only in Dane County.*

for a specific property conflicted with a county responsibility under another statutory or regulatory requirement, such as shoreland zoning.

Town actions and programs (for example, zoning decisions) affecting land use in the extraterritorial area of a city or village must be consistent with the town comprehensive plan.

Extraterritorial Platting

Under Section 236.10 of the *Statutes*, a city or village may review, and approve or reject, subdivision plats located within its extraterritorial area if it has adopted a subdivision ordinance or an official map. Section 236.02 of the *Statutes* defines the extraterritorial plat review jurisdiction as the unincorporated area within three miles of the corporate limits of a city of the first, second, or third class, or within 1.5 miles of the corporate limits of a city of the fourth class or a village.² Classes of incorporated municipalities in Southeastern Wisconsin are shown on Map 1.

In accordance with Section 66.0105 of the *Statutes*, in situations where the extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction of two or more cities or villages would otherwise overlap, the extraterritorial jurisdiction between the municipalities is divided on a line, all points of which are equidistant from the boundaries of each municipality concerned, so that no more than one city or village exercises extraterritorial jurisdiction over any unincorporated area.

City and village extraterritorial plat approval authority does not include the authority to require public improvements, such as streets or sanitary sewers, in plats outside city or village limits. Only the town board may require improvements in plats located within a town. In addition, under Section 236.45 (3) (b) of the *Statutes*, a city or village may not deny approval of a plat or certified survey map (CSM) within its extraterritorial area based on the proposed use of land within the plat or CSM, unless the denial is based on an extraterritorial zoning ordinance adopted in accordance with Section 62.23 (7a) of the *Statutes*.

Extraterritorial Zoning

Under Section 62.23 (7a) of the *Statutes*, a city or village may enact an extraterritorial zoning ordinance and map for adjoining unincorporated areas lying within its extraterritorial area. The limits of extraterritorial zoning are the same as those specified in the *Statutes* for extraterritorial plat review. Unlike extraterritorial plat review authority, which is automatically granted by the *Statutes* to cities and villages, a city or village must follow a procedure that involves the adjacent town before enacting a permanent extraterritorial zoning ordinance and map, as summarized below:

1. The common council or village board must adopt a resolution stating its intent to adopt an extraterritorial zoning ordinance. The city or village must publish a public notice and send a copy of the resolution and a map showing the boundaries of the proposed extraterritorial zoning area to the county and to the clerk of each affected town within 15 days of adopting the resolution.
2. The common council or village board may also adopt an interim ordinance that “freezes” the existing zoning within the extraterritorial area while the extraterritorial zoning ordinance is being

² *Cities of the first class are those with a population of at least 150,000 residents; cities of the second class are those with a population of 39,000 to 150,000 residents; cities of the third class are those with a population of 10,000 to 39,000 residents; and fourth class cities have a population of less than 10,000 residents. A city is not automatically reclassified based on changes in population. Under Section 62.05 of the Statutes, to change from one class to another a city must meet the required population based on the last Federal census, fulfill required governmental changes (generally, an amendment to the charter ordinance is required), and publish a mayoral proclamation.*

prepared. A public notice must be published and the county and affected towns must be notified. An ordinance freezing existing zoning can remain in effect for up to two years. The common council or village board may extend the moratorium for one additional year upon the recommendation of the joint zoning committee.

3. A joint zoning committee must be formed to develop recommendations for the extraterritorial zoning ordinance regulations and map. The committee is made up of three members from the city or village plan commission and three members from each town affected by the proposed extraterritorial zoning ordinance. The town members are appointed by the town board and must be town residents. If more than one town is affected, one committee is formed to develop the regulations, but the *Statutes* provide that “a separate vote shall be taken on the plan and regulations for each town and the town members of the joint committee shall vote only on matters affecting the particular town which they represent.”
4. The *Statutes* further provide that the common council or village board may not adopt the proposed extraterritorial zoning map and ordinance unless the map and ordinance receive a favorable vote of a majority of the six members of the joint committee.

Official Mapping

Official mapping authority, granted to cities and villages under Section 62.23 (6) of the *Statutes*, is intended to prevent the construction of buildings or structures and their associated improvements on lands designated for future public use. An official map may identify the location and width of existing and proposed streets, highways, parkways, parks, playgrounds, railway rights-of-way, public transit facilities, airports, and airport affected areas (areas up to three miles from an airport). Waterways, which include streams, ditches, drainage channels, lakes, and storage basins, may also be shown on an official map if the waterway is included in a comprehensive surface water drainage plan. Official maps may be adopted by an ordinance or resolution of the village board or common council, and must be recorded with the county register of deeds immediately following their adoption.

A city or village official map may include the area within the city or village plus the area within the extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction of the city or village.

Towns that have adopted village powers may adopt an official map for areas within the town.

Other Extraterritorial Authorities

Other city and village extraterritorial authorities include the following:

- Smoke: Under Section 254.57 of the *Statutes*, a common council or village board may regulate or prohibit the emission of dense smoke into the open air within city or village limits and up to one mile from city or village limits.
- Offensive Industry: Under Section 66.0415 of the *Statutes*, a common council or village board may regulate, license, or prohibit the location, management, or construction of any industry, thing, or place where any nauseous, offensive, or unwholesome business is carried out. This authority extends to the area within the city or village and up to four miles beyond the city or village boundaries. The City of Milwaukee may regulate offensive industries along the Milwaukee, Menominee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers and their branches to the outer limits of Milwaukee County, including along all canals connecting with these rivers and the lands adjacent to these rivers and canals or within 100 yards of them. A town board has the same powers as cities and villages within that portion of the town not regulated by a city or village under Section 66.0415.

Cities, villages, towns, and counties have the following extraterritorial authorities:

- **Water Navigation Aids:** Under Section 30.745 of the *Statutes*, a common council, village board, or town board may regulate water navigation aids (moorings, markers, and buoys) within one-half mile of the city, village, or town, provided the municipal ordinance does not conflict with a uniform navigation aids system established by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources or the County.
- **Aerial Approaches to Airports:** Under Section 114.136 of the *Statutes*, any city, village, town, or county that is the owner of an airport site may protect the aerial approaches to the airport through an ordinance regulating the use, location, height, and size of structures and objects of natural growth surrounding the airport. An ordinance adopted by a local government that owns an airport site applies in all local governments within the aerial approach area, and may be adopted and enforced without the consent of other affected governing bodies.

This is one in a series of fact sheets intended to assist in the preparation of county and local comprehensive plans. Additional information regarding the preparation of comprehensive plans in Southeastern Wisconsin is available from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). Commission staff may be contacted by telephone at (262) 547-6721, or by e-mail at sewrpc@sewrpc.org.

