



City of Tacoma
Community and Economic Development Department

Agenda Item
GB-2

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Peter Huffman, Manager, Planning Division

SUBJECT: Shoreline Master Program Update

Date: October 31, 2007

In 2006, the City's critical areas regulations were appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB). To address the petition, the City agreed to move forward with the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update three years ahead of the state's schedule. The update was to be accomplished in two phases. Phase 1 was to consist of a city-wide inventory and characterization of shoreline functions and land use and proposed regulations to address the protection of critical areas. Phase 2 was to include environment designations, policies and use regulations, a restoration plan, and cumulative impacts analysis.

Working with the Department of Ecology to update the SMP in a phased manner, it became apparent that this approach was not workable due to numerous issues. The conclusion was that conducting a "comprehensive update" is the necessary regulatory approach to comply with the revised WAC guidelines for shoreline management. Numerous issues arose, including that conducting a phased approach with the phases being so close together would in many ways be overlapping and confusing to the public, as regulations and policies developed in Phase 1 would possibly need to be revisited in Phase 2. In addition, conducting two Planning Commission and two City Council public hearings might also be confusing, would cost more, and could delay our timeline.

The City went before the GMHB on October 18, 2007 to address the petition. The City asked the GMHB to give the City until December 2008 to have an updated SMP. The City expects a decision on this petition by mid-November.

At the Commission's meeting on November 7, staff will provide a status report on the Shoreline Master Program Update. Staff will review the revised schedule for the SMP Update, which is attached. Staff will also review the comments received on the revised draft Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report, the baseline report of the City's shoreline resources. The first chapter of the report is attached, and the full document with its accompanying maps can be found at <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/planning> (click on "Shoreline Master Program Update").

If you have any questions, please contact Molly Harris at mharris@cityoftacoma.org or 591-5383.

PH:mh
c: Ryan Petty

Attachments

Shoreline Master Program Update Major Milestones

November 2007:

- Final Inventory and Characterization Report published
- Draft Critical Areas Policies and Regulations

December 2007:

- Shoreline Stakeholder's Workshop (12-6)

January 2008:

- Draft Land Use Analysis
- Draft Restoration Plan
- Draft Environmental Designations and Shoreline District Boundaries
- Shoreline Stakeholder's Workshop (1-17)

February 2008:

- Draft updated Goals, Policies, and Use regulations
- Shoreline Stakeholder's Workshop (2-28)

March 2008:

- Shoreline Stakeholder's Workshop (3-27)

April 2008:

- Draft Habitat Management Plan regulations
- Draft Cumulative Impacts Analysis
- Shoreline Stakeholder's Workshop (4-24)

July 2008:

- Planning Commission public hearing

December 2008:

- City Council public hearing and adoption

January-March 2009:

- Review and adoption of SMP by Department of Ecology

Revised Draft

TACOMA SHORELINE INVENTORY AND CHARACTERIZATION

Prepared for:
City of Tacoma

July 2007



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS..... vi

1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 1-1

 1.1 Background and Purpose 1-1

 1.2 Report Organization..... 1-1

 1.3 Regulatory Overview 1-2

 1.3.1 Shoreline Management Act and Shoreline Guidelines 1-2

 1.3.2 Shoreline Jurisdiction..... 1-2

 1.3.3 City of Tacoma Shoreline Master Program 1-3

 1.3.4 Other Plan, Programs, and Regulations Affecting Shorelines 1-3

2.0 METHODS 2-1

 2.1 Data Sources 2-1

 2.2 Determining Shoreline Jurisdiction and Planning Area Boundary..... 2-1

 2.3 Approach to Characterizing Ecosystem-Wide Processes and Shoreline Functions..... 2-2

 2.4 Approach to Inventory and Characterization of Jurisdictional Shorelines 2-2

3.0 ECOSYSTEM PROFILE..... 3-1

 3.1 Regional Overview 3-2

 3.1.1 Shoreline Description..... 3-3

 3.1.2 Land Use and Land Cover 3-4

 3.1.3 Habitat and Species Usage..... 3-5

 3.1.4 Federally Listed Species 3-5

 3.1.5 Priority Habitats and Species 3-6

 3.2 Watershed Process Controls 3-7

 3.2.1 Climate..... 3-7

 3.2.2 Topography..... 3-7

 3.2.3 Geology and Soils..... 3-8

 3.3 Key Ecosystem Processes Related to Shoreline Functions..... 3-10

 3.3.1 Processes Affecting Marine Shorelines 3-10

 3.3.2 Coastal Bluffs and Hillslopes..... 3-11

 3.3.3 Water Quality..... 3-12

 3.3.4 Processes Affecting Riverine Shorelines 3-13

 3.3.5 Processes Affecting Lake Shorelines..... 3-20

4.0 NEARSHORE MARINE SHORELINE PLANNING AREA..... 4-1

 4.1 Nearshore Marine Reaches 4-1

 4.2 Natural Environment..... 4-2

 4.2.1 Modifications to Coastal/Nearshore Processes..... 4-2

 4.2.2 Geologic Hazards..... 4-4

 4.2.3 Stream Mouths and Associated Wetlands..... 4-7

 4.2.4 Coastal Flood Hazard Areas 4-8

 4.2.5 Critical or Priority Habitat and Species Use 4-9

 4.2.6 Marine Riparian and Intertidal Habitats 4-15

 4.3 Built Environment..... 4-22

 4.3.1 Existing and Future Land and Shoreline Use 4-22

 4.3.2 Shoreline Districts, Shoreline Environment Designations, and Zoning 4-24

4.3.3	Existing and Proposed Public Access Sites	4-26
4.3.4	Historic and Cultural Resources	4-27
4.3.5	Impervious Areas	4-29
4.3.6	Roads and Bridges	4-30
4.3.7	Utilities and Infrastructure	4-30
4.3.8	Areas of Special Interest	4-31
4.4	Other Marine Areas.....	4-32
4.4.1	Browns Point-Dash Point UGA	4-32
4.4.2	Deep Water Areas	4-33
5.0	PUYALLUP RIVER SHORELINE PLANNING AREA	5-1
5.1	Puyallup River Reach	5-1
5.2	Natural Environment.....	5-2
5.2.1	Riverine Process Modifications	5-2
5.2.2	Tributary Streams and Associated Wetlands	5-3
5.2.3	Geologic Hazards.....	5-4
5.2.4	Flood Hazard and Channel Migration Zones.....	5-4
5.2.5	Critical or Priority Habitat and Species Use	5-4
5.2.6	Instream and Riparian Habitats.....	5-5
5.2.7	Water Quality.....	5-6
5.3	Built Environment.....	5-7
5.3.1	Existing and Future Land and Shoreline Use	5-7
5.3.2	Shoreline Districts, Shoreline Environment Designations, and Zoning ..	5-7
5.3.3	Existing and Proposed Public Access Sites	5-8
5.3.4	Historic and Cultural Resources	5-8
5.3.5	Impervious Areas	5-8
5.3.6	Roads and Bridges	5-8
5.3.7	Utilities and Infrastructure	5-8
5.3.8	Areas of Special Interest	5-9
6.0	HYLEBOS CREEK SHORELINE PLANNING AREA	6-1
6.1	Hylebos Creek Reach.....	6-1
6.2	Natural Environment.....	6-1
6.2.1	Riverine process modifications.....	6-1
6.2.2	Tributary Streams and associated wetlands	6-2
6.2.3	Geologic Hazards.....	6-2
6.2.4	Flood hazard and channel migration zones.....	6-2
6.2.5	Critical or Priority Habitat and Species Use	6-3
6.2.6	Instream and Riparian Habitats.....	6-3
6.2.7	Hylebos Creek Water Quality.....	6-4
6.3	Built Environment.....	6-4
6.3.1	Existing and Future Land Use.....	6-4
6.3.2	Shoreline Districts, Shoreline Environment Designations, and Zoning ..	6-5
6.3.3	Existing and Proposed Public Access Sites	6-5
6.3.4	Historic and Cultural Resources	6-5
6.3.5	Impervious Areas	6-5
6.3.6	Roads and Bridges	6-6
6.3.7	Utilities and Infrastructure	6-6

6.3.8	Areas of Special Interest	6-6
7.0	WAPATO LAKE SHORELINE PLANNING AREA	7-1
7.1	Wapato Lake Reach	7-1
7.2	Natural Environment.....	7-1
7.2.1	Lake Processes and Bank Modifications	7-1
7.2.2	Drainage Basin, Tributary Streams and Associated Wetlands	7-2
7.2.3	Geologic Hazards.....	7-3
7.2.4	Critical Wildlife Habitat and Species	7-3
7.2.5	Lake and Riparian Habitats.....	7-4
7.2.6	Water Quality.....	7-4
7.3	Built Environment.....	7-6
7.3.1	Existing and Future Land Use.....	7-6
7.3.2	Shoreline Districts, Shoreline Environment Designations, and Zoning ..	7-6
7.3.3	Existing and Proposed Public Access Sites	7-6
7.3.4	Historic and Cultural Resources	7-6
7.3.5	Impervious Areas	7-7
7.3.6	Roads and Bridges	7-7
7.3.7	Utilities and Infrastructure	7-7
7.3.8	Areas of Special Interest	7-7
8.0	ASSESSMENT OF SHORELINE FUNCTIONS AND OPPORTUNITY	
AREAS	8-1	
8.1	Nearshore / Marine Environment.....	8-1
8.1.1	Status of Shoreline Functions Summary Table.....	8-2
8.1.2	Programmatic Restoration Opportunities	8-10
8.1.3	Site-Specific Conservation and Restoration Opportunities	8-13
8.2	Puyallup River	8-18
8.2.1	Status of Lower Puyallup River Functions Summary Table	8-18
8.2.2	Programmatic Restoration Opportunities	8-23
8.2.3	Site-Specific Conservation and Restoration Opportunities	8-24
8.3	Hylebos Creek.....	8-25
8.3.1	Status of Hylebos Creek Functions Summary Table	8-26
8.3.2	Programmatic Restoration Opportunities	8-30
8.3.3	Site-Specific Conservation and Restoration Opportunities	8-30
8.4	Wapato Lake	8-30
8.4.1	Status of Wapato Lake Functions Summary Table.....	8-31
8.4.2	Programmatic Restoration Opportunities	8-34
8.4.3	Wapato Lake Site-Specific Restoration Opportunities.....	8-34
9.0	DATA GAPS.....	9-1
REFERENCES.....	10-1	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1. Relationship of Scales 3-2
 Figure 3-2. Monthly mean flows for the Puyallup River, measured at Puyallup from 1914 to 2005 3-15
 Figure 3-3. Monthly Mean Flows in Hylebos Creek 3-16

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1. Shoreline Planning Area Reaches 2-3
 Table 3-1. Federal and State Listed Species in Tacoma. 3-6
 Table 4-1. City of Tacoma Nearshore Marine Planning Area 4-1
 Table 4-2. Shoreline armoring by reach 4-3
 Table 4-3. Ecology Slope Stability Map Designations 4-5
 Table 4-4. Tributary Drainages to the Marine Shoreline in Tacoma (Tacoma, 2000) ... 4-7
 Table 4-5 Forage Fish Species 4-12
 Table 4-6. Bird Species Regularly Found in Commencement Bay Summarized by Major Group 4-14
 Table 4-7 303(d) Listed Marine Water Quality Impairments in Tacoma, WA 4-21
 Table 4-8 Shoreline Districts and Environment Designations 4-24
 Table 5-1. Shoreline Districts and Environment Designations 5-7
 Table 6-1. Shoreline Districts and Environment Designations 6-5
 Table 8-1. Assessment of Nearshore Functions within Tacoma 8-2
 Table 8-2– Commencement Bay Sensitive Habitat Sites (City of Tacoma, October 2006) 8-14
 Table 8-3. Assessment of Puyallup River Shoreline Functions within Tacoma 8-19
 Table 8-4. Assessment of Hylebos Creek Shoreline Functions within Tacoma 8-26
 Table 8-5. Assessment of Wapato Lake Shoreline Functions within Tacoma 8-31

LIST OF PHOTOS

Photo 3-1. Eroding shoreline along Wapato Lake 3-22
 Photo 4-1 Examples of shoreline modifications near Titlow Park 4-2
 Photo 4-2 Recent landslide remediation area above the Salmon Beach community in Reach 1 (The Narrows) 4-6
 Photo 4-3 Vegetated slope along Marine View Drive 4-16
 Photo 4-4 Commencement Bay beach front in Reach 7 (Marine View Drive). Floating logs, marinas, and vegetated steep bluffs adjacent to Marine View Drive are shown. 4-24
 Photo 5-1. The Puyallup River (aspect northwest from the East 11th Street Bridge toward Commencement Bay) 5-1
 Photo 6-1. Hylebos Creek near low tide, looking upstream (aspect East) from Marine View Drive 6-3
 Photo 6-2 Hylebos Creek near low tide, looking downstream (aspect West) toward the Hylebos Waterway and Commencement Bay. The Mowich Restoration Project site is located on the right bank 6-4
 Photo 7-1. An area of active bank erosion on Wapato Lake in Wapato Lake Park 7-2

LIST OF APPENDICES

Map Folio.....Appendix A
2004 Map Folio.....Appendix B

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMPs	Best Management Practices
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CBNRT	Commencement Bay Natural Resources Trustees
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
CSHI	Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements
DAHP	Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DBH	Diameter at breast height
DPS	distinct population segment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESU	Evolutionarily Significant Unit
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
LWD	Large Woody Debris
MCA	Marine Catch Area
MHHW	Mean Higher High Water
MLLW	Mean Lower Low Water
MTCA	Model Toxics Control Act
MVDS	Marine View Drive Slope
NGVD	National geodetic vertical datum
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NRDA	Natural Resource Damage Assessment
OHWL	Ordinary High Water Mark
PHS	Priority Habitats and Species
PMI	Port Maritime Industrial
PSE	Puget Sound Energy
Qvr	Vashon Recessional Outwash
Qvs	Steilacoom Gravels
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RM	River Mile
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMA	Shoreline Management Act
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
SSB	Substitute Senate Bill
TMC	Tacoma Municipal Code
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USGS	United States Geologic Service
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WRIA	Water Resource Inventory Area

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to conduct a baseline inventory and characterization of conditions relevant to the shoreline resources of the City of Tacoma (City), Washington. According to Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 6012, passed by the 2003 Washington State Legislature, cities and counties are required to amend their local shoreline master programs (SMPs) consistent with the Shoreline Management Act (SMA), Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 90.58, and its implementing guidelines, Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-26. Pierce County and the cities within Pierce County are required to complete the amendment process by the end of 2011. The City is conducting a comprehensive SMP update in two phases over the next few years. A first step in the process is development of a shoreline inventory and characterization. The inventory and characterization documents current shoreline conditions and provides a basis for updating the City's SMP goals, policies, and regulations. This characterization will help the City identify existing conditions, evaluate existing functions and values of its shoreline resources, and explore opportunities for conservation and restoration of ecological functions.

This study characterizes ecosystem-wide processes and how these processes relate to shoreline functions. Processes and functions are evaluated at two different scales: (1) a watershed or landscape scale, and (2) a shoreline reach scale. The purpose of the watershed or landscape scale characterization is to identify ecosystem processes that shape shoreline conditions and to determine which processes have been altered or impaired. The intent of the shoreline reach scale inventory and characterization is to: (1) identify how existing conditions in or near the shoreline have responded to process alterations; and (2) determine the effects of the alteration on shoreline ecological functions. These findings will help provide a framework for future updates to the City's shoreline management policies and regulations.

1.2 Report Organization

The information in this report is divided into eleven main sections. The introduction discusses the purpose of this report and describes the regulatory context for shoreline planning. The second section describes the methods, approach, and primary data sources used for this inventory and characterization. The third section provides a profile of the ecosystems surrounding the City. This ecosystem profile discusses regional overview, process controls (e.g., climate, geology), and key ecosystem-wide processes. The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sections are the shoreline inventory, separated into the nearshore marine, Puyallup River, Hylebos Creek, and Wapato Lake shorelines. The inventory provides information regarding land use patterns and the physical and biological characterization of conditions in the vicinity of the shoreline regulatory zone (referred to as the shoreline planning area). Section 8 summarizes conditions for the each shoreline area in the City's planning area, provides an assessment of shoreline functions, and identifies and discusses potential opportunity areas for protection, enhancement, restoration, and public access. Section 9 identifies data gaps. Section 10 provides conclusions. References are contained in Section 11.

Appendices A and B of this report represent a map folio that identifies the City's shoreline planning area and documents various biological, land use, and physical elements at a variety of scales.

1.3 Regulatory Overview

1.3.1 Shoreline Management Act and Shoreline Guidelines

Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was passed by the State Legislature in 1971 and adopted by the public in a referendum. The SMA was created in response to a growing concern among residents of the state that serious and permanent damage was being done to shorelines by unplanned and uncoordinated development. The goal of the SMA was "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines." While protecting shoreline resources by regulating development, the SMA is also intended to provide for appropriate shoreline use. The SMA encourages public access and use of the shoreline and provision of water-dependent uses, as well as land uses that enhance and conserve shoreline functions and values.

The primary responsibility for administering the SMA is assigned to local governments through the mechanism of local shoreline master programs, adopted under guidelines established by Ecology. The guidelines (WAC 173-26) establish goals and policies that provide a framework for development standards and use regulations in the shoreline. The SMP is based on state guidelines but tailored to the specific conditions and needs of individual communities. The SMP is also meant to be a comprehensive vision of how the shoreline area will be managed over time.

1.3.2 Shoreline Jurisdiction

Under the SMA, the shoreline jurisdiction includes areas that are 200 feet landward of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of waters that have been designated as "shorelines of statewide significance" or "shorelines of the state." These designations were established in 1972 and are described in WAC 173-18 and WAC 173-20. Generally, "shorelines of statewide significance" include portions of Puget Sound and other marine waterbodies, rivers west of the Cascade Range that have a mean annual flow of 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) or greater, rivers east of the Cascade Range that have a mean annual flow of 200 cfs or greater, and freshwater lakes with a surface area of 1,000 acres or more (RCW 90.58.030). "Shorelines of the state" are generally described as all marine shorelines and shorelines of all other streams or rivers having a mean annual flow of 20 cfs or greater and lakes with a surface area 20 acres or greater (RCW 90.58.030).

Under the SMA, the shoreline area to be regulated under the City's SMP must include all shorelines of statewide significance, shorelines of the state, and their adjacent shorelands, defined as the upland area within 200 feet of the OHWM, as well as any associated wetlands (RCW 90.58.030). "Associated wetlands" means those wetlands that are in proximity to and either influence or are influenced by tidal waters or a lake or stream subject to the SMA (WAC 173-22-030 (1)). These are typically identified as wetlands that physically extend into the shoreline jurisdiction, or wetlands that are functionally related to the shoreline jurisdiction

through surface water connection and/or other factors. The specific language from the RCW describes the limits of shoreline jurisdiction as follows:

Those lands extending landward for two hundred feet in all directions as measured on a horizontal plane from the ordinary high water mark; floodways and contiguous floodplain areas landward two hundred feet from such floodways; and all associated wetlands and river deltas (RCW 90.58.030(2)(f)).

Local jurisdictions can choose to regulate development under their SMPs for all areas within the 100-year floodplain or a smaller area as defined above (RCW 90.58.030(2)(f)(i)).

Waterbodies in Tacoma regulated under the SMA and the City's SMP include marine shorelines of Puget Sound and Commencement Bay, the Puyallup River, and Wapato Lake. Portions of Hylebos Creek in the City are also regulated under the City's SMP. The Puyallup River and marine areas waterward of extreme low tide are designated as "shorelines of statewide significance." Wapato Lake and marine areas landward of extreme low tide are designated as "shorelines of the state."

1.3.3 City of Tacoma Shoreline Master Program

The City of Tacoma first adopted its SMP in 1976 as an element of the City's long-range comprehensive Land Use Management Plan. The SMP is organized into two major parts. Part I is the Shoreline Plan, providing long-range goals and policies adopted by resolution. Part II establishes shoreline districts, shoreline environment designations, use regulations, and permitting procedures to govern development and other activities in the City's shorelines. Part II of the SMP was adopted by ordinance and codified as Chapter 13.10 of the Tacoma Municipal Code. The most recent comprehensive amendment of the SMP occurred in 1996 (City of Tacoma, 1996). Minor amendments have been approved since that time.

Local SMPs establish a system to classify shoreline areas into specific "environment designations." The purpose of shoreline environment designations is to provide a uniform basis for applying policies and use regulations within distinctly different shoreline areas. Generally, environment designations should be based on biological and physical capabilities and limitations of the shoreline, existing and planned development patterns, and a community's vision or objectives for its future development. The City's SMP establishes three environment designations: Natural, Conservancy, and Urban. The City's SMP further establishes 14 distinct shoreline districts. Each district has shoreline environment designations, management policies, and use regulations applicable to properties in that district.

1.3.4 Other Plan, Programs, and Regulations Affecting Shorelines

1.3.4.1 City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

The City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan is the official statement adopted by the City that establishes the long-range vision for the city. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates change for the coming 20 years and establishes direction for the future physical growth, development, and improvement of the city. The plan also fulfills the City's responsibilities to manage growth as mandated by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA).

There are five primary elements mandated by the GMA: land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities, and utilities. These five general elements were initially adopted in 1993. Other general elements include the Shoreline Master Program as described above. Among the goals of the Comprehensive Plan is ensuring conservation, protection, enhancement, and proper management of natural resources and shorelines, while providing for a balanced pattern of development and the needs of its citizen.

1.3.4.2 City of Tacoma Land Use Regulatory Code

The key regulatory mechanism that implements the Comprehensive Plan is the Land Use Regulatory Code. This code contains the development regulations that govern the manner by which land is used, developed, or redeveloped. This code is found in Title 13 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) and includes regulations for platting, zoning, shorelines, and critical areas. The zoning ordinance regulates land use by specifying which uses are appropriate within zoning districts.

1.3.4.3 City of Tacoma Critical Areas

The City of Tacoma's critical area regulations were recently updated and are codified in the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance (CAPO), TMC 13.11. State laws and regulations require that a jurisdiction's shoreline district "provide a level of protection to critical areas within the shoreline areas that is at least equal to that provided by the local government's critical area regulations adopted pursuant to the GMA for comparable areas other than shorelines" (WAC 173.26.221(2)(a)(ii)).

Critical areas include wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, geologically hazardous areas, and frequently flooded areas (WAC 173.26.201(3)(c)(ii)). In further describing the approach for critical areas, the guidelines describe standards for "critical saltwater" and "critical freshwater" habitats (WAC 173.26.221(2)(c)). Critical saltwater habitats include kelp beds, eelgrass beds, spawning and holding areas for forage fish, subsistence, commercial, and recreational shellfish beds, mudflats, intertidal habitats with vascular plants, and areas with which priority species have a primary association.

1.3.4.4 City of Tacoma's Open Space Habitat Plan and Green Tacoma Partnership

The City of Tacoma is undergoing the development of an Open Space Habitat Plan. The plan will set forth goals, policies, and implementation plans for Tacoma municipal open spaces and natural area that will be reviewed and adopted by the City Council through the annual update of the City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan, anticipated to occur in December 2008. The Open Space Habitat Plan will meet goals nine and ten of the GMA. Goal Nine encourages cities and counties to retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water and develop parks and recreation facilities. Goal Ten encourages cities and counties to protect the environment and enhance Washington's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

Tacoma's Open Space Habitat Plan will analyze the environmental quality and land use of Tacoma's open spaces and natural areas; identify Natural Corridors; identify additional wetland mitigation sites within the identified Natural Corridors; assess agency and community capacity to

manage and restore natural areas, and provide recommendations for the restoration and management of Tacoma's open spaces. The analysis, plan and associated maps will serve as the basis of information for development of an Open Space Program. The Natural Corridors will include public and acquired private lands to provide a city-wide open space management approach that includes the City's significant critical area, their connection to each other and bordering critical areas within the same watershed. The corridor will identify interrupted critical area corridors, as well as open spaces that support the natural environment through biologically sustainable areas that the City will preserve while also providing a balance between the natural and urban built environment for public recreation and aesthetics.

The Open Space Habitat Plan will be completed in partnership with the Green Tacoma Partnership. The Green Tacoma Partnership is a public-private partnership between the City of Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Public Utilities, Cascade Land Conservancy, Tahoma Audubon Society, and the citizens of Tacoma. The Green Tacoma Partnerships' goal is to develop and foster community capacity and support to implement the Open Space Habitat Plan. The Green Tacoma Partnership will use the Open Space Program to identify priority projects, allocate project funding, and foster political and community support. The Open Space Habitat Plan will be coordinated with the Shoreline Master Program and critical areas regulatory updates.

1.3.4.5 Commencement Bay Remediation and Restoration

The City of Tacoma has an active and well-established history in nearshore and intertidal restoration, particularly in Commencement Bay. Restoration in the nearshore marine environment of Commencement Bay has occurred over the past 15 to 20 years through the remediation efforts under the Commencement Bay Natural Resource Damage Assessment (CB/NRDA) program. These efforts are part of the implementation of the Commencement Bay Conceptual Restoration Plan (June 1997), which details the restoration components outlined in the preferred alternative – the Integrated Approach – as described in the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for the Commencement Bay cleanup plan. Restoration options for Commencement Bay cleanup were outlined in detail in Volume II - Restoration Options, Commencement Bay Cumulative Impact Study (Shapiro and Associates, June 1993). The Integrated Approach outlined in the EIS includes the implementation of a combination of restoration projects that are designed to maximize the benefits to the damaged natural resources in Commencement Bay, and meet the goals and objectives of the Commencement Bay Natural Resource Trustees. Additional detail on restoration activities is included throughout this report, particularly in Sections 4 (Nearshore Marine Shoreline Planning Area) and 8 (Assessment of Shoreline Functions and Opportunity Areas) of this report.



City of Tacoma
Community and Economic Development Department

Agenda Item
GB-3

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Peter Huffman, Manager, Planning Division
SUBJECT: Thea Foss Waterway Plan
DATE: October 31, 2007

In 2006, in conjunction with the agreement to commence with an update of the Shoreline Master Program, the Planning Commission recommended and the City Council directed that a comprehensive review of the *Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan* be undertaken to address land use compatibilities, future development and uses, design standards, transportation needs, environmental concerns, economic viability and other issues. The City hired Reid-Middleton to consult on the update.

At the Commission's meeting on November 7, staff will provide a status report on the *Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan* update. The update of the plan will be closely coordinated with both the Eastside Transportation Study and the Shoreline Master Program Update. A preliminary draft of the revised plan and shoreline regulations will be completed in March of 2008. Public review of the draft will be ongoing throughout the process. A final draft *Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan* and shoreline regulations will be completed for a public hearing before the Planning Commission in July of 2008.

The first task of the update is to conduct a review of existing documents, policies and regulations. On November 29, the City will be hosting a public workshop on the *Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan* to identify issues and areas of concern with the existing plan. The workshop will take place in the Municipal Building's 7th floor conference room between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Specific topics for discussion include:

- Land Uses
- Views
- Site Development Standards and Parking
- Design
- Parks and Public Access
- Foss Waterway Vision

If you have any questions, please contact Molly Harris at mharris@cityoftacoma.org or 591-5383 or Steve Atkinson at satkinson@cityoftacoma.org or 591-5531.

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