

URBAN TOWN POWERS – AN OVERVIEW

What is an Urban Town?

An Urban Town is a township that receives new or expanded powers. The powers, primarily described in Minnesota Statutes Ch. 368, fall into one of three categories: (1) entirely new powers; (2) previously existing powers that no longer require voter approval; and (3) powers that were previously held by the town but are authorized by different or additional statutes for urban towns. Towns do not need to be in an “urban” area to exercise urban powers.

How to become an Urban Town?

There are two ways a town may get urban powers.

1. *Mandatory Designation by the Legislature*

Towns automatically have urban powers if: (1) the town has platted subdivisions where at least 1,200 people reside OR (2) the town has a platted area located within 20 miles of the Minneapolis or St. Paul City Halls. Towns that meet either of these criteria are Urban Towns.

2. *Permissive by Voter Approval*

Towns with a population of at least 1000 may elect to exercise urban powers if a majority the voters at the town’s annual meeting vote to exercise urban powers.

What new or expanded powers are available?

Entirely New Powers

- Engage in Economic Development
- Nuisance Abatement Powers
- Full Municipal Utility Powers
- Regulate Certain Merchants
- Maintain Sidewalks
- Create Departments of Town Government
- Regulate waterways
- Regulate Taxis
- & More ...

Prior Powers No Longer Needing Voter Approval

- Build & Acquire Buildings
- Acquire & Maintain Cemetery
- Law Enforcement Powers
- Establish Fire Department
- Waste Disposal
- Establish Parks
- Expanded Road Powers
- Regulate Snow & Ice Removal
- Regulate Water Supply