

CRITICAL AREAS GOALS AND POLICIES
- THE CITY OF ZILLAH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN– Natural Systems Element

Below are the Goals and Policies for Critical Areas which are retained in support of the SMP consistent with policy NS 7.28. These Goals and Policies also legally reside within The City of Zillah's Comprehensive Plan. These Goals and Policies were updated in 2007 to be consistent with the GMA (WAC 365-190, 365-195) and the SMP Guidelines (WAC 173-26), which were adopted by the Zillah City Council as part of the Yakima Regional Shorelines Master Program under Ordinance 1167, 1175, and 1202 .

CRITICAL AREAS

PURPOSE STATEMENT 8

Critical Areas are an important part of the natural setting in the City of Zillah. Their protection is required by the Growth Management Act and important to the quality of life of the residents of this city. Critical Areas include groundwater, fish and wildlife habitat (which includes surface waters), wetlands, frequently flooded areas, and geologic hazards. The protection of critical areas must include certain general approaches, which are provided for in the goals and policies below.

Goal NS 8: Establish critical areas protection measures to protect environmentally sensitive areas, and protect people and property from hazards.

GENERAL POLICIES

NS 8.1 Use the best available science in a reasonable manner to develop regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas.

NS 8.2 Ensure proposed subdivisions, other development, and associated infrastructure are designed at a density, level of site coverage, and occupancy to preserve the structure, values and functions of the natural environment or to safeguard the public from hazards to health and safety.

NS 8.3 Use a preference-based system of mitigation sequencing for the City's stream, lake, pond, wetland, floodplain, and fish and wildlife habitat critical areas that reduces impacts using approaches ranging from avoidance to replacement.

NS 8.4 In order to encourage Critical Area protection and restoration, the density and lot size limits stipulated in other policies may be adjusted or exceeded to accomplish clustering and bonus provisions adopted under the CAO. The use of incentive based programs is encouraged.

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Groundwater and Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs)

PURPOSE STATEMENT NS 9

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for most rural City residents. The City of Yakima is the only city within Yakima County that uses surface water as a primary source (Naches River). All other jurisdictions currently use groundwater (wells) as their primary source of water. Once groundwater is contaminated it is difficult, costly, and often impossible to clean up. Some contaminants like microbial organisms can cause sickness and discomfort while others like organic chemicals, inorganic metals, and radio-nuclides can cause neurological disorders, cancer, mutations and death.

Wells provide a potential source of contamination of both the shallow and deeper aquifers. The proliferation of individual domestic and irrigation wells increases the risk that contamination may find its way into the groundwater. Although the quality of groundwater resources used for drinking water in the City of Zillah is generally good, the potential for problems exists because many wells tap shallow aquifers (less than 100 feet) which are extremely susceptible to surface contamination. The following goal and policies address these concerns by encouraging the identification of aquifers and taking steps to reduce potential contamination.

GOAL NS 9: Maintain and manage the quality of the groundwater resources in the City of Zillah as near as possible to their natural conditions and in compliance with state water quality standards.

POLICIES:

NS 9.1 Identify and map important aquifers, critical aquifer recharge areas, and surface waters.

NS 9.2 Develop performance standards and regulate uses for activities which adversely impact water quantity and quality in aquifers, wetlands, watersheds, and surface waters.

NS 9.3 Evaluate the potential impact of development proposals on groundwater quality, and require alternative site designs to reduce contaminant loading where site conditions indicate that the proposed action will measurably degrade groundwater quality.

NS 9.4 Continue data collection and evaluation efforts to better understand the City's groundwater system and its vulnerability to contamination.

NS 9.5 Encourage the retention of natural open spaces in development proposals overlying areas highly susceptible for contaminating groundwater resources.

NS 9.6 Conduct and support educational efforts which inform City citizens of measures they can take to reduce contaminant loading of groundwater systems.

NS 9.7 Encourage development and expansion of community public water systems to lessen the reliance on individual wells.

NS 9.8 Ensure that abandoned wells are closed properly.

NS 9.9 Ensure sufficient water quantity exists to support land use activities.

Flood Hazards and Stormwater

PURPOSE STATEMENT NS 13 and 14

While stormwater management may be of less concern in Yakima County than in areas that receive more precipitation, localized flooding does occur in certain areas, such as Wide Hollow Creek, Ahtanum Creek, and Cowlitz Creek. If the amount of impervious area in a watershed increases, and provisions are not made for retaining stormwater on-site, up-watershed areas can contribute to the flooding hazards of their down-stream neighbors, and flooding becomes more frequent and more severe. If the

natural drainage courses are obstructed with fill material, buildings, or roads that lack adequately-sized culverts, storm water can cause localized flooding, with property damage and disruption of services.

The City of Zillah is subject to state and federal water quality and Underground Injection Control (UIC) regulations.

GOAL NS 13: Prevent increased flooding from stormwater runoff.

POLICIES:

NS 13.1 Require on-site retention of stormwater.

NS 13.2 Preserve natural drainage courses.

NS 13.3 Minimize adverse storm water impacts generated by the removal of vegetation and alteration of land forms.

GOAL NS 14: Improve water quality through improved stormwater management.

POLICIES:

NS 14.1 Review the recommendations of locally adopted stormwater management plans, and develop a realistic implementation schedule.

NS 14.2 Control stormwater in a manner that has positive or neutral impacts on the quality of both surface and groundwater, and does not sacrifice one for the other.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, WETLANDS, AND FREQUENTLY FLOODED AREAS

PURPOSE STATEMENT NS 15, 16, 17 and 18

Yakima County contains some of the most diverse and unique fish and wildlife habitat found anywhere in the country. These environments provide places where animals can find food, water, shelter, and security, and act as gene pools to assure continued genetic diversity. The following goal and supporting policies encourage the protection of fish and wildlife habitat in order to protect the environment for multiple uses. While fish and wildlife habitat includes upland habitat, state administrative code (WAC 365-190-080(5)) focuses on habitat that is related to water.

Stream corridors, lakes, ponds, wetlands, flood plains and other areas subject to flooding perform important hydrologic functions including storing and slowly releasing flood waters, reducing floodwater velocities, settling and filtering of sediment and nutrients, shading surface waters, and other functions. These areas also provide natural areas for wildlife and fisheries habitat, recreation areas and rich agricultural lands. Development in these areas diminishes their functions and values and can present a risk to persons and property on the development site and/or downstream from the development. Building in frequently flooded areas also results in high costs for installing flood protection measures to protect life and property and to repair flood damages.

Wetlands are an economically, biologically, and physically valuable resource. They are the most biologically productive ecosystems in nature, even though they constitute only a small percentage of the total landscape. They provide important nursery and spawning areas, which in turn support a strong

commercial and recreational industry. Wetlands also play an important function in local and regional hydrologic cycles.

Goals and policies work toward preserving, protecting and managing fish and wildlife habitat and wetlands by adopting, boundaries, and a data system to track them, and establishing development regulations for their protection. These goals and policies also seek to reduce the hazards and impacts of development through comprehensive flood control planning, directing facility development away from these areas, and developing site development standards.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

GOAL NS 15: Provide for the maintenance and protection of habitat areas for fish and wildlife.

POLICIES:

NS 15.1 Encourage the protection of fish and wildlife habitat from a region- wide perspective to ensure that the best representation and distribution of habitats remains to protect the natural values and functions of those habitats. Fish and wildlife habitat protection considerations should include:

1. The physical and hydrological connections between different habitat types to prevent isolation of those habitats;
2. Diversity of habitat types both on a local and regional scale;
3. Large tracts of fish and wildlife habitat;
4. Areas of high species diversity;
5. Locally or regionally unique and rare habitats; and
6. Winter range and migratory bird habitat of seasonal importance.

NS 15.2 Direct development away from areas containing significant fish and wildlife habitat areas, especially areas which are currently undeveloped or are primarily dominated by low intensity types of land uses such as forestry.

NS 15.3 Encourage the retention of sustainable natural resource based industries such as forestry and agriculture in order to protect important fish and wildlife habitat.

NS 15.4 Coordinate fish and wildlife protection efforts with state and federal agencies and the Yakama Nation to:

1. Avoid duplication of effort;
2. Ensure consistency in protecting fish and wildlife habitat which crosses political boundaries;
3. Facilitate information exchanges concerning development proposals which may impact fish and wildlife habitat; and
4. Take advantage of any available financial, technical, and project review assistance.

NS 15.5 Protect the habitat of Washington State Listed Species of Concern and Priority Habitats and Species in order to maintain their populations within Yakima County.

NS 15.6 Work with the resource agencies to prioritize habitats and provide appropriate measures to protect them according to their relative values.

GOAL NS 16: Conserve, protect, and enhance the functions and values of stream corridors to provide for natural functions and protect hydrologic connections between features.

POLICIES:

NS 16.1 Development projects should not be authorized if they obstruct fish passage or result in the unmitigated loss or damage of fish and wildlife resources.

NS 16.2 Encourage and support the retention of natural open spaces or land uses which maintain hydrologic functions and are at low risk to property damage from floodwaters within frequently flooded areas.

NS 16.3 Protect public and private properties by limiting development within hazardous areas of the stream corridor.

NS 16.4 Give special consideration to conservation and protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

NS 16.5 Establish a system of vegetative buffers landward from the ordinary high water mark of streams, lakes and ponds and the edge of wetlands.

Frequently Flooded Areas

GOAL NS 17: Prevent the loss of life or property and minimize public and private costs associated with repairing or preventing flood damages from development in frequently flooded areas.

POLICIES:

NS 17.1 Support comprehensive flood control planning.

NS 17.2 The City of Zillah should conduct additional analysis and mapping of frequently flooded areas in cases where the 100-year floodplain maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency do not adequately reflect the levels of risk or the geographic extent of flooding.

NS 17.3 Direct new critical facility development away from areas subject to catastrophic, life-threatening flood hazards where the hazards cannot be mitigated.

NS 17.4 Where the effects of flood hazards can be mitigated require appropriate standards for subdivisions, parcel reconfigurations, site developments and for the design of structures. {Amended 12/98}

NS 17.5 Plan for and facilitate returning Shoreline rivers to more natural hydrological conditions, and recognize that seasonal flooding is an essential natural process.

NS 17.6 When evaluating alternate flood control measures on Shoreline rivers:

- 1) consider the removal or relocation of structures in the FEMA 100-year floodplain;
- 2) where feasible, give preference to nonstructural flood hazard reduction measures over structural measures;
- 3) structural flood hazard reductions measures should be consistent with the City's comprehensive flood hazard management plan.

Wetlands

GOAL NS 18: Provide for long-term protection and no net loss of wetland functions and values.

POLICIES:

NS 18.1 Preserve, protect, manage, and regulate wetlands for purposes of promoting public health, safety and general welfare by:

1. Conserving fish, wildlife, and other natural resources of the City of Zillah;
2. Regulating property use and development to maintain the natural and economic benefits provided by wetlands, consistent with the general welfare of the City;
3. Protecting private property rights consistent with the public interest; and
4. Require wetland buffers and building setbacks around regulated wetlands to preserve vital wetland functions and values.

NS 18.2 Adopt a clear definition of a regulated wetland and a method for delineating regulatory wetland boundaries.

NS 18.3 Classify regulated wetland areas to reflect their relative function, value and uniqueness.

NS 18.4 Develop a wetlands database.

NS 18.5 Manage and mitigate human activities or actions which would have probable adverse impacts on the existing conditions of regulated wetlands or their buffers.

NS 18.6 Require mitigation for any regulated activity which alters regulated wetlands and their buffers. Develop ratios, performance standards, monitoring, and long-term protection.

GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

PURPOSE STATEMENT NS 19

Geologic hazards pose a threat to the health and safety of Zillah citizens when incompatible commercial, residential, or industrial development and associated infrastructure is sited in areas of significant hazard. The following goal and policies address the risk associated with these areas by encouraging engineering designs or modified construction practices that will mitigate problems, and prohibiting building where problems cannot be mitigated.

GOAL NS 19: Protect the public from personal injury, loss of life or property damage from geologic hazards.

POLICIES:

NS 19.1: Ensure that land use practices in geologically hazardous areas do not cause or exacerbate natural processes which endanger lives, property, or resources.

NS 19.2 Locate development within the most environmentally suitable and naturally stable portions of the site.

NS 19.3 Classify and designate areas on which development should be prohibited, conditioned, or otherwise controlled because of danger from geological hazards.

NS 19.4 Prevent the subdividing of known or suspected landslide hazard areas, side slopes of stream ravines, or slopes 40 percent or greater for development purposes.

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