City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

Robb Krehbiel, Chair
Anthony Steele, Vice-Chair
Morgan Dorner
Christopher Karnes
Brett Marlo
Jordan Rash
Marie Reynolds
Troy Serad
Payton Swinford

AGENDA

MEETING: Regular Meeting (Hybrid)

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, October 15, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Council Chambers, 1st Floor of the Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

ZOOM INFO: Link: https://www.zoom.us/j/84416624153
Dial-in: +1 253 215 8782
ID: 844 1662 4153

A. Call to Order

- Quorum Call
- Land Acknowledgement

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

There are no meeting minutes to approve.

D. Public Comments

This is the time set aside for public comment on Discussion Items on this agenda.

- Written comments on Discussion Items must be submitted to Planning@tacoma.gov by 12:00 noon prior to the meeting. Comments will be compiled, distributed to the Commission, and posted on the Planning Commission's meeting webpage at https://tacoma.gov/planningcommission.
- To comment virtually, join the meeting using Zoom and raise your virtual hand. To comment in person, sign in at the back of the Council Chambers. Where necessary, the Chair may limit the allotted time for comment.

E. Disclosure of Contacts and Recusals

F. Discussion Items

1. Critical Areas Ordinance Update - Agency Comments Debrief

- Description: Review staff response to comments from four state agencies.
- Action: Review and Comment.
- Contact: Robin Bolster-Grant (RBGrant@tacoma.gov)

The City of Tacoma does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at (253) 905-4146 (voice) or 711 (TTY) before 5:00 p.m., on the Monday preceding the meeting.

¿Necesitas información en español? Cần thông tin bằng tiếng Việt? 한국어로 정보가 필요하십니까? ត្រូវការព័ត៌មានជាភាសាខ្មែរ?
Нужна информация на русском? Потрібна інформація українською мовою? ☎ Contact **TacomaFIRST 311** at **(253) 591-5000**.

2. Home in Tacoma – Early Implementation Update

- Description: Update on the early implementation of Home in Tacoma, including an overview of the permitting and development activity seen since the launch in February 2025.
- Action: Informational.
- Contact: Brian Boudet (BBoudet@tacoma.gov)

G. Upcoming Meetings (Tentative Agendas)

(1) Agenda for the November 5, 2025, meeting includes:
- 2026 Amendment Code Development

(2) Agenda for the November 19, 2025, meeting includes:
- Critical Areas Code Update
- Parking Code Update – Intro

(3) December 3, 2025 – cancelled

(4) Agenda for the December 17, 2025, meeting includes:
- Critical Areas Code Update – Recommendation
- 2026 Amendment Code Development

(5) January 7, 2026 – cancelled

H. Communication Items

(1) Communications from Staff

(2) **Status Reports by Commissioners** – Picture Pac Ave Project Advisory Committee.

(3) **IPS Agenda** – The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee's next meeting on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. (tentatively) includes presentations on the Planning Commission Work Program, the Transformed Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, and an Automated Traffic Enforcement Expansion Update. (Held at 747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402, Conference Room 248 or virtually at http://www.zoom.us/j/87829056704, passcode 614650)

I. Adjournment

Agenda Item F1

City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

To: Planning Commission

From: Robin Bolster-Grant, Land Use Division

Subject: **2025 Critical Areas Ordinance Update - Agency Comments Debrief**

Memo Date: October 8, 2025

Meeting Date: October 15, 2025

Action Requested:
Review state agency comments on the proposed Draft Critical Areas Ordinance Update.

Project Summary:
In accordance with the Growth Management Act, the City of Tacoma is required to periodically review its Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) to ensure the regulations are consistent with the Best Available Science and effectively protect critical environmental areas and natural hazards. The update is intended to maintain consistency with state and federal policies, incorporate new scientific understanding of environmental protection and natural hazards, and to ensure the City's regulations continue to protect the functions of sensitive environmental areas and the public safety.

Discussion:
The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on August 20, 2025, to receive oral testimony and kept the hearing record open through August 22, 2025 to accept additional written comments concerning the 2025 Draft CAO Update. At the meeting on September 17, 2025, the Commission reviewed the staff response to comments received from the Planning Commission and the public. At the October 15, 2025, meeting the Commission will review staff response to comments from four state agencies. To facilitate the Commission's review and discussion, staff has included the following materials in the agenda packet:

- Agency Comment Response Matrix
- Agency Comments
- Draft CAO Update

Next Steps:
A number of the comments received in response to the release of the Draft CAO Update concerned the abbreviated timeframe for completion of this project and the lack of adequate public engagement. Additionally, staff anticipates the need for additional research in order to provide information that is responsive to several comments. Therefore, next steps for the Draft CAO Update include the following tentative dates and actions:

- October 15, 2025 – Second debrief meeting before the Commission
- October 18, 2025 – Public meeting and nature walk at the Nature Center

- November 19, 2025 – Commission direction
- December 2025 – Commission direction
- January 2025 - Commission recommendation to the City Council

Prior Actions:

- July 16, 2025 – Staff introduced the Draft CAO Update to the Planning Commission. At this meeting the Commission released the Draft for public review and scheduled a public hearing for August 20, 2025.
- August 20, 2025 – The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing to receive oral and written public comments. Written comments were accepted until August 22, 2025.
- September 17, 2025 - Planning Commission review of public and Commission comments/questions

Staff Contacts:

- Robin Bolster-Grant, Land Use Division Manager, rbgrant@tacoma.gov
- Lisa Spadoni, Natural Resources Program Supervisor, lspadoni@tacoma.gov

Attachment:

- Attachment 1 – Agency Response Matrix
- Attachment 2 – Agency comments (numbered to correspond to Response Matrix)
- Draft Critical Areas Ordinance Update (hyperlink)

cc. Peter Huffman, Director

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
1	Ecology	1	13.11.190(D)(2)(b)	All other critical areas are mentioned here except for wetlands. Is there a particular reason for that? We would recommend including wetlands here as well.	13.11.190.D.2.b discusses permit process for different types of critical areas under different scenarios. Certain types of critical areas review can be done under development permits and others require a separate critical areas permit. Wetlands are discussed in subsection (1), so it will not be added to the preceding section.
2	Ecology	2	13.11.210(B)(9)	In our guidance, we don't extend the functionally disconnected buffer language to wetlands, only their buffers. If a wetland is disrupted by an existing obstruction the wetland on the other side could still be providing function to the landscape. We wouldn't recommend applying the language here to wetlands. In our wetland guidance we call this functionally disconnected buffers and the obstructions are called "significant developments". Some of this language appears very similar to our guidance. In this context however what is the meaning of "substantial improvement"? We would also suggest using the language from the guidance for clarity.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per Ecology comments.
3	Ecology	3	13.11.210(B)(10)	Criteria aligns close with our guidance. However, we would recommend including the criteria that the trail be limited to 5 feet in width.	A maximum trail width allowance will be evaluated for addition to code.
4	Ecology	4	13.11.230	If the director obtain "expert services to verify information" what are the expert services? Could this be changed to be qualified professionals as you have them defined in your code?	Changes will be incorporated into this section per Ecology comments.
5	Ecology	5	13.11.270(C)	Please refer to our sample language in our wetland guidance (Page A-16) where we give an example of what selecting a wetland mitigation site using a watershed approach might look like in a CAO. We recommend a watershed approach which doesn't prioritize the on-site mitigation as the use of a mitigation bank or other offsite location may be of better benefit to the functions and values of wetlands in the watershed.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per Ecology comments.
6	Ecology	6	13.11.270.I	This added language regarding mitigation banks and ILF appears consistent with our guidance. However, the language in b. is unnecessary for ILFs. We would recommend removing this language. It might be good to update your definitions section with definitions for mitigation banks and ILF. We have example definitions for both in Appendix B of our wetland guidance.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per Ecology comments.
7	Ecology	7	13.11.280(A)(14)	For your subdivision language we do have some additional criteria you might consider from our sample ordinance: "We recommend adding the following criteria for wetlands and buffers: 1. Land that is located wholly within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may not be subdivided 2. Land that is located partially within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may be subdivided provided that an accessible and contiguous portion of each new lot is: a. Located outside of the wetland and buffer; and b. Meets the minimum lot size requirements of [the zoning code]"	The majority of this recommended language is already present in this section and pertains to all critical areas and associated buffer, not just to wetlands. Minor changes will be made to incorporate the additional clarifications.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
8	Ecology	8	13.11.320(A)	General TMC 13.11.120 B.3 and B.4 is the small wetland exemption language that appears based on our wetland CAO Guidance criteria. While CAT IV wetlands 4,000 sqf or less can be exempt from the avoidance and minimization steps of the mitigation sequence it doesn't exempt them from the buffer provisions per our guidance. However, if those wetlands are 1,000 sqf (as stated in B.4) or less our guidance does say that they may be exempt from the buffer provisions. We would recommend that only the wetlands that meet the applicable criteria under TMC 13.11.210 B.4 be exempt from buffer requirements to align closer to our guidance. In addition to reviewing your CAO submitted to PlanView we noticed that your definitions section had been moved to another part of the code. We have some additional recommendations for your wetland related definitions that you might consider.	We have removed wetlands that meet TMC 13.11.120 B.3 from being exempt from the buffer requirements in TMC 13.11.320(A), and propose removing this exemption.
9	Ecology	9	13.01.110.A	We recommend defining existing and ongoing agriculture in your code to make a distinction between when land is considered agricultural use. We recommend the following language from the example CAO from our guidance: “Agricultural activities, existing and ongoing: Those activities conducted on lands defined in RCW 84-34-020(2), and those activities involved in the production of crops and livestock, including but not limited to operation, maintenance and conservation measures of farm and stock ponds or drainage ditches, irrigation systems, changes between agricultural activities, and normal operation, maintenance or repair of existing serviceable structures, facilities or improved areas. Activities that bring an area into agricultural use are not part of an ongoing activity. An operation ceases to be ongoing when the area in which it was conducted is proposed for conversion to a nonagricultural use or has lain idle for a period of longer than five years, unless the idle land is registered in a federal or state soils conservation program.”	Definitions will be evaluated to determine applicable changes. "Agricultural Use" is currently defined in TMC 13.01.060.A.
10	Ecology	10	13.01.110.B	The Best Available Science (BAS) definition appears consistent with GMA requirements however points to examples of BAS collected in to a document from 2002. This is may be outdated unless updated and we would recommend that it be removed from the definition.	Definitions will be evaluated to determine applicable changes and updated as appropriate.
11	Ecology	11	13.01.110.I	Recommend changing Isolated Wetland definition to our Non-Federally Regulated language: "Non-federally regulated wetland: A wetland that is not jurisdictional under the federal Clean Water Act. Sometimes referred to as “isolated wetlands,” these wetlands remain regulated under state and local laws and rules, whether or not they are protected by federal law."	Definitions will be evaluated to determine applicable changes and updated as appropriate.
12	WDFW	1	13.11.120 (B) (2)	WDFW is supportive of this policy as this aligns with the agency’s mission. To support this policy, WDFW recommends that the City uses relevant portions of the Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan: WRIA 10 – Puyallup-White Watershed plan as a guide to implement this policy.	Comment noted. Codification not required.
13	WDFW	2	13.11.120 (B) (3)	WDFW recommends expanding this intent policy to align with WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830 for the protection of all critical areas functions and values, instead of only calling out wetlands.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per WDFW comments.
14	WDFW	3	13.11.120 (B) (10)	Similar to the comment above, WDFW recommends expanding this intent policy to better align with WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830.	Both of the referenced WAC sections are overarching regulations about city and county requirements for protecting critical areas. The intent statements are already summarized in this section.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
15	WDFW	4	13.11.210 (B)(3)	We respectfully disagree with the proposed provision allowing wetlands that meet certain criteria to be exempt from the avoidance and minimization requirements of the mitigation sequence and to be subject to fill, even if fully mitigated under TMC 13.11.270.F.3 through 6. WDFW strongly recommends that the City defer to and fully align with the Department of Ecology's most current guidance on wetland categorization, protection, and mitigation. This guidance reflects the best available science and regulatory framework for maintaining wetland functions. Wetlands provide integral habitat for rearing salmonids and resident fish, while providing critical ecological functions for associated stream systems, including water quality improvement, flood attenuation, and habitat complexity. If a wetland is connected to or associated with a stream system in any manner, its ecological role is significant and should not be discounted.	This language comes directly from the Department of Ecology's Guidance for Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Updates document (publication #22-06-014). Please see Appendix A. Sample Wetland Regulations (page A-5). However, based on public, Tribal, and agency comments, staff recommends removal of this allowance.
16	WDFW	5	13.11.210 (B) (4)	Please ensure that if a Category IV wetland is associated with or connected to a Type F stream that this code be reconsidered. Fish may use a wide range of wetlands as rearing habitats. Wetlands should be evaluated on their ecological function rather than size alone, as even small or isolated wetlands can provide essential hydrologic connectivity feeding nearby streams without surface connection, and are critical to the health of aquatic species. WDFW recommends reconsideration of any exemptions that would weaken these protections.	Please see TMC 13.11.210(B)(4)(a)(2) and (5). The code as amended would require Category IV wetlands associated with a riparian habitat, associated buffer, or a FWHCA to be subject to the avoidance and minimization requirements of the mitigation sequence.
17	WDFW	6	13.11.210 (B) (11)	WDFW is supportive of this code.	Noted.
18	WDFW	7	13.11.210 (B) (12)	WDFW recommends adding a criterion stating that any tree removal within the buffer zone shall not diminish habitat quality, ecological function, or increase stream temperature. WDFW is supportive of trees being left within critical areas as snags where possible. Please see WDFW guidance on protecting snags.	Hazard tree removal is an activity allowed with staff review to prevent imminent harm to life and/or property. The current provision includes leaving portions of the hazard tree as a snag, where possible. Will add a tree replacement requirement.
19	WDFW	8	13.11.250 (A) (2)	WDFW recommend that this code be updates to include "or values" to align with the protections outlined for critical areas in WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per WDFW comments.

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20	WDFW	9	13.11.410 (A)	The City's CAO utilizes the State Interim Forest Practice Water Typing in WAC 222-16-030 to define stream types. WAC 222 is for forest practices intended to be used for water typing in forested areas of the state. The maps developed for these water types may be unreliable within urban areas due to different land uses and how other applicable local or state code requirements are defined or applied. WAC 365-190-130 (4)(f)(i) states that jurisdictions should not rely solely on WAC 222-16-030 or -031 for the mapping of stream types for the purpose of regulating land uses. Although there is currently not a single best statewide hydrography data set that WDFW can recommend at this time, we do highly encourage local jurisdictions to begin discussing a more reliable alternative. WDFW encourages the City to follow the updates from Ecology's Washington State Hydrography Dataset Program (WASHD). More information about this effort to create and sustain a consistent and complete statewide hydrography data set can be found here. This WASHD effort aims to update the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) for watercourse mapping to help ensure all state streams and associated riparian management zone (RMZ) natural resources are accurately identified. One effective approach is to adopt WDFW's Site Potential Tree Height (SPTH200) GIS mapping tool, which is based on NHD data. The SPTH200 tool reflects the best available science and aligns with WDFW's Volume 2: Management Recommendations, supporting the protection of the full range of functions and values for all streams provided by RMZs. Additional SPTH200 resources can be found on WDFW's PHS publications page.	Changes have been incorporated to increase the minimum stream buffer distance to 100 feet, which is consistent with the minimum buffer distance recommended in WDFW BAS. Buffers for streams of local significance, which have had noted salmonid presence, have also increased from 150 foot to 200 feet.
21	WDFW	10	13.11.420 (B) (1)	The best available science (BAS) emphasizes the importance of protecting all streams and their adjacent riparian areas to support full riparian ecosystem functions and values. These critical areas support the full ecosystem while providing movement corridors for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. As noted in our comments above, WDFW highly recommends that jurisdictions consider following the updates from Ecology's WASHD program. This WASHD effort aims to update watercourse mapping to help ensure all state streams and associated riparian management zone (RMZ) natural resources are accurately identified. WDFW currently recommends that the SPTH200 GIS mapping tool be used for delineating where RMZs are located. The currently proposed code updates fall short of WDFW's primary recommendation to delineate RMZ widths at SPTH200. However, given existing conditions, we understand that full implementation of SPTH200 may not be feasible at this time in all locations. We do recommend that SPTH200 be followed where possible by the City. At a minimum, an RMZ width of 100 feet is needed to achieve the pollution removal function, though other riparian functions may be compromised at this minimum width depending on the SPTH200 value at a given site. We highlight that the overarching goal of critical area protection, as outlined in WAC 365-196-830 (4), is to achieve no net loss.	Changes have been incorporated to increase the minimum stream buffer distance to 100 feet, which is consistent with the minimum buffer distance recommended in WDFW BAS. Buffers for streams of local significance, which have had noted salmonid presence, have also increased from 150 foot to 200 feet.
22	WDFW	11	13.11.420 (B) (2)	WDFW is greatly supportive of this new policy to support the riparian ecosystem.	Noted.

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23	WDFW	12	13.11.440 (A)	WDFW recommends that the City include the option for bridges in this code. This may allow more appropriate designs for water conveying structures and may also enable passage by terrestrial wildlife species. WDFW also recommends that jurisdictions review the WDFW's climate-change-resilient culvert webpage and Incorporating Climate Change into the Design of Water Crossing Structures: Final Project Report for resources on how to incorporate climate-resiliency into water crossing designs. These resources should be used during the development of future water crossing designs. Additionally, WDFW recommends including the proposed suggested changes in red that will align with WAC 365-196-830 and ensure no net loss of ecological functions and values.	Changes will be incorporated into this section per WDFW comments.
24	WDFW	13	13.11.450	WDFW is concerned about applying the wetland category system only the review of a riparian management zone for stream mitigation requirements where wetlands aren't present. The functions and values of wetlands and streams cannot be compared at a one-to-one value and will vary based on site-specific conditions. Where riverine wetlands are present, the RMZ should incorporate them using the appropriate wetland delineation, assessment, and protection per the Department of Ecology's most current guidance. To ensure adequate mitigation requirements are followed for stream impacts, please follow the six-step mitigation sequence outlined in WAC 197-11-768, and we recommend consulting with the local WDFW habitat biologist for technical assistance.	TMC 13.11.270 cites "general mitigation requirements" that are intended to apply to all critical areas and buffers. This section cites the six-step mitigation sequence outlined in WAC 197-11-768.
25	WDFW	14	13.11.510 (A) (1) (b) (2) and (3)	WDFW is concerned that the proposed code, as currently written, may inadvertently overlook ecologically significant habitats. By removing potential protections for sites with higher percentages of invasive species, the code may reduce safeguards for areas that, while supporting a limited proportion of native species, still provide important ecological functions and values. This reduction in protections could result in the degradation or loss of habitat that supports fish and wildlife species, particularly those that rely on remnant native vegetation or use these areas for foraging, shelter, or migration corridors. To ensure potential habitat is not overlooked in areas dominated by invasive vegetation, WDFW recommends assessing structural habitat features such as vertical and horizontal diversity, regardless of species composition. Additionally, such surveys should document native vegetation patches and key habitat elements even where invasive species exceed may be dominant on a parcel. WDFW also recommends incentivizing invasive and noxious plant removal techniques that minimize adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, and habitat. WDFW also supports the development of a streamlined permitting or review process for riparian restoration and enhancement projects that exceed minimum regulatory requirements to encourage voluntary efforts that contribute to long-term habitat improvement. For resources for developing wildlife and open space corridors, please see: Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas, Land Use Planning for salmon, steelhead and trout: A land use planner's guide to salmonid habitat protection and recovery, Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan, WDFW's Habitat at Home, and WDFW's Habitat connectivity website.	WDFW Priority Habitats and Species List, August 2008 (Updated June 2023) (https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/00165/wdfw00165.pdf) indicates that biodiversity areas are habitat that "is mostly comprised of native vegetation." The current code definition of Biodiversity Areas encompasses more areas of diverse habitat than is currently mapped by WDFW. Biodiversity Corridors can be comprised of various types of vegetated areas, including a greater composition of non-native vegetation. The draft code also includes provisions for removal of non-native species and enhancing biodiversity areas with planting native vegetation. The draft code is consistent with BAS.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
26	WDFW	15	13.11.510 (B) 7	We recommend the City use Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife as stated in the above comment for TMC 13.11.510 (A) (1) as a tool to support efforts to retain, restore, and enhance active habitat corridors, especially those that cross jurisdictional boundaries. This resource provides statewide connectivity maps, frameworks for identifying priority locations, recommended conservation actions, and regional profiles that highlight local connectivity challenges and opportunities. These materials can help guide planning within the landscape's constraints. WDFW is available to provide technical assistance as needed.	Noted. See above.
27	WDFW	16	13.11.510 (A) (1) (c)	Oregon White Oak is identified as a priority habitat in the PHS list and PHS maps, because it supports a wide range of native species, warranting a high level of protection. WDFW recommends maintaining strong safeguards for remaining oak habitats in alignment with regional conservation goals. Please see our 2024 Oregon White Oak guidance document for resources for offsetting impacts to Oregon white oak habitat when land-use activities are likely to degrade their function as wildlife habitat.	Regulations pertaining to Oregon White Oak have been bolstered in the draft CAO update. Please see TMC 13.11.510(B)(1)(c) and TMC 13.11.520(D). Draft regulations will be reviewed against the 2024 guidance document again and updated if needed.
28	WDFW	17	13.11.520 (A) (1)	WDFW recommends removing the "or" from this general standard.	Change will be made.
29	WDFW	18	13.11.520 (B) (1)	WDFW is supportive of this policy. While planning a network of open spaces, it's recommended to also plan for how wildlife can use these corridors alongside humans. As the built environment continues to grow, it is essential to plan ways that allow the built and natural environments to interact and provide benefits for humans and wildlife while preventing conflicts. Multiple-use open spaces can serve a multitude of human activities while also providing areas for wildlife movement. Please see the following resources, Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas, The Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, WSDOT's Reducing the risk of wildlife collisions website as well as Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Consideration in Fish Barrier Removal Projects, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind, and WDFW's website.	Noted.
30	WDFW	19	13.11.520 (D) (1)	Based on WDFW's Oregon White Oak guidance, the protections for oaks should be designated as either the critical root zone or the edge of the canopy, whichever is larger.	The drafted code language reflects this guidance.
31	DNR	1	13.11.120	"Protecting members of the public and public resources and facilities from injury, loss of life, or property damage due to landslides and steep slope failures, erosion, seismic events, volcanic eruptions, flooding or similar events;." This almost matches the geologically hazardous areas hazards identified in 13.11.710. Suggest having the same hazards. Flooding is a separate critical area, frequently flooded areas, rather than a geologically hazardous area.	Change will be made.
32	DNR	2	13.11.190	In this paragraph, it describes that critical areas may be located through a list of sources including "Washington DNR Aquatic Lands maps and geologic mapping." Suggest rephrasing this to "Washington DNR Aquatic Lands maps and the Washington Geologic Survey's Geologic Information Portal." Washington Geologic Survey (WGS) keeps the most current scientific information, which can be used for best available science, in the Geologic Information Portal. Washington Geologic Information Portal.	Change will be made.

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33	DNR	3	13.11.220	In subsection B, it describes the three types of applications. In 1. Verification. Critical Area Verification. It lists wetland, or stream, or FWHCA, so this verification option is specific to only these three types of critical areas. A person in a geologically hazardous area could not request this type of application, correct? Application types 2 and 3 appear to be available to all categories of critical areas.	Correct.
34	DNR	4	13.11.230	"When the critical area is limited to a Geologically Hazardous Area, the purpose of the information submitted is to obtain a level of study sufficient to protect the public from hazards. The information and proposed mitigation will demonstrate that there is no significant risk to the public health and safety and that any risk that cannot be effectively mitigated is avoided." This is a good and classic statement, but is a vague statement that could be strengthened. Suggest including a statement referring to the related sections that have detailed provisions, such as 13.11.700 and 13.11.730, to provide the context that there detailed provisions to comply with.	Citation to 13.11.700 and 13.11.730 will be added.
35	DNR	5	13.11.180	Great to see that all critical areas and buffers must be recorded to title. Good to see fencing and signs may be required.	Noted.
36	DNR	6	13.11.710	The geologically hazardous areas hazards are erosion, landslide, seismic, mine, volcanic hazard, and tsunami hazard. Good to see them identified clearly. Under landslides, the code states "Any area within the City mapped by the most up to date Pierce County landslide inventory prepared by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and LIDAR imagery." That is great! Suggest adding a reference to the Washington Geologic Information Portal (noted above). The codes refers to geotechnical report and geological assessment (11.13.730.J). Good to see factor of safety mentioned. The code provisions on seismic, volcanic, mine, and tsunami hazards do not include any kind of reference to a requirement for a geotechnical report or a geological assessment. Consider adding language to have hazard assessment information required to be submitted. For the tsunami hazard, have you checked the Washington Geologic Information Portal? Ah, I see some requirements in the 13.11.730 General Standards. Suggest adding references in this section, 13.11.710, to the other section.	Cross references will be assessed for addition to draft code.
37	DNR	7	13.11.730	Suggest updating the definition of qualified professional to include the geotechnical engineer and geologist professionals, licensed in the state of Washington. It may be useful to include professionals related to the other critical areas. Many jurisdictions have definitions that list the professionals for each type of critical area. Below, I include our usual language for this and future endeavors.	The definition of 'qualified professional' in TMC 13.01.110.Q is written broadly to include professionals with expertise in different critical areas. No changes are needed for it to apply appropriately.
38	DNR	8	General	Recognizing the limitations of the current proposals, I want to mention that it would be great for you to consider these in current or future work, be it in your comprehensive plan, development code, and SMP updates, and in your work in general: • Consider adding a reference to the definition of geologically hazardous areas, WAC 365-190-120, in other areas besides the CAO. In addition, consider adding a reference to WAC 365-196-480 for natural resource lands. • Consider adding in other areas besides the CAO. If you have not checked our interactive database, the WGS Geologic Information Portal, lately, you may wish to do so. • If you have not checked out our Geologic Planning page, you may wish to do so.	This can be considered with the SMP update which is due in 2029.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
39	DOH	1	13.11.100	This refers to the .100/.200 sections for general provisions. Typically, definitions would be a part of general provisions, but in this case were in .900 & now are in a different chapter. (See additional comments re definitions below.) It would be helpful to add an additional cross-reference here to TMC 13.01.110.	Cross references will be assessed for addition to draft code.
40	DOH	2	13.11.120.B	Suggested addition: 12. Protecting the quality and quantity of water used for drinking. References (generally): RCW 35.63.090, 36.70A.020(10) & .070(1); WAC 365-190-100(2)	This language has been added to TMC 13.11.120.B.
41	DOH	3	13.11.130.B	Suggested amendment: Critical areas outside a shoreline district that involve a development activity that is reviewed, pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC (Development Regulation Agreements), except for projects identified in subsection 13.05.050.B.4 TMC, shall be ~~considered~~ protected during the Development Regulation Agreement review process; a separate critical areas permit is not required. Any approval(s) pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC shall, to the maximum extent feasible, avoid potential impacts to critical areas, and any unavoidable impacts to critical areas shall be fully mitigated, either on- or off-site. (Note: This does not appear to require a complementary amendment to TMC 13.05.050.D.8 as the language used there is similar, but not identical.)	This language has been added to TMC 13.11.130.B.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
42	DOH	4	13.11.180.A	This section cross-references to TMC 13.12.930. In turn, that section seems in need of update. These two sections should be parallel but aren't. It appears that both TMC 13.11.180 & 13.12.930 were intended to encode WAC 197-11-908. Over time, the content of that WAC has changed. We encourage a close review of the various Washington State Register notices over time that are shown in the Code Reviser's notes; this will enable you to see what changed & when. For example, TMC 13.12.930.A refers to ESA designation. The 1984 version of WAC 197-11-908 talked about ESA designation, but that language was removed in 1995. While the ESA term still exists in some portions of the RCW/WAC, it has generally been replaced by "critical areas." Today, there is nothing permissive about designating critical areas—but TMC 13.12.930.A still says "may, at its option, designate." Keep in mind the purpose of the underlying WAC is to allow local jurisdictions to enact a different threshold for SEPA review in critical areas by identifying categorical exemptions that "shall not" apply. This term forms a sort of double negative: if an exemption does not apply, then it means the thing is not exempt & would need to undergo SEPA review. This would mean that within critical areas, none of the SEPA-exempt activities, uses, construction, etc. within "Section 13.12.310 of the TMC and the following subsections of WAC 197-11-800(1)(b); (2)(d) excluding landscaping, (e), (f), and (g); (3); 24(a), (b), (c), and (d)" would be SEPA-exempt. Cumulatively, this is a lengthy list of exemptions but includes some relatively minor activities. (The inclusion of WAC 197-11-800(1)(b) is prone to causing confusion, as the City has adopted higher exemption level per ss. (a) & (b). All listed levels are included here, recognizing there are overlap & differing levels.) [*See full comment in corresponding PDF for all listed levels*] Each of these otherwise SEPA-exempt actions would be subject to SEPA review in any critical area, limited to the scope in WAC 197-11-908(1)(a) & (b) & TMC 13.12.930(D). Is that what is intended? Closer to parallel are TMC 13.11.180.B & 13.12.930(D) with WAC 197-11-908(1)(a) & (b); but it would be best to use the same language throughout.	TMC 13.11.180(B) has been updated to better reflect WAC 197-11-908(1)(a) and (b). Staff and consultant team will review whether some SEPA exempt actions should also be SEPA exempt when occurring in a critical area. TMC 13.11 is prescriptive in protections and additional SEPA review may not provide additional benefits.
43	DOH	5	13.11.190.A	Please add Department of Health's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) map & EPA's Sole Source Aquifer map to the list of critical area references.	Mapping resources added to TMC 13.11.190(A).
44	DOH	6	13.11.190.D.1	The second sentence refers to adoption of a "new" SMP over 10 years ago. It would be best to remove that old language & to ensure that all the "code excerpts" it refers to are removed or otherwise corrected in this draft.	References to the SMP will be revised.
45	DOH	7	13.11.190.D.2	It appears that ss. b(5) effectively exempts almost any project in a CARA from critical areas permitting because of the proposed structure of TMC 13.11.800. Please see comments below relating to CARAs-specific standards.	Noted.
46	DOH	8	13.11.220.B.1	We encourage you to use "applications" rather than "permits" throughout this section for consistency. Verification is not a permit but more of a due diligence matter. Can the City add CARAs to its verifications?	13.11.200.B "permits" will be revised to "applications". CARAs are designated based on mapping resources.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
47	DOH	9	13.11.220.B.3	The description & requirements under “Development Permit” appears to be a variance or reasonable use permit rather than a development permit, especially in looking at the legal tests under TMC 13.11.240.	Noted. The term 'Development Permit' captures uses that could be permitted under either legal test.
48	DOH	10	13.11.230.B.2	We note that CARAs hasn’t been added here, but since it says “all surveyed”: it should be clarified that a “surveyed site plan” doesn’t include CARAs boundaries that are often tied to mapping & are incapable of being physically surveyed, &/or whose square footage may overlay the entire site.	The language in TMC 13.11.230(B)(2) states, "*The following items are required for permit review and approval,* ***where applicable depending upon the critical area*** *, the project and permit type,* ***and as determined necessary by City staff.*** *"* This would not require surveys to be produced for CARAs for the reasons stated in the comment.
49	DOH	11	13.11.230.B.3	Critical areas reports are required under ss. (3), but their place within the permit/review structure isn’t clear. The nature of the critical area should determine the content, & the code should define how they will be used. Will the City review them to determine their efficacy, or does merely submitting them fulfill the requirement? As written, it appears to be the latter; this is not protective of critical areas. “Hydrologic” information & reports are included within the materials to be prepared by a qualified professional, but this typically relates to surface water. The type of report associated with CARAs, a hydrogeologic assessment, is not included here & should be added. This should also incorporate basic content requirements. (See additional comment about hydrogeo assessments below in CARAs-specific standards.) Here is an example from Olympia’s code: [*See full comment in corresponding PDF for Olympia code excerpt*]	This section outlines application submittal requirements. Review process and performance standards are in contained in other sections and those sections are protective of critical areas. Staff and consultants will work on revising CARA specific code sections and update application submittal requirement if needed based on revisions.
50	DOH	12	13.11.230.B.4 & 250.A	With regard to both these sections, please note the comment related to compensatory mitigation below. Additionally, reasonable use & variance provisions, although common in critical areas ordinances, could potentially allow a level of contamination that affects a water source’s potability.	The language in TMC 13.11.230(B)(2) states, "*The following items are required for permit review and approval,* ***where applicable depending upon the critical area,*** *the project and permit type, and as determined necessary by City staff.* " This would not include compensatory mitigation for CARA water quality for the reasons stated in the comment.
51	DOH	13	13.11.270 & .280.B	The compensatory mitigation provisions of WAC 365-196-830 do not extend to CARAs (not included in WAC 365-190-100). When placed in general standards, these provisions imply that some degree of degradation to an aquifer is acceptable, while allowing even a limited degree of harm to an aquifer could result in lost potability. Actions such as fee in lieu or offsite mitigation cannot adequate offset damage to CARAs.	TMC 113.11.250.A. contains general performance standards for development in critical areas/buffers and includes, *"4. The proposal will not lead to significant degradation of groundwater or surface water quality".* And TMC 13.11.270.A.I requires the following when determining if mitigation will be imposed, "T*he long-term and short-term effects of the action and the reversible or irreversible nature of the impairment to or loss of the Critical Area"* In addition, all developments must meet the City Stormwater Management Manual. Taken together, these statements would not allow approval of development that would degrade water quality. However, staff and consultants will look at ways to clarify the protection of and
52	DOH	14	13.11.280.A.14	We recommend excluding CARAs from this set of subdivision provisions. By their nature, CARAs can be large & may overlay an entire property. This doesn’t lend itself to the creation of a set-aside parcel or “equal sharing” of the critical area among lots. There should be complementary amendments to TMC 13.04.310.	Language excepting CARAs from the subdivision provisions has been added.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
53	DOH	15	13.11.800 (generally)	Case law examines CARAs protections through the lens of meeting these three duties: classify, designate, & protect. The statutory pieces related to this are connected, but they are not the same thing. The statutory requirement for critical areas designation is very brief & defers to the rules. The cross-reference is to this section about classification. Neither Tacoma's existing nor draft code appears to recognize these duties or to differentiate between them. There is still significant work to be done before moving this ordinance along to adoption; **we recommend considerably revamping the existing code rather than the currently proposed amendments throughout this section.**	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.
54	DOH	16a	13.11.815	<u>Classification</u> The code should classify CARAs in keeping with WAC 365-190-100(3). Typically, this looks at what areas of the city are more susceptible to groundwater contamination & results in separate development review pathways for areas with high vs. less vulnerability. This is where you will see a "Category/Type 1/2" (or similar) in other jurisdictions' CARAs codes that is not present in Tacoma's. To accomplish this, Tacoma should restructure its CARAs provisions to classify using BAS, which could be soils-based or some other information. For instance, would the City consider the STGPD to be more vulnerable than, say, the rest of the SSA? That would give you ready BAS to support a more vulnerable classification. Some communities look at soils or use the closer-in WHPA times of travel to differentiate between higher & lower vulnerability areas. Please refer to Ecology's CARAs guidance for more information.	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.
55	DOH	16b	13.11.815	<u>Designation</u> The designation duty looks at what features are to be considered as CARAs, as exemplified in WAC 365-190-100(4)(b). Case law has held that basically, if a jurisdiction is aware of CARAs features within its community, it cannot ignore or choose to set aside the designation of these features. The preeminent case law for CARAs is Citizens for Good Governance v. Walla Walla County, Case No. 09-1-001 Here is one example (emphasizing that this is intended to be BAS-driven, not merely copied from another community). This combines classification & designation. Please work with your Commerce planner if you need assistance with identifying other cities' codes that might be adaptable. [*See full comment in corresponding PDF for Auburn Municipal Code 16.10.080 excerpt*]	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.
56	DOH	16c	13.11.815	<u>Identification of CARAs</u> As noted in the draft, the Central Pierce SSA overlays much of Tacoma. Also in that area is the STGPD & numerous wellhead protection areas (WHPAs) that are depicted in Figure 1. The location & extent of these WHPAs appears to take into consideration only Tacoma Water's facilities, & doesn't quite capture all of these,). The duty to protect the quality & quantity of drinking water applies to all drinking water, not just a jurisdiction's own. There are several other WHPAs that overlay Tacoma too. All are shown & listed below, including Tacoma Water's. As you will see, most of these are within the SSA, but there are a couple outside of the area too. Together with the SSA & STGPD, all of the WHPAs should all be designated as CARAs.	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.

Count	Agency	Comment #	TMC Section	Comment or Comment Summary	Response
57	DOH	17	13.11.820	Protection The proposed standards should be restructured. The proposed use table merely allows or disallows uses. Instead, & tied to classification as discussed above, the code should incorporate a differentiated, more rigorous review for uses in high vulnerability areas, such as requiring a hydrogeological study that results in special conditions, while less vulnerable areas might rely on more general conditions such as best practices. Of course, the City could also selectively disallow any concerning uses based on classification.	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.
58	DOH	18	13.11.805	(this is intentionally out of order as it pairs with the section immediately below) As noted in the discussion of definitions below, delete proposed language "~~CARAs are defined under WAC 365-190-100 as areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water or is susceptible to reduced recharge~~" & relocate to definitions.	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.
59	DOH	19	13.11.900	It seems like something is amiss with the history. The revision notes for this section state it was repealed by Ord. 28613, Exhibit G (2019) & relocated to TMC 13.01.110. (This is also repeated in the revision notes for TMC 13.01.110.) However, this doesn't appear to have been part of Ord. 26813, Exhibit G or otherwise; this ordinance even adds a reference to "critical areas as defined in TMC 13.11" to the public nuisance code. Regardless, the "Critical Areas Preservation Definitions" do appear in Ch. 13.01.110 in the most current version of Title 13 (Tacoma City Clerk's webpage). Noting this isn't included in the review draft, has the City reviewed these definitions as part of the CAO update, in addition to Chapter 13.11 TMC, to determine if any changes are necessary? We suggest these amendments to the definitions: • Rename "~~Aquifer critical recharging areas~~" (13.01.110.A) to "Critical aquifer recharge area" & relocate to TMC 13.01.110.C. Change the definition from "~~Areas that, due to the presence of certain soils, geology, and surface water act to recharge groundwater by percolation~~" to "Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water or is susceptible to reduced recharge." Reference: WAC 365-190-100; this also reflects comment relocated language from proposed TMC 13.11.805 (see below). • 13.01.110.S Add "Sole source aquifer (SSA). Recharge areas for sole source aquifers designed by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. References: RCW 70A.135.020 & 90.54.140; WAC 173-304-100, -306-100, & 365-190-100. • 13.01.W Add "Wellhead protection areas (WHPAs). Protective areas associated with public drinking water sources established by water systems and approved or assigned by the state Department of Health." Reference: WAC 365-190-033(23)	Staff and consultants will work on revising the CARA specific code sections.

From: Atkins, Emily (ECY)
To: Spadoni, Lisa
Cc: Bolster-Grant, Robin
Subject: Ecology Review of City of Tacoma Draft CAO Update (PlanView Submittal #2025-S-9675)
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 2:50:38 PM
Attachments: ECYReview_CAO Update 2025 - Public Review Document - PC Public Hearing.pdf

Hello Lisa,

Thank you for giving Ecology the opportunity to provide feedback on City of Tacoma's draft CAO as part of the 60-day review period. We have provided our initial feedback on the wetland related provisions below as well as comments attached to your submitted draft to PlanView to make review easier. Most of our feedback is based on our Wetland Guidance for Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) Updates: Western and Eastern Washington which contains both guidance and sample ordinance language we recommend to local jurisdictions.

Ecology 1

13.11.190 Review Process.

D.2.b. All other critical areas are mentioned here except for wetlands. Is there a reason for that? We would recommend including wetlands here as well.

Ecology 2

13.11.210 Activities Allowed with Staff Review.

B.9. In our guidance, we don't extend the functionally disconnected buffer language to wetlands, only their buffers. If a wetland is disrupted by an existing obstruction the wetland on the other side could still be providing function to the landscape. We wouldn't recommend applying the language here to wetlands. In our wetland guidance we call this functionally disconnected buffers and the obstructions are called "significant developments". Some of this language appears very similar to our guidance. In this context however what is the meaning of "substantial improvement"? We would also suggest using the language from the guidance for clarity.

Ecology 3

B.10. Criteria aligns close with our guidance. However, we would recommend including the criteria that the trail be limited to 5 feet in width.

Ecology 4

13.11.230 Application Submittal Requirements.

A. If the director obtain "expert services to verify information" what are the expert services? Could this be changed to be qualified professionals as you have them defined in your code?

13.11.270 General Mitigation Requirements.

Ecology 5 C. Please refer to our sample language in our wetland guidance (Page A-16) where we give an example of what selecting a wetland mitigation site using a watershed approach might look like in a CAO. We recommend a watershed approach which doesn't prioritize the on-site mitigation as the use of a mitigation bank or other off-site location may be of better benefit to the functions and values of wetlands in the watershed.

Ecology 6 I. This added language regarding mitigation banks and ILF appears consistent with our guidance. However, the language in b. is unnecessary for ILFs. We would recommend removing this language. It might be good to update your definitions section with definitions for mitigation banks and ILF. We have example definitions for both in Appendix B of our wetland guidance.

Ecology 7 **13.11.280 Conditions, Notice on Title, and Appeals.**

A.14. For your subdivision language we do have some additional criteria you might consider from our sample ordinance:

"We recommend adding the following criteria for wetlands and buffers:

1. Land that is located wholly within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may not be subdivided
2. Land that is located partially within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may be subdivided provided that an accessible and contiguous portion of each new lot is:
a. Located outside of the wetland and buffer; and
b. Meets the minimum lot size requirements of [the zoning code]"

Ecology 8 **13.11.320 Wetland Buffers.**

A.General TMC 13.11.120 B.3 and B.4 is the small wetland exemption language that appears based on our wetland CAO Guidance criteria. While CAT IV wetlands 4,000 sqf or less can be exempt from the avoidance and minimization steps of the mitigation sequence it doesn't exempt them from the buffer provisions per our guidance. However, if those wetlands are 1,000 sqf (as stated in B.4) or less our guidance does say that they may be exempt from the buffer provisions.
We would recommend that only the wetlands that meet the applicable criteria under TMC 13.11.210 B.4 be exempt from buffer requirements to align closer to our guidance.

In addition to reviewing your CAO submitted to PlanView we noticed that your definitions section had been moved to another part of the code. We have some additional

recommendations for your wetland related definitions that you might consider.

Ecology 9

13.01.110.A

We recommend defining existing and ongoing agriculture in your code to make a distinction between when land is considered agricultural use. We recommend the following language from the example CAO from our guidance:

> "Agricultural activities, existing and ongoing: Those activities conducted on lands defined in RCW 84-34-020(2), and those activities involved in the production of crops and livestock, including but not limited to operation, maintenance and conservation measures of farm and stock ponds or drainage ditches, irrigation systems, changes between agricultural activities, and normal operation, maintenance or repair of existing serviceable structures, facilities or improved areas. Activities that bring an area into agricultural use are not part of an ongoing activity. An operation ceases to be ongoing when the area in which it was conducted is proposed for conversion to a nonagricultural use or has lain idle for a period of longer than five years, unless the idle land is registered in a federal or state soils conservation program."

Ecology 10

13.01.110.B

The Best Available Science (BAS) definition appears consistent with GMA requirements however points to examples of BAS collected in to a document from 2002. This is may be outdated unless updated and we would recommend that it be removed from the definition.

Ecology 11

13.01.110.I

Recommend changing Isolated Wetland definition to our Non-Federally Regulated language:

> "Non-federally regulated wetland: A wetland that is not jurisdictional under the federal Clean Water Act. Sometimes referred to as "isolated wetlands," these wetlands remain regulated under state and local laws and rules, whether or not they are protected by federal law."

We hope this feedback will be useful as you continue to work on your draft CAO update. We would like to go over our comments with you to address any questions or concerns that you might have. Please let me know when there will a good time to meet and go over our comments.

Best,

Emily Atkins
She/Her
Critical Areas Ordinance Coordinator

Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
WA State Dept of Ecology
emily.atkins@ecy.wa.gov **| 360-628-6680**

Exhibit A

CHAPTER 13.11
CRITICAL AREAS PRESERVATION

Sections:

13.11.100 General Provisions.
13.11.110 Purpose.
13.11.120 Intent.
13.11.130 Scope and Applicability.
13.11.140 Regulated Uses/Activities.
13.11.145 Pre-existing Uses/Structures.
13.11.150 *Repealed*.
13.11.160 Abrogation and Greater Restrictions.
13.11.170 Severability.
13.11.180 Critical Area Designation and SEPA.
13.11.190 Review Process.
13.11.200 Allowed Activities.
13.11.210 Activities Allowed with Staff Review.
13.11.220 Application Types.
13.11.230 Application Submittal Requirements.
13.11.240 Legal Test(s).
13.11.250 General Standards.
13.11.260 Residential Density Credits.
13.11.270 General Mitigation Requirements.
13.11.280 Conditions, Notice on Title, and Appeals.
13.11.290 Sureties.
13.11.300 Wetlands.
13.11.310 Wetland Classification.
13.11.320 Wetland Buffers.
13.11.330 Wetland Buffer Modifications.
13.11.340 Wetland Mitigation Requirements.
13.11.350 *Repealed*.
13.11.360 *Repealed*.
13.11.400 Streams and Riparian Habitats.
13.11.410 Stream Classification.
13.11.420 Stream Buffers.
13.11.430 Stream Buffer Modifications.
13.11.440 Stream Standards.
13.11.450 Stream Mitigation Requirements.
13.11.500 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs).
13.11.510 Classification.
13.11.520 Standards.
13.11.530 *Repealed*.
13.11.540 *Repealed*.
13.11.550 FWHCA Modification.
13.11.560 FWHCA Biodiversity Area and Corridor Mitigation.
13.11.580 *Repealed*.
13.11.600 Flood Hazard Areas.
13.11.610 Classification.
13.11.620 Standards.
13.11.640 General Development Standards.
13.11.700 Geologically Hazardous Areas.
13.11.710 Designation.
13.11.715 Applicability.
13.11.720 Classification.
13.11.730 General Development Standards.
13.11.800 Aquifer Recharge Areas.

Note: Code correction not included in spreadsheet. Please address directly

Exhibit A

13.11.810 Classification.
13.11.815 Applicability.
13.11.820 Standards.
13.11.900 ***Repealed.***

13.11.100 General Provisions

The 100 and 200 sections contain the general provisions.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27912 Ex. A; passed Aug. 10, 2010: Ord. 27893 Ex. A; passed Jun. 15, 2010)

13.11.110 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare by establishing a regulatory scheme based on Best Available Science that classifies, protects, and preserves Tacoma's critical areas; by providing standards to manage development in association with these areas; and by designating some of these areas as environmentally sensitive in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Many critical areas provide a variety of valuable and beneficial biological and physical functions that benefit the City and its residents, while others may pose a threat to human safety, or to public and private property.

(Ord. 27431 § 13; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.120 Intent.

A. Critical areas include critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (FWHCAs), flood hazard areas, geologically hazardous areas, ~~stream corridors,~~ and wetlands. These critical areas serve many important ecological functions. Many of the critical areas in Tacoma have been lost or degraded through past development. Tacoma, as an urban growth area, is experiencing increasing growth and its land resource is diminishing. This increasing growth and diminishing land resource is creating pressure for the development of critical areas. New construction technology is also creating pressure on these sites by making development feasible on sites where it was formerly impractical to build.

B. Because of the ecological benefits of critical areas, their past destruction and historical functional loss, and the increasing pressure to develop them, the intent of this chapter is to ensure that the City's remaining critical areas are preserved and protected and that activities in or adjacent to these areas are managed. The preservation standards are provisions designed to protect critical areas from degradation. These criteria and standards will secure the public health, safety, and welfare by:

1. Protecting members of the public and public resources and facilities from injury, loss of life, or property damage due to landslides and steep slope failures, erosion, seismic events, volcanic eruptions, flooding or similar events;

2. Maintaining healthy, functioning ecosystems through the protection of ground and surface waters, wetlands, ~~and~~ fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to conserve biodiversity of plant and animal species;

3. Preventing cumulative adverse impacts to c~~C~~ritical a~~A~~reas including the prevention of net loss of wetlands;~~.~~

4. Providing open space and aesthetic value;

5. Providing migratory pathways for fish and wildlife;

6. Giving special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries;

7. Providing unique urban wilds that serve as natural laboratories for schools and the general public;

8. Avoiding public expenditures to correct damaged or degraded critical ecosystems;

9. Alerting appraisers, assessors, owners, potential buyers, or lessees to the potential presence of a critical ecosystem and possible development limitations; and

Exhibit A

10. Providing City officials with information, direction, and authority to protect critical areas and ecosystems when evaluating development proposals.

11. Support and encourage voluntary restoration and projects designed to achieve net ecological gain.

(Ord. 28725 Ex. A; passed Dec. 8, 2020: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 14; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.130 Scope and Applicability.

A. The provisions of this chapter apply to all lands and waters, all land uses and development activities, and all structures and facilities in the City, whether or not a permit or authorization is required, and shall apply to every person, firm, partnership, corporation, group, governmental agency, or other entity that owns, leases, or administers land within the City. This chapter applies to all critical areas outside of the Shoreline District. This chapter specifically applies to any activity which would destroy vegetation; result in a significant change in critical habitat, water temperature, physical, or chemical characteristics; or alter natural contours and/or substantially alter existing patterns of tidal, sediment, or storm water flow on any land which meets the classification standards for any critical area defined herein. In addition, this chapter applies to all public or private actions, permits, and approvals in or adjacent to a critical area and its buffer, management area, or ~~geo-~~setback including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Building permits;
2. Clearing and grading permits;
3. Forest practices permits;
4. Land Use permits;
5. Subdivision and short subdivisions;
6. Binding site plans;
7. Zoning amendments;
8. Creation of tax parcels.

B. Critical areas outside a shoreline district that involve a development activity that is reviewed, pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC (Development Regulation Agreements), except for projects identified in subsection 13.05.050.B.4 TMC, shall be considered during the Development Regulation Agreement review process; a separate critical areas permit is not required. Any approval(s) pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC shall, to the maximum extent feasible, avoid potential impacts to critical areas, and any unavoidable impacts to critical areas shall be fully mitigated, either on- or off-site.

(Ord. 28725 Ex. A; passed Dec. 8, 2020: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28180 Ex. E; passed Oct. 15, 2013: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27877 Ex. A; passed Mar. 2, 2010: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 15; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.140 Regulated Uses/Activities.

Pursuant to the requirements of this chapter, a site review or permit shall be obtained prior to undertaking any of the following activities in or adjacent to ~~C~~critical ~~A~~areas and their associated buffer, ~~geo-~~setback, or management area, unless otherwise covered under Sections 13.11.200 and 13.11.210. Compliance with the provisions of this~~e~~ chapter does not constitute compliance with other federal, state, and local regulations and permit requirements that may be required (for example, Shoreline Permits, ~~H~~Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permits, Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits, Ecology Section 401 permits, NPDES permits). The applicant is responsible for complying with these requirements, apart from the process established in this chapter Where applicable, the Designated Official will encourage use of information such as permit applications to other agencies or special studies prepared in response to other regulatory requirements to support required documentation submitted for critical areas review.

Exhibit A

A. Filling, placing, or dumping any soil, loam, peat, sand, gravel, rock, chemical substance, refuse, trash, rubbish, debris, or dredge material;

B. Excavating, dredging, grading or clearing any soil, loam, peat, sand, gravel, rock, vegetation, trees, or mineral substance;

C. Discharge of hazardous substances, including, but not limited to heavy metals, pesticides, petroleum products, or secondary effluent;

D. Any act which results in draining, flooding, or disturbing the water level or table;

E. Exterior alteration, construction, demolition, or reconstruction of a building, structure or infrastructure, including driving pilings or placing obstructions;

F. Destroying or altering vegetation through clearing, harvesting, shading, pruning, impacting the critical root zone of trees, or planting vegetation that would alter the character of the site; and

G. Any act or use which would destroy natural vegetation; result in significant change in water level, water temperature, physical, or chemical characteristics of the wetland or stream; substantially alter the existing pattern of tidal flow, obstruct the flow of sediment, or alter the natural contours of a site.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018:Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27813 Ex. E; passed Jun. 30, 2009: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 16; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.145 Pre-existing Uses/Structures.

A. An established use or existing structure that was lawfully permitted prior to adoption of this chapter, but which is not in compliance with this chapter, may continue subject to the provisions of Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Chapter 13.11 Critical Areas Preservation and Section 13.06.010.L.

B. Except as otherwise required by law, a legal pre-existing use or structure may continue unchanged; or modified only where the use or structure becomes less non-conforming, and where the modification will increase the buffer, and increase the functions of the critical area.

C. All modifications for pre-existing uses/structures shall conform to the current code provision to the maximum extent possible as determined by the Director of Planning and Development Services.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012)

13.11.150 *Repealed by Ord. 27728.* Allowed Activities.

(Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 17; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.160 Abrogation and Greater Restrictions.

A. It is not intended that this chapter repeal, abrogate, or impair any existing regulations, easements, covenants, or deed restrictions. However, where this chapter imposes greater restrictions, provisions of this chapter shall prevail.

B. Where one site is classified as containing two or more critical areas, the project shall meet the minimum standards and requirements for each identified critical area set forth in this chapter.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 18; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.170 Severability.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such order or judgment shall

be confined in its operation to the controversy in which it was rendered and shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of any part thereof to any other person or circumstances, and to this end, the provisions of each clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this chapter are hereby declared to be severable.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27995 Ex. I; passed Jun. 14, 2011: Ord. 27813 Ex. E; passed Jun. 30, 2009: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 19; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.180 Critical Area Designation and SEPA.

A. Pursuant to WAC 197-11-908 and Section 13.12.930 of the TMC, critical aquifer recharge areas (CARAs), fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (FWHCAs), flood hazard areas, geologically hazard areas, and wetlands, ~~and streams~~ are hereby designated as critical areas. Many of these areas are mapped on Tacoma's Generalized Critical Areas Maps available online and managed by ~~in~~ the Planning and Development Services Department and the Tacoma IT-GIS Department or as defined by this chapter. The following SEPA categorical exemptions shall not apply within these areas, unless the changes or alterations are confined to the interior of an existing structure or unless the project does not require a permit under this chapter: Section 13.12.310 of the TMC and the following subsections of WAC 197-11-800(1)(b); (2)(d) excluding landscaping, (e), (f), and (g); (3); 24(a), (b), (c), and (d).

B. The scope of environmental review of actions within critical areas shall be limited to: (a) documenting whether the proposal is consistent with the requirements of this chapter; and (b) evaluating potentially significant impacts on the critical area resources not adequately addressed by development regulations, if any, including any additional mitigation measures needed to protect the critical areas in order to achieve consistency with SEPA and other applicable environmental review laws.

(Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 20; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.190 Review Process.

A. The Review Process is used to determine whether a critical area, buffer, management area, or ~~geo~~ setback is present on or adjacent to a proposal, and whether additional review or permitting is required.

Critical areas may be located through the use of information from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, the United States Geological Survey, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Coastal Zone Atlas, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife stream maps and Priority Habitat and Species maps, Washington DNR Aquatic Lands maps and geologic mapping, the National Wetlands Inventory maps, Tacoma topography maps, the City's Generalized Wetland and Critical Areas Inventory maps, and Pierce County Assessor's maps to establish general locations and/or verify the location of any critical area on site. The City's Generalized Wetland and Critical Area Inventory maps and other above-listed sources are only guidelines available for reference. The City maps are not exhaustive, and other areas meeting the definition or intent will be included. The actual location of critical areas must be determined by a qualified professional as defined under TMC 13.01.110.Q on a site-by-site basis according to the classification criteria.

The City may utilize information from any source referred to above or available in order to establish general locations and/or to verify the location of any critical area. The City may conduct peer review following submittal review procedures under TMC 13.11.230.A.

B. Site Review.

In order to assist customers with potential proposals, City staff will provide an initial site review based on existing information, maps and a potential site visit to identify potential critical areas, and their associated buffers/~~geo~~ setbacks or management areas within 300 feet. The review area may be expanded where priority species or habitat are present. Site reviews are completed on a case by case basis and may require the applicant to submit a critical areas assessment.

Following the Ssite ~~visit and~~ Review Process, a project may proceed without further critical area permitting if the applicant can demonstrate the following:

1. There are no adverse impacts to the critical area or buffer, ~~geo~~ setback, or management area, and

Exhibit A

2. Structures and alterations are all located outside the critical area and beyond the required buffers or management areas, and

3. Existing hydrology will be maintained to support critical areas, and

4. The proposed use or activity is consistent with WDFW priority habitats and species management recommendations.

C. In conjunction with the site review process, the Director of Planning and Development Services (the "Director"; see 13.01.110.D) may require additional information on the physical, biological, and anthropogenic features that contribute to the existing ecological conditions and functions to determine whether a formal critical area permit is required.

D. Review, Assessment and Permit Requirements.

1. Review of development activities within the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act, including Puget Sound, Wapato Lake, or any stream where the mean annual flow is 20 cubic feet per second or greater are regulated under provisions of TMC Title 19 [1] and the Tacoma Shoreline Master Program. Upon adoption of the new Shoreline Master Program on October 15, 2013, all code excerpts referring to the regulation of critical areas within the shoreline will no longer be valid and those critical areas shall be regulated under the new shoreline code TMC Title 19 ~~[2]~~.[1]

2. Review of development activities outside the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act.

a. Regulated activities are subject to the application submittal requirements of TMC 13.11.230.

b. Regulated activities that require a land use or building/site development permit do not require a separate Critical Areas permit to review for potential impacts to a FWHCA Management Area, Geologically Hazardous Area, ~~or~~ Flood Hazard Area, or Critical Aquifer Recharge Area provided:

(1) There are no other critical areas, such as a wetlands, streams, ~~or~~ Biodiversity Areas/Corridors, Oregon White Oak, or their associated buffers found on the site that would require a permit under this chapter, and

(2) If a FWHCA Management Area is found on the project site, the applicant complies with applicable WDFW species management recommendation or with an approved Habitat Management Plan (HMP) submitted by the applicant.

(3) If a Geologically Hazardous Area is found on the project site, the applicant complies with applicable prescriptive requirements and minimum standards of TMC 13.11.700 and follows the recommendations of their geotechnical expert, or

(4) If a Flood Hazard Area is found on the project site, the applicant complies with the applicable prescriptive requirements and minimum standards contained within TMC 13.11.600.

(5) If a CARA is present on the project site, the applicant complies with the applicable prescriptive requirements and minimum standards of TMC 13.11.800.

c~~b~~. Regulated activities that do not require a land use or building/site development permit may require a separate Critical Area review and/or permit under this Chapter.

d~~c~~. Per TMC 13.11.160, where multiple critical areas are present the project shall meet the minimum standards and requirements for each critical area including requirements for permitting. A separate critical area permit may be required when impacts cannot be avoided or the project cannot meet the standards of this chapter.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 21; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

All other critical areas are mentioned here except for wetlands. Is there a particular reason for that? We would recommend including wetlands here as well.

[1] Code reviser's note: Title 13.10 was repealed and a new Title 19, entitled "Shoreline Master Program", was enacted per Ordinance No. 28612.
~~[2] Code reviser's note: Title 13.10 was repealed and a new Title 19, entitled "Shoreline Master Program", was enacted per Ordinance No. 28612.~~

Exhibit A

13.11.200 Allowed Activities.

A. Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to allow certain activities that are unlikely to result in critical area impacts. The activities must comply with the protective standards of this chapter and provisions of other local, state, and federal laws. All activities shall use reasonable methods to avoid and minimize impacts. Any incidental damage to, or alteration of, a critical area, ~~geo~~ setback, management area or buffer, shall be restored or replaced at the responsible party's expense.

B. The following activities may occur without City review or approval in compliance with the purpose stated above.

1. The maintenance and repair of legally existing utilities, roads, structures, or facilities used in the service of the public provided such work does not expand the footprint of the facility or right-of-way or alter any regulated critical area or buffer. Activities must be in compliance with the current City Stormwater Management Manual and Regional Road Maintenance Manual and provide all known and reasonable protection methods for the critical area.

2. The maintenance and repair of legally existing roads, structures, or facilities used in the service of the public to provide stormwater services may occur provided such work is in compliance with the current City Stormwater Management Manual and Regional Road Maintenance Manual and provides all known and reasonable protection methods for the critical area, and does not expand further into the critical area.

3. Holding basins and detention ponds that are part of the municipalities stormwater system are exempt from the permit provisions of this chapter when such holding basin or detention pond is controlled by an engineered outlet.

4. Maintenance of legally existing structures, accessways, trails, promenades, stairways, parking lots, and landscaping provided such work does not expand the foot print of the structure or right-of-way and does not alter any regulated critical area or buffer.

5. Passive recreational activities, educational activities and scientific research including, but not limited to, fishing, bird watching, walking or hiking and non-motorized boating.

6. The following can be removed by hand or hand-held light equipment provided that appropriate methods are used to protect native vegetation. Removal methods may be found in the information and materials published by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board ~~Green Tacoma Partnership Habitat Steward Field Guide~~.

a. English Ivy may be removed from plants on which is adhered or rolled up off the ground provided ground disturbance is minimal and does not cause erosion.

b. Regulated noxious weeds as listed on the Pierce County noxious weed list that are required to be eradicated (Class A and Class B) as specified by the Pierce County Noxious Weed Board.

c. Invasive species removal in a critical area or buffer when the total area is 1,000 square feet or less and slopes are less than 25%.

d. Refuse and debris.

7. Native vegetation planting in a critical area buffer or Biodiversity Area/Corridor when the total area is 1,000 square feet or less, slopes are less than 25% and a City approved planting plan is utilized.

8. The following voluntary actions can be conducted by hand or with light equipment by Public Agencies with expertise in critical area restoration and enhancement:

a. Native planting and invasive species removal in a critical area or buffer when the total area is 5,000 square feet or less and slopes are less than 15%.

b. Native planting and invasive species removal in a critical area or buffer when the total area is 2,000 square feet or less and slopes are between 15% and 25%.

9. On-site response, removal or remedial action undertaken pursuant to the Federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), or remedial actions undertaken pursuant to a state Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) order, agreed order or consent decree, or a Department of

Homeland Security order that preempt local regulations in the findings of the order. Any subsequent use or redevelopment of the property may be eligible for modification of requirements in this chapter when they are in conflict with the order, such as re-vegetation that would disturb a protective cap placed to contain contaminated soils.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28336 Ex. C; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27893 Ex. A; passed Jun. 15, 2010: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 22; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.210 Activities Allowed with Staff Review.

A. Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to allow City staff review to determine whether potential impacts to a critical area, buffer, management area, or ~~geo-~~setback may occur, without requiring a critical area permit. The staff review will ensure the activity meets the specific criteria below.

B. The following activities require review by City staff. Review and authorization may occur over-the-counter or staff may issue a letter of approval with conditions. Additional information and studies may be requested. Activities must comply with the protective standards of this chapter and provisions of other local, state, and federal laws. Any incidental damage to, or alteration of, a critical area shall be restored or replaced at the responsible party's expense.

1. Emergencies.

Those activities necessary to prevent an immediate threat to public health, safety, or welfare or pose an immediate risk of damage to private property and that require remedial or preventative action in a timeframe too short to allow for normal processing. Emergency actions that create an impact to a critical area or its buffer shall use best management practices to address the emergency and, in addition, the action must have the least possible impact to the critical area or its buffer.

The person or agency undertaking such action shall notify the City within one (1) working day following the commencement of the emergency activity. The City shall determine if the action taken was within the scope of an emergency action and following that determination, may require the action to be processed in accordance with all provisions of this chapter including the application of appropriate permits within thirty (30) days of the impact. The emergency exemption may be rescinded at any time upon the determination by the City that the action was not, or is no longer necessary.

After the emergency, the person or agency undertaking the action shall fully fund and conduct necessary mitigative actions including, but not limited to, restoration and rehabilitation or other appropriate mitigation for any impacts to the critical area and buffers resulting from the emergency action in accordance with an approved mitigation plan. All mitigation activities must take place within one (1) year following the emergency action and impact to the critical area, or within a timeframe approved by the City and reflected within an approved schedule. Monitoring will be required as specified in the General Mitigation Requirements (Section 13.11.270).

2. Maintenance and repair of legally existing utilities, roads, structures, or facilities used in the service of the public may occur following review where alteration of the critical area or buffer is unavoidable. All activities must be in compliance with the current City Stormwater Management Manual and Regional Road Maintenance Manual and provide all known and reasonable protection methods for the critical area and shall not expand further into the critical area.

3. Wetlands that meet the following criteria are not subject to the avoidance and minimization requirements of the mitigation sequence (TMC 13.11.270) in accordance with the following provisions, and they may be filled if the impacts are fully mitigated based on remaining actions in TMC 13.11.270.F.3 through 6. Any wetland fill would also require federal and/or state permits consistent with TMC 13.11.140.

a. ~~Isolated~~ All ~~Category III or~~ Category IV wetlands, which have been classified and identified as having a total cumulative area of less than 4~~1~~,000 square feet, regardless of property lines ~~are exempt from the provision of this Chapter~~ provided they:

(1) ~~a.~~ Are of low habitat function (score less than 6~~20~~ points using the wetland rating system per TMC 13.11.310~~Washington Wetlands Rating System for Western Washington~~).

Exhibit A

(2) ~~b.~~ Are ~~hydrologically isolated~~not part of riparian areas or their buffers~~I.~~ ~~and~~

(3) A~~a~~re not part of a mosaic wetland system (TMC 13.01.110.M), unless the entire mosaic wetland system meets the other criteria in subsection (3)(a) of this section.

(34)~~c.~~ Are not associated with a s~~S~~horeline of the state or their associated buffer, ~~or a wetland that is part of a riparian habitat area, or designated Biodiversity Area/Corridor,~~ and

(45) ~~d.~~ Are not associated with a FWHCA~~critical habitat to local populations of priority species~~.

4. Category IV wetlands less than 1,000 square feet that meet the ~~above~~ criteria of subsection (3)(a) of this section are exempt from mitigation sequencing and the buffer provisions contained in this Chapter. Any wetland fill would also require federal and/or state permits consistent with TMC 13.11.140.

54. Geotechnical investigation activities may be performed, provided that an access plan, protection measures, best management practices, and restoration are utilized to protect and maintain the critical area where possible. These items must be included with the application.

65. Reconstruction or exterior remodeling, of existing structures and accessory structures provided that disturbance of native vegetation is kept to a minimum and any vegetation that is disturbed shall be replaced. This shall not apply to reconstruction which is proposed as a result of structural damage associated with a critical area, such as slope failure in a landslide hazard area or flooding in a flood hazard area.

76. One-time expansion of existing structures and accessory structures, provided that expansion of the developed footprint within the critical area or buffer does not increase by more than 25 percent and that the new construction or related use extends away from the critical area; keeps disturbance of native vegetation to a minimum; and replaces native vegetation that may be disturbed This expansion may also occur in a direction parallel to the critical area if the expansion takes place upon existing impervious surfaces. A Notice on Title must be recorded to be eligible for staff review and approval.

87. Maintenance and repair of existing retaining walls and bioengineered stabilization measures designed to protect property from erosion.

98. Interrupted wetland, stream, FWHCA, or buffers.

a. Where a legally established, pre-existing use of the critical area or buffer exists, those proposed activities that are within the critical area or buffer but are separated from the remaining critical area by a permanent substantial improvement, or are located in an existing permanent substantial improvement, may be allowed provided that the detrimental impact to the critical area does not increase. The permanent substantial improvement must serve to eliminate or greatly reduce the impact of the proposed activity upon the critical area. However, if the impacts do increase, the City shall determine if additional buffer may be required along the impact area of the interruption. Substantial improvements may include developed public infrastructure (roads, railroads, dikes, and levees) and buildings. Substantial improvements may not include paved trails, sidewalks, parking areas, or bulkheads. Review may require a functional analysis report for the type of critical area buffer that is affected. In determining whether a functional analysis is necessary, the City shall consider the hydrologic, geologic, and/or biological habitat connection potential and the extent and permanence of the interruption.

b. Where a legally established, pre-existing structure or use is located within a regulated biodiversity area/corridor or buffer and where the area is fully paved and does not conform to the interrupted provision above, the biodiversity area/corridor or buffer will end at the edge of pavement.

109. Construction of pedestrian trails within the buffer of a Critical Area or within a Biodiversity Area/Corridor is permitted, subject to the following criteria:

a. The trail is constructed of pervious material such as bark chip or equivalent.

b. The trail does not cross or alter any regulated drainage features or waters of the state.

c. The trail shall be located within the outer quarter (¼) edge of the buffer, where possible, with the exception for limited viewing platforms.

d. The trail system discourages pedestrians from using informal trails that are not part of the designated trail system.

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

In our guidance, we don't extend the functionally disconnected buffer language to wetlands, only their buffers. If a wetland is disrupted by an existing obstruction the wetland on the other side could still be providing function to the landscape. We wouldn't recommend applying the language here to wetlands. In our wetland guidance we call this functionally disconnected buffers and the obstructions are called "significant developments". Some of this language appears very similar to our guidance. In this context however what is the meaning of "substantial improvement"? We would also suggest using the language from the guidance for clarity.

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

Criteria aligns close with our guidance. However, we would recommend including the criteria that the trail be limited to 5 feet in width.

e. The trail is designed to avoid human disturbance to priority species and priority habitat. Trails constructed in Biodiversity Areas/Corridors shall avoid the most sensitive areas and species and must maintain a contiguous and unfragmented corridor for wildlife movement. Expansion of existing trail systems must demonstrate that the expansion will not result in additional disruption of wildlife movement and will avoid the most sensitive areas and species.

f. Low impact trails shall not be later widened or upgraded to impervious trails that encourage activities with greater impacts without additional review and required permitting.

g. Informational signs are required at trail heads, at a minimum, and are subject to City approval.

11~~10~~. Voluntary enhancement or restoration of a critical area or buffer that exceeds the provisions above in 13.11.200.B.6, 7, or 8 may be allowed if the activity meets the requirements of this section.

a. Individual projects

(1) Enhancement activities shall be limited to planting native vegetation, controlling noxious and invasive species and providing minor habitat structures such as nest boxes.

(2) Activities shall not include grading or water control structures.

(3) A planting plan containing information on vegetation species, quantities, and general location of planting areas including the identification of wetlands, streams, and their buffers, is required for review.

(4) Proper erosion control measures are provided.

(5) If equipment, other than hand-held equipment is utilized, list the type of equipment, methods and best management practices to prevent unnecessary impacts.

b. Community Projects

Multi-party projects are encouraged. These projects shall not include new destination facilities or high-intensity recreation facilities as described in 13.06.080.L. The applicants may propose a programmatic approach pertaining to multiple sites and on-going restoration and enhancement activities as well as maintenance. A City approved habitat management template or equivalent must be provided that has been reviewed and approved by all property owners. In addition, the project is subject to the following:

(1) The primary focus is preservation and increase in biological functions through the preservation and improvement of habitat, species diversity and natural features.

(2) Preserves and connects critical areas.

(3) Includes goals, objectives, and measur~~e~~able performance standards.

(4) Includes a monitoring plan and contingency plan.

(5) Trails shall comply with the provisions in Section 13.11.210.B.9.

(6) Buildings and paved surfaces shall be located outside of wetlands and streams and their buffers. When located in a Biodiversity Area/Corridor, buildings or paved surfaces must be located in the least sensitive area and must maintain a contiguous and unfragmented corridor for wildlife passage.

(7) Picnic Tables, benches, and signage are allowed when they are located to avoid and minimize impacts.

(8) A maintenance plan that describes the proper techniques and methods used for on-going maintenance and preservation. The plan should address maintenance of any buildings and improvements such as picnic areas, as well as restoration and enhancement areas.

(9) The identification of a trained habitat steward who will be responsible for overseeing volunteers, employees, and/or contractors for all aspects of the project.

12~~11~~. Hazard trees.

Exhibit A

The removal of hazard trees from the critical area or buffer/~~geo~~ setback that are posing a threat to public safety, or posing an imminent risk of damage to an existing structure, public or private road or sidewalk, or other permanent improvement, may be allowed following City staff review, or provided that a report from a certified arborist, landscape architect or professional forester is submitted to the City for review and approval. The report must include an evaluation for tree stabilization potential and removal techniques for the hazard tree and procedures for protecting the surrounding critical area and replacement of native trees. Where possible, the hazard tree shall be left as a standing snag and the cut portions shall be left within the critical area as habitat unless removal is warranted due to fire hazard, disease, or pest control.

132. Tree Pruning.

a. Tree pruning may be allowed provided a report from a qualified professional(s) ~~certified arborist, landscape architect or professional forester regarding the health of the tree~~ is submitted to the City for review and approval. It must include the following:

(1) An analysis that concludes that the pruning will not result in long term damage or degradation of tree health.

(2)~~, and a~~A functional impact analysis ~~from a qualified professional~~ evaluating the functions of the critical area as a result of the pruning~~, is also submitted to the City for review and approval~~.

b. No topping, complete removal or impacts to the health of the tree shall be allowed.

143. Watershed restoration projects that conform to the provisions of RCW 89.08.460 shall be reviewed without fee and approved within 45 days per RCW 89.08.490.

154. Fish habitat enhancement projects that conform to the provision of RCW 77.55.181 shall be reviewed without fee and comments provided as specified in RCW 77.55.181.

165. Demolition of structures.

(Ord. 28725 Ex. A; passed Dec. 8, 2020: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28376 Ex. E; passed Aug. 16, 2016: Ord. 28336 Ex. C; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 23; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.220 Application Types.

A. This chapter allows three types of Critical Area applications, which result in the issuance of an administratively appealable decision consistent with Chapter 13.05. After the appeal period expires, the Director's approved decision becomes the official permit. Programmatic Restoration Projects processed under either the Minor Development Permit or the Development Permit may qualify for additional time extensions according to 13.05.120. See TMC 13.11.190.D. to determine if a critical areas permit is required in addition to any other required land use or development permit.

B. The three types of permits are as follows:

1. Verification. Critical Area Verification.

An applicant may request verification of a wetland, or stream, or FWHCA on the subject site or within 300 feet of the subject site without submitting plans for a specific project. A verification request may include presence, a boundary determination through wetland delineation, ~~or~~ an Ordinary High Water Mark determination, or a FWHCA determination. A verification request may also include the jurisdictional status of a critical area. ~~The critical area verification is valid for five (5) years from the date of the decision.~~

2. Minor Development Permit.

A Minor Development permit may be issued when an applicant cannot meet the minimum buffer requirements or where the Director determines that the proposal will result in temporary, minor, or de-minimis impacts to the buffer or critical area. The Director will consider the size of the area affected, the sensitivity of the critical area and/or presence of priority species and habitat when determining whether the impact is temporary, minor, or de-minimis. The project must comply with the following:

Exhibit A

a. The project will not result in a permanent impact to the critical area that would require compensatory mitigation; and

b. Mitigation is provided to restore the site to pre-development conditions, including the maintenance of pre-development hydrological conditions and vegetation conditions.

c. For buffer modification, the project meets the following:

(1) Buffer averaging as allowed within Sections 13.11.330 and 13.11.430.~~; or~~

~~(2) Buffer reduction as allowed within Section 13.11.330.~~

d. For FWHCA Biodiversity Areas/Corridors, the project meets the following:

(1) The project will meet the minimum standards in Section 13.11.550.E.1.

3. Development Permit.

A decision will be issued where, the Director determines that avoidance and minimization have not eliminated all impacts and compensatory mitigation will be required as a result of the proposal.

a. The applicant must meet the requirements of one of two ~~three~~ legal tests; No Practicable Alternatives, ~~Public Interest or~~ Reasonable Use, and

b. Demonstrate Mitigation Sequencing, and

c. Provide mitigation as required in accordance with this Chapter.

(Ord. 28725 Ex. A; passed Dec. 8, 2020: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 24; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.230 Application Submittal Requirements.

A. The purpose of information submittal and review is to require a level of study sufficient to protect critical areas and/or the public from hazards. All information submitted shall be reviewed as to its validity and may be rejected as incomplete or incorrect. Additional information or electronic copies of all information may be requested for review and to ensure compliance. ~~In the event of conflicts regarding information submitted, t~~The Director may, at the applicant's expense, obtain expert services to verify information.

B. The following items are required for permit review and approval, where applicable depending upon the critical area, the project and permit type, and as determined necessary by City staff.

1. A Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application and vicinity map for the project.

2. A surveyed site plan that includes the following:

a. Parcel line(s), north arrow, scale and two foot contours.

b. Location and square footage for existing and proposed site improvements including, utilities, stormwater and drainage facilities, construction and clearing limits, and off-site improvements. Include the amounts and specifications for all draining, excavation, filling, grading or dredging.

c. The location and specifications of barrier fencing, silt fencing and other erosion control measures.

d. Base flood elevation, floodplain type and boundary and floodways, if site is within a floodplain.

e. Critical Areas including all surveyed, delineated wetland boundaries, and the ordinary high water mark of any stream and their buffers, and all Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas (FWHCA), and any FWHCA Management Areas, as well as floodplain boundary, and top and toe of slopes related to geologically hazardous areas. Wetland and stream delineations may be documented with a professional survey or an equivalent professional method using GPS with sub-meter accuracy. The allowance for the use of GPS in wetland and stream delineations does not preclude the City's ability to require the critical area to be documented with a professional survey for purposes of verifying buffer distances from structures and

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

If the director obtain "expert services to verify information" what are the expert services? Could this be changed to be qualified professionals as you have them defined in your code?

Exhibit A

critical area boundaries associated with development approvals, or other applicable requirements such as Notice on Title requirements.

f. The square footage of the existing critical areas and buffers located on-site and the location and square footage of any impacted areas.

g. Locations of all data collection points used for the field delineation and general location of off-site critical areas and any buffer that extends onto the project site. Include location and dominant species for significantly vegetated areas and general location for habitat types.

h. The location and square footage of impact areas, mitigation areas and remaining critical areas and buffers, ~~geo-~~setbacks or management areas; including areas proposed for buffer modification.

3. Critical Areas report prepared by a qualified professional as defined in 13.01.110.Q. The analysis shall be commensurate with the sensitivity of the critical area, relative to the scale of potential impacts and consistent with best available science. Critical Areas reports are valid for no more than five years or provided that no substantial changes have occurred to the critical area. The report must include the following where appropriate:

a. Delineation, characterization and square footage for critical areas on or within 300 feet of the project area and proposed buffer(s). Delineation and characterization is based on the entire critical area. The review distance may be expanded for priority species. When a critical area is located or extends off-site and cannot be accessed, estimate off-site conditions using the best available information and appropriate methodologies.

(1) Wetland Delineations will be conducted in accordance with the approved federal manual and applicable regional supplements.

(2) The wetland characterization shall include physical, chemical, and biological processes performed as well as aesthetic, and economic values and must use a method recognized by local or state agencies. Include hydrogeomorphic and Cowardin wetland type.

(3) Ordinary high water mark determination shall be in accordance with the National Ordinary High Water Mark Field Determination Manual for Rivers and Streams by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC/CRREL TR-25-1), Determining the Ordinary High Water Mark for Shoreline Management Act Compliance in Washington State (Ecology Publication 16-06-029), or other ~~applicable~~ agency approved methodology.~~methodology from the Department of Ecology.~~

(4) Priority species and habitat identification shall be prepared according to professional standards and guidance from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Depending on the type of priority species, the review area may extend beyond 300 feet.

b. Field data sheets for all fieldwork performed on the site. The field assessment shall identify habitat elements, rare plant species, hydrologic information including inlet/outlets, water depths, and hydro-period patterns based on visual cues, and/or staff/crest gage data.

c. Provide a detailed description of the project proposal including off-site improvements. Include alterations of ground or surface water flow, clearing and grading, construction techniques, materials and equipment, and best management practices to reduce temporary impacts.

d. Assess potential direct and indirect physical, biological, and chemical impacts as a result of the proposal. Provide the square footage for the area of impact with the analysis. The evaluation must consider cumulative impacts.

e. Identification of priority species/habitats and any potential impacts. Incorporate Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or US Department of Fish and Wildlife management recommendations where applicable. When required, plan shall include at a minimum the following:

(1) Special management recommendations which have been incorporated and any other mitigation measures to minimize or avoid impacts, including design considerations such as reducing impacts from noise and light.

(2) Ongoing management practices which will protect the priority species and/or habitat after development, including monitoring and maintenance programs.

Exhibit A

f. A hydrologic report or narrative demonstrating that pre and post development flows to wetlands and streams will be maintained. This includes maintaining hydrology for all wetlands regardless of size or category.

g. Runoff from pollution generating surfaces proposed to be discharged to a critical area shall receive water quality treatment in accordance with the current City's Stormwater Management Manual, Wetland Protection Guidelines, where applicable. Water quality treatment and monitoring may be required irrespective of the thresholds established in the manual. Water quality treatment shall be required for pollution generating surfaces using all known, available and reasonable methods of prevention, control and treatment.

h. Studies of potential flood, erosion, geological or any other hazards on the site and measures to eliminate or reduce the hazard.

i. An assessment of native vegetation to include habitat types (i.e. coniferous forest, mixed coniferous-deciduous forest, scrub-shrub, meadow), species richness, and dominate species. Provide percent cover for ground, shrub, and tree canopy layers. Describe vertical structure. This can be done using a foliage height diversity index such as MacArthur and MacArthur (1961). Include an estimate for non-native species present at each layer.

j. Provide the species and size of trees. At a minimum the average diameter at breast height (DBH) for each species and the location of any madrone greater than 12 inches and conifers greater than 30 inches must be provided. Describe the coniferous component as dominant, codominant or sub-dominant. A tree survey may be required to identify the location of trees of local significance or significant tree groves.

k. Describe habitat elements that are present such as duff layer, cliffs, downed wood, and snags.

l. For Biodiversity Areas/Corridors provide the overall size of the area including off-site vegetated areas. Provide the average width for corridors, and map delineated Biodiversity Areas/Corridors.

4. A Compensatory mitigation plan shall be provided for all permanent impacts to critical areas and their buffers/management areas and will conform to the general mitigation requirements listed under Section 13.11.270 and any specific requirements identified in this chapter for the critical area. The plan shall include the following:

a. The applicant must demonstrate that they meet one of ~~three~~two legal tests provided in 13.11.240.

b. Mitigation sequencing. The applicant shall demonstrate that an alternative design could not avoid or reduce impacts and shall provide a description of the specific steps taken to minimize impacts.

c. Assessment of impacts including the amount, existing condition and anticipated functional loss. Include probable cumulative impacts.

d. The amount and type of mitigation. Include goals, objectives, and clearly defined and measurable performance standards. Include contingency plans that define the specific course of action if mitigation fails. The Director may waive the requirement that a mitigation plan be prepared by a qualified professional when mitigation is limited to standard planting or enhancement activities. The waiver shall not be granted for creation or restoration activities.

e. A description of the existing conditions and anticipated future conditions for the proposed mitigation area(s) including future successional community types for years 1, 5, 10 and 25, future wildlife habitat potential, water quality and hydrologic conditions. Compare this to the future conditions if no mitigation actions are undertaken.

f. Specifications of the mitigation design and installation including construction techniques, equipment, timing, sequencing, and best management practices to reduce temporary impacts.

g. A plant schedule including number, spacing, species, size and type, source of plant material, watering schedule and measures to protect plants from destruction;

h. Monitoring methods and schedule for a minimum of ~~five~~ten years.

i. A maintenance schedule to include ongoing maintenance and responsibility for removal of non-native, invasive vegetation and debris after monitoring is complete;

j. A hydrologic report including any mitigative measures for alterations of the hydroperiod. The City may require additional pre- and post-development field studies and/or monitoring to establish water levels, hydroperiods, and water quality. Water quality shall be required for pollution generating surfaces using all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment.

k. When mitigation includes creation or restoration of critical areas, surface and subsurface hydrologic conditions including existing and proposed hydrologic regimes shall be provided. Describe the anticipated hydrogeomorphic class and illustrate how data for existing hydrologic conditions were utilized to form the estimates of future hydrologic conditions. Future hydrologic conditions shall consider the effects of climate change to reduce risk to compensatory mitigation projects.

l. Existing topography must be ground-proofed at two foot contour intervals in the zone of any proposed creation or rehabilitation actions. Provide cross-sections of existing wetland and/or streams that are proposed to be impacted and cross-section(s) (estimated one-foot intervals) for the proposed areas of creation and/or rehabilitation.

m. A bond estimate for the compensatory mitigation using a bond quantity sheet provided by the City, or a minimum of three bond estimates per TMC 13.11.290..

n. An evaluation of potential adverse impacts on adjacent property owners resulting from the proposed mitigation and measures to address such impacts.

5. When the critical area is limited to a Geologically Hazardous Area, the purpose of the information submitted is to obtain a level of study sufficient to protect the public from hazards. The information and proposed mitigation will demonstrate that there is no significant risk to the public health and safety and that any risk that cannot be effectively mitigated is avoided

6. Programmatic Development Permit. In addition to the requirements above an application shall also include a Management Plan for the area using an approved template format or equivalent. The following information shall be included in the document;

a. Explanation of the voluntary restoration and enhancement components including phasing.

b. Identification of the qualified habitat steward who will be responsible for overseeing restoration and enhancement activities.

c. Explanation of training provided to individuals involved in activities to ensure an understanding of how to perform in accordance with the terms of the permit.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28336 Ex C; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27893 Ex. A; passed Jun. 15, 2010: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 25; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27300 § 1; passed Dec. 14, 2004: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004:)

13.11.240 Legal Test(s).

A. No Practicable Alternatives.

An alternative is considered practicable if the site is available and the project is capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, infrastructure, and logistics in light of overall project purposes. No practicable alternatives need be considered if the applicant can demonstrate all of the following:

1. The project cannot be reasonably accomplished using one or more other sites in the general region that would avoid or result in less adverse impacts to the Critical Area;

2. The goals of the project cannot be accomplished by a reduction in the size, scope, configuration or density as proposed, or by changing the design of the project in a way that would avoid or result in fewer adverse effects on the Critical Area; and

3. In cases where the applicant has rejected alternatives to the project as proposed, due to constraints on the site such as inadequate zoning, infrastructure or parcel size, the applicant has attempted to remove or accommodate such constraints, unless the applicant can demonstrate that such attempt would be futile.

Exhibit A

B. Reasonable Use.

A Reasonable Use exists when the standards of this chapter deny all reasonable economic use of the property. To demonstrate Reasonable Use, the applicant must demonstrate all of the following:

1. There is no reasonable economic use or value with less impact on the Critical Area;

2. There are no feasible on-site alternatives to the proposed activity or use (e.g., reduction in density or use intensity, scope or size, change in timing, phasing or implementation, layout revision or other site planning considerations) that would allow reasonable economic use with less adverse impact;

3. The proposed activity or use will be mitigated to the maximum practical extent and result in minimum feasible alteration or impairment of functional characteristics of the site, including contours, vegetation, fish and wildlife habitat, groundwater, surface water and hydrological conditions;

4. The proposed activity or use complies with all local, state, and federal laws and will not jeopardize the continued existence of endangered, threatened, sensitive or priority habitat or species; and

5. The inability to derive reasonable economic use is not the result of any action, such as but not limited to, in segregating or dividing the property in a way that makes the property unable to be developed after the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter.

~~C. Public Interest.~~

~~In determining whether a proposed use or activity in any Critical Area is in the public interest, the public benefit of the proposal and the impact to the Critical Area must be evaluated by the Director. The proposal is in the public interest if its benefit to the public exceeds its detrimental impact on the Critical Area. In comparing the proposal's public benefit and impact, the following should be considered:~~

~~1. The extent of the public need and benefit;~~

~~2. The extent and permanence of the beneficial or detrimental effects of the use or activity;~~

~~3. The quality and quantity of the Critical Area that may be affected;~~

~~4. The economic or other value of the use or activity to the general area and public;~~

~~5. The ecological value of the Critical Area;~~

~~6. Probable impact on public health and safety, fish, plants, and wildlife; and~~

~~7. The policies of the Comprehensive Plan.~~

(Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 26; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.250 General Standards.

A. General permit standards.

No regulated activity or use shall be permitted in or adjacent to a Critical Area or buffer, management area, or ~~geo-~~setback without prior approval and without meeting the provisions of this section.

1. The applicant has taken appropriate action to first, avoid adverse impacts, then minimize impacts and finally, compensate or mitigate for unavoidable impacts;

2. The result of the proposed activity is no net loss of Critical Area functions;

3. The existence of plant or wildlife species appearing on the federal or state endangered, sensitive, or threatened species list will not be jeopardized;

4. The proposal will not lead to significant degradation of groundwater or surface water quality; and

5. The proposal complies with the remaining standards of this chapter, which include those pertaining to compensation and the provision of bonds.

6. The alteration is the minimum necessary to allow reasonable use.

Exhibit A

B. Building Setback. Buildings and other structures shall be set back at least 10 feet from the edge of the wetland or stream buffer to ensure adequate width for construction staging, maintenance and repair of primary buildings and accessory structures, and use of improvements without disturbing the critical area buffer or critical area. Category IV wetlands that meet the criteria of TMC 13.11.210B.3.b. are exempt from this requirement.

C~~B~~. Low-impact uses and activities consistent with the critical area buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback may be permitted within a buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback that has not been reduced depending upon the sensitivity of critical area and intensity of activity or use. These may include pedestrian trails, viewing platforms, utility easements and storm water management facilities such as grass-lined swales that are used to sustain existing hydrologic functions of the critical area.

D~~C~~. Yard Reduction.

In order to accommodate for the required buffer zone/~~geo~~ setback, the Director may reduce the front and/or rear yard setback requirements on individual lots. The front and/or rear yard shall not be reduced by more than 50 percent. In determining whether or not to allow the yard reduction, the Director shall consider the impacts of the reduction on adjacent land uses.

E~~D~~. ~~As an incentive, the buffer area between a wetland or stream and regulated activity may be reduced or averaged, not less than ¾ of its standard regulated buffer width, depending upon the intensity of use and the wetland category or stream type, if the wetland or stream and its buffer area are dedicated to the public by deeding the property to the City, with City approval. The Director shall determine whether the dedication is of benefit to the City for protection of natural resources.~~

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27893 Ex. A; passed Jun. 15, 2010: Ord. 27813 Ex. E; passed Jun. 30, 2009: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 27; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.260 Residential Density Credits.

A. For residential development proposals on lands containing fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (FWHCAs), erosion hazard areas, landslide hazard areas or steep slopes, the density that would have been allowed in the critical area and buffer but for the provisions of this chapter is generally transferred to the remainder of the site not in the critical area or buffer. For residential development proposals on lands containing wetland or stream buffers, the density that would have been allowed in the buffer but for the provisions of this chapter is generally transferred to the remainder of the site not in the critical area or buffer. For wetlands and streams, density credits do not apply to the portion of the site occupied by the critical area. The allowable number of dwelling units shall be determined using the following formula, table, 125 percent maximum density rule and setback provisions.

B. The formula for determining the number of dwelling units allowed after the application of density credits is as follows:

Dwelling units allowed on site = (CA x DC + DA)/MLS, where:

CA = Critical acreage: The amount of land on the project site which is located in the critical area and required buffer and in which no regulated activity is allowed. For wetlands~~,~~ and streams,\ ~~and FWHCAs~~ the critical acreage only includes the amount of land which is located in the required buffer and in which no regulated activity is allowed.

DC = Density credit: The percentage of the density that would have been allowed in the critical area and/or required buffer but for the provisions of this chapter that is allowed to be transferred to the remainder of the site. The density credit is based on the percentage of the site in the critical area and/or buffer and is determined using the table in subsection C below.

DA = Developable acreage: The amount of land on the project site which is not located in the critical area or the required critical area buffer.

MLS = Minimum lot size: The minimum amount of land required for a dwelling unit in a specific zoning district.

Exhibit A

C. Table of density credits.

Percentage of Site in Critical Area and/or Buffer	Density Credit
1 – 10%	100%
11 – 20%	90%
21 – 30%	80%
31 – 40%	70%
41 – 50%	60%
51 – 60%	50%
61 – 70%	40%
71 – 80%	30%
81 – 90%	20%
91 – 99%	10%

D. The 125 percent maximum density rule provides that the maximum number of dwelling units cannot exceed 125 percent of the allowed number of dwelling units without a density credit on the developable acreage of the site.

E. The minimum lot size under this provision shall be 3,000 square feet, unless a smaller lot size is permitted in the district. Front and Rear setbacks may be reduced by 50 percent. ~~The Small Lot standards of Section 13.06.020.J shall apply.~~

F. The density credits can only be transferred within the same development proposal site.

(Ord. 28336 Ex. B; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 28; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27300 § 2; passed Dec. 14, 2004: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.270 General Mitigation Requirements.

A. Unless otherwise provided in this Title, if alteration to a Critical Area, or its buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback is unavoidable, all adverse impacts resulting from a development proposal or alteration shall be mitigated using the best available science, so as to result in no net loss of critical area functions and values and to ensure public health and safety. In making a determination as to whether such a requirement will be imposed, and if so, the degree to which it would be required, the Director may consider the following:

1. The long-term and short-term effects of the action and the reversible or irreversible nature of the impairment to or loss of the Critical Area;

2. The location, size, and type of and benefit provided by the original and altered Critical Area;

3. The effect the proposed work may have upon any remaining critical area or associated aquatic system;

4. The cost and likely success of the compensation measures in relation to the magnitude of the proposed project or violation;

5. The observed or predicted trend with regard to the gains or losses of the specific type of critical area; and

~~6. The extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a good faith effort to incorporate measures to minimize and avoid impacts within the project.~~

Exhibit A

B. Mitigation projects shall not result in adverse impacts to adjacent property owners.

C. Mitigation shall be in-kind and on-site, when possible, and sufficient to maintain the functions and values of the critical area.

D. The Director may determine that higher mitigation ratios or mitigation performance standards may be required when the likely success of mitigation is low due to site conditions, difficulty of the type of mitigation, or sensitivity of the critical area.

E. Mitigation shall not be implemented until after permit approval of the Director and shall be in accordance with all reports and representations made therein.

F. Mitigation Sequencing.

When an alteration to a critical area or its buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback is proposed, such alteration shall be avoided, minimized, or compensated for in the following order of preference.

1. Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.

2. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts.

3. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.

4. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations.

5. Compensating for the impact by replacing, enhancing, or providing substitute resources or environments.

6. Monitoring the required mitigation and taking remedial action where necessary.

G. Mitigation for Lost or Affected Functions.

Compensatory mitigation shall address the functions affected by the proposed project or alteration to achieve functional equivalency or improvement and shall provide similar critical area or buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback functions as those lost, except when:

1. The lost critical area or buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback provides minimal functions as determined by a site-specific functional assessment, and the proposed compensatory mitigation action(s) will provide equal or greater functions or will provide functions shown to be limited~~ing~~ within a watershed through an existing ~~formal Washington state~~ watershed ~~assessment~~ plan or ~~protocol~~ a local or regional study that characterizes watershed processes; or

2. Out of kind replacement of critical area type or functions will best meet watershed goals formally identified by the City, such as replacement of historically diminished critical areas.

H. Type and Location of Mitigation.

Unless it is demonstrated that a higher level of ecological functioning would result from an alternative approach, compensatory mitigation for ecological functions shall be either in-kind and on-site, or in-kind and within the same stream reach, subbasin, or drift cell (if estuarine wetlands are impacted). Mitigation action shall be conducted within the same sub-drainage basin and on the site of the alteration except when all of the following apply:

1. There are no reasonable on-site or in subdrainage basin opportunities (e.g. on-site options would require elimination of high functioning upland habitat), or on-site and in subdrainage basin opportunities do not have a high likelihood of success based on a determination of the natural capacity of the site to compensate for impacts. Considerations should include: anticipated critical area mitigation ratios, buffer conditions and proposed widths, available water to maintain anticipated hydrogeomorphic classes of wetlands, or streams when restored, proposed flood storage capacity, potential to mitigate riparian fish and wildlife impacts (such as connectivity);

2. Off-site mitigation has a greater likelihood of providing equal or improved critical area functions than the impacted critical area; and

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

Please refer to our sample language in our Wetland CAO Guidance (Page A-16) where we give an example of what selecting a wetland mitigation site using a watershed approach might look like in a CAO. We recommend a watershed approach which doesn't prioritize the on-site mitigation as the use of a mitigation bank or other off-site location may be of better benefit to the functions and values of wetlands in the watershed.

Exhibit A

3. Off-site locations shall be in the same sub-drainage basin unless established watershed goals for water quality, flood storage or conveyance, habitat, or other wetland functions have been established by the City and strongly justify location of mitigation at another site.

I. Approved Programmatic Mitigation

Where the mitigation sequencing requirements of F.1. through F.6. above have been met and on-site mitigation has been demonstrated to be infeasible or ~~in conflict~~in addition to~~with~~ federal mitigation requirements resulting in excess mitigation~~,~~ the Director may allow for programmatic mitigation.

1. Wetland Mitigation Banks.

a. Credits from a wetland mitigation bank may be approved for use as compensation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands when:

(1) The bank is certified under state rules;

(2) The Director determines that the wetland mitigation bank provides appropriate compensation for the authorized impacts; and

(3) The proposed use of credits shall be consistent with terms and conditions of the bank's certification.

b. Replacement ratios for projects using bank credits shall be consistent with replacement ratios specified in the bank's certification.

c. Credits from a certified wetland mitigation bank may be used to compensate for impacts located within the service area specified in the bank's certification. In some cases, the service area of the bank may include portions of more than one adjacent drainage basin for specific wetland functions.

2. In-Lieu Fee (ILF) Mitigation.

a. Credits from an approved in-lieu fee program may be used when all the following apply:

(1) The Director determines that it would provide appropriate compensation for the proposed impacts;

(2) The proposed use of credits is consistent with the terms and conditions of the approved ILF program instrument.

(3) Projects using ILF credits shall have debits associated with the proposed impacts calculated by the applicant's qualified professional using the credit assessment method specified in the approved instrument for the ILF program.

~~2. In-Lieu Fee.~~

b. To aid in the implementation of off-site mitigation, the City may develop a program which prioritizes wetland areas for use as mitigation and/or allows payment in lieu of providing mitigation on a development site. This program shall be developed ~~and approved through a public process and be~~ consistent with state and federal rules. The program should address:

(1)~~a.~~ The identification of sites within the City that are suitable for use as off-site mitigation. Site suitability shall take into account wetland functions, potential for wetland degradation, and potential for urban growth and service expansion, and

(2)~~b.~~ The use of fees for mitigation on available sites that have been identified as suitable and prioritized.

~~I. Wetland Mitigation Banks.~~

~~1. Credits from a wetland mitigation bank may be approved for use as compensation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands when:~~

~~a. The bank is certified under state rules;~~

~~b. The Director determines that the wetland mitigation bank provides appropriate compensation for the authorized impacts; and~~

~~c. The proposed use of credits shall be consistent with terms and conditions of the bank's certification.~~

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

This added language regarding mitigation banks and ILF appears consistent with our guidance. However, the language in b. is unnecessary for ILFs. We would recommend removing this language. It might be good to update your definitions section with definitions for mitigation banks and ILF. We have example definitions for both in Appendix B of our wetland guidance.

Exhibit A

~~2. Replacement ratios for projects using bank credits shall be consistent with replacement ratios specified in the bank's certification.~~

~~3. Credits from a certified wetland mitigation bank may be used to compensate for impacts located within the service area specified in the bank's certification. In some cases, the service area of the bank may include portions of more than one adjacent drainage basin for specific wetland functions.~~

~~J. In-Lieu Fee.~~

~~To aid in the implementation of off-site mitigation, the City may develop a program which prioritizes wetland areas for use as mitigation and/or allows payment in lieu of providing mitigation on a development site. This program shall be developed and approved through a public process and be consistent with state and federal rules. The program should address:~~

~~1. The identification of sites within the City that are suitable for use as off-site mitigation. Site suitability shall take into account wetland functions, potential for wetland degradation, and potential for urban growth and service expansion, and~~

~~2. The use of fees for mitigation on available sites that have been identified as suitable and prioritized.~~

J~~K~~. Timing of Compensatory Mitigation.

It is preferred that compensation projects will be completed prior to activities that will disturb the on-site critical area. If not completed prior to disturbance, compensatory mitigation shall be completed immediately following the disturbance and prior to the issuance of final certificate of occupancy. Construction of mitigation projects shall be timed to reduce impacts to existing fisheries, wildlife, and flora.

The Director may authorize a one-time temporary delay in completing construction or installation of the compensatory mitigation when the applicant provides a written explanation from a qualified professional as to the rationale for the delay (i.e. seasonal planting requirements, fisheries window).

K~~L~~. Critical Area Enhancement as Mitigation.

Impacts to critical area functions may be mitigated by enhancement of existing significantly degraded critical areas, but should be used in conjunction with restoration and/or creation where possible. Applicants proposing to enhance critical areas or their buffers must include in a report how the enhancement will increase the functions of the degraded critical area or buffer and how this increase will adequately mitigate for the loss of critical area and function at the impact site. An enhancement proposal must also show whether any existing critical area functions will be reduced by the enhancement action.

L~~M~~. Innovative Mitigation.

The Director may approve innovative mitigation projects that are based on best available science including but not limited to activities such as advance mitigation and preferred environmental alternatives. Innovative mitigation proposals must offer an equivalent or better level of protection of critical area functions and values than would be provided by the strict application of this chapter. Such mitigation proposals must demonstrate special consideration for conservation and protection measures for anadromous fisheries. The Director shall consider the following for approval of an innovative mitigation proposal:

1. Creation or enhancement of a larger system of natural areas and open space is preferable to the preservation of many individual habitat areas;

2. The applicant demonstrates that long-term protection and management of the habitat area will be provided;

3. There is clear potential for success of the proposed mitigation at the proposed mitigation site;

4. Mitigation according to TMC 13.11.270.E is not feasible due to site constraints such as parcel size, stream type, wetland category, or excessive costs;

5. A wetland of a different type is justified based on regional needs or functions and values;

6. The replacement ratios are not reduced or eliminated; unless the reduction results in a preferred environmental alternative; and

7. Public entity cooperative preservation agreements such as conservation easements are applied.

Exhibit A

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 35; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.280 Conditions, Notice on Title, and Appeals.

A. The Director shall have the authority, in accordance with Chapter 13.05, to attach such conditions to the granting of any permit under this chapter deemed necessary to mitigate adverse impacts and carry out the provisions of this chapter. In addition, such conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Placement of Notice on Title on the subject parcels;

In addition to provisions of Chapter 13.05, the owner of any property upon which approval under Title 13, Tacoma Municipal Code, or Chapter 2.02, Building Code, of the TMC, is sought with a critical area or critical area buffer/management area/~~geo-~~setback verified on site through a Critical Area or building permit, shall record with the Pierce County Auditor a notice of presence of the critical area and buffer/management area/~~geo-~~setback with the exception of protected information. Such recording shall contain notice of the critical area and buffer/management area/~~geo-~~setback and the applicability of this chapter to said property. Such notification shall be in a form as specified by Planning and Development Services. The notice shall be notarized and the applicant must submit proof that the notice has been legally recorded before the final approval for development is issued. The notice shall run with the land and failure to record such notice shall be in violation of this chapter.

2. Limitations on minimum lot size;

3. Provisions for additional vegetative buffer zones depending on the intensity of the use or activity;

4. Requirements that structures be elevated on piles, limited in size or located with additional setback requirements;

5. Dedication of utility easements;

6. Modification of waste disposal or water supply facilities;

7. Imposition of easement agreements or deed restrictions concerning future use including conservation easements within fish and wildlife habitat conservation area (FWHCA), wetland, stream, geologically hazardous areas, flood hazard areas, or other natural area tracts and subdivision of lands;

8. Limitation of vegetation removal;

9. Setting minimum open space requirements;

10. Erosion control and storm water management measures, including restrictions on fill and other activities in the Critical Area or buffer;

11. Development of a plan involving the creation or enhancement of a Critical Area or restoration of a damaged or degraded Critical Area to compensate for adverse impacts;

12. Permanent Signs may be required on each lot or FWHCA, wetland, stream or natural area tract, and shall be prepared in accordance with the approved City of Tacoma template for signs. Additional custom signs may be required for areas with sensitive species that require specific protection measures;

13. Fencing is required when the Director determines that a fence will prevent future impacts to a protected critical area or other natural habitat area. Fencing installed as part of a proposed activity shall not interfere with species migration, including fish runs, nor shall it impede emergency egress; and

14. Subdivisions. The subdivision and short subdivision of land in Critical Areas and associated buffers/management area/~~geo-~~setbacks are subject to the following and Section 13.04.310:

a. Land that is located partially within a Critical Area or its buffer/~~geo-~~setback may be subdivided provided that an accessible and contiguous portion of each new lot is located outside the Critical Area and its buffer/~~geo-~~setback.

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

We recommend adding the following criteria for wetlands and buffers:

1. Land that is located wholly within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may not be subdivided
2. Land that is located partially within a wetland and/or wetland buffer may be subdivided provided that an accessible and contiguous portion of each new lot is:
a. Located outside of the wetland and buffer; and
b. Meets the minimum lot size requirements of [the zoning code]

b. Access roads and utilities serving the proposed subdivision may be permitted within the Critical Area and associated buffers/~~geo~~ setbacks only if the Director determines that no other feasible alternative exists and the project is consistent with the remaining provisions of this chapter.

c. A protection covenant such as a Conservation Easement shall be recorded with the Pierce County Assessor's Office for critical areas or natural area tracts that are created as part of the permitting process.

B. Compensatory mitigation as a condition.

As a condition of a permit or as an enforcement action under this chapter, the City shall require, where not in conflict with a reasonable economic use of the property, that the applicant provide compensatory mitigation to offset, in whole or part, the loss resulting from an applicant's or violator's action or proposal.

C. Appeals.

An appeal of a decision regarding a critical area, except for staff decisions regarding exemptions which are not subject to an administrative appeal, may be made in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 13.05 and Chapter 1.23 of the Tacoma Municipal Code.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27912 Ex. A; passed Aug. 10, 2010: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 28; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27300 § 2; passed Dec. 14, 2004: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.290 Sureties.

The City will accept performance and monitoring and maintenance sureties in the form of bonds or other sureties in a form accepted in writing by the City. Sureties shall be posted prior to issuance of any development permits including, but not limited to, clearing and grading permits and building permits.

(1) Performance Surety.

Except for public agencies, applicants receiving a permit involving compensation for mitigation are required to post a cash performance bond or other acceptable security to guarantee compliance with this chapter prior to beginning any site work. The value of the surety shall be based on the average of three contract bids that establish all costs of compensation including costs relative to performance, monitoring, maintenance, and provisions for contingency plans. The amount of the surety shall be set at 150 percent of the average expected cost of the compensation project and include all review fees. The surety shall guarantee that work and materials used in construction are free from defects. All sureties shall be approved by the City Attorney. Without written release, the surety cannot be terminated or cancelled. The Director shall release the surety after documented proof that all plantings, structures and improvements have been shown to meet the requirements of this chapter.

(2) Monitoring and Maintenance Surety.

Except for public agencies, an applicant receiving a permit involving compensatory mitigation shall be required to post a cash maintenance bond or other acceptable security prior to beginning any site work guaranteeing that structures and improvements required by this chapter will perform satisfactorily for a minimum of five years after they have been constructed and approved. The value of the surety shall be based on the average or median of three contract bids that establish all costs of compensation, including costs relative to performance, monitoring, maintenance, and provision for contingency plans. The amount of the surety shall be set at 150 percent of the average expected cost of the compensation project and include all review fees. All sureties shall be on a form approved by the City Attorney. Without written release, the surety cannot be cancelled or terminated. The Director shall release the surety following a determination that the performance standards established for measuring the effectiveness and success of the project have been met.

(Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012)

13.11.300 Wetlands.

The 300 section contains the regulations for wetlands, including the following:

Exhibit A

13.11.310 Wetland Classification.
13.11.320 Wetland Buffers.
13.11.330 Wetland Buffer Modifications.
13.11.340 Wetland Standards.
13.11.350 Wetland Mitigation Requirements.
13.11.360 *Repealed*.

(Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 29; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.310 Wetland Identification and Classification.

A. Wetlands shall be delineated in accordance with the approved federal delineation manual and applicable regional supplements described in WAC 173-22-035 and based on field investigation and a survey per TMC 13.11.230. Wetland delineations are valid for five years unless a significant change has occurred to the wetland.

BA. Wetlands shall be classified Category I, II, III, and IV, in accordance with the criteria from the Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington: 2014 Update, Version 2.0 (Ecology Publication No. 23-06-009Hruby and Yahnke 2023), as amended2014 Washington State Wetlands Rating System for Western Washington, Washington Department of Ecology Publication No. 14-06-029, published October 2014. Wetlands shall be delineated in accordance with the approved federal delineation manual and applicable regional supplements described in WAC 173-22-035 and based on field investigation and a survey per TMC 13.11.230. Wetland ratings are valid for five years provided the Ecology Wetland Rating Document is not updated resulting in changes.

1. Category I wetlands are those that 1) represent a unique or rare wetland type; or 2) are more sensitive to disturbance than most wetlands; or 3) are relatively undisturbed and contain ecological attributes that are impossible to replace within a human lifetime; or 4) provide a high level of functions.

Category I wetlands include the following types of wetlands: Estuarine wetlands, Natural Heritage wetlandsWetlands of High Conservation Value, Bogs, Mature and Old-growth Forested wetlands; wetlands in Coastal Lagoons; and wetlands that perform many functions at high levels, (scoringvery well and that score between 23-27 or more points or more using the 2014 Washington Wetlands Rating System for Western Washington).

2. Category II wetlands are those that are difficult to replace, and provide high levels of some functions. These wetlands occur more commonly than Category I wetlands, but still need a relatively high level of protection.

Category II wetlands include the following types of wetlands: Estuarine wetlands, Interdunal wetlands, and wetlands that perform functions well and score between 20-22 points.

3. Category III wetlands are those that perform functions moderately well and score between 16-19 points, and interdunal wetlands between 0.1 and 1 acre in size. These wetlands have generally been disturbed in some way and are often less diverse or more isolated from other natural resources in the landscape than Category II.

4. Category IV wetlands are those that have the lowest levels of functions. (between 9-15scoresing fewerless than 16 points), and are often heavily disturbed. These are wetlands that may be replaced, and in some cases may be improved.

5. In addition, wetlands that require special protection and are not included in the general rating system shall be rated according to the guidelines for the specific characteristic being evaluated. The special characteristics that should be taken into consideration are as follows:

a. The wetland has been documented as a habitat for any Federally listed Threatened or Endangered plant or animal species. In this case, "documented" means the wetland is on the appropriate state or federal database.

b. The wetland has been documented as a habitat for State listed Threatened or Endangered plant or animal species. In this case "documented" means the wetland is on the appropriate state database.

c. The wetland contains individuals of Priority Species listed by the WDFW for the State.

d. The wetland has been identified as a Wetlands of Local Significance.

Exhibit A

C. Wetlands of Local Significance are designated based on their ecological functions and community value and include the following sites:

1. Tacoma Nature Center Wetlands (Snake Lake Wetland)

2. China Lake

2. Delong Park

3. Wapato Lake Wetlands

4. McKinley Park

5. Puget Creek Park

(Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 27431 § 30; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.320 Wetland Buffers.

A. General.

A buffer area shall be provided for all uses and activities adjacent to a wetland area to protect the integrity, function and value of the wetland. Buffers adjacent to wetlands are important because they help to stabilize soils, prevent erosion, act as filters for pollutants, enhance wildlife diversity, and support and protect plants and wildlife. A permit may be granted if it has been demonstrated that no adverse impact to a wetland will occur and a minimum buffer width will be provided in accordance with this section. The buffer shall be measured horizontally from the delineated edge of the wetland. The buffer shall be vegetated with the exception of areas that include development interruptions as described within this chapter. Wetlands that meet the applicable criteria under TMC 13.11.210.B.3 or B.4 are exempt from buffer requirements.

~~B. Minimum Requirement.~~

~~1. Wetlands.~~

~~Wetland buffer widths shall be established according to the following tables which are based on wetland classification, habitat function, land use intensity, and local significance:~~

B. Standard Buffer Widths.

1. The standard buffer widths in Table 1 have been established based on best available science. They are based on the category of wetland and the habitat score as determined by a qualified wetland professional using the Washington state wetland rating system for western Washington.

2. The buffer widths in Table 1 presume the buffer is densely vegetated with a native plant community appropriate for the ecoregion, consisting of an average of 80 percent native cover composed of trees, shrubs and groundcover plants. If the existing buffer is sparsely vegetated or vegetated with invasive species, the buffer must be enhanced, monitored, and maintained through an approved mitigation plan.

~~3. If the~~

Table 1. Standard Buffer Widths

Category of wetland	Habitat score 3-5 points	Habitat score 6-7 points	Habitat score 8-9 points	Buffer width based on special characteristics
Category I (based on functions)	100	150	300	n/a
Category II (based on functions)	100	150	300	n/a
Category III	80	150	300	n/a
Category IV	50	50	50	n/a

Emily Atkins
Comment on Text

TMC 13.11.120 B.3 and B.4 is the small wetland exemption language that appears based on our wetland CAO Guidance criteria. While CAT IV wetlands 4,000 sqf or less can be exempt from the avoidance and minimization steps of the mitigation sequence it doesn't exempt them from the buffer provisions per our guidance. However, if those wetlands are 1,000 sqf (as stated in B.4) or less our guidance does say that they may be exempt from the buffer provisions.
We would recommend that only the wetlands that meet the applicable criteria under TMC 13.11.210 B.4 be exempt from buffer requirements to align closer to our guidance.

Exhibit A

Table 1. Standard Buffer Widths				
Wetlands of Local Significance	n/a	n/a	n/a	300
Category I: Bogs and Wetlands of High Conservation Value	n/a	n/a	300	250
Category I: Forested	100	150	300	n/a
Category I: Estuarine and Coastal Lagoons	n/a	n/a	n/a	200
Category II: Estuarine and Coastal Lagoons	n/a	n/a	n/a	150

Note: n/a is used in this table to indicate that wetlands of the corresponding habitat score or special characteristic do not existing under the WA state wetland rating system and therefore no corresponding buffer exists.

~~Table 1. Examples to minimize disturbance*~~		
~~Disturbance element~~	~~Minimum measures to minimize impacts~~	~~Activities that may cause the disturbance~~
~~Lights~~	~~Direct lights away from wetland~~	~~Parking Lots, Warehouses, Manufacturing, High Density Residential~~
~~Noise~~	~~Place activity that generates noise away from the wetland~~	~~Manufacturing, High Density Residential~~
~~Toxic runoff~~	~~Route all new untreated runoff away from wetland, Covenants limiting use of pesticides within 150 feet of wetland~~	~~Parking Lots, Roads, Manufacturing, residential Areas, Application of Agricultural Pesticides, Landscaping~~
~~Change in water regime~~	~~Infiltrate or treat, detain and disperse into buffer new runoff from surface~~	~~Any impermeable surface, lawns, tilling~~
~~Pets and Human disturbance~~	~~Fence around buffer, Plant buffer with "impenetrable" natural vegetation appropriate for region~~	~~Residential areas~~
~~Dust~~	~~Best Management Practices for dust~~	~~Tilled fields~~
~~*Washington State Department of Ecology and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wetlands in Washington State; Volume 2: Guidance for Protecting and Managing Wetlands, Buffer Alternative 3~~		

~~Table 2.~~	
~~Level of Function~~	~~Habitat Score in Rating System~~
~~High (H)~~	~~8-9~~
~~Medium (M)~~	~~65-7~~
~~Low (L)~~	~~3-54~~

~~Table 3. Buffer width for all wetlands*~~	
~~Wetland Category~~	~~Buffer Width (feet)~~
~~Category I~~	~~H and M - 200~~ ~~L - 175~~
~~Category II~~	~~H and M - 150~~ ~~L - 100~~
~~Category III~~	~~H,M,L - 75~~
~~Category IV~~	~~H,M,L - 50~~

Exhibit A

~~*Best Available Science Review, City of Tacoma, Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance, Tacoma, Washington, June 15, 2004, prepared by GeoEngineers and modified by CAPO Focus Group, 2012.~~

~~**Table 4. Wetlands of local significance***~~	
~~**Site**~~	~~**Buffers (feet)**~~
~~Snake Lake~~	~~300~~
~~China Lake~~	~~300~~
~~Delong Park~~	~~300~~
~~Wapato Lake~~	~~300~~
~~McKinley Park~~	~~300~~
~~Puget Creek Park**~~	~~300~~
~~*Best Available Science Review Recommendation from City of Tacoma Critical Areas Task Force June 2004 and modified by CAPO Focus Group 2012.~~ ~~** Inclusion recommended by CAPO Focus Group, 2012.~~	

(Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 31; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.330 Wetland Buffer Modifications.

A. Buffer Requirements.

The standard buffer widths in Table 1~~2~~ have been established in accordance with the best available science. They are based on the category of wetland and the habitat score as determined by a qualified wetland professional using the Washington state wetland rating system for western Washington. ~~The use of the standard buffer widths requires the implementation of the measures in Table 1, where applicable, to minimize the impacts of the adjacent land uses. The applicant shall demonstrate mitigation sequencing when using buffer averaging or buffer reduction.~~

B. Buffer Increases.

Buffer widths shall be increased ~~on a case by case basis as determined by the Director~~ when a larger buffer is necessary to protect wetland functions and values as determined by the Director. This determination shall be supported by appropriate documentation showing that it is reasonably related to protection of the functions and values of the wetland. The documentation must include but not be limited to the following criteria:

a. The wetland is used by a plant or animal species listed by the federal government or the state as endangered, threatened, candidate, sensitive, monitored or documented priority species or habitats, or essential or outstanding habitat for those species or has unusual nesting or resting sites such as heron rookeries or raptor nesting trees; or

b. The adjacent land is susceptible to severe erosion, and erosion-control measures will not effectively prevent adverse wetland impacts; or

c. The adjacent land has ~~minimal vegetative cover or~~ slopes ~~are~~ greater than 30 percent.

d. The adjacent land contains an identified connective corridor that should not be bisected.

C. Buffer Averaging.

The widths of buffers may be averaged if this will improve the protection of wetland functions, or if it is the only way to allow for use of the parcel. Averaging may not be used in conjunction with the provisions for buffer reductions.

Exhibit A

1. Averaging to improve wetland protection may be permitted when all of the following conditions are met:

a. The wetland has significant differences in characteristics that affect its habitat functions, such as a wetland with a forested component adjacent to a degraded emergent component or a dual-rated wetland with a Category I area adjacent to a lower rated area, and

b. The averaged buffer will not result in degradation of the wetland's functions and values as demonstrated by a report from a qualified wetland expert; and

c. The buffer is increased adjacent to the high-functioning area of habitat or more sensitive portion of the wetland and decreased adjacent to the lower-functioning or less sensitive portion; and

d. The total area of the buffer after averaging is equal to the area required without averaging; and

e. The buffer at its narrowest point is never less than ¾ of the required width.

2. Averaging to allow a reasonable use of a legal lot of record may be permitted when all of the following are met:

a. There are no feasible alternatives to the site design that could be accomplished without buffer averaging; and

b. The averaged buffer will not result in degradation of the wetland's functions and values as demonstrated by a report from a qualified wetland expert;

c. The total area of the buffer after averaging is equal to the area required without averaging; and

d. The buffer at its narrowest point is never less than ¾ of the required width.

D. Buffer Reduction.

~~Buffer widths can be reduced according to the following criteria:~~

~~1. The buffer for Category I and Category II wetlands that score moderate (5-7 points) or high for habitat (8-9 points) points or more may be reduced to the low habitat buffer; or up to no less than 60 feet for Category III wetlands or 40 feet for Category IV wetlands, if the following criteria are met;~~

~~a. A relatively undisturbed vegetated corridor at least 100 feet wide is protected between the wetland and any other Priority Habitats as defined by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. The corridor must be protected for the entire distance between the wetland and the Priority Habitat via some type of legal protection such as a conservation easement, or~~

~~b. The remaining buffer area on site shall be enhanced and/or restored by removing invasive species that do not perform needed functions and replanting with an appropriate plant community.~~

1. The reduced buffer widths in Table 2 below may be used when the following criteria are met:

a. The impact minimization measures in Table 3 are implemented, where applicable.

b. A habitat corridor is provided for wetlands that score six or more habitat points and are within 300 feet of another qualifying feature. See TMC 13.11.520.E for habitat corridor standards. ~~is provided. A habitat corridor is a relatively undisturbed, vegetated corridor at least 100 feet wide connecting the wetland to:~~

~~i. A legally protected, relatively undisturbed and vegetated area (e.g., Priority Habitats, compensatory mitigation sites, wildlife areas/refuges, national, county, and state parks where they have management plans with identified areas designated as Natural, Natural Forest, or Natural Area Preserve, or~~

~~ii. An area that is the site of a Watershed Project identified within, and fully consistent with, a Watershed Plan as defined by RCW 89.08.460, or~~

~~iii. An area where development is prohibited according to the provisions of the local shoreline master program, or~~

~~iv. An area with equivalent habitat quality that has conservation status in perpetuity, in consultation with WDFW.~~

Exhibit A

c. The habitat corridor is permanently protected for the entire distance between the wetland and the shoreline or legally protected area by a conservation easement, deed restriction, or other legal site protection mechanisms.

d. Presence or absence of the shoreline or Priority Habitat must be confirmed by a qualified ~~biologist~~professional ~~or shoreline Administrator.~~

e. For wetlands that score five or fewer habitat points, only the measures in Table 3 are required.

2. The reduced buffer widths in Table 2 presume the buffer is densely vegetated with a native plant community appropriate for the ecoregion, consisting of an average of 80 percent native cover composed of trees, shrubs and groundcover plants. If the existing buffer is sparsely vegetated or vegetated with invasive species, the buffer must be enhanced through an approved mitigation plan and monitored and maintained in perpetuity.

Table 2. Reduced Buffer Widths

Category of wetland	**Habitat score 3-5 points**	**Habitat score 6-7 points**	**Habitat score 8-9 points**	**Buffer width based on special characteristics**
Category I (based on functions)	75	110	225	n/a
Category II (based on functions)	75	110	225	n/a
Category III	60	110	225	n/a
Category IV	40	40	40	n/a
Wetlands of Local Significance	n/a	n/a	n/a	225
	n/a	n/a	225	190
Category I: Forested	75	110	225	n/a
Category I: Estuarine and Coastal Lagoons	n/a	n/a	n/a	150
Category II: Estuarine and Coastal Lagoons	n/a	n/a	n/a	110

Table 3. Impact Minimization Measures

Examples of disturbance	**Activities and uses that cause disturbances**	**Examples of measures to minimize impacts**
Lights	• Parking lots • Commercial/Industrial • Residential • Recreation (e.g., athletic fields) • Agricultural buildings	• Direct lights away from wetland • Only use lighting where necessary for public safety and keep lights off when not needed • Use motion-activated lights • Use full cut-off filters to cover light bulbs and direct light only where needed • Limit use of blue-white colored lights in favor of red-amber hues • Use lower-intensity LED lighting • Dim light to the lowest acceptable • intensity
Noise	• Commercial • Industrial • Recreation (e.g., athletic fields, bleachers, etc.) • Residential • Agriculture	• Locate activity that generates noise away from wetland • Construct a fence to reduce noise impacts where appropriate along~~on~~ adjacent wetland ~~and~~ buffer boundary • Plant a strip of dense shrub vegetation adjacent to wetland buffer

Exhibit A

Table 3. Impact Minimization Measures		
Toxic runoff	• Parking lots • Roads • Commercial/industrial • Residential areas • Application of pesticides • Landscaping • Agriculture	• Route all new, untreated runoff away from wetland while ensuring wetland is not dewatered • Establish covenants limiting use of pesticides within 150 ft. of wetland • Apply integrated pest management (These examples are not necessarily adequate for minimizing toxic runoff if threatened or endangered species are present at the site.)
Stormwater runoff	• Parking lots • Roads • Residential areas • Commercial/industrial • Recreation • Landscaping/lawns • Other impermeable surfaces, compacted soil, etc.	• Retrofit stormwater detention and treatment for roads and existing adjacent development • Prevent channelized or sheet flow from lawns that directly enters the buffer • Infiltrate or treat, detain, and disperse new runoff from impervious surfaces and lawns
Pets and human disturbance	• Residential areas • Recreation	• Use privacy fencing along adjacent wetland buffer boundary. • Plant dense native vegetation to delineate buffer edge and to discourage disturbance • Place wetland and its buffer in a separate tract • Place signs around the wetland buffer every 50-200 ft., and for subdivisions place signs at the back of each • residential lot • When platting new subdivisions, locate greenbelts, stormwater facilities, and other lower-intensity uses adjacent to wetland buffers
Dust	• Tilled fields • Roads	• Use best management practices to control dust

E. Buffer Averaging or Buffer Reduction beyond the minimum standards indicated above may be allowed to allow a reasonable use of a legal lot of record when all of the following criteria are met:

a. There are no feasible alternatives to the site design that could be accomplished with the standard buffer averaging or buffer reduction provision above; and

b. The averaged or reduced buffer will not result in degradation of the wetland's functions and values as demonstrated by a report from a qualified wetland expert, and

~~c. The remaining buffer area on site shall be enhanced and/or restored by removing invasive species that do not perform needed functions and replanting with an appropriate plant community, and~~

d. The project shall meet the requirements of one of the two~~three~~ legal tests; No Practicable Alternatives, ~~Public Interest,~~ or Reasonable Use.

(Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 32; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

Exhibit A

13.11.340 ~~Wetland~~ Mitigation Requirements.

A. The applicant shall adhere to the mitigation sequencing requirements of TMC 13.11.270.F. and avoid, minimize, and~~or~~ compensate for all impacts that degrade the functions and values of wetlands and their buffers. Unless otherwise provided in this Title, if alteration to the wetland or its buffer is unavoidable, all adverse impacts resulting from a development proposal or alteration shall be mitigated using the best available science, so as to result in no net loss of critical area functions and values. ~~The mitigation ratios in 13.11.340.D, below, apply to wetland impacts.~~

B. All wetland mitigation will comply with applicable mitigation requirements specified in 13.11.270, including, but not be limited to, mitigation plan requirements, monitoring and bonding.

C. Preference of Wetland Mitigation Actions.

Methods to achieve compensation for wetland functions shall be approached in the following order of preference:

1. ~~1.~~ Restoration (re-establishment and rehabilitation): The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning natural/historic functions and environmental processes to a former or degraded wetland. ~~of wetlands on upland sites that were formerly wetlands.~~ Restoration is divided into two categories:

    a. Re-establishment: The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning natural/historic functions and environmental processes to a former wetland. Re-establishment results in rebuilding a former wetland and results in a gain in wetland area and functions. Example activities could include removing fill, plugging ditches, or breaking drain tiles to restore a wetland hydroperiod, which in turn will lead to restoring wetland biotic communities and environmental processes.

    b. Rehabilitation: The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of repairing natural/historic functions and environmental processes to a degraded wetland. Rehabilitation results in a gain in wetland function but does **not** result in a gain in wetland area. The area already meets wetland criteria, but hydrological processes have been altered. Rehabilitation involves restoring historic hydrologic processes. Example activities could involve breaching a dike to reconnect wetlands to a floodplain or return tidal influence to a wetland.

2. Creation (Establishment): The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site to develop a wetland on an upland where a wetland did not previously exist. Establishment results in a gain in wetland area and functions. An example activity could involve excavation of upland soils to elevations that will produce a wetland hydroperiod and hydric soils by intercepting groundwater, and in turn supports the growth of hydrophytic plant species. ~~of wetlands on disturbed upland sites such as those with vegetative cover consisting primarily of non-native introduced species. This should only be attempted when there is an adequate source of water and it can be shown that the surface and subsurface hydrologic regime is conducive for the wetland community that is being designed.~~

    a. If a site is not available for wetland restoration to compensate for expected wetland and/or buffer impacts, the Director may authorize establishment of a wetland and buffer upon demonstration by the applicant's qualified professional that:

        (1) The hydrology and soil conditions at the proposed mitigation site are conducive for sustaining the proposed wetland and that establishment of a wetland at the site will not likely cause hydrologic problems elsewhere;

        (2) Adjacent land uses and site conditions do not jeopardize the viability of the proposed wetland and buffer (e.g., due to the presence of invasive plants or noxious weeds, stormwater runoff, noise, light, or other impacts); and

        (3) The proposed wetland and buffer will eventually be self-sustaining with little or no long-term maintenance.

        (4) The proposed wetland would not be established at the cost of another high-functioning habitat (i.e., ecologically important uplands).

3. Preservation (Protection/Maintenance): The removal of a threat to, or preventing the decline of, wetlands by an action in or near those wetlands. This term includes activities commonly associated with the protection and

Exhibit A

maintenance of wetlands through the implementation of appropriate legal and physical mechanisms such as recording conservation easements and providing structural protection like fences and signs. Preservation does not result in a gain of aquatic resource area or functions but may result in a gain in functions over the long term. Preservation of a wetland and associated buffer can be used only if:

a. The Director determines that the proposed preservation is the best mitigation option;

b. The proposed preservation site is under threat of undesirable ecological change due to permitted, planned, or likely actions that will not be adequately mitigated under existing regulations;

c. The area proposed for preservation is of high quality or critical for the health and ecological sustainability of the watershed or sub-basin. Some of the following features may be indicative of high-quality sites:

(1) Category I or II wetland rating (per TMC 13.11.310.B).

(2) Rare or irreplaceable wetland type (e.g, peatlands, mature forested wetland, estuaries) or aquatic habitat that is rare or a limited resource in the area.

(3) The presence of habitat for threatened or endangered species (state, federal, or both).

(4) Provides biological and/or hydrological connectivity to other habitats.

(5) Priority sites identified in an adopted watershed plan.

~~3~~4. Enhancement: ~~of significantly degraded wetlands in combination with restoration or creation. Such enhancement should be part of a mitigation package that includes replacing the impacted area and meeting appropriate ratio requirements.~~ The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a wetland to heighten, intensify, or improve specific wetland function(s). Enhancement is undertaken for specified purposes such as water quality improvement, flood water retention, or wildlife habitat. Enhancement results in the gain of selected wetland function(s) but may also lead to a decline in other wetland function(s). Enhancement does not result in a gain in wetland area. Enhancement activities could include planting vegetation, controlling non-native or invasive species, and modifying site elevations to alter hydroperiods in existing wetlands.

Applicants proposing to enhance wetlands and/or associated buffers shall demonstrate how the proposed enhancement will increase the wetland and/or buffer functions, how this increase in function will adequately compensate for the impacts, and how existing wetland functions at the mitigation site will be protected.

D. Mitigation ratios.

1. The ratios contained within Table 4~~5~~ shall apply when direct wetland impacts are proposed. Other types of impacts (e.g., long-term temporary, conversions) shall be mitigated using the recommended ratios in Wetland Mitigation in Washington State – Part 1: Agency Policies and Guidance (Version 2) (Ecology Publication 21.06-003 or as revised)~~to all wetland Creation, Re-establishment, Rehabilitation, and Enhancement compensatory mitigation.~~

2. Impacts to wetland buffers shall be mitigated at a minimum ratio of one-to-one (1:1). Compensatory buffer mitigation shall replace those buffer functions lost from development.

~~2~~3. Increased replacement ratios. The Director may increase ~~the~~ compensatory wetland or buffer mitigation ratios under the following circumstances:

a. Uncertainty exists as to the probable success of the proposed restoration or creation;

b. A significant period of time will elapse between impact and replication of wetland functions;

c. Proposed mitigation will result in a lower category wetland or reduced function relative to the wetland being impacted; or

d. The impact was an unauthorized impact.

Exhibit A

Table 45. Wetland MMmitigation Rratios for projects in Western Washington that do not alter the hydro-geomorphic setting of the site***

Category and Type of Wetland	Re-establishment or Creation	Rehabilitation	1:1 Re-establishment or Creation (R/C) and Enhancement (E) Preservation	Enhancement or Preservationonly
All Category IV	1.5:1	3:1	1:1 R/C and 2:1 E6:1	6:1
All Category III	2:1	4:1	1:1 R/C and 2:1 E8:1	8:1
Category II Estuarine	Case-by-case4:1 (re-establishment only)	4:1 rehabilitation of an estuarine wetland8:1	Case-by-case16:1	Limited circumstances (Case-by-case)
Category II Coastal lagoonCategory II Interdunal	3:1 (re-establishment only)2:1 Compensation has to be interdunal wetland	6:14:1 compensation has to be interdunal	12:11:1 R/C and 2:1 E	Not considered an option8:1
All other Category II	3:1	68:1	1:1 R/C and 4:1 E12:1	12:1
Category I Forested	6:1	12:1	1:1 R/C and 10:1 E24:1	24:1
Category I based on score for functions	4:1	8:1	1:1 R/C and 6:1 E16:1	16:1
Category I Natural Heritage siteWetlands of High Conservation Value	Not considered possibleConsult with WA DNR	Consult with WA DNR6:1	Case-by-case24:1	Consult with WA DNRCase-by-case
Category I Coastal lagoon	Not considered possible4:1 (re-establishment only)	86:1	16:1Case-by-case	Case-by-caseNot considered an option
Category I Bog	Not considered possible	6:1Not considered possible	Case-by-case24:1	Case-by-caseNot considered possible
Category I Estuarine	Case-by-case3:1 (re-establishment only)	6:1	Case-by-case12:1	Limited circumstances (Case-by-case)

Notes:

1. Ratios for rehabilitation, preservation, and enhancement may be reduced when combined with 1:1 replacement through re-establishment or creation, in accordance with Wetland Mitigation in Washington State – Part 1: Agency Policies and Guidance (Version 2) (Ecology Publication 21.06-003 or as revised).

2. Preservation sites must meet the criteria listed in TMC 13.10.340.C.3.

*Natural heritage site, coastal lagoons, and bogs are considered irreplaceable wetlands, and therefore no amount of compensation would replace these ecosystems. Avoidance is the best option. In the rare cases when impacts cannot be avoided, replacement ratios will be assigned on a case-by-case basis. However, these ratios will be significantly higher than the other ratios for Category I wetland.

**Rehabilitation ratios area based on the assumption that actions judged to be most effective for that site are being implemented.

**Rehabilitation ratios area based on the assumption that actions judged to be most effective for that site are being implemented.

***Washington State Department of Ecology and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wetlands in Washington State; Volume 2: Guidance for Protecting and Managing Wetlands, Buffer Alternative 3

Exhibit A

E. Compensatory Mitigation Plan Requirements.

When a project involves wetland or buffer impacts, a compensatory mitigation report shall be required, meeting the following minimum standards:

1. Preparation by qualified professional~~Wetland Specialist~~. A compensatory mitigation report for wetland or buffer impacts shall be prepared by a qualified professional~~Wetland Specialist~~ as specified in 13.01.110.Q~~W~~.

2. A Wetland Delineation Report must accompany or be included in the compensatory mitigation report.

(Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 33; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.350 *Repealed by Ord. 28070.*[3] Wetland Mitigation Requirements.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 34; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.360 *Repealed by Ord. 27728.* Bonds.

(Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008:. 27431 § 35; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.400 Streams and Riparian Habitats.

The 400 section contains the regulations for streams, a type of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area per WAC 365-190-130, including the following:

13.11.410 Stream Classification.
13.11.420 Stream Buffers.
13.11.430 Stream Buffer Modification.
13.11.440 Stream Standards.
13.11.450 Stream Mitigation Requirements.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 36; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.410 Stream Classification.

A. Streams shall be generally classified in accordance with the Washington State Water Typing System set forth in WAC 222-16-030 to describe Type "S," "F," "Np" and "Ns" streams. Additional criteria typing for ~~"F1", and "F2" and~~ "Ns1" and "Ns2" streams are included within this section.

~~General descriptions of the water typing system are~~Water types are classified as follows:

1. Type "S" w~~W~~aters include streams and waterbodies that are designated "shorelines of the state" as defined in chapter 90.58.030 RCW. ~~means all streams or rivers, within their bankfull width, inventoried as "shorelines of the state" or "shorelines of statewide significance" under the Tacoma Shoreline Management Program (TMC Title 19) or chapter 90.58 RCW and the rules promulgated pursuant to chapter 90.58 RCW, including periodically inundated areas of their associated wetlands.~~

2. Type "F" w~~W~~aters include streams and waterbodies that are known to be used by fish, or meet the physical criteria to be potentially used by fish. Fish streams may or may not have flowing water all year; they may be perennial or seasonal. ~~means segments of natural waters other than Type S Waters, which are within the bankfull widths of defined channels and periodically inundated areas of their associated wetlands, or within lakes, ponds, or impoundments having a surface area of 0.5 acre or greater at seasonal low water and which in any case contain fish habitat or as further described within WAC 222-16-030. Type "F1" Water means~~

[3] See 13.11.340 Wetland Mitigation Requirements

Exhibit A

~~segments of natural waters containing salmonid fishes. Type "F2" Water means segments of natural water containing fish that are not salmonids.~~

3. Type "Np" ~~W~~waters include streams that have flow year-round and may have spatially intermittent dry reaches downstream of perennial flow. Type Np streams do not meet the physical criteria of a Type F stream. This also includes streams that have been proven not to contain fish using methods described in Forest Practices Board Manual Section 13. ~~means all segments of natural waters within the bankfull width of defined channels that are perennial nonfish habitat streams. Perennial streams are waters that do not go dry any time of a year of normal rainfall or as further described within WAC 222-16-030.~~

4. Type "Ns" w~~W~~aters include streams that do not have surface flow during at least some portion of the year, and do not meet the physical criteria of a Type F stream. ~~means all segments of natural waters within the bankfull widths of the defined channels that are not Type S, F, or Np Water. These are seasonal, nonfish habitat streams in which surface flow is not present for at least some portion of a year of normal rainfall and are not located downstream from any stream reach that is a Type Np Water.~~ "Ns1" ~~W~~waters must be physically connected by an above ground channel system to Type, F, or Np Waters. "Ns2" ~~W~~waters may not be physically connected by an above ground channel system to Type, F, or Np Waters.

B. Streams of Local Significance include the following:

1. Puyallup River

2. Hylebos Creek

3. Puget Creek

4. Wapato Creek

5. Swan Creek

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 37; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.420 Stream Buffers.

A. General.

A buffer area shall be provided for all uses and activities adjacent to a stream to protect the integrity and function of the stream. Buffers adjacent to streams are important because they help to stabilize soils, prevent erosion, act as filters for pollutants, enhance wildlife diversity, and support and protect plants and wildlife. The buffer shall be measured horizontally from the edge of the ordinary high water mark. When a channel migration zone is present, the stream buffer area width shall be measured from the outer edge of the channel migration zone.

B. Minimum Requirement.

1. Streams. Stream buffer widths shall be established according to the following table which is based on stream classification:

Table 5~~6~~. Stream Types	
Stream Type	**Buffer (feet)**
Type S ~~or Streams of local significance~~	150
Streams of Local Significance	200
Type F~~1~~ (~~Salmonids~~Fish)	150
~~Type F2 (Non-Salmonids)~~	~~100~~
Type Np (Non-fish Perennial)	100
Type Ns1 (Non-fish Seasonal; c~~C~~onnected to S, F, or Np)	100~~75~~
Type Ns2 (Non-fish Seasonal; ~~N~~not connected to S, F, or Np)	100
~~**Streams of local significance**~~	

Exhibit A

Name	Buffer (feet)
Puyallup River	150200
Hylebos Creek	150200
Puget Creek	150200
Wapato Creek	150200
Swan Creek	150200

2. The buffer widths in Table 65 presume the buffer is densely vegetated with a native plant community appropriate for the ecoregion, consisting of an average of 80 percent native cover composed of trees, shrubs and groundcover plants. If the existing buffer is sparsely vegetated or vegetated with invasive species, the buffer must be enhanced, monitored, and maintained through an approved mitigation plan.

3. If the existing buffer area is not densely vegetated with a native plant community appropriate for the ecoregion and no buffer enhancement is proposed, the buffer widths in Table 1 shall be increased by 33%.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 38; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.430 Stream Buffer Modification.

A. Stream Buffer Increase.

The required buffer widths shall be increased as follows;

1. When the Director determines that the recommended width of the stream buffer is degraded and is insufficient to prevent habitat degradation and to protect the structure and functions of the habitat area due to lack of suitable native vegetation and stratification and/or the presence of invasive or non-native species;

2. When the frequently flooded area exceeds the streamrecommended buffer width, the buffer area may extend to the outer edge of the frequently flooded area, where appropriate;

3. When a channel migration zone is present, the stream buffer area width shall be measured from the outer edge of the channel migration zone;

34. When the habitat area is in an area of high blowdown potential, the stream buffer area width shall be expanded an additional fifty feet on the windward side; or

45. When the habitat area is within an erosion or landslide area, or buffer, the buffer area width shall be the recommended distancewidth based on stream type, or extend to the edge of the erosion or landslide hazard area (see TMC 13.11.720.A.) or buffer, whichever is greater.

B. Stream Buffer Averaging and Reduction.

The Director may allow the recommended stream buffer width to be averaged or reduced in accordance with a stream habitat analysis report only if:

1. The stream buffer areas that are reduced through buffer averaging will not reduce stream or habitat functions, including those of nonfish habitat;

2. The stream buffer areas that are reduced will not degrade the habitat, including habitat for anadromous fish;

3. The total area contained in the stream buffer of each stream on the development proposal site is not decreased;

4. The recommended stream buffer width is not reduced by more than twenty-five (25%) percent in any one location;

5. The stream buffer areas that are reduced will not be located within another critical area or associated buffer; and

6. The stream buffer areas that are reduced and required mitigation are supported by best available science.

7. When averaging the stream buffer, the proposal will provide additional habitat protection by including more highly functioning areas and reducing the buffer only in the low functioning areas.

~~8. When reducing the stream buffer, with an existing buffer that is unvegetated, sparsely vegetated, or vegetated with invasive species that do not perform needed functions, the remaining buffer shall be planted to create the appropriate plant community.~~

(Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 39; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.440 Stream Standards.

A. Type F~~1~~, ~~F2,~~ Np, and Ns1, and Ns2 streams may be relocated or placed in culverts provided it can be demonstrated that:

1. There is no other feasible alternative route with less impact on the environment;

2. Existing location of the stream would prevent a reasonable economic use of the property;

3. No significant habitat area will be destroyed;

4. The crossing minimizes interruption of downstream movement of wood and gravel;

5. The new channel or culvert is designed and installed to allow passage of fish inhabiting or using the stream and complies with WDFW requirements;

6. The channel or culvert also complies with the City of Tacoma current Stormwater Management Manual~~;~~.

7. The applicant will, at all times, keep the channel or culvert free of debris and sediment to allow free passage of water and fish;

8. Roads in riparian habitat areas or buffers shall not run parallel to the water body;

9. Crossing, where necessary, shall only occur as near to perpendicular with the water body as possible;

10. Road bridges are designed according to 2013 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Water Crossing Design Guidelines, and the National Marine Fisheries Service Guidelines for Salmonid Passage at Stream Crossing, 2000.

(Ord. 28336 Ex. C; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 40; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.450 Stream Mitigation Requirements.

All proposed alterations in the buffer of a stream shall be in accordance with the standards for the applicable wetland category, where riparian wetland exists.

In the event stream corridor alterations or relocations, as specified above, are allowed, the applicant shall submit an alteration or relocation plan prepared in association with a qualified professional with expertise in this area. In addition to the general mitigation plan standards, the plan shall address the following information:

1. Creation of natural meander patterns and gentle side slope formations;

2. Creation of narrow sub channel, where feasible, against the south or west bank;

3. Provisions for the use of native vegetation;

4. Creation, restoration or enhancement of fish spawning and nesting areas;

5. The proposed reuse of the prior stream channel;

6. Provision of a qualified consultant, approved by the City, to supervise work to completion and to provide a written report to the Director stating the new channel complies with the provisions of this chapter; and

7. When streambank stabilization is necessary, bioengineering or soft armoring techniques are required, where possible.

Exhibit A

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has authority over all projects in State Waters which impact fish. Construction in State Waters is governed by Chapter 75.20 RCW, Construction Projects in State Waters.

(Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 41; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.500 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs).

The 500 section contains the regulations for fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (FWHCAs), including the following:

13.11.510 Classification.
13.11.520 Standards.
13.11.530 *Repealed*.
13.11.540 *Repealed*.
13.11.550 FWHCA Modification.
13.11.560 FWHCA Biodiversity Area and Corridor Mitigation.
13.11.580 *Repealed*.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 42; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.510 Classification.

A. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas are areas identified as being of critical importance to the maintenance of fish and wildlife species. All Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs) are hereby designated as Critical Areas subject to the provisions of this Chapter, except for Shorelines of the State that are managed under the City's Shoreline Master Program. FWHCAs may also include other Critical Areas such as Geologically Hazardous Areas, Stream Corridors, Wetlands, and these Critical Areas' associative buffers.

B. The City seeks to identify and map the location of FWHCAs taking into account Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) mapping and other sources of information. However, WDFW and City maps are not complete and other areas meeting the definition will be included.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs) include:

1. Lands and waters containing ~~S~~state Priority Habitats and Species. Priority H~~h~~abitat and S~~s~~pecies are classified by ~~Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority (~~WDFW~~)~~ and are documented in the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species List (as amended). Additional criteria for classifying area as Biodiversity Area and Oregon White Oak Habitat is provided below.

~~a. As of the date of this ordinance, the following State terrestrial Priority Habitat, and Species, and Features are known to be located in the City of Tacoma:~~

~~(1) Great blue herons;~~
~~(2) Mountain quails;~~
~~(3) Pigeon guillemots;~~
~~(4) Purple martins;~~
~~(5) Seabird colonies;~~
~~(6) Waterfowl concentrations;~~
~~(7) Wood ducks;~~
~~(8) Pacific (Western) pond turtle~~
~~(9) Marbled Murrelet~~
~~(10) Western grebes~~
~~(11) Orcas (Killer whale);~~
~~(12) Seals and sea lions;~~
~~(13) Anadromous fish (including Bull Trout);~~
~~(14) Reticulate sculpins~~

Exhibit A

~~(15) Wetlands~~
~~(16) Streams and riparian areas~~
~~(17) Oregon White Oak Woodlands~~
~~(18) Old Growth/Mature Forest~~
~~(19) Biodiversity Areas and Corridors~~
~~(20) Cliffs~~
~~(21) Snags and Logs~~

b. In classifying an area as a Biodiversity Area ~~or Corridor~~, the city will assess the functions and values of the existing habitat in the context of adjacent properties and the collective ecosystem services. An area which is already developed with legally established, pre-existing uses which serve to eliminate or greatly reduce the propensity of wildlife to use the area as habitat ~~or a corridor~~ will not be classified as a Biodiversity Area ~~or Corridor~~. The following will be considered:

(1) ~~The following will be considered in the designation of Biodiversity Areas;~~

~~(a)~~ The presence of rare or uncommon plant species and associations designated by the City or identified by federal and state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources Heritage Program.

(2)~~(2)(b)~~ The presence of a vertically diverse assemblage of native vegetation containing multipl~~e~~y layers of vegetation such as herbaceous, shrub, and tree canopy layers, snags, or downed wood, and/or areas that are horizontally diverse with a mosaic of habitats and microhabitats. Native vegetation should be dominant~~e~~ (i.e. more than half of the vegetation present based on percentage of cover)

(3)~~(3) The (c)~~ The~~A~~ Biodiversity Area~~/Corridor~~ shall be a minimum size of two acres.

(4)~~(4)~~ (d) The needs and requirements of species known or likely to occur must be considered as well as the ability of the habitat to provide wildlife access or movement.

~~(2) The following will be considered in the designation of a Biodiversity Corridor:~~

~~(a) Areas of relatively undisturbed and unbroken tracts of vegetation and,~~

~~(b) the tracts of vegetation connect other priority habitat, or other critical areas including, but not limited to wetlands and FWHCA.~~

~~(c) a minimum width of 50 feet~~

~~(d) biodiversity areas also serve as corridors; however corridors do not have to meet the vegetation standards of a biodiversity area.~~

~~(5) The following developments or uses may be considered as an elimination or significant reduction in the ability of an area to serve as a corridor for wildlife use. The permanence and extent of the use or development shall be considered.~~

~~(a) Multilane paved road(s) with two or more travel lanes in each direction and their maintained rights-of-way.~~

~~(b) Permanent wildlife-impassible fence(s) and other permanent barriers that prevent wildlife movement.~~

~~(c) Areas where legally established structures and impervious surfaces are present for more than 65% of the area.~~

~~(6) The following are examples of uses that may not reduce or eliminate the use of the area by wildlife or as a corridor.~~

~~(a) Gravel road(s) and driveways~~

~~(b) Trails used for passive recreation~~

~~(c) Wildlife-passible fence(s)~~

~~(d) Unmaintained rights-of-way~~

Exhibit A

c. In classifying Oregon White Oak (OWO) Habitat~~Woodlands~~, the following will be considered:

(1) Priority OWO Woodlands. Stands of Oregon white oak or oak/conifer associations where the stand is at least one acre in size and the canopy coverage of the oak component of the stand is greater than or equal to 25 percent. ~~Most current published WDFW PHS guidance for Oregon White Oak Woodlands~~

(2) Significant OWO Trees and Stands. Single oaks or stands of oaks smaller than one acre in size when any of the following criteria are met:~~City PDS Policy XX regarding classification and protection of OWO Woodlands in an urban environment. PDS Policy XX includes methodology for delineating urban OWO Woodlands, regulations pertaining to the minimum regulated size of individual OWO trees, and mitigation requirements for approved alterations to OWO trees and woodlands.~~

(a) Individual OWO trees having a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 20 inches or more; or

(b) OWO stands in which the oak trees have an average DBH of 15 inches regardless of stand size.

2. Natural ponds under 20 acres and their submerged aquatic beds that provide critical fish or wildlife habitat.

3. Waters of the State, which are defined in WAC Title 222, Forest Practices Rules and Regulations. Waters of the State must be classified using the system in WAC 222-16-030. In classifying waters of the state as FWHCAs the following may be considered:

(a) Species present which are endangered, threatened, sensitive, or priority;

(b) Species present which are sensitive to habitat manipulation;

(c) Historic presence of priority species;

(d) Existing surrounding land uses that are incompatible with salmonid habitat;

(e) Presence and size of riparian ecosystem;

(f) Existing water rights; and

(g) The intermittent nature of some of the higher classes of Waters of the State.

4. Lakes, ponds, streams and rivers planted with game fish, including those planted under the auspices of a federal, state, local, or tribal program and waters which support priority fish species as identified by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

5. Areas with which State or Federally designated endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have a primary association.

6. Habitats and species of local importance that have been identified as sensitive to habitat manipulation. Areas identified must represent either high-quality native habitat or habitat that has a high potential to recover and is of limited availability, highly vulnerable to alteration, or provides landscape connectivity that contributes to the integrity of the surrounding landscape. In designating habitat and species of local importance, the following characteristics will be considered:

(a) Local population of native species that are in danger of extirpation or vulnerable and in decline.

(b) The species or habitat has recreation, tribal, or other special value.

(c) Long-term persistence of the species is dependent on protection, maintenance, or restoration of nominated habitat.

(d) Protection by other county, state, or federal policies and laws is not adequate to prevent degradation of the species or habitat.

(e) Without protection, there is a likelihood that the species or habitat will be diminished over the long term.

7. Area critical for habitat connectivity, including Open Space Corridors designated in the City's comprehensive plan.

8. State natural area preserves and natural resource conservation areas.

Exhibit A

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 43; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.520 Standards.

A. General Standards.

1. No development, including temporary clearing and grading, shall be allowed within a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area with which state or federally endangered, threatened or sensitive species have a primary association without approval from the City of Tacoma and/or WDFW.

2. Preservation of FWHCAs are necessary to improve the likelihood that species will survive and or reproduce. Alteration of FWHCAs may reduce this likelihood. Activities allowed in FWHCAs shall be consistent with the species located there and all applicable state and federal regulations regarding that species. In determining allowable activities for FWHCAs that are known or that become known, the provisions of the Washington State Hydraulic Code, WDFW's Management Recommendations for Washington Priority Habitats and Species, best available science, and recommendations by other state or federal agencies with expertise for the species or habitat shall be reviewed. Development in these areas shall be in accordance with the requirements of the underlying zone, ~~and~~ any overlapping critical area classification, and the modification allowances in TMC 13.11.550..

3. In accordance with TMC 13.11.160.B., where a designated FWHCA geographically coincides with another critical area, all appropriate critical area standards and associated buffer/management area/~~geo~~ setback requirements shall apply as described within this Chapter.

B. FWHCA Management Areas Standards.

1. FWHCA management areas are used to protect and manage activities in or adjacent to areas with a specific priority species. The location and dimensions of FWHCA Management Areas are dependent on the species and habitat and as defined by specific management recommendations established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or other state/federal agencies. While the standards for protection are species specific and established by other agencies, the FWHCA Management Areas remain subject to all applicable standards of this chapter.

If a proposal meets the standards of this chapter and demonstrates that they are meeting the management recommendations for the priority species and their management area, then a separate Critical Area permit may not be necessary (See TMC 13.11.190.D).

2. Typical standards may include seasonal restrictions for activities and required buffer widths from nesting sites. A Habitat Management Plan approved by WDFW may be required.

C. Biodiversity Area~~s and Corridors~~ Standards.

1. In managing Biodiversity Areas and Corridors, the intent is to maintain rare and uncommon plant species and associations, ~~and~~ large patches dominated by~~of~~ native vegetation that provide habitat and general ecological services, and connecting corridors for animal movement ~~as well as general ecological services~~. Preservation of Biodiversity Areas and Corridors is necessary to minimize the impacts of development to wildlife and conserve the City's most diverse areas. The following standards apply:

a. Preserve existing native vegetation on the site to the maximum feasible extent, prioritizing the most valuable and sensitive environmental assets by developing the least impactful area.

b. Maintain biodiversity functions to prevent habitat degradation and fragmentation and preserve habitat for priority and common urban species, as supported by the Best Available Science.

c. The applicant shall avoid all actions that degrade the functions and values of a Biodiversity Area and Corridor. When impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimized and mitigated by limiting overall vegetation clearance, maintaining corridors, protecting the most sensitive environmental features, and clustering development that does occur.

Exhibit A

D. Oregon White Oak Habitat Standards.

1. The critical root zone of regulated OWO trees shall be used to delineate the FWHCA for OWO Habitat.

E. Habitat Corridor Standards.

1. Applicability. When a habitat corridor is required, the following habitats shall be considered for connection within 300 feet of the subject habitat feature (e.g., wetland, stream, Biodiversity Area):

a. A legally protected, relatively undisturbed and vegetated area (e.g., Priority Habitats, compensatory mitigation sites, wildlife areas/refuges, national, county, and state parks where they have management plans with identified areas designated as Natural, Natural Forest, or Natural Area Preserve), or

b. An area that is the site of a Watershed Project identified within, and fully consistent with, a Watershed Plan as defined by RCW 89-08-460, or

c. An area where development is prohibited according to the provisions of the local shoreline master program, or

d. An area with equivalent habitat quality that has conservation status in perpetuity, in consultation with WDFW.

e. Other critical areas, including but not limited to wetlands, riparian areas, and FWHCAs.

2. The standard habitat corridor width is 100 feet.

3. Condition.

a. The following developments or uses may be considered as an elimination or significant reduction in the ability of an area to serve as a corridor for wildlife use. The permanence and extent of the use or development shall be considered.

(1) Multilane paved road(s) with two or more travel lanes in each direction and their maintained rights-of-way.

(2) Permanent wildlife-impassible fence(s) and other permanent barriers that prevent wildlife movement.

(3) Areas where legally established structures and impervious surfaces are present for more than 65% of the area.

(4) Open Space Corridors that have significant development designed for recreation activities that would conflict with wildlife presence or access.

b. The following are examples of uses that may not reduce or eliminate the use of the area by wildlife or as a corridor.

(1) Gravel road(s) and driveways

(2) Trails used for passive recreation

(3) Wildlife-passible fence(s)

(4) Unmaintained rights-of-way

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 44; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

Exhibit A

13.11.530 *Repealed by Ord. 28230*. FWHCA's Shoreline – Marine Buffers.

(Repealed by Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 45; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.540 *Repealed by Ord. 28230*. FWHCA's Marine Buffer Modifications.

(Repealed by Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008)

13.11.550 FWHCA Modification.

A. All proposed modification in a FWHCA shall be in accordance with the standards of this Chapter, except where allowed through 13.11.200 or 13.11.210.

B. Modification and mitigation will comply with applicable General Standards of TMC 13.11.250 and mitigation requirements specified in 13.11.270, including, but not limited to, mitigation sequencing, mitigation plan requirements, monitoring and bonding.

C. Where a designated FWHCA geographically coincides with another Critical Area, modification and mitigation will comply with applicable requirements described within this chapter for each type of critical area and/or as recommended by state or federal agencies.

D. Habitat Management Plan.

If the critical area review process as described in this chapter (13.11.190) determines that the proposed project will adversely impact a FWHCA, a Habitat Management Plan shall be prepared as part of a development proposal, the following standards shall apply.

1. The Habitat Management Plan shall be prepared in coordination with the WDFW or federal agencies where appropriate and by a qualified professional. The professional must have an education and professional work experience relevant to the species and habitat being evaluated (See TMC 13.01.110 Qualified Professional).

2. The Habitat Management Plan may be included as part of a larger critical areas report and shall include all applicable requirements as listed in TMC 13.11.230 and, at a minimum, the following:

a. Analysis and discussion on the project's effects on the FWHCA;

b. An assessment and discussion on special management recommendations which have been developed for species or habitat located on the site by any federal or state agency;

c. A discussion of mitigation sequencing and proposed mitigation measures which could avoid or minimize impacts;

d. Assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of mitigation measures proposed; and

e. Assessment and evaluation of ongoing management practices which will protect the FWHCA after development of the project site, including proposed monitoring and maintenance programs.

f. For Biodiversity Areas ~~and Corridors~~ a detailed description of vegetation on and adjacent to the project area is required and may include a surveyed site plan with the specific location and species name of trees with a 12-inch or greater Diameter at Breast Height (DBH).

E. The following shall apply for proposed modifications within or affecting Biodiversity Areas ~~and Corridors~~.

1. In determining which areas are least sensitive to development impacts, the following criteria shall apply:

a. A minimum of 65% of the Biodiversity Area ~~and Corridor~~ area shall be left in an undisturbed natural vegetated state. The undisturbed area set aside shall contain all other Priority Habitats, Priority Species, and Critical Areas and Buffers that may be present, per applicable standards.

(1) Legally created existing parcels 5,000 square feet in size or smaller must maintain an minimum of 40% of the Biodiversity Area ~~and Corridor~~ in an undisturbed natural vegetated state.

Exhibit A

b. A contiguous Biodiversity Corridor with a width of 300-feet shall be retained connecting onsite and offsite Priority Habitats and Critical Areas including shorelines, as well as significant trees per the definition below. The minimum 300 feet shall be a contiguous area that enters and exits the property.

(1) Where a legally created existing parcel cannot accommodate the 300 foot width corridor due to parcel size or configuration, then the maximum feasible width shall be provided in conjunction with maintaining the designated minimum undisturbed gross site area for the size of parcel.

(2) Habitat corridor connections may be required to be wider when additional width is supported by the Best Available Science to support the function and values of species or habitat present.

c. Retain exceptional trees, significant tree groves, and rare or uncommon plant species or habitat types as identified by the City or by state or federal agencies. ~~Conifers and Madrone are considered exceptional trees.~~

(1) Significant tree groves. Significant tree groves means a group of 8 or more trees 12- inches diameter or greater that form a continuous canopy. Trees that are less than 12-inch in diameter that are part of a grove's continuous canopy are also considered to be ~~exceptional~~ significant and cannot be removed if their removal may damage the health of the grove. Street trees shall not be included in determining whether a group of trees is a grove.

(2) Retain exceptional trees. "Exceptional tree" means a tree or group of trees that because of its unique historical, ecological, or aesthetic value constitutes an important community resource, and is determined as such by the Director according to standards and procedures promulgated by the Department of Planning and Development. Conifers greater than 30 inches DBH, and Madrone greater than 12 inches DBH are considered exceptional trees.

d. Development must be clustered and located in the least sensitive areas and must use Low Impact Development practices where feasible.

2. Proposals that meet the minimum standards in 1 above may be reviewed under a Minor Development permit. See TMC 13.11.220.B.2. Other proposals will require review under a Development Permit and must also demonstrate the following:

a. The project cannot meet the minimum standards in 1 above due to site constraints such as parcel size or other physical conditions and the inability is not the result a self-created hardship.

3. In planning the development of the site, consideration shall also be given to ongoing and future management needs such as vegetation maintenance, generally favoring setting aside a large, connected, contiguous areas as feasible.

4. Buffer Averaging or reduction as described within section TMC 13.11.250.D., TMC 13.11.330, and TMC 13.11.430 for wetlands and streams can be utilized to average or reduce portions of buffers to accommodate development.

a. The standards for preservation of 65% of the gross site area and minimum 300 foot corridor width still apply.

5. Corridor width averaging. The width of the corridor may be averaged to allow for reasonable use of the property when the following are met:

a. The averaged corridor width will not result in degradation of the Biodiversity Corridor or its ability to facilitate wildlife movement;

b. The corridor width is increased adjacent to the high-functioning or more sensitive areas and decreased adjacent to lower-functioning or less sensitive portion;

c. The corridor at its narrowest point is never less than ¾ of the required width; and

d. The total area of the corridor is equal to the area required without averaging.

Exhibit A

F. For proposed modifications to Oregon White Oak Habitat, WDFW management recommendations shall apply to the extent feasible. See PDS Policy XX regarding minimum mitigation requirements for OWO Habitat in an urban environment.

G~~F~~. Innovative mitigation per TMC 13.11.270.L~~M~~.

When the project cannot meet the minimum standards of this section or the project proponent can demonstrate that a different method will achieve equivalent or better protections for the critical area, it will be reviewed per the standards in 13.11.270.L~~M~~.

H~~G~~. Protection covenant such as a conservation easement shall be recorded with Pierce County Assessor's Office for critical areas that are identified as part of the review process per 13.11.280 (Conditions, Notice on Title, and Appeals).

I~~H~~. If mitigation is performed off-site, a conservation easement or other legal document must be provided to the City to ensure that the party responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of the mitigation has access and the right to perform these activities.

(Ord. 28906 Ex. D; passed Aug. 15, 2023: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008)

13.11.560 Biodiversity Area ~~and Corridor~~ Mitigation Requirements.

A. Mitigation must compensate for the adverse impacts and achieve equivalent or higher ecological functions including, vegetation diversity and habitat complexity and connectivity.

B. Enhancement or Restoration requires the following ratios:

Onsite Mitigation	Offsite Mitigation
1.5:1 Enhancement or Restoration	3:1 Enhancement or Restoration
Exceptional trees = 2:1	Exceptional trees = 2:1

C. The protection covenant or conservation easement recorded with Pierce County Assessor's Office shall include all mitigation areas including those located off-site.

D. The following shall be incorporated to minimize disturbance:

1. Minimize light disturbance by directing lights away from critical areas.

2. Place activities that generate noise furthest from critical areas.

3. Limit disturbance from humans and pets with "impenetrable" natural vegetation between the development and critical areas.

4. Design infrastructure to minimize impacts through such steps as designing narrower streets or integrating LID approaches.

5. Seasonal restriction of construction activities.

(Repealed and reenacted by Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed June 26, 2018: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008)

13.11.580 *Repealed by Ord. 28070*. Habitat Zones.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008)

13.11.600 Flood Hazard Areas.

The 600 section contains the regulations for flood hazard areas, including the following:

13.11.610 Classification.
13.11.620 Standards.

Exhibit A

13.11.630 *Repealed.*
13.11.640 General Development Standards.

(Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 46; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.610 Classification.

Classifications of flood hazard areas shall be consistent with the most recent official map of the Federal Insurance Administration that delineates areas of special flood hazards and includes the risk premium zones applicable to the City or as determined by the FIA. Also known as "flood insurance rate map" or "FIRM."

Where the flood insurance map and studies do not provide adequate information, the City, through Planning and Development Services, shall consider and interpret information produced by the Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other qualified person or agency to determine the location of Flood Hazard Areas and Coastal High Hazard Areas.

(Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27893 Ex. A; passed Jun. 15, 2010: Ord. 27431 § 47; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.620 Standards.

A. All development proposals shall comply with ~~the application requirements listed in TMC 13.11.230~~, Title 2 Building and Development Code regarding Flood Hazard and Coastal High Hazard Areas, and Title 12 for general and specific flood hazard protection. Development shall not reduce the base flood water storage ability. Construction, grading, or other regulated activities which would reduce the flood water storage ability must be mitigated by creating compensatory storage on- or off-site. Compensatory storage provided off-site for purposes of mitigating habitat shall comply with all applicable wetland, stream, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation area requirements. Compensatory storage provided off-site for purposes of providing flood water storage capacity shall be of similar elevation in the same floodplain as the development. Compensatory storage is not required in Coastal A and V Zone flood hazard areas or in flood hazard areas with a mapped floodway but containing no functional salmonid habitat on the site. For sites with functional connection to salmonid bearing waters that provide a fish accessible pathway during flooding, compensatory storage areas shall be graded and vegetated to allow fish refugia during flood events and their return to the main channel as floodwater recede without creating flood stranding risks. Base flood data and flood hazard notes shall be shown on the face of any recorded plat or site plan, including, but not limited to, base flood elevations, flood protection elevation, boundary of floodplain, and zero rise floodway.

B. Proposals for development within a floodplain shall comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Floodplain development shall include an assessment of the impact of the alteration on water quality and aquatic and riparian habitat. At the discretion of the Director of Planning and Development Services, the assessment may be conducted by City staff under the provisions of TMC 13.11.190.B. If the PDS Director, or designee, determines that an application is required under TMC 13.11.220 for impacts identified by staff or an applicant provided assessment, the applicable provisions of TMC 13.11.100 and 13.11.200 shall apply. The assessment shall be:

1. Conducted by a qualified professional;

~~2. A Biological Evaluation or Biological Assessment that has received concurrence from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act;~~

~~3. Documentation that the activity fits within a Habitat Conservation Plan approved pursuant to Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act;~~

~~4. Documentation that the activity fits within Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act;~~

2~~5~~. ~~An assessment~~ ~~p~~Prepared in accordance with Regional Guidance for Floodplain Habitat Assessment and Mitigation, FEMA Region X, 2010. The assessment shall determine if the project would adversely affect any one or more of the following:

a. the primary constituent elements identified when a species is listed as threatened or endangered;

Commented [LS1]: Requiring an assessment that has been reviewed and approved by US FWS or NOAH is both impractical and unnecessary at the local level. Should only need #1 and 2.

Commented [KK2R1]: City staff biologists provide a habitat analysis for projects within floodplains and so far, this has been acceptable.

Exhibit A

b. Essential Fish Habitat designated by the National Marine Fisheries Service;

c. fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas;

d. vegetation communities and habitat structures;

e. water quality;

f. water quantity, including flood and low flow depths, volumes and velocities;

g. the river or stream channel's natural planform pattern and migration process;

h. spawning substrate, if applicable; and

i. floodplain refugia, if applicable.

C~~6~~. Projects with adverse effects shall demonstrate compliance with the mitigation sequencing requirements of 13.11.270.F.

D. Critical Facilities. Construction of new critical facilities shall be, to the extent possible, located outside the limits of the special flood hazard area (SFHA) (100-year floodplain). Construction of new critical facilities shall be permissible within the SFHA if no feasible alternative site is available. Critical facilities constructed within the SFHA shall have the lowest floor elevated three feet or more above the level of the base flood elevation (100-year) at the site or to the height of the 500-year flood, whichever is higher. Access to and from the critical facility should also be protected to the height utilized above. Floodproofing and sealing measures must be taken to ensure that toxic substances will not be displaced by or released into floodwaters. Access routes elevated to or above the level of the base flood elevation shall be provided to all critical facilities to the extent possible.

(Ord. 28906 Ex. D; passed Aug. 15, 2023: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27431 § 48; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.630 *Deleted by Ord. 27431.* General Development Standards.

(Deleted by Ord. 27431 § 49; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.640 General Development Standards.

The owner of any property upon which new development occurs is required to record a Notice on Title according to Section 13.11.280 if the property contains land with the 100-year floodplain and/or the Riparian Buffer zone, before a permit may be issued.

Development within a flood hazard area that does not otherwise require a building permit, such as material storage or building of small accessory structures, must still obtain review and approval prior to development, and is subject to all applicable regulations including flood, Critical Areas, and Shoreline regulations.

Stormwater and drainage features shall incorporate low impact development techniques that the mimic pre-development hydrologic conditions, when technically feasible.

(Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012)

13.11.700 Geologically Hazardous Areas.

The 700 section contains the general provisions, including the following:

13.11.710 Designation.
13.11.715 Applicability.
13.11.720 Classification.
13.11.730 General Standards.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 27431 § 50; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27300 § 3; passed Dec. 14, 2004: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

Exhibit A

13.11.710 Designation.

A. Geologically hazardous areas are critical areas susceptible to severe erosion, landslide activity, or other geologic events. In the City of Tacoma shoreline, high marine bluffs, like those along the Tacoma Narrows, are the most visible type of geologically hazardous area, although seismic, tsunami, and erosion hazards have also been mapped.

The more severe hazard areas may not be suitable for placing structures or locating intense activities or uses due to the inherent threat to public health and safety. Vegetation removal during construction and development on or above the slop alters surface runoff and groundwater infiltration patterns that can lead to increased slope instability. Erosion, excavation, or wave action at the toe or base of the slope can also lead to increased slope instability.

B. Designation of Geologically Hazardous Areas. Geologically hazardous areas include areas susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events. Areas susceptible to one or more of the following types of geo-hazards shall be designated as a geologically hazardous area. Further descriptions of these areas can be found in TMC 13.11.720.~~:~~

1. Erosion hazard;
2. Landslide hazard;
3. Seismic hazard;
4. Mine hazard;
5. Volcanic hazard; and
6. Tsunami hazard.

(Ord. 27431 § 51; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.715 Applicability.

Geologically Hazardous Areas are subject to all applicable provisions of this chapter and the following:

A. When the Geologically Hazardous Area, buffer, and/or ~~geo-~~setback cannot be avoided by locating the development activity outside of the Geologically Hazardous Area, buffer, and/or setback, the risk to public health and safety may be minimized by engineering, design, or modified construction practices.

B. When technology cannot reduce the risk to acceptable levels the Geologically Hazardous Area and setback must be avoided.

C. When other critical areas are present the standards specific to those critical areas also apply.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018)

13.11.720 Classification.

A. Classification of specific hazard areas.

1. Erosion hazard areas.

Erosion hazard areas generally consist of areas where the combination of slope and soil type makes the area susceptible to erosion by water flow, either by precipitation or by water runoff. Concentrated stormwater runoff is a major cause of erosion and soil loss. Erosion hazard critical areas include the following:

a. Areas with high probability of rapid stream incision, stream bank erosion or coastal erosion, or channel migration.

b. Areas defined by the Washington Department of Ecology Coastal Zone Atlas as one of the following soil areas: Class U (Unstable) includes severe erosion hazards and rapid surface runoff areas, Class Uos (Unstable old slides) includes areas having severe limitations due to slope, Class Urs (Unstable recent slides), and Class I (Intermediate).

Exhibit A

c. Any area characterized by slopes greater than 15 percent; and the following types of geologic units as defined by draft geologic USGS maps: m (modified land), Af (artificial fill), Qal (alluvium), Qw (wetland deposits), Qb (beach deposits), Qtf (tide-flat deposits), Qls (landslide deposits), Qmw (mass-wastage deposits), Qf (fan deposits), Qvr and Qvs series of geologic material types (Vashon recessional outwash and Steilacoom Gravel), and Qvi (Ice-contact deposits).

d. Slopes steeper than 25% and a vertical relief of 10 or more feet.

e. Soil Erosion Hazard Areas. Lands not directly adjacent to freshwater or marine waters that, through the geological assessment process, are identified as susceptible to erosion. Soil erosion hazard critical areas include the following:

(1) Areas with high probability of rapid stream incision, stream bank erosion or coastal erosion, or channel migration.

(2) Any area characterized by slopes greater than 15 percent; and the following types of geologic units as defined by the latest geologic USGS maps: m (modified land), Af (artificial fill), Qal (alluvium), Qw (wetland deposits), Qb (beach deposits), Qtf (tide-flat deposits), Qls (landslide deposits), Qmw (mass-wastage deposits), Qf (fan deposits), Qvr and Qvs series of geologic material types (Vashon recessional outwash and Steilacoom Gravel), and Qvi (Ice-contact deposits).

(3) Areas classified as having severe or very severe erosion potential by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

2. Landslide Hazard Areas.

Landslide hazard areas are areas potentially subject to landslides based on a combination of geologic, topographic, and hydrologic factors. They include areas susceptible because of any combination of bedrock, soil, slope, slope aspect, structure, hydrology, or other factors. Landslide hazard areas are identified as any area ~~with all three of~~meeting the following ~~characteristics~~:

a. Any slope area with the combination of the following three characteristics:

(1) Slopes steeper than 25 percent and a vertical relief of ten (10) or more feet.

(2)~~b.~~ Hillsides intersecting geologic contacts ~~that contain impermeable soils (typically silt and clay) frequently inter-bedded with permeable granular soils (predominantly sand and gravel), or impermeable soils overlain~~ with relatively permeable sediment~~soils~~ overlying a relatively impermeable sediment or bedrock; and~~.~~

(3)~~c.~~ Springs or groundwater seepage.

b~~d~~. Any area which has exhibited movement during the Holocene epoch (from 10,000 years ago to present) or that are underlain or covered by mass wastage debris of that epoch.

c~~e~~. Any area potentially unstable due to rapid stream incision stream bank erosion or undercutting by wave action.

d~~f~~. Any area located on an alluvial fan presently subject to, or potentially subject to, inundation by debris flows or catastrophic flooding~~deposition of stream-transported sediments~~.

e~~g~~. Any area where the slope is greater than the angle of repose of the soil; that is, the slope relies on cohesion for stability.

f~~h~~. Any shoreline designated or mapped as Class U (Unstable), Uos (Unstable old slides), Urs (Unstable recent slides), or I (Intermediate) by the Washington Department of Ecology Coastal Zone Atlas.

g. Slopes that are parallel or subparallel to planes of weakness (such as bedding planes, joint systems, and fault planes) in subsurface materials.

h. Slopes having gradients steeper than 80 percent subject to rockfall during seismic shaking.

i. Any area with a slope of 40 percent or steeper and with a vertical relief of 10 feet or more except areas composed of bedrock. A slope is delineated by establishing its toe and top and measured by averaging the inclination over at least 10 feet of vertical relief.

Exhibit A

j. Any area within the City mapped by the most up to date Pierce County landslide inventory prepared by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and LIDAR imagery.

k. Landslide Hazard sub-classifications: Landslide hazard areas shall be classified into categories which reflect each landslide hazard areas past landslide activity and the potential for future landslide activity based on an analysis of slope instability. Landslide hazard areas shall be designated as follows:

(1) Active Landslide Areas.

A composite of the active landslides and/or unstable areas, including that portion of the top of slope and slope face subject to failure and sliding as well as toe of slope areas subject to impact from down slope run-out, identified and mapped during a geological assessment of a site. An active landslide hazard area exhibits one or more of the following:

(a) Areas of historical landslide movement on a site which have occurred in the past century including areas identified on the Washington Department of Ecology Washington State Coastal Atlas Map as Urs (unstable recent slide).

(b) Any landslide or areas susceptible to landslides as identified in the most up to date Pierce County landslide inventory by Washington State DNR or as updated.

(c) Unstable areas that exhibit geological and geomorphologic evidence of past slope instability or landsliding or possess geological indicators (stratigraphy, ground water conditions, etc.), that have been determined through a geotechnical report to be presently failing or may be subject to future landslide activity. The impact of the proposed development activities must be considered in defining the extent of the active areas.

(d) Interim areas are located between areas identified through a geotechnical report as an active landslide hazard area. Interim areas will be considered part of the active landslide hazard area if the required top of slope or toe of slope landslide hazard area buffer encompasses the area.

(1) Inactive Landslide Areas.

Areas that have been identified as potential landslide hazard areas, but, through the geological assessment process per Section 13.11.730.J, meet one of the following conditions:

(a) No indicators exist that indicate the potential for future landslide activity to occur.

(b) A slope stability analysis has indicated that there is no apparent landslide potential.

(c) Adequate engineering or structural measures have been provided in a geotechnical report that mitigates the potential for a future landslide to occur as a result of current or past development activity. The engineering or structural measures must provide a minimum factor of safety of 1.5 static conditions and 1.2 for dynamic conditions. Analysis of dynamic (seismic) conditions shall be based on a minimum horizontal acceleration as established by the current version of the International Building Code, or as recommended by the geotechnical engineer based on site specific conditions that require alternative values. The engineering or structural measures must be completed, inspected and accepted for the area to be deemed stable. Construction sequencing recommendations must be provided by the geotechnical professional when a proposed development will be constructed concurrently with the engineering or structural measures.

(d) A geotechnical report has been prepared and the results of that report indicate that an area is not a landslide hazard area.

3. Seismic hazard areas.

Seismic hazard areas shall include areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of seismic induced settlement, shaking, lateral spreading, surface faulting, slope failure, or soil liquefaction. These conditions occur in areas underlain by soils of low cohesion or density usually in association with a shallow groundwater table. ~~Seismic hazard areas shall include areas subject to severe risk of damage as a result of seismic-induced settlement, shaking, lateral spreading, surface faulting, slope failure, or soil liquefaction. These conditions occur in areas underlain by soils of low cohesion or density usually in association with a shallow groundwater table. Seismic hazard areas shall be as defined by the Washington Department of Ecology Coastal Zone Atlas~~

Exhibit A

~~(Seismic Hazard Map prepared by GeoEngineers) as: Class U (Unstable), Class Uos (Unstable old slides), Class Urs (Unstable recent slides), Class I (Intermediate), and Class M (Modified) as shown in the Seismic Hazard Map.~~

4. Mine Hazard Areas.

Mine hazard areas are those areas underlain by or affected by mine workings such as adits, gangways, tunnels, drifts, or airshafts, and those areas of probable sink holes, gas releases, or subsidence due to mine workings. Underground mines do not presently exist within City limits.

Note: An underground structure, consisting of a partially completed underground railroad tunnel, exists within City limits, as defined in the mine hazard areas map. The tunnel was constructed in 1909 and discontinued that same year due to excessive groundwater flows within the tunnel. The dimensions of the tunnel are presently unknown, and it was reportedly backfilled with wood, sand, and gravel in 1915.

5. Volcanic Hazard Areas.

Volcanic hazard areas are areas subject to pyroclastic flows, lava flows, debris avalanche, and inundation by debris flows, lahars, mudflows, or related flooding resulting from volcanic activity. The most likely types of volcanic hazard within the City are mudflows, lahars, or flooding relating to volcanic activity. The boundaries of the volcanic hazard areas within the City are shown in the volcanic hazard map.

6. Tsunami hazard areas.

Tsunami hazard areas and seiche waves include~~are~~ coastal areas and large lake shoreline areas susceptible to flooding and inundation as the result of excessive wave action derived from seismic, atmospheric, or other geologic events. Currently, no specific boundaries have been established in the City limits for this type of hazard area.

(Ord. 27431 § 52; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.730 General Standards.

The standards in this section apply only to geologically hazardous areas. The following definitions apply to this section:

"~~Geo-s~~Setback" is the minimum building setback from the applicable geo-hazard area.

"~~Geo-b~~Buffer" is a zone within a ~~geo-~~setback area required to be vegetated with either native or non-native vegetation.

Exhibit A

A. Standard Buffers.

1. Determining erosion hazard area and landslide hazard area buffer widths:

a. The buffer width shall be measured on a horizontal plane from a perpendicular line established at the edge of the erosion or landslide hazard area limits (from the top and toe of slope).

b. An undisturbed buffer of existing vegetation shall be required for a hazard area to protect existing native vegetation. The required buffer width is either the greater amount of the following two distances, or the minimum distance recommended by the geotechnical professional measured from the edge of the hazard area. In the case of a buffer reduced below these two distances, the standards of the buffer modification section shall apply:

(1) 50 feet from all edges of the erosion hazard area limits; or

(2) A distance of one-third the height of the slope if the regulated activity is at the top of the slope and a distance of one-half the height if the regulated activity is at the bottom of the slope.

2. Buffer Modification:

a. Modifications to the shoreline erosion and/or landslide hazard area buffer consistent with TMC 13.11.730.C. as applicable may be considered at the approval by the Director if the modification is found to meet TMC 13.11.730.I.

b. A minimum 10-foot buffer shall be maintained and the proposed development shall not decrease the factor of safety for landslide occurrences below the limits of 1.5 for static conditions and 1.2 for dynamic conditions. Analysis of dynamic conditions shall be based on a minimum horizontal acceleration as established by the current version of the International Building Code.

c. All uses and development must meet the standards in TMC 13.11.730.D.

B. Small Project Waiver.

1. The Director may approve new accessory structures which are not designed for human occupancy, such as storage or utility space, or additions to existing principal structures in a landslide hazard or erosion hazard buffer without submittal of a geotechnical report if no construction occurs over or within any other critical area or buffer, and if the applicant demonstrates that the proposal meets the following criteria:

a. The new accessory structure or addition to an existing principal structure is on a lot that has been in existence as a legal building site prior to October 31, 1992;

b. The development is consistent with TMC 13.11.145;

c. The new accessory structure is less than 1,000 square feet of floor area for existing residences;

d. Addition to existing residences, including decks have a maximum 250 square feet footprint of building, deck or roof area and are not closer to the top or toe of the slope than the existing residence;

e. The installation of fences where they do not impede emergency access;

f. Removal of noxious or invasive weeds, provided such areas are protected from erosion with either native vegetation or other approved erosion protection;

g. It is not practicable to build the accessory structure or addition to an existing principal structure for the intended purpose outside of the landslide or erosion hazard area buffer;

h. The location of the accessory structure or addition to an existing principal structure minimizes the impact on the steep slope erosion hazard area and/or buffer; and

i. In landslide hazard areas the Director may require a soils report prepared by a qualified geotechnical engineer or geologist licensed by the State of Washington demonstrates that it is safe to construct the new accessory structure or the addition to an existing structure.

2. Director's Decision:

Exhibit A

a. The Director shall require the use of fencing with a durable and visible protective barrier during the construction to protect the remainder of the hazard area and buffer.

b. The Director shall require additional measures to protect the remainder of the hazard area and buffer from the impacts of approving new accessory structures or additions to existing principal structures.

C. General Regulations.

1. The following regulations apply to all geologically hazardous areas:

a. New development, modification to existing structures, or the creation of new lots that would cause foreseeable risk from geological conditions to people or improvements during the life of the development shall be prohibited.

b. New development, modification to existing structures, or the creation of new lots that would require structural stabilization over the life of the development shall be prohibited, except where:

(1) stabilization is necessary to protect a permitted use; and

(2) no alternative location is available; and

(3) no net loss of ecological functions will result; and

(4) stabilization measures shall conform to all provisions included in TMC 2.19.050-.070.

c. All developments shall be required to comply with the building code requirements of the TMC.

d. All proposed modifications to any geological hazard area or buffer shall remain subject to mitigation sequencing and any unmitigated impacts resulting from a modification are required to be compensated for consistent with TMC 13.11.230.B.4, TMC 13.11.270.F, and TMC 13.11.290.

e. Mitigation sequencing shall not apply where staff has determined through a site-specific evaluation that there is not a significant geologic hazard risk and no other critical area exists.

f. Any alteration shall not adversely impact other critical areas.

g. Stabilization structures or measures to protect existing primary residential structures may be permitted where no alternatives, including relocation or reconstruction of existing structures, are found to be feasible, and less expensive than the proposed stabilization measure provided they are designed and constructed consistent with the provisions of TMC 2.19.050-.070.

h. Any development, encroachment, filling, clearing, or grading, timber harvest, building structures, impervious surfaces, and vegetation removal within geologically hazardous areas and associated buffers shall be prohibited except as specified in TMC 13.11.730.D.-I.

Exhibit A

D. Erosion and Landslide ~~h~~Hazard areas - Standards.

1. In addition to the general regulations set forth in subsection C. above, development and activities within an erosion or landslide hazard critical area or their associated buffers shall incorporate the following additional standards in design of the proposal as applicable. The requirement for long-term slope stability shall exclude designs that require regular and periodic maintenance to maintain their level of function.

a. Structures and improvements shall minimize alterations to the natural contour of the slope, and foundations shall be tiered where possible to conform to existing topography; Terracing of the land, however, shall be kept to a minimum to preserve natural topography where possible.

b. Structures and improvements shall be located to preserve the most critical portion of the site and its natural landforms and vegetation;

c. The proposed development shall not result in greater risk or a need for increased buffers on neighboring properties;

d. The use of retaining walls that allow the maintenance of existing natural slope area is preferred over graded artificial slopes where graded slopes would result in increased disturbance as compared to use of retaining walls;

e. Development shall be designed to minimize impervious surfaces within the critical area and critical area buffer;

f. Where change in grade outside the building footprint is necessary the site retention system should be stepped and regrading should be designed to minimize topographic modification. On slopes in excess of 40 percent, grading for yard area may be disallowed where inconsistent with these criteria;

g. Building foundation walls shall be utilized as retaining walls rather than rockeries or retaining structures built separately and away from the building wherever feasible. Freestanding retaining structures that are designed to the same life and performance criteria as the adjacent structure;

h. On slopes in excess of 40 percent, use of pole-type construction which conforms to the existing topography is required where feasible. If pole-type construction is not technically feasible, the structure must be tiered to conform to the existing topography and to minimize topographic modification;

i. On slopes in excess of 40 percent, piled deck support structures are required where technically feasible for parking or garages over fill-based construction types; and

j. Areas of new permanent disturbance and all areas of temporary disturbance shall be mitigated and/or restored pursuant to a mitigation and restoration plan meeting the requirements of this Program.

2. The development shall not increase surface water discharge or sedimentation onsite or to adjacent properties beyond pre-development conditions. Note that point discharges onto adjacent properties is not permitted without approved easements. Dispersed flows meeting pre-developed flows will be permitted provided other development standards can be met.

3. Development shall be designed to minimize impervious lot coverage. All development shall be designed to minimize impervious lot coverage and should incorporate understructure parking and multi-level structures within the existing height limit.

4. Roads, walkways, and parking areas should be designed parallel to topographic contours with consideration given to maintaining consolidated areas of natural topography and vegetation.

5. Removal of vegetation shall be minimized and only that which is needed to accommodate a permitted structure. Any replanting that occurs shall consist of trees, shrubs, and ground cover that is compatible with the existing surrounding vegetation, meets the objectives of erosion prevention and site stabilization, and does not require permanent irrigation for long-term survival.

6. The proposed development shall not result in greater risk or need for increased geo-buffers on neighboring properties.

Exhibit A

7. Structures and improvements shall be clustered where possible. Driveways and utility corridors shall be minimized through the use of common access drives and corridors where feasible. Access shall be in the least sensitive area of the site.

8. Active Landslide Hazard – Standards.

a. Any new development, encroachment, filling, clearing or grading, impervious surfaces, and vegetation removal is prohibited within an Active Landslide Hazard Area and buffers except as specified in the following specific instances:

(1) Stormwater Conveyance. Stormwater conveyance shall be allowed when it is conveyed through a high-density polyethylene stormwater pipe with fused joints and when no other stormwater conveyance alternative is available. The pipes shall be located on the surface of the ground and be properly anchored so that it will continue to function in the event of an underlying slide.

(2) Utility Lines. Utility lines will be permitted when no other conveyance alternative is available. The line shall be located above ground and properly anchored and/or designed so that it will continue to function in the event of an underlying slide. Utility lines may be permitted when it can be show that no other route alternative is available.

(3) Trails. Trails shall be allowed when all of the following conditions have been met:

(a) The removal or disturbance of vegetation, clearing or grading shall be prohibited during the wet season (November 1 through May 1);

(b) The proposed trail shall not decrease the existing factor of safety within the active landslide hazard area, or any required buffer;

(c) The proposed trail cannot be located outside of the active landslide hazard area or its associated buffer due to topographic or site constraints;

(d) The proposed trail is for non-vehicular use only, and is no wider than 4 feet;

(e) Trails shall not be sited within active landslide hazards or their associated buffers when there is such a high risk of landslide activity that use of the trail would be hazardous;

(f) Trails shall be designed and constructed using an engineered drainage system or other methods to prevent the trail from channeling water.

b. No small projects waivers as described in TMC Section 13.11.730.B. are allowed in active landslide hazard areas and their buffers.

~~1. Structures and improvements shall be required to maintain a minimum 50-foot geo-setback from the boundary of all erosion hazard areas (Note: where no distinct break exists, the top of a steep slope is the upper most limit of the area where the ground surface drops greater than 10 feet or more vertically within a horizontal distance of 25 feet). No geo-setback shall be required where the vertical relief of the slope is 10 feet or less. The geo-setback may be reduced to 30 feet where the vertical relief of the slope is greater than 10 feet but no more than 20 feet.~~

~~The 30-foot or 50-foot geo-setback may be reduced to a minimum of 10 feet for the following conditions:~~

~~a. Construction of one-story detached accessory structures (garages, sheds, playhouses of similar structures not used for continuous occupancy) with less than 1,000 square feet of floor area, whichever is greater for existing residences.~~

~~b. Addition to existing residences, including decks that have a maximum 250 square feet footprint of building, deck or roof area, whichever is greater, and are not closer to the top or bottom of the slope than the existing residence.~~

~~c. Installation of fences where they do not impede emergency access.~~

~~d. Clearing only up to 2,000 square feet during May 1 to October 1, if determined by the Building Official to not cause significant erosion hazard.~~

Exhibit A

e. Grading up to 5 cubic yards during April 1 to October 1 over an area not to exceed 2,000 square feet, if determined by the Building Official that such grading will not cause a significant erosion hazard.

f. Removal of noxious or invasive weeds, provided such areas are protected from erosion with either native vegetation or other approved erosion protection.

g. Forest practices regulated by other agencies.

h. The construction of public or private utility corridors; provided it has been demonstrated that such construction will not significantly increase erosion risks.

i. Trimming and limbing of vegetation for the creation and maintenance of view corridors, removal of site distance obstructions as determined by the City Traffic Engineer, removal of hazardous trees, or clearing associated with routine maintenance by utility agencies or companies; provided that the soils are not disturbed and the loss of vegetative cover will not significantly increase risks of landslide or erosion. See TMC 13.11.200 and 210.

j. The construction of approved public or private trails; provided they are constructed in a manner which will not contribute to surface water runoff.

k. Remediation or critical area restoration project under the jurisdiction of another agency.

l. Where it can be demonstrated through an erosion hazard analysis prepared by a geotechnical specialist that there is no significant risk to the development proposal or adjacent properties, or that the proposal can be designed so that any erosion hazard is significantly reduced, the geo-setback may be reduced as specified by the geotechnical specialist. This geo-setback may be increased where the Building Official determines a larger geo-setback is necessary to prevent risk of damage to proposed and existing development. The development must also comply with the Specific Development Standards for Erosion and Landslide Hazard Areas. The erosion hazard analysis shall provide the following information:

(1) Alternative setbacks to the erosion hazard area.

(2) Recommended construction techniques for minimizing erosional damage.

(3) Location and methods of drainage and surface water management.

(4) Recommended time of year for construction to occur.

(5) Permanent erosion control (vegetation management and/or replanting plan) to be applied at the site.

m. In addition to the erosion hazard analysis, a Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan shall be required that complies with the requirements in the currently adopted City Stormwater Management Manual. Clearing and grading activities in an erosion hazard area shall also be required to comply with the City amendments to the most recently adopted International Building Code.

2. Erosion hazard areas that are also landslide hazard areas shall be required to comply with all standards for landslide hazard areas as well.

B. Landslide hazard areas.

1. Structures and improvements shall be required to maintain a minimum 50-foot geo-setback from the boundary of all landslide hazard area. (Note: where no distinct break exists, the top of a steep slope is the upper most limit of the area where the ground surface drops greater than 10 feet or more vertically within a horizontal distance of 25 feet). No geo-setback shall be required where the vertical relief of the slope is 10 feet or less. The geo-setback may be reduced to 30 feet where the vertical relief of the slope is greater than 10 feet but no more than 20 feet.

The 30-foot or 50-foot geo-setback may be reduced to a minimum of 10 feet for the following conditions:

a. Construction of one-story detached accessory structures (garages, sheds, playhouses of similar structures not used for continuous occupancy) with less than 1,000 square feet of floor area, whichever is greater.

b. Addition to existing residences, including decks that have a minimum 250 square feet footprint of building, deck or roof area, whichever is greater, and are not closer to the top or bottom of the slope than the existing residence.

Exhibit A

e. Installation of fences where they do not impede emergency access.

d. Clearing only up to 2,000 square feet during May 1 to October 1, if determined by the Building Official to not cause significant landslide hazard.

e. Grading up to 5 cubic yards during April 1 to October 1 over an area not to exceed 2,000 square feet, if determined by the Building Official that such grading will not cause a landslide hazard.

f. Removal of noxious or invasive weeds, provided such areas are protected from erosion with either native vegetation or other approved erosion protection.

g. Forest practices regulated by other agencies.

h. Slopes modified by an engineered cut or fill engineered retaining wall system, where setbacks, if any, were established by the previous engineered design.

i. Steep slopes resulting for right-of-way improvements (streets, alleys, sidewalks, etc) may be exempted by the Building Official if improvements will not decrease slope stability on said property or adjacent properties.

j. The construction of an approved public surface water conveyance, provided it will result in minimum vegetation removal and soil disturbance on the slope.

k. The construction of approved public or private trails; provided they are constructed in a manner which will not contribute to surface water runoff.

l. The construction of public or private utility corridors; provided it has been demonstrated that such construction will not significantly increase landslide risks.

m. Trimming and limbing of vegetation for the creation and maintenance of view corridors, removal of site distance obstructions as determined by the City Traffic Engineer, removal of hazardous trees, or clearing associated with routine maintenance by utility agencies or companies; provided that the soils are not disturbed and the loss of vegetative cover will not significantly increase risks of landslide or erosion. See TMC 13.11.200 and 210.

n. Remediation, critical area restoration, or mining and quarrying where local regulation is pre-empted by state or federal law.

o. Where it can be demonstrated through a geotechnical analysis prepared by a geologic hazards specialist that there is no significant risk to the development proposal or adjacent properties, or that the proposal can be designed so that any landslide hazard is significantly eliminated, the geo-setback may be reduced as specified by the geotechnical engineer. The geo-setback may be reduced to no less than 10 feet where slopes are 40 percent or greater. This geo-setback may be increased where the Building Official determines a larger geo-setback is necessary to prevent risk of damage to proposed and existing development. The development must also comply with all applicable Development Standards. The geotechnical analysis report shall include the following:

(1) A description of the extent and type of vegetative cover.

(2) A description of subsurface conditions based on data from site-specific explorations.

(3) Descriptions of surface runoff and groundwater conditions, public and private sewage disposal systems, fills and excavations, and all structural improvements.

(4) An estimate of the bluff retreat rate that recognizes and reflects potential catastrophic events such as seismic activity or a 100-year storm.

(5) Consideration of the run-out hazard of landslide debris and/or the impacts of landslide run-out on down slope properties.

(6) A study of the slope stability, including an analysis of proposed cuts, fills, and other site grading; and the effect construction and placement of structures will have on the slope over the estimated life of the structures.

Exhibit A

~~(7) Recommendations for building site limitations, specifically, a recommendation for the minimum geo-buffer and minimum setback.~~

~~(8) Recommendations for proposed surface and subsurface drainage, considering the soil and hydrology constraints of the site.~~

~~C. Specific Standards for Erosion and Landslide Hazard Areas.~~

~~1. The development shall not increase surface water discharge or sedimentation to adjacent properties beyond pre-development conditions. Note that point discharges onto adjacent properties is not permitted without approved easements. Dispersed flows meeting pre-developed flows will be permitted provided other development standards can be met.~~

~~2. The development shall not decrease slope stability on adjacent properties.~~

~~3. Such alterations shall not adversely impact other critical areas.~~

~~4. The proposed development shall not decrease the factor of safety for landslide occurrences below the limits of 1.5 for static conditions and 1.2 for dynamic conditions. Analysis of dynamic conditions shall be based on a minimum horizontal acceleration as established by the current version of the International Building Code.~~

~~5. Structures and improvements shall minimize alterations to the natural contour of the slope, and the foundation shall be tiered where possible to conform to existing topography. Terracing of the land, however, shall be kept to a minimum to preserve natural topography where possible. Structures and improvements shall be located to preserve the most critical portion of the site and its natural landforms and vegetation.~~

~~6. Development shall be designed to minimize impervious lot coverage. All development shall be designed to minimize impervious lot coverage and should incorporate understructure parking and multi-level structures within the existing height limit.~~

~~7. Roads, walkways, and parking areas should be designed parallel to topographic contours with consideration given to maintaining consolidated areas of natural topography and vegetation.~~

~~8. Removal of vegetation shall be minimized and only that which is needed to accommodate a structure. Any replanting that occurs shall consist of trees, shrubs, and ground cover that is compatible with the existing surrounding vegetation, meets the objectives of erosion prevention and site stabilization, and does not require permanent irrigation for long-term survival.~~

~~9. The proposed development shall not result in greater risk or need for increased geo-buffers on neighboring properties.~~

~~10. Structures and improvements shall be clustered where possible. Driveways and utility corridors shall be minimized through the use of common access drives and corridors where feasible. Access shall be in the least sensitive area of the site.~~

E~~D~~. Seismic ~~h~~Hazard ~~a~~Areas - Standards.

1. A ~~hazard analysis~~geotechnical report consistent with the requirements of TMC 13.11.730.J shall be prepared~~will be required~~ for structures and improvements in a seismic hazard area. All developments shall be required to comply with the requirements of the most recently adopted edition of the International Building Code. The following types of projects will not require a ~~seismic hazardous analysis~~geotechnical report;

a. Construction of new buildings with less than 1,000~~2,500~~ square feet footprint of floor or roof area, whichever is greater, and which are not designed for human occupancy, such as storage or utility spaces, and are not residential structures or spaces used as places of employment or public assembly.

b. Additions to existing residences, including decks that have a maximum 250 square feet footprint of building, deck or roof area, whichever is greater.

c. Installation of fences where they do not impede emergency access.

~~d. The exceptions above may not apply to areas that are also landslide hazard areas.~~

2. The exceptions above may not apply to areas that are also landslide hazard areas.~~The hazard report shall include the following:~~

Exhibit A

~~a. Known and mapped faults within 200 feet of the project area.~~

~~b. Analysis of the potential impacts of seismic activity on the site.~~

~~c. Evaluation of the physical properties of the subsurface soils and their liquefaction potential, and mitigation measures.~~

~~3. All developments shall be required to comply with the requirements of the most recently adopted edition of the International Building Code.~~\

F~~E~~. Volcanic H~~h~~azard A~~a~~reas - Standards.

~~Development in volcanic hazard areas shall comply with the zoning and Building Code requirements of the TMC. New developments in volcanic hazard areas shall be required to submit an evacuation and emergency management plan, with the exception of the following:~~

1. New developments in volcanic hazard areas shall be required to submit an evacuation and emergency management plan, with the exception of the following:

a. Construction of new buildings with less than 1,000~~2,500~~ square feet of floor area or roof area, whichever is greater, and which are not designed for human occupancy, such as storage or utility spaces, and are not residential structures or used as places of employment or public assembly;

b.~~2.~~ Additions to existing residences, including decks that have a maximum 250 square feet footprint of building, deck or roof area, whichever is greater; and

c.~~3.~~ Installation of fences where they do not impede emergency egress.

G~~F~~. Mine H~~h~~azard A~~a~~reas - Standards.

Essential~~Critical~~ facilities, as defined by the currently adopted version of International Building Code, are not permitted in the area of the former railroad tunnel. Other development within 50 feet of the mapped location of the former railroad tunnel shall be required to perform a hazard analysis that includes the information specified in Section 13.11.730.J.~~identifies the following:~~

~~1. Location of the development relative to the former tunnel.~~

~~2. Evaluation of the potential effects of tunnel subsidence on the proposed structures.~~

~~3. Recommendations for mitigation of any potential subsidence.~~

H~~G~~. Tsunami H~~h~~azard A~~a~~reas - Standards.

Development in tsunami and seiche hazard areas shall comply with the zoning and Building Code requirements of the TMC. There are no other specific development standards for tsunami hazard or seiche hazard areas.

I. Approval of Geologic Hazard Area Modification.

Modifications to geologic hazard critical areas and their associated buffers shall only be approved if the Director determines that the modification:

1. Will not increase the threat of the geological hazard to adjacent properties over conditions that would exist if the provision of this part were not modified;
2. Will not adversely impact other critical areas;
3. Shall not decrease the factor of safety for landslide occurrences below the limits of 1.5 for static conditions and 1.2 for dynamic conditions. Analysis of dynamic conditions shall be based on a minimum horizontal acceleration as established by the current version of the International Building Code.
4. Has been evaluated to meet life safety standards under anticipated conditions by a qualified geotechnical engineer or geologist, licensed in the state of Washington;
5. The applicant provides a geotechnical report prepared by a qualified professional demonstrating that modification of the critical area or critical area buffer will have no adverse impacts on stability of any adjacent slopes, and will not impact stability of any existing structures. Geotechnical reporting standards shall comply with the requirements of TMC 13.11.730.J.

Exhibit A

6. Any modification complies with recommendations of the geotechnical report with respect to best management practices, construction techniques or other recommendations;

7. The proposed modification to the geologic hazard area or its associated buffer with any associated mitigation does not significantly impact habitat associated with species of local importance, or such habitat that could reasonably be expected to exist during the anticipated life of the development proposal if the area were regulated under this part.

Exhibit A

J. Geologic Hazard Assessment and Geotechnical Report Requirements.

1. The following are general requirements for a geologic hazard assessment and geotechnical report. Depending on the scope and scale of the project, additional information may be required. It is the responsibility of the qualified geotechnical professional to address all factors, which in their opinion, are relevant to the site.

a. Project information and report purpose:

(1) Site address;

(2) Vicinity Map; and

(3) Purpose (e.g. feasibility, permit application, final design).

b. Site and project description:

(1) Site plan showing existing and proposed structures and site improvements, property lines, and existing contour lines based upon the best available data;

(2) Site plan shall show crest (top) and toe of slope, limit of recommended buffer, and recommended setback limits as determined by a geotechnical engineer;

(3) Surface conditions, including adjacent properties, structures, and rights-of-way;

(4) Description of existing and/or proposed sewer drainage facilities (sanitary and stormwater) on or adjacent to site when these facilities affect or are affected by the proposed work;

(5) Description of proposed structural and site improvements;

(6) Floor and foundation grades; and

(7) Anticipated excavation depths.

c. Geology and geologic hazards:

(1) Review of available literature, geologic maps;

(2) Preliminary geologic hazard assessment (e.g. landslide-prone areas, peat settlement prone areas, liquefaction hazard areas); and

(3) Landslide history, including review of GeoMap NW, DNR landslide inventory maps or City files.

d. Field explorations and laboratory testing:

(1) Exploration logs;

(2) Field and laboratory testing results.

e. Subsurface description:

(1) Subsurface conditions;

(2) Geologic profile and site development cross-sections; and

(3) Groundwater evaluation and levels.

f. Analyses:

(1) Include soil properties, layering, and geometry;

(2) Describe assumptions, analysis methods, results and interpretation.

g. Conclusions and recommendations:

(1) Conceptual siting of structures and general recommendations;

(2) Earthquake engineering;

(3) Slope stability assessment including (1) existing conditions, construction phase, and post-construction phase and (2) areas affected beyond the site as appropriate;

Exhibit A

(4) Foundation support recommendations (e.g. type, allowable bearing pressures, deep foundation capacities, settlement estimates);

(5) Temporary excavation and/or shoring recommendations, impacts on adjacent properties including utilities and ROW;

(6) Lateral earth pressure and resistance recommendations;

(7) Grading and earthwork including site preparation, compaction requirements, fill specifications, sequencing of earthwork operations, wet weather considerations;

(8) Temporary and permanent surface and subsurface drainage requirements, temporary and permanent dewatering, off site effects;

(9) Temporary and permanent erosion control; and

(10) Other recommendations as needed.

h. Plan review and minimum risk standards:

(1) In landslide-prone critical areas, the following will be required with all permit applications:

(a) A statement that the most recent plans and specifications submitted to the City have been reviewed and conform to the recommendations of the analysis and report and, provided that those conditions and recommendations are satisfied during the construction and use, the areas disturbed by construction or activity will be stabilized and remain stable and will not increase the potential for soil movement; and the risk of damage to the proposed development and from the development to adjacent properties from soil instability will be minimal.

(2) In other areas designated by the Director as having high risk potential, the following shall be submitted:

(a) A statement that the most recent plans and specifications submitted to the City have been reviewed and conform to the recommendations of the analysis and report, and provided that the conditions and recommendations are satisfied, the construction and development or activity will not increase the potential for soil movement; and the risk of damage to the proposed development and from the development to adjacent properties from soil instability will be minimal.

2. Additional reporting requirements in erosion or landslide hazard areas. The following are additional submittal requirements to those listed in Section a. above for a site located within an erosion or landslide hazard area.

a. An evaluation of the erosion potential on the site during and after construction shall be submitted. It shall include recommendations for mitigation including retention of vegetation buffers and revegetation. The geotechnical engineer shall provide a statement identifying buffer areas at the top or toe of a slope based on geotechnical site constraints and the impacts of proposed construction methods on the stability of the slope, consistent with the minimum buffer requirements of this Program.

b. The geotechnical engineer shall submit a statement in the soils report that the geotechnical elements of seismic design have been evaluated in accordance with the criteria and ground motions prescribed by the current version of the International Building Code for new structures or ASCE-31/41 for existing buildings. Slope stability analyses for erosion or landslide hazard areas shall be evaluated in accordance with the most current version of the International Building Code. The plan set for the project shall be reviewed by the geotechnical engineer for consistency with these design criteria.

c. The geotechnical engineer shall make a recommendation as to which portion of the site is the most stable and the preferred location of the structure. The limits of the area of grading activity shall be identified in the recommendations.

Exhibit A

d. In general, no excavation will be permitted in erosion or landslide hazard areas during the typically wet winter months. When dirt disturbing activities, such as excavation or grading, is proposed, including the maintenance of open temporary slopes during the wet season as defined in TMC 2.19 or the City's Stormwater Management Manual, technical analysis shall be provided to assure that no environmental harm or safety issues would result. The technical analysis shall be submitted for approval by the Director and shall, at a minimum, consist of plans showing mitigation techniques and a letter from the geotechnical engineer.

K. In addition to the information provided pursuant to the requirements of this Program, the Director may require third-party review if the professional opinions of an applicant's representative and the Department's reviewers cannot be reconciled. Third-party review requires the applicant's geotechnical and/or additional technical studies to be reviewed by an independent third party, selected by the Director and paid for by the applicant. The third-party review shall be conducted by a qualified professional geotechnical engineer.

(Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 27431 § 53; passed Nov. 15, 2005: Ord. 27294 § 2; passed Nov. 16, 2004)

13.11.800 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas.

The 800 section contains the regulations for critical aquifer recharge areas (CARAs), including the following:

13.11.805 Purpose and Intent
13.11.810 Classification.
13.11.815 Applicability
13.11.820 Standards.

(Ord. 27431 § 54; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.805 Purpose and Intent.

CARAs are defined under WAC 365-190-100 as areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water or is susceptible to reduced recharge.

The Central Pierce County Sole Source Aquifer serves as a significant source of drinking water for the City of Tacoma and surrounding areas. For future growth, supplemental supply, and emergency response, this resource will continue to be extremely important to the City of Tacoma.

The accidental or improper release of hazardous substances through spillage, leaks, or discharges from local industry has been identified as a cause of historical groundwater contamination in the aquifer system.

This section intends to establish procedures that reduce risks to public health and safety, as well as potential impacts to the groundwater supply. These procedures shall insure that within the aquifer, properties that have stormwater infiltration facilities and properties that store hazardous substances meet appropriate performance standards, and those properties are maintained and inspected.

13.11.810 Classification.

Classification of recharge areas as critical areas shall be based upon the susceptibility of the aquifer to degradation and contamination. High susceptibility is indicative of land uses which produce contaminants that may degrade groundwater and low susceptibility is indicative of land uses which will not. The following criteria should be considered in designating areas with critical recharging effects:

Exhibit A

A. Availability of adequate information on the location and extent of the aquifer;

B. Vulnerability of the aquifer to contamination that would create a significant public health hazard. When determining vulnerability, depth of groundwater, macro and micro permeability of soils, soil types, presence of a potential source of contamination and other relevant factors should be considered; and

C. The extent to which the aquifer is an essential source of drinking water.

D. The Central Pierce County Sole Source Aquifer (Central Pierce County SSA), mapped by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, extends through a majority of the City of Tacoma. It is an essential source of drinking water. The zoning allows the establishment of various land uses that could produce contaminants that may degrade groundwater and the area contains existing high-impact uses. Therefore, the City classifies the Central Pierce County SSA as a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area. For the purposes of this section, the boundaries of the Central Pierce County SSA are delineated on the map referenced in Figure 1 below. The map also delineates the boundaries of the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD). The STGPD, as the area with the most concentrated high-impact uses, contains specific regulations under TMC 13.06.070.D.

Exhibit A

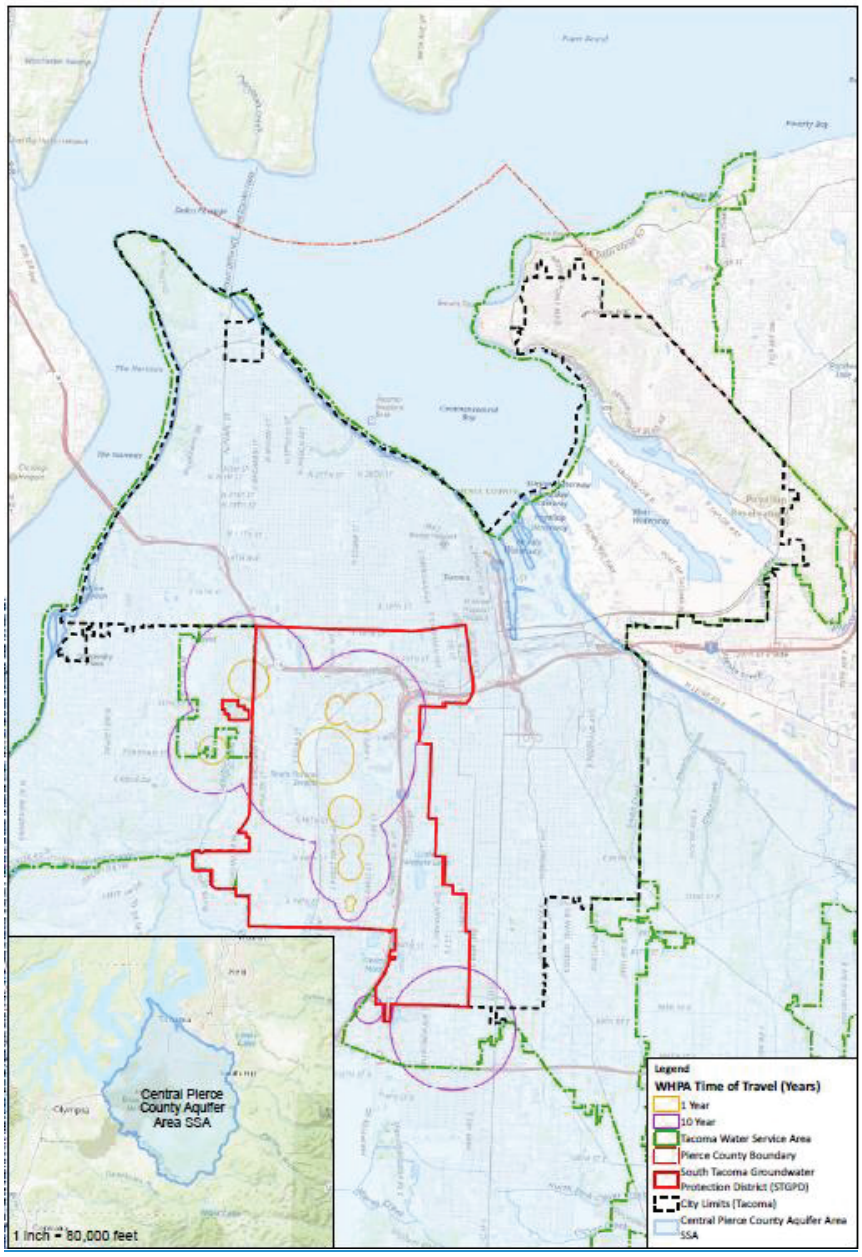


Figure 1. Central Pierce County SSA

Exhibit A

(Ord. 27431 § 55; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.815 Applicability

A. Applicability.

1. The mandates of this chapter shall apply to new and existing developments and facilities, and to the alteration and/or expansion of existing uses, when such uses are listed in the "High Impact Use Table" and are located within the Central Pierce County SSA.

2. All property within the Central Pierce County SSA, shall comply with the requirements of this chapter and any additional requirements of the zoning district where the property is presently located or may be located in the future. In the event of conflict, the stricter provisions shall control.

3. Standards for development in aquifer recharge areas in the STGPD shall be in accordance with the provisions in Chapter 13.06.070.D, South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District.

4. Standards for development in aquifer recharge areas outside of the STGPD shall be in accordance with this section. Definitions contained within Chapter.13.06.070.D are applicable to this section.

13.11.820 Standards.

~~Standards for development in aquifer recharge areas shall be in accordance with the provisions in Chapter 13.06.070.D09, South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, of the TMC and other local, state, and federal regulations.~~

A. High Impact Uses

1. The High Impact Use Table below identifies the new, expanded, or altered land uses and activities that are restricted or prohibited within the Central Pierce County SSA. The Director of Planning and Development Services, or designee, shall consult the North American Industry Classification System ("NAICS") Manual for assistance in reviewing and making use interpretations pursuant to this subsection.

High Impact Use Table abbreviation:

P: Permitted use, subject to requirements of this title
N: Prohibited use

High Impact Use Table

Regulated Uses and Activities	Use Allowance
Agricultural Uses	P
Animal slaughter and fat rendering facilities	N
Asphalt plants/cement and concrete plants	N
Boat refinishing	P
Cemeteries and funeral facilities	P

Exhibit A

Chemical manufacture and reprocessing.	N
Chemical storage facilities (not include fuel)	N
Chemical/hazardous waste reprocessing and disposal	N
Coal Facility	N
Creosote/asphalt manufacture or treatment.	N
Drycleaner facilities	P
Electroplating activities	N
Fire training center	N
Greenhouse – commercial/nursery – wholesale/retail	P
Hazardous waste treatment, transfer, storage, or disposal facilities including radioactive wastes ("Designated Facility" per Ecology's Chapter 173-303 WAC et seq.).	N
Infiltration of reclaimed water	N
Landfill—demolition (inert), municipal sanitary waste, solid waste, wood waste, hazardous waste	N
Machine shops, fabricating, metal processing with etchers and chemicals	P
Manufacture of Class 1A or 1B flammable liquids as defined in the Fire Code.	N
Mining and quarrying	N
Metal recycling/auto wrecking facilities	N
Pesticide/fertilizer storage facilities	N
Petroleum and petroleum products refinery, including reprocessing and petroleum fuel facilities.	N
Pulp and Paper Mill	N
Railroad yards-cargo transfer areas	P
Sewage lift stations	P
Smelting	N

Exhibit A

Solid waste processing/handling/transferring/recycling	P
Storage Tanks – above ground (hazardous substances)	P
Storage Tanks – underground (hazardous substances)	P
Vehicle and boat repair/service/garages/body shops	P
Wood products preserving	N

2. Pre-existing Nonconforming Uses and Structures

An established use or existing structure that was lawfully permitted prior to adoption of this ordinance, but that does not comply with the provisions of this chapter, may continue subject to TMC Chapter 13.06.010.L. Continued operation is permitted as long as the use or structure does not result in contamination of the site or the groundwater, as determined by the TPCHD regulations and other applicable environmental regulations and agencies.

3. Permanent or temporary storage of hazardous substances on sites with pervious surfaces, the disposal of hazardous substances, and the disposal of solid waste is prohibited, unless such discharge or disposal is specifically in accordance with a valid discharge permit, is approved for discharge into the City's municipal wastewater system pursuant to Chapter 12.08 of the Tacoma Municipal Code as may be amended or is conducted in compliance with the requirements of a solid waste handling permit issued by the TPCHD.

B. Exemptions

The following facilities shall be exempt from all provisions of this chapter:

1. Any handling, storing, disposing, or generating of 220 pounds (100 kilograms) or less of a hazardous substance per month or batch.

2. Farm or residential tanks of 1,100 gallons or less capacity used for storing motor fuel and heating oil tanks for non-commercial purposes. Any small quantity of hazardous substances intended solely for personal use.

3. Gasoline or diesel tanks attached to private or commercial motor vehicles and used directly in the propulsion of that vehicle, including tank trucks in transit.

4. A pipeline facility (including gathering lines) regulated under: (1) the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 reauthorized in 1996 as the Accountable Pipeline Safety and Partnership Act as may be amended from time to time, or (2) the Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Act of 1979 as may be amended from time to time; or which is an interstate pipeline facility regulated under State laws comparable to the provisions of law referred to in (1) and (2) above.

5. The City's municipal sewer system, in accordance with Chapter 12.08 of Tacoma Municipal Code as may be amended from time to time.

6. Any municipal solid waste landfill or other regulated solid waste handling activities, when permitted and operated in compliance with Chapter 173- 351 WAC et seq. or 173-350 WAC et seq. as adopted locally by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Board of Health, and as may be amended from time to time.

7. The application of fertilizer, plant growth retardants and pesticides in accordance with label directions and requirements of the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

C. Hazardous substance storage and management.

Owners and operators of regulated high impact uses shall:

1. Store hazardous substances in containers that are in good condition.

Exhibit A

2. Label containers in a manner that adequately identifies the major risk(s) associated with their contents. Labels shall not be obscured, removed, or otherwise unreadable.

3. Remove or destroy labels from empty containers no longer used for hazardous substance storage, and label such containers as "Empty" or otherwise provide a clear indication that the containers are not useable.

4. Use containers made of, or lined with, materials that will not react with, and are otherwise compatible with the hazardous substance being stored.

5. Always have containers closed except when it is necessary to add or remove hazardous substances.

6. Maintain a minimum 30-inch separation between rows of containers holding hazardous substances and ensure that each row of drums is no more than two drums deep.

7. Provide and maintain containment systems for container storage areas that are capable of collecting and holding spills and leaks with sufficient capacity to contain 10 percent of the volume of all containers, or 100 percent of the volume of the largest container, whichever is greater.

8. Store all hazardous substance containers in a covered area where they will not be degraded by the weather or exposed to stormwater.

9. At closure of the facility, all hazardous substances must be removed from the containment system. Remaining containers, liners, bases, and soil containing or contaminated with hazardous substances or residues must be decontaminated or removed.

10. Ensure that business practices and stormwater infiltration facility maintenance minimizes potential releases of hazardous substances to the environment.

D. All High Impact Uses shall follow the applicable regulations and permit requirements of the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, including the General Guidance and Performance Standards as applicable, the Tacoma Fire Department, and other regulatory agencies.

E. Above ground and underground storage tanks shall comply with the performance standards in TMC 13.06.070.D.10 and TMC 13.06.070.D.11, as applicable.

(Ord. 27431 § 56; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

13.11.900 *Repealed by Ord. 28613.* Definitions.

Relocated to 13.01.110.

(Repealed and relocated by Ord. 28613 Ex. G; passed Sept. 24, 2019: Ord. 28518 Ex. 5; passed Jun. 26, 2018: Ord. 28336 Ex. C; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28335 Ex. A; passed Dec. 1, 2015: Ord. 28230 Ex. F; passed Jul. 22, 2014: Ord. 28109 Ex. O; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 28070 Ex. B; passed May 8, 2012: Ord. 27813 Ex. E; passed Jun. 30, 2009: Ord. 27728 Ex. A; passed Jul. 1, 2008: Ord. 27431 § 57; passed Nov. 15, 2005)

From:	DFW R6SSplanning
To:	Planning; Bolster-Grant, Robin; Spadoni, Lisa
Cc:	Lentes, Gwendolen A (DFW); Tuttle, Megan E (DFW); Bryant, Jessica (DFW); Penk, Miles A (DFW); Eberly, Jennifer C (DFW); Whittaker, Kara A (DFW); Berejikian, Marian (DFW); Guida, Eric (COM); DFW R6SSplanning
Subject:	WDFW Comment Letter on City of Tacoma"s Critical Areas Ordinance Update
Date:	Friday, August 22, 2025 2:05:02 PM
Attachments:	2025.08.22_WDFW Letter For Tacoma CAO.pdf

Hello Robin Bolster-Grant,

Please see the attached WDFW comment letter on the City of Tacoma's 2025 Draft Critical Areas Ordinance Update. We respectfully request that these comments be considered and included in the public comment record for the update, including the public comment feedback that closes on August 22nd. For awareness, this comment letter has been uploaded to the City's Planview submittal 2025-S-9675.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding our comments, don't hesitate to reach out for clarity.

Thank you,

Jessica Bryant (she/her)
Regional Land Use Lead – Region 6
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jessica.Bryant@dfw.wa.gov
(564) 669-4755

State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Coastal Region • Region 6 • 48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, WA 98563-9618
Telephone: (360) 249-4628 • Fax: (360) 249-1229

August 22, 2025

City of Tacoma
ATTN: Robin Bolster-Grant, Land Use Division Manager
747 Market Street, Room 345
Tacoma, WA 98402

Subject: WDFW Comments on the City of Tacoma's Draft Critical Areas Ordinance Update, Planview Submittal 2025-S-9675

Dear Ms. Bolster-Grant,

On behalf of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), we offer our comments on the 2025 draft critical areas ordinance update for the City of Tacoma as part of the current periodic update under the Growth Management Act (GMA). WDFW is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and perpetuating the state's fish, wildlife, and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

In recognition of our responsibilities, we submit the following comments, acknowledging that other comments may be offered in the future. We strive to maintain contact throughout this update process and look forward to future engagement opportunities.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Amendments:

Table 1. Recommended changes to proposed CAO language from WDFW. Policy language suggestions and their legal implications should be vetted by the jurisdiction receiving them.

Note: Policy language changes to be addressed directly.

Section Number	Policy Language (with WDFW suggestions in red)	WDFW comment
Chapter 13.11 Critical Areas Preservation		
13.11.100 General Provisions		
13.11.120 (B) (2) Intent	Maintaining healthy, functioning ecosystems through the protection of ground and surface waters, wetlands, fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to conserve biodiversity of plant and animal species;	WDFW is supportive of this policy as this aligns with the agency's mission. To support this policy, WDFW recommends that the City uses relevant portions of the Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan: WRIA 10 – Puyallup-White Watershed plan as a guide to implement this policy. WDFW 1

13.11.120 (B) (3) Intent	Preventing cumulative adverse impacts to critical areas ~~including the prevention of net loss~~ ensuring no net loss of ecological functions or values for all critical areas; ~~of wetlands;~~	WDFW recommends expanding this intent policy to align with WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830 for the protection of all critical areas functions and values, instead of only calling out wetlands. WDFW 2
13.11.120 (B) (10) Intent	Providing City officials with information, direction, and authority to protect critical areas ~~and~~ ecosystems ~~s~~ functions and values from no net loss when evaluating development proposals.	Similar to the comment above, WDFW recommends expanding this intent policy to better align with WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830. WDFW 3
13.11.200 Allowed Activities		
13.11.210 (B) (3) Activities Allowed with Staff Review	Wetlands that meet the following criteria are not subject to the avoidance and minimization requirements of the mitigation sequence (TMC 13.11.270) in accordance with the following provisions, and they may be filled if the impacts are fully mitigated based on remaining actions in TMC 13.11.270.F.3 through 6. Any wetland fill would also require federal and/or state permits consistent with TMC 13.11.140. a. All Category IV wetlands, which have been classified and identified as having a total cumulative area of less than 4,000 square feet, regardless of property lines provided they: (1) Are of low habitat function (score less than 6 points using the wetland rating system per TMC 13.11.310). (2) Are not part of riparian areas or their buffers (3) Are not part of a mosaic wetland system (TMC 13.01.110.M), unless the entire mosaic wetland system meets the other criteria in subsection (3)(a) of this section. (4) Are not associated with a Shoreline of the state or their associated buffer, and (5) Are not associated with a FWHCA.	We respectfully disagree with the proposed provision allowing wetlands that meet certain criteria to be exempt from the avoidance and minimization requirements of the mitigation sequence and to be subject to fill, even if fully mitigated under TMC 13.11.270.F.3 through 6. WDFW strongly recommends that the City defer to and fully align with the Department of Ecology's most current guidance on wetland categorization, protection, and mitigation. This guidance reflects the best available science and regulatory framework for maintaining wetland functions. Wetlands provide integral habitat for rearing salmonids and resident fish, while providing critical ecological functions for associated stream systems, including water quality improvement, flood attenuation, and habitat complexity. If a wetland is connected to or associated with a stream system in any manner, its ecological role is significant and should not be discounted. WDFW 4

13.11.210 (B) (4) Activities Allowed with Staff Review	Category IV wetlands less than 1,000 square feet that meet the criteria of subsection (3)(a) of this section are exempt from mitigation sequencing and the buffer provisions contained in this Chapter. Any wetland fill would also require federal and/or state permits consistent with TMC 13.11.140.	Please ensure that if a Category IV wetland is associated with or connected to a Type F stream that this code be reconsidered. Fish may use a wide range of wetlands as rearing habitats. Wetlands should be evaluated on their ecological function rather than size alone, as even small or isolated wetlands can provide essential hydrologic connectivity feeding nearby streams without surface connection, and are critical to the health of aquatic species. WDFW recommends reconsideration of any exemptions that would weaken these protections. WDFW 5
13.11.210 (B) (11) Activities Allowed with Staff Review	Voluntary enhancement or restoration of a critical area or buffer that exceeds the provisions above in 13.11.200.B.6, 7, or 8 may be allowed if the activity meets the requirements of this section.	WDFW is supportive of this code. WDFW 6
13.11.210 (B) (12) Activities Allowed with Staff Review	Hazard trees. The removal of hazard trees from the critical area or buffer setback that are posing a threat to public safety, or posing an imminent risk of damage to an existing structure, public or private road or sidewalk, or other permanent improvement, may be allowed following City staff review, or provided that a report from a certified arborist, landscape architect or professional forester is submitted to the City for review and approval. The report must include an evaluation for tree stabilization potential and removal techniques for the hazard tree and procedures for protecting the surrounding critical area and replacement of native trees. Where possible, the hazard tree shall be left as a standing snag and the cut portions shall be left within the critical area as habitat unless removal is warranted due to fire hazard, disease, or pest control.	WDFW recommends adding a criterion stating that any tree removal within the buffer zone shall not diminish habitat quality, ecological function, or increase stream temperature. WDFW is supportive of trees being left within critical areas as snags where possible. Please see WDFW guidance on protecting snags. WDFW 7

13.11.250 (A) (2) General Standards	The result of the proposed activity is no net loss of Critical Area functions or values;	WDFW recommend that this code be updates to include "or values" to align with the protections outlined for critical areas in WAC 365-190-080 and WAC 365-196-830. WDFW 8
13.11.400 Streams and Riparian Habitats		
13.11.410 (A) Stream Classification	Streams shall be generally classified in accordance with the Washington State Water Typing System set forth in WAC 222-16-030 to describe Type "S," "F," "Np" and "Ns" streams. Additional criteria typing for "Ns1" and "Ns2" streams are included within this section.	The City's CAO utilizes the State Interim Forest Practice Water Typing in WAC 222-16-030 to define stream types. WAC 222 is for forest practices intended to be used for water typing in forested areas of the state. The maps developed for these water types may be unreliable within urban areas due to different land uses and how other applicable local or state code requirements are defined or applied. WDFW 9 WAC 365-190-130 (4)(f)(i) states that jurisdictions should not rely solely on WAC 222-16-030 or -031 for the mapping of stream types for the purpose of regulating land uses. Although there is currently not a single best statewide hydrography data set that WDFW can recommend at this time, we do highly encourage local jurisdictions to begin discussing a more reliable alternative. WDFW encourages the City to follow the updates from Ecology's Washington State Hydrography Dataset Program (WASHD). More information about this effort to create and sustain a consistent and complete statewide hydrography data set can be found here. This WASHD effort aims to update the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) for watercourse mapping to help ensure all state streams and associated riparian management zone (RMZ) natural resources are accurately identified. One effective approach is to adopt WDFW's Site Potential Tree Height ($SPTH_{200}$) GIS mapping tool, which is based on NHD data. The $SPTH_{200}$ tool reflects the best available science and aligns with WDFW's Volume 2: Management Recommendations, supporting the protection of the full range of functions and values for all streams provided by RMZs. Additional $SPTH_{200}$ resources can be found on WDFW's PHS publications page.

<table>
<tr>
<td>13.11.420 (B) (1)

Stream Buffers</td>
<td>Streams. Stream buffer widths shall be established according to the following table which is based on stream classification:
<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Table 5. Stream Types</th></tr>
<tr><th>Stream Type</th><th>Buffer (feet)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type S</td><td>150</td></tr>
<tr><td>Streams of Local Significance</td><td>200</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type F (Fish)</td><td>150</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type Np (Non-fish Perennial)</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type Ns1 (Non-fish Seasonal; connected to S, F, or Np)</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type Ns2 (Non-fish Seasonal; not connected to S, F, or Np)</td><td>100</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
<td>The best available science (BAS) emphasizes the importance of protecting all streams and their adjacent riparian areas to support full riparian ecosystem functions and values. These critical areas support the full ecosystem while providing movement corridors for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. As noted in our comments above, WDFW highly recommends that jurisdictions consider following the updates from Ecology’s WASHD program. This WASHD effort aims to update watercourse mapping to help ensure all state streams and associated riparian management zone (RMZ) natural resources are accurately identified.

WDFW currently recommends that the $SPTH_{200}$ GIS mapping tool be used for delineating where RMZs are located. The currently proposed code updates fall short of WDFW’s primary recommendation to delineate RMZ widths at $SPTH_{200}$.

However, given existing conditions, we understand that full implementation of $SPTH_{200}$ may not be feasible at this time in all locations. We do recommend that $SPTH_{200}$ be followed where possible by the City. At a minimum, an RMZ width of 100 feet is needed to achieve the pollution removal function, though other riparian functions may be compromised at this minimum width depending on the $SPTH_{200}$ value at a given site. We highlight that the overarching goal of critical area protection, as outlined in WAC 365-196-830 (4), is to achieve no net loss.
WDFW 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.11.420 (B) (2)

Stream Buffers</td>
<td>The buffer widths in Table 5 presume the buffer is densely vegetated with a native plant community appropriate for the ecoregion, consisting of an average of 80 percent native cover composed of trees, shrubs and groundcover plants. If the existing buffer is sparsely vegetated or vegetated with invasive species, the buffer must be enhanced, monitored, and maintained through an approved mitigation plan.</td>
<td>WDFW is greatly supportive of this new policy to support the riparian ecosystem.

WDFW 11</td>
</tr>
</table>

13.11.440 (A) Stream Standards	Type F, Np, and Ns1, and Ns2 streams may be relocated or ~~placed in culverts~~ conveyed through bridges or culverts provided it can be demonstrated that: 1. There is no other feasible alternative route with less impact on the environment; 2. Existing location of the stream would prevent a reasonable economic use of the property; 3. No net loss of critical areas functions or values will occur; ~~significant habitat area will be destroyed~~; 4. The crossing minimizes interruption of downstream movement of wood and gravel; 5. The new channel, bridge or culvert is designed and installed to allow passage of fish at all life stages and species potentially inhabiting or using the stream and complies with WDFW requirements; 6. The channel, bridge, or culvert also complies with the City of Tacoma current Stormwater Management Manual; 7. The applicant will, at all times, keep the channel, bridge, or culvert free of debris and sediment to allow free passage of water and fish; 8. Roads in riparian habitat areas or buffers shall not run parallel to the water body; 9. Crossing, where necessary, shall only occur as near to perpendicular with the water body as possible;	WDFW recommends that the City include the option for bridges in this code. This may allow more appropriate designs for water conveying structures and may also enable passage by terrestrial wildlife species. WDFW also recommends that jurisdictions review the WDFW's climate-change-resilient culvert webpage and Incorporating Climate Change into the Design of Water Crossing Structures: Final Project Report for resources on how to incorporate climate-resiliency into water crossing designs. These resources should be used during the development of future water crossing designs. Additionally, WDFW recommends including the proposed suggested changes in red that will align with WAC 365-196-830 and ensure no net loss of ecological functions and values. WDFW 12

	10. Road bridges are designed according to 2013 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Water Crossing Design Guidelines, and the National Marine Fisheries Service Guidelines for Salmonid Passage at Stream Crossing, 2000.	
13.11.450 Stream Mitigation Requirements	All proposed alterations in the buffer of a stream shall be in accordance with the standards for the applicable wetland category, where riparian wetland exists, unless the riparian protection is greater. In the event stream corridor alterations or relocations, as specified above, are allowed, the applicant shall submit an alteration or relocation plan prepared in association with a qualified professional with expertise in this area. In addition to the general mitigation plan standards, the plan shall address the following information:	WDFW is concerned about applying the wetland category system only the review of a riparian management zone for stream mitigation requirements where wetlands aren't present. The functions and values of wetlands and streams cannot be compared at a one-to-one value and will vary based on site-specific conditions. Where riverine wetlands are present, the RMZ should incorporate them using the appropriate wetland delineation, assessment, and protection per the Department of Ecology's most current guidance. WDFW 13 To ensure adequate mitigation requirements are followed for stream impacts, please follow the six-step mitigation sequence outlined in WAC 197-11-768, and we recommend consulting with the local WDFW habitat biologist for technical assistance.
13.11.500 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs).		
13.11.510 (A) (1) (b) (2) and (3) Classification	(2) The presence of a vertically diverse assemblage of native vegetation containing multiple layers of vegetation such as herbaceous, shrub, and tree canopy layers, snags, or downed wood, and/or areas that are horizontally diverse with a mosaic of habitats and microhabitats. Native vegetation should be dominant (i.e. more than half of the vegetation present based on percentage of cover) (3) The Biodiversity Area/Corridor shall be a minimum size of two acres.	WDFW is concerned that the proposed code, as currently written, may inadvertently overlook ecologically significant habitats. By removing potential protections for sites with higher percentages of invasive species, the code may reduce safeguards for areas that, while supporting a limited proportion of native species, still provide important ecological functions and values. This reduction in protections could result in the degradation or loss of habitat that supports fish and wildlife species, particularly those that rely on remnant native vegetation or use these areas for foraging, shelter, or migration corridors.

		To ensure potential habitat is not overlooked in areas dominated by invasive vegetation, WDFW recommends assessing structural habitat features such as vertical and horizontal diversity, regardless of species composition. Additionally, such surveys should document native vegetation patches and key habitat elements even where invasive species exceed may be dominant on a parcel. WDFW also recommends incentivizing invasive and noxious plant removal techniques that minimize adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, and habitat. WDFW also supports the development of a streamlined permitting or review process for riparian restoration and enhancement projects that exceed minimum regulatory requirements to encourage voluntary efforts that contribute to long-term habitat improvement. For resources for developing wildlife and open space corridors, please see: Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas, Land Use Planning for salmon, steelhead and trout: A land use planner's guide to salmonid habitat protection and recovery, Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan, WDFW's Habitat at Home, and WDFW's Habitat connectivity website. WDFW 14
13.11.510 (B) 7	Area critical for habitat connectivity, including Open Space Corridors designated in the City's comprehensive plan.	We recommend the City use Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife as stated in the above comment for TMC 13.11.510 (A) (1) as a tool to support efforts to retain, restore, and enhance active habitat corridors, especially those that cross jurisdictional boundaries. This resource provides statewide connectivity maps, frameworks for identifying priority locations, recommended conservation actions, and regional profiles that highlight local connectivity challenges and opportunities. These materials can help guide planning within

		the landscape's constraints. WDFW is available to provide technical assistance as needed. WDFW 15
13.11.510 (A) (1) (c) Classification	In classifying Oregon White Oak (OWO) Habitat, the following will be considered:	Oregon White Oak is identified as a priority habitat in the PHS list and PHS maps, because it supports a wide range of native species, warranting a high level of protection. WDFW recommends maintaining strong safeguards for remaining oak habitats in alignment with regional conservation goals. Please see our 2024 Oregon White Oak guidance document for resources for offsetting impacts to Oregon white oak habitat when land-use activities are likely to degrade their function as wildlife habitat. WDFW 16
13.11.520 (A) (1) Standards	No development, including temporary clearing and grading, shall be allowed within a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area with which state or federally endangered, threatened or sensitive species have a primary association without approval from the City of Tacoma and~~/or~~ WDFW.	WDFW recommends removing the "or" from this general standard. WDFW 17
13.11.520 (B) (1) Standards	FWHCA management areas are used to protect and manage activities in or adjacent to areas with a specific priority species. The location and dimensions of FWHCA Management Areas are dependent on the species and habitat and as defined by specific management recommendations established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or other state/federal agencies. While the standards for protection are species specific and established by other agencies, the FWHCA Management Areas remain subject to all applicable standards of this chapter.	WDFW is supportive of this policy. While planning a network of open spaces, it's recommended to also plan for how wildlife can use these corridors alongside humans. As the built environment continues to grow, it is essential to plan ways that allow the built and natural environments to interact and provide benefits for humans and wildlife while preventing conflicts. Multiple-use open spaces can serve a multitude of human activities while also providing areas for wildlife movement. Please see the following resources, Landscape Planning for Washington's Wildlife: Managing for Biodiversity in Developing Areas, The Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, WSDOT's Reducing the risk of wildlife collisions website as well as Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Consideration in Fish Barrier Removal Projects, Montana Fish,

		Wildlife, and Parks' How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind, and WDFW's website. WDFW 18
13.11.520 (D) (1) Standards	The critical root zone or canopy cover, whichever is larger, of regulated OWO trees shall be used to delineate the FWHCA for OWO Habitat.	Based on WDFW's Oregon White Oak guidance, the protections for oaks should be designated as either the critical root zone or the edge of the canopy, whichever is larger. WDFW 19

Thank you for taking the time to consider our recommendations for your critical areas ordinance update to better reflect the best available science for fish and wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions and values.

We value the relationship we have with your jurisdiction and the opportunity to work collaboratively with you throughout this periodic update cycle. For additional resources in support of WDFW's land use planning conservation priorities, please see this website. If you have any questions, need our technical assistance or resources at any time during this process, please don't hesitate to contact me at 360-819-6451 or at Megan.Tuttle@dfw.wa.gov, or Region 6's Regional Land Use Lead, Jessica Bryant, Jessica.Bryant@dfw.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Megan Tuttle
Assistant Regional Habitat Program Manager
1111 Washington St. SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Cc: Gwen Lentes, Regional Habitat Program Manager (Gwendolen.Lentes@dfw.wa.gov)
Jessica Bryant, Regional Land Use Lead (Jessica.Bryant@dfw.wa.gov)
Kara Whittaker, LUCP Section Manager (Kara.Whittaker@dfw.wa.gov)
Marian Berejikian, Environmental Planner (Marian.Berejikian@dfw.wa.gov)
Miles Penk, Area Habitat Biologist (Miles.Penk@dfw.wa.gov)
Jennifer Eberly, Habitat Biologist (Jennifer.Eberly@dfw.wa.gov)

From: Sears, Tricia (DNR)
To: Spadoni, Lisa
Cc: Sears, Tricia (DNR); Guida, Eric (COM)
Subject: Tacoma's Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments (2025-S-9675): WGS comments
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2025 7:55:48 AM

Hello Lisa,

In keeping with the interagency correspondence principles, I am providing you with comments on Tacoma's Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments (2025-S-9675).

For this proposal submitted via Planview, I looked at the proposal and focused on areas related to WGS work. Of note, but not limited to, I look for language around the geologically hazardous areas, mineral resource lands, mining, climate change, and natural hazards mitigation plans.

Specifically in this proposal, I reviewed the CAO Update 2025 – Public Review Document PC Public Hearing.PDF. It is Chapter 13.11 Critical Areas Preservation. Kudos to you for updating your critical areas ordinance!

DNR 1 13.11.120 Intent. 1. "Protecting members of the public and public resources and facilities from injury, loss of life, or property damage due to landslides and steep slope failures, erosion, seismic events, volcanic eruptions, flooding or similar events;." This almost matches the geologically hazardous areas hazards identified in 13.11.710. Suggest having the same hazards. Flooding is a separate critical area, frequently flooded areas, rather than a geologically hazardous area.

DNR 2 13.11.190 Review Process. In this paragraph, it describes that critical areas may be located through a list of sources including "Washington DNR Aquatic Lands maps and geologic mapping." Suggest rephrasing this to "Washington DNR Aquatic Lands maps and the Washington Geologic Survey's Geologic Information Portal." Washington Geologic Survey (WGS) keeps the most current scientific information, which can be used for best available science, in the Geologic Information Portal. Washington Geologic Information Portal

DNR 3 13.11.220 Application Types. In subsection B, it describes the three types of applications. In 1. Verification. Critical Area Verification. It lists wetland, or stream, or FWHCA, so this verification option is specific to only these three types of critical areas. A person in a geologically hazardous area could not request this type of application, correct? Application types 2 and 3 appear to be available to all categories of critical areas.

DNR 4 13.11.230. Application Submittal Requirements. 5. "When the critical area is limited to a Geologically Hazardous Area, the purpose of the information submitted is to obtain a level of study sufficient to protect the public from hazards. The information and proposed mitigation will demonstrate that there is no significant risk to the public health and safety and that any risk that cannot be effectively mitigated is avoided." This is a good and classic statement, but is a vague statement that could be strengthened. Suggest including a statement referring to the related sections that have detailed provisions, such as 13.11.700 and 13.11.730, to provide the context that there detailed provisions to comply with.

DNR 5

13.11.180 Conditions, Notice on Title, and Appeals. Great to see that all critical areas and buffers must be recorded to title. Good to see fencing and signs may be required.

13.11.700 Geologically Hazardous Areas.

DNR 6

13.11.710 Designation. The geologically hazardous areas hazards are erosion, landslide, seismic, mine, volcanic hazard, and tsunami hazard. Good to see them identified clearly. Under landslides, the code states "Any area within the City mapped by the most up to date Pierce County landslide inventory prepared by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and LIDAR imagery." That is great! Suggest adding a reference to the Washington Geologic Information Portal (noted above). The codes refers to geotechnical report and geological assessment (11.13.730.J). Good to see factor of safety mentioned. The code provisions on seismic, volcanic, mine, and tsunami hazards do not include any kind of reference to a requirement for a geotechnical report or a geological assessment. Consider adding language to have hazard assessment information required to be submitted. For the tsunami hazard, have you checked the Washington Geologic Information Portal? Ah, I see some requirements in the 13.11.730 General Standards. Suggest adding references in this section, 13.11.710, to the other section.

13.11.730 General Standards.

Subsection I Approval of Geologic Hazard Modification. "4. Has been evaluated to meet life safety standards under anticipated conditions by a qualified geotechnical engineer or geologist, licensed in the state of Washington; 5. The applicant provides a geotechnical report prepared by a qualified professional…"

Subsection J Geologic Hazard Assessment and Geotechnical Report Requirements. "The third-party review shall be conducted by a qualified professional geotechnical engineer."

13.01.110.Q is the definition of qualified professional. Tacoma Municipal Code | City of Tacoma
13.01.110.Q "Qualified professional." A person who, at a minimum, has earned a degree from an accredited college/university in the relevant scientific or engineering discipline appropriate to the critical area subject and two years of related professional work experience; or eight years of professional work experience in the relevant critical area subject."

DNR 7

Suggest updating the definition of qualified professional to include the geotechnical engineer and geologist professionals, licensed in the state of Washington. It may be useful to include professionals related to the other critical areas. Many jurisdictions have definitions that list the professionals for each type of critical area.

Below, I include our usual language for this and future endeavors.

Recognizing the limitations of the current proposals, I want to mention that it would be great for you to consider these in current or future work, be it in your comprehensive plan, development code, and SMP updates, and in your work in general:

DNR 8

- Consider adding a reference to the definition of geologically hazardous areas, WAC 365-190-120, in other areas besides the CAO. In addition, consider adding a reference to WAC 365-196-480 for natural resource lands.
- Consider adding in other areas besides the CAO. If you have not checked our interactive database, the WGS Geologic Information Portal, lately, you may wish to do so. Geologic Information Portal | WA - DNR
- If you have not checked out our Geologic Planning page, you may wish to do so. Geologic Planning | WA - DNR

Thank you for considering our comments. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me. For your convenience, if there are no concerns or follow-up discussion, you may consider these comments to be final as of the 60-day comment deadline of 9/22/25.

Have a great day!

Cheerio,
Tricia

Tricia R. Sears (she/her/hers)
Geologic Planning Liaison
Washington Geological Survey (WGS)
Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Cell: 360-628-2867 | Email: tricia.sears@dnr.wa.gov

From: Johnson, Deborah L (DOH) <deborah.johnson@doh.wa.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 22, 2025 4:48 PM
To: Spadoni, Lisa <lspadoni@tacoma.gov>
Cc: Guida, Eric (COM) <eric.guida@commerce.wa.gov>; Nolan, Adam <ANolan@tacoma.gov>; Burchard-Juarez, Keri <KBJuarez@tacoma.gov>; mmeyer@lakewoodwater.org; remyal@aol.com; jeffd@cityoffircrest.net
Subject: RE: Comments- critical areas ordinance update (Commerce ID#2025-S-9675)

Lisa,
I've noticed that a handful of items were inadvertently modified/deleted when importing this from the Word document in which was originally written to an email item. I'm not sure why that happened, but I've inserted highlighted corrections below. Apologies for this oversight.

Deborah Johnson
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Washington State Department of HEALTH

From: Johnson, Deborah L (DOH)
Sent: Monday, September 22, 2025 12:21 PM
To: lspadoni@tacoma.gov
Cc: Guida, Eric (COM) <eric.guida@commerce.wa.gov>; ANolan@tacoma.gov; KBJuarez@tacoma.gov; mmeyer@lakewoodwater.org; remyal@aol.com; jeffd@cityoffircrest.net
Subject: Comments- critical areas ordinance update (Commerce ID#2025-S-9675)

Good afternoon,

In keeping with the interagency correspondence principles, I am providing you with comments on Tacoma's proposed amendments to Chapter 13.11 Tacoma Municipal Code – Critical Areas Preservation (Commerce ID# 2025-S-9675). Our comments focus on the general standards (TMC 13.11.100-.290 & .900) & critical aquifer recharge areas (CARAs) requirements (TMC 13.11.800-.820). There also appears to be certain content that has been moved outside of the critical areas portion of the code, which is reflected here.

13.11.100

DOH 1 This refers to the .100/.200 sections for general provisions. Typically, definitions would be a part of general provisions, but in this case were in .900 & now are in a different chapter. (See additional comments re definitions below.) It would be helpful to add an additional cross-reference here to TMC 13.01.110.

DOH 2 **13.11.120.B**

Suggested addition:

> 12. Protecting the quality and quantity of water used for drinking.
> References (generally): RCW 35.63.090, 36.70A.020(10) & .070(1); WAC 365-190-100(2)

DOH 3 **13.11.130.B**

Suggested amendment:

> Critical areas outside a shoreline district that involve a development activity that is reviewed, pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC (Development Regulation Agreements), except for projects identified in subsection 13.05.050.B.4 TMC, shall be ~~considered~~ protected during the Development Regulation Agreement review process; a separate critical areas permit is not required. Any approval(s) pursuant to Section 13.05.050 TMC shall, to the maximum extent feasible, avoid potential impacts to critical areas, and any unavoidable impacts to critical areas shall be fully mitigated, either on- or off-site.

(Note: This does not appear to require a complementary amendment to TMC 13.05.050.D.8 as the language used there is similar, but not identical.)

DOH 4 **13.11.180.A**

This section cross-references to TMC 13.12.930. In turn, that section seems in need of

update. These two sections should be parallel but aren't.

It appears that both TMC 13.11.180 & 13.12.930 were intended to encode WAC 197-11-908. Over time, the content of that WAC has changed. We encourage a close review of the various Washington State Register notices over time that are shown in the Code Reviser's notes; this will enable you to see what changed & when. For example, TMC 13.12.930.A refers to ESA designation. The 1984 version of WAC 197-11-908 talked about ESA designation, but that language was removed in 1995. While the ESA term still exists in some portions of the RCW/WAC, it has generally been replaced by "critical areas." Today, there is nothing permissive about designating critical areas—but TMC 13.12.930.A still says "may, at its option, designate." Keep in mind the purpose of the underlying WAC is to allow local jurisdictions to enact a different threshold for SEPA review in critical areas by identifying categorical exemptions that "shall not" apply.

This term forms a sort of double negative: if an exemption does not apply, then it means the thing is not exempt & would need to undergo SEPA review. This would mean that within critical areas, none of the SEPA-exempt activities, uses, construction, etc. within "Section 13.12.310 of the TMC and the following subsections of WAC 197-11-800(1)(b); (2)(d) excluding landscaping, (e), (f), and (g); (3); 24(a), (b), (c), and (d)" would be SEPA-exempt.

Cumulatively, this is a lengthy list of exemptions but includes some relatively minor activities. (The inclusion of WAC 197-11-800(1)(b) is prone to causing confusion, as the City has adopted higher exemption level per ss. (a) & (b). All listed levels are included here, recognizing there are overlap & differing levels.)

- Construction or location of any residential structure of 20 or fewer dwelling units. In the Urban Residential (UR) Districts, the construction or location of any residential structure of 40 or fewer dwelling units, provided, developments of more than 20 units must demonstrate that soil testing per Department of Ecology and/or Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department requirements has been completed and appropriate mitigation is incorporated into the development.
- Construction or location of four attached or detached single family residential units.
- Construction or location of four multifamily residential units.
- Construction of a barn, loafing shed, farm equipment storage building, produce storage or packing structure, or similar agricultural structure, covering 30,000 square feet or less, and to be used only by the property owner or their agent in the conduct of farming the property. (Doesn't include feed lots.)
- Construction of a barn, loafing shed, farm equipment storage building, produce storage or packing structure, or similar agricultural structure, covering 10,000 square feet, and to be used only by the property owner or his or her agent in the conduct of farming the property. (Doesn't include feed lots.)
- Construction of an office, school, commercial, recreational, service, or storage building with 12,000 square feet or less of gross floor area, and with associated parking facilities designed for no more than 40 automobiles.
- Construction of an office, school, commercial, recreational, service or storage building with 4,000 square feet of gross floor area, and with associated parking facilities designed for 20 automobiles. This exemption includes parking lots for 20 or fewer automobiles not associated with a structure.
- Demolition of an office, school, commercial, recreational, service, or storage building

with 12,000 square feet or less of gross floor area.

- Construction of a parking lot designed for no more than 40 automobiles.
- Any landfill or excavation of 500 cubic yards or less throughout the total lifetime of the fill or excavation; and any fill or excavation classified as a class I, II, or III forest practice under RCW 76.09.050 or regulations thereunder.
- Any fill or excavation of 100 cubic yards throughout the total lifetime of the fill or excavation and any excavation, fill or grading necessary for an exempt project in WAC 197-11-800(1)(b)(i), (ii), (iii), or (iv).
- Construction of an individual battery charging station or an individual battery exchange station, that is otherwise categorically exempt shall continue to be categorically exempt even if part of a larger proposal that includes other battery charging stations, other battery exchange stations, or other related utility networks.
- Construction or installation of minor road and street improvements by any agency or private party that include the following:
  Safety structures and equipment such as pavement marking, adding or removing turn restrictions, speed limit designation, physical measures to reduce motor vehicle traffic speed or volume, freeway surveillance and control systems, railroad protective devices (not including grade-separated crossings), grooving, glare screen, safety barriers, energy attenuators.
  Temporary traffic controls and detours.
  Correction of substandard curves and intersections within existing rights of way, widening of a highway by less than a single lane width where capacity is not significantly increased and no new right of way is required.
  Adding auxiliary lanes for localized purposes, (weaving, climbing, speed change, etc.), where capacity is not significantly increased and no new right of way is required.
  Channelization, rechannelization, elimination of sight restrictions at intersections, street lighting, guard rails and barricade installation.
  Installation of catch basins and culverts for the purposes of road and street improvements.
  Reconstruction of existing roadbed (existing curb-to-curb in urban locations), including adding or widening of shoulders where capacity is not increased and no new right of way is required.
  Addition of bicycle lanes, paths and facilities, and pedestrian walks and paths including sidewalk extensions, but not including additional automobile lanes.
- Grading, excavating, filling, septic tank installations, and landscaping necessary for any building or facility exempted by the above provisions, as well as fencing and the construction of small structures and minor facilities accessory thereto.
- Additions or modifications to or replacement of any building or facility exempted by the above provisions when such addition, modification or replacement will not change the character of the building or facility in a way that would remove it from an exempt class.
- Demolition of any structure or facility, the construction of which would be exempted by the above provisions, except for structures or facilities with recognized historical significance such as listing in a historic register.
- Issuance of new grazing leases covering a section of land or less; and issuance of all grazing leases for land that has been subject to a grazing lease within the previous 10 years.

- Licenses or approvals to remove firewood.
- Issuance of agricultural leases covering 160 contiguous acres or less.
- Issuance of leases for Christmas tree harvesting or brush picking.

Each of these otherwise SEPA-exempt actions would be subject to SEPA review in any critical area, limited to the scope in WAC 197-11-908(1)(a) & (b) & TMC 13.12.930(D). Is that what is intended?

Closer to parallel are TMC 13.11.180.B & 13.12.930(D) with WAC 197-11-908(1)(a) & (b); but it would be best to use the same language throughout.

We suggest reviewing this section closely through the lens of what is intended & to also include complementary amendments to TMC 13.12.930.

DOH 5

13.11.190.A
Please add Department of Health's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) map & EPA's Sole Source Aquifer map to the list of critical area references.

DOH 6

13.11.190.D.1
The second sentence refers to adoption of a "new" SMP over 10 years ago. It would be best to remove that old language & to ensure that all the "code excerpts" it refers to are removed or otherwise corrected in this draft.

DOH 7

13.11.190.D.2
It appears that ss. b(5) effectively exempts almost any project in a CARA from critical areas permitting because of the proposed structure of TMC 13.11.800. Please see comments below relating to CARAs-specific standards.

DOH 8

13.11.220.B.1
We encourage you to use "applications" rather than "permits" throughout this section for consistency. Verification is not a permit but more of a due diligence matter. Can the City add CARAs to its verifications?

DOH 9

13.11.220.B.3
The description & requirements under "Development Permit" appears to be a variance or reasonable use permit rather than a development permit, especially in looking at the legal tests under TMC 13.11.240.

DOH 10

13.11.230.B.2
We note that CARAs hasn't been added here, but since it says "all surveyed": it should be clarified that a "surveyed site plan" doesn't include CARAs boundaries that are often tied to mapping & are incapable of being physically surveyed, &/or whose square footage may overlay the entire site.

DOH 11

13.11.230.B.3
Critical areas reports are required under ss. (3), but their place within the permit/review structure isn't clear. The nature of the critical area should determine the content, & the code should define how they will be used. Will the City review them to determine their efficacy, or does merely submitting them fulfill the requirement? As written, it appears to be the latter; this is not protective of critical areas.

"Hydrologic" information & reports are included within the materials to be prepared by a qualified professional, but this typically relates to surface water. The type of report associated with CARAs, a hydrogeologic assessment, is not included here & should be added. This should also incorporate basic content requirements. (See additional comment about hydrogeo assessments below in CARAs-specific standards.) Here is an example from Olympia's code:

> **Olympia Municipal Code 18.32.230 Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Areas – Hydrogeological Report**
> A. If the Department determines that where risks from on-site activities within a drinking water protection area are not well known, or where site specific assessment is necessary to determine mitigation levels above the minimum standards outlined in OMC 18.32.225, a Hydrogeological Report shall be required. This report shall identify the proposed development plan and the risks associated with on-site activities which may degrade the groundwater within a designated wellhead protection area.
> B. This report shall be prepared, signed, and dated by a licensed geologist or hydrogeologist, consistent with Chapter 18.220 RCW.
> C. A Hydrogeological Report shall contain:
> 1. Information sources;
> 2. Geologic setting, including well logs or borings;
> 3. Background water quality;
> 4. Groundwater elevations;
> 5. Location and depth of perched water tables and water-bearing aquifers;
> 6. Recharge potential of site soils;
> 7. Groundwater flow direction and gradient;
> 8. Available data on wells located within 1/4 mile of the site;
> 9. Available data on springs within 1/4 mile of the site;
> 10. Permanent and seasonal surface water body locations and recharge potential;
> 11. Any proposed monitoring or sampling schedules;
> 12. Analysis of the possible effects on the groundwater resource by the proposed project including the storage or use of any hazardous materials;
> 13. Discussion of potential mitigation measures, should it be determined that the proposed project will have an adverse impact on groundwater resources;
> 14. Information required under Washington Department of Ecology Publication 05-10-028, as amended; and
> 15. Any other information as required by the Department.
> ###

13.11.230.B.4 & 250.A

DOH 12 With regard to both these sections, please note the comment related to compensatory mitigation below. Additionally, reasonable use & variance provisions, although common in critical areas ordinances, could potentially allow a level of contamination that affects a water source's potability.

13.11.270 & .280.B

DOH 13 The compensatory mitigation provisions of WAC 365-196-830 do *not* extend to CARAs (not included in WAC 365-190-100). When placed in general standards, these provisions imply that some degree of degradation to an aquifer is acceptable, while allowing even a limited

degree of harm to an aquifer could result in lost potability. Actions such as fee in lieu or off-site mitigation cannot adequate offset damage to CARAs.

13.11.280.A.14

DOH 14

We recommend excluding CARAs from this set of subdivision provisions. By their nature, CARAs can be large & may overlay an entire property. This doesn't lend itself to the creation of a set-aside parcel or "equal sharing" of the critical area among lots. There should be complementary amendments to TMC 13.04.310.

13.11.800 (generally)

DOH 15

Case law examines CARAs protections through the lens of meeting these three duties: classify, designate, & protect. The statutory pieces related to this are connected, but they are not the same thing. The statutory requirement for critical areas designation is very brief & defers to the rules. The cross-reference is to this section about classification. Neither Tacoma's existing nor draft code appears to recognize these duties or to differentiate between them. There is still significant work to be done before moving this ordinance along to adoption; **we recommend considerably revamping the existing code rather than the currently proposed amendments throughout this section**.

13.11.815

DOH 16a

Classification

The code should classify CARAs in keeping with WAC 365-190-100(3). Typically, this looks at what areas of the city are more susceptible to groundwater contamination & results in separate development review pathways for areas with high vs. less vulnerability. This is where you will see a "Category/Type 1/2" (or similar) in other jurisdictions' CARAs codes that is not present in Tacoma's. To accomplish this, Tacoma should restructure its CARAs provisions to classify using BAS, which could be soils-based or some other information. For instance, would the City consider the STGPD to be more vulnerable than, say, the rest of the SSA? That would give you ready BAS to support a more vulnerable classification. Some communities look at soils or use the closer-in WHPA times of travel to differentiate between higher & lower vulnerability areas. Please refer to Ecology's CARAs guidance for more information.

DOH 16b

Designation

The designation duty looks at what features are to be considered as CARAs, as exemplified in WAC 365-190-100(4)(b). Case law has held that basically, if a jurisdiction is aware of CARAs features within its community, it cannot ignore or choose to set aside the designation of these features. The preeminent case law for CARAs is *Citizens for Good Governance v. Walla Walla County*, Case No. 09-1-0013.

Here is one example (emphasizing that this is intended to be BAS-driven, not merely copied from another community). This combines classification & designation. Please work with your Commerce planner if you need assistance with identifying other cities' codes that might be adaptable.

> **Auburn Municipal Code 16.10.080 Classification and rating of critical areas.**
> …
> F. *Aquifer Recharge Areas.* The following areas are hereby designated as aquifer recharge areas subject to review under this chapter:
> 1. *Type I.*

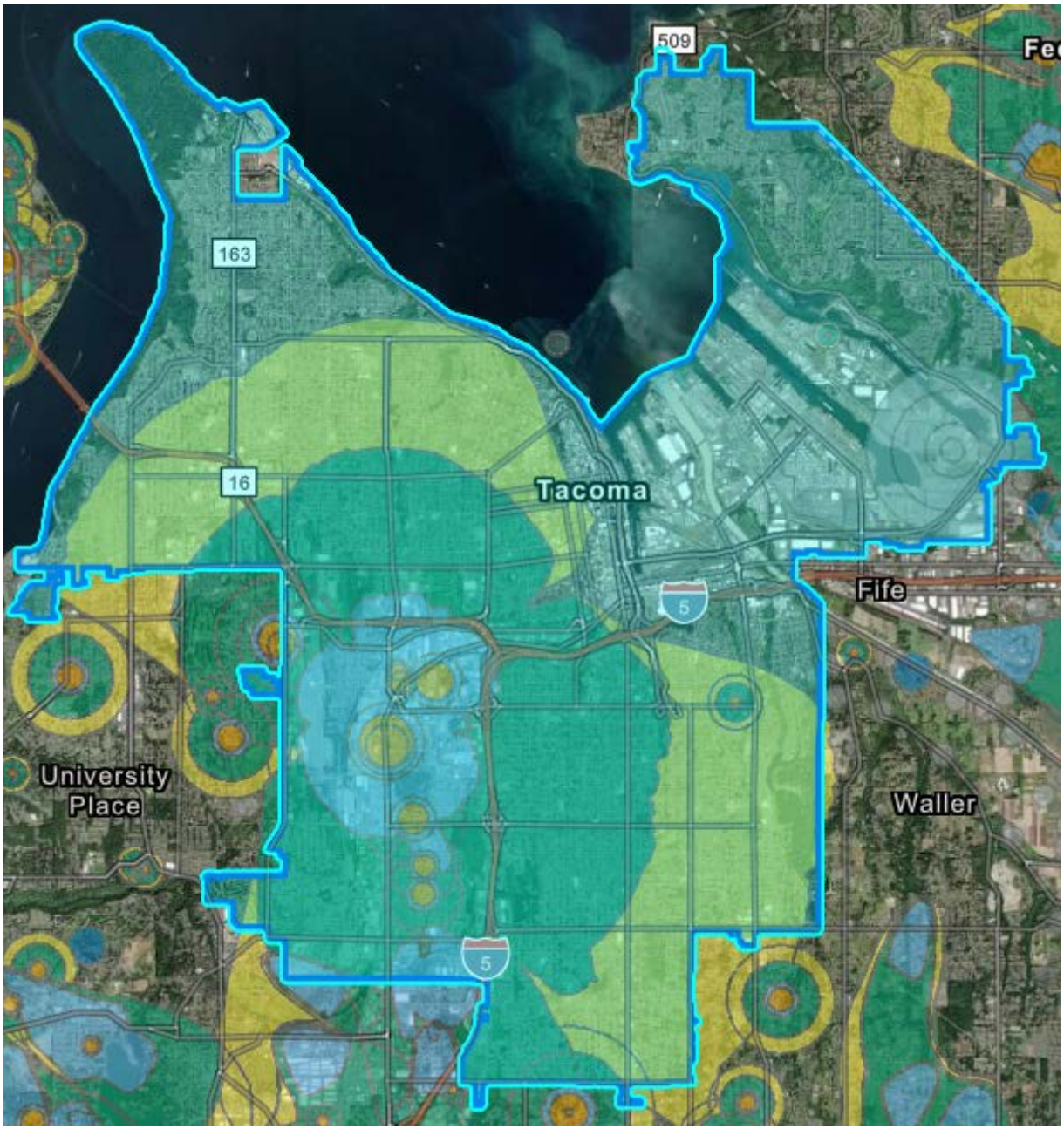
a. Sole source aquifers and wellhead protection areas designated pursuant to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.
b. Areas established for special protection pursuant to a groundwater management program as described by Chapters 90.44, 90.48 and 90.54 RCW and Chapters 173-100 and 173-200 WAC.
c. Any other area meeting the definition of "areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water" as described in Chapter 365-190 WAC and the Auburn comprehensive plan, including groundwater protection areas Nos. 1 through 3 as designated in the "Water Resource Protection Report" prepared for the city by the Pacific Groundwater Group, December 2000.
2. *Type II.*
a. Groundwater protection area No. 4 as designated in the "Water Resource Protection Report" prepared for the city by the Pacific Groundwater Group, December 2000.
b. Any other area within the city that is not otherwise designated or that is added to the city via annexation shall be treated as a Type II aquifer recharge area.
###

DOH 16c

Identification of CARAs

As noted in the draft, the Central Pierce SSA overlays much of Tacoma. Also in that area is the STGPD & numerous wellhead protection areas (WHPAs) that are depicted in Figure 1.

The location & extent of these WHPAs appears to take into consideration only Tacoma Water's facilities, & doesn't quite capture all of these,). The duty to protect the quality & quantity of drinking water applies to *all* drinking water, not just a jurisdiction's own. There are several other WHPAs that overlay Tacoma too. All are shown & listed below, including Tacoma Water's. As you will see, most of these are within the SSA, but there are a couple outside of the area too. Together with the SSA & STGPD, all of the WHPAs should all be designated as CARAs.



Source: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9dc3fd45206d450f828ebd7ed9cdf7be

Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical (WS ID#37410), Wells 1 & 4
Lakewood Water District (WS ID#45550), Source 27, Well U-1, AFK806
Meadow Park Apartments (WS ID#AA781), Well 1, AA781
(City of) Fircrest (WS ID# 25150)
Source 03, Well #8, ACN701
Source 09, Well #9, AAY306
(City of) Tacoma Water (WS ID#86800)
Source 06, North Fork/1-7 (wellfield)
Source 09, Tideflats Well ACN703
Source 10, Portland Ave
Source 16, Well 3-A, ABM917
Source 17, Well 4-A, ABM922

Source 20, Well 7-B, ABR904
Source 21, Well 8-B, ABM920
Source 23, Well 10-C, ABM919
Source 24, Well 11-A, ABM921
Source 26, Well 13-A, ABM918
Source 44, Well 6-B, AFT2190

DOH 17

13.11.820
Protection
The proposed standards should be restructured. The proposed use table merely allows or disallows uses. Instead, & tied to classification as discussed above, the code should incorporate a differentiated, more rigorous review for uses in high vulnerability areas, such as requiring a hydrogeological study that results in special conditions, while less vulnerable areas might rely on more general conditions such as best practices. Of course, the City could also selectively disallow any concerning uses based on classification.

DOH 18

13.11.805 (this is intentionally out of order as it pairs with the section immediately below)
As noted in the discussion of definitions below, delete proposed language "~~CARAs are defined under WAC 365-190-100 as areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water or is susceptible to reduced recharge~~" & relocate to definitions.

DOH 19

13.11.900
It seems like something is amiss with the history. The revision notes for this section state it was repealed by Ord. 28613, Exhibit G (2019) & relocated to TMC 13.01.110. (This is also repeated in the revision notes for TMC 13.01.110.) However, this doesn't appear to have been part of Ord. 26813, Exhibit G or otherwise; this ordinance even adds a reference to "critical areas as defined in TMC 13.11" to the public nuisance code.

Regardless, the "Critical Areas Preservation Definitions" do appear in Ch. 13.01.110 in the most current version of Title 13 (Tacoma City Clerk's webpage). Noting this isn't included in the review draft, has the City reviewed these definitions as part of the CAO update, in addition to Chapter 13.11 TMC, to determine if any changes are necessary?

We suggest these amendments to the definitions:

- Rename "~~Aquifer critical recharging areas~~" (13.01.110.A) to "Critical aquifer recharge area" & relocate to TMC 13.01.110.C. Change the definition from "~~Areas that, due to the presence of certain soils, geology, and surface water act to recharge groundwater by percolation~~" to "Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water or is susceptible to reduced recharge." Reference: WAC 365-190-100; this also reflects comment relocated language from proposed TMC 13.11.805 (see below).
- 13.01.110.S Add "Sole source aquifer (SSA). Recharge areas for sole source aquifers designed by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. References: RCW 70A.135.020 & 90.54.140; WAC 173-304-100, -306-100, & 365-190-100.
- 13.01.W Add "Wellhead protection areas (WHPAs). Protective areas associated with

public drinking water sources established by water systems and approved or assigned by the state Department of Health." Reference: WAC 365-190-033(23).

###

Thank you for considering our comments. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me.

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Agenda Item F2

City of Tacoma
Planning and Development Services

To: Planning Commission

From: Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager

Subject: **Home in Tacoma – Early Implementation Update**

Memo Date: October 8, 2025

Meeting Date: October 15, 2025

Action Requested:
Informational.

Summary:
Planning and Development Services staff provided an implementation update to the City Council at their September 30 study session. At the October 15 meeting, staff will provide a similar update to the Planning Commission on the early implementation of Home in Tacoma. This will incorporate an overview of the permitting and development activity seen since the launch in February 2025, including the types and location of development, and early challenges related to land use and infrastructure.

Background:
The Home In Tacoma Zoning and Standards package is now in effect. Approved by the City Council in November 2024, the new zoning regulations introduced Urban Residential zones to expand housing options, allowing for a broader range of housing types, including backyard cottages, rowhouses, and others, in Tacoma neighborhoods. It also updated parking rules, promotes tree preservation, and enables flexible lot use. The new zoning regulations went into effect on February 1, 2025.

Staff Contacts:
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c. Peter Huffman, Director