



Memorandum

To: Chris Anderson, City of Ramsey

From: Alison Harwood, WSB & Associates, Inc.

Date: April 19, 2018

Re: Ramsey COR AUAR Update

In 2003, the City of Ramsey completed an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the COR. The AUAR process is a hybrid of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The AUAR process is designed to allow Responsible Government Units (RGUs), such as the City of Ramsey, to understand how different development scenarios will affect the environment, assess the cumulative impacts of each scenario, and outline necessary mitigation for any identified impacts. An AUAR is valid for 5 years and then must be updated to qualify as the required environmental review. The COR AUAR was last updated in 2013 and is due for an update in July 2018.

There are several benefits to completing an update of the COR AUAR, which are summarized below:

1. The AUAR process allows for review of various development scenarios for an entire geographical area, rather than a specific project. This allows RGUs more flexibility with regard to changing development needs.
2. The AUAR process serves as a substitute for other state environmental review processes, such as an EAW or EIS. As long as the proposed development fits within one of the development scenarios reviewed by the AUAR, additional environmental review is not necessary.
3. It provides an opportunity to review the cumulative impacts resulting from several different projects occurring within a given area, rather than just focusing on a single development at a time.
4. The AUAR process enable planners to better integrate environmental review into their comprehensive planning process, and allows them to evaluate how much development can be accommodated by an area.
5. The AUAR process can address both public infrastructure and private development at once.
6. The AUAR process allows planners to review the cumulative impacts of projects that are expected in the immediate future as well as potential development scenarios that are not expected for several years later, at the same time.
7. Updates of the AUAR need only revise the information that has changed since approval of the original document.

If an AUAR is not updated within 5 years, any specific project that is proposed within the AUAR area that would otherwise exceed the threshold for EAW or EIS review cannot be approved until either the necessary EAW or EIS review has been completed or the AUAR has been updated.

If you have any questions regarding the AUAR Update process, or benefits of completing the AUAR Update, please contact me at aharwood@wsbeng.com or 763-231-4847.