



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Planning Policy Commission  
Environmental Board

**FROM:** Douglas Yormick, Associate Environmental Planner

**RE:** Shoreline Master Program Updates

**DATE:** January 24, 2022

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### Meeting Purpose

This public hearing is the second PPC phase of review and adoption of an updated Land Use Code, Title 18. Shoreline is part of Bucket 1, Natural Environment. (Title 18's chapters have been divided into six buckets.) The February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting will be a joint one of Planning Policy Commission (PPC) and the Environmental Board (EB) to introduce the discussion draft of Shoreline Master Program/Bucket 1, and other chapters, and receive the commission/board's input.

### Background

During the 2019 Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update, City Council expressed concern that current shoreline setback rules, especially those allowing buffer reductions through a "common line setback" provision, didn't go far enough to protect the sensitive shoreline habitat. In addition, Council asked staff to look at regulating dock lighting and removing bulkhead removal incentives. As part of the Title 18 Update, the City is exploring ways to improve the degraded habitat conditions at Lake Sammamish through better regulation of shoreline setbacks.

Based on recommendation of City Council the following items from the Council's Title 18 Goals and Outcomes chart are relevant to SMP code changes.

1. Goal 3 Conserve and protect environmentally critical areas from loss or degradation
2. Goal 4 Enhance wetland and the riparian corridors and improve fish and wildlife habitat

### Analysis

#### Shoreline Evaluation:

Based on Council discussion during the 2019 Periodic Update, staff was to perform the following analysis.

1. Conduct a characterization and inventory of all parcels bordering Lake Sammamish to analyze impacts of our current buffer and setback standard.
2. Develop a more robust buffer enhancement and monitoring provision to ensure desired outcomes of the near-shore environment.
3. Explore district standard setback reductions or other mitigation sequencing techniques to alleviate shoreline buffer and setback exceptions if common-line and/or buffer reduction through bulkhead removal are entirely removed.

City Staff consulted The Watershed Company to perform a GIS analysis to better understand existing development conditions along Lake Sammamish, specifically regarding shoreline setbacks. That analysis was presented in 2021 to Planning Policy Commission (PPC), the Environmental Board, and City Council and used to guide the proposed changes.

#### Common line setback:

Issaquah's existing SMP allows for a shoreline buffer to be reduced to match adjacent non-conforming development on either side, referred to as a common line setback. The common line is found by drawing an imaginary line between specified corners of buildings on adjoining lots to find the reduced setback where new development can occur.

In general, common line setbacks can result in a new building being able to develop closer to the shoreline than the code would otherwise allow; however, Issaquah's existing SMP requires shoreline enhancement or restoration in exchange for the buffer reduction.

#### Bulkhead removal incentives:

The buffer reduction incentive allows a property owner to reduce their shoreline buffer from 35' to 10' with bulkhead removal. Since 2013, staff has granted this incentive to two properties using this provision. As this is rarely used, it is not creating sufficient incentive to encourage property owners to remove bulkheads which is desired.

#### Shoreline Dock Lighting:

The regulation of shoreline dock lighting is to minimize the impacts of these lights on lake wildlife, especially juvenile salmon. Relying on our lighting consultant, Stantec, the proposed language regulates new or replaced lighting through the height, shielding, motion detection, and light color (2700k). This is consistent with WRIA 8 and King County's guidance documents. (The draft will also be provided to them for their review.) In consultation with the state Department of Ecology, dock lighting was incorporated into the SMP rather than 18.614 Outdoor Lighting to ensure that the SMP's procedural tools are available in reviewing any permits; however, a cross reference will be provided between the chapters.

The following summarizes significant changes made:

1. Removed common line setback exception (SMP pg. 76)
2. Removed all reference to buffer reduction (SMP pg. 75, 77))
3. Removed buffer reduction with bulkhead removal incentive (SMP pg. 58 & 76)
4. Added bulkhead removal as part of new/redevelopment (SMP pg. 77) To balance stability of the shoreline with restoration of shorelines, an assessment option is provided.
5. Removed illustration for buffer example with bulkhead removal (SMP pg. 79)

6. Created lighting dock standards for new, replaced, major repair, additional, or enlargements of docks (SMP pg. 88)
7. Added threshold for docks to come into compliance with new dock standards (SMP pg. 88 & 89)
8. Revised SMP document will be linked at Code Publishing in 18.804 to improve public access to it and awareness of it.
9. Made changes based on feedback from the City's Attorney (throughout document)

## Previous Meetings

- July 22, 2021, Joint PPC and Environmental Board Meeting ([video](#) / [minutes](#))
- August 26, 2021, Joint PPC and Environmental Board Meeting ([video](#) / [minutes](#))

## Things to Consider: Policy Discussion

PPC and EB could give additional thought to the following topics in their review of the Discussion Draft:

1. What should the threshold be for requiring a property to remove a bulkhead?  
As proposed, the SMP will require bulkhead removal for any new or redeveloped homes along Lake Sammamish unless it is demonstrated through environmental reports replacement with bio-engineered shoreline is not feasible. (SMP pg. 77)
2. What should the threshold be for dock lighting to comply with our new light standards?  
As proposed, new docks and docks undergoing significant modification must comply with the new dock lighting standards. (SMP pg. 88)

## B. Timeline

1. February 9, 2022: Open House on Bucket 1 (Natural Environment). This meeting is to give community members the opportunity to ask Staff questions about the draft prior to the PPC meeting.
2. February 24, 2022: PPC/EB Discussion Draft Public Hearing (Natural Environment)
3. March 10, 2022: PPC Bucket 1 (Natural Environment) Deliberation and Recommendation
4. August/September 2022: PPC Public Hearing on Title 18 Consolidated Draft