



Snohomish County
Planning and Development Services
September 2015

Summary of Amendments to Chapter 30.62B SCC - Geologically Hazardous Areas

On June 24th, 2015, County Council adopted [Emergency Ordinance 15-042](#), extending a moratorium enacted by Amended Emergency Ordinance No. 14-045, and extended by Emergency Ordinance No. 14-105, for an additional six-month period; adopting a moratorium on applications for new development within the SR 530 landslide impact area; amending Chapter 30.62B SCC; and declaring an emergency.

Definition of Landslide Hazardous Area

The criteria that defines a landslide hazardous area in SCC 30.91L.040 was expanded to include lands within a distance from the top of the slope equal to the height of a slope and within a distance from the toe of the slope equal to two times the height of the slope. These changes are shown in legislative format below:

30.91L.040 Landslide hazard areas.

"Landslide hazard areas" means areas potentially subject to mass earth movement based on a combination of geologic, topographic, and hydrologic factors, with a vertical height of 10 feet or more. These include the following:

- (1) Areas of historic landslides as evidenced by landslide deposits, avalanche tracks, and areas susceptible to basal undercutting by streams, rivers or waves;
- (2) Areas with slopes steeper than 33 percent which intersect geologic contacts with a relatively permeable sediment overlying a relatively impermeable sediment or bedrock, and which contain springs or ground water seeps;
- (3) Areas located in a canyon or an active alluvial fan, susceptible to inundation by debris flows or catastrophic flooding.

For sections 1, 2, and 3 above, the landslide hazard area also includes lands within a distance from the top of the slope equal to the height of the slope or within a distance of the toe of the slope equal to two times the height of the slope. The director may expand the boundary of a landslide hazard area pursuant to 30.62B.390 SCC.

Note: Please use [this link](#) for an illustration of the new definition of a landslide hazard area.

The new definition of landslide hazard area incorporates what was the setback area for structures from the landslide hazard area. The setbacks use to be the height of the slope divided by two at the toe and the height of the slope divided by three at the top of the slope. It was determined that the purpose of the current setback was established based on the International Building Code requirements and were intended to protect a structure from either sliding down the slope from the



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top of slope or being hit by a slide that had mobilized at the toe of slope. It was determined that this setback area is actually part of the landslide hazard area.

SCC 30.62B.340 was amended to provide consistency with the new definition of landslide hazardous area. The change would not allow development in the landslide hazard area and provides a methodology to construct in the landslide hazardous area if there is no other alternative. The changes provide criteria for expansion of the landslide hazard area in order to protect public health and safety as determined through best available science provided by site conditions and a geotechnical report.

Geotechnical Report Requirements

In section 30.62B.140 SCC, the proposal adds several new provisions regarding the analysis of hazards and risks, landslide run out and a summary of the report that will be recorded with the property title.

The amendments include additional requirements for what is required to be included in a geotechnical report under SCC30.62B.140. This includes assessment and analysis of risks associated with geologic hazards, estimating landslide material run out, and a requirement for an abstract of the report to be recorded with the property.

Notice and identification requirements

Section 30.62B.160 contains the requirements for identification, development restrictions and requirements in geologically hazardous areas. The recently adopted amendments includes additional notice, disclosure, and covenant requirements for development activities or actions requiring a project permit or approval in a landslide hazard area in section SCC 30.62B.160(4). This does not include approvals for fences, retaining walls, deflection walls or landslide mitigation. The notice requires a covenant that runs with the land and states that the property is in a landslide hazardous area, describes the risks, the owner accepts the responsibility for the risks, inform future purchasers and provides indemnification.

Increased Authority

A new section was added that provides PDS the authority and methodology to expand a site specific landslide hazard area, provide for more stringent construction standards and to impose additional mitigation in order to reduce specific safety impacts