

**From:** [Val Tollefson](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Cc:** [CityAdmin](#); [PCD](#)  
**Subject:** SMP comment / suggestion re Shoreline Residential Conservancy issue  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 17, 2013 9:22:01 AM

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The following comment and suggestion floated to the surface around 5:30 this morning, as a result of listening to the exchange at the North Ward meeting last evening.

One of the key remaining divisive issues in the SMP revision process seems to be the designation of some of the Island waterfront as Shoreline Residential, and some as Shoreline Residential Conservancy. I think there may be a way to eliminate the Conservancy designation without compromising the environmental protection goals of this process.

One of the more vocal audience members last night (the one who was passionate, articulate and polite) stated a position that I am sure is held by many active supporters of the Shoreline Homeowners group (which, parenthetically, does not represent the views of all of the shoreline homeowners, by any means). His position was that it is unfairly discriminatory to divide the waterfront property designations in a way that, in his view, will almost certainly have a negative economic impact on the value of property given the Conservancy designation.

Anne Blair explained that the designation was the drafters' response to a DOE mandate that unique physical characteristics of property be accounted for in how they are zoned, and how development is regulated. (I admit that I am an amateur when it comes to the SMP, and I hope that I am at least close in my characterization of her justification.) However, Anne made two other comments that partially drive this email.

First, she pointed out that in complying with the same DOE mandate, other cities had used other language, or had made designations more onerous in one respect while making them less onerous in another, all with the goal of achieving no-net-loss.

Second, she acknowledged that when the new plan is implemented, and a property owner comes to the City for a permit, the actual characteristics of that individual property will be important in determining what sort of actual requirements, such as for mitigation, will be imposed. A good example, possibly, are the 7 properties adjacent to my own in West Port Madison which are proposed as Shoreline Residential Conservancy.

Our seven lots, between the West Port Madison Nature Preserve and the Gordon Drive Roadend, are slated for conservancy designation, as I understand it, largely because we abut a long stretch of high-bank property that has the geophysical characteristics of the Conservancy designation, even though our properties, in our view, do not.

As Anne explained, the actual physical characteristics of our specific lots will be an important driver in determining under what conditions we would be allowed to develop in the future, and I personally am not afraid that I will have a harder time than my neighbor across the street, whose property will be simply Shoreline Residential.

Bob Scales reinforced my personal comfort level with his observation that how the revised SMP is implemented will be the test of its success. His comment also plays in to the

suggestion that follows.

A significant number of other waterfront property owners do not share my belief that this will all turn out just fine, and many of them are very vocal and very articulate. Rightly or wrongly, they are dividing our community, and the council seems to be abetting that division by its inability to find a work-around.

Suggestion:

Eliminate the Shoreline Residential Conservancy designation. Combine the definitions of the two as now written to encompass fully the meaning of both. The last sentence of the definition could then read "Where a particular property possesses more sensitive characteristics, a higher level of development standards is warranted [and will be applied]." Obviously, other work will need to be done to combine these two sections in a way that meets the purpose of this suggestion, but you get the idea.

As with the use of "non-conforming", which the Council has recently gotten past, I respectfully suggest that the laudable goal of these revisions can be accomplished without using what has turned out to be polarizing language and classifications.

Thanks for your hard work and attentive ears.

Val Tollefson