

Snoqualmie Mill Site PCIP FAQ's- City of Snoqualmie

What is the Mill Site Planned Commercial/Industrial Plan?

The Mill Site Planned Commercial/Industrial Plan (PCIP) is a proposed development application that would guide subsequent planning and future development of the former Snoqualmie Mill site, located north of the Snoqualmie River and Borst Lake and northeast of SE Mill Pond Road. The site is divided into three distinct areas/phases for future development of the overall site. The PCIP application provides detailed information for Planning Area 1/Phase 1, an approximate 102- acre area in the northwestern portion of the site, and conceptual information for Planning Areas/Phases 2 and 3.

Is the Mill Pond part of the Snoqualmie Mill project?

No, the Mill Pond and the Mill Site are separate properties that are under different ownership. The Mill Pond, also known as Borst Lake, was excavated and used to store logs prior to processing during operation of Weyerhaeuser's Snoqualmie Mill. The Mill Pond is still owned by the Weyerhaeuser Company. The pond was not included in the property that was purchased by Snoqualmie Mill Ventures LLC, the applicant, and is not included in the PCIP application.

What is SEPA?

SEPA is an acronym for the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C RCW). SEPA was enacted in 1971 and is implemented through Chapter 197-11 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). SEPA provides the framework for agencies to consider the environmental consequences of a proposal before taking action. Under SEPA, agencies have the ability to condition or deny a proposal due to identified likely significant adverse impacts.

What is an EIS?

A SEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is an impartial evaluation of potential adverse environmental impacts associated with a proposed project and project alternatives. It also presents design and construction measures that would eliminate or reduce the likely environmental impacts of a project. The Snoqualmie Mill PCIP EIS is a legally-mandated document that will comply with requirements of SEPA, the WAC, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the City of Snoqualmie environmental review process. The EIS is not a permit or a decision-making document - it is one of many sets of information the permitting agencies will consider as they decide whether to approve the project and issue necessary permits.

Why is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required?

Environmental review is required for any proposal which involves a government "action," as defined in the SEPA Rules (WAC 197-11-704), and is not categorically exempt (WAC 197-11-800 through 890). Project actions involve an agency decision on a specific project. The Mill Site PCIP application is under consideration and the City of Snoqualmie determined that an EIS was necessary by issuing a Determination of Significance (DS) in order to evaluate the project's impacts.

What are all of the issues you will be studying in the EIS?

The elements of the environment under SEPA are listed in WAC 197-11-444, and include both the natural environment (earth, air, water, plants and animals, energy and natural resources) and the built

environment (environmental health, land and shoreline use, transportation, public services and utilities). Based on key environmental issues and comments received during scoping, the following are elements that will be evaluated as part of the EIS for the PCIP: Hazardous Materials/Toxics Contamination, Earth, Air, Water, Flood Hazards, Plants, Animals, Environmental Health, Noise, Cultural and Historic Resources, Recreation, Land Use and Shoreline, Housing, Aesthetics, Light and Glare, Public Services, Utilities, Transportation and Traffic.

Will the project cause serious impacts to traffic, water, flooding, noise, public services, city finances and other environmental concerns?

We don't know the answers to those questions yet. That is the purpose of the EIS: to study whether and how the Snoqualmie Mill redevelopment plan could cause significant impacts to the site, the City and the environment. That information will be published in the EIS and will enable the public and City officials to see what could happen if the project moves forward. The City can then identify how the redevelopment plan might be modified or conditioned to reduce or eliminate unacceptable impacts. The Draft EIS is expected to be published in the Spring of 2018.

Will there be huge, noisy rock concerts at the proposed amphitheater?

Several comments received by the City expressed concern about traffic and noise issues from the proposed amphitheater, fearing concerts they would be of the same magnitude and type as those at the Gorge, Marymoor Park or White River. The PCIP application identifies a 3.7-acre landscaped area in Planning Area 1 that would be used for an outdoor amphitheater, but it does not describe the types or frequency of events, the potential magnitude of attendance, or constructed facilities. In response to comments received and their own internal design discussions, the applicant has removed the performance space from the PCIP application. To provide an appropriate analysis of potential impacts from a performance space, the concept will be included in an alternative to the PCIP application in the EIS. The space would also be located in Planning Area 3 instead of Planning Area 1. Inclusion of the performance space in an EIS alternative will allow for a comparison of potential impacts if the performance space were included or not included. The details of how the space could be used will be provided in the EIS.

How is the Snoqualmie Mill site zoned, and will it contain heavy industrial activity?

The zoning for the Snoqualmie Mill site was established in a Pre-Annexation Agreement and became effective when the site was annexed to the City in 2012. The site is in the Planned Commercial/Industrial District (PCI). This district permits light industrial and manufacturing, warehouse office, retail and office uses. Heavy industrial uses are not permitted. A site plan graphic that was distributed at the scoping meeting contained a typographical error that indicated heavy industrial uses were included. This is incorrect; heavy industrial uses are not proposed and are not permitted by zoning. Multi-family residential uses are conditionally permitted, but single-family residences are prohibited. The PCIP includes 120 rental apartments (1 and 2-bedroom units) on the upper floors in the mixed-use main street portion of Planning Area 1.

I have heard that that the Snoqualmie Mill is a "Superfund" site. Is that true, and what does that mean?

The Snoqualmie Mill site was assessed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during Weyerhaeuser's clean-up activities in the 1990's, and was determined not to qualify as a Superfund site. "Superfund" is shorthand for a federal statutory program, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act (CERCLA), which is managed by the EPA. The program includes a list of sites (National Priorities List, aka Superfund sites) that typically have extensive

contamination and require substantial remediation. Designated Superfund sites qualify for federal funding to assist in cleanup.

The Snoqualmie Mill property is most accurately characterized as a “brownfield, which EPA defines as a property where redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the known or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant (see <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/overview-brownfields-program>). EPA estimates that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S. The federal and state governments encourage clean-up and redevelopment of these sites as means to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, reduce development pressures on rural lands, and improve and protect the environment. As a brownfield, the site is subject to the Washington Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), which is the state’s regulatory framework for identifying and cleaning-up sites with contamination above state standards.

Numerous studies and remediation were conducted for the Weyerhaeuser Company, generally between 1989 and 2006, to identify the locations, types, and extent of contamination and options for remediation. These reports are on file with the City; a summary prepared in 2011 is included on the city’s Snoqualmie Mill website:

<http://www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us/393/Mill-Site-Planned-Commercial-Industrial>

Weyerhaeuser completed extensive remediation before the property was purchased by Snoqualmie Mill Ventures in 2010. There are, however, six areas where full remediation was not documented to Department of Ecology standards. These areas warrant additional investigation and may require additional remediation before or concurrent with redevelopment. Independent scientific analysis concluded that these six areas pose no threat to human health or the environment in their current, undisturbed state.

The EIS will review these prior studies, will conduct additional investigations, and will identify a comprehensive strategy and timetable for remediating the site. Any required remedial actions will be performed as part of proposed development and in accordance with environmental regulations and cleanup plans developed under Department of Ecology guidance. The objective of any future remedial actions will be to protect human health and the environment and achieve regulatory closure for legacy contamination.

What is the schedule for the project and the SEPA EIS?

The EIS schedule is a general time frame. In the current schedule the Draft EIS would be released in the Spring of 2018. All of the environmental issues that are studied take time and have to be looked at very carefully. Part of the time needed is so that preliminary designs for each of the alternatives can be developed for the EIS. Also, a considerable amount of data must be collected. For example, data must be collected to inform technical reports such as traffic, air quality, hydrology, cultural resources, among others. It is important to complete the EIS correctly and thoroughly, and the schedule is only generally predictable and subject to change.

What does phasing mean for this project?

Phased review is appropriate when the sequence of development is from a broad review to narrower, more specific review- for example, review of site selection and general development issues and subsequent review on specific design impacts when more information is available on the specific

development. A planned unit development might be phased with the first phase evaluating the entire development in general terms and later phases evaluating specific construction.

Will the EIS address all three phases of the project?

Yes, the EIS will consider the project as a whole.

What if the project design changes after the Final EIS is issued?

The SEPA Rules state that no action that would foreclose options shall be taken until SEPA has been completed. Therefore, if a design element significantly changes, the project should not be allowed to move forward until a supplemental EIS is complete.

What are alternatives and what alternatives are most inclined to be built?

The EIS must evaluate reasonable alternatives that could feasibly attain the proposal's objective, and are within a jurisdictional agency's authority to control. The City will consider each alternative's potential impacts to the environment before making a decision. A preferred alternative will be identified in the Final EIS, and may include a combination of different alternatives from the Draft EIS. The Scoping Memorandum indicates the EIS will consider three alternatives: A No-Build alternative (required by law), a PCIP Application alternative (the proposal as identified by the PCIP application, minus the performance space), and an EIS Alternative (reduces office and industrial space and increases warehouse space, and includes a performance space).

Where are efforts currently and what are is coming next?

The initial scoping period ended on May 24, 2017. Public comment emails and letters were collected, reviewed and forwarded to the applicant. Please refer to the Scoping Memorandum, dated December 18, 2017 on the City's webpage for a summary and outcome of the initial scoping period as well as the project alternatives to be studied in the EIS. The applicant's technical research is beginning, which will inform the analysis of the Draft EIS.

Why is the City of Snoqualmie the Lead Agency?

The City of Snoqualmie is the lead agency because the development proposal was presented to the City. Therefore, the City took responsibility for fulfilling procedural aspects of SEPA compliance. The City's responsible official, Mark Hofman, AICP, represents the lead agency and is responsible for the documentation and the content of the environmental analysis.

Who is developing the Draft EIS and completing analysis of potential project impacts?

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) lays out the requirements for an EIS, including the process that must be followed to prepare, review and publish the document. State law also gives the City of Snoqualmie responsibility, as the "lead agency," to manage EISs for public and private projects proposed within the city. Mark Hofman, the City's Community Development Director, is the city official who will make decisions about the content and process for the EIS. He will be assisted by the City Attorney, other city staff, and by a team of scientists, engineers and environmental experts.

Both state law and the City code permit EISs to be prepared by qualified independent consultants, subject to city approval. Those consultants follow the city's direction during the EIS process. For the Snoqualmie Mill Site PCIP proposal, the City has retained a second team of independent third-party peer reviewers who will review the EIS for the City to ensure that it is technically accurate and complete. All consultants involved in the preparation and review of the EIS are paid directly or indirectly by the

project proponent, at no net cost to the City. Most cities in Washington state follow a similar process for EISs.

How is the City ensuring that the Draft EIS review includes credible assessment of project impacts?

The City has a team of “on-call” planners and technical experts – consultants who are under contract directly with the City to assist in ensuring development applications are completed consistent with City requirements. Throughout development of the Draft EIS, the City’s experts will ensure that assessment of potential project impacts, and necessary mitigation strategies, meets City requirements and is completed consistent with established best practices and applicable State-required guidelines for each environmental element.

When is the next time the public will have opportunity for testimony?

After issuance of a Draft EIS, a 45-day noticed public review period will begin in which the public will have the opportunity to comment on the content of the Draft EIS. This is anticipated to occur in the Spring/Summer of 2018.

Where can I find more information?

Check the City’s website periodically for updated information:

<http://www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us/393/Mill-Site-Planned-Commercial-Industrial>

How can I be notified of public hearings and FAQ updates?

Request to be on the mailing list so you can be informed of future meetings and FAQ updates:

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