SHORELINE

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

This element addresses Covington's shorelines of the state – segments of Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake.

SHORELINE ELEMENT

Since the early 1970s, the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA) has required that jurisdictions develop shoreline management programs for areas with significant shorelines.

Washington State, in partnership with Department of Ecology (Ecology), requires cities with areas designated as "Shorelines of the State" update their Shoreline Master Program in accordance with the SMA and the State Shoreline Master Programs Guidelines.

One of the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA) incorporates the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020. A community's shoreline master program goals and policies is considered part of the Comprehensive Plan. The

shoreline master program development regulations are considered part of a community's GMA development regulations.

In July 2007, the City of Covington obtained a grant from Ecology to conduct a comprehensive Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update. As a result, the City inventoried the city's shorelines and developed goals, policies and regulations for any new development along city's shorelines. The goals and policies were developed with the help of an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee that included property owners along Jenkins Creek, Soos Creek, and Pipe Lake, members of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission, a representative from Soos Creek Water & Sewer District, an area homeowner association member, and a member of the business community.

In March 2011, the City Council forwarded the finalized draft of the SMP to Ecology for their approval (Ordinance No. 05-11). In April 2011, Ecology adopted the City of Covington's Final SMP.

This element summarizes and provides the SMP goals, as well as incorporates by reference the City's SMP.

KEY TERMS

"Shorelines" means all of the water areas of the state, including reservoirs, and their associated shorelands, together with the lands underlying them; except (i) shorelines of statewide significance; (ii) shorelines on segments of streams upstream of a point where the mean annual flow is twenty cubic feet per second or less and the wetlands associated with such upstream segments; and (iii) shorelines on lakes less than twenty acres in size and wetlands associated with such small lakes. (RCW 90.58.030(2)(e))

Segments of Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake are shorelines of the state in Covington.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT

Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was adopted by the public in a 1972 referendum "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines." The Act has three broad policies:

- Encourage water-dependent uses: "uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon use of the states' shorelines..."
- Protect shoreline natural resources, including "...the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the water of the state and their aquatic life..."
- Promote public access: "the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines of the state shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally."

The SMA recognizes that "shorelines are among the most valuable and fragile" of the state's resources. The SMA, and the City of Covington, recognize and protect private property rights along the shoreline, while aiming to preserve the quality of this unique resource for all state residents.

Pipe Lake, King County 2015

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Three shorelines of the state are found in Covington: Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake. Shoreline jurisdiction generally includes the water bodies at greater than 20 cubic feet per second flow or lakes of 20 acres or more plus 200 feet landward of the waterbody and associated wetlands. The three shorelines in Covington encompass about 104 acres of shoreline jurisdiction and 2.45 miles of shorelines and lakeshore. Shoreline jurisdiction is a management area where shoreline uses, ecological function, and public access are balanced consistent with Shoreline Management Act (SMA) goals.

The City's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) has been prepared consistent with the SMA and provides goals, policies, and regulations of each shoreline. The SMP is adopted by the City of Covington and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The City administers the SMP, though Ecology has authority over shoreline conditional use permits and shoreline variances.

Predominant uses along Covington shorelines include low density residential, utility, and other lands. The stream corridors contain floodplains and wetlands; minimal critical areas are located along Pipe Lake. Planned land uses match present uses – residential, industrial (utility), and public. There are some adjacent public access locations just outside the Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek shoreline jurisdiction boundaries.

Jenkins Creek
The Watershed Company, 2010

Big Soos Creek
The Watershed Company, 2010

SHORELINE ISSUES AND TRENDS

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Pipe Lake, King County

The City's shorelines include Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, Pipe Lake, and their associated shorelands. The total area subject to the City's updated SMP is approximately 104.03 acres, and encompasses 12,934 lineal feet (2.45 miles) of stream and lakeshore.

Big Soos Creek is surrounded largely by very low-density residential uses and undeveloped lands. Other land uses include a small strip of industrial lands along the eastern edge of the shoreline management area and SR 18 bisecting the area roughly in half from northeast to southwest. The two SR 18 bridge spans and associated embankment fill, armoring, footings, and pilings are the only known shoreline modifications in the Big Soos Creek shoreline area within City limits. Public access opportunities exist on public lands inside and outside of shoreline jurisdiction, such as the adjacent Soos Creek Park. Floodplains and wetlands make up much of the shoreline jurisdiction along Big Soos Creek. The stream is used by chinook and coho salmon, as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

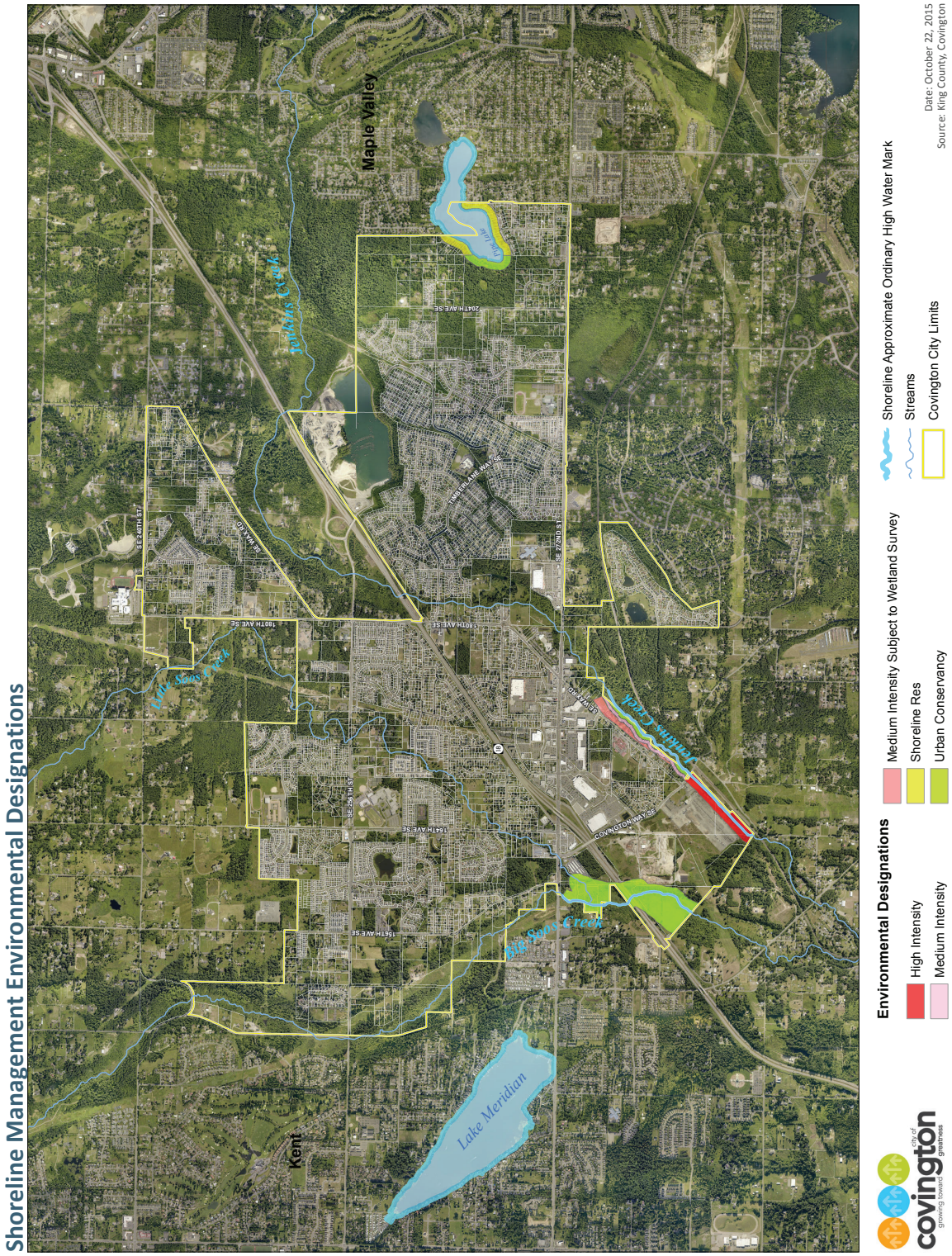
Along Jenkins Creek over half of the shoreland area is in low density residential uses. Much of the rest of the land is in public utility use by the Bonneville Power Administration's Covington substation or is undeveloped. Covington Way SE crosses shoreline jurisdiction of Jenkins Creek just southeast of SE Wax Rd outside the City limits (King County jurisdiction), while SE Wax Road runs parallel to Jenkins Creek just outside the shoreline jurisdiction to the north. The Jenkins Creek channel bordering the

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) substation has been straightened. Just upstream of the Bonneville Power Administration site, the stream passes through a three-bay concrete box culvert under Covington Way SE. Public shoreline access to Jenkins Creek exists currently within Jenkins Creek Park and Jenkins Creek trail, both of which are located further upstream outside of the shoreline jurisdictional area. Floodplains and wetlands are found along the Jenkins Creek shoreline. Fish species include chinook and coho salmon, steelhead, and resident cutthroat trout. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

Pipe Lake is approximately 52 acres and has a maximum depth of approximately 65 feet and a mean depth of 27 feet. Pipe Lake feeds into Lake Lucerne, which eventually feeds into a tributary of Jenkins Creek approximately one-half mile to the north of Lake Lucerne. There are no visible inflows into either lake. Currently, over half of the shorelands surrounding Pipe Lake are in low-density residential uses. Camp McCullough comprises another third of the shoreline frontage, with the remaining is undeveloped. There are a number of docks that are owned and maintained by private homeowners associations located along the lake. There is also a boat launch and dock along the western shore of the lake that is associated with Camp McCullough. This parcel has some natural shoreline. Motorized boats on Pipe Lake are prohibited. While there are some wooded areas, there are minimal mapped critical areas. The lake appears may support cutthroat trout and possibly rainbow trout if stocked by lake residents. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

A map showing shoreline jurisdiction and locations of floodplains and wetlands is provided in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Covington Shorelines and Environment Designations



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This Shoreline Element balances:

- Preferred shoreline uses such as single family residential and water oriented uses such as recreation
- Ensuring no-net-loss of shoreline ecological function
- Promoting public access opportunities, with larger developments or on public lands

These three goals are balanced consistent with Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requirements and through application of shoreline environment designations that act as an overlay to the underlying zoning (see "Our Shoreline Plan") permitted uses, and regulations.

OUR SHORELINE PLAN

The SMP includes Environment Designations that function as an overlay zone on top of the City's underlying zoning. The Environment Designations control land use, building placement, height and other aspects of shoreline development. Each designation has a different purpose.

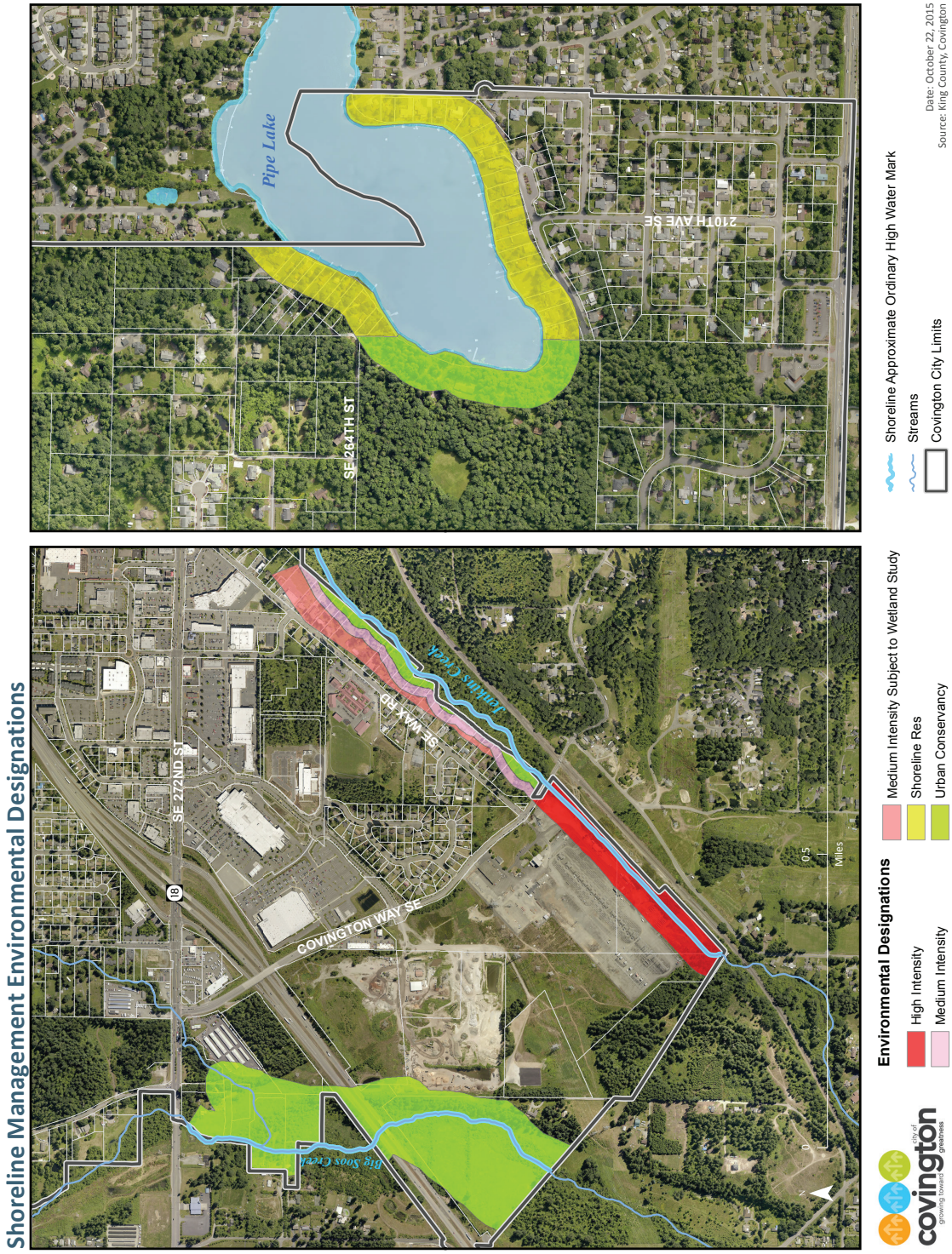
- **High Intensity:** The purpose of the High-Intensity environment designation is to provide for high-intensity water-oriented and non-water oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.
- **Medium Intensity:** The purpose of the Medium-Intensity environment designation is to provide for water oriented and non-water oriented commercial, mixed-use, and residential uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.

Adaptive reuse of existing structures for office uses is emphasized, along with public access and water-enjoyment uses. A subset of this designation is subject to a wetland study and is marked on the map as: Medium Intensity Subject to Wetland Study.

- **Shoreline Residential:** The Shoreline Residential environment designation is designed to provide for residential needs where the necessary facilities for development can be provided. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.
- **Urban Conservancy:** The purpose of the Urban Conservancy environment designation is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, flood plain and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings, while allowing a variety of compatible uses.
- **Aquatic:** The purpose of the Aquatic environment designation is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high- water mark.

A map identifying the Environment Designations is found in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2. Covington Environment Designations Detail



GOALS

Covington's SMP goals are listed below. The entire SMP is additionally incorporated by reference, consistent with Covington Ordinance No. 05-11.

Goal-I. **Ensure that any economic activity taking place along the shoreline does not harm the quality of the site's environment or adjacent shorelands, and that new non-residential development provides public access to the shoreline for water-enjoyment activities.**

Goal-II. **Increase the amount and diversity of public access to the shoreline, and preserve and enhance views of the shoreline, consistent with the natural shoreline character, private rights and public safety.**

Goal-III. **Encourage diverse, water-oriented recreational opportunities in those shoreline areas that can reasonably tolerate such uses without destroying the integrity and character of the shoreline.**

Goal-IV. **Maintain safe, reasonable and adequate vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation systems to shorelines and ensure that these routes will have the least possible adverse effect on unique or fragile shoreline features and existing ecological systems, while contributing to the functional and visual enhancement of the shoreline.**

Goal-V. **Preserve, protect, and restore to the greatest extent feasible the natural resources of the shoreline, including but not limited to scenic vistas, aesthetics, and vital riparian areas for wildlife protection.**

Goal-VI. **Ensure that the land use patterns within shoreline areas are compatible with shoreline environment designations and will be sensitive to and not degrade habitat and ecological systems and other shoreline resources.**

Goal-VII. **Identify, protect, preserve and restore important archaeological, historical and cultural sites located in shoreline jurisdiction of Covington for their educational and scientific value, as well as for the recreational enjoyment of the general public.**

Goal-VIII. **Protect the City of Covington from losses and damage created by flooding.**

ACTION PLAN

The Shoreline Element is implemented through administration of the City's SMP. Similar to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the City would reevaluate the SMP and consider appropriate revisions every eight years.

Exhibit 3. Shoreline Element Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
Implement SMP and evaluate consistent with GMA review cycles.	Community Development Department