



REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY AND SEWER SERVICE AREA IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

BIG PICTURE

- Direct higher intensity development to certain areas.
- Improve the ability to preserve farmland.
- Preserve rural communities.
- Utilize existing infrastructure.
- Align growth with sewer availability and sustain adequate capacity at UAJA.
- Protect sourcewater and other environmental resources.
- This requires a REGIONAL agreement to implement from the six Centre Region municipalities

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

- Most new building permits are issued inside the RGB and SSA.
- Development capacity inside the RGB and SSA is adequate to serve growth.
- Permitted average monthly hydraulic capacity at UAJA is 10.62 MGD. Average monthly flow in 2022 was 5.31 MGD.
- Projected flows in 2027 is estimated at 5.67 MGD.
- Sourcewater continues to be protected from incompatible development.
- Farmland and open areas have been preserved.
- The RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement has helped municipalities implement regional goals. Particularly areas that want to grow and areas that want to maintain their rural character.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING AGREEMENT

- The process to expand the RGB and SSA is meant to be rigorous.
- The process does not require a Development of Regional Impact inside the RGB and SSA. Makes it easier to grow where the Region wants growth.
- It can be a complicated process that is not often utilized.
- Continues to maintain a contiguous RGB and SSA boundary.
- The process requires that all six municipalities vote on requested expansions of the RGB and SSA.

WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME?

- The initial request to expand the RGB and SSA boundary is a local decision.
- Five municipalities need to approve a request to expand the RGB and SSA.
- Moved exceptions to the front of the Agreement
- The background section was deleted and incorporated into the *RGB and SSA at a Glance* document. A link to the document will be included as reference at the end of the Agreement.
- Deleted the “Limited Review Process” and reauthorized the option for municipalities to approved minor requests to expand the RGB and SSA without going to the COG General Forum.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES?

- No substantial changes.
- Cleaned up authority and effective date.
- Moved exceptions to the front of the Agreement.
- The background section was deleted and incorporated into the *RGB and SSA at a Glance* document. A link to the document will be included as reference at the end of the Agreement.
- Deleted the “Limited Review Process” and reauthorized the option for municipalities to approved minor requests to expand the RGB and SSA without going to the COG General Forum.

THANK YOU

- Questions
- Comments
- Clarifications
- Next steps
 - Address municipal comments with the LUCI Committee and CRPC in late summer or early fall.
 - Forward to COG General Forum for final action.



THE REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY AND SEWER SERVICE AREA AT A GLANCE

August 2022



CRPA
Centre Regional
Planning Agency



THE **REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY** AND **SEWER SERVICE AREA** TODAY

In simple terms, the RGB and SSA is a boundary the Centre Region municipalities mutually agree upon to direct more urban development inside the line where there is infrastructure to serve development. Less intensive uses that do not require urban infrastructure, particularly public sewer, are located outside of the line. The RGB and SSA was formalized in 2000, but the growth management concept behind it has been utilized for more than 46 years. Over time, the initial growth concept and the formal RGB and SSA have contributed substantially to the physical growth of the Centre Region and how it looks today.

The Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA) was formally established over 20 years ago and marked the first time the Centre Region municipalities jointly approved a line on a map that required a property owner to go through a formal process to request expansion of the line. The process, when initially established, required unanimous approval of all municipalities to expand the RGB and SSA. Today five of the six Centre Region municipalities need to approve requests. The RGB and SSA is not amended frequently and was last amended in 2014, so today it does not tend to be a highly visible policy to residents in the Region. In fact, most people in the Region do not realize that there is an RGB and SSA, although it wields tremendous influence over how and where the Region grows.

So, what does it really mean to have implemented a long-term regional policy like the RGB and SSA over the past 46 years? It means:

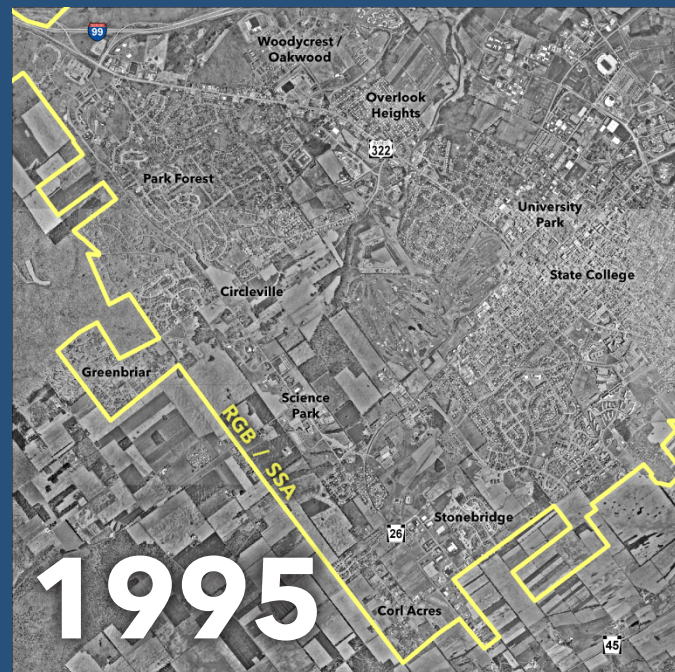
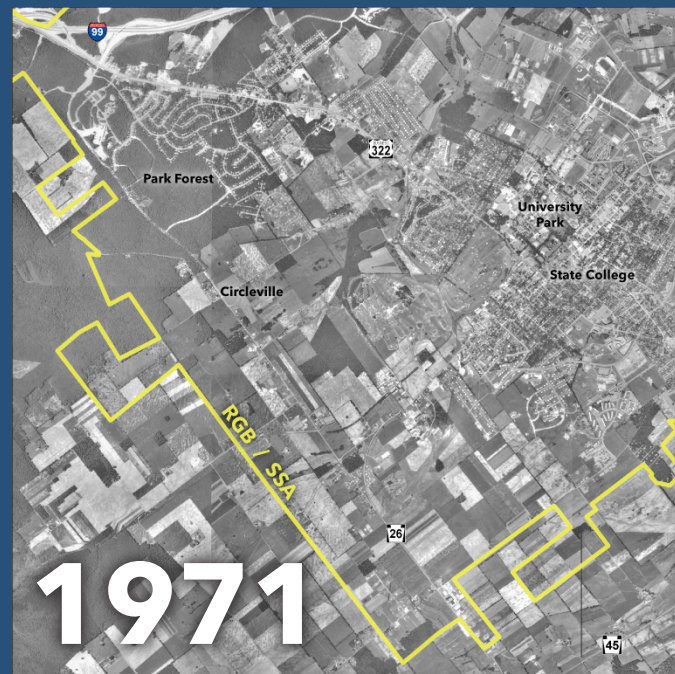
- Having a policy and process that guides how municipalities make decisions about where, how, and when to grow.
- Supporting a variety of housing types and neighborhoods. For example, residents can commute from nearly any rural area outside the RGB and SSA to work on the PSU campus, or downtown State College in 20 minutes or less.
- Having a development pattern inside the RGB and SSA that supports transportation alternatives such as CATA, multi-use trails, and other means to connect neighborhoods to work, schools, and parks.
- Helping to preserve the agriculture heritage of the Region, along with the municipalities, farmers, and other conservation organizations.
- Giving all municipalities a voice in protecting shared resources from adverse impacts of development. For example, many potable water wells are in two or three municipalities, but potable water resources are vital to all residents in the Region.
- Efficiently using existing infrastructure instead of building new roads, water and sewer lines, and other infrastructure to serve new development.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area (RGB and SSA) has evolved over more than 46 years since the initial adoption of a Primary Growth Area in the 1976 Comprehensive Plan. The concept was initially a regional-level policy, adopted by municipal resolution to guide where the Centre Region municipalities wanted to direct growth as part of the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan. For many years there was no delineated boundary for growth, just a concept illustrated on a map, and written policies stating where the region should grow. The SSA is established within the Centre Region's Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan and was first incorporated into the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, generally including the same area as the RGB. Today there is a one delineated line for both the RGB and SSA so that urban growth and service can be planned jointly. By consolidating these two geographic areas, the Centre Region municipalities are able to encourage growth in areas where public wastewater will be required for development and readily available.

The Primary Growth Area (1976), Future Growth Areas (1990), and the initial Regional Growth Boundary (2000) were maps with associated policies supporting a vision for growth in the Centre Region Comprehensive Plans. The Centre Region municipalities approve Centre Region Comprehensive Plans by adopting municipal resolutions. Resolutions are generally defined as a statement of policy by the governing body that a specific action be taken. For example, the specific action of a municipal resolution adopting a comprehensive plan would be for the municipality to plan for their municipality consistent with the goals, policies, actions, maps, and content in the comprehensive plan. This is particularly important for the Centre Region where a multi-municipal approach to planning has been utilized since the early 1960s to accomplish many goals that transcend municipal boundaries, including source water protection, open space preservation, farmland conservation, transportation, and other issues.

The Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area Implementation Agreement establishes a regional process to consider proposals to expand the RGB and SSA and provides the COG General Forum an advisory role in the review of major rezonings and text amendments outside the existing RGB and SSA. The Centre Region municipalities adopted the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement by ordinance. Ordinances for the initial Implementation Agreement were signed in 2006. New ordinances were adopted in 2013 when the Implementation Agreement was updated. The Implementation Agreement was also reviewed in 2018 however, no changes were made so it was not necessary to adopt new ordinances.



TIMELINE OF THE REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY AND SEWER SERVICE AREA

1976 to 1999 - Precursor to the Regional Growth Boundary

1976

The 1976 Comprehensive Plan identified a Primary Growth Area that designated a portion of the Centre Region with sufficient land for accommodating anticipated development with the least negative impact to the physical environment and the most efficient expansion of public services possible.

1990

The concept of a Primary Growth Area continued with some refinements in 1990. The 1990 Comprehensive Plan includes a map designating Future Growth Areas as a growth concept in the Region. This concept was like the Primary Growth Area in the 1976 Plan, but it expanded along transportation corridors and included historic villages such as Stormstown, Pine Grove Mills, Boalsburg, and Lemont, for example.

The 1990 Comprehensive Plan also contained a map showing Planned Sewer Service Areas. The area planned for public sewer service included the urbanized area and Pine Grove Mills, and some expansion areas adjacent to the urbanized area.

The Planned Sewer Service Areas map from the 1990 Comprehensive Plan was utilized to establish the Sewer Service Area for the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA).

2000 to 2013 - The Regional Growth Boundary is established, combined with the Sewer Service Area, and the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement is approved

The 2000 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan further refined the Future Growth Areas map by establishing a specific RGB. The plan established policies to direct the majority of future growth into areas inside the RGB so that new development could be efficiently served by public utilities, services, and transit.

Between 2000 and 2005, there were extensive discussions regarding wastewater treatment constraints at the UAJA Facility and how additional capacity could be added to the Facility. Since that time, the UAJA has installed improvements that increased capacity in the beneficial reuse system and can now produce up to 3.0 million gallons of beneficial reuse water daily. The UAJA has also made several operational improvements that have increased treatment capacity.

The RGB and SSA were delineated as one boundary line in the 2005 Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update to ensure coordination between regional land use planning efforts and sewage treatment and beneficial reuse capacity at the UAJA treatment plant. The RGB and SSA is the boundary within which public sewer will be provided in the future by the UAJA and where most of the new development will be focused.

- Patton Township received an application to rezone property outside the RGB and SSA from Geisinger to build a medical facility in Patton Township. There was, however, not a formal process in place to determine how to expand the RGB. The COG General Forum formed an Ad Hoc Committee to determine how to review the rezoning request.
- The process was also opened to property owners outside the RGB and SSA and a total of 26 requests were submitted to expand the RGB and SSA. Five requests were approved after an extensive review process.
- The COG General Forum requested that the Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA) develop a formal process for the regional review and approval of proposed RGB and SSA expansions. This was completed in 2006 with the development of an Implementation Agreement. The process was adopted by municipal ordinance as the process going forward.

2013 to 2022 – The RGB and SSA is reaffirmed in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement is refined and re-adopted.

- The 2013 Comprehensive Plan retains the RGB and SSA as a primary tool to manage growth in the Centre Region.

2013

- First update of the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement since initial adoption. A five-year review cycle was added to the Agreement.

2018

- COG Transportation and Land Use Committee (now the Land Use and Community Infrastructure Committee) reviewed the 2013 Agreement and did not recommend any changes.

Next update to the RGB and SSA

2023

- Initiation of a Centre Region Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Next five-year review of the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement is required.



OTHER INFORMATION

How is the RGB and SSA supported by the municipalities?

The RGB and SSA is a policy adopted by the municipalities to guide growth in the Region. The municipalities implement the purposes of the RGB and SSA through their zoning regulations. For example, areas outside of the RGB are generally zoned for forest, agriculture, residential densities of no more than one dwelling unit per acre and other uses that support a rural environment. Inside the RGB and SSA, municipalities zone at higher residential densities, and more intense commercial and non-residential uses. This results in a regional development pattern where most growth is directed into the RGB and SSA with some growth outside.

How is wastewater treatment and reuse accommodated?

The University Area Joint Authority (UAJA) operates a wastewater plant known as the Spring Creek Pollution Control Facility. It was constructed in 1969 and is permitted to treat up to 10.62 million gallons per day. The Facility currently serves all Centre Region municipalities except Halfmoon Township. Halfmoon Township, by virtue of being in the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan, does have a stake in the Facility and could request sewer service in the future. Flows to the Facility in 2021 averaged 5.31 million gallons per day, or half of the permitted treatment capacity. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) limits discharge from the Facility to Spring Creek to 6.0 million gallons per day. At this time, the UAJA has a beneficial reuse water treatment system in place that can produce up to 3.0 million gallons per day of reclaimed water that can be discharged or reused in other locations to reduce flow into Spring Creek. Per the most recent annual report (2021) from the UAJA to the DEP, the current facility is sufficient to prevent overload conditions.

Penn State owns and operates a wastewater treatment plant known as the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF), which provides sanitary sewer service to the University Park campus. A small portion of the College Heights neighborhood in State College Borough is treated at the WRF because the topography allows sewage transmission through a gravity line which flows downhill to the WRF. The WRF is designed to treat up to 3.0 million gallons per day. The Penn State WRF has zero discharge into a stream, which is unusual in Pennsylvania. Since 1983, Penn State has been recycling all of its treated effluent through a land application system known as the Living Filter.

Wastewater treatment outside the RGB and SSA is generally accommodated through individual on-lot septic systems. The DEP required the Centre Region to establish a sewage management program in the Act 537 Plan so that on-lot systems could be inspected and pumped on a regular basis. The Centre Region Code Administration and municipal Sewage Enforcement Officers implement the sewage management program for municipalities that have individual on-lot septic systems.

Is there sufficient land inside the RGB and SSA to accommodate anticipated growth?

The CRPA updates the Regional Development Capacity (REDCAP) Report every five years to estimate the amount of developable land inside the RGB and SSA. The 2017 REDCAP indicated that adequate residential and nonresidential development potential exists within the RGB and SSA to support growth beyond the 20-year planning horizon.

The REDCAP is in the process of being updated for 2022. This report is used to estimate the inventory of vacant land and potential redevelopment areas, ensuring that the Region can accommodate residential and nonresidential growth for the next 20 years. At all times, the Region should have a sufficient inventory of land inside the RGB and SSA to accommodate at least 20 years of forecast growth.

DEFINITIONS AND MORE INFORMATION

Centre Region Comprehensive Plan - A plan for the physical growth of the Centre Region.

Regional Growth Boundary – The Regional Growth Boundary is the boundary within which higher density development exists to support urban services including public sewer, public water, public transportation, fire, police, and schools efficiently and economically as noted in the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan.

Sewer Service Area – The Sewer Service Area is the location where public sewer service is provided or planned as identified in the Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan.

Sewage Management Plan - This plan requires that individual on-lot septic systems be inspected and septic tanks pumped on a regular basis outside the sewer service area.

Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area Implementation Agreement - Established a regional process to consider proposals to expand the RGB and SSA and provide the COG General Forum an advisory role in the review of major rezonings and text amendments outside the existing RGB and SSA. The Centre Region municipalities adopted the RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement by ordinance.

Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan – Pennsylvania’s Act 537 requires that municipalities develop and implement a comprehensive sewage facilities plan that addresses present and future sewage disposal needs. The six Centre Region municipalities maintain one Act 537 Plan to accommodate this requirement for the entire region.

COG General Forum - Is comprised of the 32 elected officials from College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris, and Patton Townships, and the Borough of State College. The COG fosters cooperative efforts to resolve regional problems, determine policies, and to formulate plans and programs to meet regional needs.

Where to get more information:

www.crcog.net
Centre Region Comprehensive Plan
Centre Region Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
Centre Region Act 537 Sewage Facilities Management Plan
Centre Region Land Consumption Study – 2020
Regional Development Capacity (REDCAP) Report
Sustainability of Agriculture in the Centre Region
Wastewater and Beneficial Reuse Story Map
RGB and SSA Implementation Agreement

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