

# Memorandum

December 5, 2022

To: Soap Lake City Council

From: Sara Noland and Josh Jensen, Anchor QEA; Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting

Cc: Jeremy Sikes, Washington State Department of Ecology; Christopher Young, Grant County

**Re: Soap Lake Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review:  
Summary of Proposed Revisions**

## Introduction

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) is the foundation for shoreline management in Washington State. The SMA requires each town, city, and county to review, and, if necessary, revise its Shoreline Master Program (SMP) every eight years per Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 90.58.80.

The City of Soap Lake, Grant County, Electric City, and Grand Coulee last updated their SMPs in 2014. Now, in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), these jurisdictions are completing the periodic review process to review and revise their SMPs on or before June 30, 2023. The periodic review addresses recent changes in SMA requirements, changes for consistency with revised comprehensive plans and regulations, and any other changes deemed necessary to reflect changed circumstances, new information, or improved data.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Soap Lake City Council with an early review of updates currently being proposed for inclusion in the SMP. The following text includes a general overview of the SMA and SMP process, followed by a summary of SMP updates currently being proposed. The 2014 SMP and information related to the periodic review process are available online at <https://www.grantcountywa.gov/245/2022---2023-SMP-Periodic-Update>

### *The Shoreline Management Act*

The SMA was ratified by state voters in 1972 and is codified in RCW 90.58. Its overarching purpose is “to prevent harm caused by uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state’s major shorelines.” The SMA applies to all shorelands and “Shorelines of the State” on waterbodies meeting size and flow requirements as defined by the SMA (RCW 90.58.030). The SMA has the following three primary purposes:

1. To protect the shoreline environment
2. To accommodate water-dependent and other appropriate uses in shorelands
3. To maintain and enhance public access to shorelines

The SMA requires all counties and most towns and cities in the state that have shorelines to develop and implement SMPs. SMPs are approved at the local level and by Ecology in an integrated approval process, consistent with the RCW and the SMP guidelines provided in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 127-26.

### *Current SMP Update*

Ecology is responsible for overseeing the SMP periodic review process consistent with the SMA and the applicable WAC administrative guidelines. Ecology must also formally approve the locally approved SMP amendments. Local jurisdictions are responsible for ensuring the SMP complies with local requirements and is consistent with local plans and policies, as well as state law.

Grant County and planning staff from other local jurisdictions have been working with a consultant team (Anchor QEA and White Bluffs Consulting) to prepare changes to the 2014 SMPs for consideration by Ecology, Boards of Commissioners, and City Councils. The current consulting team also supported the 2014 SMP updates. Each jurisdiction will be considering the proposed revisions, holding public hearings and accepting public comments, and adopting the revised SMPs. The revisions will also undergo a Washington State Department of Commerce 60-day review period, during which other state agencies may provide comments.

### **Proposed SMP Updates**

Table 1 summarizes the currently proposed SMP revisions. These recommendations were developed with guidance from Ecology, including the *Shoreline Master Programs Handbook*, revised in December 2017, Ecology's 2021 periodic review checklist and guidance, and the Shoreline Master Program Approval/Amendment Guidelines in WAC 173-26. Input was also provided by local planning staff on areas of the SMP or provisions that could be improved to support effective administration. This table summarizes only substantive revisions; minor editorial or formatting corrections to the SMP are not included.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of Proposed Revisions to City of Soap Lake SMP**

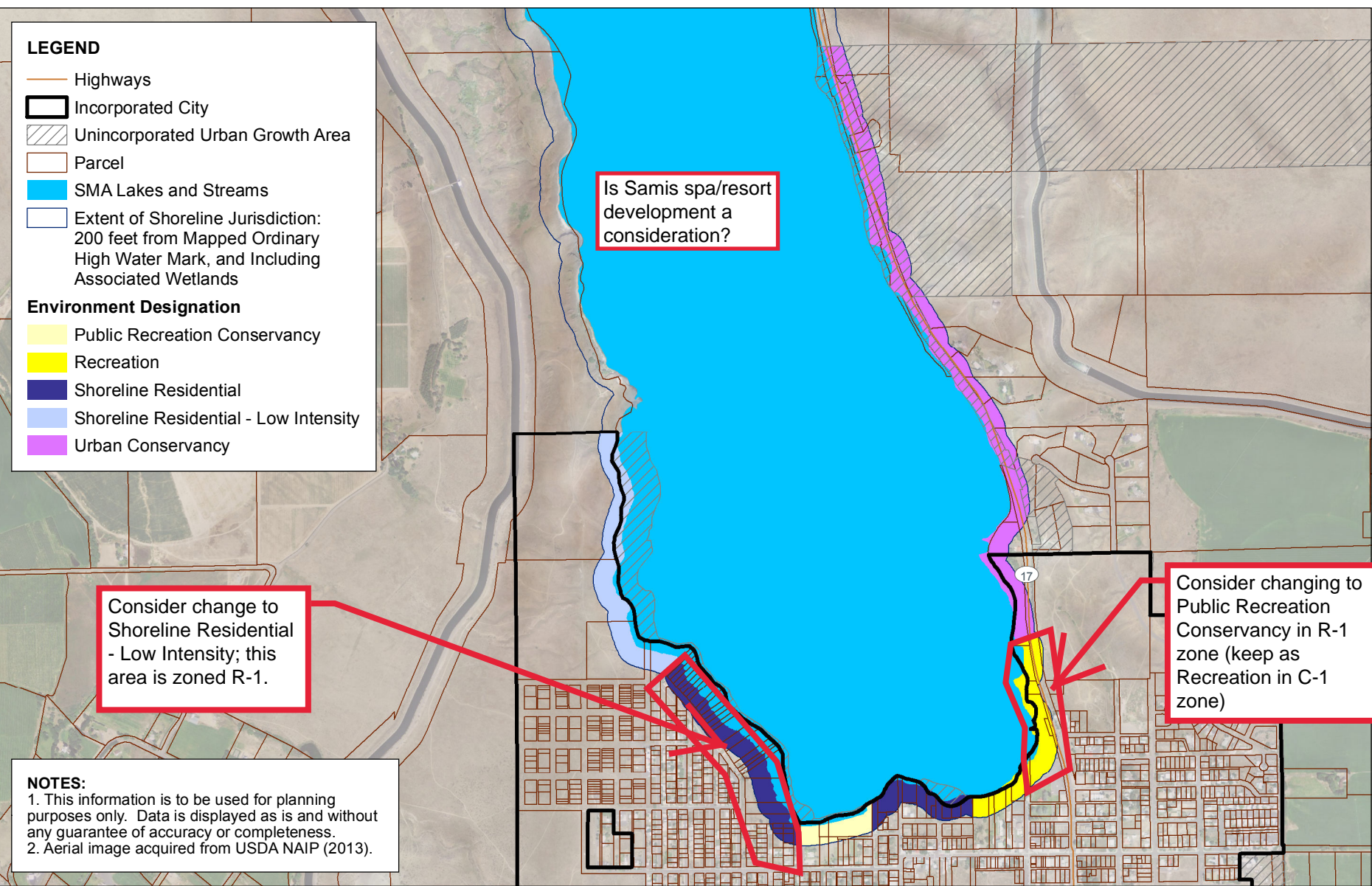
<b>Summary of Change</b>	<b>SMP Section</b>	<b>Source of Change</b>
Update text with current state statutes regarding exemptions for fish passage projects.	14.08.870	Ecology guidance
Update text to include current state cost thresholds and recommended language for freshwater docks.	14.08.870	Ecology guidance
Update text to include current state cost thresholds for substantial development.	14.08.870	Ecology guidance
Clarify that development does not include dismantling or removing structures if there is no other associated development or re-development.	14.08.960	Ecology guidance

Summary of Change	SMP Section	Source of Change
Add text to describe exceptions to review.	14.08.020	Consultant recommendation and Ecology guidance
Consider clarifying that the SMP is intended to regulate development but not shoreline maintenance or other management policies.	14.08.020	Consultant recommendation
Clarify regulations and definition for nonconforming lots.	14.08.720 14.08.960	Consultant recommendation and Ecology guidance
Add an exemption for Americans with Disabilities Act retrofits.	14.08.870	Ecology guidance
Add an exemption for construction or modification of navigational aids such as channel markers and anchor buoys.	14.08.070	Consultant recommendation
Clarify impervious surfaces requirement; Is this a setback in feet that is allowed or a maximum percent of impervious coverage within the 200-ft shoreline area or buffer area? Also, are public trail requirements not mentioned since they have more stringent requirements (same question in 14.08.260(E))?	Table 14.08.210(A)	Consultant recommendation
Update text to require use of 2008 or later U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual – Arid West Regional Supplement (adopted by Ecology in 2011).	14.08.520 14.08.590	Ecology requirement
Consider revisions to City's shoreline environment designation map ( <b>see Attachment 1</b> ).	Shoreline environment map	Consultant recommendation

## Attachment 1

# Shoreline Environment Designation and Zoning Maps

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