

**Maryland Department of the Environment
Stormwater Management Regulations
Guidance for Implementation of Local Stormwater Management Programs
March 2010**

Introduction

The Stormwater Management Act of 2007 requires that environmental site design (ESD), previously optional under regulations issued in 2000, now be used to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) to control runoff. Implementation of Maryland's stormwater requirements occurs at the State and local level. The State establishes technical requirements and provides a Model Ordinance, and county governments are required to adopt an ordinance that meets these regulatory requirements. A municipality may either adopt its own local ordinance or rely on the county program. In each case, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) must review and approve the local stormwater management ordinances.

The new State regulations implementing the Stormwater Management Act of 2007 became effective on May 4, 2009. They appear in the Code of Maryland Regulations at 26.17.02. These regulations state that, unless final approval for erosion and sediment control and stormwater management plans for a project (Final Approval) was granted by May 4, 2010, the project will be required to comply with the new regulatory requirements.

Drafts of local ordinances from counties and those municipalities electing to implement the program were due to MDE for review by November 11, 2009 and must be adopted by May 4, 2010. To date, all counties and 31 municipalities have submitted proposed code changes for MDE review. The Department provided comments on 54 proposed local stormwater management ordinances and approved 22 as of March 5, 2010.

It became apparent that local jurisdictions and the development community perceived that the regulations and provisions of the Model Ordinance were not sufficient to assure fair application of the new regulatory requirements in some circumstances. The Department, after discussions with stakeholders, determined to amend the regulations and provide additional guidance to address concerns in three general categories:

- Grandfathering - the impact of the new requirements on projects that have advanced partially through the development approval process, but that will not receive Final Approval by May 4, 2010.
- Redevelopment - the impact of the new requirements on redevelopment projects and the feasibility of using ESD for redevelopment projects.
- Smart Growth - a perception that the stormwater regulations will have an adverse impact on Smart Growth, whether new development or redevelopment.

This guidance addresses a new regulation, illustrates how certain projects could qualify for waivers, and provides criteria applicable to other aspects of the regulations. It will help guide local governments as they adopt or amend their ordinances and exercise the flexibility inherent in

the State regulations. The examples listed in this guidance are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to limit the flexibility available to local governments.

With the issuance of this guidance, MDE will submit a proposed emergency regulation to the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review. The emergency regulation will allow a local jurisdiction to incorporate into its ordinance, waiver provisions to address grandfathering of projects under certain conditions or when circumstances prevent the reasonable implementation of ESD to the MEP.

These proposed changes will not affect the requirement for local jurisdictions to adopt modified ordinances by May 4, 2010. The Department acknowledges that some local jurisdictions may wish to incorporate into their local ordinances provisions that reflect the emergency regulations and this guidance. The Department will develop Model Ordinance language and work with local jurisdictions to accommodate these new grandfathering and waiver provisions.

The Department will exercise discretion during its review of local stormwater programs who are making a good faith effort to reach the May 4, 2010 deadline.

Grandfathering Provisions

The emergency regulation will allow a local jurisdiction to incorporate into its ordinance a waiver provision for projects that had completed part of the development review process but had not received Final Approval by May 4, 2010.

Upon the effective date of the emergency regulations and incorporation of consistent provisions into local ordinances, local jurisdictions will be able to issue a waiver that will “grandfather” certain projects. Eligible projects will be those that have cleared an appropriate stage in the development process before May 4, 2010, even though they will not have received Final Approval by that date. Because local jurisdictions have different development review procedures and use various terms for the steps in their processes, the State regulations will identify the appropriate stage of the development process by defining the terms “Approval”, “Preliminary Project Approval”, “Final Project Approval” and “Administrative Waiver”.

“Approval” means a documented action by a local jurisdiction following local review to determine and acknowledge the sufficiency of submitted materials to meet the requirements of a specified stage in a development process. “Approval” does not mean an acknowledgement by the jurisdiction that submitted materials have been received for review.

“Preliminary Project Approval” means a plan approval or completed review by a local jurisdiction that includes the following as part of the a local jurisdiction’s preliminary planning approval process at a minimum: 1) the number of planned dwelling units or lots and proposed density; 2) the proposed size and location of all land uses in the project; 3) a plan that identifies the proposed drainage patterns, locations of all points of discharge from the site, and the type, location and size of all stormwater management controls based upon site-specific computations of stormwater management requirements.

Additionally, a “Preliminary Project Approval” may include the following items if currently required as part of a local jurisdiction’s preliminary planning approval process: 4) the proposed alignment, location and construction type and standard for all proposed roads, access ways and areas of vehicular travel; 5) the proposed method and adequacy of wastewater disposal and provisions of potable water; 6) the general location size and type of all infrastructure proposed for water and wastewater systems; and 7) any other information deemed necessary by the local jurisdiction to adequately review the proposal.

“Final Project Approval” means that the appropriate local authority has approved the final erosion and sediment control plan for the project’s stormwater facilities ,and approved the final stormwater management plan, and, if applicable, bonding and/or financing has been secured based on the final plans for the development.

“Administrative Waiver” means a waiver that allows the construction of the development to be governed by the stormwater management ordinance in effect in the local jurisdiction where the project will be located as of May 4, 2009. The Administrative Waiver is to remain in effect for the time described below. Any construction after expiration of the Administrative Waiver must follow the local ordinance in force at the time of expiration. Phased projects which have been granted an administrative waiver, and have constructed stormwater facilities designed to meet local requirements in place as of May 4, 2009, shall use reasonable efforts to incorporate ESD.

A project that received Preliminary Project Approval before May 4, 2010 will be eligible for an "Administrative Waiver." If the local jurisdiction grants the Administrative Waiver, the project will not be required to meet the new regulations; instead, construction of the project will be governed by the stormwater ordinance in effect as of May 4, 2009, in the jurisdiction where the project will be located. This local ordinance will include the design criteria established in the 2000 Design Manual prior to May 2009. The regulation will also address the expiration of the Administrative Waiver if the project does not obtain Final Approval by May 4, 2013, or begin construction before May 4, 2017. Lastly, a local jurisdiction may extend the deadline for Final Project Approval for the expiration of the Administrative Waiver only if by May 4, 2010, the development had received a “Preliminary Project Approval” and was subject to a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement, a Tax Increment Financing approval or an Annexation Agreement. Any extension granted under this paragraph shall expire when the Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement, the Tax Increment Financing approval or Annexation Agreement expires.

The following examples illustrate circumstances where an Administrative Waiver may be appropriate:

Example 1:

A proposed development project received Preliminary Plan Approval before May 4, 2010, but will not receive Final Approval by that date. The local jurisdiction may grant an Administrative Waiver, but the final approved project plans must meet the 2000 stormwater regulatory requirements, and the waiver will be subject to expiration as stated in the State regulations.

Example 2:

In 2008, a local government gave a project Preliminary Plan Approval and executed a DRRA with a term of ten years (expiring in 2018). The project will not be able to obtain Final Approval by May 4, 2010, and the local jurisdiction decides to grant an Administrative Waiver. The project experiences further delay due to the economic downturn and will not be able to obtain Final Approval by May 4, 2013. As that date approaches, because the project is subject to a DRRA, the local approving authority could extend the deadline. If it does, the local approving authority could, in 2014 or later, approve final erosion and sediment control plan and stormwater management plans that meets the 2000 regulatory requirements and allow the project to move forward without requiring a redesign to meet 2009 requirements.

Example 3:

A project is granted an Administrative Waiver, but does not receive Final Approval by May 4, 2013. In the absence of special circumstances such as a DRRA, the local jurisdiction cannot extend the Administrative Waiver and the project must meet the stormwater requirements of the local jurisdiction that are in effect as of May 4, 2013.

Example 4:

A proposed development project received Final Approval prior to May 4, 2010, but the project experiences delay due to the economic downturn and will not be able to proceed to construction. When the approved erosion and sediment control plan expires, the local authority could issue a waiver of the 2009 requirements and approve a new stormwater management plan provided the project meets, at a minimum, the stormwater regulatory requirements that were in effect at the time of Final Approval. In the absence of special circumstances such as a DRRA, the waiver cannot extend beyond May 4, 2017.

Other Waiver Provisions

The regulations that became effective on May 4, 2009, authorized a local government to include in its ordinances provisions for waivers of the quantitative and qualitative control requirements if it determined that circumstances exist that prevent the reasonable implementation of those control practices. For example, although projects with less than 40% existing imperviousness would normally require full implementation of ESD to the MEP, the regulations acknowledge that circumstances might exist that prevent the reasonable implementation of these requirements.

For these projects, provided that the project meets the applicable local stormwater requirements as of May 4, 2009, the local jurisdiction may grant a waiver of the 2009 stormwater requirements under the following conditions: 1) phased projects that have already constructed stormwater management facilities that are designed to meet 2000 regulatory requirements, and implementation of ESD to the MEP cannot be met, as long as reasonable efforts to incorporate ESD have been demonstrated; and, 2) infill development projects that are located in Priority Funding Areas with existing stormwater conveyance, and public water and sewer, and where the economic feasibility of the project is tied to the planned density.

If implementation of the 2009 regulatory requirements would result in a loss of the planned development density, a quantitative waiver may be applied to the project for the impervious cover that previously existed on the project site. ESD to the MEP shall be provided to meet the full water quality treatment requirements for the entire development. ESD to the MEP shall be utilized to provide full quantity control for all new impervious surfaces.

The Department will review each jurisdiction's waiver policies in the course of its regular triennial evaluations of the local stormwater programs. In order to assess the initial implementation of the 2009 regulatory requirements, the Department intends to monitor local government's review and approval processes, including the issuance of waivers. Therefore, local approving authorities shall provide to MDE a copy of all approved waivers within 30 days of the approval.

The following examples illustrate circumstances where a waiver may be appropriate.

Example 5:

A developer planned a phased project for a site. Before May 4, 2010, stormwater management facilities designed to meet 2000 regulatory requirements for multiple phases were approved and constructed. If the developer demonstrates that reasonable efforts to incorporate ESD in future phases have been made, and the project meets local stormwater requirements that were in effect as of May 4, 2009, the local jurisdiction may grant a waiver of the 2009 stormwater requirements for the future phases.

Example 6:

An infill development project is planned on a site with existing impervious surface, although less than 40%. It is in a Priority Funding Area (PFA) with existing stormwater conveyance and public water and sewer. The economic feasibility of the project is tied to the planned density. If implementation of the 2009 regulatory requirements would result in a loss of the planned development density, a quantitative waiver may be applied to the project for the impervious cover that previously existed on the project site. ESD to the MEP shall be provided to meet the full water-quality treatment requirements for the entire development. ESD to the MEP shall be utilized to provide full quantity control for all new impervious surfaces.

Redevelopment

The regulations for redevelopment are applicable only to projects that meet the definition of "redevelopment." Sites that do not meet the definition are considered "development." State regulations define redevelopment as *"any construction, alteration, or improvement performed on sites where existing land use is commercial, industrial, institutional, or multifamily residential and the existing site impervious area exceeds 40 percent."* MDE adopted this definition only after considering comments and suggestions from the regulators, engineers, homebuilders, and environmental organizations that comprised MDE's redevelopment committee. While the recommendations from this group varied widely, there were areas of consensus. For example, the committee agreed that the regulations should require more management on less densely developed sites, encourage redevelopment by imposing reduced requirements, and allow greater flexibility compared to new development requirements.

There is precedent for requiring greater management for redevelopment on less densely developed sites in other state and national programs. For example, the policy in the western portion of Washington State defines redevelopment as sites with greater than 35% impervious area. The United States Green Building Council provides different standards for stormwater management on previously developed sites with greater than 50% impervious area in order to meet LEED™ certification standards.

For all redevelopment projects, the primary goal is to achieve water quality improvements on existing developed lands. To accomplish this, the stormwater regulations require reducing imperviousness, implementing ESD to the MEP to provide water quality treatment for one-inch of rainfall, or using some combination of these for at least 50% of the existing impervious area. This standard is significantly less stringent than the requirements for new development, which require the use of ESD to the MEP to treat up to 2.7 inches of rainfall.

The Department recognizes that designers, developers, engineers and reviewers need significant flexibility as they consider stormwater management in a redevelopment context. For this reason, both the Model Ordinance and the regulations describe several alternative stormwater management measures that may be considered if addressing 50% of the site's impervious area cannot be accomplished. These include a combination of ESD and on-site or off-site structural Best Management Practices (BMPs), or any of the following options:

- Other types of retrofitting (BMP upgrades, filtering practices, implementing ESD off-site)
- Participation in a stream restoration project
- Pollution trading with another entity
- Watershed Management Plans
- Payment of a fee-in-lieu
- Partial Waiver of the treatment requirement to the extent that ESD is not practicable.

The determination of what alternative stormwater management measures will be available may be made by the local government at the appropriate point in the development review process. The local government shall consider the prioritization of alternative measures outlined above, after ESD to the MEP has been determined to be impracticable. In deciding what alternatives measures may be required, a local government may use considerations including, but not limited to the following:

1. whether the project is in an area targeted for development incentives, such as a PFA, a designated Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area, or a designated BRAC Revitalization and Incentive Zone;
2. whether the project is necessary to accommodate growth consistent with comprehensive plans; and
3. whether bonding and/or financing has already been secured based on an approved development plan.

These options provide developers significant flexibility with which to address the State's new stormwater requirements. Local governments exercised this same flexibility in implementing the 2000 regulatory requirements.

The following examples illustrate the application of these principles to redevelopment projects.

Example 7:

A redevelopment project in a highly urbanized area plans to match or increase existing density. Opportunities to reduce imperviousness are limited or non-existent and site constraints limit the ability to use ESD practices. Upon a determination by the local authority that it is not practicable to achieve the 50% treatment level, the remaining volume requirement could be addressed with on-site or off-site BMPs, such as underground storage, a pond, or some other traditional practice.

Example 8:

Site constraints on a redevelopment site limit options for ESD, and reductions to imperviousness are not practicable. Reconstruction of a nearby school site offers opportunities for mitigation of stormwater. A local reviewer could allow the developer to perform or fund the installation or upgrade of BMPs at the school to satisfy the regulatory requirements.

Example 9:

A redevelopment site cannot practicably meet ESD requirements and there are no reasonable opportunities for installing on-site or off-site BMPs. The local jurisdiction has a stream restoration project planned but unfunded. The restoration project could be completed or funded by the developer to compensate for the redevelopment project.

Example 10:

Site constraints on a redevelopment project limit options for ESD and reductions to imperviousness are not practicable. The developer may propose to use an innovative approach to stormwater management such as storage and potential reuse of stormwater. In this case, the local reviewer could allow the developer to use alternative approach as long as the practice was consistent with local codes, and opportunities to either reduce imperviousness or practicably implement ESD to the MEP had been exhausted.

Example 11:

A local jurisdiction has identified a developed area where zoning allows more dense development and where it wants to encourage redevelopment. The local jurisdiction has the option of developing a Watershed Management Plan, using the guidelines described in State regulations, and implementing a watershed-based approach to stormwater management. This approach would allow implementation of less stringent stormwater management within the redevelopment area provided that the local jurisdiction targeted restoration activities to other parts of the watershed management area to compensate for the less stringent controls in the targeted area.

Example 12:

A local jurisdiction is heavily urbanized and has encountered many development scenarios where stormwater requirements cannot practicably be met. The local jurisdiction has developed a fee-in-lieu program to streamline the process of identifying off-site mitigation opportunities. Developers who cannot practicably meet requirements using on-site or off-site practices could pay a fee set by the locality based on criteria outlined in the ordinance. Many jurisdictions currently use a fee-in-lieu option to fund a wide range of stormwater projects.

Example 13:

A project is proposed for a reclaimed mine site with an impervious cap to prevent the infiltration of water into the fill material. In this case, the local approving authority may allow alternative management options to meet the unique constraints of the site.

Example 14:

A proposed redevelopment project in a TOD has been designed to achieve the overall density necessary to support transit and mixed uses. Because of the important public benefit and the public investment in the transportation infrastructure, a local jurisdiction could grant a waiver of the 2009 regulatory requirements if meeting the requirements adversely affects the larger goal of the TOD, and approve the project under the 2000 regulatory requirements.

Example 15:

A local government has approved a development plan for a redevelopment project that is located within a designated growth area. Financing for a portion of the project has been secured based on an approved build-out plan yielding a certain density and rate of return. A redesign of the project to meet the new requirements for stormwater management would adversely affect the project's economic viability, resulting in a loss of financing or bonding for the project. In this case, the local approving authority could grant a partial waiver from the new requirements and approve the project under the 2000 regulatory requirements, after ESD to the MEP has been determined to be impracticable.

Example 16:

A local government has approved a redevelopment plan for a project that is located within a designated growth area. The local jurisdiction took a loan or issued bonds to finance infrastructure to serve the project; the financing has been premised on an approved build-out plan yielding a certain density. A redesign of the project to meet the new requirements for stormwater management would result in reduced density or affect the project's economic viability. In this case, the local approving authority could grant a partial waiver from the new requirements and approve the project under the 2000 regulatory requirements, after ESD to the MEP has been determined to be impracticable.

Smart Growth and Stormwater Management

MDE regulations and programs support the principles of Smart Growth, which are critical to achieving federal and State air pollution and water quality standards. Since 1997, the

Department has specifically considered whether every new regulation or program supports Smart Growth. In the case of the stormwater regulations, the standard for redevelopment projects is significantly less stringent than the standard for new development. In addition, the definition of redevelopment was carefully analyzed to establish a definition that reasonably enables ESD to be implemented. To the extent ESD cannot be implemented, due to site constraints, the regulations provide the necessary flexibility to allow a project to reasonably proceed. The guidance recognizes that the local jurisdiction can take into account whether the project is in an area targeted for development incentives, such as a PFA, a TOD, or a designated BRAC Revitalization and Incentive Zone.

Smart Growth projects that are already in the development pipeline can proceed to completion under the new regulations by taking advantage of the available flexibility and waivers. Future Smart Growth projects may comply with the new regulations either by incorporating ESD from the initial concept stage or by using the flexibility described above.

In order to assure that the stormwater regulations do not disproportionately affect Smart Growth, MDE will develop a system for tracking future developments and, if necessary, consider adjustments to the regulations. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to notify MDE if they encounter instances where the new requirements prevent or significantly discourage Smart Growth projects.

Other Provisions

At the request of the Critical Area Commission, a clarifying amendment will be made to the regulations by adding the following:

The provisions of these regulations may not be construed to affect the requirements for a project located in an Intensely Developed Area of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area to comply with the 10% Pollution Reduction Requirement under COMAR 27.01.02.03 D (3).