

**Potential Code Improvements Under Consideration in the Watershed Protection Ordinance
in relation to Council Resolution No. 20110113-038**

Topic	Council Resolution Language	Potential Code Change (or ECM/DCM Changes as noted)
1. Creek Protection	"Improve stream buffer requirements, including critical headwater areas, to protect water quality and reduce erosion, flooding, and long-range costs for infrastructure maintenance."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Extend minor "headwater" stream buffers to 64 acres of drainage citywide. o Standardize Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) buffer drainage area thresholds & widths citywide (will evaluate use in western creeks but may retain existing widths): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 640 ac. DA; 300 ft (major). - 320 ac. DA; 200 ft (intermediate). - 64 ac. DA; 100 ft (minor). o Eliminate Water Quality Transition Zone buffers in Suburban watersheds (like Urban). o Use Gross Site Area basis for impervious cover in Suburban watersheds (discontinue Net Site Area basis). o Allow "buffer averaging" to reduce buffers by up to one-half if the overall area protected remains the same. o Allow "innovative" water quality controls in the upper half of CWQZ buffers (but out of 100-yr floodplain) in Urban & Suburban watersheds. o Reevaluate uses allowed/disallowed in CWQZ (e.g., golf courses, parks facilities, etc.). o Add erosion hazard safeguards (e.g., add depth component for utility crossings). o Modify redevelopment exception to consider minimum stream setback & disallow additional non-compliance o Make improvements to the Open Channels section of the Drainage Criteria Manual. o Buffer Elements that do not change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retain WQ Transition Zone buffers in Drinking Water Protection Zone - Barton Creek main channel buffer remains at 400 ft. - No buffers within Downtown area. - No change to buffers on Lady Bird Lake/Lake Austin.
2. Floodplain Protection	"Promote, encourage and/or require the preservation and restoration of floodplains and stream buffers as well as the beneficial re-purposing of mining quarries."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adjust definition of "natural & traditional character" to protect & enable the recovery of degraded waterways. o Restrict floodplain modifications in CWQZ. o Explore planning for wooded/naturally vegetated floodplains when designing for future conditions. o Make improvements to the Floodplain Modification guidelines in the Environmental Criteria Manual.
3. Development Patterns & Greenways	"Explore opportunities to encourage a development pattern that better protects public and private property, preserves floodplains, creeks and open spaces, and provides access and connectivity with greenways and trails."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Facilitate the creation and use of riparian greenways & trails. o Explore parkland dedication options to protect floodplain & riparian areas. o Consider options to incentivize improved stream buffers for redevelopment sites. o Improve PUD zoning elements for "superior" watershed protection. o Consider expanding BSZ Redevelopment Exception to Water Supply watersheds for water quality & community improvements. o Make improvements to transfers of development rights to allow for increased flexibility and protection of additional environmental resources.

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4. Improved Stormwater Controls	"Improve permanent stormwater controls to better moderate runoff and help reduce streambank erosion."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Require Water Quality (WQ) controls based on extent of impervious cover instead of percentage. o Evaluate new options to "stack" WQ & flood detention volumes (i.e., combine in a single pond). o Strengthen measures to regulate & inspect subsurface controls. o Tighten standards for use of wet ponds. o Remove code barriers to incentivize green infrastructure. o Use WQ controls to satisfy 2-year detention. o Review Water Quality (WQ) volume sizing requirements. o Review WQ control performance requirements. o Add option for volumetric detention to Drainage Criteria Manual. o Consider requirements or incentives for flood detention/conveyance for redevelopment in flood-prone areas. o Consider space-efficient WQ control options for Downtown. o Explore new non-degradation control options (e.g., infiltration rain gardens). o Reevaluate credits for porous pavement.
5. Mitigation Options	"Explore better ways to regulate the modification of floodplains, including options for off-site mitigation for developments in areas that are planned for higher density developments."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Consider use of payment-in-lieu option for water quality ponds on small sites in some/all Suburban watersheds. o Consider strengthened cut & fill and steep slope protections for areas outside of Comprehensive Plan centers & corridors.
6. Simplify Regulations & Maintain Development Opportunity	"Simplify development regulations where possible and minimize the impact of any changes on individual and collective abilities to develop land."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Evaluate simplification of Suburban watershed IC limits in City Limits (outside Edwards Aquifer recharge zone). o Consider higher IC limits for Comp Plan "centers" in ETJ of Suburban watersheds. o Eliminate the Boundary Street Deduction in Suburban watersheds. o Consider allowing public boat ramps along the Colorado River (currently requires variance). o Allow street crossings of minor CWQZ buffers every 900 feet in Suburban watersheds (to match maximum block length criteria). o Clarify that created or irrevocably altered roadside ditches do not create a CWQZ. o Numerous clarifications & corrections of existing code.
7. Coordinate with Regional Partners	"Work in coordination with Travis County and neighboring communities to develop the above changes."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coordinate regulations with new Travis County Water Quality Rules (currently under development).

Key to Terms:

BSZ = Barton Springs Zone
 Comp Plan = Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan
 CWQZ = Critical Water Quality Zone buffer
 DA = Contributing Drainage Area (acres)
 DCM = Drainage Criteria Manual
 DDZ = Desired Development Zone
 Dev't = Development
 DWPZ = Drinking Water Protection Zone

ECM = Environmental Criteria Manual
 ETJ = Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
 FP = Floodplain
 IC = Impervious Cover
 PUD = Planned Unit Development
 WQ = Water Quality
 WQTZ = Water Quality Transition Zone buffer
 WS = Water Supply (e.g., Water Supply Rural Watersheds)