



**Agenda for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/95353411299> or by calling (253) 215- 8782 and entering Meeting ID 953 5341 1299. Please see the Public Comment & Decorum section at the end of this agenda for information on options to make public comment.

This meeting may also be viewed live in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center.

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Approval of Minutes:

Public Comment:

Agenda Items:

Welcome new Commissioner Zhou

Chair Election

Critical Area Ordinance – Presentation Community Development Director, Eric Baker and Commission discussion

Other Business: Next meeting Thursday, October 2, 2025

Adjournment:

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

The city desires to allow a maximum opportunity for public comment. However, the business of the Planning Commission must proceed in an orderly, timely manner. The purpose of a Planning Commission meeting is to advise on subjects prescribed by the City Council; it is not a public forum.

Public comment may be made in-person from the microphone, remotely via Zoom or by

phone during designated portions of the meeting. To speak during the meeting via Zoom, press the Raise Hand button near the bottom of your Zoom window or press *9 on your phone. Please refrain from raising your hand until the Chair has announced that the Commission has opened the public comment portion of the meeting. Your name or the last three digits of your phone number will be called out when it is your turn to speak. When using your phone to call in, you may need to press *6 to unmute yourself. Speakers will be allotted 3 minutes per individual, unless revised by the chair. Comments shall be made, first giving the speaker's name and address. Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.

Instead of making oral comments, written comments may be submitted to the Planning Commission at PlanningComments@gigharborwa.gov.

All remarks shall be addressed to the commission as a body and not to any specific commissioner. All speakers shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations with regard to any commissioner, or any member of the staff or the public.

There will be no demonstrations during or at the conclusion of any public comment. These guidelines are intended to promote an orderly system of holding public meetings, to give every person an opportunity to be heard and to ensure that no individuals are embarrassed by voicing their opinions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



"THE MARITIME CITY"

**Minutes for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Open Public Hearing
Thursday, August 21, 2025 at 5:30 P.M.
Council Chambers**

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Burcar called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners Martin, Nasseh, Snodgrass and Tessicini were present. Commissioner Jordan was excused

Staff: Community Development Director, Eric Baker; Principal Planner, Katharine Shaffer; Senior Planner, Nestor Guevara; Associate Planner, Kyle Hendricks and Planning Technician, Michelle Thomas

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Move to approve minutes from August 7, 2025 (Tessicini/Snodgrass)

Vote: Unanimously approved

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None.

Agenda Items

Development Code Phase 1 Proposal to adopt a new Zoning Map, Land Use Map, and updated Development Code to ensure consistency with the City's recently adopted 2024 Comprehensive Plan. – Principal Planner Shaffer discussed the proposed changes

Public Comment

Mike Shipman – Gig Harbor

Recommendation

Motion: Move that the City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission recommend approval of the Phase 1 Development Code as presented by Staff at this evening's hearing is moved on to City Council for approval. (Tessicini/Martin)

Other Business

Parking study update. No meeting September 4, 2025, next meeting Thursday,

September 18, 2025 will be introducing new Commissioner and election of Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Nasseh will not be at the next meeting.

Adjournment 6:19 p.m.

Michelle Thomas

Michelle Thomas
Planning Technician

Critical Areas Ordinance Code Update

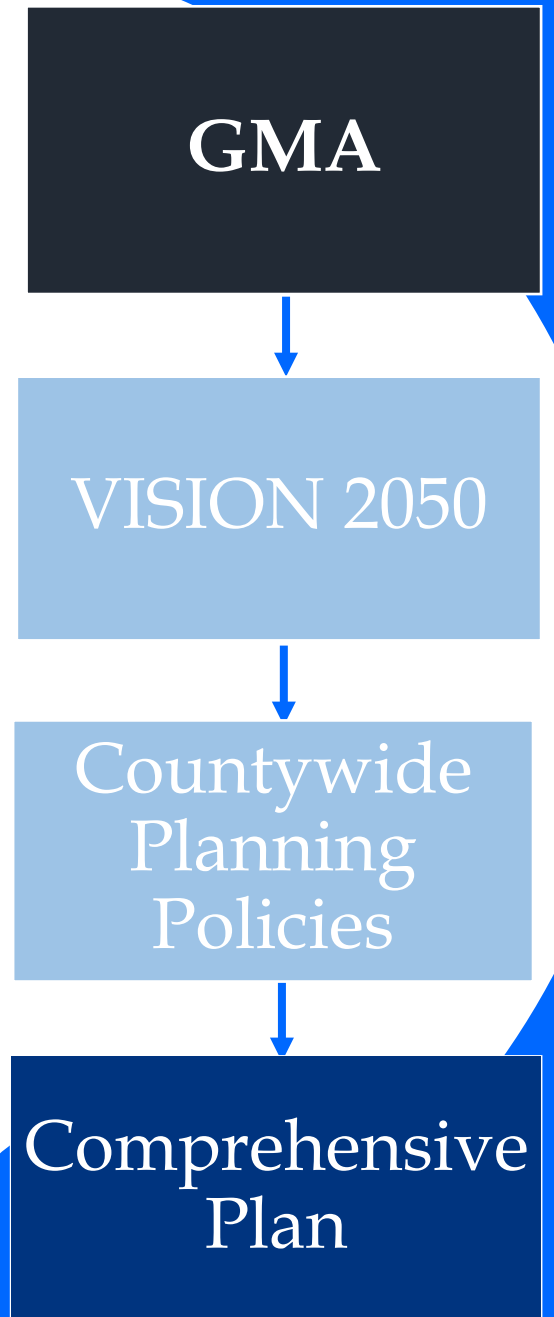
Planning Commission
September 18, 2025

Eric Baker, Community Development



WHY UPDATE?

- Per the Growth Management Act (GMA), a review and update is required every 10 years.
- City Code must be reviewed again best available science (BAS) to ensure “no net loss” of functions and values.
- BAS is primarily driven by state agency guidance (previously more grass roots review)
- Due December 31, 2025
- To ensure proper public outreach we will likely be a few months late (Q1-Q2 2026).



WHAT IS COVERED?

Multiple natural features:

- Wetlands
- Streams/Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas
- Steep and Unstable Slopes
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs)

Wetland and Stream protections get the most attention due to impacts on development potential.



UPDATE PROCESS?

- City contracted with an environmental consultant (Farallon/Grette)- **April 2025**
- Project team reviewed current code against current BAS to determine gaps – **June 2025**
- Based on gap analysis, team prepares draft code amendments – **Fall 2025**
- Public outreach to stakeholder groups, developers and the community – **Fall 2025**
- Planning Commission and Council consideration – **Winter 2025/Early 2026**



WETLANDS

They come in types based upon quality and habitat.

- **Category I.** Estuaries, bogs, priority plant or fish species, large systems.
- **Category II.** Variety of habitat but often connected to streams or other wetland systems.
- **Category III.** Most common. Smaller in size but isolated, often single habitat like deciduous trees (e.g. alders)
- **Category IV.** Isolated, very small, low habitat like grassy areas, brush.



WETLANDS

Protections for wetland feature itself but also areas around each (buffers).

Wetland Features

- Impacting a wetland requires analysis and mitigation and depending on the size, approval from federal agencies (Army Corp).
- On-site mitigation is preferred but off-site is also an option (wetland banking)
- Development usually avoids impacting wetlands due to process and cost.



WETLANDS

The function and values of the wetland is protected through buffers.

Wetland Buffers

- Buffers are areas to be undisturbed by development ranging from 25 to 250 feet in width based on category and intensity of proposed use.
- Based on site-specific analysis, mitigation is allowed through buffer averaging, buffer restoration and buffer reductions.
- Setbacks from the buffer is also required for structures (15 feet).



STREAMS

Protections again based on stream type broken into segments (DNR Mapping).

- **Type 1 (Type S)** – Shorelines of the state. Lakes and year-round, fish-bearing often directly connected to the shoreline.
- **Type 2 and 3 (Type F)** – Large streams, year-round and fish-bearing.
- **Type 4 (Type Np)**- Smaller, year-round without fish habitat.
- **Type 5 (Type Ns)** – Intermittent streams without fish habitat.

Any work within the stream banks is regulated by WA Fish and Wildlife



STREAMS

Like wetlands streams are protected by buffer areas.

- Depending on the stream type, these buffers currently range from 25 to 200 feet.
- With site-specific analysis to maintain “no net-loss”, mitigation opportunities similar to wetlands are available.
- Buffer averaging, buffer restoration and buffer reductions and reasonable use exceptions are examples.
- Also, like wetlands, a 15-foot building setback is also required.



STEEP SLOPES

Development on or near slopes is also covered.

Development must either:

- Be located the same distance away from the slope as the vertical height of the bluff, or
- Submit a geotechnical report from a certified engineer with mitigation measures to reduce this distance (common).

A 10-foot building setback is also required.

Similar geotechnical reports are required is within a seismic hazard area,



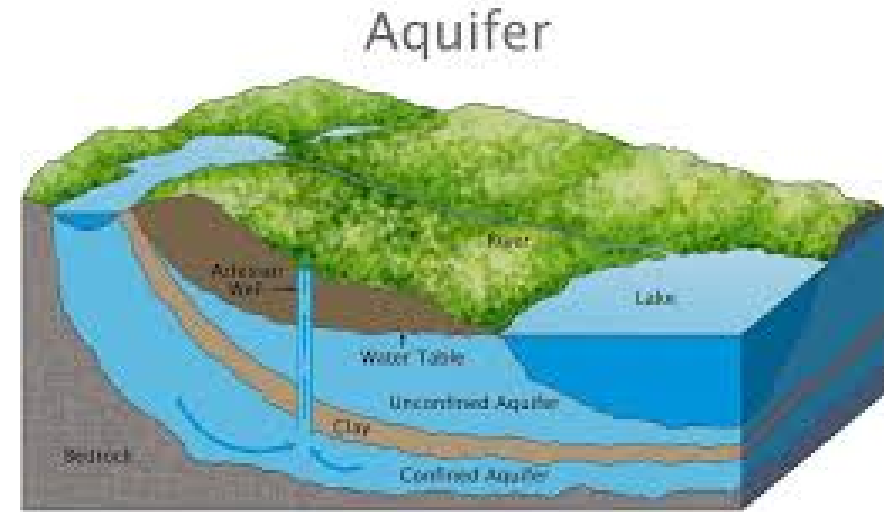
FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

- FEMA-driven to protect public and private property.
- Areas established by Flood Insurance Administration (Flood Insurance Rate Map).
- Requires development with flood hazard areas to meet construction standards of GHMC 18.10.
- These standards are consistent with federal requirements and best management practices.



CRITICAL AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS (CARAs)

- Intended to protect aquifers from contamination from land uses.
- Includes mapped aquifers but also wellhead radiuses.
- Requires uses handling or processing hazardous or solid waste to prepare a Hydrogeologic Assessment prior to development.
- Assessment contains mitigation measures in case of emergency.



EXPECTED DRAFT CONTENTS

- Some expanded wetland buffers
- Expanded stream buffers for both fish and non-fish streams.
- Clarified mitigation measures and process.
- Updated definitions and references.

May impact development of vacant land and redevelopment/expansion of existing uses.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

<https://www.gigharborwa.gov/198/Planning>

Eric Baker
Community Development Director

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