



City of Edmonds Media Release

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To: Media

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State Responds on Shoreline Master Program

(Edmonds - WA) The state Department of Ecology has responded by letter to the City Council about proposed changes for updating its Shoreline Master Program. The response agrees with most of the Council's proposed changes but calls for a site-specific assessment to establish marsh buffers prior to any future development in the Harbor Square area.

The City's existing Shoreline Master Program (SMP), adopted in 2000, does not include any part of the Harbor Square area, but the proposed SMP update does. Ecology had required the City to include this change as part of the SMP update. However, as the update was being drafted, controversy arose about the specific width of buffers to be required for the area when development occurs.

Until an updated SMP is approved and adopted, the 2000 shoreline plan applies. Ecology has asked the City to respond by March 30 to its new letter.

The City Council is scheduled to discuss this issue at its January 24 meeting. In Ecology's letter, two options are offered for providing a more site-specific approach and a scientific study for the Urban IV Mixed Use Area, which includes Harbor Square. Agency staff have noted that the City could choose either of these options or some combination that achieves similar results.

The proposed SMP addresses shoreline areas in Edmonds that extend 5.2 miles along the Puget Sound and also adjacent to Lake Ballinger. It uses updated scientific information to set requirements for future shoreline activities. Development in all shoreline areas would be subject to newer regulations, including for shorelines, environment, and stormwater.

A copy of Ecology's letter is attached.

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