

2014/2015 Development Code Update: Process

A major update of the Edmonds Community Development Code is underway. This reflects the City Council's allocation of funding for a major code update, along with funding to update certain special code topics. (Note: The update's *scope* is outlined in a short report entitled "2014/2015 Development Code Update: Scope.")

Brief History

The Development Code has been revised many times over the years. Currently, it needs significant work to fill gaps, clarify procedures, bring policies in line with newer direction (e.g., regarding stormwater management), and otherwise be more consistent, clear, and reasonably easy to use.

In 2013 and 2014, the City Council appropriated funding to assist with certain special topics, as well as a more comprehensive and integrated code update. Steps in this process included:

- Compilation by city staff of numerous code conflicts and confusing language
- Development of regulations as part of a new Shoreline Master Program
- Identification by a third-party attorney of legal issues and options related to various existing code provisions
- City Council discussion of development code issues at public meetings, including the following (and probably other) dates: 11/26/13, 4/22/14, 11/10/14, 12/2/14
- Planning Board discussion of development code issues at public meetings, including the following (and probably other) dates: 4/22/14, 7/9/14, 8/13/14, 8/27/14
- Hiring of consultant to assist Tree Board on options for a tree code update
- Research and preparation of concepts for updating tree code regulations
- Hiring of consultant to assist with reviewing best available science and critical area regulations
- Research and preparation of concepts for updating critical area regulations
- Adoption of minor code changes to clarify requirements for legal lots, animals, etc.
- Hiring of consultant firm to assist with the major development code update
- Consultant's review of existing development code, conversation with staff and key parties to learn about code concerns, and related research
- Public meetings of Tree Board, resulting in a recommendation for a new draft tree code for consideration

2015 Status

- Proposed Shoreline Master Program (with updated shoreline regulations)—under consideration by the state Department of Ecology
- Draft update to critical area regulations being developed
- Draft tree code being reviewed by Planning Board
- Public open house being held March 11 on development code update—with public input welcome
- Gap analysis of development code being prepared
- Development code issues, priorities, and timeline being sorted out

Key Next Steps

For 'Special Topic' Code Updates

- Final version of Shoreline Master Program (with any changes after Department of Ecology review) to be adopted and published—circa late spring, 2015
- Continuing review and consideration of draft tree code by Planning Board—now through spring, 2015
- Public hearing and recommendation by Planning Board on draft tree code update—late spring, 2015
- Public hearing and potential action by City Council on Planning Board's recommendation for draft tree code—summer, 2015
- Draft update of critical area regulations to Planning Board for consideration—spring, 2015
- Public hearing and recommendation on critical area regulations by Planning Board—late spring, 2015
- Public hearing and potential action by City Council on Planning Board's recommendation for draft critical area regulations update—early summer, 2015

For Major Development Code Update

- Issuance of “gap analysis” report for major code update (expected by mid-March, 2015)
- Development of timeline for addressing priority development code issues (by summer, 2015)
- Organization of major development code update and key issues to address—spring, 2015
- Drafting of development code update—summer through November 2015
- Identification of issues that need to be addressed in the next code update phase—fall, 2015
- Public input opportunities—through November 2015 and later, as appropriate
- Consideration and possible adoption of major code update—late 2015 (schedule still being developed)

Public Involvement Opportunities

Members of the public can provide input or ask questions at an open house (March 11 or another one in the fall). They can also learn more or comment at a public meeting of the Planning Board or City Council or by contacting Development Services staff. Information will be posted on the City's webpage from time to time: www.edmondswa.gov. Information will be included at Planning Board and City Council meetings, as well as occasionally at the meetings of other city boards and commissions. (Agendas are posted online in advance; minutes are posted after.) At least two public hearings will be noticed and held in late fall, 2015, when a draft code update is prepared.

Adoption Process for Proposed Development Code Updates

- Planning Board reviews proposed code update and may request changes
- Planning Board holds public hearing on draft code update, considers comments and other information, and makes recommendation to City Council
- City Council reviews Planning Board recommendation and other information
- City Council holds public hearing on proposed code update, considers comments and other information, and makes a decision on adoption (whether to adopt, adopt with changes, or take some other action)