

Isolated wetland exemption and Wetland buffer exemption

Item 3-19e

Existing Regulation(s)	Proposed Amendment & Description
<p>Current regulations allow for isolated wetlands less than 1,000 square feet to be exempted from the Wetland Development Standards of the SMC provided any impacts are mitigated pursuant to an approved mitigation plan.</p>	<p>The proposed modification to item 4-19d would increase the wetland size exemption from avoidance sequencing for isolated wetlands from 1,000 to 4,000 square feet, provided that the area of impacted wetland does not exceed 2,500 square feet, and is mitigated consistent with the mitigation requirements.</p>
<p><u>Desired Result of Amendment:</u> This alternative modifies the proposed item 3-19d, which allows reduced wetland buffers. The proposed modification would allow for wetlands with an area of up to 4,000 square feet to be altered, provided that no more than 2,500 square feet is filled.</p>	

Amendment Source:

Staff

Best Available Science Support: Not Supported

- Best Available Science Report “Wetlands” by AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

Relevant Information (includes technical papers and/or references) (if applicable):

- Wetlands in Washington State, Volume 1: A Synthesis of the Science; Sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4; Ecology Publication #05-06-006, March 2005.
- Wetlands and CAO Updates: Guidance for Small Cities, Western Washington Version; 1st revision July 2011; Ecology Publication #10-06-002.

Affected Code Section(s) (includes duplicative and overlapping sections):

- 21A.50.320 – Wetlands – Limited exemption
- Possibly a new code section

Public Comment Reference(s):

33, 67-70, 84, 85, 88, 101, 105, 116, 182, 220

Notes:

Evaluation Form – Planning Commission Approved

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Ratings are either: large positive (P), small positive (p), neutral, large negative (N), small negative (n)			
Environmental	n	Implementation	Neutral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased on-site protection of wetlands Decreased protection of public assets and resources (e.g. streets, water quality) Increased cumulative impacts to wetlands Increased effect on potential to restore damaged wetland buffer areas Increased chance of damage to wetlands Neutral potential to damage high quality, unique wetlands Some net loss of wetland functions and values <p>The proposed amendment to increase the wetland exemption to 4,000 square feet would allow for more wetlands to fall under the exemption, thereby allowing more cumulative impacts and net loss of overall wetland functions and values. However, limiting the area of impact to 4,000 square foot wetlands to 2,500 square feet, combined with wetland mitigation, will reduce the loss of wetland functions and values while providing greater flexibility.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral effect on clarity, neutral chance for unintended consequences Neutral effect on consistent, efficient implementation by the staff Neutral likelihood of support/approval by other agencies Decreased effective mitigation, easier to monitor <p>The proposed amendment would have little impact on regulation clarity or on application review, although it may have some impact on the quantity of mitigation projects that must be reviewed and tracked by the city.</p>	
Property	P	Overall Effect	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased flexibility and options for property owner's use of property Neutral predictability for permit applicants and neighbors Increased recognition of site improvements and existing uses in standards Neutral expense / more time <p>The proposed amendment to increase the wetland exemption to 2,500 square feet would offer greater flexibility for applicants seeking to develop sites constrained by an isolated wetland. It would not affect predictability. The property owner might incur a greater cost as a result of the critical areas study, but in return would have greater flexibility in property use.</p> <p>The additional allowance for wetland buffer modifications associated with type III and IV wetlands up to 4,000 square feet would further increase flexibility for property owners with relatively small low value wetland areas.</p>		<h2>Positive</h2>	

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