

### 403.17 Definitions.

The following terms wherever used or referred to in [this chapter](#), shall have the following meanings, unless a different meaning is clearly indicated by the context:

1. “*Affected taxing entity*” means a city, county, or school district which levied or certified for levy a property tax on any portion of the taxable property located within the urban renewal area in the fiscal year beginning prior to the calendar year in which a proposed urban renewal plan is submitted to the local governing body for approval.

2. “*Agency*” or “*urban renewal agency*” shall mean a public agency created by [section 403.15](#).

3. a. “*Agricultural land*” means real property owned by a person in tracts of ten acres or more and not laid off into lots of less than ten acres or divided by streets and alleys into parcels of less than ten acres, and that has been used for the production of agricultural commodities during three out of the past five years. Such use of property includes but is not limited to the raising, harvesting, handling, drying, or storage of crops used for feed, food, seed, or fiber; the care or feeding of livestock; the handling or transportation of crops or livestock; the storage, treatment, or disposal of livestock manure; and the application of fertilizers, beneficial substances, pesticides, and herbicides on crops.

b. “*Agricultural land*” includes land on which is located farm residences or outbuildings used for agricultural purposes and land on which is located facilities, structures, or equipment for agricultural purposes.

c. “*Agricultural land*” includes land taken out of agricultural production for purposes of environmental protection or preservation.

4. “*Area of operation*” of a city means the area within the corporate limits of the city and, with the consent of the county, the area within two miles of such limits, except that it does not include any area which lies within the territorial boundaries of another incorporated city, unless a resolution has been adopted by the governing body of the city declaring a need to be included in the area. The “*area of operation*” of a county means an area outside the corporate limits of a city. However, in that area outside a city’s boundary but within two miles of the city’s boundary, a joint agreement between the city and the county is required allowing the county to proceed with the activities authorized under [this chapter](#). In addition, a county may proceed with activities authorized under [this chapter](#) in an area inside the boundaries of a city, provided a joint agreement is entered into with respect to such activities between a city and a county.

5. “*Blighted area*” means an area of a municipality within which the local governing body of the municipality determines that the presence of a substantial number of slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures; defective or inadequate street layout; faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness; insanitary or unsafe conditions; deterioration of site or other improvements; diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land; defective or unusual conditions of title; or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or any combination of these factors; substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition and use. A disaster area referred to in [section 403.5, subsection 7](#), constitutes a “*blighted area*”. “*Blighted area*” does not include real property assessed as agricultural property for purposes of property taxation.

6. “*Board*” or “*commission*” shall mean a board, commission, department, division, office, body, or other unit of the municipality.

7. “*Bonds*” shall mean any bonds, including refunding bonds, notes, interim certificates, certificates of indebtedness, debentures, or other obligations.

8. “*Chairperson of the board*” means the chairperson of the board of supervisors or other legislative body charged with governing a county.

9. “*Clerk*” shall mean the clerk or other official of the municipality who is the custodian of the official records of such municipality.

10. “*Economic development area*” means an area of a municipality designated by the

local governing body as appropriate for commercial and industrial enterprises, public improvements related to housing and residential development, or construction of housing and residential development for low and moderate income families, including single or multifamily housing. If an urban renewal plan for an urban renewal area is based upon a finding that the area is an economic development area and that no part contains slum or blighted conditions, then the division of revenue provided in [section 403.19](#) and stated in the plan shall be limited to twenty years from the calendar year following the calendar year in which the municipality first certifies to the county auditor the amount of any loans, advances, indebtedness, or bonds which qualify for payment from the division of revenue provided in [section 403.19](#). Such designated area shall not include agricultural land, including land which is part of a century farm, unless the owner of the agricultural land or century farm agrees to include the agricultural land or century farm in the urban renewal area. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), “*century farm*” means a farm in which at least forty acres of such farm have been held in continuous ownership by the same family for one hundred years or more.

11. “*Federal government*” shall include the United States or any agency or instrumentality, corporate or otherwise, of the United States.

12. “*Housing and residential development*” means single or multifamily dwellings to be constructed in an area with respect to which the local governing body of the municipality determines that there is an inadequate supply of affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing and that providing such housing is important to meeting any or all of the following objectives: retaining existing industrial or commercial enterprises; attracting and encouraging the location of new industrial or commercial enterprises; meeting the needs of special elements of the population, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities; and providing housing for various income levels of the population which may not be adequately served.

13. “*Local governing body*” means the council, board of supervisors, or other legislative body charged with governing the municipality.

14. “*Low or moderate income families*” means those families, including single person households, earning no more than eighty percent of the higher of the median family income of the county or the statewide nonmetropolitan area as determined by the latest United States department of housing and urban development, section 8 income guidelines.

15. “*Mayor*” shall mean the mayor of a municipality, or other officer or body having the duties customarily imposed upon the executive head of a municipality.

16. “*Municipality*” means any city or county in the state.

17. “*Obligee*” shall include any bondholder, agents, or trustees for any bondholders, or any lessor demising to the municipality property used in connection with an urban renewal project, or any assignee or assignees of such lessor’s interest or any part thereof, and the federal government, when it is a party to any contract with the municipality.

18. “*Person*” shall mean any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint stock association; and shall include any trustee, receiver, assignee, or other person acting in a similar representative capacity for an individual or such entities.

19. “*Public body*” shall mean the state or any political subdivision thereof.

20. “*Public officer*” shall mean any officer who is in charge of any department or branch of the government of the municipality relating to health, fire, building regulations, or to other activities concerning dwellings in the municipality.

21. “*Real property*” shall include all lands, including improvements and fixtures thereon, and property of any nature appurtenant thereto, or used in connection therewith, and every estate, interest, right and use, legal or equitable, therein, including terms for years and liens by way of judgment, mortgage or otherwise.

22. “*Slum area*” shall mean an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which: by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence; by reason of inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces; by reason of high density of population and overcrowding; by reason of the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or which by any combination of such factors, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, or crime, and which is detrimental to the

public health, safety, morals, or welfare. “*Slum area*” does not include real property assessed as agricultural property for purposes of property taxation.

23. “*Urban renewal area*” means a slum area, blighted area, economic development area, or combination of the areas, which the local governing body designates as appropriate for an urban renewal project.

24. “*Urban renewal plan*” means a plan for the development, redevelopment, improvement, or rehabilitation of a designated urban renewal area, as it exists from time to time. The plan shall meet the following requirements:

a. Conform to the general plan for the municipality as a whole except as provided in [section 403.5, subsection 7](#).

b. Be sufficiently complete to indicate the real property located in the urban renewal area to be acquired for the proposed development, redevelopment, improvement, or rehabilitation, and to indicate any zoning district changes, existing and future land uses, and the local objectives respecting development, redevelopment, improvement, or rehabilitation related to the future land uses plan, and need for improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements within the urban renewal area.

c. If the plan includes a provision for the division of taxes as provided in [section 403.19](#), the plan shall also include a list of the current general obligation debt of the municipality, the current constitutional debt limit of the municipality, and the proposed amount of indebtedness to be incurred, including loans, advances, indebtedness, or bonds which qualify for payment from the special fund referred to in [section 403.19, subsection 2](#).

25. “*Urban renewal project*” may include undertakings and activities of a municipality in an urban renewal area for the elimination and for the prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight, may include the designation and development of an economic development area in an urban renewal area, and may involve slum clearance and redevelopment in an urban renewal area, or rehabilitation or conservation in an urban renewal area, or any combination or part thereof in accordance with an urban renewal program. The undertakings and activities may include:

a. Acquisition of a slum area, blighted area, economic development area, or portion of the areas;

b. Demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;

c. Installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out in the urban renewal area the urban renewal objectives of [this chapter](#) in accordance with the urban renewal plan;

d. Disposition of any property acquired in the urban renewal area, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality itself, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban renewal plan;

e. Carrying out plans for a program of voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings or other improvements in accordance with the urban renewal plan;

f. Acquisition of any other real property in the urban renewal area, where necessary to eliminate unhealthful, insanitary, or unsafe conditions, or to lessen density, eliminate obsolete or other uses detrimental to the public welfare, or otherwise to remove or prevent the spread of blight or deterioration, or to provide land for needed public facilities;

g. Sale and conveyance of real property in furtherance of an urban renewal project;

h. Expenditure of proceeds of bonds issued before October 7, 1986, for the construction of parking facilities on city blocks adjacent to an urban renewal area.

[C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §403.17]

[85 Acts, ch 66, §5 – 9](#); [86 Acts, ch 1237, §23](#); [87 Acts, ch 104, §5](#); [89 Acts, ch 299, §4](#); [91 Acts, ch 186, §2 – 4](#); [91 Acts, ch 214, §2, 3](#); [94 Acts, ch 1182, §8, 9](#); [96 Acts, ch 1050, §1](#); [96 Acts, ch 1129, §113](#); [96 Acts, ch 1204, §21](#); [99 Acts, ch 171, §37, 38, 41, 42](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1119, §161](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1124, §15](#); [2025 Acts, ch 134, §23](#)

Referred to in [§15A.1, 368.26, 403A.22, 404.1, 423B.10, 437A.15](#)

Subsection 1 and 1994 amendments to subsections 4, 5, 10, 14, 22, and 24 apply to plans approved on or after January 1, 1995, except that the century farm amendment to subsection 10 applies to plans approved on or after July 1, 1994; [94 Acts, ch 1182, §15](#)

Subsection 3 and 1999 amendments to subsection 10 apply to state highway construction projects approved for commencement by the transportation commission on or after July 1, 1999, and to all other condemnation proceedings in which the application for condemnation is filed on or after July 1, 1999; see [99 Acts, ch 171, §42](#)

1999 amendment to subsection 10 applies to urban renewal areas established on or after July 1, 1999, and to agricultural land included in an urban renewal area established before July 1, 1999, if the land is so included by amendment to the urban renewal plan adopted on or after that date; see [99 Acts, ch 171, §41](#)  
Subsection 3 amended