

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

**Description of Proposal:** City of Issaquah Parks and Recreation Department proposal for a Master Site Plan (MSP) to guide the long-term development of a 15.5 acre park. The project site is divided by Issaquah Creek and the East Fork of Issaquah Creek and two pedestrian bridges are proposed to connect parcels separated by the creeks. Park features include a trail system, informal play area, seating/gathering area, picnic shelters, restroom facility, P-Patch garden, and re-use of existing historical buildings. The proposal also includes stream restoration to reduce channelization and confinement of the creeks by creating widened high flow terraces, removing existing armoring, adding large woody debris (LWD), creating off-channel habitat, and restoring riparian vegetation.

**Proponent:** City of Issaquah

<b>Contacts:</b>	City of Issaquah Parks and Recreation Dept. P.O. Box 1307 Issaquah, Washington 98027 Attn: Anne McGill, Margaret Macleod	Andy Mitton The Berger Partnership 1721 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave N Seattle, WA. 98109
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**Permit Number:** PLN11-00054 Confluence Park Master Site Plan (MSP)

**Lead Agency:** City of Issaquah

**Location of Proposal:** 595, 695 Rainier Blvd. N, 525 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW

**Determination:** The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

**Comments:** This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2). The lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days. Written comments may be submitted between **December 22, 2011** and **January 4, 2012**. The Responsible Official will reconsider the DNS based on timely comments and may retain, modify, or if significant adverse impacts are likely, withdraw the DNS.

**Appeals:** You may appeal this determination by filing a Notice of Appeal with the Issaquah Permit Center located at 1775 12th Ave. NW, Issaquah between **January 5, 2012** and **January 18, 2011**. Appellants should prepare specific factual objections. Contact the SEPA Responsible Official to read or ask about the procedures for SEPA appeals.

Appeals of this SEPA determination must be consolidated with appeal of the underlying permit, per IMC 18.04.250.

**Notes:**

- 1) This threshold determination is based on review of the Master Site Plan sheets including the site survey, critical areas existing conditions and restoration plans, grading plan, utility plan, Phase I, II, III, and IV plans, architectural drawings, and sun-shadow analysis received August 17, 2011; Project Narrative received August 17, 2011; environmental checklist received August 17, 2011; *Wetland and Streams Critical Areas Assessment* (Anchor QEA, August 2011) received August 17, 2011; Memorandum on the Wetland and Streams Critical Areas Assessment received November 8, 2011; and other documents in the file.

- 2) Issuance of this threshold determination does not constitute approval of the permit. The proposal will be reviewed for compliance with all applicable City of Issaquah codes, which regulate development activities, including the Land Use Code, Critical Area Regulations, Building Codes, Clearing and Grading Ordinance, and Surface Water Design Manual.

**Findings:**

1. Master Site Plan Concept – Site Development Constraints - Confluence Park consists of four adjacent City-owned parcels totaling 15.5 acres. Most of the park land has been acquired through grants or private donations with stipulations that the park be limited to “passive recreation use” and open space. In addition, site improvements are constrained by the 100-foot stream buffer requirements on Issaquah Creek and the East Fork Issaquah Creek. Therefore, the Master Site Plan includes limited physical site improvements, no active recreation features (no ball fields), and proposes significant enhancement/restoration of the on-site streams and riparian buffer area. The major park elements include: two pedestrian bridges, a trail system, informal play area, seating/gathering area, picnic shelters, restroom facility, P-Patch garden, and re-use of existing historical buildings. The stream enhancements include creating widened high flow terraces in the stream channel, removing existing armoring, adding large woody debris (LWD), creating off-channel habitat, and restoring riparian buffer vegetation.
2. Phased Development - The Master Site Plan (MSP) is intended to guide the long-term development of the park. Phasing plans are included in the MSP application. Details of park construction features were not available at the MSP permit stage so the potential impacts of future park improvements could not be fully evaluated. Therefore, additional environmental review and shoreline permits will be required for each project implementation phase. Detailed information to evaluate potential environmental impacts and mitigation will be required as necessary for each project phase.

For example, a wetland area has been identified in the west area of the park site. The wetland boundaries have not been formally delineated, although the wetland boundaries have been generally verified and the wetland rating and required buffer width identified. A formal wetland delineation and rating will be required for the park phase which includes the wetland area. If park improvements impact the wetland or wetland buffer, mitigation will be required with the approval of the project phase.

3. Critical Areas – The mainstem Issaquah Creek and the East Fork of Issaquah Creek are Class 1 streams, identified as “shorelines of the state” subject to the City’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP), and Class 1 streams require a 100-foot buffer. The primary impact to the streams and stream buffers would be from the proposed bridges and trail construction. The bridge abutments would be outside the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the streams, although the Master Site Plan doesn’t include bridge construction details. The bridges would shade the stream channel, approximately 400 SF on the mainstem and 200 SF on the East Fork. To mitigate for shading impacts, the proposal includes 1,800 SF of “channel creation” (3:1 mitigation ratio) where in-channel high flow terraces would be created by removing existing bank armoring and fill to reduce channelization and confinement of the creek. The proposed trail system largely avoids encroachment into the stream buffer, but impacts 3,300 SF of buffer area as necessary to provide public access. To mitigate for the trail impacts, 3,300 SF of buffer enhancement (1:1 mitigation ratio) is proposed. It is important to note that stream and stream buffer impacts are limited to what is necessary to provide for public access and enjoyment of the shoreline, and provision of public access is one of the primary State and local goals in the Shoreline Master Program (SMP).

4. Enhancement/restoration of Critical Areas – The MSP includes significant environmental enhancement/restoration of Issaquah Creek, the East Fork Issaquah Creek and the associated riparian buffer areas. The extensive enhancement/restoration is not required mitigation, because the park improvements would have only minor impacts on critical areas (see discussion above). The proposed enhancement/restoration would greatly improve existing ecological functions and address historic conditions which have limited properly functioning conditions. The *Wetland and Streams Critical Areas Assessment* (Anchor QEA, August 2011) prepared for the Confluence Park MSP summarizes habitat limiting factors for Issaquah Creek and the East Fork, as identified and evaluated in detail in the City's *Stream Inventory and Habitat Evaluation Report* (Parametrix 2003). The report identifies limiting factors including existing bank armoring and channel confinement preventing floodplain connectivity and the lack of riparian vegetation and large woody debris (LWD). Major improvements to existing habitat conditions proposed in the Confluence Park MSP include: creating off-channel habitat to reconnect the stream to two historic oxbows, creating a widened high flow terrace in the stream channel and removing existing bank armoring to reduce channelization and confinement of the stream channel, adding large woody debris (LWD) to improve channel complexity, and enhancing riparian buffer vegetation. The proposed habitat improvements are also consistent with and implement the City's *Stream and Riparian Areas Restoration Plan* (Watershed Company 2006), which ranked the Confluence Park site as having some of the best ecological restoration opportunities in the City.

The Master Site Plan includes significant voluntary enhancement/restoration (beyond required mitigation) as a major component of the proposal, including approximately:

- 1.5 to 2 acres of riparian buffer enhancement
  - 10,000 to 12,000 SF of in-channel high flow terrace
  - 100 to 150 linear feet of stream armoring (riprap) removal
  - 4,000 to 5,000 SF of off-channel habitat reconnection at the North Oxbow
  - 10,000 SF to 12,000 SF of off-channel habitat reconnection at the South Oxbow
  - Removal of existing structures encroaching into stream buffer – A farmhouse, barn and shed associated with the Tolle Anderson farmstead are currently located in the 100-foot stream buffer, as close as 10-25 feet from the East Fork Issaquah Creek. All of these existing structures will be removed and the farm building will be re-built outside the stream buffer and the barn is proposed to be re-built as a picnic shelter only partially within the outer stream buffer. The buffer area where the existing structures will be removed will be restored with native riparian buffer vegetation.
5. Endangered Species/ESA – Chinook salmon and Steelhead are listed as threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Coho salmon as a species of concern. These species are present in Issaquah Creek and the East Fork. The proposed stream restoration would greatly improve existing conditions and would benefit local and migratory wildlife, including ESA-listed species. In particular, creation of the high flow terraces, off-channel habitat, and installation of large woody debris (LWD) will provide refuge for salmon during high flow events and the riparian buffer enhancement will increase shading to lower water temperatures and provide detritus input.

Areas of the park site are located within the 100-year floodplain. There are minimal park improvements proposed in the floodplain and importing fill would require a flood hazard permit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires a habitat assessment with flood hazard permits to demonstrate compliance with ESA. Habitat assessments will be completed with

the SEPA determination and permitting of the project implementation phases, when there is more specific detailed information about park improvements and potential impacts on ESA-listed species.

6. Cultural/Historic Resources – The Tolle Anderson farmstead includes a farmhouse (ca. 1900), barn and garage/shed. The Anderson Farm is not listed on the King County Landmark List, but the property has been determined eligible for National Register listing by the Washington State Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The existing Anderson farm buildings are deteriorated and will require re-construction. Because the buildings are presently sited within the stream buffer, the farm building and barn will be reconstructed further away from the creek, using similar massing and cladding as the original structures to maintain the historic character.

The park site also contains the 1890 Ek Farmhouse, which is not listed in the King County Landmark List but is included in the State's Historic Site Inventory. The EK house will be retained for future adaptive re-use for public park programs.

No site-specific archaeological or cultural resources survey or inventory has been completed for the MSP. A survey will be conducted with the first project phase to identify potential cultural resources in areas where there may be grading/ground disturbance for park improvements. The survey will identify whether cultural resources are present and provide measures to minimize construction impacts.

**Mitigation Measures:** The Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance is based on the checklist received August 17, 2011 and supplemental information in the application. The following SEPA mitigation measures shall be deemed conditions of the approval of the licensing decision pursuant to Chapter 18.10 of the Issaquah Land Use Code. All conditions are based on policies adopted by reference in the Land Use Code.

1. Additional environmental review is required for each project implementation phase. Details of park construction were not available with the Master Site Plan (MSP) application, so the potential environmental impacts of future park improvements could not be fully evaluated. Information necessary to fully evaluate potential environmental impacts and mitigation shall be required with subsequent applications for each project phase.

**Responsible Official:** Peter Rosen  
**Position/Title:** Environmental Planner  
**Address/Phone:** P.O. Box 1307, Issaquah, WA 98027-1307 (425) 837-3094  
**Date:** 12/21/2011  
**Signature:** 

cc: Washington State Department of Ecology  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Mark Hinthorne, David Favour, Peter Rosen – Issaquah Planning Department  
Issaquah Building Department  
Issaquah Public Works Department  
Issaquah Parks Department