



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 11, 2007
To: Sultan Planning Board
From: Roger Wagoner and Aubin Phillips, BHC Consultants
Subject: Sultan Shoreline Master Program

The City of Sultan is finalizing the process of developing a Sultan Shoreline Master Program. This summary is intended to answer questions you might have about the Shoreline Management Act and Shoreline Master Programs in general.

What is the Shoreline Management Act?

In 1972, the state Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was adopted through a citizen referendum. The Act applies throughout the state, to all marine waters, submerged tidelands, lakes over 20 acres, and all streams with a mean annual flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second. Marshes, bogs, and swamps associated with the lakes, streams, and marine waters are also included, as is a 200-foot wide shoreline area landward from the water's edge.

The primary intent of the SMA is to ensure that "...development of these shorelines...will promote and enhance the public interest." The Act directs that this goal shall be attained through the protection of natural shorelines, and through encouragement of water-related and water-dependent uses.

The underlying goal of the SMA is to find an equitable balance between uses that allow for reasonable development and economic activity, and uses that give a preference to preserving the public's access and enjoyment of the state's shorelines. The Act also recognizes and protects private property rights along the shoreline, while aiming to preserve the quality of this unique resource for all state residents.

What is a Shoreline Master Program?

The Shoreline Management Act regulates activity through local shoreline master programs. These programs are written by local governments with policy guidance



from Ecology. Master programs are not all alike - local communities tailor their programs to meet their specific physical characteristics and economic needs.

Each local master program is a combined planning and regulatory document - it includes goals, objectives, and policy statements, combined with specific land use regulations. Shoreline master programs have been characterized as zoning overlays because they classify land areas for intended uses. These classifications are called environment designations, such as "urban," "rural," "natural," and "conservancy."

SMP program policies are implemented through the shoreline substantial development permit process. Permits are issued by local governments, with review by Ecology. Ecology provides technical assistance to local governments on administering and enforcing shoreline programs.

Why should you care about shoreline management?

Whether you have a business that depends on a waterfront location, or just enjoy using a boat access on the river or fishing from the shore, Washington State's approach to shoreline management is important to you. Shoreline management rules affect how a community plans for the use and protection of shoreline, wetland, and floodplain areas - areas that provide irreplaceable environmental, recreational, and economic values.

How does the Shoreline Master Program relate to other laws, plans, policies, and regulations?

Wetlands: The Shoreline Management Act is only one of several laws regulating wetlands. The Sultan SMP will be evaluated to be consistent with current requirements for "best available science" and the updates to the Sultan Critical Area Regulations.

Sultan Comprehensive Plan: The SMP development project is being done with the intention that the preliminary goals developed for the Sultan SMP are incorporated into the overall goals and policies of the updated comprehensive plan. Under the state legislature's 1996 regulatory reform actions, a local government's SMP is required to be integrated into and consistent with its GMA comprehensive plan, including critical area regulations. In addition, the processing of permits under the SMP is addressed by the single review process that jurisdictions were required to adopt.



What is the process for developing a Shoreline Master Program?

There are several steps to developing a shoreline master program. They include:

Shoreline Inventory – the focus of the inventory is the natural features and ecological conditions of the shoreline, in addition to a summary of the ownership patterns, current and planned land uses, and zoning. The inventory evaluates the existing shoreline's "functions and values" as a habitat area, especially for recognized threatened and endangered species, including salmon. Inventoried information was mapped.

Develop Shoreline Goals – using the state Shoreline Management Act as a foundation, overall shoreline goals that are appropriate for Sultan were identified.

Designate Shoreline Environments – the results of the inventory provided the foundation for defining the different shoreline environments. Within each environment, different policies and regulations apply, as required by the conditions and needs identified in the inventory.

Prepare Draft Policies/Regulations – we expanded on the environment designation policies identified, and developed a range of different policies and regulations to address various types of land uses and developments possible along the shoreline.

Review and Adoption Process - The SMP was developed within a three-year timeframe. As the SMP nears completion, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft SMP before it provides a recommendation to the City Council for their decision. Once adopted by the local government, the SMP will be submitted to the Department of Ecology for their final review and approval.