| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Tammy Miller |
| **To:** | Malakoutian, Mo; Stokes, John; Zahn, Janice; Hamilton, Dave; Lee, Conrad; jnieuwehuis@bellevuewa.gov; King, Emil A.; Robinson, Lynne; PlanningCommission |
| **Subject:** | Requesting Support for WDFW"s Aid for Environmental Protections for the Riparian Zones in the Wilburton/BelRed Subarea Growth Plans |
| **Date:** | Wednesday, November 6, 2024 4:34:06 PM |
| **Attachments:** | WDFW-habitat-committee-riparian-mapping-june2024.pdf |



Dear Council Members and city officials,

Please consider the recommendation that the Department of Fish and Wildlife has put forth in their letter regarding the environmental protection for the city of Bellevue. They are the experts on this issue and as good leaders, please consider and evaluate their guidance. The impact of over building and populating an already dense area will have long term consequences that cannot be undone. Once these trees are cut down and streams are polluted, like they are today, the future of this once desirable city and the livelihood of current residents and future generations will surely diminish. Bellevue is slowly declining and becoming a concrete jungle.

Seeing ducks and ducklings swimming in the stream, watching blue herons fly overhead and eagles and hawks soring high in the sky is quite a sight to see. We don't want these beautiful sights of nature to disappear from our neighborhoods and other neighborhoods in Bellevue. Even seeing the remains of crustaceans and fish carcasses is encouraging, as it is a reminder that nature is still being preserved in this growing city. The stream is a live and still full of life. These things make living in Bellevue special. I live between NE 8$^{th}$ and Bel Red Road and is encompass by both Kelsey Creek and Golf Creek. Please don't take that away just to build more homes. What is great about living in Bellevue is all the parks, trails and nature that surrounds us are being preserved. We can be a growing city without destroying what makes this city a great place to call home! Growth is good when it is done with thorough and thoughtful consideration for both people and the environment in mind.

Please consider the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recommendation regarding the environmental protections within Bellevue, particularly focusing on tree retention, wildlife habitat, and riparian zones, which includes the riparian zones in our Wilburton /BelRed/NE 8$^{th}$ Street subarea as noted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The presence of priority fish and bird species in Kelsey Creek and Goff Creek streams are sighted on private properties in our neighborhood and warrants this status.

As highlighted by the WDFW, urban ecosystems and riparian zones are integral in supporting wildlife and mitigating the impacts of development. Their proposal to integrate its latest riparian management guidance into Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan zoning update is critical. Attached is WDFW's latest report for environmental protections guidance for riparian restoration projects, based on Best Available Science (BAS), and includes strategies such as utilizing Site Potential Tree Height (SPTH) at 200 years and Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) instead of traditional stream

typing. These strategies are designed to ensure that our riparian zones can sustain long-term ecological function and resilience. It's essential that these plans align with recommendations from the WDFW and relevant state legislation to ensure environmental protections, equity, and resilience. Doing so later may be costly and ineffective.

1. **Tree Retention and Canopy Expansion**
   To enhance tree protections in riparian zones, a recommended 3:1 tree replacement ratio, and meeting the "WDFW's Riparian Data Engine: An Aid for Identifying and Prioritizing Riparian Restoration Projects" 38% tree canopy retention for riparian management zones. Expanding the tree canopy is critical for mitigating urban heat, providing shade, and preserving ecosystem health.
2. **Riparian Zone Protections**
   The WDFW's latest guidance on riparian management, based on Best Available Science (BAS), includes innovative strategies using Site Potential Tree Height (SPTH) at 200 years and establishing Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) rather than traditional stream typing. These guidelines recommend stream RMZs of 187–196 feet to support long-term ecological function, particularly in areas with fish and other priority species, as seen in Kelsey Creek and Goff Creek, which flow through private properties in our neighborhood.
3. **Equity Considerations**
   As we address growth, it's important to prioritize equity by reducing heat disparities, following King County's strategies. This will ensure that our plans address the needs of all community members and provide relief in the most heat-vulnerable areas.

The recommended stream RMZs, ranging from 187-196 feet as per WDFW's BAS recommendations, will significantly enhance protections for trees and wildlife, particularly in areas like Wilburton. The presence of salmon in Kelsey Creek, as noted in the city of Bellevue's recent records, and priority bird species further underscores the need for robust environmental protections.

I urge the planning team to adopt these BAS-informed recommendations and integrate them into the Comprehensive Plan update and subarea plan updates. Doing so will not only safeguard our urban ecosystems but also ensure that Bellevue remains a city that values and protects its natural habitat and its ecological environment.

Thank you for your consideration and attention.

Sincerely,

Tammy Miller
Wilburton/BelRed/NE 8th Street Resident

# Riparian Data Engine: An Aid for Identifying and Prioritizing Riparian Restoration Projects

Keith Folkerts and Robin Hale
Habitat Program

Washington Department of FISH & WILDLIFE

# Overview

15-minute presentation:

- Context
- Who is involved?
- Why are we building this tool?
- What is this tool?
- Who are we building it for? How do we anticipate they will use it?
- How has it been received thus far?
- When will it be ready?

15-minute dialog/Q&A

# Who is Involved?

Legislature

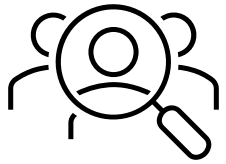
Groups Convened by the Legislature

WDFW Staff

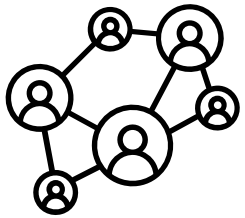
Ken Pierce, Robin Hale
Margen Carlson,
Chris Conklin …

Consultant Team: ESA

Mike Leech, Spencer Easton…



Focus Group of Practitioners



Key Users

# Context

We anticipate increasing interest and investment in riparian restoration.

Our tool delivers greater bang for the buck.

# Why are we Building this Tool?

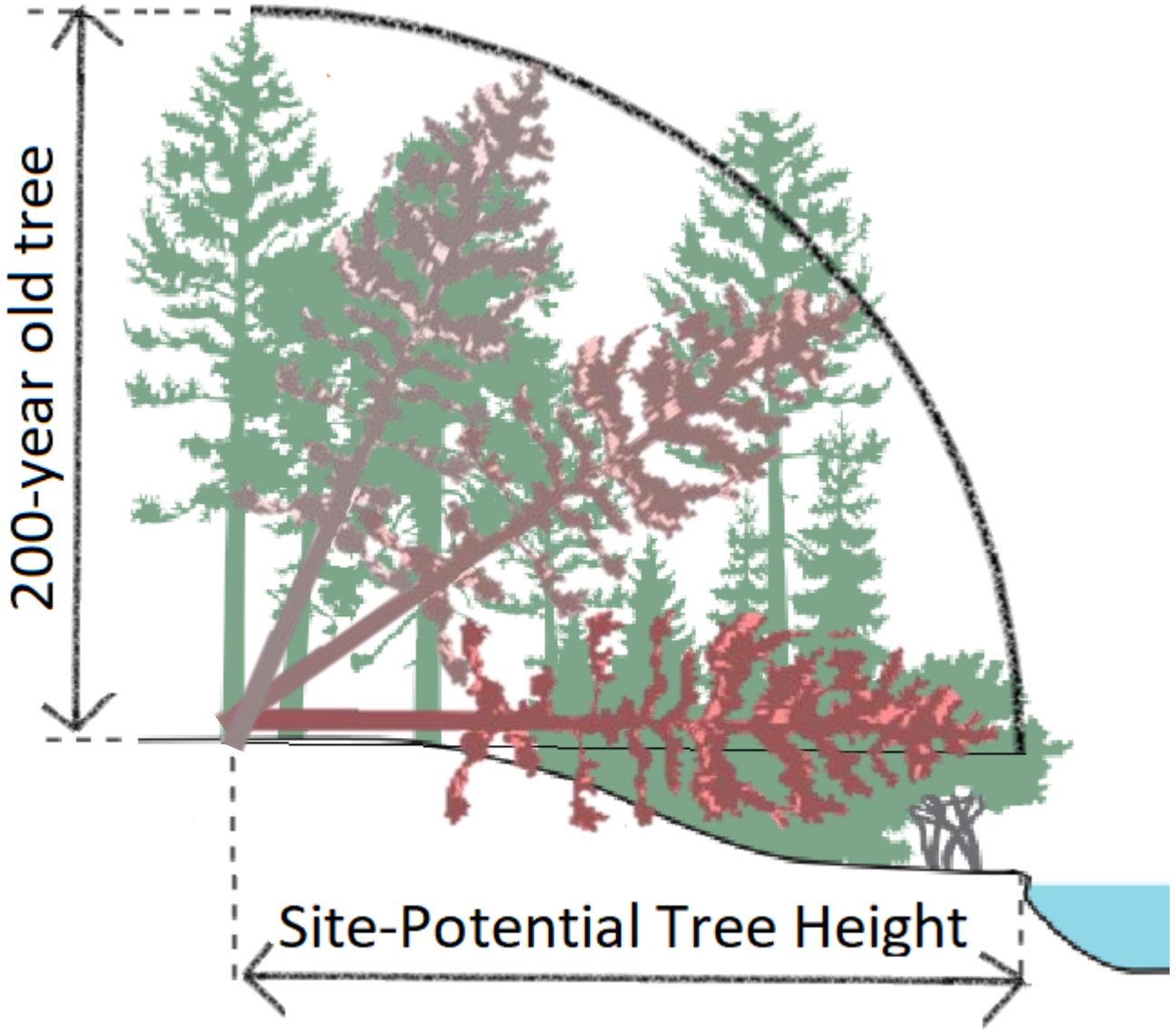
- Purpose (proviso language):

  *…assess the status of current riparian ecosystems…identifying any **gaps in vegetated cover** relative to a science-based standard for a fully functioning riparian ecosystem and comparing …[gaps] to water **temperature impairments**, known **fish passage barriers**, and status of **salmonid stocks**.*

# Proviso language

*"…relative to a science-based standard for a fully functioning riparian ecosystem…"*

Site-potential tree height of a 200-year-old tree ($SPTH_{200}$) is the width from which full riparian functions are provided.

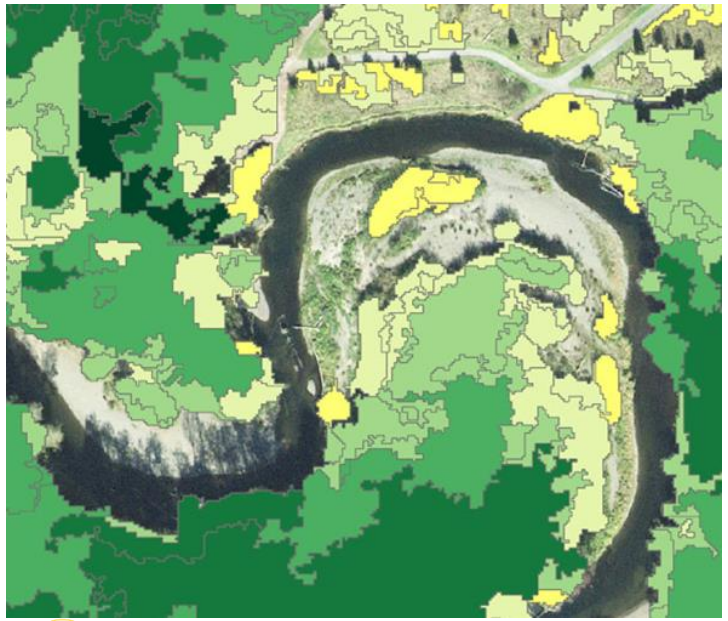


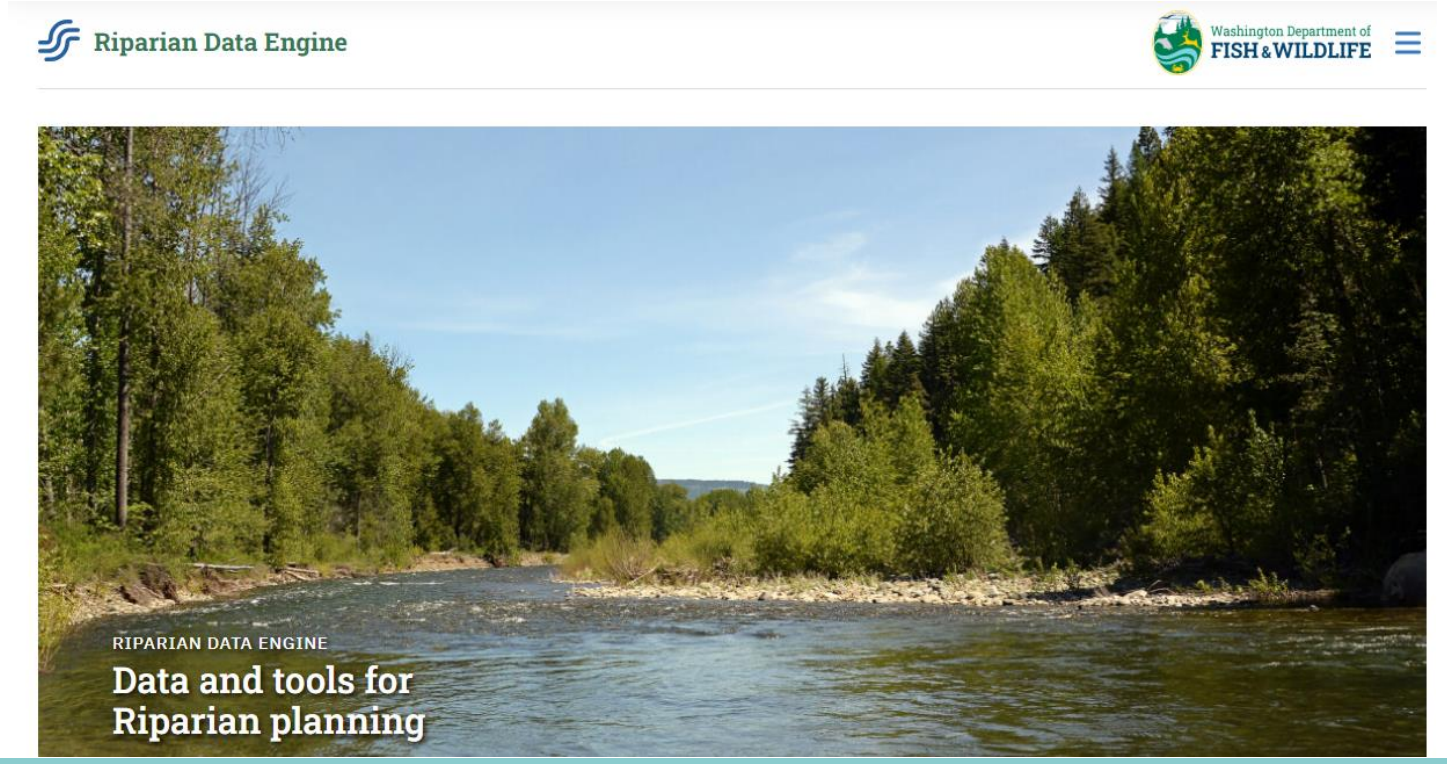
# What the Two Provisos Fund

The Legislature passed two provisos for ~$1M/year for 3 years for WDFW to:

- Create new data (example: High Resolution Change Detection)
- Create a system to store, retrieve, and aggregate data (“Riparian Data Engine”)

**Land cover data**





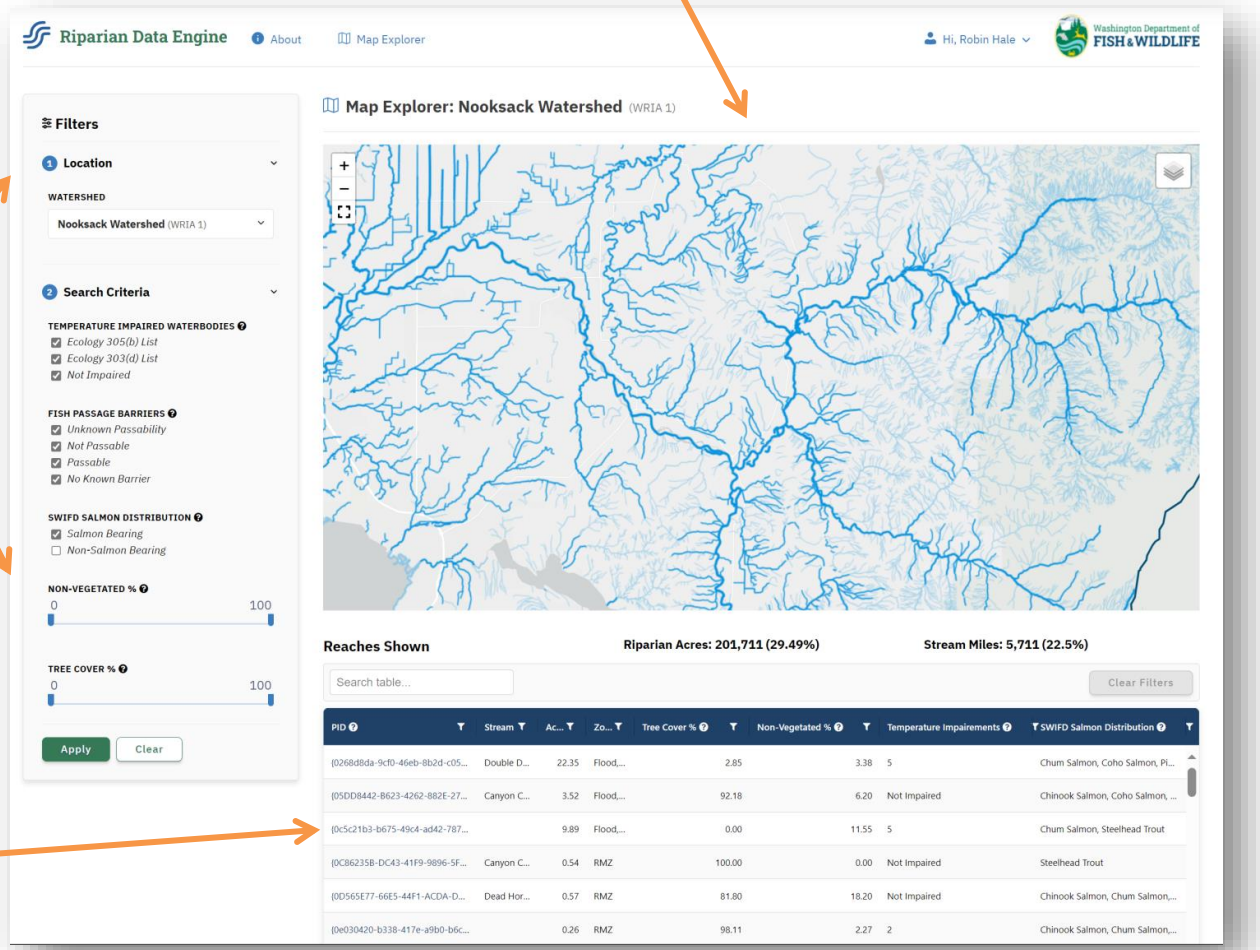
# What is this Tool?

This is an online decision support tool to help users identify and prioritize riparian areas for restoration projects.

*Interactive maps*

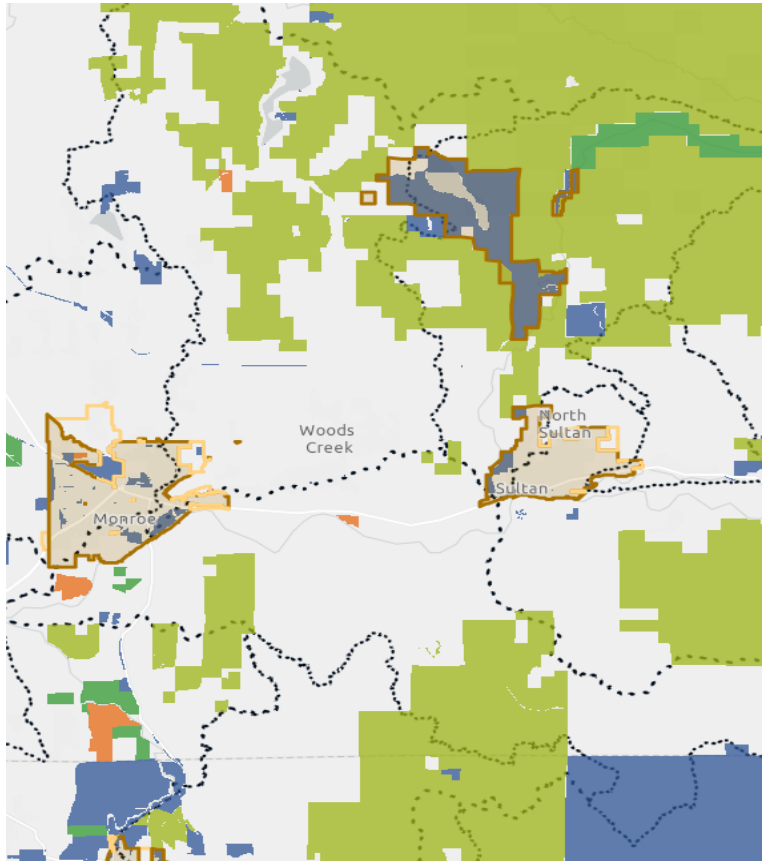
*Customizable filters*

*Data details and summaries*



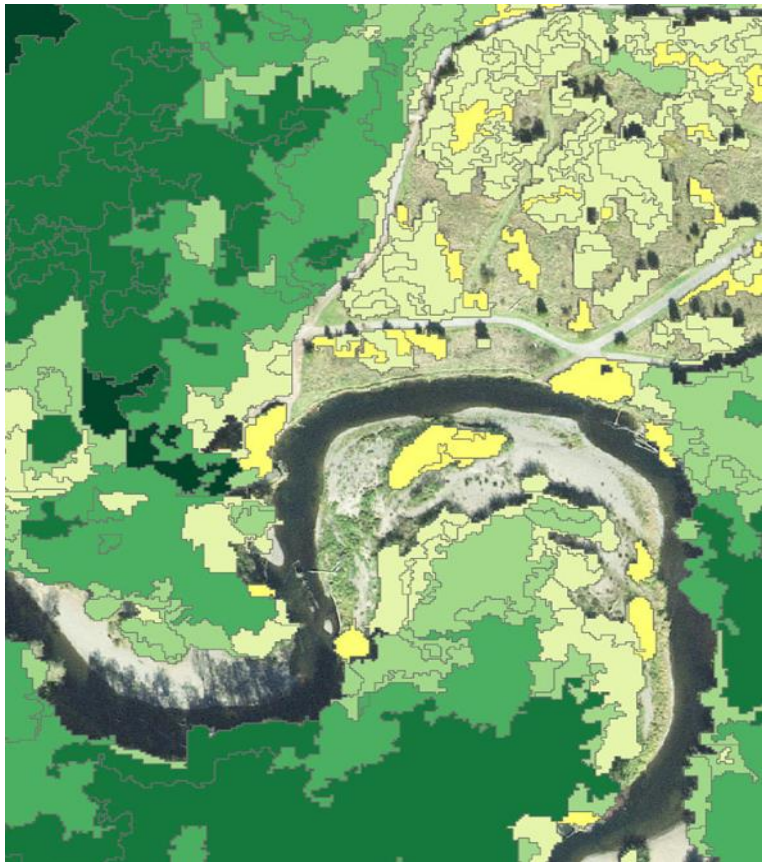
# Data we are Compiling for the Tool

**Boundaries:** Public lands, cities, parcels, land use, watersheds…

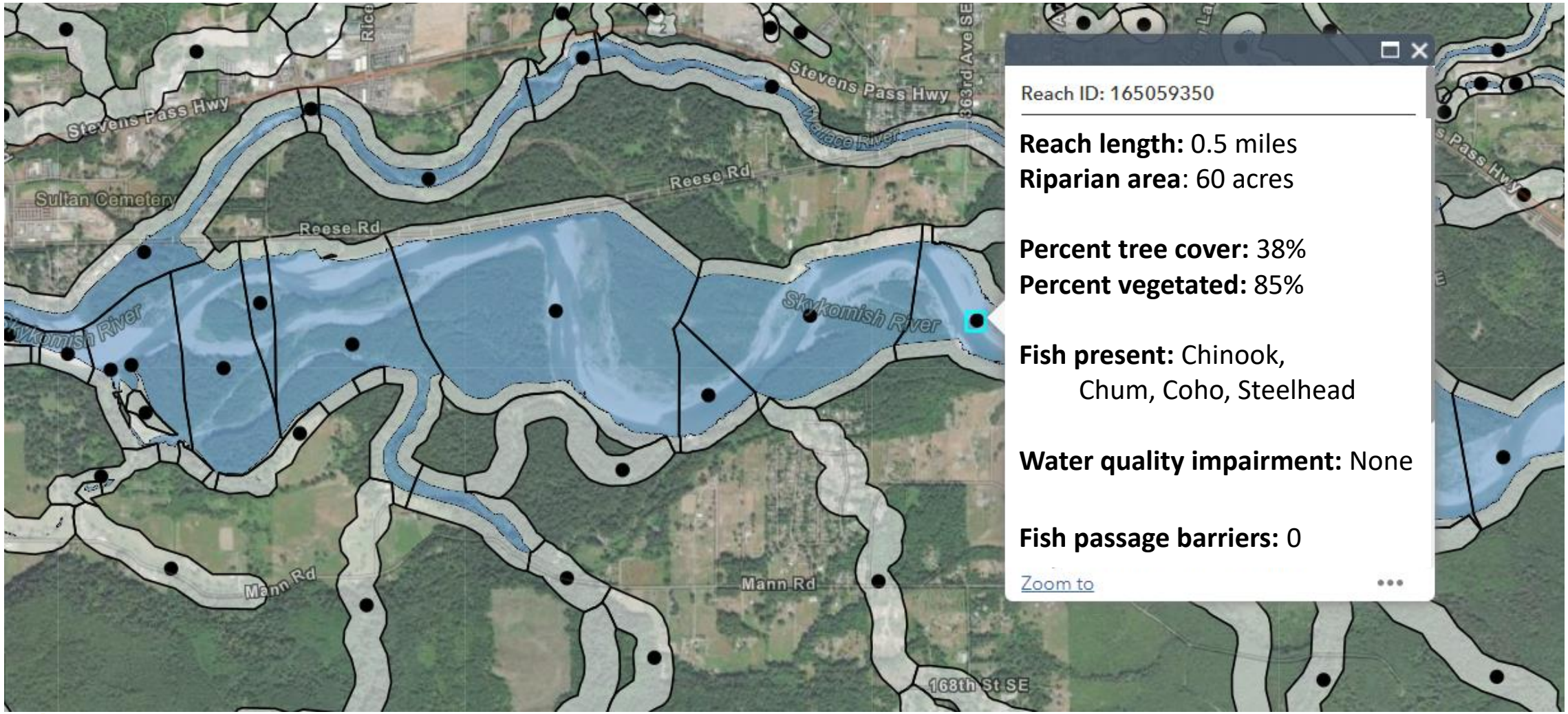



**Fish & streams:** Stock presence, passage barriers, water quality...


**Land cover:** Type (tree, shrub), vegetation height, change over time.



# Riparian Management Zones (RMZs)



# Land cover data & Canopy metric

**Land cover**

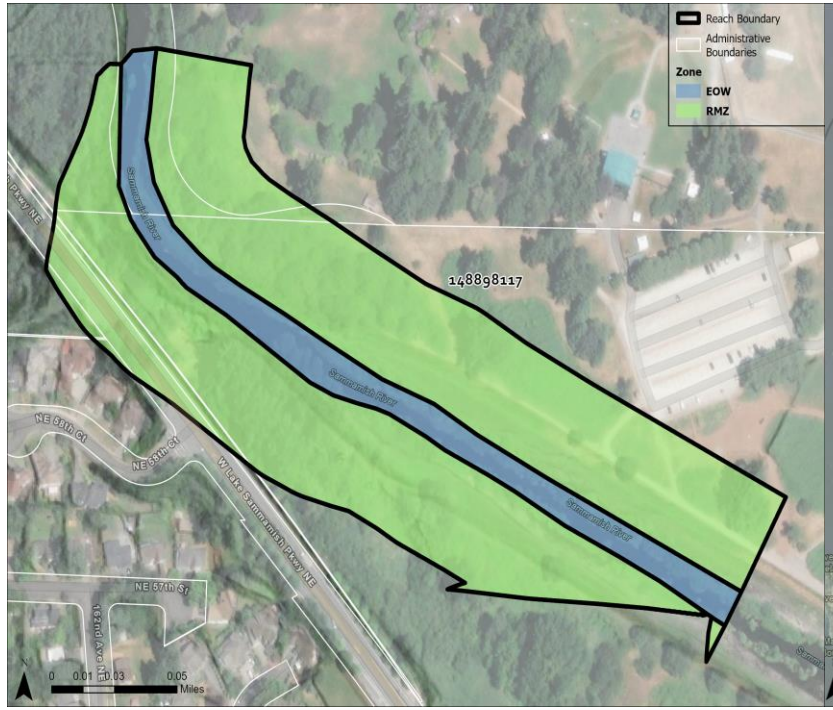
- Non-Vegetated
- Herbaceous
- Shrub
- Trees
- Open Water


**Canopy metric**

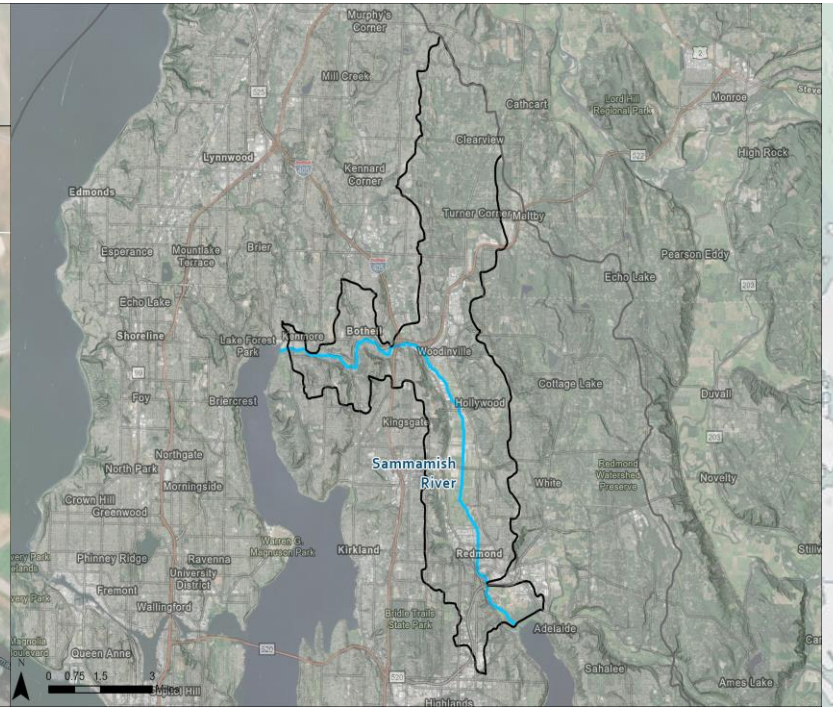
- 0.0 - 0.14
- 0.14 - 0.40
- 0.40 - 0.63
- 0.63 - 0.82
- 0.82 - 1

# Showing Results at Multiple Scales

**Reach**

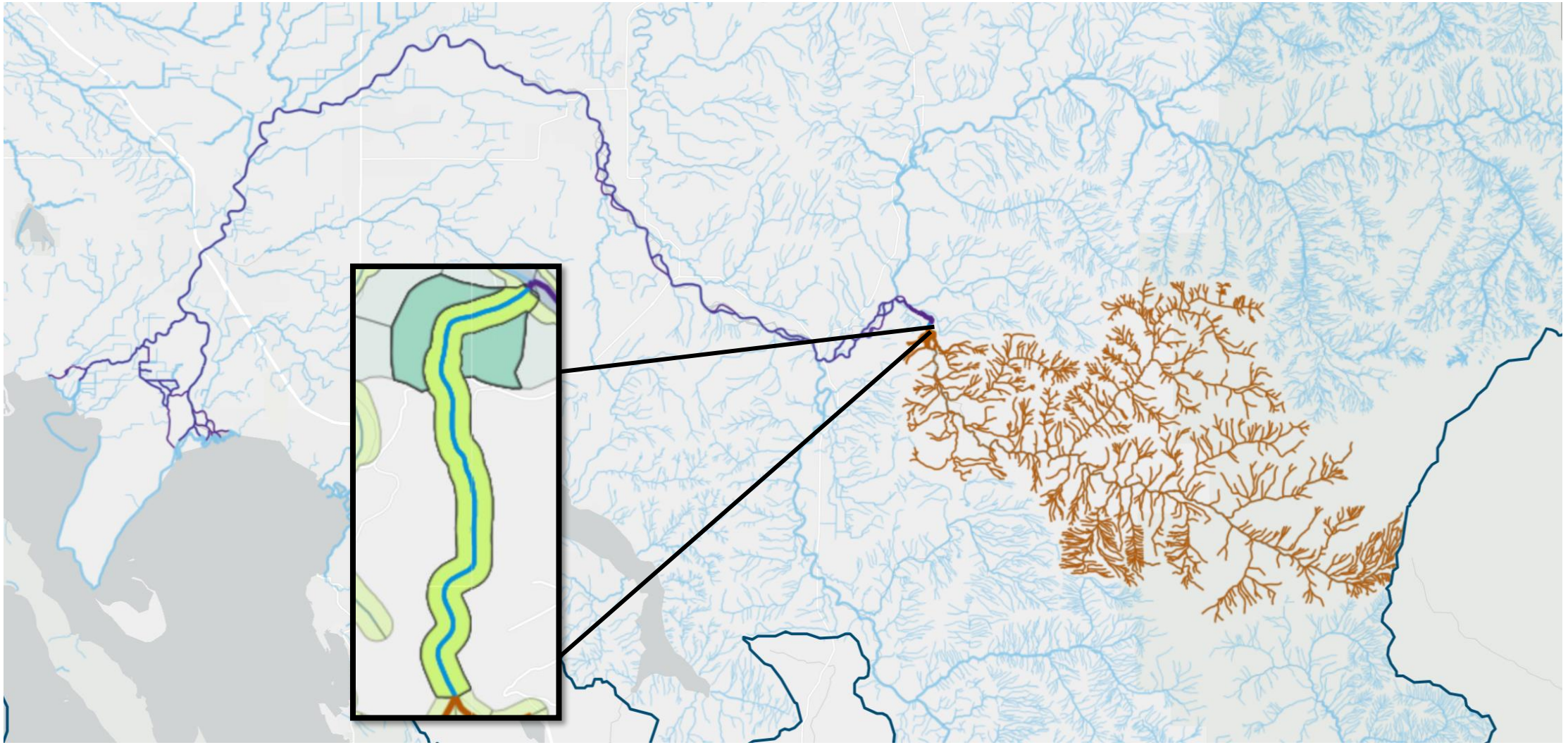



**Sub-watershed or River**




**WRIA**

# Upstream/downstream connections




Department of Fish and Wildlife

# Who are We Building This Tool for?

Local riparian restoration practitioners

- Salmon recovery lead entities
- Conservation District staff

Regional entities involved with riparian restoration

- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- State Conservation Commission

Policy level: Legislature, Riparian Roundtable

# How do We Anticipate This Tool will be Used?

Local riparian restoration practitioners

- Identify landowners to target with incentives
- Identify importance of opportunistic projects

Regional entities involved with riparian restoration

- Develop criteria to effectively distribute funds

Policy level: Legislature, Riparian Roundtable

- Right-size incentives to match the challenges.

# How has it been Received Thus Far?

More-than-anticipated participation in workshops

- Conservation District staff
- Salmon Recovery Lead Entities
- Separate workshop for tribal leaders and their staff

We selected members of a focus group to help us build a tool that is relevant to their needs.

# Building a Useful Tool: Listening to our Stakeholders

*Nov 2023* — **Workshop #1**

- Introduce project
- Identify use cases
- Milestones and next steps

*Feb 2024* — **Workshop #2**

- Refine personas
- Get feedback on initial design concepts

*Apr 2024* — **Card Sorting Activity**

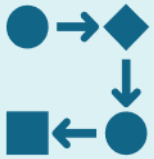
- Prioritize use cases and requirements

*May 2024* — **Workshop #3**

- Present card sort findings
- Get feedback on dashboard designs and prototypes

**Deliverables:**


Personas

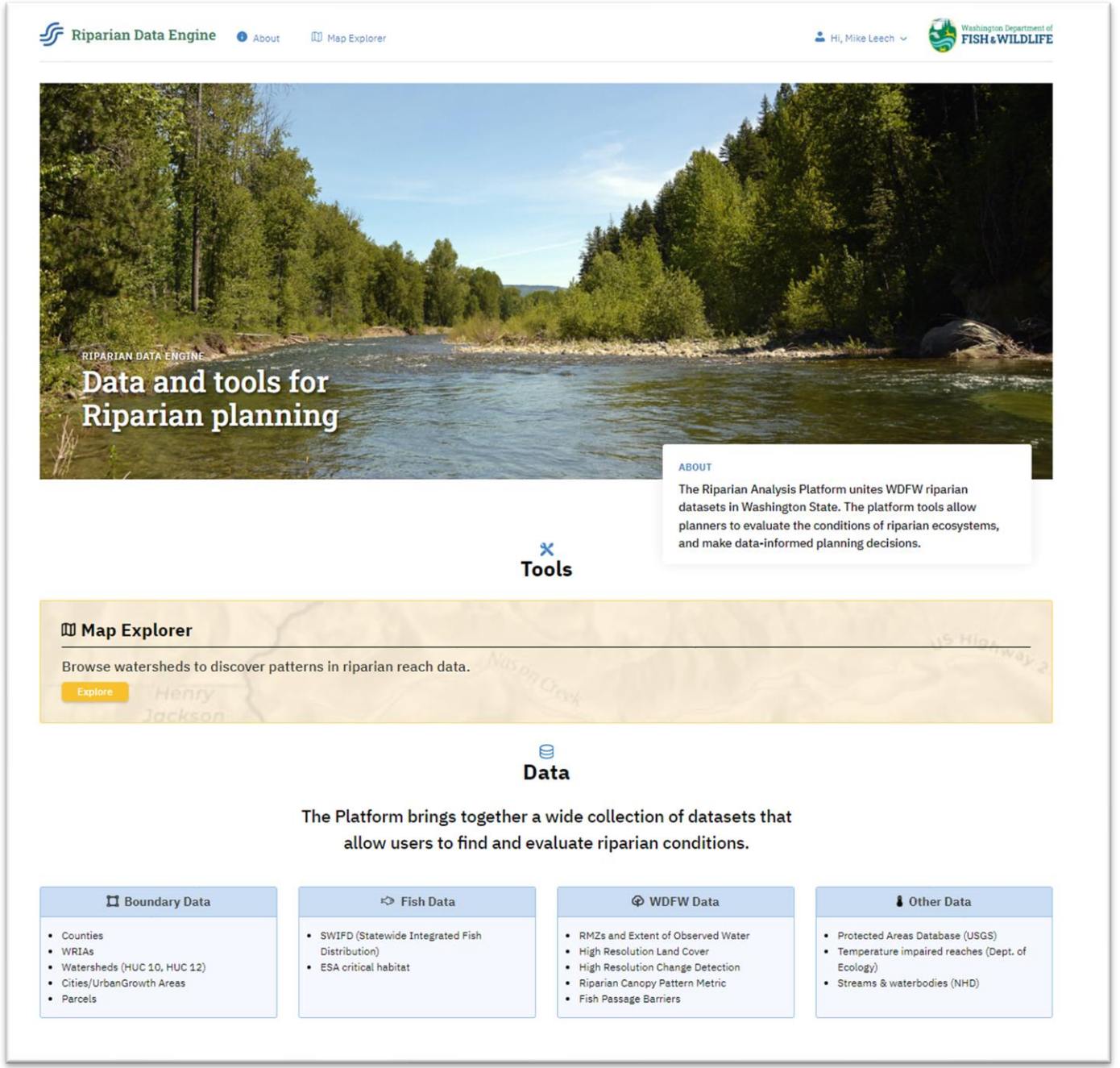

Use Cases


Requirements


Prototypes

# Next Steps

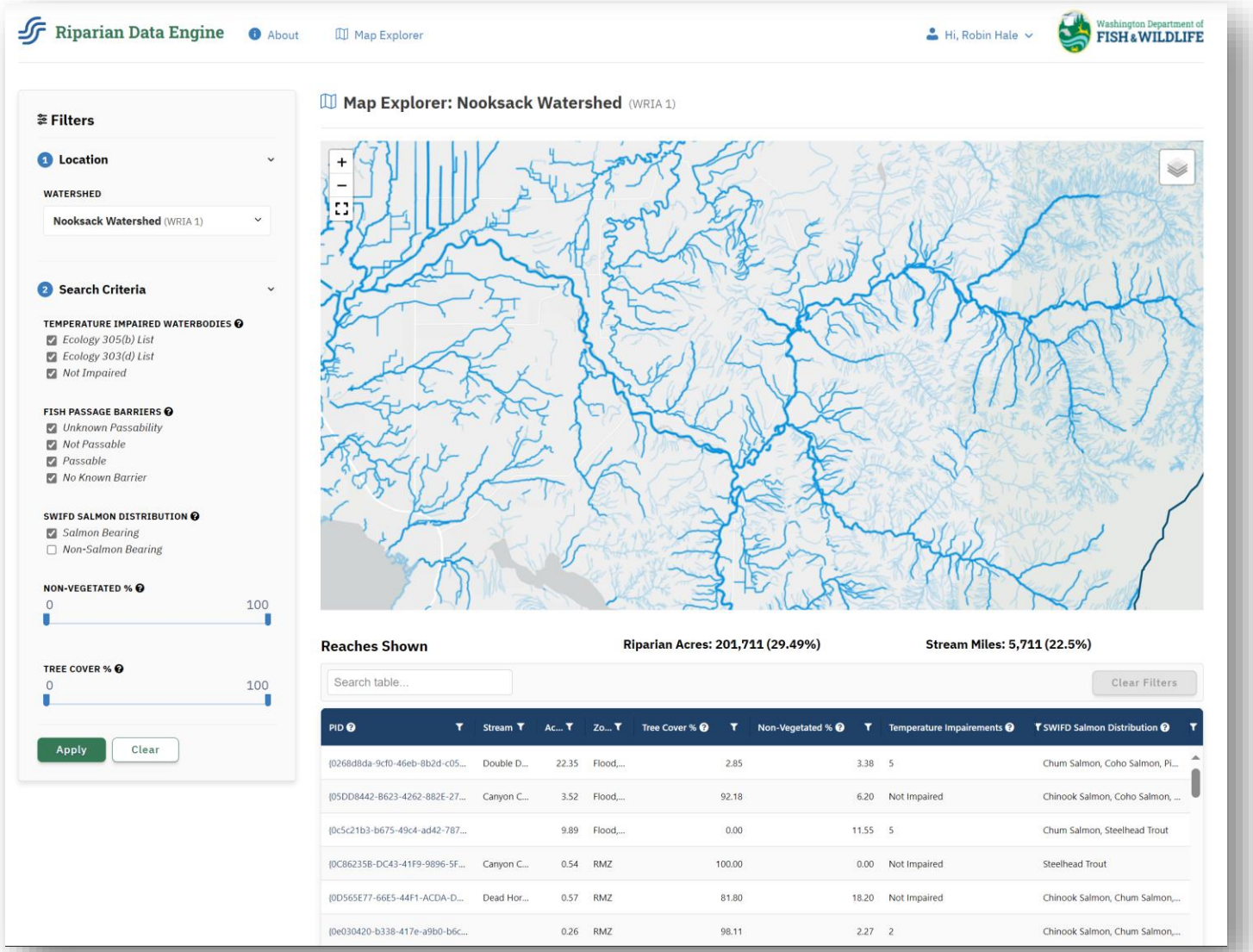
- Continued improvements
  - Additional land cover and change data.
  - Expanded analysis capabilities.
- Continue to seek feedback
  - Continue dialog with tribes and stakeholders.
  - Design it to inform key users' most critical questions.
  - Improve user interface.
- Deploy it to key stakeholders.
- Seek ongoing funding.



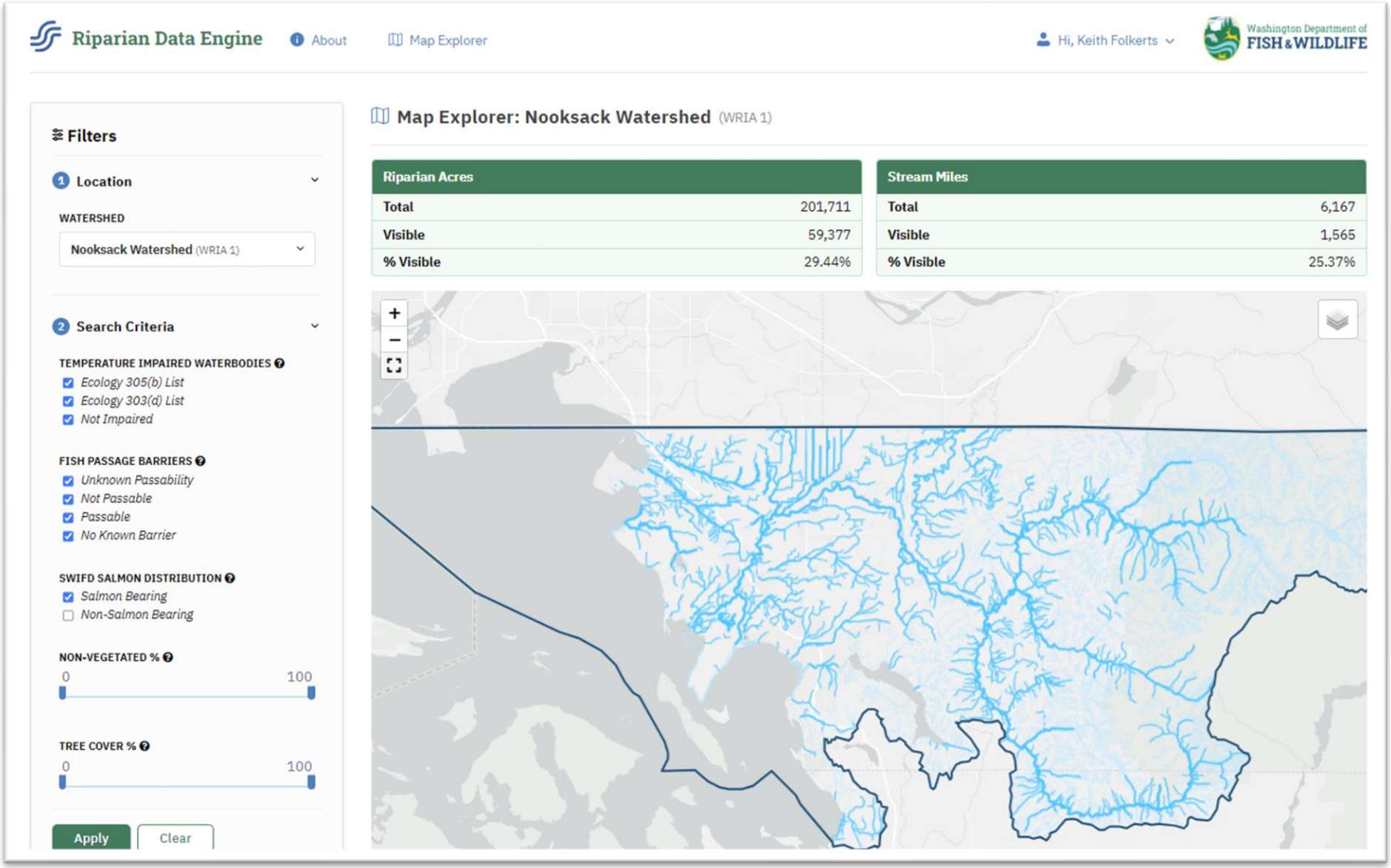
# When will it be Ready?

We anticipate this will be available to practitioners a year from now.

Our proviso and contract with ESA runs through June 2025.



# Questions and Dialog



| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | phyllisjwhite@comcast.net |
| **To:** | PlanningCommission; Malakoutian, Mo; Bhargava, Vishal; Goeppele, Craighton; Cuellar-Calad, Luisa; Khanloo, Negin; Ferris, Carolynn; Lu, Jonny; avillaveces@bellevuewa.gov |
| **Cc:** | King, Emil A. |
| **Subject:** | WDFW Comments Regarding the Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendments |
| **Date:** | Wednesday, November 13, 2024 4:26:40 PM |
| **Attachments:** | WDFW Bellevue Wilburton Plan Comments.pdf |



Dear Chair Goeppele, Vice-Chair Cuellar-Calad, Planning Commissioners, and Deputy Mayor Malakoutian,
Attached is the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's recommendations regarding the Wilburton/NE 8th Subarea Street Plan which includes the following:
"...Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Plan, such as "S-WI-9. Protect and enhance streams, drainage ways, and wetlands in the Kelsey Creek Basin," and "S-WI-10. Prevent development from intruding into the floodplain of Kelsey Creek..."
and
We request that the city incorporate WDFW's Best Available Science (BAS) for riparian management zones (RMZs), including the Site Potential Tree Height at 200 years (SPTH200) standard. It includes our Wilburton neighborhoods north of NE 8th, between BelRed Road and NE 8th, 134th, 132nd, and 130th.
Sincerely,
Phyllis White
Bellevue Resident

State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 4
Region 4 information: 16018 Mill Creek Blvd, Mill Creek, WA 98012 | phone: (425)-775-1311

October 31, 2024

City of Bellevue
Josh Steiner
450 110th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

**WDFW Comments Regarding the Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendments**

Dear Mr. Steiner,

On behalf of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the city of Bellevue's Wilburton Vision Implementation Land Use Code Amendment. Within the State of Washington's land use decision-making framework, WDFW is considered a technical advisor for the habitat needs of fish and wildlife and routinely provides input into the implications of land use decisions. We provide these comments and recommendations in keeping with our legislative mandate to preserve, protect, and perpetuate fish and wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of future generations – a mission we can only accomplish in partnership with local jurisdictions.

**Fish and Wildlife Resources and Recommendations:**

Congratulations on the recent land use code updates proposed to successfully implement the Wilburton Subarea Plan. Integrating green building incentives, open space provisions, and other sustainable development measures reflects Bellevue's commitment to fostering a vibrant and environmentally conscious community.

To further strengthen these efforts, we recommend incorporating WDFW's Best Available Science (BAS) for riparian management zones (RMZs), including the Site Potential Tree Height at 200 years ($SPTH_{200}$) standard. Think of $SPTH_{200}$ like a measuring cup for riparian ecosystems— it provides the exact "recipe" for buffer width determination, ensuring adequate filtration, erosion control, and shade requirements are met to protect water quality and aquatic habitats, especially for sensitive species like Chinook salmon in Kelsey Creek.

Our data shows that a 196 ft RMZ (or 'buffer' width) is needed in the Kelsey Creek area to protect all critical ecosystem functions and values. According to our BAS management recommendations, a minimum of 100 feet is required to filter most pollutants, whereas buffers under 100 feet, such as the current 50-foot width, are insufficient for safeguarding water quality and ecosystem integrity. Utilizing WDFW's BAS can help Bellevue align with its interlocal agreement commitments and provide lasting environmental benefits.

WDFW's BAS also underscores the importance of protecting all streams, not just those with fish presence, and prioritizing the retention of mature vegetation over compensatory mitigation planting. In addition to supporting fish life, healthy riparian vegetation stabilizes stream banks, prevents erosion, and provides the necessary shade to maintain cool water temperatures. These ecosystem functions are challenging to replace, particularly those provided by mature plants. With climate change increasing the likelihood of severe heat and storm events, protecting vegetated buffers will help absorb floodwaters, mitigate future high-flow conditions, and maintain cooler water temperatures, ultimately contributing to community resilience.

While a broader code update is anticipated in 2025, establishing protections now ahead of increased development activity will help ensure that the Wilburton area's streams continue to provide essential ecosystem services while allowing development in suitable areas. Riparian areas can also serve as open spaces that enhance community character, offering recreational areas and natural spaces for residents to enjoy. By preserving adequate RMZs delineated using the $SPTH_{200}$ standard, Bellevue can foster a more resilient, livable, and ecologically connected Wilburton area.

Incorporating our recommendations helps align this plan with BAS standards (WAC 365-195-900) and further demonstrates Bellevue's leadership in sustainable urban development. Our recommendations further align with the policies within the Wilburton/N.E. 8th Street Plan, such as "S-WI-9. Protect and enhance streams, drainage ways, and wetlands in the Kelsey Creek Basin," and "S-WI-10. Prevent development from intruding into the floodplain of Kelsey Creek."

We would be happy to assist in providing additional information on WDFW's recommendations or explore opportunities to integrate these environmental and community benefits into future planning. Please also see the WA Department of Ecology's funding opportunity, the Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Grant. See also NOAA's grant opportunity, Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants.

Thank you once again for your dedication to enriching Bellevue's natural and built environments. Please feel free to reach out to our Reginal Land Use Lead for further collaboration (Morgan Krueger, Morgan.Krueger@dfw.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Timothy Stapleton

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Region 4, Habitat Program Manager

CC:
Morgan Krueger, Regional Land Use Lead (Morgan.Krueger@dfw.wa.gov)
Kara Whittaker, Land Use Conservation and Policy Section Manager (Kara.Whittaker@dfw.wa.gov)
Marian Berejikian, Land Use Conservation and Policy Planner (Marian.Berejikian@dfw.wa.gov)
Stewart Reinbold, Assistant Regional Habitat Program Manager (Stewart.Reinbold@dfw.wa.gov)
Bethany Scoggins, Habitat Biologist (Bethany.Scoggins@dfw.wa.gov)
Jesse Dykstra, Habitat Biologist (Jesse.Dykstra@dfw.wa.gov)

**From:** leesgt@aol.com
**To:** PlanningCommission; Council
**Subject:** Thoughts from a viewer of city meetings
**Date:** Tuesday, November 26, 2024 10:04:12 AM



Several weeks ago, I was in a City Council meeting and I noted that there was a power point included for the study session in the Meeting Details online. I was amazed and gratified to see it there. It allowed me to see the power point when I was struggling with some eye irritation. I was also able to look back and forth on the slides to remind myself of things shown and discussed. I know that the power points are only a moment in time and not firm information that will be in future considerations because of ongoing changes needed but, from a person trying to grasp what is being discussed and share to others, these power points are important to the genesis of these projects and share information that is important to fully understand what is being done. I know that I have used my iPad to capture some of the images at presentation time, I have noted others doing the same, and even watched Planning Commissioners do the same.

I have thought about mentioning the inclusion of the power points in the Details before and just not gotten around to it. Just didn't do it. I think this is a part of the way to provide transparency in the process of getting to the end. It shows the work and direction of the staff at the moment and connects it to the results at that moment in time. It shows the work being done and can affirm the struggles being overcome.

Please consider adding this information to the Details before the meetings.

Sincerely,

Lee Sargent
16246 NE 24th ST
Bellevue, WA 98008

Home: 425-641-7568
Mobile: 206-8616140