



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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Comments accepted through Feb. 7 on MWRD's watershed management ordinance

Changes are being proposed to a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) ordinance that works to abate the negative impacts of stormwater runoff as a result of new development or redevelopment. Public comments on the proposed amendments to the MWRD's Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO) are being accepted through Feb. 7.

The WMO regulates sewer construction within MWRD's service area and development within suburban Cook County. It provides uniform stormwater management regulations to prevent future commercial, municipal, and residential development and redevelopment projects from exacerbating flooding and protects environmentally sensitive areas.

The WMO first went into effect in May 2014, and was most recently amended in February 2018. The proposed changes in 2019 will incorporate clarifications, reorganization, and move guidance and explanatory language to the WMO's Technical Guidance Manual (TGM). In addition, the amendments include a new TGM appendix concerning the creation of a stormwater trading program that provides flexibility in meeting stormwater requirements. A stormwater trading program could potentially allow developers to meet stormwater retention requirements through the purchase of credits from others who retrofit their properties for stormwater. The MWRD, along with the Metropolitan Planning Council and The Nature Conservancy, have determined that ample supply and demand for a potential stormwater credit trading market exists across Cook County. The new Appendix H would provide guidance on how a potential market could meet the WMO stormwater requirements. Public comments can provide additional input and guidance, MWRD officials said.

"If communities grow without careful and thorough stormwater planning, sewer systems and local waterways can become overwhelmed, polluted, and may contribute to community wide flooding," said MWRD Commissioner Kim Du Buclet, chairman of the MWRD's Committee on Stormwater Management. "The WMO is in place to provide these safeguards and encourage responsible development. We encourage the public to comment and help us strengthen this important policy and create a satisfactory and innovative stormwater trading program that can make a difference in preventing flooding."

The WMO ensures stormwater drainage and detention is provided to curb impacts of new development, protects wetlands and riparian environments, and reduces soil erosion. Paved roads, parking lots, walkways and buildings make cities livable, but they also reduce the amount of land on which water can be absorbed. These improvements can fill and impact the floodplain.

The MWRD has held eight meetings to present the proposed WMO changes, including one final meeting to be held on January 31, 2019, 7 p.m. at Northlake City Hall, 55 E. North Ave., in Northlake.

To learn more about the WMO, visit wmo.mwrdd.org. To submit a comment on the proposed changes, please email WMOComments@mwrdd.org or send by mail to: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Local Sewer Systems Section, 111 E. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60611.

After compiling public comments, MWRD staff will propose final changes to the WMO before the MWRD Board of Commissioners in spring 2019 at a date to be determined.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.