City of MEDINA WASHINGTON

Critical Areas Ordinance Update

Medina Planning Commission
October 28, 2025

Doug Yormick & Dan Nickel

Agenda

Critical Areas Ordinance Update

- Overview of October 14th PC Meeting
  - Nonconforming and Reasonable Use
  - Key Area for Consideration
    - Wetlands, Streams
- Additional Edits
- Schedule

Nonconforming

Purpose

- Structures, uses, or developments that no longer meet current code standards
- Allows for flexibility
- City discretion (to a point)

Standards

- Existing nonconforming structures may be maintained, repaired, and expanded
- Vertical expansion and additions are allowed within existing improved areas
- Damaged or destroyed structures may be rebuilt in kind

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Reasonable Use Exception (RUE)

Purpose

- Provides relief when strict application of code denies all reasonable use of property
- Ensures minimum necessary impact to critical areas
- Balances property rights with environmental protection

Standards

- Proposed use must be the least impactful feasible alternative
- Not caused by applicants own actions
- Result in “no net loss”
- Comply with other development regulations

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Nonconforming Demonstration

Hold slide for KM content

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Wetland Buffers – Proposed

Proposed Update

- Adjust habitat score groupings to three rankings: 3-5, 6-7, 8-9
- Ecology provided three BAS based buffer options
- Buffer modification options:
    - Strike reduction with enhancement
    - Retain buffer averaging
- Establish clear criteria for the two-tier buffer approach
    - Narrower (Reduced) buffer must meet certain criteria
    - Wider (Standard) buffer applies when that criteria is not met

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Wetland Buffer Update – Current Code

Current wetland buffers apply habitat scores broken down into four value ranges: 3-4, 5, 6-7, 8-9.

Wetland Rating	Habitat Score and Buffer Width							
	Standard	Reduced	Standard	Reduced	Standard	Reduced	Standard	Reduced
	3-4		5		6-7		8-9	
Category I	100	75	140	105	220	165	300	225
Category II	100	75	140	105	220	165	300	225
Category III	80	60	140	105	220	165	N/A	N/A
Category IV	50	37.5	N/A					

Note: Current code allows buffer averaging and buffer reduction by 25% with enhancement.

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Wetland Buffer Update – Option 1

Recommended 2022 Ecology Wetland Buffer Option 1.

Wetland Rating	Habitat Score and Buffer Width							
	Standard	Mitigated	Standard	Mitigated	Standard	Mitigated	Standard	Mitigated
	3-5		5		6-7		8-9	
Category I	100	75	Habitat score of 5 is now grouped with Low (3-4)		150	110	300	225
Category II	100	75			150	110	300	225
Category III	80	60			150	110	N/A	N/A
Category IV	40	40	N/A					

Habitat scores are grouped into 3 value ranges, Low, Medium and High.

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Streams / Riparian Areas – GIS Analysis

Stream Type	Existing CAO (ft)	SPTH (ft)	Proposed Option (ft)
Type 1	100	100-231	150
Type 2	75	100-231	100
Type 3	50	100-231	100

Results	Existing CAO	SPTH	Proposed Option
Affected Parcels	77	109	90
Fully Encumbered (80-90%)	20	53	39

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Stream Regulations

Stream Type	Current buffer (ft)	Recommended Standard buffer (ft)	Recommended Increased buffer (ft)
Type 1	100	150	200
Type 2	75	100	133
Type 3	50	100	133

Recommended Buffers

Requirements for standard buffer widths:

- Native vegetation standards
- Planting plan if above is not met

Buffer modification options

- Buffer averaging retained, maximum reduction at any point is 25% of buffer assigned
- Buffer reduction removed, not supported by BAS
- Interrupted buffer standard

Note: WDFW is supportive of the recommended buffer approach

Clyde Hill buffer approach is 125’ for Stream 2 and 100 for all other streams

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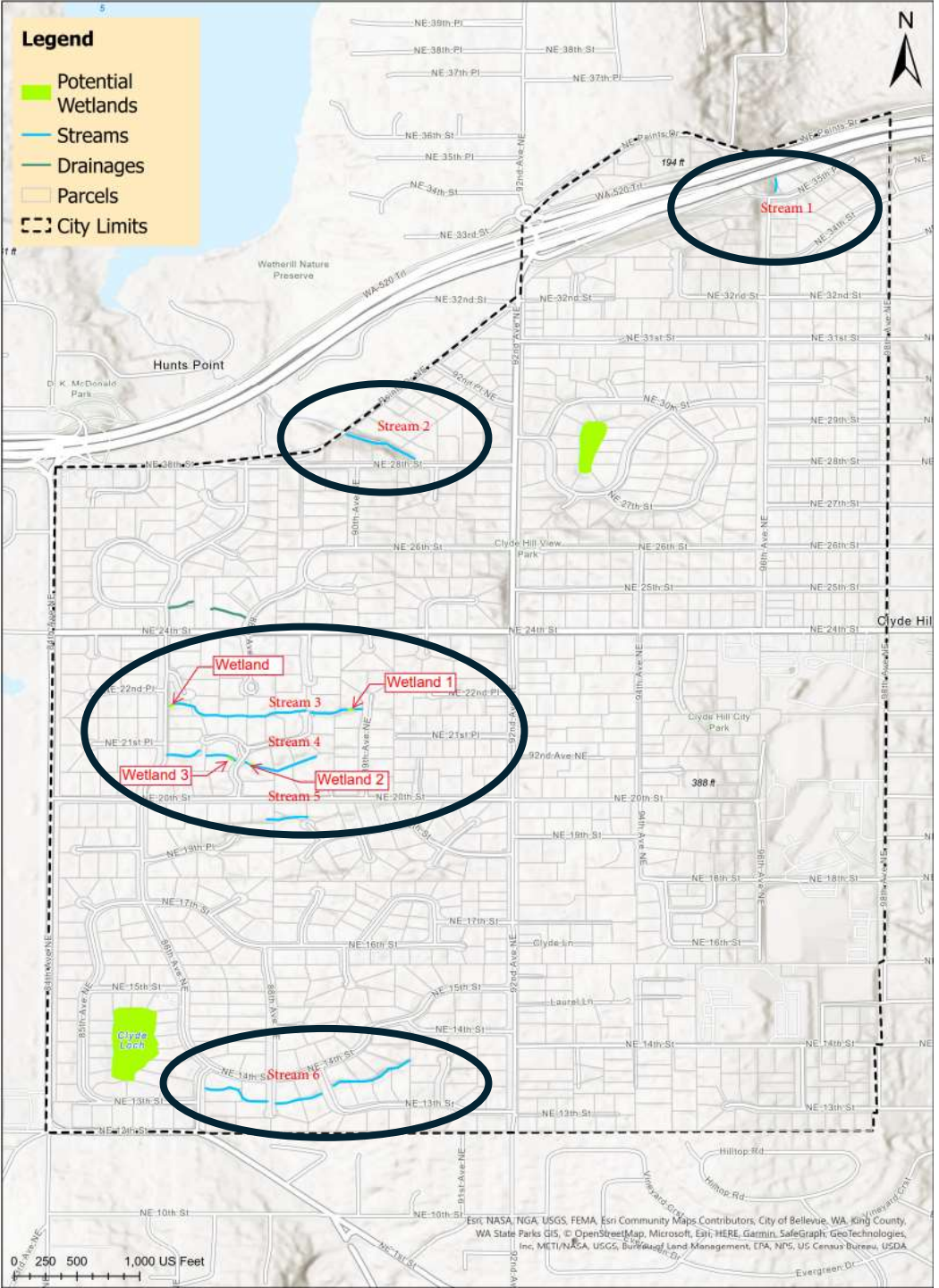

Clyde Hill Stream Buffer Approach

- **Stream Analysis:** No detailed study; buffers based on Comp Plan maps
- **Buffer Adjustments:** Increased from 75' to 100' per WDFW input; Stream 2 set at 125' for higher riparian value
- **Stream Typing:** No Type F streams likely; explains lack of WDFW comment on Stream 2
- **Future Work:** Post-CAO analysis planned, focused mainly on wetlands

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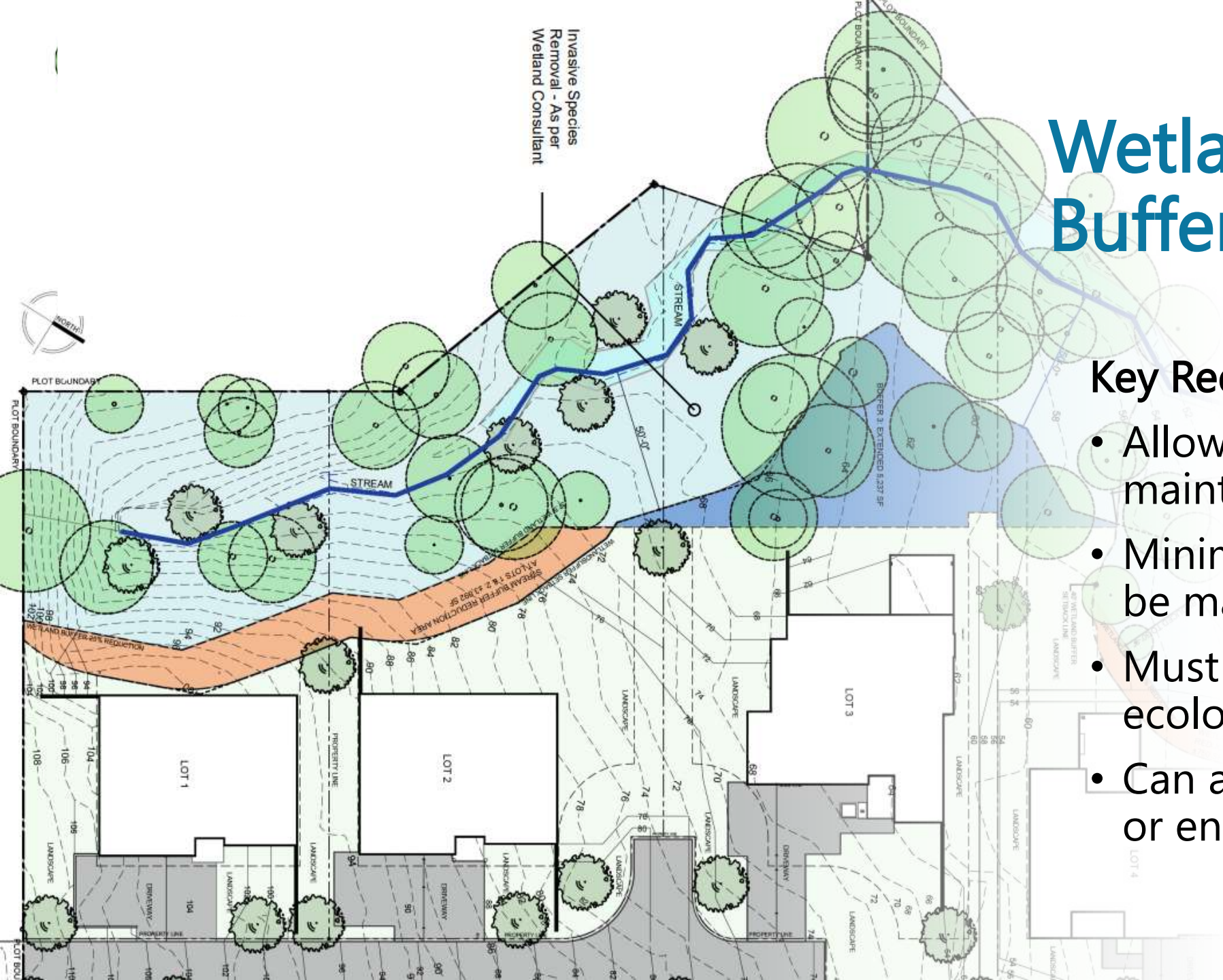
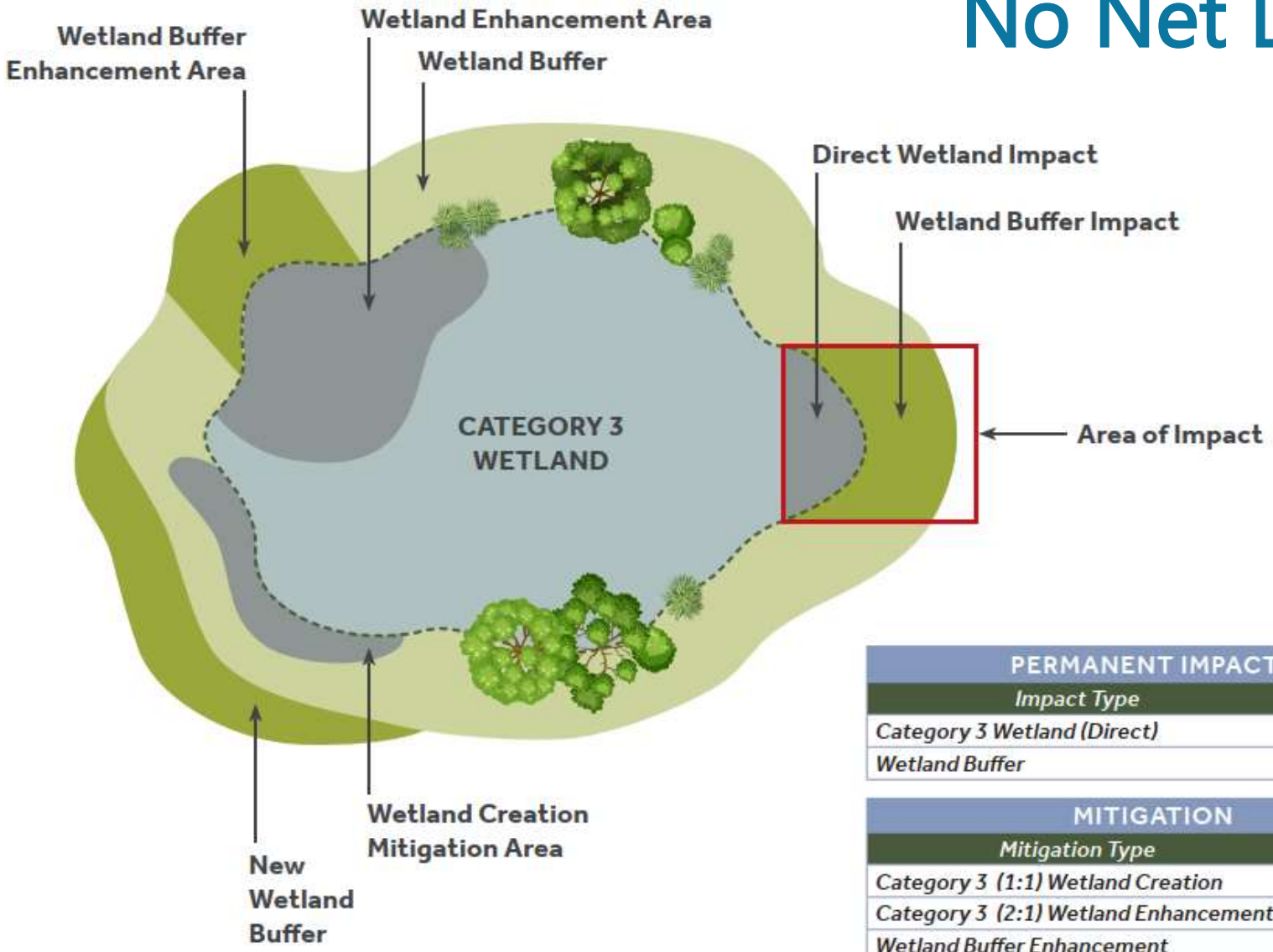


Wetland/Stream Buffer Averaging

Key Requirements

- Allows flexibility while maintaining total buffer area
- Minimum buffer width must be maintained
- Must provide equal or better ecological protection
- Can address site constraints or enhance function

No Net Loss Demonstration



PERMANENT IMPACTS	
Impact Type	*Sq. ft.*
Category 3 Wetland (Direct)	200
Wetland Buffer	600

MITIGATION	
Mitigation Type	*Sq. ft.*
Category 3 (1:1) Wetland Creation	200
Category 3 (2:1) Wetland Enhancement	400
Wetland Buffer Enhancement	600

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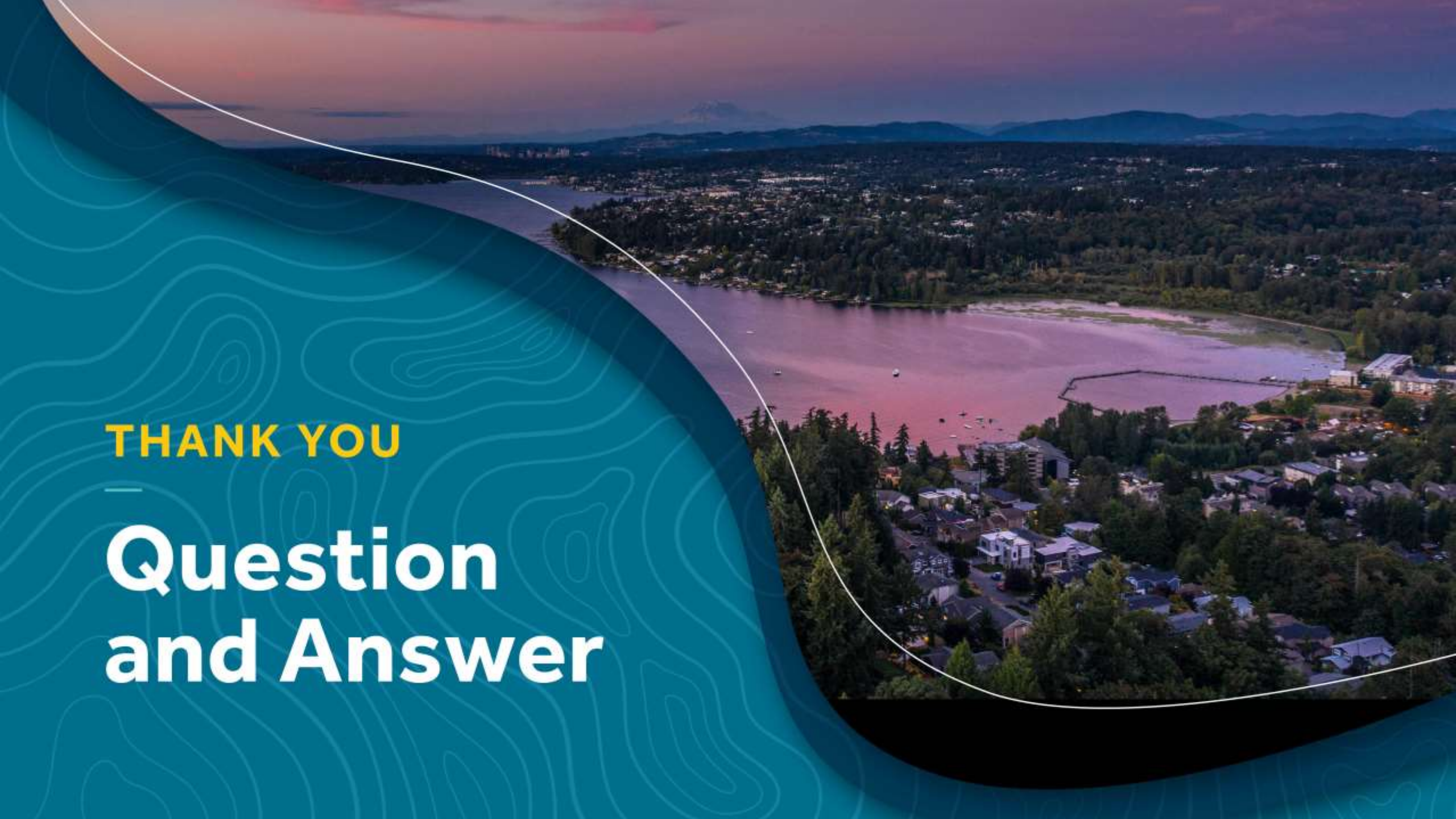
CAO Update Timeline



THANK YOU

Question and Answer