
SECTION TWO -- GENERAL GOALS AND POLICIES

I. GOAL

The goal of this Master Program is to preserve to the fullest possible extent the scenic, aesthetic and ecological qualities of the Shorelines of the Thurston Region in harmony with those uses which are deemed essential to the life and well-being of its citizens.

II. PURPOSE

The local governments of Thurston County recognize that the Shorelines of the State and the Region are among the most valuable and fragile of our natural resources. There is great concern regarding their utilization, protection, restoration and preservation. In addition, these local governments find that the ever-increasing pressures to accommodate additional uses on the shoreline necessitates increased management coordination in the development of the Shorelines. These local governments further find that much of the Shorelines of the Region and the uplands adjacent thereto are in private ownership; that unrestricted construction on the privately-owned or publicly-owned Shorelines of the State is not in the best public interest; and therefore, coordinated planning is necessary in order to protect the public interest associated with the Shorelines of the State while, at the same time, recognizing and protecting private property rights consistent with the public interest. There is, therefore, a clear and urgent demand for a planned, rational and concerted effort, jointly performed by federal, state and local governments, to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the Shorelines of the State and Region.

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III. POLICIES

It shall be the policy of the local governments of Thurston County to provide for the management of the Shorelines of the State and Region by planning for and fostering all reasonable and appropriate uses. This policy is designed to insure the development of these shorelines in a manner which, while allowing for limited reduction of rights of the public in the navigable waters, will promote and enhance the public interest. This policy contemplates protecting against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the State and their aquatic life, while protecting generally public rights of navigation and corollary rights incidental thereto.

To implement this document, the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural Shorelines of the State and Region shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the people generally. To this end, uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment or are unique to or dependent upon use of the State's shoreline. Alterations of the natural condition of the shorelines, in those limited instances when authorized, shall be given priority for single-family residences, ports, shoreline recreational uses including but not limited to parks, marinas, piers and other improvements facilitating public access to shorelines of the Region; industrial and commercial developments which are particularly dependent on their location on, or use of, the shorelines of the Region; and other development that will provide an opportunity for substantial numbers of the people to enjoy the shorelines of the Region. Permitted uses of the Shorelines of the State and Region shall be designed and conducted in a manner to minimize, to the extent feasible, any resultant damage to the ecology and environment of the shoreline area and any interference with the public's use of the water.

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IV. PRIORITIES

In accordance with the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, the management of Shorelines of State-Wide Significance shall be given preference to uses, in the following order of priority, which:

1. Recognize and protect the state-wide interest over local interest;
2. Preserve the natural character of the shoreline;
3. Result in long-term over short-term benefit;
4. Protect the resources and ecology of the shoreline;
5. Increase public access to publicly-owned areas of the shorelines;
6. Increase recreational opportunities for the public on the shoreline;
7. Protect life and property from hazards of flood; and
8. Provide for any other element as defined in RCW 90.58.100 deemed appropriate or necessary. (RCW 90.58.020)

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V. REGIONAL CRITERIA

All development within the jurisdiction of this Master Program shall demonstrate compliance with the following policies:

- A. Public access to shorelines shall be permitted only in a manner which preserves or enhances the characteristics of the shoreline which existed prior to establishment of public access.
- B. Protection of water quality and aquatic habitat is recognized as a primary goal. All applications for development of shorelines and use of public waters shall be closely analyzed for their effect on the aquatic environment. Of particular concern will be the preservation of the larger ecological system when a change is proposed to a lesser part of the system, like a marshland or tideland.
- C. Future water-dependent or water-related industrial uses shall be channeled into shoreline areas already so utilized or into those shoreline areas which lend themselves to suitable industrial development. Where industry is now located in shoreline areas that are more suited to other uses, it is the policy of this Master Program to minimize expansion of such industry.
- D. Residential development shall be undertaken in a manner that will maintain existing public access to the publicly-owned shorelines and not interfere with the public use of water areas fronting such shorelines, nor shall it adversely affect aquatic habitat.
- E. Governmental units shall be bound by the same requirements as private interests.
- F. Applicants for permits shall have the burden of proving that a proposed substantial development is consistent with the criteria which must be met before a Permit is granted. In any review of the granting or denial of an application for a permit as provided in RCW 90.58.18.180 (1), the person requesting the review shall have the burden of proof.

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- G. Shorelines of this Region which are notable for their aesthetic, scenic, historic or ecological qualities shall be preserved. Any private or public development which would degrade such shoreline qualities shall be discouraged. Inappropriate shoreline uses and poor quality shoreline conditions shall be eliminated when a new shoreline development or activity is authorized.

- H. Protection of public health is recognized as a primary goal. All applications for development or use of shorelines shall be closely analyzed for their effect on the public health.

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VI. REGIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Plan Elements are uses or activities. Any of the more specific use activities, which are described later in this section, can be grouped into one or more of these Plan Elements. The eight Regional Plan Elements are listed and defined as follows:

- A. Economic Development. This element deals with the location and design of industries, transportation and port facilities, commercial and other developments that are largely dependent on shoreland locations. Economic development is defined as human use of shorelines to produce goods and services. Tourism, gravel mining, tree farming, aquaculture, manufacturing, commercial stores and shops, resorts, fishing and transportation facilities are examples of economic development.
- B. Public Access. This element is concerned with physical access to publicly-owned shores and tidelands and visual access to public waters. The regulations function to protect the physical and visual environment in the location, design and maintenance of public access developments.
- C. Circulation. This element is concerned: (1) with the location and character of existing and proposed highways, transportation corridors, freight and shipping terminals and waste disposal systems; (2) with the movement of people, goods and services; and (3) with the relationship of all these to the shorelines and aquatic habitat. Along with but not limited to, roads, bridges, highways, railroads and marine terminals, circulation use regulations consider pipelines, power transmission and telephone lines, airports, public access facilities and pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- D. Recreation. This element is concerned with the preservation, diversification, expansion and regulation of recreational opportunities, including but not limited to parks, beaches and tidelands for such activities as boating, picnicking, clam digging, fishing, climbing and hiking.

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- E. Shoreline Use. This element considers the pattern of land use distribution on shorelines and adjacent upland, tidal marsh and flood plain areas. These uses include but are not limited to housing, commercial, industrial, transportation, utilities, public facilities, agriculture, recreational, aquaculture and educational uses. They also include the locational pattern of water uses of the same types, and the distribution of natural resources.
- F. Conservation. This element deals with the conservation of natural resources, including but not limited to scenic vistas, aquatic habitats of fish and wildlife, watercourses, beaches, tidal and submerged lands, and aesthetically valuable sites.
- G. Historical and Cultural Values. This element deals with the preservation or restoration of buildings, sites and natural features having historic, cultural, scientific, educational or physically unique characteristics. Archaeological sites, ancient villages, military forts, old settlers' homes, ghost towns and pioneer trails are examples of cultural features included in this element.
- H. Restoration. This element provides for restoration to a useful condition of areas which are blighted by abandoned buildings and dilapidated conditions.

VII. SHORELINE ENVIRONMENTS

The State of Washington Department of Ecology Final Guidelines for the Shoreline Management Act of 1971, establish a framework of four categories of shorelines, based on the degree of man's intrusion into the shoreline and the degree of uniqueness of the shoreline. These four categories are termed the "Natural, Conservancy, Rural and Urban Environments."

To further express the goals for each of these four Environments, eight Plan Elements are utilized. These goals serve to keep regulations governing Use Activities from being arbitrary. A definition and purpose for each Environment is also included in the following:

A. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (Refer to WAC 173-16-040(4)(b)(i))

Purpose. The intent of a Natural Environment designation is to preserve, maintain or restore a shoreline as a natural resource existing relatively free of human influence, and to discourage or prohibit those activities which might destroy or degrade the essential, unique or valuable natural characteristics of the shoreline.

Definition. The "Natural Environment" designates shoreline areas in which unique natural systems and resources are to be preserved or restored. This environment is characterized by severely limited land and water use with little or no visual evidence of man-developed structures or occupancy. Development or utilization of soil, aquatic and forest resources, as well as nonrenewable mineral and nonmineral resources is prohibited. Public access and recreation are limited to a degree compatible with the preservation or restoration of the unique character of this environment.

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1. Economic Development. Economic development is not a goal of the Natural Environment.
2. Public Access. Public access may exist on public land to the extent that it does not degrade or change the natural or cultural features to be preserved or restored.
3. Circulation. Circulation corridors may exist only to the extent necessary to maintain the character of the Natural Environment areas to be preserved.
4. Recreation. Opportunities for passive recreation (viewing, photography, etc.) may exist wherever it is possible without degrading the characteristics to be preserved or restored.
5. Shoreline Use. The distribution of shoreline uses is not an issue in the Natural Environment.
6. Conservation. Nonconsumption, preservation and restoration of the distinguishing natural characteristics are the goals of the Conservation Element.
7. Historical and Cultural Values. A goal of the Natural Environment shall be to promote, protect and preserve historical, cultural, scientific or educational values on shorelines where these values are acknowledged.
8. Restoration. Blighted, abandoned or dilapidated uses and structures which would detract from the intended character will be absent from the Natural Environment areas. Side effects of uses, such as degraded water quality, also will be absent.

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B. CONSERVANCY ENVIRONMENT (Refer to WAC 173-16-040(4)(b)(ii))

Purpose. The intent of a Conservancy Environment designation is to protect, conserve and manage existing resources and valuable historic and cultural areas in order to ensure a continuous flow of recreational benefits to the public and to achieve sustained resource utilization. The preferred uses are nonconsumptive of the physical and biological resources of the area and activities and uses of a nonpermanent nature which do not substantially degrade the existing character of the areas. Nonconsumptive uses are those uses which utilize resources on a sustained yield basis while minimally reducing opportunities for other future uses of the resources of the area.

Definition. The "Conservancy Environment" designates shoreline areas for the protection, conservation and management of existing valuable natural resources and historic and cultural areas. This environment is characterized by low-intensity land use and moderate-intensity water use with moderate to little visual evidence of permanent structures and occupancy. Sustained management of the pastoral, aquatic and forest resources, as well as rigidly controlled utilization of nonrenewable and other nonmineral resources which do not result in long-term irreversible impacts on the natural character of the environment are permitted. Intensity of recreation and public access may be limited by the capacity of the environment for sustained recreational use.

Goal Statements

1. Economic Development. The goal for this element is to reach a high level of renewable resource utilization on a sustained yield basis.
2. Public Access. It is a goal to maintain and improve the existing public access facilities to County shorelines, and to seek more facilities and devices to increase opportunities for public access to them. It is the intent of this goal to:
 - a. Recognize and protect private property rights consistent with the public interest;

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- b. Prevent the destruction of the more fragile recreation areas through excessive use; and
 - c. Exercise due regard for the safety of the public.
3. Circulation. Circulation systems in the Conservancy shorelines of the County should exist to serve the economic, aesthetic, health, safety and cultural needs of the area, but are to be designed to have a minimal adverse impact upon shorelines.
 4. Recreation. Recreational opportunities are to be preserved and expanded through programs of development (public and private), and various means of public acquisition, such as purchase, leases, easements and donations. The intensity of the recreational use will be limited by the capacity of the environment to sustain it.
 5. Shoreline Use. A goal is to locate structures and uses in such a position that they are not highly visible from the water.
 6. Conservation. The goal of this element is to protect, conserve and manage existing natural resources and valuable historical and cultural areas in order to ensure a continuous flow of recreational benefits to the public, and to achieve sustained resource utilization.
 7. Historical and Cultural Values. This goal shall be to promote, protect and preserve historical, cultural, scientific or educational values on shorelines where these values are acknowledged.
 8. Restoration. The goal of this element is to restore to a useful or original condition those areas (including waters) which are blighted by present uses and dilapidated or abandoned structures.

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C. RURAL ENVIRONMENT (Refer to WAC 173-16-040(4)(b)(iii))

Purpose. The primary purposes of the Rural Environment are to protect areas from urban expansion, restrict intensive developments along undeveloped shore-lines, function as a buffer between urban areas, and maintain open spaces for recreational purposes compatible with rural uses. New developments in a Rural Environment are to reflect the character of the surrounding area.

Definition. The "Rural Environment" designates shoreline areas in which land will be protected from high-density urban expansion and may function as a buffer between urban areas and the shorelines proper. This environment is characterized by low intensity land use and moderate to intensive water use. Residential development does not exceed two dwellings per acre. Visual impact is variable with a moderate portion of the environment dominated by structures of impermeable surfaces. Intensive cultivation and development of the renewable soils, aquatic and forest resources, as well as limited utilization of nonrenewable mineral resources is permitted. Recreational activities and public access to the shoreline are encouraged to the extent compatible with other rural uses and activities designated for this environment.

Goal Statements

1. Economic Development. Available resources should be utilized consistent with the definition and purpose of the Rural Environment.
2. Public Access. The primary goal of this element is to provide adequate public access areas to ensure maximum enjoyment of recreational and scenic opportunities with minimum conflict with other rural uses. It is the intent of this goal to:
 - a. Recognize and protect private property rights consistent with the public interest;
 - b. Prevent the destruction of the more fragile recreation areas through excessive use; and
 - c. Exercise due regard for the safety of the public.

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3. Circulation. The goal of the Circulation Element in the Rural Environment is to provide facilities that are necessary only for local usage. Trail systems for safe nonmotorized traffic are to be encouraged where compatible with rural uses. Major planned circulation systems shall be located away from shoreline areas whenever possible.
4. Recreation. The recreation goal is to assure diverse, convenient and adequate water-related recreational opportunities along the shorelines of the County located in such a way as to minimize conflicts with other rural activities.
5. Shoreline Use. Areas for intensive public use should be distributed in such a manner as to avoid concentration of user pressure, to discourage intrusions endangering life or property, and to avoid uses having adverse effects on fragile natural systems.
6. Conservation. This goal shall be to have sound management in the conservation of all natural resources within the Rural Environment.
7. Historical and Cultural Values. The goal of this element shall be to promote, protect and preserve historical, cultural scientific or educational values on shorelines where these values are acknowledged.
8. Restoration. This goal is to restore to a useful or original condition those areas (including waters) which are blighted by present uses, discontinued uses and dilapidated or abandoned structures.

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D. SUBURBAN ENVIRONMENT

Purpose. The purpose of the Suburban environment is to allow residential development at urban densities and recreational development. It is not intended to be applied to existing industrial and commercial areas.

Definition. The "Suburban" environment designates shorelines which are developed with residential uses at an urban density and/or recreational uses that improve the public's ability to use the shoreline. This environment can only be applied to lands within the urban growth area as defined by the Urban Growth Management Planning Area document, signed by Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater on June 20, 1988, or as hereafter revised. This environment is characterized by moderate-intensity land use and moderate to intensive water use. Visual impact is variable with a moderate to high number of permanent structures. Recreational activities and public access to the shoreline are encouraged to the extent compatible with other uses and activities designated for this environment.

Goal Statements

1. Economic Development. Available resources should be utilized consistent with the purpose and definition of this environment.
2. Public Access. The goal is to plan for and, where appropriate, acquire visual and physical access to the water.
3. Circulation. The goal is to provide facilities that are necessary only for approved uses. Trail systems for safe nonmotorized traffic are to be encouraged. Major planned circulation systems for motorized vehicles should be located away from shoreline areas where possible.
4. Recreation. The goal is to assure diverse, convenient and adequate water-related recreational opportunities along the shorelines.
5. Shoreline Use. Shoreline uses are to be distributed in such a manner as to minimize transportation costs, conflicts between adjacent uses, and to avoid uses having adverse effects on fragile natural systems.

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6. Conservation. The goal is to have sound management in the conservation of all human and natural resources within the Suburban environment.
7. Historic and Cultural Values. This goal shall be to promote, protect and preserve historical, cultural; scientific or educational values on shoreline where these values are acknowledged.
8. Restoration. This goal is to restore to a useful or original condition those areas (including waters) which are blighted by present uses, discontinued uses and dilapidated or abandoned structures.

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E. URBAN ENVIRONMENT (Refer to WAC 173-16-040(4)(b)(iv))

Purpose. The purpose of an Urban Environment designation is to obtain optimum utilization of the shorelines within urbanized areas by providing for intensive public and private urban uses and by managing development of affected natural resources.

Definition. The "Urban Environment" designates shorelines within urbanized areas which provide for intensive public use and which are developed in a manner that enhances and maintains shorelines for a multiplicity of urban uses. This environment is characterized by high-intensity land and water use, visually dominated by man-made residential, commercial and industrial structures and developments. Both renewable and nonrenewable resources are fully utilized, and public access and recreation encouraged to the maximum compatible with the other activities designated in the environment.

Goal Statements

1. Economic Development. The goal of this element is to utilize most efficiently the limited shoreline for industry, transportation facilities, commercial and other developments that are particularly dependent upon their location on, or use of, the shoreline.
2. Public Access. This goal is to plan for and, where appropriate, acquire visual and physical public access to the water.
3. Circulation. The goal of this element is to integrate existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, bicycling and pedestrian paths, and other public utilities and facilities and to assure that they best serve the uses of the shoreline.
4. Recreation. This goal is to provide close-to-home recreation.
5. Shoreline Use. Shoreline uses are to be distributed in such a manner as to minimize transportation costs and conflicts between adjacent uses.

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6. Conservation. Resources in the Urban Environment should be utilized in a manner that minimizes the adverse impacts of that utilization on other resources.
7. Historical and Cultural Values. This goal shall be to promote, protect and preserve historical, cultural, scientific or educational values on shorelines where these values are acknowledged.
8. Restoration. The goal of this element is to restore to a useful or original condition those areas (including waters) which are blighted by present uses, discontinued uses and dilapidated or abandoned structures.

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F. AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

All four of the shoreline environments apply equally to upland areas as well as aquatic lands and surface water. The specific location of the individual shoreline environments is mapped and further detailed in SECTION FIVE. As a part of those maps, a "Natural-Aquatic Environment" has been identified as a specific sub-environment is defined as follows:

Natural-Aquatic Environment

Definition. That surface water together with the underlying lands and the water column of all marine water seaward of ten (10) fathoms (60 feet) in depth.