Critical Areas Ordinance Update

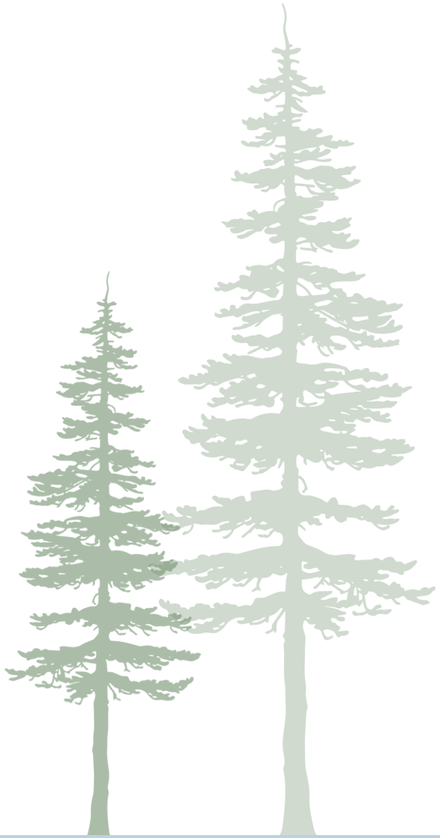
Presented by: Robin Bolster-Grant, Land Use Division Manager
Lisa Spadoni, Natural Resources Program Supervisor

Presentation Outline

- Background
- Review of Draft Changes
- Public Comments
- Tribal and State Agency Comments
- Updated Public Engagement Efforts
- Revised Schedule

Overview of Changes

- Periodic update required by state law (RCW 36.70A.130)
- Goal: Ensure consistency with Best Available Science (BAS) and state guidance
- Consultant team retained to assist with technical review
  - Best Available Science review
  - Gap Analysis
  - Draft code
  - Comment responses and draft code revisions



Public Engagement

- Media
  - Website, email, social media posts, press release, listserv (over 1,000 hits registered)
- Tribal engagement
- Early notification to community partners and interested parties
- Agency meetings
- Briefing of Tacoma Permit Advisory Group (TPAG)
- Presentation to Climate and Sustainability Commission
- Public information meeting
- Planning Commission Public Hearing

Additional Public Engagement

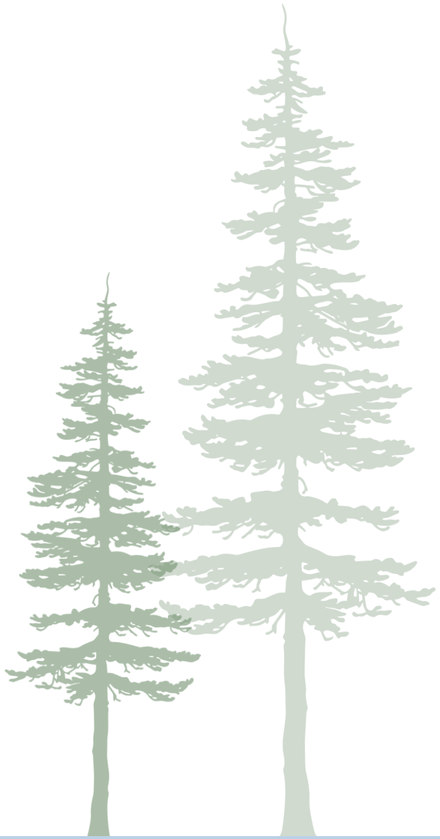
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians: September 17, 2025
- Tacoma Permit Advisory Group: September 17, 2025
- Climate & Sustainability Subcommittee: October 7, 2025
- Community Informational Meetings
  - Eastside Tacoma Community Leaders: September 22, 2025
    16 attendees
    Information translated into four languages for distribution by community ambassadors
  - Tacoma Nature Center: October 18, 2025

- Direct partner engagement with:
  - Parks Tacoma (September 8, 2025)
  - Port of Tacoma (August 11 & October 20, 2025)
  - Interested Environmental Partners
  - Master Builders of Pierce County

Agency Comments

- Agency Comments
  - Department of Ecology
  - Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - Department of Natural Resources
  - State Department of Health





Agency Comment Themes

Clarification

- Update references to WAC and other authoritative sources
- Add cross references to other code sections
- Definition updates/consistency
- Remove repetitive language

Technical / BAS based revisions

- Remove ‘critical areas’ from interrupted buffer provision
- Limit allowed trail widths in buffers
- Clarify hazard tree removal requirements
- Update OWO provisions based on WDFW guidance
- Update subdivision provisions to better reflect BAS
- Review SEPA exemptions

CARA provisions

- Examples provided for significantly revising CARA section

Revised Schedule (Tentative)

Action	Date
Public Information Session	September 22
Planning Commission Debrief (continued)	October 15
Public Information Session	Late October – Early November
Planning Commission: additional comments and code revisions	November 19
Planning Commission: comments and direction	December 17
Planning Commission recommendation	January 2026
City Council Public Hearing	February 2026
City Council Final Read & Adoption	March 2026

Questions?