



Building at the Coast

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT 125 E 8th AVENUE, EUGENE OR 97401 PLANNING: 682-3807

The oceanfront and coastal lakes of Lane County have long been recognized for their unique environmental qualities. As such, these areas are afforded extra protection through “Combining Zones” which are in addition to the requirements found in the base zone of a specific piece of property. These combining zones preserve the topographic integrity of the land, protect critical wildlife and plant species, water quality and quantity, and indigenous vegetation, and to ensure soil stability during and after development.

Coastal soils, lakes and associated natural features are subject to rapid erosion, degradation, and instability. Development must be evaluated on a site specific basis to ensure it is consistent with the limitations of these resources, to prevent economic loss, promote diverse shoreland uses, and provide for recreation.

WHAT ARE THE COASTAL COMBINING ZONES? Seven combining zones are found in the coastal areas. More than one may apply to a particular piece of property. The combining zones include:

- Significant Natural Shorelands (/SN) Combining Zone
- Prime Wildlife Shorelands (/PW) Combining Zone
- Natural Resources Conservation (/NRC) Combining Zone
- Residential Development Shorelands (/RD) Combining Zone
- Shorelands Mixed Development (/MD) Combining Zone
- Dredge/Material/Mitigation Site (/DMS) Combining Zone
- Beaches and Dunes (/BD) Combining Zone

DOES A COMBINING ZONE APPLY TO YOUR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL? The combining zones are shown on the coastal zoning maps. These maps are on the Lane County website (www.lanecounty.org). You will need your tax parcel number to locate the correct zoning map.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION If it is found that an overlay zone applies to your property, a field inspection, or “Preliminary Investigation” is conducted by a County land use planner prior to issuance of a building permit or other development permit. The purpose of this field visit is to discover if certain conditions listed in the ordinance, as described below, pertain to the development site.

Beaches and Dunes (/BD) Combining Zone: In the Beaches and Dunes Zone, soils are generally very sandy. Potential hazards associated with removal of vegetation and development on sites in this zone include rapid surface erosion and impacts on underground water resources. These effects could have both short and long term consequences with regard to soils stability, water quality, and safe development. Therefore, conditions are imposed on how projects are carried out in this zone. Vegetation removal is limited to the minimum amount necessary to accommodate the project, and replanting of native vegetation is generally required within 9 months of project completion. If other potential hazards exist, (such as steep slopes, which further aggravate soil erosion problems), additional conditions may be imposed.

Note that sites which require a special use permit by the base zone (such as a new dwelling in the F2 Zone), and which also are in a Beaches and Dunes Combining Zone, are automatically subject to an additional Special Use Permit approval for the /BD Zone. In these cases, applicants must meet Special Use criteria specified in both the base zone and the /BD Zone.

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Other Coastal Combining Zones: Other coastal combining zones apply to sites near coastal lakes, rivers, estuaries, and wildlife areas. These zones are concerned with protection of natural resources, while providing for residential, recreational, and economic uses. For these areas, a different set of conditions come into play during the Preliminary Investigation site visit. The planner would be looking for development taking place within areas of steep slope adjacent to shorelands, riparian resources that contribute to water quality, wildlife habitat, wetland or flood hazard areas, and site conditions which increase the potential of lake, ocean, and river shore erosion. If any of these conditions pertain to the development site, a Special Use Permit would be required.

Land use application forms are available in the LMD office or the Lane County website (www.lanecounty.org).

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