

WATER PLANNING GUIDANCE

prepared for the

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

by the

Environmental Protection Division

of the

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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Water Planning Guidance

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act (SB 130) provides that three plans (watershed management, wastewater, and water supply/water conservation) be prepared. The statute includes specific requirements for each plan, and provides for EPD to develop standards for each of them.

The District proposes to revise the existing water resource management plans into one integrated plan.

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (District) last adopted the three plans in 2009 and those plans contain sound planning elements that provide an ideal foundation upon which to build. The 2016 integrated plan update (integrated plan) should utilize as much of the existing 2009 plan material that is still relevant and build upon or modify sections that need improvement or updating and address any new requirements since the last update.

This document outlines the planning standards adopted by EPD to guide elements of the integrated plan that address local and regional policies for watershed management, wastewater, and water supply and water conservation. Additional guidance on other elements of the District's 2016 integrated plan update will be forthcoming.

This guidance supersedes the Water Planning Standards prepared for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, dated December 18, 2001.

General Guidance

1. The integrated plan shall, at a minimum, be consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and rules.
2. The integrated plan shall follow guidance developed under the Georgia Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan, as consistent with O.C.G.A. §12-5-570 et seq.
3. The integrated plan shall be implementable. Specific activities identified in the integrated plan should be cost effective as they relate to identifiable measurable goals. These activities should be practical in design for the application and the desired results. These activities should be site specific and effective in the watershed in which they occur. Testing of any selected BMP projects should be included in the implementation schedule.

4. The integrated plan shall evaluate and consider provisions and recommendations of the 2011 Regional Water Plans and draft 2016 revisions to the 2011 plans that address water resources shared with the District. The integrated plan shall also consider the most recent surface water and groundwater availability assessments and surface water quality assessments prepared by EPD to support regional water planning.
5. The integrated plan shall include measures to minimize, where feasible, net losses from interbasin transfers from each of the six river basins that lie within the District area.

Watershed Management Section of the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-12 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-582.
2. The integrated plan shall incorporate selected provisions from “Land Development Provisions to Protect Georgia Water Quality,” October 1997.
3. The integrated plan shall address the local governments’ need for a watershed strategy that addresses the overall health of the watershed pre- and post-development. It will link ordinances, zoning, impervious surface limits, stormwater management, green space, floodplain protection, and demonstrate how these actions will protect the overall health of the watershed.
4. The integrated plan shall identify local and regional opportunities to implement better site design, green infrastructure and low impact development practices.
5. The integrated plan shall be consistent with the Nine Key Elements for Watershed-Based Plans identified by EPA as critical to achieving improvements in water quality where appropriate.
6. The integrated plan shall identify impaired streams, rivers, and lakes within the District and outline strategies to achieve and maintain water quality standards for those waters as well as strategies to preserve and maintain unimpaired surface waters within the District.
7. The integrated plan shall include stormwater management activities to support stream baseflow in the Upper Flint River basin.

8. The integrated plan shall be consistent with the Georgia Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan where feasible.

Wastewater Management Section of the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-9 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-583.
2. Given the current and expected future demands on the water resources within the Metro District, and limitations on assimilative capacity in parts of the District, the integrated plan shall recognize the need for advanced treatment technologies in areas where current limits may not be sufficient to protect water quality standards.
3. The integrated plan shall ensure that the design of new and expanded wastewater treatment facilities consider the potential for future requirements for removal of ammonia, total nitrogen and phosphorus.
4. Returning highly treated wastewater to Lake Allatoona and its watershed, Lake Lanier and its watershed, and the Upper Flint basin shall be encouraged, where feasible, in order to support the long-term sustainability of water use from these basins.
5. The plan shall consider the relationship between septic system use, stream baseflow, and pollutant loading in areas where regional water planning, including EPD's surface water availability assessments, or other studies indicate that more immediate return flows are critical to water supply reliability or protecting water quality standards.

Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Section of the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-9 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-584.
2. The integrated plan shall not prevent the appropriate and reasonable downstream and instream water needs from being met.
3. The integrated plan shall promote policies and encourage activities that support interjurisdictional water connections for efficiency and reliability.
4. The integrated plan shall direct implementation of, at a minimum, water conservation practices consistent with the approach and intended outcomes of the 2009 Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, as amended, as well as current DNR

rules and regulations for outdoor water use (Rule 391-3-30) and anticipated rules for water use efficiency and drought management should they be adopted.

5. The integrated plan shall evaluate enhanced water conservation and/or drought management measures and propose those measures that could be implemented in basins where water supply reliability and low flow impacts are a significant concern (e.g., Chattahoochee and Flint basins).
6. The plan shall consider the relative value of potable and non-potable water reuse within the District's overall water supply (i.e., value from water resource and pricing perspectives).
7. The plan shall identify opportunities for non-potable water reuse that are compatible with the goals of offsetting potable water demand and not increasing net consumptive use.

8. Groundwater shall be considered as a supplemental source of water supply.

These standards were issued by the Environmental Protection Division on Feb 11, 2015.