



Critical Areas Ordinance Update

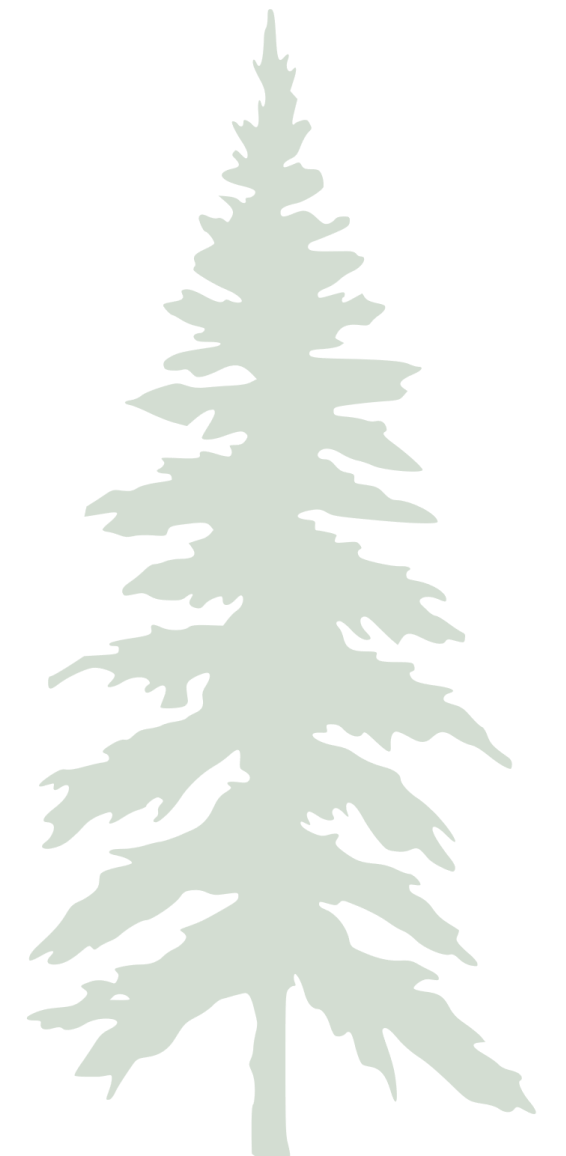
Presented by: **Robin Bolster-Grant, Land Use Division Manager**
Lisa Spadoni, Natural Resources Program Supervisor



Presentation Outline



- Background
- Review of Draft Changes
- Public Comments
- Tribal and State Agency Comments
- Updated Public Engagement Efforts
- Revised Schedule



Overview of Changes



- Periodic update required by state law (RCW 36.70A.130)
- Goal: Ensure consistency with Best Available Science (BAS) and state guidance
- Consultant team retained to assist with technical review
 - Best Available Science review
 - Gap Analysis
 - Draft Code



Public Engagement



- Media: website, social media posts, City news release, listserv
- Early notification to community partners and interested parties
- Tribal engagement initiated
- Agency meetings
- Briefing of Tacoma Permit Advisory Group (TPAG)
- Presentation to Climate and Sustainability Commission
- Public information meeting
- Planning Commission Public Hearing

Public Comments



- Total comments: 28
- Written comments: 14
- In-person speakers: 4
 - General support for environmental protections
 - Concerns with various provisions being insufficient or too restrictive
 - Not enough time for review / participation



Public Comment Themes



- Insufficient protections**
 - Buffer averaging, reductions, exemptions, lack of salmon specific regulations
 - Allows filling small wetlands
 - Riparian buffers too narrow
 - Performance standards for mitigation needed
 - Biodiversity Areas definition too narrow
- Overly restrictive**
 - Buffer expansions & increased mitigation ratios
 - Creates a 10-foot building setback
 - Removes Public Interest Test
 - No flexibility for OWO, larger sizes should be used
- Creates conflicts**
 - Expanding the CARA and potential conflict with the Tideflats Subarea Plan
- More engagement needed**
 - More engagement with community partners
 - More general public information and engagement
 - More technical review
- Mapping**
 - Where do maps come from? Can they be more informative?



Tribe and Agency Comments



- Puyallup Tribe Comments
 - Similar to public comments regarding insufficient protections
- Agency Comments
 - Department of Ecology
 - Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - Department of Natural Resources



Additional Public Engagement



- Puyallup Tribe of Indians: September 17, 2025
- Tacoma Permit Advisory Group: September 17, 2025
- Community Informational Meetings
 - Eastside Tacoma Community Leaders: September 22, 2025
 - Tacoma Nature Center: October/November
- Direct partner engagement with:
 - Parks Tacoma
 - Port of Tacoma
 - Interested Environmental Partners
 - Master Builders of Pierce County



Revised Schedule (Tentative)



Action	Date
Public Information Session	September 22
Planning Commission Debrief (continued)	October 15
Public Information Session	Late October – Early November
Planning Commission: additional comments and code revisions	November 19
Planning Commission recommendation	December 17
City Council Public Hearing	January 2026
City Council First Read	February 2026
City Council Final Read & Adoption	March 2026





THANK YOU