

23 Aug 2010

City of Burien  
400 SW 152<sup>nd</sup> St, Suite 300  
Burien, WA 98166

**To:** David Johanson

**Re:** Updating the Shoreline Master Program

It is obvious that the City has labored long and hard, maybe, even anguished over how to create a Shoreline Master Program that works for the citizens of Burien. Commendation is in order. It has been made clear in recent city council meetings that much revision is needed to present a shoreline master program for the City of Burien that is ecologically sound, compliant with good science, equitable in real estate considerations, free from financial burden, and protective against increase in criminal activity. One would like to see that taxpayers money is well spent instead of going toward countless months in court possibly answering to litigants with the City defending its position taken in haste or made out of council members' lack of comprehensive information.

To begin with, fairness to property owners should mandate elimination of the "non-conforming" status designation and preserve existing building setbacks in perpetuity to any existing structure in its current characteristics or in the event of damage replacement construction. The point being: one cannot sell or get bank financing for replacement costs or a future buyer cannot procure mortgage funding for a residence or structure that has been declared "non-conforming." This would represent a gross imposed constraint of personal freedoms to move about and be self-determining, due to a governing body's decision. For criminals it is understood that restraint is required. For the general citizenry to be constrained in the freedom to transact the normal business of life, this is not appropriate. So, it is hoped that the "non-conforming" language is, by now, eliminated from the proposed SMP.

As for the "access to the shorelines" aspects of the proposed SMP, several thoughts of concern:

- 1) We have access to considerable shoreline already in place for the public, the jewel being Seahurst Beach (Ed Munro) Park, then there's Eagle Landing Park, and thirdly, Arbor Lake Park. Three parks with physical access to shorelines. Some cities have no waterfront access and would covet even one such similar park in their roster of public spaces. Essentially, we have a great deal of waterfront access for the public already in place.
- 2) Gaining more public access to shorelines is unnecessary and expensive. Shouldn't the tax dollars be spent for essential services:
  - a) Better crime response times and more police.
  - b) Curbing the spread of illegal drugs by funding educational and incentive programs, not to mention gang related crime.
  - c) Funding privately run "safe houses" for the abused.
  - d) Added funding to community food banks
  - e) Seeking to house released sex offenders away from residences and the vulnerable (NeighborhoodScan.com reports there are nine (9) released sex offenders in the 98166 zip code, and fourteen in the White Center zip code of 98146). For the size of the community this seems relatively high. Are

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the police and the monitoring agencies and individuals adequately funded to actually keep surveillance of these offenders? In consultation with a former neighboring city Chief of Police, I learned that the monitoring is extremely minimal or non-existent due to cost.

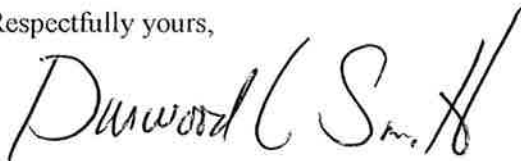
- f) Increase funding to assure our parks are safe at all hours from indigents, drug dealers/users, gangs, and other criminal element, camera surveillance and monitoring suggested and on-site law enforcement personnel recommended.

Additionally, I find it unthinkable to contemplate a public park on the shores of Lake Burien. The reason is that Ruth Dykeman Children's Center occupies considerable shoreline on the lake and the access vulnerability of the children who reside there is very high. Granted, the property is not gated, but the entrance opening to the grounds is minimized at the street approach and public visibility is a natural deterrent. However, due to a lengthy shoreline it would be difficult and expensive to guarantee the safety of the residents and staff. Public access would be extremely open were a park to be located anywhere on the shoreline of Lake Burien. I would also think that the liability to the City would be extremely high if ever there were a criminal occurrence against any RDCC resident due, in part, to the location of a public park.

There's more but space and time don't allow. You've heard all this before. The safety of the city is far more important than thinking about spending money on "one more park", adding one more place to further burden the police and where crime can possibly develop. Frankly, as I see it, in all good conscience, another park, particularly on Lake Burien is a bad idea. Quality of life means peaceful existence without threat and fear of the criminal element. Isn't this the highest goal community officers can be commended for? Farther down the line, much farther, comes amusement amenities as an enhancement to daily life.

I commend the City for a stunning shoreline park at Seahurst Beach and Eagle Landing Park. And with a little effort, Arbor Lake Park could be enhanced to a place where it could be a real "stand-out". Simply put, we have enough physical public access shoreline. I gladly join you in sound and compassionate financial management and in making the most of the waterfront parks we already have.

Respectfully yours,



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cc: City Council Members, Planning Commission Members, Ruth Dykeman Children's Center, Scott Kimerer (Chief of Police), Lake Burien Shore Club