



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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DENVER, CO – The Colorado Water Conservation Board announced the availability of new guidance to Colorado water suppliers on implementing water conservation measures through land use planning. This guidance, approved by the CWCB on January 28, 2019, is intended to provide a suite of best practices for incorporating land use planning techniques into water resources operations that can be considered by municipal water utilities and water districts and adapted to their unique circumstances.

“This new guidance provides step-by-step instruction for water providers for collaboration with their land use authorities to configure new development in a way that reduces overall water demand,” said Rebecca Mitchell, Director of the CWCB. “Working together, Colorado water suppliers and planning departments can use a ‘smart-from-the-start’ approach that provides enhanced ability to absorb new growth, meet community priorities, and contribute to better resiliency of existing supplies without sacrificing quality or desirability.”

State legislation in Colorado requires an evaluation of best practices for implementing water conservation and efficiency through land use measures. In addition, Colorado’s Water Plan sets a measurable objective of having 75 percent of Coloradans living in communities that have incorporated water-saving actions into land use planning by 2025. The new guidance is intended to further both goals.

The guidance document is a joint project of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment at the University Of Colorado Law School and the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, a center of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, with involvement and support from the CWCB. The best practices were compiled through an extensive outreach effort that included interviews of Colorado water providers, an advisory committee of experts in the field, and a day-long workshop with interested and knowledgeable individuals.

“Many Colorado water providers have already improved their efficiency through use of inclining block rate structures, structured tap fees, and landscape guidelines,” said Anne Castle, of the Getches-Wilkinson Center and a co-author of the new guidance. “But with continued pressure

on water supplies, the greatest potential for additional future water savings lies with the initial land use approval, and that process should integrate both land planning and water resources tools and concerns.”

“Many resources for integrating land use and water planning are geared toward land use planners. In addition to meeting statutory requirements and goals of the Colorado Water Plan, this new guidance clarifies for water providers how land use techniques can reinforce their water efficiency activities,” said Erin Rugland, Babbitt Center Junior Research Fellow and co-author of the new guidance.

Work on the best practices guidance document was made possible through funding from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the CWCB. The co-authors of the study are Erin Rugland of the Babbitt Center and Anne Castle of the Getches-Wilkinson Center. The new guidance is available on the CWCB website. <http://cwcb.state.co.us/technical-resources/water-conservation-plan-development-guide/Pages/main.aspx>

The mission of the CWCB is to conserve, develop, protect and manage Colorado’s water for present and future generations. The Babbitt Center seeks to advance water sustainability through improved integration of land use and water planning, management, and decision making. The Getches-Wilkinson Center incorporates creative, interdisciplinary research and innovative problem solving to further sustainability for lands, waters, and environment. For more information on the integration of land and water planning, see [Colorado’s Water Plan implementation discussion](#).

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