

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 (O.C.G.A. §12-5-572) 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 Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (District) adopted an integrated plan in 2017. The integrated plan successfully combined the three separate plans into one plan and the District intends to continue with an integrated plan in 2022. The 2022 integrated plan update (integrated plan) should utilize as much of the existing 2017 plan material that is still relevant, 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.

This guidance supersedes the Water Planning Guidance prepared for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, dated February 11, 2015.

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 2017 Regional Water Plans and draft revisions to the 2017 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 District shall include coordination steps during the District's plan update process with applicable Regional Water Planning Councils regarding shared water resources. The District may confer with EPD and the Council planning contractors to ensure effective and timely communications and coordination steps. The coordination steps should also focus on jurisdictions along the borders of the District who rely on shared water resources.
6. The District should coordinate with EPD regarding forecasting efforts and the use of EPD's resource assessments in the District's planning process.
7. 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.
8. The integrated plan shall provide greater detail regarding interbasin transfers.
9. Water supply projects and wastewater projects shall be adopted into the integrated plan in Appendix B with a reasonable amount of specificity before EPD actively commences review of the related permit applications.
10. The integrated plan shall encourage the consolidation of small private water supply and wastewater systems with adjacent public systems, particularly in situations where there would likely be improved environmental and/or health protections.
11. In preparing the integrated plan, the District should take into account the limited financial resources and staff of small local governments in evaluating action items and their applicability.

Watershed Management Items in the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-12 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-582(b).
2. 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.

3. The integrated plan shall identify local and regional opportunities to implement better site design, green infrastructure and low impact development practices.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The integrated plan shall include stormwater management activities to support stream baseflow in the Upper Flint River basin.
7. The integrated plan should outline strategies for reducing nonpoint sources of nutrients. The strategies should include the Lake Lanier basin and Allatoona Lake basin. The strategies may include nutrient trading.
8. The integrated plan shall be consistent with the Georgia Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan where feasible.

Wastewater Items in the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-9 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-583(b).
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 biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), ammonia, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and any other parameters with revised or new water quality criteria.

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 integrated 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.
6. The integrated plan shall consider the disposal of septage in a holistic manner. Rate structures should incentivize proper disposal of septage.

Water Supply Planning and Water Conservation Items in the Integrated Plan

1. The integrated plan shall include items 1-9 of O.C.G.A. 12-5-584(a).
2. The integrated plan shall not prevent the appropriate and reasonable downstream 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 DNR rules and regulations for water use efficiency and drought management.
5. The integrated plan should build upon the foundation that the District has laid regarding its Water Waste Policy by considering additional enhancements to the policy and by including measures to ensure that members are effectively implementing the policy.
6. 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).

7. The integrated 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).
8. The integrated 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.
9. Groundwater shall be considered as a supplemental source of water supply.