

# PLANNING AGENCY DISCUSSION TOPICS SEPTEMBER 11, 2006 MEETING

## Wetland Mitigation Ratios, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas and Development Standards for Geologically Hazardous Areas

### *Should new wetland mitigation ratios be established?*

**Status:** Wetland mitigation can be in the form of enhancement, rehabilitation or creation that is based on the condition of the affected wetland. Enhancement relates to improving an existing wetland where habitat value and/or habitat area is added to a functioning wetland (e.g., plantings to raise the function from emergent to shrub community or footprint expansion). Rehabilitation relates to restoring a degraded wetland (e.g., removing invasive species such as blackberry). Creating relates to making a new wetland where one does not exist.

**BAS Recommendation:** Grette BAS Report, Page 19 recommends that the City define minimum acceptable mitigation ratios by wetland category. Within the built environment of a City, there may be considerations including compromised existing function and limited mitigation opportunity that preclude mitigation at the ratios recommended by CTED. The King County system is recommended over the CTED system given the City is far more likely to be dealing with wetland enhancement and rehabilitation than straight up creation. Providing minimum mitigation ratios by Category (e.g., 6:1 for Category I, 2:1 for Category II, and 1.5:1 for Category III and IV), provides the City with the flexibility to require smaller mitigation ratio where necessary, but also requests or requires higher mitigation ratios where appropriate for higher functioning wetlands. Table 1 below shows wetland protection standards.

**Table 1. Recommended Wetland Mitigation Ratios**

	Existing DMMC* Based on previous classification and type and acreage	CTED	King County Permanent		
			Enhancement	Rehabilitation	Creation
Category I	2:1	6:1	6:1	4.5:1	3:1
Category II	2:1	3:1	3:1	2:1	1.5:1
Category III	1:1	2:1	2:1	1.5:1	1:1
Category IV	N/A	1.5:1	1.5:1	1:1	1:1

## **Planning Agency Recommendation:**

### **Council Environment Committee Recommendation:**

The Environment Committee wants to see the locations of rated wetlands before making a recommendation as to whether or not expanding wetland mitigation ratios is feasible.

### **City Council Recommendation:**

#### ***Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas.***

**Status:** Critical aquifer recharge areas are established and managed by Water District 54 and the Highline Water District. The Washington State Department of Ecology and/or the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health (KC DOH) provide guidance on the means and methods to identify critical aquifer recharge areas and on how to define a wellhead protection zone.

*DMMC 18.86.083 Development Standards -- Aquifer Recharge Areas.* This section states that all development on or adjacent to a critical aquifer recharge area shall be in compliance with all development and land use restrictions and provisions recommended by various federal, state and county agencies and utilizing best management practices. The section also indicates that development requirements may rely on recommendations presented in a special environmental study.

**BAS Recommendation:** Associated Earth Sciences Inc. (AESI) BAS Report, Page 3 recommends that DMMC 18.04.212 (definitions) be revised to clarify that Ecology and KCC DOH do not identify CARAs. AESI also noted that each jurisdiction is responsible for identifying their own CARAs.

AESI BAS Report, Page 6 recommends that *DMMC 18.86.083 Development Standards -- Aquifer Recharge Areas* be expanded to include the requirements of the special environmental study, who can perform such a study, what types of development cannot occur within critical aquifer recharge areas and possibly others.

## **Planning Agency Recommendation:**

### **Council Environment Committee Recommendation:**

The Environment Committee feels it is the responsibility of the water districts to determine and map the CARAs.

### **City Council Recommendation:**

## ***Should development standards for geologically hazardous areas be expanded?***

***BAS Recommendation:*** Development standards (DMMC 18.86.077, 18.86.078, 18.86.079, 18.86.080)

*DMMC 18.86.077 Hillsides of 15 percent slope and greater. AESI BAS Report, Page 6* recommends that a section be added that discusses drainage and control of site runoff in order to maintain the stability of the slope.

*DMMC 18.86.078 Seismic hazard areas.* This section discusses development on slopes adjacent to seismic hazard areas but does not discuss development within seismic hazard areas that are prone to liquefaction, which are the seismic hazard areas shown on the hazard inventory map (Geologically Hazardous Areas, Figure 4-5). AESI BAS Report recommends that a section be added to discuss development requirements in liquefaction prone areas.

*DMMC 18.86.079 Landslide hazard areas.* This section discusses what conditions must be met to allow construction on or near a landslide hazard area but does not provide prescriptive buffer widths from the top and bottom of landslide hazard areas. AESI BAS Report recommends that a section be added that prescribes top and bottom of slope set back limits from landslide hazard areas and under what conditions these set backs may be reduced from the prescriptive values.

*DMMC 18.86.080 Erosion Hazard Areas.* This section indicates that land filling, grading and clearing activities in erosion hazard areas shall be limited to occurring between April 1st and October 31st. AESI BAS Report recommends that this section be expanded to include additional key elements. These key elements would regard: temporary erosion and sediment control plans; drainage requirements; allowance for a dry season grading extension if the site meets certain conditions, and perhaps others.

### **Planning Agency Recommendation:**

### **Council Environment Committee Recommendation:**

The Environment Committee feels it is the responsibility of the water districts to determine and map the CARAs.

### **City Council Recommendation:**