



City of Edmonds Media Release

Office of the Mayor ~ 121 5th Ave N, Edmonds, WA 98020

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To: Media

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AFTER LENGTHY REVIEW AND DEBATE - CITY COUNCIL APPROVES CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE

Mayor Earling Concurs with Updated Version

(Edmonds, WA) - The City's updated critical area regulations, adopted by the City Council at a May 3 public meeting, will not be vetoed by Mayor Dave Earling.

"I've thought about this carefully," said Earling. "To me, it seemed some amendments made to the code were getting away from best available science and at the same time making it hard for owners to make any improvements to their properties without going through long or expensive processes. "

He noted that the current version is better than the one he vetoed earlier this year. "The latest update strengthens how we deal with sea level rise," said Mayor Dave Earling. "It also is better at taking into account local conditions that affect property owners so they can protect or enhance the environment and still use their properties in a reasonable way."

"Critical areas" include wetlands, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, fish and wildlife habitat areas, and aquifer recharge areas. They are required to be protected under state law.

Adoption of the critical area code update was preceded by five meetings of the Planning Board and 13 meetings of the City Council. Earlier this year, the City Council adopted a version of the critical area code that prompted a veto by the Mayor.

Since then, the City Council held another public hearing, invited more public input, and continued discussing potential amendments to the draft critical area regulations.

The Council's May 3 meeting included proposals for several more amendments. In the end, the approved amendments changed some language without changing the basic policies of the draft update.

Said Mayor Earling, "I'm pleased with the positive decision ultimately made by the City Council and the outstanding work by staff to get this update done."

He stated that it was important for the City to focus on best available science and recognize the role of the state Department of Ecology in providing scientific guidance.

At least every eight years, the critical area regulations must be reviewed and updated as necessary.

A map showing general locations of critical areas in Edmonds can be found on the City's website at: www.maps.edmondswa.gov. The map is meant to be informational and not regulatory. For more information, contact the Development Services Department at 425.771.0220 or by emailing planning@edmondswa.gov

While the critical area code update is complete for now, the City Council will consider more specific environmental issues later this summer as part of finalizing an update to the Edmonds Shoreline Master Program.

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