



Chesapeake Bay Information

The Chesapeake Bay ordinance was adopted by the City of Fairfax to protect the city's streams and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay from nonpoint source pollution that is generated from urban development. As land is developed, water can no longer infiltrate into the ground where the soil can filter out pollutants and sediments that degrade water quality. The ordinance which has been approved by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is written to meet the requirements set forth in the Code of Virginia.

The intent of the Chesapeake Bay ordinance is to establish criteria for approving, denying or modifying requests to rezone, subdivide, use, develop and /or redevelop land in the Chesapeake Bay preservation areas which includes all areas of the city. The Chesapeake Bay preservation area map delineates resource protection areas as 100 foot vegetative buffers adjacent to water bodies with perennial flow.

The purpose of the buffers is to filter pollutants before they enter the streams. The intent of the regulations is to ensure the following:

- Protect sensitive environmental lands within the city
- Safeguard the quality of state waters
- Prevent the further increase in pollution of state waters
- Reduce existing pollution of state waters
- Promote water resource conservation in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the present and future citizens of the city

The following performance standards are set forth in the ordinance for designing projects to ensure the quality of water is not compromised and that projects may have a positive impact on the water quality in the city's streams.

- Maximize rainwater infiltration
- Reduce the land application of nutrients and toxics
- Implement best management practices to provide water quality improvement.
- Minimize erosion and sedimentation potential
- Limit land disturbance
- Preserve indigenous vegetation to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with the use or development proposed.

The ordinance applies to all Chesapeake Bay preservation areas as depicted on the City of Fairfax Chesapeake Bay preservation area map. The city is divided into resource protection and resource management areas. The resource management area includes all property in the city that is not designated as a resource protection area. Based on the proximity of the resource protection areas to the streams, more specific performance criteria apply when the land disturbance is located in a resource protection area. For disturbance in resource protection areas refer to Section 4.18.7.C and D of the Zoning Ordinance.