WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §5b-2A-9

§5B-2A-9. Securing developable land and infrastructure.

(a) The office shall determine the land and infrastructure needs in the general area of the surface mining operations for which it makes the determination authorized in §5B-2A-6 of this code.

(b) For the purposes of this section, the term "general area" shall mean the county or counties in which the mining operations are being conducted or any adjacent county.

(c) To assist the office, the operator, upon request by the office, shall be required to prepare and submit to the office the information set forth in this subsection as follows:

(1) A map of the area for which a permit under §22-3-1 *et seq*. of this code is being sought or has been obtained;

(2) The names of the surface and mineral owners of the property to be mined pursuant to the permit; and

(3) A statement of the post-mining land use for all land which may be affected by the mining operations.

(d) In making a determination of the land and infrastructure needs in the general area of the mining operations, the office shall consider at least the following:

(1) The availability of developable land in the general area;

(2) The needs of the general area for developable land;

(3) The availability of infrastructure, including, but not limited to, access roads, water service, wastewater service, and other utilities;

(4) The amount of land to be mined and the amount of valley to be filled;

(5) The amount, nature, and cost to develop and maintain the community assets identified in §5B-2A-8 of this code; and

(6) The availability of federal, state, and local grants and low-interest loans to finance all or a portion of the acquisition and construction of the identified land and infrastructure needs of the general area.

(e) In making a determination of the land and infrastructure needs in the general area of the surface mining operations, the office shall give significant weight to developable land on or near existing or planned multilane highways.

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(f) The office may secure developable land and infrastructure for a Development Office or county through the preparation of a master land use plan for inclusion into a reclamation plan prepared pursuant to the provisions of §22-3-10 of this code. No provision of this section may be construed to modify requirements of §22-3-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(1) The county commission or other governing body for each county in which there are surface mining operations that are subject to this article shall determine land and infrastructure needs within their jurisdictions through the development of a master land use plan which incorporates post-mining land use needs, including, but not limited to, alternative energy uses, residential uses, highway uses, industrial uses, commercial uses, agricultural uses, public facility uses, or recreational facility uses. A county commission or other governing body of a county may designate a local, county, or regional development or redevelopment authority to assist in the preparation of a master land use plan. A county commission or other governing body of a county may adopt a master land use plan developed after July 1, 2026, only after a reasonable public comment period.

(2) Upon the request of a county or designated development or redevelopment authority, the office shall assist the county or development or redevelopment authority with the development of a master land use plan.

(3)(A) The Department of Environmental Protection and the Office shall review master land use plans existing as of July 1, 2026. If the office determines that a master land use plan complies with the requirements of this article and the rules promulgated pursuant to this article, the office shall approve the plan on or before July 1, 2027.

(B) Master land use plans developed after July 1, 2026, shall be submitted to the department and the office for review. The office shall determine whether to approve a master land use plan submitted pursuant to this subdivision within three months of submission. The office shall approve the plan if it complies with the requirements of this article and the rules promulgated pursuant to this article.

(C) The office shall review a master land use plan approved under this section every three years. No later than six months before the review of a master land use plan, the county or designated development or redevelopment authority shall submit an updated master land use plan to the department and the office for review. The county may submit its updated master land use plan only after a reasonable public comment period. The office shall approve the master land use plan if the updated plan complies with the requirements of this article and the rules promulgated pursuant to this article.

(D) If the office does not approve a master land use plan, the county or designated development or redevelopment authority shall submit a supplemental master land use plan to the office for approval.

(4) The required infrastructure component standards needed to accomplish the designated post-mining land uses identified in a master land use plan shall be developed by the county

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or its designated development or redevelopment authority. These standards shall be in place before the respective county or development or redevelopment authority can accept ownership of property donated pursuant to a master land use plan. Acceptance of ownership of such property by a county or development or redevelopment authority may not occur unless it is determined that:

(A) The property use is compatible with adjacent land uses;

(B) The use satisfies the relevant county or development or redevelopment authority's anticipated need and market use;

(C) The property has in place necessary infrastructure components needed to achieve the anticipated use;

(D) The use is supported by all other appropriate public agencies;

(E) The property is eligible for bond release in accordance with §22-3-23 of this code; and

(F) The use is feasible.

Required infrastructure component standards require approval of the relevant county commission, commissions, or other county governing body before such standards are accepted. County commission or other county governing body approval may be rendered only after a reasonable public comment period.

(5) The provisions of this subsection shall not take effect until legislative rules are promulgated pursuant to this code governing bond releases which assure sound future maintenance by the local or regional economic development, redevelopment, or planning agencies.

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