



# SEATTLE'S REGULATIONS WHICH WILL INFLUENCE THE FUTURE

## Land Use and Development Regulations

This Section updates the information presented in Seattle's Land Use Regulations and Stormwater Management Report, July, 1999. That report describes in detail the City's environmental regulations and the protection they provide to salmonids. Highlights of the report are repeated below.

There are four main bodies of environmental regulations: Seattle Shoreline Master Program; Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code; State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); and Environmentally Critical Areas Code. In addition, there are regulations in the Land Use Code (zoning, lot coverage, landscaping) and Building Code (standards for docks and piers) that can work to protect fisheries habitat. Taken together, these regulations give Seattle considerable authority to require developers to identify potential impacts on salmonids or their habitat and to require appropriate mitigation to protect the species. Even though these environmental regulations were implemented many decades after the city was developed, we believe that they have slowed the rate of loss of natural resources and effectively improved conditions in places where development has occurred.

The regulations work in two ways: non-discretionary regulations, also referred to as development standards; and discretionary review with conditioning authority. To do more with our existing non-discretionary regulations we need more research linking biological function and the specific elements of development projects. One goal of the City's large effort to obtain better science is to craft development standards to be more effective in protecting salmon and their habitat. By implementing a program to record mitigation measures and alternative or experimental measures and track their success over time, we will be able to make effective adjustments in the future.

In the interim, before additional protective standards can be adopted, much of Seattle's ability to protect existing function is in its authority for discretionary review of individual projects. Projects undergoing discretionary review can be

required to submit technical studies and to provide mitigation on a case-by-case basis. The policy basis and authority to protect existing function through discretionary review is described on page 104. The types of conditions and mitigating measures that can be applied through discretionary review are highlighted in Table 1. The projects that are subject to this discretionary review are detailed in Table 2. In Table 3, the information is reorganized to list the reviews required at the local, state, and federal level for specific types of projects.

Under Washington State's Growth Management Act, future growth is to be directed to already urbanized areas, rather than continuing the pattern of suburban sprawl that threatened the state's and particularly the Puget Sound region's more pristine environments. As the densest place in the state, Seattle agreed to take even further growth in order to help minimize the growth pressure on undeveloped rural areas. Under GMA the City is required to plan to accommodate the projected 20-year population growth and to demonstrate the City's ability to provide the transportation, utilities and capital facilities necessary to serve that growth.

### Update on Activities Since the Publication of the Regulatory Report

The City has made a number of improvements in the regulatory arena to address the needs of fish and fish habitat over the past four years. First, the City has funded and implemented significant process changes. We've added people with expertise in fisheries and wetlands biology to our pool of permit reviewers, and we've added inspectors and increased the number and scope of inspections in the areas of stormwater control and shoreline management. With project review that is more



focused on fisheries issues and more inspections, we have already achieved more effective enforcement of our existing regulations. Continual improvement in administering and enforcing our current suite of development regulations will lead to even greater effectiveness. This includes greater emphasis on publicizing and training around best management practices on drainage and erosion control plans and vegetation replacement and maintenance plans.

Moreover, the City has adopted new rules and regulations. Certain thresholds triggering review of projects have been lowered, subjecting more projects to permit review and regulations. And, certain development standards have become more stringent. The following is a list of specific code amendments and process changes effected since 1998:

1. We added the following requirements for projects affecting stormwater (Ordinance 119965):
  - flow control to detain the 100-yr storm for large projects draining to creeks,
  - structural source control requirements for all projects proposing pollution-generating activities, and
  - stormwater treatment for large projects.
2. We added the following controls on land disturbing activities (Ordinance 119965):
  - lower thresholds for project review, including a zero threshold for grading within the local drainage basins of the 4 primary creeks within the city, and
  - more stringent erosion and sediment controls, including performance measures for the transport of sediment from the site during construction.
3. We expanded controls on environmentally sensitive areas to include the runout zones of steep slopes, and remapped steep slopes with revised science, field surveys and aerial photography.
4. We amended regulations in the shoreline to expand the prohibition of new houses over water (Ordinance 119453).
5. We amended our authority to assess environmental impacts to ensure substantive authority for review and mitigation of projects affecting listed endangered and threatened species.
6. We created and staffed the Site Development Services Team to address stormwater, drainage, and erosion control issues. We added seven inspectors, one plan reviewer, two geotechnical experts and a team supervisor to that team, a fourfold increase in resources to address these issues.
7. Among its other responsibilities, the Site Development Services team is conducting pre-construction-permit-application site inspections to identify issues that must be addressed during permit review involving topography, soils, slope, vegetation, wetlands, and fisheries nexus. This pre-application site inspection is required of anyone proposing any amount of land disturbing activity. In conducting this pre-application inspection, inspectors are also conducting a fisheries screening, which identifies projects that need to be reviewed by the fisheries biologist (see #8 below and Pre-Application Site Visit form on following pages).
8. We added a fisheries biologist to land use and construction permit review. This biologist has helped to build an appropriate plans routing protocol and is now reviewing all projects that are likely to affect fish or fish habitat. The biologist is also working with resource agencies and others to stay on top of the science as it develops, and assisting with the development of a monitoring and adaptive management program. The fisheries biologist is a member of Seattle's Science Team.
9. We are developing various erosion and sediment control training programs, for staff and the public, including curricula for contractors and homeowners. And we are developing a certification program for sediment and erosion control contractors.
10. We increased the number of Shoreline Inspectors to monitor and enforce the substantive objectives of the Washington State Shoreline Management Act and the Seattle Shoreline Master Program.

### Commitment to Future Actions

The assessment of the regulatory program and subsequent programmatic and code changes are the result of additional policy and code development



City of Seattle  
Department of Design,  
Construction, and Land Use

# PRE-APPLICATION SITE VISIT Field Assessment and Report

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**Project address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**This report lists the application submittal requirements needed to address unusual or complex site conditions; it does not list all of the permit application submittal requirements. If you have questions about this report or the Pre-Application Site Visit process, please contact the DCLU Site Development Team at 206-233-7232.**

**Site Inspector** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

- The plot plan did not include the following existing or proposed elements: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please be sure to include these in your permit application plan set.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL AREAS (ECA):

- No ECA or ECA buffers noted in project site.  
 The project site includes the following ECAs and/or ECA buffers:

<b>ECA mapping unit and type:</b>		
1	Steep slope	4 Wetland
2	Potential slide	5 Liquefaction
3	Riparian corridor	6 Flood prone
		7 Landfill
		8 Known slide
		9 Fish and wildlife

- The project is possibly exempt per ECA Code 25.09.040 **see supplemental sheet. Note: ECA exemptions will be confirmed at permit application intake.**  
 See supplemental sheet for ECA submittal requirements and exemption information.

## EARTH DISTURBANCE (References are to the Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code)

- The field assessment found evidence of previous grading or unstable soils in the project area, specifically: \_\_\_\_\_ Please provide a soils report as detailed in 22.804.040C.2.d.
- Project earth disturbance, specifically \_\_\_\_\_, will be outside the building construction grading limits shown on the plot plan. Please show this, and all other, earth disturbance on the permit application plans.
- The project grading exceeds thresholds noted in 22.804.030; grading review and approval are required. See 22.804.040 and 22.804.050 for development standards and permit application submittal requirements.
- Project excavation or fill may require shoring, adjacent property owner's consent, or slopes steeper than 1h:1v. **Include in the plans detailed cross-section(s) from the bottom of excavation to** \_\_\_\_\_ . If needed, show methods to protect adjacent properties: **or** provide documentation of consent from adjacent property owner (see 22.804.100); **or** provide geotechnical engineer's verification that temporary cut slopes can stand at greater than 1:1 (H:V); **or**, if shoring is required, provide submittals by the geotechnical and structural engineer(s) and show shoring system on the plans.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

- Please show on a site plan all trees on the site that are over 6-inches in diameter (**include common and scientific names for all trees shown on the site plan**).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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## PERMANENT STORMWATER CONTROL

Call Site Drainage and Sewer Information Desk at **684-5362** if you have questions regarding this section.

There is evidence on the project site of surface and/or underground drainage water flowing to or through the site, or significant ground water, specifically \_\_\_\_\_

Due to the proximity of steep slopes and/or other unfavorable geologic conditions, or the evidence of a high water table, infiltration of storm water runoff should not be allowed.

The street adjacent to the site has: Concrete curb [ ] Asphalt curb [ ] Curb height \_\_\_\_\_  
**No curb** [ ] → Visible street pavement width is: Less than 18-feet [ ] Less than 16-feet [ ].

The project will include over 750 square feet of land disturbance.

**Note:** Projects with more than 5000 square feet of new or replaced impervious surfacing, and/or over 1 acre of land disturbance, must provide a Large Project Comprehensive Drainage Control Plan and Construction Erosion Control Plan, prepared by a licensed civil engineer.

## CONSTRUCTION EROSION CONTROL:

**Note:** All projects, regardless of size, must provide erosion control in accordance with the requirements noted in the Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code 22.802.015 and .016. The details noted below refer to details found on the Small Project Construction Stormwater Control Plan, which is available from DCLU's Public Resource Center.

Show the following on the permit application Construction Stormwater Control plan

Place filter fabric fence (Detail E3.10), straw bales (Detail E3.15), straw wattles, or other approved equal to control construction stormwater runoff.

Create construction non-disturbance area (Detail E1.25) or buffer zone (Detail E1.30) to minimize disturbed areas.

Show access to the construction site; show methods to protect the right-of-way from mud and dirt (Detail E2.10).

Place silt-trapping inserts (Detail E3.30) in all receiving catch basins or inlets.

Cover bare soil with straw, mulch, or matting (Details E1.10 and E1.15).

Cover stockpiles and bare slopes (Details E 1.15 and E1.20.)

**Note:** The first DCLU construction inspection will be for construction erosion control. This inspection will occur prior to any earth disturbance other than that which is necessary to place the erosion control measures.

**INSPECTOR'S NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PRE-APPLICATION SITE VISIT  
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Environmentally Critical Areas Supplemental  
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**Sheet**

**Exemptions from the Environmentally Critical Areas ordinance:**

- Mismapping; no ECA or ECA buffers in the project site (see ECA Code 25.09.040 D.1)
- No impact: project will not impact the ECA and ECA buffers (see ECA Code 25.09.040 D.2.)

**Exemption Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Site Team specialist's concurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Modification to Submittal Standards:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Site Team specialist's concurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible exemption from ECA submittal requirements (the standards of the ECA ordinance still apply). The applicability of the exemption from the submittal requirements must be confirmed at permit application intake:**

- Type A: Emergency threatening public health and safety (see ECA Code 25.09.040 A).
- Type B: Maintenance, repair, renovation, or structural alteration of structure existing on October 31, 1992 (see ECA Code 25.09.040 B).
- Type C: New accessory structures and additions with less than 750 square feet of additional impervious surfacing (see ECA Code 25.09.040 C).

**Standard submittal requirements for projects in Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs):**

**(Note: Submittal requirements may be modified by a prior ECA Exemption Decision.)**

**All ECAs:**

- Provide a topographic survey with 2-foot contours stamped by a licensed land surveyor.

**ECA Types 1, 2, and 8 (Geologic Hazard ECAs):**

- Notification to adjacent property owners is required; see ECA Code 25.09.080B.4.

**ECA Types 1, 2, and 8 and ECA Type 5 (Liquefaction-prone ECA):**

- Submit a geotechnical report with the permit intake submittal package.

**ECA Type 1- Steep Slope**

- Delineate the steep slope critical area on a site plan based on the survey (steep slopes are areas that have a 10 foot rise averaging 40 percent or steeper.) Provide area calculations for the steep slope delineation.
- Show the steep slope buffer. Generally, buffer should be 15 feet from slope
- Construction activity area appears to be within the steep slope critical area. An ECA pre-application conference intake is strongly recommended.
- Geotechnical report must address, where appropriate: Protection of development from steep slope rising above project site; the stabilization of the development and slope below the project, including the current code-specified design earthquake event; and/or protection of adjacent property during excavation. Submit recommendations from geotechnical engineer, and structural calculations if shoring is required.



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**Sheet**

**ECA Type 3- Riparian Corridor:**

- Show riparian corridor boundary on plans.
- Site includes a Class A stream – show 50 foot buffer from bank of creek.
- Site includes a Class B stream – show 25 foot buffer from bank of creek.

No construction activity is allowed in Class A or B streams or associated buffers; show on plans a bright orange construction fence at the limit of construction activity. Refer to ECA Code 25.09.140 for full details, including buffer reduction requirements.

**ECA Type 4- Wetland:**

- Site appears to have areas with wetland vegetation and/or seasonal or permanent saturation; the permit application should be routed to a DCLU wetland specialist for further review.

**ECA Type 5- Liquefaction Prone:**

- Site is mapped as liquefaction prone. Geotechnical report required to address liquefaction potential and, if needed, mitigation.

**ECA Type 6- Flood Prone:**

- Site is mapped as being located within 100-year floodplain. Refer to the ECA Code 25.09.120 and the Seattle Floodplain Development Ordinance 25.06 for details. A FEMA Elevation Certificate will be required of the applicant when the structure is completed.

**ECA Type 7- Abandoned Landfill:**

- Site is mapped as being on an abandoned landfill. Report required by a licensed engineer to provide requirements for prevention of damage from methane gas buildup, subsidence, and earthquake induced ground shaking.
- Site is mapped as being within 1,000 feet of a methane-producing landfill. Report required by a licensed Civil Engineer to provide methane barriers or appropriate ventilation to mitigate potential methane gas buildup.

**ECA Type 9- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Area:**

- Site is mapped as being within a fish and wildlife habitat area. The characteristics of the fish and wildlife habitat area will be used to evaluate development within wetlands, riparian corridors, steep slopes and designated habitat areas.

**INSPECTOR'S NOTES**

**(continued):**

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staff. The changes have already increased the cost of development in the city. More residents and businesses are paying for permits, and they are on notice that more changes in the regulations and permitting process are coming.

In 2002-2003, we will continue the staff level of 1999-2001 in order to remain prepared for the changing playing field (i.e., new rules, science, assessments, and actions plans, such as WRIA plans, NMFS' Recovery Plan). These resources are essential to:

- ❑ manage new information, and to review and assess that information and make changes in regulations as necessary.
- ❑ amend regulations, (there will be amendments to the Environmentally Critical Areas Code, the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code, and a comprehensive update to the Seattle Shoreline Master Program. The City is considering the lowering of certain additional thresholds that trigger discretionary review, and we are prepared to ramp up conditioning of those projects.)
- ❑ build partnerships for implementation, e.g., development of a construction stormwater control certification through an education program developed by the Association of General Contractors.
- ❑ uphold our responsibilities to our customers, those being:
  - ◆ Certainty and predictability as to what standards any development will be held
  - ◆ Coordination with state and federal review processes
  - ◆ Consistency in implementing our own process and cross-jurisdictional processes

Seattle has been examining its current ECA policies and regulation to determine what changes need to be made to better protect salmon. The ECA code update will include a public outreach component and the necessary environmental review under the State Environmental Policies Act. This process will be completed by December 2004.

The update of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) will occur after the ECA code update. The State is in the process of adopting new SMP guidelines. After the adoption of new guidelines, according to the State Legislature, Seattle will have until December 2009 to update the SMP. Cur-

rently Seattle is collecting baseline environmental inventory data that will be used to update the SMP.

### Policy Basis and Authority to Protect Existing Function

Under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the City has the authority to condition or deny public or private actions over which the City has permit authority, in order to mitigate or prevent environmental impacts, including impacts to fish and fish habitat. The following language comes from the City's SEPA Ordinance (SMC 25.05.675):

- a. It is the City's policy to minimize or prevent the loss of wildlife habitat and other vegetation which have substantial aesthetic, educational, ecological, and/or economic value. A high priority shall be given to the preservation and protection of special habitat types. Special habitat types include, but are not limited to, wetlands and associated areas (such as upland nesting areas), and spawning, feeding, or nesting sites. A high priority shall also be given to meeting the needs of state and federal threatened, endangered, and sensitive species of both plants and animals.
- b. For projects which are proposed within an identified plant or wildlife habitat or travelway, the decisionmaker shall assess the extent of adverse impacts and the need for mitigation.
- c. When the decisionmaker finds that a proposed project would reduce or damage rare, uncommon, unique or exceptional plant or wildlife habitat, wildlife travelways, or habitat diversity for species (plants or animals) of substantial aesthetic, educational, ecological or economic value, the decisionmaker may condition or deny the project to mitigate its adverse impacts. Such conditioning or denial is permitted whether or not the project meets the criteria of the Overview Policy set forth in SMC Section 25.05.665.
- d. Mitigating measures may include but are not limited to:
  - i. Relocation of the project on the site;
  - ii. Reducing the size or scale of the project;
  - iii. Preservation of specific on-site habitats, such as trees or vegetated areas;
  - iv. Limitations on the uses allowed on the site;
  - v. Limitations on times of operation during



periods significant to the affected species (i.e., spawning season, mating season, etc.);

- vi. Landscaping and/or retention of existing vegetation;

There is further policy guidance in the Shoreline Management Act and the City's current policies and regulations under it. SMC 23.60.002 states "it is the purpose of this chapter to implement the policy and provisions of the Shoreline Management Act and the Shoreline Goals and Policies of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan by regulating development of the shorelines of the City in order to:

1. Protect the ecosystems of the shoreline areas;
2. Encourage water dependent uses;
3. Provide for maximum public use and enjoyment of the shorelines of the City; and
4. Preserve, enhance, and increase views of the water and access to the water.

DCLU is using the authority granted in SMC 23.60.030, Criteria for substantial development permits, to attach conditions to the approval of a permit as necessary to ensure consistency of the proposed development with the Seattle Shoreline Master Program and the Shoreline Management Act. DCLU is drawing from the same set of conditions appropriate under SEPA, except that SMA does not grant the authority to deny a project.



**Table 1.**

**Conditions and Mitigating Measures Applied through Discretionary Review**

Projects and Activities in-water and adjacent to water	Upland Projects and Activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Native vegetation retention and replacement	<input type="checkbox"/> Native vegetation retention
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffers	<input type="checkbox"/> Buffers
<input type="checkbox"/> Revegetation of disturbed or degraded buffers	<input type="checkbox"/> Erosion and sediment control BMPs
<input type="checkbox"/> Erosion and sediment control BMPs	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction window limits
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction window limits	<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater flow control
<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater flow control	<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/water separators
<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/water separators	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent dikes, catch basins, settling ponds, interceptor drains, and planted buffers
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent dikes, catch basins, settling ponds, interceptor drains, and planted buffers	<input type="checkbox"/> Permeable surfacing
<input type="checkbox"/> Permeable surfacing	<input type="checkbox"/> Limit or restrict potentially harmful building materials or substances
<input type="checkbox"/> Limit or restrict potentially harmful building materials or substances	<input type="checkbox"/> Proper disposal of construction materials and wastes
<input type="checkbox"/> Proper disposal of construction materials and wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention and/or detention of storm water
<input type="checkbox"/> Retention and/or detention	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent erosion control fabrics, filter fabric
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent erosion control fabrics, filter fabric	<input type="checkbox"/> Limitations on the times of use operation
<input type="checkbox"/> Limitations on the times of use operation	<input type="checkbox"/> Project denial
<input type="checkbox"/> Transparent Decking including prisms and grating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bio-engineered beach protection	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gravel berms	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drift sills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Beach nourishment, enhancement	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1 slopes on hard beach protection	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish mix	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sediment capping	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restriction on overwater coverage	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restrict fill	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project denial	

Discretionary Review



**Table 2.**

<b>Discretionary Review Thresholds</b>		
<b>Project Location</b>	<b>Discretionary</b>	<b>Non-discretionary</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protective measures</li> <li>● Conditions</li> <li>● Mitigating measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standards</li> <li>● Numeric criteria</li> <li>● Prescriptive measures</li> </ul>
<p>In or over water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pilings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bulkheads</li> </ul>	<p>All projects, including reconstruction or maintenance of groins and similar shoreline protection structures, and replacement of utility cables that must be buried under the surface of the bedlands receive discretionary review, except minor repair or replacement of structures (see next column)</p>	<p>Repair or replacement of piling, ramps, floats, or mooring buoys, or minor repair, alteration, or maintenance of docks.</p> <p>Some bulkhead reconstruction</p>
<p>Upland, within shoreline jurisdiction</p>	<p>Generally, any project greater than \$5,000 receives discretionary review, with exceptions (see next column)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Single family homes, including garage, deck, driveway, utilities, fences, installation of a septic tank and drainfield, and grading which does not exceed two hundred fifty (250) cubic yards and which does not involve placement of fill in any wetland or waterward of the ordinary high water mark (exempted by state law)</li> <li>2) Normal maintenance, repair or replacement of existing structures or developments, including damage by accident, fire or elements, except where repair causes substantial adverse effects to shoreline resources or environment (exempted by state law).</li> <li>3) Construction of the normal protective bulkhead common to single-family residences (that are not constructed wholly or partially on lands covered by water-exempted by state law).</li> <li>4) Emergency construction necessary to protect property from damage by the elements (exempted by state law).</li> <li>5) Demolition of structures, except where the Director determines that such demolition will have a major impact upon the character of the shoreline (exempted by state law)</li> <li>6) Projects less than \$5,000 that also do not trigger SEPA:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Approval of short plats and subdivisions</li> <li>b) Parking lots for fewer than 20 cars</li> <li>c) Landfill or excavation of less than 500 cubic yards</li> <li>d) Granting of variances based on special circumstances, not including economic hardship, applicable to the subject property, such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings</li> </ol> </li> </ol>



**Table 2. (con't.)**

Upland, within riparian corridor	All projects within 100 feet of streams receive discretionary review, with some exceptions (see next column)	Standard: All activity is required to provide a buffer of 50 feet from the top of bank (with exceptions <u>only</u> for reasonable use – a constitutional right). Exceptions (projects not receiving discretionary review, while still having to provide the 50-ft buffer: ( 1) grading (landfill, excavation) of less than 25 cubic yards; (2) single family homes less than 9,000 square feet; (3) repair, remodeling, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing private or public structures, facilities or equipment, including utilities, involving no material expansions or changes in use beyond that previously existing; (4) minor road and street improvements, transportation corridor landscaping and herbicides for weed control; (5) short plats and subdivisions; (6) chemical means to maintain design condition of utilities, public parks or recreation lands
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