



SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

Shoreline Master Programs are subject to the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58), and the goals and policies of the Shoreline Master Program are included in Comprehensive Plans under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A).

As of August 3, 2015, a proposed Shoreline Master Program update is under review by the Washington State Department of Ecology in accordance with RCW 90.58. When that process is completed, the Shoreline Management Element will be updated in accordance with RCW 36.70A.480.

Shoreline Management Program Element

GOALS:

1. To protect and enhance the natural and developed shorelines of the city.
2. To ensure that the city's shorelines are planned for optimal use of this limited resource, to provide amenities to protect the natural environment, and to enhance the aesthetic quality of the shoreline.
3. To protect, preserve, and enhance the natural resources and amenities of the city's shorelines for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.
4. To increase public, physical, and visual access to and along the city's shoreline areas.
5. To encourage and increase water-related recreational activities for the public on the city's shorelines when appropriate and consistent with the public interest.
6. To recognize existing residential uses and to regulate new residential construction within the intent of shoreline policies.
7. To discourage expansion of commercial uses and activities on the city's Lake Washington and Larsen Lake shorelines, except where those commercial uses or activities are water-dependent.
8. To encourage a balanced circulation system along existing corridors within shoreline areas.

OVERVIEW

The Shoreline Management Program Element includes policies which direct development to be compatible with the natural attributes of Bellevue's shorelines. Shorelines help define the city's boundaries, provide recreational opportunities, offer vistas, and create habitats for wildlife and natural vegetation. These policies apply to Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, Mercer Slough, Larsen Lake, Phantom Lake, and their associated wetlands as defined by the Shoreline Management Act.

POLICIES

The following policies have been adopted by the State (June 1992) in accord with the Shoreline Management Act.

Shoreline Uses and Activities

POLICY SH-1. Plan for reasonable and appropriate shoreline uses.

Discussion: Bellevue's shorelines are primarily residential in use with some natural areas and commercial uses. Uses and activities should balance environmental needs, the public interest, and private property rights.

POLICY SH-2. Discourage short-term economic gain or convenience in development when potential, long-term adverse effects on the shoreline are possible.



The city's shorelines are a unique and irreplaceable resource.

POLICY SH-3. Give priority to uses and activities which improve or are compatible with the natural amenities of the shorelines, provide public access, or depend on a shoreline location.

POLICY SH-4. Limit the density and intensity of shoreline uses and activities through planning, zoning, capital improvements, and other policy and regulatory standards.

Discussion: Exceptions to shoreline uses, through the Shoreline Conditional Use process, may be considered if they meet a demonstrated need of the city and then only if they are in accordance with other shoreline policies.

POLICY SH-5. Plan and designate shorelines suited for public water-enjoyment uses.

POLICY SH-6. Consider and encourage aesthetic values when reviewing development of the shoreline.

Discussion: Consider aesthetic values such as public views, landscaping, and compatible site design.

POLICY SH-7. Discourage expansion or redevelopment of existing shoreline uses or activities that are incompatible with the shoreline environment.

Discussion: Shoreline uses or activities not specified in this document should be consistent with the intent of the shoreline goals and policies.

POLICY SH-8. Discourage uses, activities, and developments in the shoreline area that create offensive, unsafe, or unmitigatedly adverse impacts.

POLICY SH-9. Preserve the natural amenities and resources of the shorelines in the context of existing and planned residential, recreational, and commercial land uses.

POLICY SH-10. Encourage development to keep the water's edge free of buildings.

POLICY SH-11. Consider the impacts on shorelines from uses and activities in the related drainage basins as a part of shoreline planning.

Conservation

POLICY SH-12. Designate and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. If necessary, control access and use for the protection of these areas.

POLICY SH-13. Protect and improve wildlife and aquatic habitats, particularly spawning waters.

POLICY SH-14. Maintain water quality to permit swimming and other recreational uses.



Acquisition and development of public access to the shoreline is emphasized as a community goal.

POLICY SH-15. Discourage landfill and dredging in the shoreline area.

Discussion: Landfill or dredging may be permitted where necessary for the maintenance or restoration of shoreline property where no other practical alternatives are available. Also, landfill and dredging may be permitted if there is no net reduction of surface waters of the lake and no significant adverse impact to fish, wildlife, and adjacent property.

POLICY SH-16. Discourage structures using materials which have significant adverse physical or chemical effects on water quality, vegetation, fish, and wildlife in or near the water.

POLICY SH-17. Protect and restore shoreline areas which have historical, cultural, educational, or scientific value.

Discussion: These special shoreline areas should not be changed until their value and use are determined. Once determined, public and private cooperation should be encouraged in site preservation and protection. Temporary uses appropriate to shoreline activity involving public interest and not substantially degrading water quality and unique and fragile areas could be permitted.

POLICY SH-18. Inland Shoreline Areas: Preserve the open character of Mercer Slough.

POLICY SH-19. Maintain an optimum water flow in the Mercer Slough Canal.

Public Access

POLICY SH-20. Evaluate the needs and opportunities for additional public access in public-owned shoreline areas.

POLICY SH-21. Encourage acquisition and development of public access to the shorelines.

POLICY SH-22. Improve the existing public access facilities owned by the city.

Discussion: Bellevue's existing public access facilities periodically need renovations and repairs due to age and wear from use and the water environment. To keep these public access areas viable and safe, the city should encourage renovations according to the Park Department's Renovation Plan.

POLICY SH-23. Emphasize public access with foot, bicycle, and handicap paths to and along the water's edge.

Discussion: Access points to and along the shoreline should be linked by pedestrian and bicycle pathways developed as close as possible to the water's edge without disruption to slopes or in environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY SH-24. Develop, enhance, and maintain right-of-ways and street ends on the shorelines for public access.

POLICY SH-25. Provisions of public access should be consistent with public safety, private property rights, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

Discussion: All public access should be clearly defined and be separated from private property. Where separation is necessary, it may be achieved through use of walls, fences, or landscape planting.

POLICY SH-26. Encourage public access to and along the water's edge for all development excluding individual single-family lots.

POLICY SH-27. Preserve and enhance views of shoreline and water from public areas.

Discussion: Enhancement of views shall not be construed to mean excessive removal of vegetation or disturbance in environmentally sensitive areas.

Recreation

POLICY SH-28. Increase and give high priority to a variety of recreational activities along the shoreline where appropriate and consistent with Environmental Element policies.

Discussion: Recreational activities include public parks, recreational fishing, boating, and public swimming areas. Nonmotorized boating shall be permitted on Larsen and Phantom Lakes.

POLICY SH-29. Encourage opportunities for passive forms of recreation and open space.

Discussion: Passive forms of recreation, for example, include walking, sitting, viewing, and other nonstructured activities with minimal facilities.



Water-related public recreation activities take many forms.

POLICY SH-30. Encourage commercial shoreline uses to incorporate recreational activities into their shoreline area.

POLICY SH-31. Work with other appropriate government agencies and jurisdictions to expand recreational opportunities through acquisition programs, development, and maintenance of shoreline areas.

POLICY SH-32. Lake Washington: Provide regional launch facilities which recognize the boating demand in Bellevue and the carrying capacity of city infrastructure to support the boat launch.

POLICY SH-33. Separate boat launching from swimming areas wherever possible, to prevent accidents and contamination of swimming areas.

POLICY SH-34. Lake Washington: Encourage private marinas to provide public small boat launching facilities.

POLICY SH-35. Provide facilities for launching small nonmotorized boats separate from other launching facilities.

Residential

POLICY SH-36. Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish: Recognize the potential for a mix of uses compatible with the predominantly single-family residential character of the Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish shorelines.

POLICY SH-37. Encourage new subdivisions along shorelines to share private shoreline facilities in common.

Discussion: It is important in a subdivision that piers, swimming areas, and boat moorage are shared to avoid cluttered development along the shorelines and to help protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Commercial Development

POLICY SH-38. Discourage shoreline commercial uses and activities, other than those which are water-dependent, from expanding beyond their existing boundaries.

POLICY SH-39. Limit marina facilities to commercial or industrial areas. Day moorage may be permitted in recreational areas, but not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Discussion: Marina facilities should have the same limitations as other commercial developments. In addition, marinas should: be equipped to handle sewage and wastes from boats; limit gas and oil sales to recreational boats; and be equipped to contain and clean up pollutants associated with boating activity. Shallow embayments with poor flushing action should not be considered for overnight or long-term moorage.

POLICY SH-40. Discourage incompatible commercial uses in the shorelines.

Discussion: Incompatible uses include log boom storage, petroleum or toxic storage tanks, commercial aircraft facilities, and ocean-going commercial ship and barge facilities.



Shoreline policies include regulating new residential construction.

Circulation

POLICY SH-41. Minimize roadways and parking areas in the shoreline areas.

POLICY SH-42. Design roadways near the shoreline for slow traffic, to respond to topography, and to include scenic views.

POLICY SH-43. Design roadways and improvements to existing roadways and parking areas within, or adjacent to, shoreline wetlands to minimize pollution from storm water runoff.

POLICY SH-44. Encourage public transportation to access recreational areas on the shorelines.

POLICY SH-45. Develop pedestrian and bicycle pathways, including provisions for maintenance, operation, and security, in Bellevue's shoreline areas.

Discussion: All pedestrian and bicycle pathways in street right-of-ways are the Transportation Department's responsibility. All pedestrian and bicycle pathways outside of street right-of-ways are Parks Department right-of-ways. Coordination between the two departments should be encouraged.

POLICY SH-46. Inland Shoreline Areas: Circulation within Inland Shoreline Areas should be limited, as much as possible, to bicycles, pedestrians, and small nonmotorized boats.

Shoreline Protective Structures

POLICY SH-47. Limit bulkheads upland of the ordinary highway mark except in the case of an approved landfill.

POLICY SH-48. Encourage the use of vegetation, cobbles, and gravels for stabilizing the water's edge from erosion over the use of bulkheads. Where bulkheads are used, their design should reduce the transmission of wave energy to other properties.

POLICY SH-49. Discourage construction of jetties, groins, breakwaters, or other protective structures unless there is a demonstrated need for such structures.

Discussion: In those limited instances where groins are permitted, a design must not extend beyond the summer water line or be taller than is necessary to protect structures and must be technically and ecologically practical.

Piers and Moorages

POLICY SH-50. Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish: Discourage construction of multiple or expanded piers except where public access is needed.

Discussion: Piers should be used only for pleasure craft, water-dependent recreation, commercial uses, and required emergency vessels on a temporary basis.

POLICY SH-51. Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish: Consider the use of buoys and floating docks for moorage as a preferred alternative to the construction of piers.

Discussion: Buoys and docks should be placed as close to shore as possible to minimize navigation hazards.

POLICY SH-52. Inland Shoreline Areas: Limit piers in the Mercer Slough to minimal construction for ease of pedestrian and small nonmotorized craft access.

Discussion: Only small non-motorized craft such as canoes and rowboats should use these slough facilities.

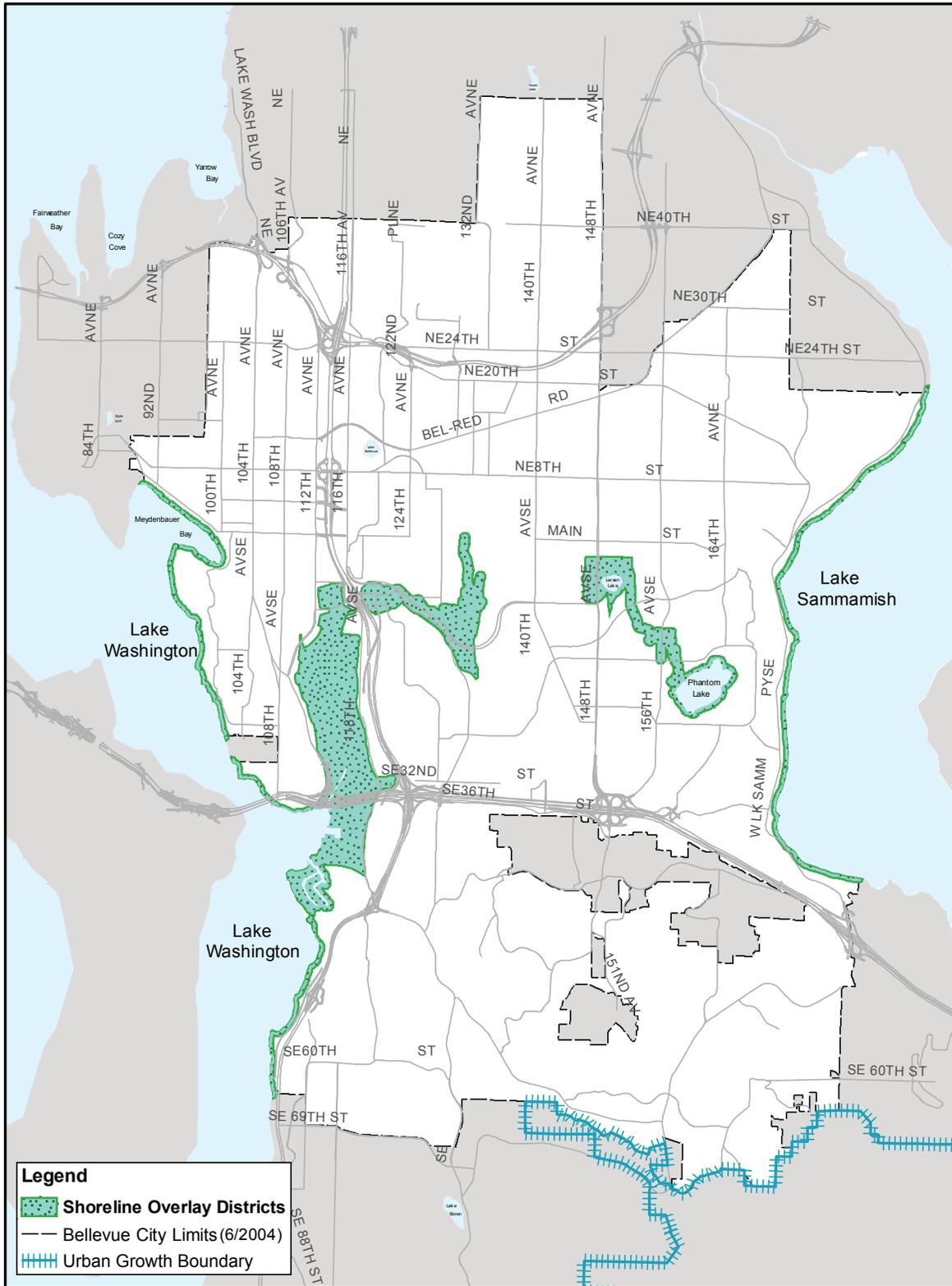


Figure SM.1

Shoreline Management Areas

