



# FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION

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[seattlefloatinghomes.org](http://seattlefloatinghomes.org)

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Dear Floating Homes Resident -

This is early warning about the Department of Planning and Development's (DPD's) revision of Seattle's Shorelines Master Program (SMP). The SMP is the law that regulates our use of the shoreline.

During the past year, DPD has convened a "Citizen's Advisory Committee" to give them some public input on their rewrite. The Floating Homes Association is a member of this group, which issued its final report in June. DPD has now taken most of its public comments and is concentrating on writing the new code.

Through the initial Advisory Committee process, we have learned that while stopping short of eliminating existing houseboats, DPD intends to ban any new moorages and impose costly regulations on replacements or remodels.

If you have any intention of ever selling, replacing, rebuilding or even repairing your houseboat, these new rules will affect you.

State guidelines for local SMP revisions discourage floating homes, but acknowledge situations of a historic nature, like us.

To justify many of their proposed changes, DPD invokes the goal of protecting endangered salmon migrating through the Ship Canal. This aligns with a regional effort to restore Chinook salmon runs in the Lake Washington basin at large. The Association supports this effort generally and has a history of promoting a better water environment.

But there's not much evidence that houseboat moorages have an impact on migrating salmon or that, having been here for a hundred years or so, we are doing any particular harm. Despite the faint influence DPD's proposed changes might have on the ecology, however, the cost of these changes to us promises to be very high.

Our problem is this lack of proportion. The burdens we are being asked to carry seem to far outweigh the benefits that might ensue.

The attached summary lists some of the problems we have with DPD's proposals. All this will become a lot more specific when they publish their draft language in the fall. After the Mayor gets his look at it, it goes to the City Council.

You're likely to hear from us then, when we make our case to the Council.

The Floating Homes Association

# Floating Homes' Positions on DPD's SMP Revisions.

For more information, please see [seattlefloatinghomes.org/smp](http://seattlefloatinghomes.org/smp)

DPD's Proposed Regulations	What this means for you	Why	Floating Homes Position
<b>Floating homes will no longer be a water dependent use</b>	Your home will lose its status as a preferred use of the shoreline.	Changing floating homes from a "water-dependent use" to an "allowed use" will be a potential erosion of legitimacy for the floating home community.	Remain Water Dependent.
<b>New floating homes will be prohibited</b>	You will be allowed to replace your home in case of damage or for a remodel, however, empty houseboat moorages on any dock will not be filled unless by an existing structure from elsewhere on the lake.	A prohibition on new floating homes de-legitimizes the floating home community in general and may be the first step in a plan to reclaim the shoreline.	Allow in current limited range to current high standards.  (Otherwise, license?)
<b>Adding additional floor area to your home will be prohibited unless total float area is reduced to 1,200 sq ft or less</b>	If your float is larger than 1,200 sq ft, and you want to add <i>any</i> additional floor area to your living space, you will have to replace your current float with one that measures 1,200 sq ft or less.		Huh?
<b>Conforming and non-conforming houseboat moorage standards will be combined</b>	Combining the standards will create more complexity and potential contradictions that may hamper the maintenance and remodeling of your home.	The variety of existing floating home sizes, heights, setbacks etc. is the result of numerous decisions by the City of Seattle over the years. In addition, floating homes and moorages are not only physically interdependent, but are constrained by a web of DNR leases, private leases, cooperative or condominium legal requirements and state and local regulations.	Retain current distinction.
<b>Depth of floats for replacement floating homes will be regulated by the city</b>	City regulation of float depth and material may, depending on your float size and dimensions, significantly limit the height, size and weight of your replacement home.	It is in the best interest of the community that new regulations are based on solid scientific evidence. The data that have been available through DPD do not appear now to justify a complete and outright ban on what might be a useful and environmentally benign floating home component.	Engineering and necessity should determine floatation.
<b>New basements will be prohibited</b>	You will be prohibited from utilizing the potential living or storage space under your home.		Harmless amenity should be allowed.