

**SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS
CITY OF BLAINE SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM UPDATE**

UPDATED APRIL 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance in relation to this project: Members of the Blaine Planning Commission and City Council, Blaine City staff, and Barry Wenger from the Department of Ecology.

This project was funded in part by the Washington Department of Ecology with a Coastal Zone Management grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric



Administration.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.

**BLAINE SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM
SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION2

2.0 OFFICIAL SHORELINE ENVIRONMENTS DESIGNATION MAP2

3.0 SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS2

3.1 Aquatic3

 Purpose3

 Designation Criteria3

 Management Policies3

 Reaches Designated Aquatic3

3.2 Natural3

 Purpose3

 Designation Criteria4

 Management Policies4

 Reaches Designated Natural5

3.3 High Intensity5

 Purpose5

 Designation Criteria6

 Management Policies6

 Areas Designated High Intensity6

3.4 Urban Conservancy7

 Purpose7

 Designation Criteria7

 Management Policies7

 Reaches Designated Urban Conservancy8

3.5 Shoreline Residential8

 Purpose8

 Designation Criteria8

 Management Policies9

 Reaches Designated Shoreline Residential9

4.0 SUMMARY OF SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS 10

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Blaine system for classifying and designating the various areas within the jurisdiction of the Blaine Shoreline Management Master Program consists of six shoreline environment designations. These environment designations are consistent with, and implement, the Shoreline Management Act (90.58 RCW), the Shoreline Master Program Guidelines (173-26 WAC), and the City of Blaine Comprehensive Plan. Environment designations are ‘overlay’ zoning for shorelines of the state and are intended to be consistent with current zoning districts established on the City of Blaine Official Zoning Map. The Special Management Unit designation is developed to correspond with and integrate the City’s two master planned water-oriented land area; Semiahmoo Spit and the Blaine Wharf District.

Preferred uses have been provided in the Shoreline Inventory and Analysis and the Shoreline Master Program Regulations for each environment designation. Designation criteria and management policies have been developed for each environment designation based on the Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. The application of these criteria is based on shoreline location, current uses, future development plans, surrounding land uses, ecological functions provided by the shoreline area, and the potential for ecological restoration. The designations are also consistent with policies for assuring the protection of existing shoreline ecological functions. The five shoreline environment designations for the City of Blaine are:

1. Aquatic
2. Natural
3. High-Intensity
4. Urban Conservancy
5. Shoreline Residential
6. Special Management Unit

2.0 OFFICIAL SHORELINE ENVIRONMENTS DESIGNATION MAP

The Map entitled “City of Blaine Shoreline Jurisdiction and Environment Designations” shows the areas within the jurisdiction of the Blaine Shoreline Master Program, and the proposed location and extent of the five different environment designations. See attached Map for the location of shoreline environments in the City of Blaine and the Blaine urban growth area.

3.0 SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS

3.1 AQUATIC

Purpose

To protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high watermark. The Aquatic designation is intended to promote wise use of the natural features and resources of these shorelines of the state that are substantially different from those of the adjoining uplands.

Designation Criteria

Assign an “aquatic” environment designation to lands waterward of the ordinary high-water mark as specified in WAC 173-18. Aquatic designations may also be assigned to wetlands within shoreline jurisdiction.

Management Policies

- A. Allow new over-water structures only for water-dependent uses, public access, or ecological restoration.
- B. The size of new over-water structures should be limited to the minimum necessary to support the structure’s intended use.
- C. In order to reduce the impacts of shoreline development and increase effective use of water resources, multiple use of over-water facilities should be encouraged.
- D. All developments and uses on navigable waters or their beds should be located and designed to minimize interference with surface navigation, to consider impacts to public views, and to allow for the safe, unobstructed passage of fish and wildlife, particularly those species dependent on migration.
- E. Uses that have the potential to adversely impact the ecological functions of critical marine, nearshore or freshwater habitats should not be allowed except where necessary to achieve the objectives of RCW 90.58.020, and then only when their impacts are mitigated according to the sequence described in WAC 173-26-201(2)(e) as necessary to assure no net loss of ecological functions.
- F. Shoreline uses and modifications should be designed and managed to prevent degradation of water quality and alteration of natural hydrographic conditions.

Reaches Designated Aquatic

It is recommended that all areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) be designated Aquatic; including portions of Reaches 1-9 and Reaches 13-17 as identified in the Blaine Shoreline Inventory and Analysis Report.

3.2 NATURAL

Purpose

To protect those shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence or that include intact or minimally degraded shoreline functions intolerant of human use. These systems require that only very low intensity uses be allowed in order to maintain the ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes. Consistent with the policies of this designation, the City should undertake planning for restoration of degraded shorelines within this environment.

Designation Criteria

A 'natural' environment designation should be assigned to shoreline areas if any of the following characteristics apply:

- A. The shoreline is ecologically intact and therefore currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that would be damaged by human activity;
- B. The shoreline contains forested areas that generally include native vegetation with diverse plant communities, multiple canopy layers, and the presence of large woody debris available for recruitment to adjacent water bodies;
- C. The shoreline is considered to represent ecosystems and geologic types that are of particular scientific and educational interest;
- D. The shoreline is unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety or
- E. The shoreline is especially sensitive to human disturbance and important for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species.

Such shoreline areas include largely undisturbed portions of shoreline areas such as wetlands, estuaries, unstable bluffs and ecologically intact shoreline habitats.

Ecologically intact shorelines means those shoreline areas that retain the majority of their natural shoreline functions, as evidenced by the shoreline configuration and the presence of native vegetation, and as further supported or not by the shoreline data within the 2006 City of Blaine Shoreline Inventory and Analysis Report.

The term "ecologically intact shorelines" applies to all shoreline regardless of their size.

Management Policies

- A. Any use that would substantially degrade the ecological functions or natural character of the shoreline area should not be allowed.
- B. The following new uses should not be allowed in the natural environment: commercial uses, industrial uses, nonwater-oriented recreation, and roads, utility corridors, and parking areas that can be located outside of 'natural'-designated shorelines.
- C. Scientific, historical, cultural, education research uses, and low-intensity water-oriented recreational access uses may be allowed provided that no significant ecological impact on the area will result.
- D. Single family residential development may be allowed as a conditional use if the density and intensity of such use is limited as necessary to protect ecological functions and be consistent with the purpose of this environment designation.
- E. Agricultural uses of a very low intensity nature may be consistent with the Natural Environment when such use is subject to appropriate limitations or conditions to assure that the use does not expand or alter practices in a manner inconsistent with the purpose of the designation.
- F. Development or significant vegetation removal shall not be allowed that would reduce the capability of vegetation to perform normal ecological functions or result in net loss of vegetation.

- G. Subdivision of property in a configuration that, to achieve its intended purpose, will require significant vegetation removal or shoreline modification that adversely impacts ecological functions shall not be allowed.
- H. Intact wildlife habitat corridor areas should be promoted and protected to allow for continuous habitat areas. Structures should be sited in a manner that minimizes the fragmentation of otherwise intact habitat areas. Reconnection of fragmented habitat areas shall be considered an element of habitat restoration and is encouraged

Reaches Designated Natural

Description

The Natural designation occurs in areas already dominated by native vegetation and important ecological functions. It is recommended that portions of the following Reaches be designated Natural: Reaches 6-8, Reaches 13-14, and Reaches 16-17.

Rationale

A Natural designation will allow these areas of ecological importance to restore and maintain ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes. These areas will be protected from future development and serve as buffers along the shoreline that will help protect aquatic resources.

- Reach 6, the steep slope or bluff except where developed
Areas of intact vegetation are present along the shores of Drayton Harbor.
- Reach 7, the steep slope or bluff except where developed
Areas of intact vegetation are present along the shores of Dakota Creek.
- Reach 8, the steep slope or bluff except where developed
Intact vegetation corridor is present along the shores of Dakota Creek.
- Reach 13, Up to the platted “geo setback line” and the old Drayton Harbor Road grade whichever is further from the OHWM, plus northwestern portion of reach in the park
Areas of intact vegetation are present along the shores of Drayton Harbor.
- Reach 14, area within Semiahmoo Park and the adjacent right-of-way
Semiahmoo Park and the adjacent shoreline area should remain undeveloped.
- Reach 16, area within Semiahmoo Park and the adjacent right-of-way
Semiahmoo Park and the adjacent shoreline area should remain undeveloped.
- Reach 17, the steep slope or face of bluff
Existing vegetation corridor exists adjacent to Semiahmoo Bay.

3.3 HIGH INTENSITY

Purpose

To provide for high-intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.

Designation Criteria

Assign a 'high-intensity' environment designation to shoreline areas if they currently support high-intensity uses related to commerce, transportation or navigation; or are suitable and planned for high-intensity water-oriented uses. Reasonable long-range projection of local economic need should guide the amount of the shoreline designated high-intensity.

Management Policies

- A. First priority should be given to water-dependent uses. Second priority should be given to water-related and water-enjoyment uses. Non-water oriented uses should not be allowed except as part of mixed use development.
- B. Full utilization of existing urban areas should be achieved before further expansion of intensive development is allowed.
- C. Polices and regulations shall assure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions as a result of new development.
- D. Where feasible, visual and physical access should be required as provided for in WAC 173-26-221(4)(d).
- E. Aesthetic objectives should be implemented by means such as sign control regulations, appropriate development siting, screening and architectural standards, and maintenance of natural vegetative buffers.
- F. Where applicable, new development shall include environmental cleanup and restoration of the shoreline to comply with any relevant state and federal law.

Areas Designated High Intensity

Description

The High-Intensity designation includes Reach 2, Reach 3, Reach 4 and Reach 15.

Rationale

The High-Intensity designation will allow for the continued operation of commercial and industrial operations while encouraging future economic growth and providing control over future development and its impact on shoreline functions.

- Reach 2, area southwest of Marine Park
This area is proposed for additional public development including constructin of the new wastewater treatment plant.
- Reach 3
Reach 3 contains the Blaine Marina and related commercial and industrial uses, as well as the boat launch.
Reach 4
Reach 4 contains portions of downtown which back the BNSF rail corridor.
- Reach 15
Reach 15 contains the Semiahmoo Marina, the Inn at Semiahmoo and areas planned for future mixed-use development.

3.4 URBAN CONSERVANCY

Purpose

To protect and restore ecological functions in all systems including fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, open space, floodplain and frequently flooded areas, and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings. Urban Conservancy shorelines should allow for a variety of compatible uses that also provide an opportunity for visual and/or physical access to the shoreline and provide ecological restoration.

Designation Criteria

Areas designated Urban Conservancy should be appropriate and planned for development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring of the ecological functions of the area, and that are not generally suitable for water-dependent uses. Urban Conservancy shorelines should be designated within incorporated municipalities, urban growth areas, or within commercial or industrial areas if any of the following characteristics apply:

- A. They are more suitable for water-related or water-enjoyment uses and/or mixed uses;
- B. They are open space, floodplain, or other sensitive areas that should not be more intensely developed;
- C. They have potential for ecological restoration;
- D. They retain important ecological functions, even though partially developed; or
- E. They have the potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.

Management Policies

- A. Primary uses that should be allowed include those uses that would preserve the natural character of the area or promote preservation of open space, floodplain, or sensitive lands either directly or over the long term.
- B. During development and redevelopment, all reasonable efforts should be taken to restore ecological functions.
- C. Standards should be established for shoreline stabilization measures, vegetation conservation, water quality, and shoreline modifications within the Urban Conservancy designation. These standards shall ensure that new development does not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions or further degrade other shoreline values.
- D. Public access and public recreation objectives should be implemented whenever feasible and significant ecological impacts can be mitigated.
- E. Conditional uses in an Urban Conservancy shoreline should provide the maximum amount of restoration or enhancement of ecological function and the maximum amount of area devoted to public access whether it be visual or physical.

Reaches Designated Urban Conservancy

Description

The Urban Conservancy designation is appropriate in areas planned for a variety of development types, where the area retains important ecological functions. Portions of the following Reaches are proposed to be designated Urban Conservancy: Reaches 1, 5 and 7.

Rationale

An Urban Conservancy designation will allow these areas to develop with a variety of uses, while protecting and restoring ecological functions and providing areas for public access and enjoyment of the shoreline. In areas of Urban Conservancy where development does occur, this designation will ensure protection and restoration of ecological functions.

- Reach 1
This area includes the international border crossing. Little or no new development is anticipated within this reach.
- Reach 5
This reach is dominated by the railroad and Peace Portal Drive.
- Reach 7, area beyond the crest of the steep slope
This area is planned for additional residential development and a City community park.

3.5 SHORELINE RESIDENTIAL

Purpose

To accommodate residential development and appurtenant structures that are consistent with WAC 173-26 while protecting and restoring ecological functions by minimizing shoreline modifications. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.

Designation Criteria

- A. Areas inside urban growth areas, as defined in RCW 36.70A.110, incorporated municipalities, “rural areas of more intense development,” or “master planned resorts,” as described in RCW 36.70A.360, if they are predominately single-family or multifamily residential development or are planned and platted for residential development.
- B. Areas to be designated Shoreline Residential should not include sensitive shorelines with ecologically degraded functions and should meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Areas presently developed or platted for residential uses.
 - Areas which could serve as transition zones between high-intensity and low-intensity resource management, conservancy, or natural shoreline areas.

- Areas that can provide and have the capabilities to support the necessary public service, utilities, and access to accommodate low to medium density development or which can support on-site systems.

Management Policies

- A. Development should be permitted only in those shoreline areas where adequate setbacks or buffers are possible to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions, where there are adequate access, water, sewage disposal, and utilities systems and public services available, and where the environment can support the proposed use in a manner which protects or restores the ecological functions.
- B. Densities or minimum frontage width standards in the "shoreline residential" environment shall be established to protect the shoreline ecological functions, taking into account the environmental limitations and sensitivity of the shoreline area, the level of infrastructure and services available, and other comprehensive planning considerations.
- C. Development standards for setbacks or buffers, shoreline stabilization, vegetation conservation, critical area protection, and water quality shall be established to ensure no net loss of ecological functions.
- D. Multifamily and multi-lot residential and recreational developments should provide community or public access and joint use for community recreational facilities.
- E. Access, utilities, and public services should be available and adequate to serve existing needs and planned future development.
- F. Commercial development should be limited to water-oriented uses.
- G. Public or private outdoor recreation facilities should be encouraged if compatible with the character of the area. Preferred uses include water-dependent and water-enjoyment recreation facilities that provide opportunities for substantial numbers of people to access and enjoy the shoreline.

Reaches Designated Shoreline Residential

Description

The Shoreline Residential designation is located in areas already containing residential development or that are planned for residential development. Shoreline Residential reaches will assure future land for housing while preserving views of the shoreline. Portions of the following Reaches are designated Shoreline Residential: Reaches 6, 9, 13, and 17.

Rationale

The Shoreline Residential designation will allow for future residential development in desired locations within the Blaine urban growth area.

- Reach 6, above the break in the slope at the top of bluff
This area is primarily developed with residences.
- Reach 9,
This area contains or is planned for residential development.

- Reach 13, above the “geo line” or the old Drayton Harbor Road grade as applicable.
This area is planned for or contains residential development
- Reach 17, area beyond the first 100 feet
This area contains or is planned for residential development.

4.0 SUMMARY OF SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS

Table 1 - Recommendations and Rationale

DESIGNATION	REACHES	RATIONALE
Aquatic	Reaches 1-17, including shoreline areas waterward of the ordinary high watermark.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high watermark.
Natural	Reaches 6, 7, 13, 14, 16 and 17 (all or parts waterward of developed areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence or that include intact or minimally degraded shoreline functions intolerant of human use. • Require only very low intensity uses be allowed to maintain ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes. • Shoreline areas designated as Natural shall include ecologically intact shorelines performing important processes that would be damaged by human activity and those shorelines that represent ecosystems that are of particular scientific interest.
High Intensity	Reach 4 (and overlays for Reach 2, 3, and 15 in the SMU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas already containing or planned for high-intensity commercial, industrial or mixed-use development. • Provide for high-intensity uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas previously degraded.
Urban Conservancy	Reaches 1, 2, 5 and 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and restore ecological functions of open space, floodplain, and other sensitive lands. • Area is suitable for a mix of uses. • Comprised of open space, floodplains, or other areas that should not be more intensively developed. • Potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.
Shoreline Residential	Reaches 6, 9, 13 and 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas containing or planned primarily for residential development. • Accommodate residential development

		<p>consistent with this Chapter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.
Special Management Unit	Reaches 3 and 4 Reach 15, plus portions of 14 and 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master planned areas intended to accommodate water-oriented uses. • High importance for both commerce and recreation. • High opportunity for enhanced public access.