



King County

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November 3, 2009

The Honorable Dow Constantine
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Constantine:

I am pleased to transmit for your review and consideration, the Executive Recommended King County Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update.

All information including policies, maps, and draft code language are available on the Department of Development and Environmental Services Web site at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/shorelines>. Comments were accepted at public meetings, through the mail, and via e-mail.

The update is a long overdue revision to the King County Shoreline Master Program. King County's current SMP was adopted in 1977 and has not been significantly altered since then. The update is required by state law. In 2003, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) adopted revised regulations that govern the content of Shoreline Master Programs. Under state law, King County must adopt an updated Shoreline Plan that implements the new guidelines by December 1, 2009. If necessary, the county may ask for an extension from Ecology. I understand that the King County Council may not have sufficient time to review and adopt this proposal before the December 1 deadline. Therefore, I will be willing to join with the King County Council in seeking an extension from Ecology.

King County Executive staff initiated this proposal over four years ago. At the start of the process, then Executive Sims directed King County staff to approach this effort with the objective of relying on existing regulations to the maximum extent possible. Since the adoption of the original SMP in 1977, King County has adopted additional land use and environmental regulations that further protect our fragile shoreline environments. With this in mind, Executive Sims wanted to ensure that King County made use of those existing measures whenever possible. I am pleased to say that we have succeeded in this goal.

The changes to existing regulations are mostly in the nature of clarifying existing provisions or addressing emerging issues. For example, the proposed Shoreline Master Program includes both policies and regulations directed at aquaculture. This is an industry that did not exist in King County 30 years ago, but that has become an increasingly important and contentious issue that needs to be addressed. In other cases, the proposal eliminates or streamlines processes or modifies regulations that provide no environmental benefit. For example, overly restrictive standards that effectively prohibit docks and floats on rural lakes have been relaxed to allow these shoreline property owners to have improved access to the water when it will not cause environmental problems.

The other major change from the current Shoreline Master Program concerns the Shoreline Environment Designations, which act like a zoning overlay on the shoreline jurisdiction. King County's current Shoreline Plan provides for only four shoreline environments. Since that plan was adopted, King County has seen phenomenal population growth and changes in the shoreline. The Proposed Shoreline Master Program updates the shoreline environment designations to take into account current conditions and relies on eight shoreline environments to establish environment designations that are more tailored to the different types of shorelines.

King County received two grants from Ecology, beginning in 2005, to conduct the update. King County staff conducted a comprehensive review of existing shoreline conditions as required by Ecology's guidelines. It also conducted an extensive outreach effort, holding several public meetings in different parts of the county over a period of almost three years. The initial outreach focused on information gathering, seeking to ensure that the information King County has developed on shoreline conditions and development was accurate. The next phase focused on soliciting public input on overall goals of the shoreline program and identification of issues and concerns.

With this information, a draft Shoreline Master Program was developed that was intended to comply with Ecology's directives and meet the concerns identified through the public process. Through two public processes, in October 2007 and October 2008, King County collected comments and suggestions to improve the program. At each step of this process, King County mailed notice to shoreline property owners, those property owners who would be most directly affected by the shoreline master program.

The result of all of this work is an updated Shoreline Master Program that meets the requirements of the Shoreline Management Act, but will have minimal additional effect on individual property owners.

Supporting Documentation

Included with this letter are the following enclosures:

- Ordinance adopting the King County Shoreline Master Program and Shoreline Development Regulations
- King County Shoreline Master Plan

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- Supplemental Technical Documents: Shorelines Technical Appendix (May 2007), Shoreline Protection And Restoration Plan (July 2009), Shoreline Public Access Plan (July 2009) and Shoreline Cumulative Impacts Assessment (July 2009)
- Fiscal note and regulatory note

The determination in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act is underway and will be completed in advance of any action by the King County Council. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Warden, Director, Department of Development and Environmental Services, by telephone at 206-296-6700, or via e-mail at stephanie.warden@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,


Kurt Triplett
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Tom Bristow, Interim Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Frank Abe, Communications Director

Beth Goldberg, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget

Stephanie Warden, Director, Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)

Paul Reitenbach, Senior Policy Analyst, Director's Office, DDES

Harry Reinert, Special Projects Manager, Director's Office, DDES

Theresa Jennings, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Mark Isaacson, Manager, Water and Land Resources Division, DNRP

Karen Wolf, Division Manager, Strategic Planning and Policy, Office of Strategic Planning and Policy