



Community Development Department

Emily Arteche, Community Development Director

38624 SE River St. | P.O. Box 987

Snoqualmie, Washington 98065

(425) 888-5337 | awragge@snoqualmiewa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Emily Arteche, Community Development Director
Date: July 15, 2024
Subject: Critical Areas Update Introduction

Introduction:

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to update their critical area ordinance or before December 31, 2024. Counties and cities have an additional 1-year extension, beyond the periodic update deadline, to complete the review and update of the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO Update) pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130(7)(b). All critical areas must be designated, and functions and values protected using the best available scientific, (BAS) information.

The City's updated regulations should consider increased conservation and protection measures that may be necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries which are intended to preserve the natural environment, maintain fish and wildlife habitat, and protect drinking water.

In addition to updated critical area regulations the City will also update related flood hazard regulation in Chapter 15.12.

Background:

The City of Snoqualmie critical area codes are regulated by [SMC 19.12](#) and last updated by Ordinance 1176 in 2016. The Planning Commission recently completed draft Environmental Goals and Policies in March 2024, which included recommended policies for the use of Best Available Science, the protection of anadromous fisheries, the restoration and maintenance of riparian management zones and their buffers, and for the protection of the City's environmental critical areas.

Along with the update the City will also including updates to related flood hazard regulation in Chapter 15.12. Department of Commerce provided a Critical Area Handbook; a complete guidance document for updating the regulations. This [2023 publication](#), addresses the following: Wetlands rating system, Voluntary Stewardship Program, agricultural activities, FEMA Biological

Opinion, availability of LiDAR, monitoring and adaptive management, a salmon recovery roadmap, and other issues.

Analysis:

A draft ordinance and draft code amendment will be prepared for Planning Commission review at a subsequent meeting, along with public outreach/public hearing. Updates to Snoqualmie Municipal Code will also include updates to the City's Flood Hazard Regulations, [SMC 15.12](#). Statutory requirements for the updates are defined in RCW 36.70A.030(5) and through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which includes five types of critical areas:

1. Wetlands.
2. Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water.
3. Frequently flooded areas.
4. Geologically hazardous areas.
5. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

Next Steps

An introduction to updating the City of Snoqualmie critical areas ordinance will be presented to the Commission by the City's Consulting Senior Scientist, Jeff Gray. Otak. After the presentation time will be allocated for questions and answers.