



City of Langley  
Planning Department  
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## Memorandum

**To: Shoreline Advisory Committee**

**Re: Shoreline Environment Designations: Shoreline Residential vs. Urban Conservancy**

The areas north and south/southeast of the downtown are currently designated as shoreline residential environments. Development is predominantly single family homes on high bluffs with a history of instability. Much of the development occurs outside of the shoreline district (200' from Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM)) due to the 65' setback required from the top of the bluff. In addition, many of these properties have sufficient area to construct residential dwellings outside of the shoreline district and with a greater setback from the bluff than is required (65'). Below are summaries of each type of shoreline environment:

### **"Urban conservancy" environment.**

(i) **Purpose.** The purpose of the "urban conservancy" environment is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, flood plain and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings, while allowing a variety of compatible uses.

### **(ii) Management policies.**

(A) Uses that preserve the natural character of the area or promote preservation of open space, flood plain or sensitive lands either directly or over the long term should be the primary allowed uses. Uses that result in restoration of ecological functions should be allowed if the use is otherwise compatible with the purpose of the environment and the setting.

(B) Standards should be established for shoreline stabilization measures, vegetation conservation, water quality, and shoreline modifications within the "urban conservancy"

designation. These standards shall ensure that new development does not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions or further degrade other shoreline values.

(C) Public access and public recreation objectives should be implemented whenever feasible and significant ecological impacts can be mitigated.

(D) Water-oriented uses should be given priority over nonwater-oriented uses. For shoreline areas adjacent to commercially navigable waters, water-dependent uses should be given highest priority.

(E) Mining is a unique use as a result of its inherent linkage to geology. Therefore, mining and related activities may be an appropriate use within the urban conservancy environment when conducted in a manner consistent with the environment policies and the provisions of WAC 173-26-241 (3)(h) and when located consistent with mineral resource lands designation criteria pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170 and WAC 365-190-070.

(iii) **Designation criteria.** Assign an "urban conservancy" environment designation to shoreline areas appropriate and planned for development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring of the ecological functions of the area, that are not generally suitable for water-dependent uses and that lie in incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, or commercial or industrial "limited areas of more intensive rural development" if any of the following characteristics apply:

(A) They are suitable for water-related or water-enjoyment uses;

(B) They are open space, flood plain or other sensitive areas that should not be more intensively developed;

(C) They have potential for ecological restoration;

(D) They retain important ecological functions, even though partially developed; or

(E) They have the potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.

Lands that may otherwise qualify for designation as urban conservancy and which are designated as "mineral resource lands" pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170 and WAC 365-190-070 may be assigned a designation within the "urban conservancy" environment that allows mining and associated uses in addition to other uses consistent

with the urban conservancy environment.

(f) **"Shoreline residential" environment.**

(i) **Purpose.** The purpose of the "shoreline residential" environment is to accommodate residential development and appurtenant structures that are consistent with this chapter. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.

(ii) **Management policies.**

(A) Standards for density or minimum frontage width, setbacks, lot coverage limitations, buffers, shoreline stabilization, vegetation conservation, critical area protection, and water quality shall be set to assure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions, taking into account the environmental limitations and sensitivity of the shoreline area, the level of infrastructure and services available, and other comprehensive planning considerations.

Local governments may establish two or more different "shoreline residential" environments to accommodate different shoreline densities or conditions, provided both environments adhere to the provisions in this chapter.

(B) Multifamily and multi-lot residential and recreational developments should provide public access and joint use for community recreational facilities.

(C) Access, utilities, and public services should be available and adequate to serve existing needs and/or planned future development.

(D) Commercial development should be limited to water-oriented uses.

(iii) **Designation criteria.** Assign a "shoreline residential" environment designation to shoreline areas inside urban growth areas, as defined in RCW 36.70A.110, incorporated municipalities, "rural areas of more intense development," or "master planned resorts," as described in RCW 36.70A.360, if they are predominantly single-family or multifamily residential development or are planned and platted for residential development.