

## Water Efficiency in Smart Growth

---

An aspect of Smart Growth not yet discussed by the Development-Redevelopment Subcommittee or the full committee is efficient use of water, primarily in the residential sector. While efforts to develop alternative water supplies continue, Volusia County could do much more in the way of demand reduction.

Indoor water use efficiency standards have been mandated by the 1992 Federal Energy Act. Effective in 1994, this federal law requires sale of toilets using no more than 1.6 gallons per flush and other low flow fixtures.

Outdoor water use standards have been left to local governments or water management districts. Volusia County passed a “Water Wise Ordinance” effective July 1, 2004, which mandates new home landscapes and irrigation systems to be installed with increased efficiency. This ordinance is a pioneering effort in Florida, with only local governments in the Tampa Bay Area having already passed such ordinances. H.B. 293 of last year’s legislative session requires water management districts to encourage local governments to pass such ordinances. Aspects of enforcement of this ordinance remain to be perfected. Referencing the ordinance as part of the Smart Growth Standards proposed by the committee would reinforce an important effort.

Upon redevelopment of an area, water efficiency will automatically be increased, as only low flow fixtures are now sold. The irrigation system, if altered more than 50%, would be required to follow the Water Wise Ordinance.

During the development of the Water Wise Ordinance, the Volusia Home Builders Association repeatedly pointed out that much water wastage occurs in existing homes, and asked that the burden of cost of putting in more efficient landscapes be borne also by existing homeowners. Ordinances requiring “retrofit upon resale” are appearing in different parts of the country. Real estate agents would have to include in their checklist features like low flow toilets, rain sensors, back flow preventers, modern automatic timers, and water use zones as required by the Water Wise Ordinance. Development of a retrofit upon resale ordinance, with staged deadlines for different items, starting with the easiest fixtures to retrofit, might be part of our Smart Growth proposal.

Prepared by:

Deborah Green  
Water Conservation Coordinator  
Water Authority of Volusia  
1190 Pelican Bay Drive  
Daytona Beach, FL 32119  
386 322 5160 #33  
dgreen@wvh2o.com  
[www.wvh2o.com](http://www.wvh2o.com)