

## Shoreline Friends

For those of you who attended the Shoreline Master Plan Update Open House last week – thank you for your attendance and excellent comments! Residents from Meydenbauer Bay and other affected parts of Bellevue were also in attendance. With nearly 100 residents showing up, we're certain that staff took notice. We were impressed.

The meeting was revealing. We learned important facts about how City staff plans to incorporate shoreline regulations that were adopted as part of the Critical Areas Ordinance several years ago. They did not seem to realize that most residents saw the CAO process as one dealing with steep slopes and wetlands, not shorelines. Most of us knew nothing of that aspect, anticipating that the shorelines would be dealt with later. For this and other reasons, a recent court ruling involving the City of Anacortes has negated shoreline elements included in CAO's.

On Wednesday night (May 27<sup>th</sup>) the Planning Commission held a meeting to address part of the changes. We were in attendance and made the following comments to the Commissioners. Shoreline "designations" was the topic; however, we took the opportunity to alert the Commission to some of the shoreline property owner concerns. At the start of the meeting we noted the Anacortes case and its implications to the current process. It was pointed out to the Commission that the State act, prescribing that cities and counties update their shoreline programs, is quite flexible and only "encourages" many components.

Fundamental among our concerns is a shoreline buffer that has recently been increased from 25 to 50 feet. In suggesting that a 50 foot buffer is unreasonable, we pointed out that imposing it would restrict the use of a very important part of our properties and warned that such restriction would lead to reduced property values and thus must be viewed as a "taking" of that property.

One major fact that has not been emphasized enough is that, although shoreline residents are committed to the health of the lake, the most cogent problem is not being addressed – runoff of storm water directly to the lake without treatment, especially of phosphates. Removing bulkheads and re-landscaping the shorefront will not solve this.. .

The Planning Commission requested staff to return with an accounting of shoreline elements that staff has already embedded in the CAO. Since they also discussed several large commercial properties along the shorelines and wetlands, Bellefield Office Park for example, they told staff to have those owners present in the future since their properties are affected.

The Commission plans to work on the SMP update every other meeting. The next shoreline session is scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup>. Keep in touch with their agenda at –

[http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/planning\\_commission\\_agendas\\_2009.htm](http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/planning_commission_agendas_2009.htm)