

Shoreline Master Program Update

May 13, 2009

BOCC Briefing

Staff-Cynthia Wilson

wilsonc@co.thurston.wa.us

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/shoreline-master-program/index.html>

SMP History

- Cities and counties must develop Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) to regulate development along streams, lakes and marine waters in compliance with Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) *"to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines."*

- The SMP is essentially a comprehensive plan for the shoreline. It has a zoning overlay (different zone types are referred to as environment designations) and use regulations specific to each environment designations and it's customized to local circumstances.

- In 2003 Ecology adopted new Shoreline Guidelines (*WAC 173-26*) requiring that local governments update their SMPs to contain policies and regulations that will ensure ***no net loss of shoreline ecological functions.***

- Local government is required to characterize their shoreline through *an analysis of ecosystem-wide processes and shoreline ecological functions* and provide a *detailed inventory of current shoreline and adjacent land use conditions*. The findings from this analysis used to create an informed shoreline zoning overlay, and to determine allowable uses and development regulations.

Shoreline Management Policies

Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was adopted by the public in a 1972 referendum *"to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines."* The SMA has three broad policies:

1. Encourage water-dependent uses: "uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon use of the states' shorelines..."
2. Protect shoreline natural resources, including "...the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the water of the state and their aquatic life..."
3. Promote public access: "the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines of the state shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally."

Elements of the SMP

- An economic development element
- A public access element
- A recreational element
- A circulation element
- A use element
- A conservation element
- An historic, cultural, scientific, and educational element
- An element that gives consideration to the statewide interest in the prevention and minimization of flood damages

SMP Update Tasks

- Task 1-Coordination

Ecology, Inter-jurisdictional SMP Work Group, Scientific Technical Advisory Group

- Task 2-Public Information and Outreach

Develop public outreach plan and implement

Two series of public meeting sessions, 2008 and 2009

Website:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/shoreline-master-program/index.html>

Tasks-continued

- Task 3-Preliminary Shoreline Jurisdiction, Goals and Policies
- Task 4-Inventory and Analysis of Shoreline Conditions
Inventory and Acquisition of relevant data. Analysis and Characterization
- Task 5-Environmental Designations and Shoreline Regulations

Tasks-continued

- Task 6-Address Cumulative impacts
- Task 7-Restoration Plan
Existing efforts, needs, future plan
- Task 8-Local Adoption and State Approval

Where are we?

- Thurston County's update is due in 2011.
- The County was awarded the full amount of the proposal for a 3 yr project with the understanding that the 3rd year is not obligated until appropriations are secured. Funding for the next biennium looks promising but is not guaranteed.
- Two consultants have been hired to assist the County in the SMP update.
- We have had two series of public outreach meetings. One last spring 2008, and the second the beginning of March 2009.
- The work plan has been delayed due to loss of GIS staff capabilities and overall planning staff loss and reallocation of workloads.
- New staff has been hired and committed to working on the SMP but we are probably 9-12 months behind our original workplan. In Aggressive catch up mode
 - 3 Internal Staff
 - 2 consulting team
- We are currently focused on completing Task 4-Inventory and Characterization by the end of June.
- Concern: 3 year funding.