

Frederick County's Water Resources Element

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Across Maryland, jurisdictions that exercise planning and zoning authority are preparing to include a new element in their comprehensive plans – the Water Resources Element (WRE). The WRE is a new requirement passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006 as part of House Bill 1141 (HB 1141). HB 1141 was in part a response to water shortages and building moratoriums resulting from recent record droughts, groundwater contamination from inadequate land use planning, the effects of land development on Chesapeake Bay health, and related public and environmental health and welfare issues.

With an additional 1.1 million people expected to in-migrate to Maryland over the next 25 years, the WRE provides an opportunity to be proactive rather than reactive in our water resources and land use planning. The purpose of the WRE is to link a jurisdiction's future land use plan with its water resources. The WRE is intended to serve as an early warning system to determine whether drinking water, wastewater treatment and disposal, and stormwater management will be available and adequate to support planned growth in a jurisdiction.

The WRE must be adopted in the comprehensive plan by October 1, 2009. The Division of Planning is coordinating Frederick County's effort. The Divisions of Utilities and Solid Waste Management (DUSWM), Public Works (DPW), Permitting and Development Review (DPDR), Environmental Health (DEH) and the Office of Economic Development (OED) are each involved in the project. The County is working closely with the 12 Frederick County municipalities and with adjacent counties. A substantial amount of data will be shared among jurisdictions with the goal of producing a comprehensive WRE that captures Frederick County's diverse water resources challenges, issues, and solutions.

To learn more about the WRE, go to the Maryland Department of Planning's web site at <http://www.mdp.state.md.us>. Download Models and Guidelines #26, which present the WRE requirements, from their publications page. For questions specific to Frederick County's WRE, contact Hilari Varnadore, Principal Planner with the Division of Planning at 301.600.2941 or hvarnadore@fredco-md.net.

Now you can view archived County work sessions and public hearings online! Go to <http://www.co.frederick.md.us> and click on Videos. For the WRE, try the **July 31, 2007 BOCC Worksession** for an overview or the **September 7, 2007 BOCC and Municipalities Meeting** to understand how the WRE will be coordinated with the 12 municipalities.