

Attachment D - Critical Areas – General Provisions

20.80.010 Purpose.

A. The purpose of this chapter is to establish supplemental standards for the protection of critical areas, as defined in SMC 20.20.014, in compliance with the provisions of the Washington Growth Management Act of 1990 (Chapter 36.70A RCW) and consistent with the goals and policies of the Shoreline Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the procedures of Chapter 20.30 SMC. The standards of this chapter, as incorporated into the Shoreline Master Program, in SMC ~~20.230.030(A) General Regulations (1)~~20.240, shall apply within the shoreline jurisdiction, where critical areas are present. If there are any conflicts or unclear distinctions between the Master Program and the City's critical areas regulations, the most restrictive requirements apply as determined by the City.

B. By identifying and regulating development and alterations to critical areas and their buffers, it is the intent of this chapter to:

1. Protect the public from injury, loss of life, property damage or financial losses due to flooding, erosion, landslide, seismic events, or soils subsidence;
2. Protect unique, fragile and valuable elements of the environment;
3. Reduce cumulative adverse environmental impacts to water quality, wetlands, streams, and other aquatic resources, fish and wildlife habitat, landslide hazards, and other geologically unstable features and protect the functions and values of critical areas from overall net loss;
4. Ensure the long-term protection of ground and surface water quality;
5. Alert members of the public, including appraisers, assessors, owners, potential buyers, or lessees, to the development limitations of critical areas and their required buffers;
6. Serve as a basis for exercise of the City's substantive authority under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the City's Environmental Procedures (Chapter 20.30 SMC, Subchapter 8); and comply with the requirements of the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) and its implementing rules;
7. Establish standards and procedures that are intended to protect critical areas while accommodating the rights of property owners to use their property in a reasonable manner; and
8. Provide for the management of critical areas to maintain their functions and values and to restore degraded ecosystems.

C. This chapter is to be administered with flexibility and attention to site-specific characteristics. It is not the intent of this chapter to make a parcel of property unusable by denying its owner reasonable economic use of the property or to prevent the provision of public facilities and services necessary to support existing development and planned for by the community without decreasing current service levels below minimum standards.