



Legislation Text

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TITLE:

Stormwater Management: What Carrboro Does Currently.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board of Aldermen to receive information on the current responsibilities, requirements, and programs/services related to stormwater management in Town.

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Public Works

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INFORMATION: What is stormwater and what does it mean to manage it? Stormwater is the term used to describe the rainfall that is not able to infiltrate into the ground, evaporate, or be taken up by plants, and which, due to the quantity and velocity channelizes and flows more rapidly into receiving waters. The attraction to using land near waterbodies means that people have historically, routinely risked periodic flooding in exchange for the benefits of the 'waterfront.' Even in Carrboro's portion of the North Carolina Piedmont small intermittent and perennial streams offer attractive features. Prior to the establishment of regulations protecting the natural feature or the development, development has occurred in these locations. The resultant flooding can present significant problems to older development and to new development opportunities. Erosion adds soil and other pollutants and runoff from impervious surfaces contributes additional contaminants. Flooding and erosion change the characteristics of the receiving waters and degrades the habitat of plants and animals. Increases in the amount of land area that is impervious to water infiltration directly increases the amount of water that will flow to downstream tributaries, larger creeks, and lakes.

After decades of intervention and development to control and direct flooding, federal regulation to comprehensively manage floodplains began in 1967. Local governments were given the option of joining in the mid-1970s as a prerequisite to their constituents accessing the National Flood Insurance Program. Recognizing that urban development and associated stormwater runoff was the number one impairment to urban waterbodies inspired the United States Environmental Protection Agency to expand the Clean Water Act in 1987 and establish permitting requirements for local governments related to their discharge of stormwater runoff. Carrboro joined the second tier of municipalities subject to the requirements in 2000. More details of the Town's responsibilities under the Flood Insurance Program and the Clean Water Act and the range of programs and services the Town carries out in these areas are provided in the attached memo.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: None associated with the Board receiving this information.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Board receive this report and provide feedback regarding future stormwater management activities in Carrboro.