

Misinformation Related to the Pilot Program

One of the most frequent mistakes people make in trying to get a handle on the proposed pilot program is they think it will allow development on steep slopes or drain onto steep slopes. We have heard this time and time again. Even many of the comments by the pilot program opponent's experts err in this. It is not true. The proposed pilot program specifically excludes steep slopes in the overlay from the program. There will be no development allowed on steep slopes under the proposed pilot program.

Landslide risk has been brought up several times related to the pilot program. Landslides occur on steep slopes. Once again, the pilot program excludes steep slope development. Landslide and erosion hazard are two different issues. Both are handled in the proposed ECA update, but under different sections.

I heard a comment last meeting that made it sound as though the proponents would be the only beneficiaries of the proposed pilot program. That is not true. Despite our involvement in the ECA process and pilot program development over the past year and a half, there are no guarantees that we will be the ones to benefit from it. It is set up on a first come first serve basis.

Some people think that the City is free to do whatever it wants to do with these regulations. According to both the Washington State Attorney General and the GMA cities have to use extreme caution not to over-regulate property rights. They have a responsibility to protect their citizen's property rights. If they err, it needs to be on the side of their citizen's property rights. Property rights need to be protected unless there is uncontroversial and undeniable evidence to the contrary. It has to be a last resort. As we have seen throughout the process, there is no such absolute evidence to take away property rights. The bulk of the evidence actually leans in the other direction; that development can be safely permitted in the overlay. The pilot program will prove it.

Some opponents make it sound as though the pilot program will allow massive development throughout the overlay. This is not the case. The pilot program is a good way to demonstrate, with a very limited number of properties, that development can occur without any more of an impact as development anywhere else in the city. In other words, property owners in the overlay expect the same rights everyone else has in the city, to follow the same rules, while taking extra care to prevent erosion that could impact Lake Sammamish.

A final point: We are citizens of Sammamish, not developers. This is not an environmentalist vs. developer issue. It is an issue of over-regulation; plain and simple. We are environmentally concerned citizens. In our situation and the situation of our neighbors, there is no threat to Lake Sammamish. If there were, we would understand, but there has not been any uncontested or undeniable evidence to demonstrate it. The pilot program and all the extreme hoops associated with it is a good compromise to ensure there is no harm to the lake and to protect the property rights of Sammamish CITIZENS!