

# Shoreline Designations

## Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater

One of the major changes under the proposed Shoreline Master Program update is to the environmental designations of specific sections of shorelines – or reaches. This is because the State Department of Ecology is recommending that local jurisdictions adopt completely new designations – new names – and a new set of criteria and rules. *Note: the best way to compare existing and proposed shoreline designations is to compare the set of maps included in this package.*

Shoreline Environmental Designations (SEDs) are similar to zoning districts for areas under shoreline jurisdiction. The purpose of the environmental designations is to encourage uses that protect or enhance the current or desired character of shoreline.

In the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater and their associated urban growth areas the current Shoreline Master Program uses five designations: Aquatic, Natural, Conservancy, Rural, and Urban, and has identified two special management areas – Percival and Deschutes. The State Department of Ecology's 2003 guidelines recommend that the updated Master Program consider using six designations: Aquatic, Natural, Urban Conservancy, Rural Conservancy, Shoreline Residential, and High Intensity. The policies and regulations for each designation should reflect the purpose and intent of each environment.

Future development locating within shoreline jurisdiction needs to be consistent with the rules and policies within the environment designation, as well as local government zoning and critical area regulations. Ecology guidelines require critical area protection within shoreline jurisdiction to be - at a minimum - equal to that under local critical area regulations.

The cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater are considering adopting five of the six recommended SEDs – with the Rural Conservancy designation not being applicable to urban areas. The purpose of each of the five designations is as follows:

***Aquatic:*** *The purpose of the aquatic environment is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics of the areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark.*

***Natural:*** *The purpose of the natural environment is to protect those shoreline areas relatively free of human influence or that include intact or minimally degraded shoreline functions intolerant of human use. These systems require that only very low intensity uses be allowed in order to maintain the ecological function and ecosystem-wide processes. Consistent with the policies of the designation, local government should include planning for restoration of degraded environment within this environment.*

***Urban Conservancy:*** *The purpose of the urban conservancy environment is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, flood plain, and other sensitive land where they exist in urban and developed settings, while allowing a variety of compatible uses.*

***Shoreline Residential:*** *The purpose of the shoreline residential environment is to accommodate residential development and appurtenant structures and to provide for public access and recreational uses.*

***High Intensity:*** *The purpose of the high intensity environment is to provide for high intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.*

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## Designation Criteria

The flow chart below shows the criteria used to determine the SEDs for individual reaches.

