



Seattle's Shoreline Master Program Moratorium FAQ

For additional information, see also:

- [Seattle's Shoreline Master Program Floating On-Water Residences FAQ](#)
- [Seattle's Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review and Update FAQ](#)

1) What does the Moratorium do?

The moratorium pauses the permitting for the replacement of FOWR-vessels. FOWR-vessels are vessels that have been verified as an FOWR and meet the definition of "vessel" in SMA 23.60A.942.

The moratorium does not apply to FOWR structures or people living on conventional vessels that are not verified as FOWRS. It also does not halt the verification process or any permits for maintenance or remodeling of any FOWRs.

2) Why did Seattle enact a Shoreline Master Program moratorium pausing the replacement of floating on-water residence-vessels (FOWR-vessel)?

The reason for the moratorium is to create space for Seattle to include a broad public process for its work in updating the Shoreline Master Program (SMP), which are the Land Use regulations that govern the uses and standards for development within the Shoreline District ((Shoreline District is the area over the water and within 200-ft of the ordinary high-water mark). Please see the following document for additional information regarding floating on-water residences (FOWRs):

Seattle's Shoreline Master Program Floating On-Water Residences FAQ

3) What is a FOWR-vessel?

A FOWR-vessel is a vessel that has been verified as an FOWR and meets the definition of "vessel" in SMC 23.60A.942.

4) Does SMP have the authority to enact a moratorium?

Seattle has the authority under RCW 90.58.590 to adopt shoreline development moratoria.

5) Will the SMP update be limited to addressing the moratorium issues or will there be more amendments to the regulations?

Seattle's update to the SMP will include additional amendments and will serve to fulfill Department of Ecology's SMP periodic review and update requirement. For additional information please see:

Seattle's Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review and Update FAQ

6) Does the moratorium only effect FOWR-vessels and it is not dependent on when the FOWR-vessel was verified?

Yes, so long as the FOWR meets the definition of vessel in SMC 23.60A.942.

7) If a FOWR-vessel was verified previously why can't a FOWR owner replace the FOWR?

Seattle is not denying the right of a FOWR owner to replace their FOWR. The moratorium pauses the replacement of FOWR-vessels with permanent floating residences in order to update the shoreline regulations to reflect changed circumstances, new information and improved data, and address state legislative amendments.

8) Why have you divided FOWRs into two groups, FOWR-structures and FOWR-vessels?

Vessels have always been protected under Seattle's SMP and Seattle's SMP has always allowed people to live on conventional vessels. However, when a vessel becomes a verified FOWR Seattle's shoreline regulations lack clarity on how these vessels are regulated.

9) How many FOWR-vessels are there? Is there a list by verification number or location?

Because living on conventional vessels is an allowed use and does not require a permit SDCI does not have a list of vessels that would qualify as FOWRs. Additionally, because of the history of verification of FOWRs and the changes to the definition of both FOWRs and vessels, SDCI did not previously separate out which FOWRs would meet the definition of structure or vessel under Seattle's current SMP.

10) Many early verifications were vessels to meet the SMP at the time. Will those now be classified as FOWR-vessels?

The determination of whether something is a vessel is based on the definition of vessel in SMC 23.60A.942. SDCI will make this determination during the review process if such FOWR applies for a permit.

11) Did the moratorium affect any applications that were in process, if so, how many.

There were two active applications that were paused by the moratorium. The paused applications were not for FOWR-vessels that are currently lived on. The moratorium paused these applications while the SMP is amended in order to provide a broad range of public input on the variety of issues that are important to Seattle's Shorelines.

12) Will the moratorium impact the maritime businesses that construct vessels?

No, the moratorium does not impact maritime businesses in the shoreline constructing or repairing vessels.

13) Are there briefing materials that provide greater details regarding the adopted moratorium and the reason for the moratorium?

Yes, briefing material is on the SDCI SMP Update website "Project Documents" page, under the "City Council Public Hearing on SMP Moratorium" heading. See link below:

[Shoreline Master Program Update - Project Documents - SDCI | seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/sdcip/smpupdate/projectdocuments)

14) Are the materials from the June 13 City Council vote on the moratorium and July 6th public hearing on the moratorium on Seattle Council's website?

Yes, below is the link to the agenda for City Council's June 13th meeting with links to the legislative material for the moratorium:

[City Council June 13 Agenda](#)

The moratorium is item #1 on the agenda.

And below is the link to the agenda for the Land Use Committee's July 6th public hearing with links to the legislation:

[Land Use July 6 Agenda](#)

The moratorium is item #2 on the agenda.

Additionally, the public hearing was recorded and below is a link to the recording, which takes place from approximate minute 2 minute to minute 55 of the recording:

[Land Use Committee Special Meeting - Public Hearing - 7/6/23 | seattlechannel.org](#)