Overview

1. What are Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA)?
2. Reasons for ECA update
3. Components of the update
4. Update process
5. Summary of identified issues
What are Environmentally Critical Areas?

• Aquifers
• Landslide-Prone and Steep Slope Areas
• Peat bogs
• Streams
• Small lakes
• Shorelines
• Wetlands
ECA Background

• **1990** – Washington State’s response to rapid growth was the 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA)

• **1992** – GMA-required protection of Environmentally Critical Areas

• **1995** – New requirement to use **Best Available Science** to protect ECAs with “special consideration” for protecting anadromous fish (e.g., salmon)

• **2015** – No new requirements; update ECA regulations for clarity and continued compliance with GMA
Requirements for the 2015 ECA Update

1. Review regulations for compliance with GMA
2. Best Available Science
3. Public participation plan
4. Develop policies and regulations
Process

• Public outreach via website and meetings
• Public Open House
• Summary of identified changes – February 2015
• Proposed policy changes – February 2015
• Proposed regulatory changes – March 2015
• Public input throughout February and March 2015
ECA Mapping

Biodiversity Area and Corridor

- Great Blue Heron Management Area
- Bald Eagle Management Area

2015 WDFW Data
Existing WDFW Data
City of Seattle Park
City Property

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 HARN StatePlane Washington North FIPS 4601 Feet
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Datum: North American 1983 HARN
False Easting: 1,640,416.6667
False Northing: 0.0000
Central Meridian: -120.8333
Standard Parallel 1: 47.5000
Standard Parallel 2: 48.7333
Latitude Of Origin: 47.0000
Units: Foot US
ECA Mapping

- Known Slide Area
- Potential Slide Area
- Steep Slope (40%)
- City of Seattle Park
- City Property

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 HARN StatePlane
Washington North FIPS 4601 Feet
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic

Datum: North American 1983 HARN
False Easting: 1,640,416.6667
False Northing: 0.0000
Central Meridian: -120.8333
Standard Parallel 1: 47.5000
Standard Parallel 2: 48.7333
Latitude Of Origin: 47.0000
Units: Foot US
ECA Mapping
Existing ECA Regulations

Section 25.09 of the Seattle Municipal Code

The current regulations:
1. Define ECAs
2. Establish exempt development (e.g., maintenance and repair)
3. Specify submittal requirements
Existing ECA Regulations

4. Establish specific development standards for each ECA type
5. Outline variance process for development on steep slopes
6. Outline exception process for lots predominantly ECA
Riparian Corridor Regulations

Riparian Corridors (streams, small lakes)

- Limited Development Area
- Type 2-5 Waters without anadromous fish 50 ft. no build area
- Type 2-3 Waters with anadromous fish 75 ft. no build area
- 100 ft. from creek
- Bank
- Watercourse: No building allowed

- Riparian Management Area
Wetland Regulations

Buffer Requirements

**Wetland type**

- Category I and II wetlands with high level of habitat function
- All other Category I and II wetlands
- Category III wetlands with high/mod level of habitat function
- All other Category III wetlands
- Category IV wetlands

**Buffer (feet)**

- 200
- 100 / 110
- 85
- 60
- 50
Standards for Steep Slopes

- **25.09.180** Stabilization of slope
- **25.09.180** Water quality and erosion protection
- **Variance** allows up to 30% disturbance of slope
Priority Species Protection

• Bald Eagle
• Heron
Standard Bald Eagle Management Plan (WAC 232-12-292)

- Within 400’ requires individual plan from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- 400-800’ of eagle nest and/or within 250’ of shoreline and 0.5 mile of eagle nest:
  1. Retain all known perch trees and all conifers ≥ 24” DBH
  2. Retain all cottonwoods ≥ 20” DBH
  3. Retain at least 50% of pre-clearing or pre-construction conifer stand
  4. Windowing and low-limbing of trees acceptable provided no more than 30% of live crown removed
  5. Topping of trees not allowed
Standard Bald Eagle Management Plan
(WAC 232-12-292)

Construction timing

• Within 400-800’ of nest: February 1–April 15
• Within 400’ of nest: February 1–July 15

Site-specific plan – WDFW
The Standard Great Blue Heron Management Plan

Construction timing: February 15 – July 31

Retaining trees: All 22” dbh or larger during nesting season

Building location: As far as possible from colony perimeter

Alternative conditions: WDFW site-specific plan
Low Impact Development Code Changes

- New requirement for municipal stormwater permit from Washington State Department of Ecology
- Review development-related codes and standards to encourage LID and remove unintentional barriers in code
What is Low Impact Development?

• Stormwater and land use management strategies that mimic natural hydrology
• Reduced impervious surface, bioretention, preservation of native vegetation

What changes are proposed?

• Changes to the land use code would encourage LID by:
  • Making it easier to do rain gardens
  • Clarifying that bioretention qualifies as “landscaped open space”
  • Allowing some flexibility for landscaping or setback requirements to accommodate bioretention and GSI
  • Requiring Green Factor for certain institutional lots
Proposed Changes: ECA and LID

- See summary handout of ECA and LID code changes [at sign-in table]
- Visit the project websites:
  - [www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changestocode/lowimpactdevelopment/whatwhy](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changestocode/lowimpactdevelopment/whatwhy)
- Email us:
  - Nick Welch
    [nicolas.welch@seattle.gov](mailto:nicolas.welch@seattle.gov)
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    [maggie.glowacki@seattle.gov](mailto:maggie.glowacki@seattle.gov)