



**TO:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
**FROM:** Stephen Atkinson, Associate Planner, Planning and Development Services  
Peter Huffman, Interim Director, Planning and Development Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution – Response to the Department of Ecology’s Conditional Approval of the Tacoma Shoreline Master Program – September 17, 2013  
**DATE:** September 11, 2013

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**SUMMARY:**

Response to the Department of Ecology’s Conditional Approval of the Tacoma Shoreline Master Program to include an alternative intent statement for the S-6/7 Schuster Parkway Transition District and to accept the remainder of Ecology’s conditions as provided in the conditional approval.

**COUNCIL SPONSORS:**

Mayor Strickland, Councilmember Mello and Councilmember Boe.

**BACKGROUND:**

Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a conditional approval of the City of Tacoma’s locally-adopted Shoreline Master Program (SMP) on August 19, 2013. According to the Washington Administrative Code, the City has 30-days to respond to Ecology’s decision and can either accept Ecology’s conditions or propose alternatives.

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requires that local Master Programs be updated to meet three basic policies: a) give priority to uses that require a shoreline location; b) promote public access and enjoyment opportunities; and c) protect the environmental resources of state shorelines. The Department of Ecology guidelines which are codified in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 173-26) are to be used and followed by local jurisdictions in the comprehensive update. The guidelines include substantive, procedural, and process requirements. The SMA was amended to establish a timeline for local jurisdictions to adopt an updated Master Program consistent with the guidelines. The deadline for Tacoma was December 1, 2011.

The City of Tacoma initiated the update of the Master Program in 2007 and completed local-adoption ahead of the required deadline. The Master Program was subsequently submitted to Ecology for state review and approval. On August 19, 2013 Ecology issued a conditional approval and the City has 30 days from the date of issuance to respond to Ecology by either 1) accepting Ecology’s conditions, or 2) proposing alternatives to Ecology’s conditions. The City Council reviewed Ecology’s conditional approval at a study session on August 27, 2013 and City staff held a public informational meeting on September 5. At a study session on September 10, the Council gave staff direction to propose an alternative, by resolution, for Council consideration on September 17, in order to provide a timely response to Ecology by the September 18 deadline.

**ISSUE:**

The Department of Ecology’s conditional approval includes required and recommended changes. The required changes must be approved by the City of Tacoma for the Master Program to take effect. The required changes include several limited amendments to use allowances and development standards for aquaculture, amendments to specific definitions to bring them into alignment with the Washington



Administrative Code, and amendments to the S-9 Puyallup River Shoreline District and the S-6/7 Schuster Parkway Transition Shoreline District.

The Master Program adopted by the City Council and submitted to the Department of Ecology included an area-wide re-designation and re-zone of the existing S-7 Schuster Parkway Shoreline District that created an S-6/7 Schuster Parkway Transition District between the S-6 Ruston Way District and the S-7 Schuster Parkway District. The S-6/7 Transition District was designated an Urban-Conservancy environment and prohibited new layberth uses and activities.

Ecology's decision requires that the City allow layberth uses and activities through a conditional use permit process and requires amendments to the intent statement for the S-6/7 Transition District to reflect this change.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The City of Tacoma has two primary options at this stage of the process: 1) to accept Ecology's conditions as proposed or, 2) to propose alternatives to Ecology's conditions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

At the study session on September 10, Council's general direction was to consider a resolution including an alternative intent statement for the S-6/7 Transition District and to accept the remainder of Ecology's conditions as provided in the conditional approval. The alternative intent statement will add clarity to the long term vision for the S-6/7 Shoreline District and provide further direction for evaluating future permits in the district.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact.