

Water Supply Element Compliance Rubric

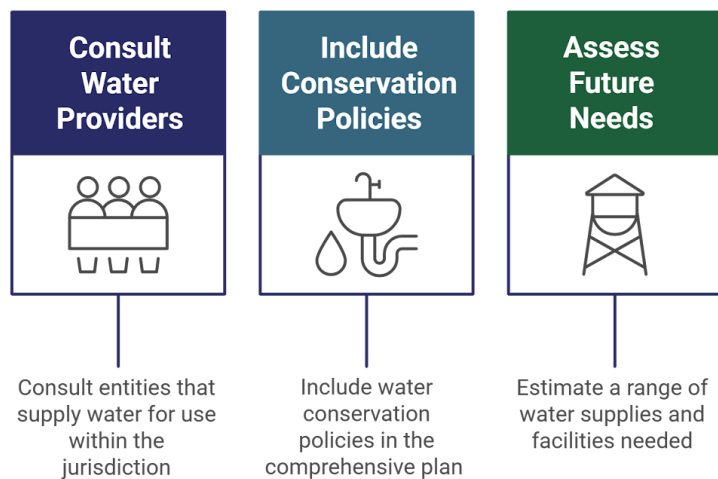
Per [Senate Bill \(SB\) 24-174](#), by December 31, 2026, Colorado municipalities, counties, and regional planning commissions **with a comprehensive plan** must adopt a water supply element in their comprehensive plans. Any jurisdiction or regional planning commission **without** a comprehensive plan, and **not required by state law** to have one, is not subject to this requirement. Any jurisdiction developing a new comprehensive plan must include a water supply element.

Water supply elements must:

- be developed in consultation with entities that supply water for use within the municipality, county, or region (A.K.A. “water providers”),
- include water conservation policies, and
- estimate a range of water supplies and facilities needed to support the potential public and private development described in the comprehensive plan.

Water Supply Element

Summary of Required Components



SB 24-174 also requires that in adopting or amending a comprehensive plan, the municipality, county or regional planning commission shall **consider the Colorado Water Plan where applicable or appropriate** (C.R.S. § 30-28-106 and 31-23-206).

Jurisdictions must update their water supply element at least every five years but jurisdictions have discretion in how they define terms, choose methods, set priorities, and integrate it into their comprehensive plan.

Rubric Outlining Compliance

DOLA staff will review the water supply element and may provide comments. Per the [Compliance Framework and Guidelines](#) established by Executive Order D 2025 005, DOLA staff will determine whether the Water Supply Element satisfies the requirements of **C.R.S. § 30-28-106** or **31-23-206** and will provide a designation of compliant or compliance-in-progress.

In the rubric below, the "baseline compliant" column describes evidence that meets the statutory threshold for compliance. In contrast, jurisdictions reaching the "exemplary" level will be noted within DOLA as potential best-practice case studies. The "exemplary" category is not intended to influence funding decisions. This rubric allows DOLA staff to clearly distinguish between two types of feedback:

- Compliance Comments: Required changes to meet statutory standards.
- Technical Assistance: Optional recommendations to adopt best practices based on a community's specific capacity and context.

As the requirement for a water supply element is due by December 31, 2026, DOLA recognizes the relatively short time available for jurisdictions' first water supply element. Some jurisdictions may be baseline compliant in their initial water supply element, while (optionally) choosing to begin a path to exemplary compliance.

Required Component	Not Compliant	Baseline Compliant	Exemplary
Consultation & Coordination Statutory language: "...developed in consultation with entities that	No mention of outreach to water providers.	Lists water providers engaged and a description of consultation/ coordination in development of the plan.	Documents past and plans for ongoing coordination with water providers. Explicitly describes how data and feedback from

Required Component	Not Compliant	Baseline Compliant	Exemplary
supply water for use within the [municipality or] county or region to ensure coordination on water supply and facility planning.”			water providers informed the plan.
Water Conservation Policies Statutory language: “...include water conservation policies, to be determined by the [municipality or] county or local governments within a region...”	No water conservation policies.	Lists conservation policies the jurisdiction has or will adopt (e.g., water-wise landscaping code, water efficiency plan, water adequacy policy/water availability overlay, 35+ acres zoning to protect aquifers, etc.).	Includes specific policies with an action plan that prioritizes actions necessary to implement the plan, includes a timeline for implementation, and assigns responsibility for actions.
Demand, Supply & Facilities Estimates Statutory language: “Estimate a range of water supplies and facilities needed to support the potential	No estimation of future water demand or no discussion of supplies and/or facilities needed to support the comprehensive plan.	Describes water supply or water infrastructure-related constraints to the growth described in the comprehensive plan and provides general supply/demand projections.	Quantifies future demand against existing supply for at least a 20-year horizon. Estimates facilities needed for both public and private development. Estimates are clearly informed

Required Component	Not Compliant	Baseline Compliant	Exemplary
public and private development described in the master plan.”		Identifies key assumptions/open questions that may need to be revisited in future updates.	by water conservation policies.
5-Year Update Cycle Statutory language: “The [municipality,] county or region must update the Water Supply Element and Strategic Growth Element no less frequently than every five years.”	Greater than five years old; No mention of future updates.	Less than five years old. States the element will be updated, but may not include a defined schedule.	Less than five years old. Includes a commitment to update the element every five years and outlines that process and names a responsible department or office.
Adoption and Approval See C.R.S. 30-28-106 and 31-23-206 for the duty of the planning commission and subject to the approval of the governing body.	No indication that the element was adopted by the planning commission and/or approved by the governing body.	Includes date adopted by the planning commission and date approved by the governing body.	N/A

**Per statute, comprehensive plans must be adopted by the planning commission of a municipality or county, “subject to the approval of” the local governing body. DOLA interprets the governing body’s approval as permissive, however, local governments may choose to require this as part of their process and DOLA endorses this approach as a best practice.*

Considering Colorado Water Plan

Statute requires that in adopting or amending a comprehensive plan, the municipality, county or regional planning commission shall consider the Colorado Water Plan where applicable or appropriate (C.R.S. § 30-28-106 and 31-23-206).

The following rubric could be used for additional technical assistance notes from DOLA when conducting courtesy reviews or compliance reviews. Please note that jurisdictions may consider the Colorado Water Plan in areas other than the water supply element, such as in sections related to natural resources, environment, recreation, etc.

Required Component	Consideration not evident	Baseline Compliant	Exemplary
Consideration of the Colorado Water Plan, where applicable and appropriate Statutory language: “In adopting or amending a master plan, the [municipal] or county or regional planning commission shall consider the following, where applicable or appropriate, and any other information deemed relevant by the...commission: ...The Colorado water plan”	No mention of the Colorado Water Plan.	Mention of the Colorado Water Plan in relation to jurisdiction’s water element	Closely ties the jurisdiction’s plan and policies to the Colorado Water Plan’s Vision, Action Areas, and Partner Actions and/or Considers Water Plan Scenarios and/or associated “High-Impact Drivers” when estimating

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Explore DOLA's [Water Supply Element Guidance](#) for examples, resources, and considerations. We also encourage you to [contact staff](#) for **technical assistance** and **courtesy reviews** of your water supply elements to ensure they meet the requirements in [SB24-174](#).