



Frequently Asked Questions

City of Mountlake Terrace

Periodic Update of the Shoreline Master Program, 2019

What is a Shoreline Master Program (SMP)?

A Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a set of policies and regulations required by state law that has three basic principles:

- Encourages reasonable and appropriate development of shorelines with an **emphasis on water-dependent uses**; and
- **Protects the natural resources and character of the shorelines**, the land, vegetation, wildlife, water, and aquatic life; and,
- **Promotes public access** and provides opportunities to enjoy the aesthetic qualities of the natural shorelines.

Where does this apply?

In Mountlake Terrace the shoreline jurisdiction extends 200 feet landward of the water's edge and additionally includes associated wetlands, floodways, and up to 200 feet of floodplain contiguous to the floodway. Lake Ballinger is the only shoreline in the City of Mountlake Terrace.

What is a periodic update of the SMP?

The City of Mountlake Terrace completed a comprehensive update to its Shoreline Master Program in 2013. Washington state law requires jurisdictions to periodically review and update their SMPs every eight years to attain state approval. This periodic update will focus on:

- Reviewing relevant legislative updates since 2013 and incorporating any applicable amendments.
- Ensuring consistency with adopted regulations for critical areas and flood hazard areas.

This periodic update will NOT:

- Re-evaluate the ecological baseline which was established as part of the 2013 comprehensive update.
- Extensively assess no net loss criteria.
- Change shoreline jurisdiction or environment designations.

What type of activities and uses do shoreline regulations apply to?

Shoreline regulations apply to any land use activity that occurs within the shoreline jurisdiction as defined in the SMP. Included in the SMP are:

- New or expanded structures, such as houses, sheds, and decks;
- New or expanded in-water and over-water structures, such as docks, buoys, and boat launches;

- Land development and alteration, such as clearing, grading, dredging, or filling; and
- Other activities along the shorelines, including restoration (e.g., riparian planting, bank stabilization), trail construction, and public access.

What is a Shoreline Exemption and what is required to obtain approval?

Certain land uses and development activities are exempt from the requirement to obtain a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit. Exemptions under the SMP are different than exemptions under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

How does the SMP affect existing uses and development?

SMP regulations are not retroactive. SMP regulations apply to *new* development and uses. Existing uses and developments legally established may be repaired, maintained and operated. The SMP applies to proposals for expansion or alteration of existing uses and structures.

What is public access to shorelines? When is it required?

Public access is a preferred use per the SMP. Public access can be physical access (e.g. trail) and/or visual access (e.g. view corridors). Public access requirements do not allow for trespass on private property.

What is No Net Loss?

No net loss means that over time, the aggregate existing condition of shoreline ecological functions should remain the same as when the SMP was implemented. The no net loss standard is designed to balance the introduction of new impacts to shoreline ecological functions resulting from new development through mitigation sequencing and restoration. The City must achieve this standard through both the SMP planning process and by appropriately regulating individual developments as they are proposed in the future. Any amendments to the SMP that may occur through the periodic update process would need to comply with the no net loss standard.

How can I get more information?

Website:

<https://www.cityofmlt.com/247/Shoreline-Planning>

Contact:

Edith L. Duttlinger, Senior Planner
Community & Economic Development Dept.
City of Mountlake Terrace
Phone: 425.744.6279
E-mail: eduttlinger@ci.mlt.wa.us