



## Overview of the Georgetown County Stormwater Ordinance

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### Components of the Georgetown Co. Stormwater Program

**1. Stormwater Ordinance**

- Standards for new development/ redevelopment
- Outline permitting requirements
- Establishes authority

**2. Stormwater (Best Management Practices) Design Manual**

- Technical standards and specifications
- Easily amended to reflect changes in the state of the art

**3. Stormwater Utility (or other funding mechanism)**

- Independent study and recommendations
- Intended to support permitting and enforcement staff

### Ordinance Development Timeline

**June, 2005** – Gtwn. Co. Stormwater Advisory Committee formed (meets ~ 4 times July - September, 2005)

**November 29, 2005** – (after numerous delays), Ordinance presented to Planning Commission at workshop;  
*\*public comments taken*

**January 11, 2006** – Joint workshop for Planning Commission & County Council; decision to split into 2 workgroups  
*\*no public comments taken*

**January 18 to March 1** – Eastern County Workgroup (and writing subgroup) meet 5 times

**March 6, 2006** – East County Workgroup releases proposed changes to Ordinance

### Key Themes of Public Comment

- Provisions for public input during permit appeals process
- Total allowable impervious surface percentage
- Riparian buffer requirements
- Exemption for single family residential development

**So where are we now?**

**Things to keep in mind :**

1. All existing development is grandfathered, except:
  - a. existing lots without building permits
  - b. specific redevelopment/ annexation scenarios (defined in ordinance)
  
2. Nothing is set in stone! This proposed document has not yet gone before the Planning Commission or County Council – (both are opportunities for public input)

**Key Revisions Proposed by the East County Workgroup (1)**

- I. **Relevant to whole county:**
  - A. Land disturbance permit requirement (linked to tree ordinance)
  - B. Expanded definition of Critical Protection Area (entire Neck + all Planned Development Districts)
  - C. Updated/ expanded 'Definitions' section in Appendix

**Key Revisions Proposed by the East County Workgroup (2)**

- II. **Relevant to Critical Protection Area only:**
  - A. Limit of 20% **effective** imperviousness per site (all classes of development)
    1. Additional 10% permitted w/ use of prescribed Best Management Practices (BMPs)
    2. Rooftop area discounted from impervious total if runoff captured/ routed into infiltration BMP

**So what does that mean for my quarter-acre lot?**

- ¼ acre = 10,890 square ft.
- 20% of 10,000 = 2,000 sq. ft allowable imperviousness w/out BMPs
- Add 1 'Highly Preferred' BMP:  
Additional 10% (total 3,000 sq. ft allowable imperviousness)
- Capture/ manage rooftop runoff:  
Discount rooftop area from total on-site imperviousness (thus freeing up that much additional area for development)





**Key Revisions Proposed by the East County Workgroup (3)**

**II. Relevant to Critical Protection Area only:**

B. Riparian (along waterways) Buffer Requirement:

1. Between 25' -35' wide (depending on parcel size) on side adjacent to receiving water of the county
2. Limited disturbance in riparian buffer

**What's the difference between a buffer and a setback?**

Setbacks:

- located between buildings & roadways
- flexibly uses (swimming pools, decks, roof overhang)

Buffers:

- only along water ways
- Limited use

**Vegetated Riparian (shoreline) Buffers**

**Select Benefits:**

- Combat erosion/ stabilize shoreline
- Slow overland flow/ enhance infiltration
  - \* facilitates groundwater recharge
- Trap and retain sediment
- Take up excess nutrients
- Remove contaminants
- Provide shade and natural habitat



Photo: D. Hitchcock

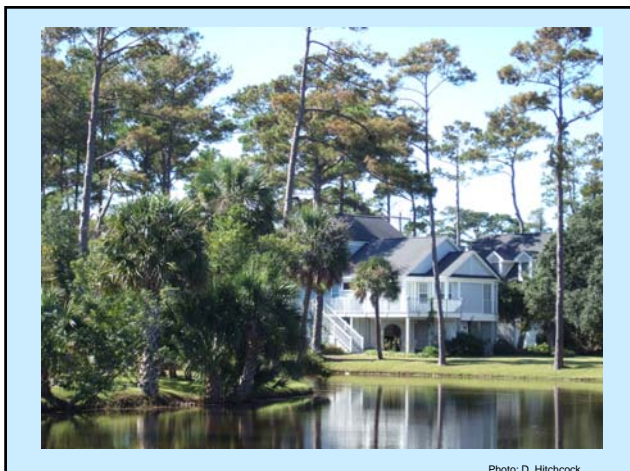


Photo: D. Hitchcock





**Key Revisions Proposed by the East County Workgroup (4)**

**II. Relevant to Critical Protection Area only:**

**C. Vegetated Open Space (VOS) Requirement:**

1. Intended to deter clear cutting (not bush hogging)
2. 5% of total sq. footage of all non-riparian properties
3. Very few restrictions - (minimum size, no manicured turf)  
\*VOS requirement can be combined in subdivisions (up to 5 lots)  
\*Certain activities encouraged (e.g. preservation of pre-development native vegetation)



### Other Components of Ordinance

- Tiered approach to permitting (a) multi-family residential, (b) multi-lot subdivisions, and (c) non-residential development:
  - less than or equal to 10 acres
  - between 10 and 40 acres
  - 40 acres or larger
- Clear thresholds for when redevelopment or annexation/ expansion would trigger new requirements, based on:
  1. added property value
  2. area of land disturbance
  3. additional imperviousness

### Next Steps – Opportunities for Public Involvement

1. Evaluate your personal/ professional decisions and behaviors. Are you doing your part as a resident of MI to protect water quality?
2. Call your elected/ appointed representatives about what you've heard here.
3. Ordinance back to Planning Commission \* – Date TBD  
*\* Opportunity for Public Comment*
4. Three Readings at County Council \* – Dates TBD  
*\* Opportunity for Public Comment*