



**Mason County:**



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Scope of Assistance:

Prior to the policy review meeting, Mason County staff, PSAT staff and AHBL agreed on a scope of services for the regulations to be reviewed. The following are the areas of emphasis that the County staff directed the consultant team to pursue:

- ◆ Review the Draft Master Development Plan (17.60 – 17.61)
- ◆ Review the Small Parcel Stormwater Site Plan Requirements
- ◆ Review the appropriate portions of the Development Regulations relating to vegetation and impervious surfaces
- ◆ Propose a system of application of LID that could be used in MDPs
- ◆ Prepare draft thresholds for native vegetation
- ◆ Prepare a memo discussing a variety of LID protection levels

This direction resulted in review of the following Mason County codes and standards by the consultant team:

- ◆ MCC 14.44 – Excavation and Grading
- ◆ MCC 11.04 – Forest Practices Moratorium
- ◆ Draft MCC 17.60 & 17.61 – Master Development Plans
- ◆ MCC 16.21 – Performance Subdivisions
- ◆ MCC 16.23 – Cluster Subdivisions
- ◆ Title 17 – Zoning

The policy review meeting with Mason County staff occurred on June 29, 2006. Present at the meeting were representatives from Taylor Shellfish Farms and Otak, in addition to Mason County staff. At the meeting, County staff directed the consultant team on the content of the desired technical assistance. This direction resulted in the preparation of several work products to be reviewed by the County at the regulatory amendments meeting on September 13, 2006. An outline of these work products is presented below in a topical manner with the full text of the updates attached separately.

Work Products:

1. Clear and Grade Ordinance

The consultant team prepared a draft Clear and Grade Ordinance for Mason County, based on the CTED Model, that included references to Best Management Practices found in the Washington State Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual (2005) and the various Integrated Management Practices found in the Puget Sound Action Team's Low Impact Development Technical Guidance Manual (2005). The draft Clear and Grade Ordinance, Title 18, was intended to replace the existing MCC 14.44 Excavation and Grading and contains a number of the exemptions allowed under MCC 14.44.

2. 17.31 – Landscaping in the Belfair UGA



During the policy review meeting, the County requested additional native vegetation requirements that would be applicable only to urban areas. The consultant team identified MCC 17.31 as the most appropriate section to place stand alone native vegetation requirements for the Belfair UGA, and MCC 17.17 for the Allyn UGA. The new amendments include a table that provides a minimum amount of native vegetation needed for each zoning designation. This table includes minimum amounts that do not necessarily increase the stringency of regulations for each zone, but rather a format for future LID regulations within the Belfair UGA.

### 3. 17.17 – Landscaping in the Allyn UGA

As noted above, additional native vegetation requirements were added to the existing Chapter 17.17. Applicable regulations adapted from the Chapter 17.31 were also included in the amendments of MCC 17.17, since this chapter does not yet contain requirements for landscaping. Establishing landscaping and native vegetation codes for the Allyn UGA will hopefully lead to the creation of a framework for development within the Allyn UGA that requires consideration for vegetation and promotes LID goals and objectives.

### 4. Draft 17.70 –Low Impact Development Chapter

In order to achieve consistency in low impact development standards throughout Mason County, the consultant team prepared a LID chapter that will establish general requirements for LID projects. These requirements were intended to be placed so that they will be applicable to projects within the variety of Mason County urban and rural growth areas. The LID chapter contains thresholds for native vegetation and impervious surfaces and emphasizes the preservation of pre-development hydrologic conditions. This document is also referenced within the proposed amendments to MCC 16.25 and 17.60.

### 5. Draft 16.25 – Low Impact Development Subdivisions

The consultant team found through the initial review process that the higher levels of flexibility and creativity that are often necessary to complete a successful LID project appear to be present within the existing MCC 16.21 Performance Subdivisions and MCC 16.23 Cluster Subdivisions. Additionally, Title 16 – Plats and Subdivisions creates a platform for a wide variety of subdivision types, including developments with designs and characteristics that differ from traditional development. In order for LID projects to utilize the benefits of alternative subdivision design, as found in MCC 16.21 and 16.23, the consultant team prepared LID Subdivisions MCC 16.25. As where MCC 16.21 and MCC 16.23 emphasize the provision of open space preservation and creative site design, MCC 16.25 provides density benefits and flexibility in dimensional requirements in exchange for LID design components and strategies. The proposed MCC 16.25 contains basic administrative and procedural regulations and directs the applicant to other sections of the code for most other specific standards.

### 6. Draft 17.60 – Master Development Plans

The County staff requested review and analysis of the draft MCC 17.60, with the intent of implementation of stronger LID standards and objectives throughout the chapter. At the time of review, the draft Master Development Plans (MDP) Chapter was being reviewed by the Planning Commission. To that end, the consultant team did not formally propose additional amendments to the MDP Chapter. Per the suggestion of the County staff, the consultant team prepared amendments to the MDP Chapter for the possibility of “sunsetting” the LID provisions of the MDP Chapter and replacing them with the draft Low Impact Development Chapter prepared for the regulatory amendments meeting. This was done with the intentions of resulting in a wholesale replacement of the LID provisions with quantifiable design standards that would be easily understood by both the development/engineering community and County staff charged with administering the code.

### 7. Public Benefit Tax Analysis



The Mason County staff directed the consultant team to research the extent to which the County might be able to provide a tax benefit to LID projects. The consultant team prepared a summary of the tax benefits made available through RCW 84.34. The summary is imbedded in a memo dated September 13, 2006.

Findings:

Mason County's existing development regulations are predominantly organized by zoning designation and the County's five urban/rural growth areas. Fragmentation of development regulations between zones is logical when the variety of land uses requires a broad spectrum of standards; however, it serves as a possible hindrance to regulations such as LID that are applicable for a variety of development types. The consultant team has placed a number of the proposed LID standards in separate, new chapters rather than within specific zones, in order to eliminate redundancy of standards within development regulations and inconsistencies between development types.

MCC 17.60 Master Development Plans has potential to be an appropriate implementation tool of LID for Mason County. The overall integration of LID into the requirements and planning of an MDP, as well as the reiteration of LID principles throughout the Chapter, create a set of regulations that will allow for a strong application of LID. One area of concern, as the chapter is currently written, is the minimum area of 100 acres in urban areas and 250 acres in rural areas required for MDP approval. Although these minimum area requirements are likely intended to limit the chapter's applicability, they may also potentially limit the applicability of the chapter's LID components to only significantly large projects. The MPD ordinance should not, therefore, be the only vehicle for encouraging and/or requiring LID in Mason County. As a remedy, Mason County is considering language that would establish LID standards for projects of any size.