

ShoreScore Update

January 2013



SMP Approved by Planning Commission

On Jan. 16th the Planning Commission completed final edits to the Shoreline Master Program (SMP). In addition to previous changes, which WSSA has reported to you, the Commission received a subcommittee report dealing with properties like yours near the shore. ([Click here to review our last newsletter](#)).

As you'll recall, an updated draft of the SMP regulations was brought before the Commission last summer. It had taken a year for staff to complete changes from the version published for the Public Hearing held in May 2011. Staffs' effort had slightly reduced a bulky, 350 page document, but a critique by WSSA's attorney, followed by our comments before the Commission, revealed shortcomings. As a result, Commission chairman John Carlson asked for one-on-one meetings between WSSA and staff.

WSSA's meetings with staff encompassed the summer and fall, culminating in December. At that time several commissioners contended the regulations would allow "completely paving the shoreline". Chair Carlson then appointed a committee to seek refinement of a proposal staff had provided. WSSA's perspective on the final outcome can be found at our website. ([Click to review our recent news release.](#))

As the news release suggests, your legally developed improvements will be protected and not declared non-conforming – an issue of great concern with respect to property values. In the future, if you take certain actions within 50 feet of the shore, you will have to assure that at least 50% of what is called the "shoreline setback" is vegetated.

The good news – as approved by the Commission, this setback, which is being called "greenscape", can be traditional landscaping and doesn't carry a "no touch" native vegetation restriction. Actions triggering "greenscape" requirements would be any development outside your current footprint that would encroach inside the area between 25 to 50 feet from shore.

We were surprised at last minute changes to the requirements, however. Added on was a provision that you would also need to assure no more than 15% of the first 10 feet of your shoreline contains any man-made "structure", whether impervious or pervious. On a 50 foot wide lot, this would restrict, say a walkway to your dock, to no wider than 7.5 feet. WSSA's proposal that at least 10 feet be allowed on even the smallest lots was rejected.

It should also be noted that changes to your "hardscape", as the man-made structure near the shore is being called, will trigger similar restraints, if you propose changes. The good news –

what you have along the shoreline in the near-shore (first 25 feet) is grandfathered, if it was legally placed.

The Commission adopted these and earlier changes, approving the draft by 7-0.

Where to Next?

The draft now goes to the City Council.

WSSA believes the draft SMP, while restrictive and lacking some of our requests, strikes a balance which our elected officials should find acceptable. By State law, Bellevue's regulations must be consistent with those in near-by jurisdictions. It is. However, in each instance of submission of draft regulations to Dept. of Ecology by other jurisdictions, Ecology has proposed further restrictions.

The City must support shoreline residents and hold firm. **Your help is needed to assure this!** We ask that you plan to attend forthcoming City Council meetings when they deliberate the draft regulations.

Please let us know that we can include you in alerts to get people out to attend and show support for our positions.

Your Support is Critical

We've made it to first base with the approval of the draft SMP. The next stage will be much shorter, as the City Council receives and considers the Commission version. While it took over 3 years to get to this point, we expect Council consideration to be complete in 3 months or less. To have our efforts thus far produce a scoring run, the SMP must have City support to pass pressures assuredly to come from the Department of Ecology. Your support is needed going forward and to help us with the more than \$15,000 debt facing our treasury.

Please:

1. Respond to the email delivering this ShoreScore that we can call on you to attend a City Council meeting as a show of support, and
2. Send a contribution to WSSA, P.O. Box 6773, Bellevue 98008
Or via PayPal at our [website](#).