



# City of White Salmon Critical Areas Ordinance Update

**Planning Commission Meeting  
August 23, 2023**

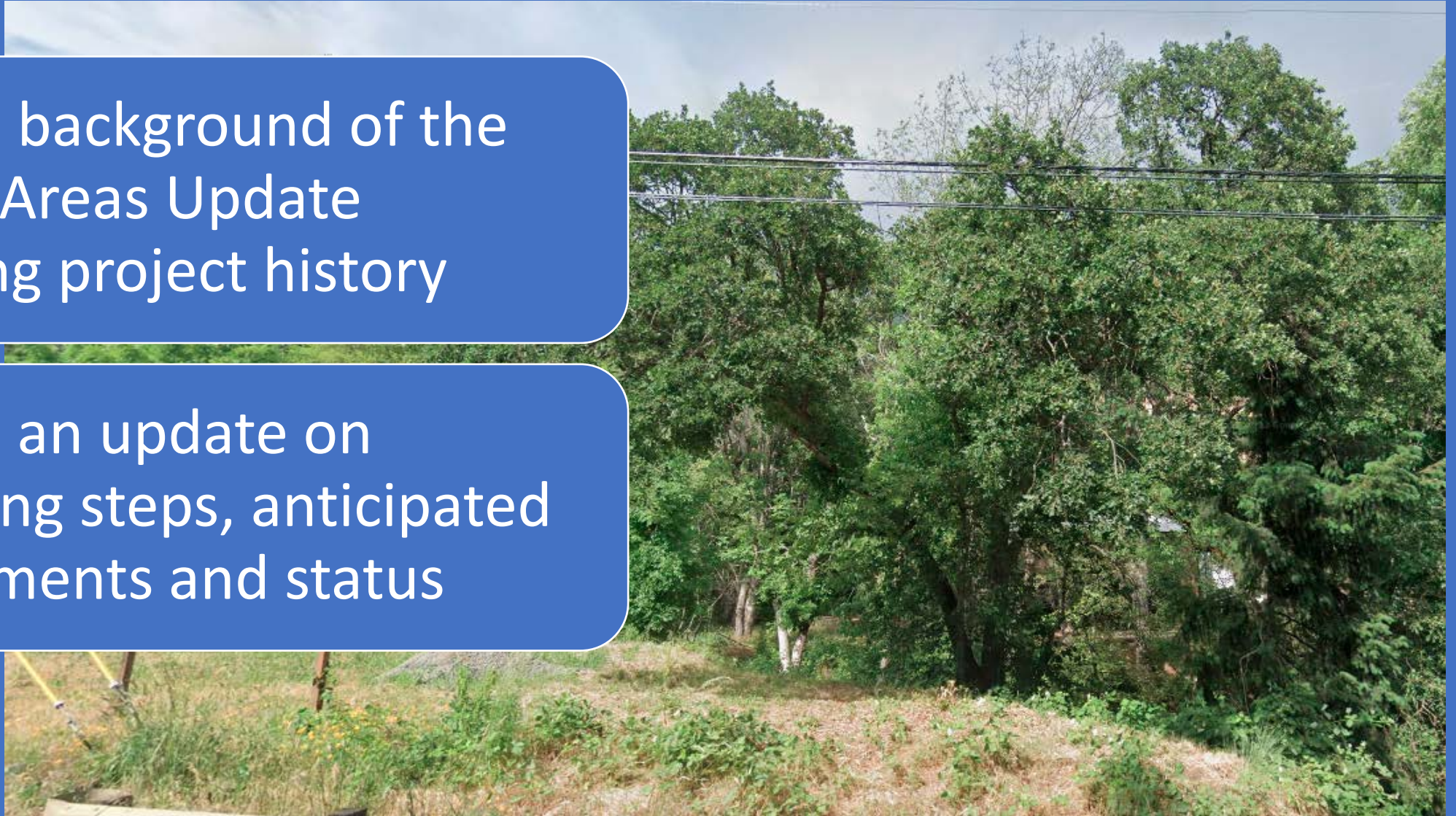


**D|C|G WATERSHED**

# Goals for this meeting:

Provide background of the Critical Areas Update including project history

Provide an update on upcoming steps, anticipated amendments and status



# Why update the Critical Areas Ordinance now?

- As required by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.172) for all counties and cities to evaluate Best Available Science.
- Regular updates are required so City can remain in good standing for state funding.
- Last updated in 2012 and can now follow more closely in-step with recent Shoreline Master Program Update.
- Continues partially started work by a previous consultant in 2018.



Image Source: [https://letstalk.mercergov.org/CAO/news\\_feed/best-available-science](https://letstalk.mercergov.org/CAO/news_feed/best-available-science)

# Critical Areas Defined

Found within WSMC 18.10 & 15.28

1. Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
  - Streams
  - Heritage Trees
2. Geologically Hazardous Areas
3. Flood Hazard Areas
4. Wetlands
5. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas



# General Provisions

1. Expand incidental exemptions
  - A. Maintenance of single family homes, vegetation trimming, enhancement
2. Updated allowed uses section (developments that do not require critical areas review – so long as requirements are met).
3. Combine variance and reasonable use exception processes
  - A. final decision by hearing examiner.



# General Provisions

1. Include a listing of available critical areas maps online.
2. Include more specific enforcement proceedings.
3. Extend reconstruction of a non-conforming structure (if damaged) to two years.
4. Updating mitigation sequencing language to be consistent with best available science.



Image Source: google maps

# Fish & Wildlife Habitat Areas

1. List Priority Habitats in lieu of specific species
2. Establish a new exemptions section for limited development flexibility
3. Move heritage tree regulations outside critical areas ordinance as these are not a state-defined critical areas



# Geologically Hazardous Areas

1. Add WDNR map reference
2. Include other geologic events not otherwise defined
3. Allow a no practical alternative provision, so long as evaluated by stamp of a professional engineer or geologist
4. Establishes performance standards for erosion hazard areas
  - A. Drainage

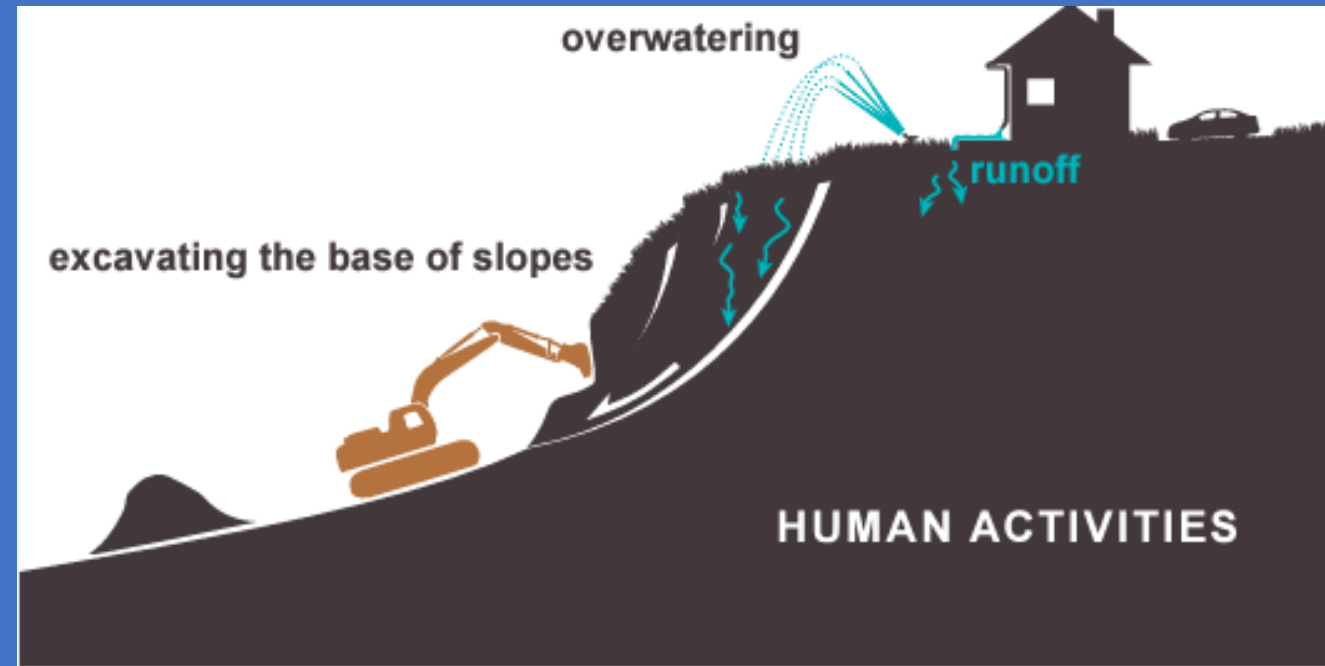


Image Source: [wdnr.wa.gov](http://wdnr.wa.gov)



# Frequently Flooded Areas

1. Add Floodplain Habitat Assessment – Endangered Species Act compliance
2. Minor revisions to WSMC 15.28
  - A. Floodway definition
  - B. Add special flood hazard areas

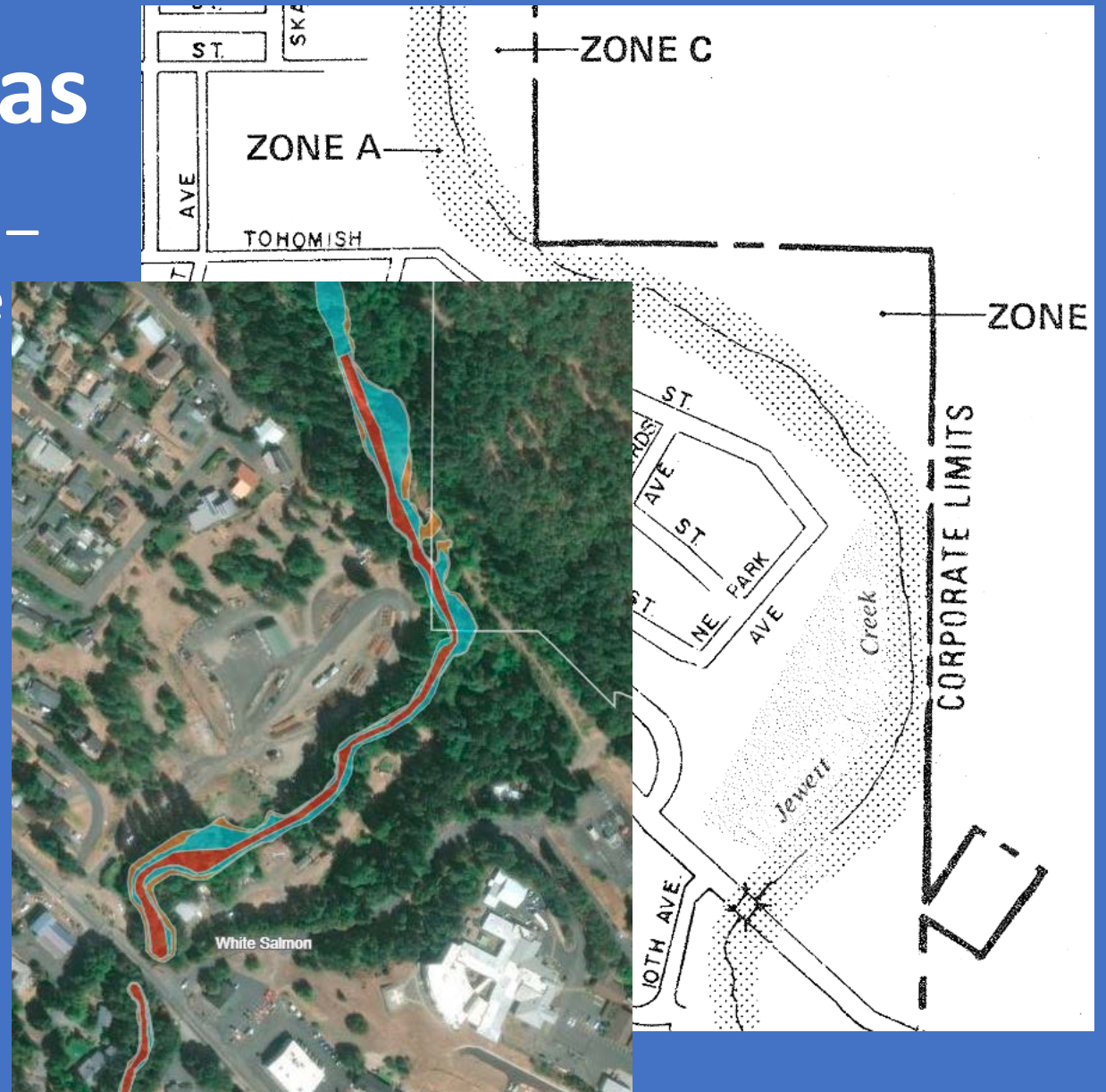


Image Source: FEMA.gov,  
<https://map1.msc.fema.gov/firm?id=5303050005A>

# Wetlands

1. Add isolated buffer provision (buffers separated by public road or rail)
2. Update wetland buffer table shifted away from a land use intensity table
  - A. Add minimization measures
3. Add intrusions in buffer allowances



Image Source:

<https://www.mariaruthbooks.net/mariaruthbooks/2019/6/14/washington-lakes-lost-and-found>

# Anticipated Timeline of Key Events

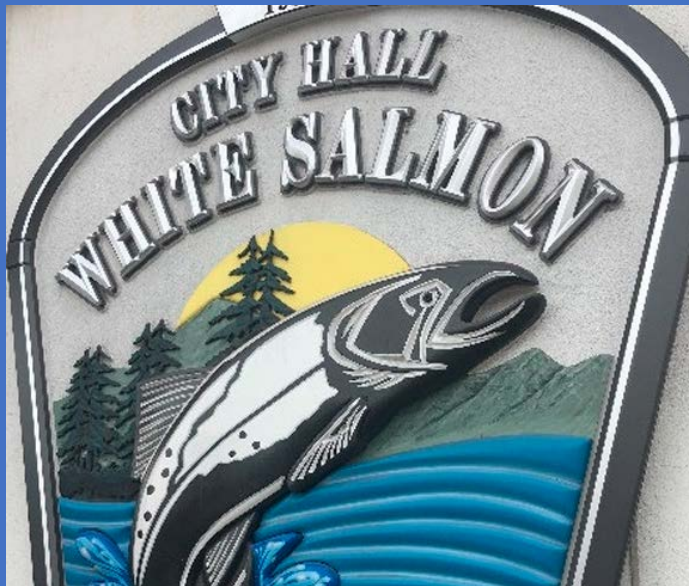
- City Planning Commission Meeting – August 23, 2023
- City public comment period – Late August – Late September, 2023
- City public hearing – September 13, 2023
- Respond to Public Comments – October 2023
- Planning Commission Recommendation – October 2023
- City Council adoption of the CAO – Early November 2023

*\*All dates are tentative*

# Additional information

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Questions?